

18. The Book of Romans 1:21-25-Part 2

Paul's Epistle to the Romans
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(5-31-23)

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In our study of the Book of Romans, we find ourselves in a section where Paul (acting as a prosecuting attorney) wants to show that the whole world apart from Christ stands condemned before God.

The theme of the book of Romans is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1:16)—and yet Paul knows that before a person will see their need for a Savior—they must first be made to see themselves as sinners. So, he starts in verse 18 to prove that the pagan is condemned before God—before moving to the moralist and then finally to the religionist.

We are currently in the section in Romans Chapter 1 where Paul is proving that the natural man (the unbeliever/pagan) is condemned by God.

Romans 1:18–25 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 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, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, 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. ²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

There is a lot here to unpack, and since we've already looked at verses 18 through 20 in depth—let's focus our attention on verses 21 through 25.

Verse 21 starts with the word '**because**' which means it's continuing the thought from the previous verse (verse 20)—which in context is Paul indicting the pagan Greco-Roman world for rejecting the existence of the true and living God who has clearly revealed Himself through the creation (i.e., 'natural revelation').

The Bible says that '*God is light*' (1 John 1:5).

John opened his gospel by telling us that Jesus Christ (God the Son), was the Light of God who came into a world of darkness—and the darkness could not extinguish that light. (John 1:5)

In the Scriptures "*light*" and "*darkness*" are used quite often as metaphors—

- "**Light**" is often used in the Scriptures to represent—*spiritual truth, holiness, moral purity and obedience toward God.*

- **“Darkness”** is often used in the Scriptures to represent—*spiritual error, evil, moral impurity and rebellion against God.*

John 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² [Jesus]...“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

Jesus is the **“Light”** of God Who came into a world of darkness (Satan’s lies, paganism, and moral perversions) to light fallen man’s way back to God—even as John introduced Him to begin his gospel:

John 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ [Jesus]...**was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**

When a person rejects the true God and the light of His Word (His truth)—they open themselves up to spiritual darkness (spiritual error, moral impurity—and ultimately paganism).

Jesus came into a world of darkness as the Light of God (the Truth) which alone can save people—but only if they “embrace” the Truth (believe in and receive Jesus as their Savior).

Romans 1:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ **because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts** [they embraced empty, worthless ideologies or ‘belief systems’], **and their foolish hearts were darkened** [no longer able to comprehend truth]. ²² **Professing to be wise** [doctors, scientists, professors etc.], **they became fools** [Greek is the word we get the English word ‘moron’ from], 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.**

In other words, when people reject the God of the Bible (spiritual Light)—the darkness of demonic spiritual deception takes hold of their heart and they become morons!

It’s always amazed me the stupid, moronic things people will believe in and worship when they reject the God of the Bible and His truth! It is the height of foolishness for a person to look at the creation and instead of worshipping the Creator—worship the creation as God.

In other words, they worship animals, birds, reptiles—and everything in the natural world.

This worship takes on numerous forms—*polytheism, pantheism, animism*, as well as *monotheism*.

- **Polytheism** is the worship of many gods (the Hindus worship 330 million gods).
- **Pantheism** is the belief that everything in the natural world is God (pantheism means ‘all is God’)—that God is actually an impersonal ‘force’ that fills everything, and binds everything (man, animals, birds, rocks etc.) together into one divine collective.
- **Animism** is the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence—and so animals, plants, rocks, rivers, sacred places, weather systems—all have a spiritual essence and are *animated* and alive.

However, I believe that the most common form of pagan worship among fallen mankind is the worship of himself as God—and this ultimately gets into our study in Romans:

Romans 1:22–25 (NKJV)

²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man [*first on the list and dominant*]*—*and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ²⁴ **Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness** [the Greek is a word that means ‘sexual filth, moral perversion, depravity’], **in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,** ²⁵ **who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

Let’s turn to John 8 which actually dovetails with Romans 1:23-25. In John 8, Jesus and the Pharisees have gotten into a highly explosive confrontation with each other regarding spiritual truth.

Jesus, who *is* the Truth, came into the world (a world of lies and spiritual deception) to declare God’s truth—whereas the Pharisees had embraced Satan’s lies (religion):

John 8:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ **You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources** [the NIV—“he speaks his native language”], **for he is a liar and the father of it.**

When Jesus said that Satan was the ‘**father of lies**’—I don’t believe He was claiming that Satan was the source of every lie ever spoken upon the earth. Remember, the context is false doctrine—the lies Satan has gotten the human race to believe that will send them to hell!

When the Lord Jesus Christ talked about Satan being the ‘father of lies’—I believe He had in mind one particular lie that has given birth to many different lies (false doctrines/belief systems).

- This one lie is referenced in Romans 1:25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:11 as “**the lie**”—not “a lie” as in one of many, but “**the lie**”—as in the ‘mother of lies!’

The world is full of lies, that’s true—but there is one lie that is the ‘mother’ of all spiritual lies that the father of lies introduced into the human race in the Garden of Eden. It’s the lie that, before it’s all over, will cause the spiritual deaths of billions and billions of people in hell.

It’s a lie that has been growing and spreading like a poisonous fruit since the Garden of Eden and has now reached its ‘full ripeness’ in these last days and will soon be veraciously consumed by most of the people of this world during the Tribulation Period.

1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times [‘last days’] some will depart from the faith [*N.T. doctrine*], giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Did you know that demons have doctrines (teachings)? God’s Word is telling us that—demons are teachers!

These doctrines are what occultists and New Agers have called the ‘Cosmic Gospel.’

Dave Hunt—

“It’s the same message people have heard from extra-terrestrials (close encounters of the third kind), in séances, while on LSD trips (which the Bible calls sorcery and forbids), in deep yoga trances, while practicing

transcendental meditation, out of Ouija boards, through mediums that are in contact with the spirit realm. It's a message that has flooded into our world (especially in these last days) from dozens of different directions—proclaiming the same thing over and over again with amazing consistency."

This main lie is made up of four tenets or doctrines that together they make up 'the lie' that Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden.

I believe that the very lie that caused the human race to fall in the beginning—is going to be the ultimate lie (spiritual deception) that Satan is going to use against the human race to bring it down in the end.

**I believe that this very lie that Satan introduced into the human race in the Garden of Eden—
is the lie he will use to deceive the world during the Tribulation Period.**

The Bible tells us that at the beginning of the Tribulation Period (the last 7-years of human history before Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom) a world leader will arise and unite the world in a one world government—we call this leader the *Antichrist*. The Bible also tells us that he will have a cohort called the *False Prophet* who will unite the world in a one world religion.

Together they will deceive the whole world, with the exception of those who will come to Christ during the Tribulation Period.

Paul the Apostle said that the "*mystery of iniquity*" is already at work—in other words, Satan is already preparing the world to receive this LIE—and has been for six-thousand years!

The battle between God's truth and Satan's lie goes back to the beginning of time—all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

C.S Lewis traced all major religions and cults back to two primary sources—Judeo-Christianity (God's truth) and Hinduism (Satan's lie)—both of which started in the Garden of Eden.

Let's go back to Genesis 3 and look at the lie that Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden—

Genesis 3:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ "but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

This lie that Satan told Eve was made up of 4 different false doctrines.

You can find these 4 doctrines, in part or in total, in many false religions, cults, the occult and in many humanistic teachings on the face of the earth—like PMA (Positive Mental Attitude).

These 4 basic doctrines that make up Satan's lie are:

1. **God is not personal but an impersonal force that fills the universe and everything and everyone in it.**

When Satan came to Eve one of the things he subtly planted into her mind was the concept that—the Person she had come to know as God was not God because of *who He was*, but was God because of *what He knew*—“***you will be like God knowing*”(verse 5)**

In other words, He had learned (gained knowledge) on how to tap into a force that made Him God and now He was trying to keep her from understanding what this ‘God-force’ was because He did not want her to find the same divinity that He had found.

So here you have **the first part of the lie**—God is not personal but is an impersonal force that fills the universe and flows through everything and everyone in it (pantheism).

Of course, that was the main message that was being preached through the Star Wars movies—“*May the Force be with you.*”

George Lucas fancied himself as the ‘Billy Graham’ of the force. Of course, a force (like electricity) is impersonal and amoral and isn’t going to hassle you with moral standards.

If God is a *force*—then that means that I am not held to any *personal* God’s standard of right and wrong.

Those who believe this doctrine don’t believe in moral absolutes (truth is relative they believe) because the God-force is in you and so you only need to ‘*look within*’ to find your ‘*truth*’ and what’s right and wrong for *you*.

2. **The second element of the lie that Satan told Eve was that there is no ultimate death.**

When Satan told Eve, “***You will not surely die***” he was saying to her, “*Eve there is no penalty for disobeying God (no judgment)—no death (ultimately speaking).*”

God told them in the day they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ‘*they would surely die*’ (*Genesis 2:17*)—but Satan told Eve God lied about the consequences of disobeying Him—there is no death. This became the basis for the doctrine of *reincarnation*.

Reincarnation is the process of ‘spiritual evolution’ whereby our spirit keeps being reincarnated (recycled) upon the earth into a new body in the hope that we will live a more moral, spiritually enlightened life each time until we finally evolve to godhood.

You see, if we are all part of the ‘God-force’—the ‘God-force’ is eternal!

So, if my body dies my spirit never dies because it’s part of the eternal God-force—it just keeps getting ‘recycled’ into a new body, in other words—there is no ultimate death!

We also saw this also being taught in those Star Wars movies which promoted and taught New Age doctrine (Westernized Hinduism).

Remember when Obi-Wan Kenobi was struck down by Darth Vader how he didn’t stop existing—he continued to communicate with Luke Skywalker as a disembodied spirit from out on the astral plane.

This is one of the most damning and destructive doctrines of demons ever fed the human race—that there is no *ultimate* death, that reincarnation keeps giving a person another chance to get things right on the earth.

That's what Hinduism and the New Age believes and teaches—that when we die our spirit simply moves out onto the astral plane where we wait for a new body to be reincarnated into.

That is why Mormon's (who embrace this teaching) consider it a great sin not to have a lot of children—all these disembodied spirits are waiting for new bodies to be reincarnated into. (Explain)

Satan uses this teaching to deceive those who embrace it into the false hope that if they blow it in this life—it's no big deal—there's always going to be another opportunity to 'redeem' themselves in the next life.

But the Word of God clearly teaches that *"...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). However, reincarnation says, *"There is no judgment after death, you just keep getting another chance to come back to the earth and do better next time."*

Of course, that's the big problem with the doctrine of reincarnation—it takes away the consequences of sin (judgment/hell) and keeps people from experiencing what the Bible calls, *"the fear of the Lord"*—which is the *"beginning of wisdom"*. (Proverbs 9:10)

When the fear of coming judgment is removed from a society, the inevitable result is an explosion of sin rooted in self-love—just as we're seeing today.

Paul the apostle warned us of this very thing—he prophesied, *"In the last days perilous times will come...men will be lovers of self, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God..."* (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Now, reincarnation works in conjunction with '*karma*' which is the spiritual law of *"cause and effect"*. Karma doesn't solve the problem of sin (as does the atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross)—in fact, it perpetuates the problem of sin!

Karma is one of the cruelest jokes the devil ever played on the human race—because it robs mankind of some of the most basic, beautiful and important attributes that God has given to it—compassion, mercy and kindness toward his fellowman.

As a true Hindu if you see a person who is starving, impoverished, and begging by the side of the road—you can't go over and help him because he is working off the bad karma from his past life. Yet Hindus *will* sometimes help others for no other reason than—they are trying to work off their own bad karma!

Most of the charities, hospitals, and orphanages in the world (by far)—have been established by Christians or at least by organizations that have a Christian worldview.

➤ *Why is that?*

It's because of the love of God which He has placed in our hearts as His children.

It's because our God, the God of the Bible—is a loving, kind, gracious, giving, generous and merciful God!

Atheists don't establish these institutions, Muslims don't establish them either, nor do Hindus—it's Christians that reach out to the poor, sick and orphaned people of this world.

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.

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