

*Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*  
*1:19 because the thing which may be known of God is clearly revealed within them, for God revealed it to them.*  
*1:20 For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse.*  
*1:21 Because, knowing God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*  
*1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools*  
*1:23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things.*  
*1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.*  
*1:25 For they changed the truth of God into a lie, and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*  
*1:26 For this cause, God gave them up to dishonorable affections. For even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature.*  
*1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another; males with males working out shameful, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was fitting for their error.*  
*1:28 And even as they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do the things not right,*  
*1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, evil habits, becoming whisperers,*  
*1:30 backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud, braggarts, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*  
*1:31 undiscerning, perfidious, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful;*  
*1:32 who, knowing the righteous order of God, that those practicing such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but have pleasure in those practicing them.*

## Historical context

This is not a passage about gay marriage. This passage has nothing to do with marriage. Paul is writing to Greek and Roman readers and his use of homosexuality is in keeping with the historical understanding of his readers. Paul is reminding his readers that cultures that built on greed end in hedonism. Most often they end because other cultures built on greed wipe them out. Hedonism makes them too fat and lazy to defend themselves. The great fear for the Romans was that the rampant homosexuality prevalent among the political and military leaders would eventually lead to the decline in population growth required to sustain a military superpower. The Romans were all too familiar with the history of Greece and they were afraid of becoming like the city state of Sparta. Sparta had institutionalised homosexuality, 100% male participation was required. As time went by their population dwindled away to nothing. If you know anything about Greek history it would be most unfair for me to call the Spartans hedonists. But my point remains Ancient people feared the rampant growth in homosexuality not because they were homophobic, but because they thought hedonism was a sign that their society was coming to an end. This point of view [commonly known as the cycle of nations] is worth remembering today.

*A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within.*

*Ariel Durant*

Point to ponder: What was the sin of Sodom?

**Ezekiel 16:49** Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.

Let me spell it out loud and clear, the sin in the passage that Paul wants to emphasise is denying that God is the all powerful creator and serving him. The consequence of this sin is that we become less natural in our behaviour. We fail to live up to our created purposes. Worse still we become destructive.

In the first part of Romans 1 you will recall we looked at Salvation and Revelation. Specifically we considered how the basis of our faith is the special revelation from God of who Jesus is. The evidence of our salvation is the revelation the Holy Spirit has given us that "Jesus is Lord". He is The Christ, the Son of the living God!

I also took some time explaining that salvation comes from God alone and "being saved" not something that saved people can lose.

### **In this sermon we look at General revelation**

General revelation is the term used for the fact that all people know God exists, because they cannot deny it in creation.

**Genesis 3:1** *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

**3:2** *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

**3:3** *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

**3:4** *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

**3:5** *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

**3:6** *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

**3:7** *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

**3:8** *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

**3:9** *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

**3:10** *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

**3:11** *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

Rich Mullens said "the original sin from the Garden was thinking that if we knew the difference between good and evil we could deal with them better than God."

No longer was creation a beautiful reminder of the loving creator, but it became a place to hide and a constant reminder of their guilt.

Ponder this where do you hide from God? Is your hiding place something that could bring you closer to God?

Adam and Eve had no reason or experience that justified their decision to doubt God and believe the lie.

Sin corrupts everything, even our thoughts and feelings, our reason and our experience. This is why people cannot come to a full knowledge of God through general revelation. I have work colleges who agree with me that the beauty of a sun set is proof that there is a God. But in the next moment they say the suffering in the world proves that he is not all powerful [this is pagan theology].

## **Special revelation brings Salvation**

The only way any human could grasp the enormity of God and his goodness and his plans was for God to make them clear in a way that humans could understand. This would require three things

1. God had to give people new hearts [minds]. Renewed ability to understand what he was saying in a way untainted by sin and fear.
2. God had to give these people faith enough to follow him
3. God had to become a Man in order to do it

**Come see His hands and His feet –**

**The scars that speak of sacrifice**

**Hands that flung stars into space**

**To cruel nails surrendered**

**[lyrics to Servant King, Graham Kendrick]**

Not only is God revealed to us in Jesus, but Jesus death and resurrection made it possible for God to renew our hearts and restore us to faith.

## **General revelation restored to something that makes us marvel at God**

Once we have been restored by God; our mind, emotions thoughts and actions can be ways that we can experience God again in everything we do.

Even testing times can be used by God to bring about new knowledge of him.

When we are tested we must remind ourselves that God has planned it and he does put us in a situation that he can't help us get through. In other word he believes in us.

So do you want to rely on the creator of the universe to help you through life?

Or

Can you deal with life on your own?