

GOD GAVE THEM UP

Romans 1:26-32

I thank God this ~~morning~~ that He has set us free! We have believed in Christ and have trusted him to save us from sin and Hell!

I met Jesus Christ and accepted him as my Lord and Savior at Moody Church in Chicago on Christmas Day, December 25, 1967. I had just arrived in Chicago from California two weeks before. My company had transferred me and I was alone in the Big City. But, in the midst of my loneliness and uncertainty, the Lord reached out to touch my heart and give me peace and assurance and salvation.

The next summer, I went back to California on vacation to visit my family and friends. But when I joyously told them about my new-found life in Christ, they weren't impressed.

Most of my old friends said that they couldn't believe in a God who would send anybody to Hell. They argued that if God is love, He could never condemn nor abandon any human being. As the father of all mankind, He had to assure that everybody would eventually wind up in Heaven somehow. Thus, it really didn't matter what they believed: God would accept them anyway.

As a brand-new christian, I was caught flat-footed: I didn't know how to answer that. But I have since learned that the error begins with thinking that God is the father of all mankind. God is not the father of all mankind! He is the creator of all mankind, but He is the Father only to those who have been born again through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ!

God offers salvation to all men! Whosoever will may come! But, God must abandon those who continuously and permanently refuse to come to Him and accept His salvation. God doesn't send anybody to Hell! We send ourselves to Hell! God tries to talk us out of it! He shows us the way out of Hell and into Heaven through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. But if we continuously refuse to listen to Him, eventually there comes a point where He just lets us go our own way.

When men ignore God and try to convince themselves that they don't need God, eventually God gives them up!

Romans 1:26 begins, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:"

These are four of the most solemn and horrifying words

in the entire Bible: "God...gave them up." I don't mind telling you that I shake and get chills up my spine when I read those awful words. God gave them up!

Romans 1:26 and 27 continue, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:"

27. "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."

Today, the Aids epidemic is a clear example of this: the homosexual community is receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which is meet. It is true that others besides homosexuals have contracted Aids, but the vast majority of its victims are male homosexuals: they are receiving in their own bodies the just payment for their acts of depravity!

When we look around at the world surrounding ~~us~~^{us} and see all the evil deeds that men are committing, it is easy to console ourselves by saying that they are going to go to Hell for those deeds. It is easy to say, but it is wrong. It is backwards. They are not going to Hell because they are doing those deeds: they are doing those deeds because they are going to Hell! God has given them up!

God isn't going to send anyone to Hell for doing evil deeds. People go to Hell for one reason only! People go to Hell because they refuse to accept God's grace through Jesus Christ!

There is a difference between "sin" and "sins": "sins" are evil deeds; "sin" is an evil heart at enmity with God. We are Christians and yet we still commit "sins". But we are not in the state of "sin" because we are freed from sin by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior who was made sin for us and died that we might live.

Sins (sinful deeds) are not good, but they are merely the outward evidence of the inward sin nature from which they spring. It is the evil heart that must be dealt with, not just the evil deeds that the evil heart generates.

Doctors treat illnesses, not just symptoms. If you have pain in your arm, the doctor wants to find and correct the cause of the pain. He doesn't want to just give you a

*FOR THE CAUSE OF THE PAIN
WOULD YOU BE THERE?*

massive dose of morphine so you won't feel the pain. If he did that, the pain might go away; ~~but suppose the pain was caused by a heart attack; pain in the arm is a frequent symptom associated with heart attacks!~~ In that case, the doctor's failure to diagnose and treat the heart ailment might result in a worse heart attack. You might die because ~~the doctor treated the pain instead of its cause!~~

Those who continually refuse to go to the doctor, eventually reach the point where it is too late: the doctor is no longer able to ~~save~~ ^{Hell} them. ~~Those who discover small lumps or other irregularities in their bodies, and refuse to go to the doctor because they are terrified that they will hear the dreaded word "cancer", are fools.~~

If they went to the doctor, he might be able to ~~cure the cancer, either with chemotherapy or with radiation or with surgery.~~ ^{Hell} If done in the early stages of the cancer, they might still be able to live a long and normal life after the treatment.

But, ~~cancer~~ ^{illnesses} which ~~is~~ ^{are} ignored ~~does~~ ^{do} not go away! ~~It~~ ^{They} just gets worse and worse until it is too late, and no doctor can help: the fool ~~dies~~ ^{can be helped} because of his foolish refusal to seek help!

It is the same with sin! Those who continually refuse to accept God's grace do eventually reach a point where it is too late! God gives them up! When you see the awful depths of sin into which men are sinking today, remember that the men are not going to Hell because they are doing those evil deeds, but rather that they are doing the evil deeds because they are already on their way to Hell! God has given them up!

28. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;"

29. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,"

30. "Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents."

31. "Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:"

Anytime that God repeats something in the Bible, it should call our attention to the fact that God considers that subject very important. And, here in the closing verses of the first chapter of Romans, we read three times that "God ... gave them up!" Three times! We had better pay very special attention indeed to this very solemn warning.

First, God gave them up to unclean lusts. Then He gave them up to vile affections and homosexuality. Homosexuality is not an alternate lifestyle: it is an alternate deathstyle! It is a curse! Homosexuality is a penalty for ignoring and rebelling against God!

But, here in verses 28 through 31, we read that God finally gave them up to a reprobate mind. Because men do not like to retain God in their minds, because they try everything they can to banish God from their thoughts, and because they refuse to even acknowledge His existence: He finally gives them up to a reprobate mind.

The word "reprobate" is the translation of the Greek word that was used for counterfeit coins when they were too light; not having the precious metal necessary to make them real.

The mind is the object of much of man's worship and respect today. Human reason and education are seen as the answers to all of men's problems. But God declares that the human mind is inadequate and unfit for comprehending Him. I Corinthians 2:14 declares, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And Romans 8:7-8 declares, "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The practical result of a reprobate mind is that the possessor of such a mind sinks deeper and deeper into all manner of depravity. God lists twenty-~~two~~ of the forbidden, shameful practices that men sink into after God abandons them to a reprobate mind: unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful.

all kinds
unmerciful
reprobate
enmity

And verse 32 closes both the chapter and the door on those who have descended to such levels:

32. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

This verse is one of the most damning in the entire Bible. It teaches us that men have an inner knowledge that God exists, and that they know that God hates sin and must judge it; nevertheless they persist in their sin anyway, and finally they come to the point where they help others to sin and even rejoice in the sins of others.

That evil people are going to Hell should not cause too great a shock. It seems right. If there were no Hell, where would Hitler pay for his atrocities? As sad as the thought of evil people going to Hell may be, it does seem right and just.

But what is really devastating to most people, and what they absolutely will not accept, is that "so-called" good people, and even apparently "religious" people are also on their way to Hell. No matter how "good" they are, no matter how "religious" they may be; if they have not turned to Jesus Christ as their Savior and accepted the grace and mercy which our Father God offers to them through Jesus' death and resurrection, then they are going to Hell!

Evil people ... "good" people ... "religious" people ... ALL destined for Hell, the Lake of Fire, Eternal Death, and Eternal Separation from God in the Outer Darkness! An extremely frightening prospect!

Thank God that we are part of a small but real minority that doesn't fit into any one of those three categories. Once we did. But now God has set us free! Now we are free from sin and death! We have believed in Christ and have trusted him to save us from these awful dooms. Physical death is for us but an opening door into glory!

Hallelujah! Amen!

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