

14. The Book of Romans 1:19-20-Part 1

Paul's Epistle to the Romans
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(5-3-23)

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In our study of Romans, we have moved into the main body of the Epistle which runs from 1:18 thru 15:13.

This first section (1:18-3:20) falls under the heading of **"Condemnation"** (judgment) because in it Paul wants to prove that the whole human race, apart from Christ, is condemned by God.

Condemnation is a judicial term denoting that fallen man is guilty before a holy, righteous God of violating His laws and is thereby condemned (sentenced) by Him to spend eternity in hell for those crimes.

That is why Paul begins it with the words, **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all who are ungodly..." (1:18)**—and ends with: **"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight..." (3:20)**

Here Paul is acting like a prosecuting attorney who starts by proving that the pagan (the ungodly) is condemned (guilty) before a holy God. He then moves to the moralist to show that those who think they're right with God because they live 'moral' lives are hypocrites and guilty. Then finally, he turns his focus on the religionist (in this case those who embrace Judaism) to show that keeping the Law of God (religion) will not justify them either.

The verdict—all apart from Christ are guilty and condemned!

Again, it's important that Paul begins the main body of this epistle by proving the whole world apart from Jesus is condemned because before people will see their need for a Savior, they must first be made to see themselves as guilty sinners—which is why Paul starts this section with the **"wrath of God" (verse 18)**

As a pastor, one of the questions I have been asked from time to time is:

"What about the poor native in Africa or the Aborigine in the outback of Australia who has never heard about Jesus Christ. Is it fair that God sends them to hell?"—the following section in Romans answers that question:

Romans 1:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

This is called *"natural"* or *"general"* revelation—which is God's disclosure of Himself in creation:

Psalms 19:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ The heavens [universe] declare the glory of God; And the firmament [sky] shows His handiwork. ² Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³ *There is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard.

As we stated last time, a *revelation* is something that has been made known to us by God—something we could not know apart from God revealing it to us because it's knowledge that comes from another dimension—from the spiritual dimension.

Theologians have divided revelations from God into 2 categories: 1) Natural; and 2) Special.

- *Natural* (or general) revelation is God's revelation of Himself in creation (Psalm 19:1-6).
- *Special* (or specific) revelation is God's revelation of Himself in Scripture.

Natural revelation gives us knowledge about God in general (He exists, He is powerful, He loves beauty and color because we see it everywhere in His creation etc.).

Whereas with *special* revelation God gets 'up-close and personal' with us by telling us His name, personal information about Himself—what He loves, what He hates, how we can know Him personally and live with Him in His Kingdom eternally, and so on.

These are the things that *natural* revelation (things found in creation) can't tell us about Him because natural revelation isn't specific but only provides general information about God.

Here in Romans 1:19-20 Paul isn't dealing with *special* revelation—he's talking about natural revelation.

He is telling us that although natural revelation is incomplete in its revelation of God—it nevertheless is such a clear revelation of His *existence* that anyone who looks at the creation and rejects the existence of God is without excuse and He will hold them personally accountable on the Day of Judgment.

Romans 1:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them...

The word “**known**” (verse 19) in the Greek is “*gnostos*”—which means, “*What is knowable about God.*”

In other words, God only holds mankind responsible for knowing and acting upon that which can be known about Him from the creation (the outside revelation of the creation, and the inside revelation of the conscience—more on that in chapter 2).

The Bible goes on to tell us that if we are faithful to *that* light—God will give us ‘more light’ (more spiritual truth) enough to be saved (which could include pressing your heart to pick up a Bible and start reading it, turning on the radio or TV and hearing the gospel being preached, someone giving you a Bible tract—or even God giving you a vision, a dream, or a visit from an angel etc.).

Getting back to natural revelation—the very first thing creation reveals to us about God is that—He exists (which is where our faith must begin):

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, [that He exists] and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

I think it's interesting that the Bible doesn't start out by trying to prove or defend the existence of God—but instead simply starts out with a statement that *assumes* His existence—“**In the beginning God...**”

Romans 1:19–20 (NLT)

¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

Apparently, God didn't think it was necessary to prove His existence since the creation itself testifies to the existence of God—but how exactly?

Let me give you 3 reasons or proofs or arguments from creation that proves the existence of God.

These are taken from Norm Geisler's series "*12 Points that Prove Christianity is True*"—

- I) **The Cosmological Reason;**
- II) **The Teleological Reason;**
- III) **The Moral Reason**

I. The Cosmological Reason

(Cosmology is a study of the universe)

A. Everything that had a beginning had a cause.

Now the question is—did the physical universe have a beginning?

I ask that question because for many years scientists maintained the belief that the universe was *eternal* and therefore had no beginning which meant—it didn't need a cause.

However, as their understanding of the universe increased through the use of more powerful telescopes, they realized that the universe is growing old and wearing out—energy is being used up, stars are dying—the universe is running down and moving towards an end—in fact, now scientists talk about its eventual 'heat death'.

They use the term '*heat death*' to describe a time in the future (billions of years from now they believe) when the universe will eventually reach a uniform temperature (planets, stars) which they believe will be around absolute zero and therefore will have no more heat to produce energy to accomplish any useful work.

In other words, the universe is growing old, it's wearing out and will eventually die—even as God said in His Word:

Psalms 102:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

²⁶ They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment...

This is the greatest argument from science that proves the universe had a beginning—the immutable law that scientists refer to as: The second law of thermodynamics.

The first law of thermodynamics says that the amount of actual energy in the universe remains constant—the second law says the amount of usable energy is decreasing—or as scientists tell us—in a closed isolated system (which evolutionists believe the universe is), the amount of usable energy decreases.

Things are running down, wearing out, rusting, going from order to disorder—it's called entropy. The universe is running down which means it isn't eternal as scientists once thought—its usable energy is being depleted.

Robert Jastrow, the great agnostic, and founder of the Goddard Institute for Space Research and noted astrophysicist said, *"Once hydrogen has been burned within a star and converted to heavier elements it can never be restored to its original state. Minute by minute, year by year as hydrogen is used up by the stars the supply of this element in the universe grows smaller."*

This is one of the most firmly established of all scientific laws—there are no known exceptions to the second law of thermodynamics—that in a closed system it always runs down and burns up its usable energy. The idea behind a closed system like the universe is that—nothing from outside the universe is replenishing the energy that is being used up.

(**LISTEN:** Illustration of the gas tank on a car.)

So, the universe is a closed system and it's burning up its usable fuel bringing it to an end. But here's the problem—since scientists have come to realize the universe is going to have an end, that means—it had to have a beginning! If the universe had a beginning it had to have a cause that brought it into existence—it's called the principle of causality.

Everything that exists that is going to have an end had to have a beginning—and everything that had a beginning had to have a beginning cause—because nothing can't produce something.

Even David Hume, the most ardent skeptic that ever lived agreed with this—*"I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause."*

Norm Geisler, *"The principle of causality is the fundamental principle behind all science and all rational thought; only a fool would deny it."*

B. The universe had a beginning—therefore, the universe had a cause.

Look, either the first verse in the Bible is true—**"In the beginning God (the divine Cause) created everything"** or else we are left with the absurd premise which evolution is built upon—that in the beginning: *"Everything came from nothing all by itself."*

Now when scientists realized the universe was going to have an end (which again meant it had to have a beginning)—they had to come up with another explanation for the existence of the universe since they couldn't any longer claim it was eternal (that it always existed and never had a beginning).

Since they now had evidence that the universe had a beginning—that meant it had to have a beginning cause! Of course, they rejected God as the cause, which meant they had to invent another cause—so they came up with—the Big Bang Theory!

Isaac Asimov, an atheist, gave this explanation for the beginning of the universe:

"There was a state of nothingness once and then 'Bang' there was something... when you have nothing you have 2 possibilities—either it can remain nothing or it can become something—guess what—it became something!"

That is the best explanation the evolutionist can come up with for the origin of the universe.

This led someone to say with tongue in cheek—"If that's true, I wonder how long it would take for an empty garage to produce a Cadillac!?"

But Asimov is not alone, British scientist and atheist, Anthony Kinney said,

"According to the Big Bang Theory, the whole matter of the universe began to exist at a particular time in the remote past. A proponent of such a theory, at least if he's an atheist, must believe that the matter of the universe came from nothing and by nothing."

So, for the atheist, *"Nobody times nothing equals everything."*

Quoting again from Robert Jastrow,

"Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the universe... Consider the enormity of the problem: Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks what cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? Science cannot answer these questions."

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock—he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been there for centuries." [Yea, sitting there reading the Book of Genesis!]

Alright, the next argument after the **Cosmological Argument** for the existence of God is—

II. The Teleological Argument

This is basically the argument from design.

The teleological argument argues that everything in the natural realm that demonstrates design had to have a *designer* (and therefore a *Maker* or a *Creator*).

God made us smart enough to know that you can't have a painting without a painter; a sculpture without a sculptor; a building without a builder—even so you can't have creation without a Creator!

This is just simple logic and common sense that everything that demonstrates design had to have a *designer*.

The only thing we need to determine is—does the universe in general and life in particular demonstrate design?

A. Life demonstrates complex design

The more science looks at life—the more complex they realize it is.

The body, for example, is made up of trillions of cells. In just one of those cells (one out of trillions), the amount of genetic information has been estimated to fill at least one thousand books of 500 pages each.

➤ *Where did all this digitally coded genetic information come from?*

The evolutionist says it evolved—but that information is the ‘operating system’ of the cell.

The operating system of a computer has to be installed first before that computer can function. You can build a computer and leave it sit for a billion years and it will never ‘evolve’ the operating system necessary to run it.

The same is true with the cells of all living things—especially human beings.

Do you realize that the human brain is more complex than a 747 airplane?

A 747 is made up of six million components—can you imagine a 747 resulting from a tornado blowing thru a junk yard and leaving behind a fully formed, fully functioning 747 jumbo jet?

(That was the basic premise behind James Perloff’s book, “Tornado in a Junkyard: The Relentless Myth of Darwinism” published in 1999)

But this is what evolutionists would have you believe about the complexity of life on the earth—that it all came about thru natural processes without any divine intervention. **Yet you can’t have design without a designer—and everywhere we look on the earth there is evidence of design—everywhere!**

To look at all of this complex design and ascribe it to chance and accident (naturalism)—is absurd and man’s obvious attempt at suppressing the truth of God to deny His existence!

Dr. Geisler gives this illustration,

“Let’s say you’re on the beach and you look up into the sky and you see—‘Drink Coca Cola.’ What do you assume? Unusual cloud formation or that some intelligent being put the message there? Even atheists assume the latter, because that little message—‘Drink Coca Cola’ took an intelligent being to put it together and natural elements (wind, rain, and storm) never produce—‘Drink Coca Cola’ in the sky.

Or you get up tomorrow and the alphabet cereal is spilled all over the table and right in the middle it says—‘Take out the garbage-mom’ What do you assume? An earthquake knocked over the cereal? The wind blew on it and arranged the letters?

Natural forces will never produce—‘Take out the garbage-mom’ when you spill the alphabet cereal on the table—only intelligent beings can give it—‘specified complexity’ which is the technical scientific term.”

The difference between natural forces producing random results and specified complexity—is the difference between the Grand Canyon and Mt. Rushmore.

The problem with many scientists is that they refuse to acknowledge the specified complexity in nature that points to the Creator!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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