

# The Unmovable Image of the Almighty

Tim Dubberly, February 6, 2005

Text: Romans 1:18-32

## Introduction:

The world we live in seems to be focused on giving credit for creation to an electrical charge on a stagnant pond to produce the creation of man. Then it wills to accept evolution to get us to where we are today. It seems the world is trying to explain away the existence of God. However, that is impossible.

Paul was writing to the church at Rome to convey a message concerning creation and how God's handiwork can be clearly seen all around us. One has only to look at the world around them to understand that there had to be a master designer. Creation screams out God's eternal power and Godhead, and there is no excuse for one not to accept it.

■ At a summer religious camp for children one of the counselors was leading a discussion on the purpose God had for everything He created. They began to find good reasons for clouds and trees and rocks and rivers and animals and just about everything else in nature. Finally, one of the children said, "If God had a good purpose for everything, then why did He create poison ivy?" The discussion leader gulped and, as he struggled with the question, one of the other children came to his rescue, saying, "The reason God made poison ivy is because He wanted us to know there are certain things we should keep our cotton-pickin' hands off."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 254.

The message of Paul seems to fit our nation today. Here are a few of the "accusations" Paul made concerning the religious leaders of that day.

I. Paul accused them of knowing God but not glorifying Him (21).

A. He said they were unthankful, which deals with the attitude of the heart.

- These were those to whom God had revealed Himself and they gave His glory to the work of their own hands.
- Their attitude affected their altitude.

■ Thankfulness leaves no room for discouragement. I once read a legend of a man who found the barn where Satan kept his seeds ready to be sown in the human heart, and on finding the seeds of discouragement more numerous than others, he learned that those seeds could be made to grow almost anywhere. When Satan was questioned, he reluctantly admitted that there was one place in which he could never get them to thrive. "And where is that?" asked the man. Satan replied sadly, "In the heart of a grateful man."

V. Norskov Olsen, President, Loma Linda University

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 262.

B. Paul claimed that their thoughts were futile.

- They work hard to justify their lives in God's eyes.
- They gave their imagination over to satan who convinced them they were o.k.

C. Their hearts were darkened.

- Darkness is the absence of light.
- They had the look, moves, and ministry, but they did not have God or His anointing upon their lives.

II. Paul accused them of professing to be wise when they were fools (22-24).

A. Their worship was given to idols.

- They created images of everything including themselves.
- They wanted a tangible, controllable, and limited god of wood and stone over the almighty, mysterious, unfailable, and all-powerful Jehovah.

■ The Christian Communications Laboratory relates the story of a small Midwestern weekly paper which ran a story saying, "We are pleased to announce that the cyclone which blew away the Methodist church last Friday did no real damage to the town." Kind of scary! Perhaps our failure today is not that we kill the King's Son or practice violence and bloodshed so much as being irrelevant and without impact.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 448.

B. They changed God's glory.

- They wanted to humanize God and bring Him down to be equal with them.
- God turned them loose and gave them over to uncleanness.

C. They dishonored their bodies.

- Their lust burned in their heart until they had no restrictions.
- Their lust produced the vile passions that turned them away from even that which was natural.

III. Paul also accused them of worshipping the creature instead of the creator (25-27).

A. They changed the truth of God for a lie.

- They rejected His word and account for creation.
- They chose to believe a lie even when creation was staring them in the face.

B. They began to serve the creature and rejected the Creator.

- The attention, praise, and desire was given to the creature.
- Like many worshippers today, they want to be satisfied and do not care if God is satisfied.

C. They even went against nature in their lusts.

- Paul reveals that it is unnatural for a man to lust after a man and a woman for a woman sexually.
- Men and women have a natural use and that is to marry and procreate and refill the earth.

■ If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

C. S. Lewis

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 175.

IV. Lastly, he accused them of trying to erase God from their knowledge (28-32).

A. He pointed out that they were filled with the desire of hell.

- God gave up on them again and allowed them to be filled with a wicked mind.
- Their focus in life was to satisfy the unrestricted desire of their flesh.
- Paul revealed that they were filled with unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, and they overflowed with envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness, and were whisperers, backbiters, and haters of God.

B. They knew, but did not fear, the righteous judge.

- They became inventors of evil who were full of violence, pride, boasting, and they became unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful.
- They revealed no respect for the goodness of God and were disobedient to parents, undiscerning and untrustworthy.

C. They not only approved of these practices but they taught them.

- They knew the penalty for this lifestyle was death, but they approved of it and practiced.
- They taught it and justified it in the eyes of others to lead them into the same damnation.

Conclusion:

Paul realized that the religious leaders of that day did not have an intimate relationship with Jehovah. He could see the decay of morality and natural human normalcy. Paul was calling their attention to the image of the almighty God that they should be seeing in creation.

Our nation is facing many of these accusations, for we see men refusing to glorify God while they take credit for everything themselves. They reveal their foolishness while they boast their wisdom by trying to dethrone God. We see an exodus of people who now worship the creature instead of the Creator and are unrestricted in their desires. Truly there is a mass of people who are trying to erase God from the mind of humanity.

We look at our churches and they seem to be good, strong, healthy, one minute and then the next they seem to be falling apart. The problem is in the roots of that church.

■ Working in my garden, I was admiring the large, green, healthy-looking squash plant. The stems appeared to be strong, and the leaves were large. A few days later I noticed that the plant was terribly wilted, and within a couple of days the squash plant was completely dead. Pulling up the plant and examining its roots, I discovered that a bore worm, which could not be seen from the outside, had eaten the heart out of the stem of the plant. Hidden sin, like the bore worm, can eat away the heart of one's Christian experience and leave him spiritually dead.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 455.

We are the light of the world, and we can destroy the ignorance of darkness. We have the true wisdom, and we have the power to tear down the spiritual strongholds of Satan. We know the Creator, and our preaching and practice of living should stand as an emblem of what is normal and sane. While the world tries to erase God from their mind we need to go into the highways and hedges until all hear, understand, and realize that Jesus is still Lord, and He is the soon coming King who will bring the world to a final judgment.

My Challenge:

- Present your lives to God today so He can receive the glory from it.
- Ask Him to help you today to be the light that would destroy the darkness in this world.
- Ask Him to help you to increase in wisdom, boldness, and ability to stir up the knowledge of God.