

Romans 31

Abandoned by God Part 01

Romans 1:24-32, *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour 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.²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

Men are wicked. They are evil. They are creatures utterly filled with sinfulness. They are characterized as ungodly and unrighteous.

No matter how well a society begins, it always descends to the same pit of immoral behaviour and subsequent judgment of God that is categorically presented to us in Romans chapter 1.

Like a baby, the beginnings may be lovely and beautiful, but the end is ugly. Everything starts well but the vileness of man's nature plunges him into the pit of sin under the condemnation of God with nothing but a prospect of eternal hell.

Man is evil. His nature is bent on sin and given his prerogatives he will inevitably end up in the morass of immorality.

Why?

Why has man always inevitably to sink to such a sad condition?

How is it that that infant life, so lovely, so precious, so soft, so innocent, will descend to the corrupted adulthood that inevitably awaits the human race.

The answer because God gave them up.

Three times that is said in these verses. Basically, it means that man is abandoned by God. God has abandoned man.

Because of the Fall and the depravity of man, his innate sinfulness, as we shall see in a moment, man has no capacity to restrain his sinfulness. It is impossible for him to restrain his sinfulness.

He cannot capture it.

He cannot harness it.

He cannot do good.

He cannot keep from doing evil.

There is none, says Romans 3, that doeth good, no not one. They do evil continually.

Even the religious among men, the seemingly self-righteous among men may be committing the most heinous sin of all, which is self-righteousness.

Man cannot restrain evil, and he will inevitably do what is wrong. There is only one force in the entire universe that can restrain evil and that is God.

The problem with man is that God is not restraining him. God has abandoned him. God has given him up!

What that really means is that God no longer restrains man. God has abandoned man.

That is the story of the human race and it all began in the Garden.

V 24, "Wherefore God also gave them up."

V 26, "For this because God gave them up."

V 28, "And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind."

2 Timothy 3:13, *But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

Almost as if God just continues to let go of man and man continues to go his own way. In the process man compounds sin upon sin, which escalates his evil, until ultimately you end up in the Tribulation.

In the Tribulation period the restrainer is ben taken off.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7, *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

You compound that with the last bit of restraint being taken off man, with centuries of escalating sinfulness, and you have the Tribulation.

Psalm 81:11-12, *“But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. ¹² So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.*

Israel would not listen to God. So, God gave them up!

Hosea 4:17, *“Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.*

God gives up on the northern kingdom. God gives up on his wayward people who will have none of Him.

Matthew 15:14, *Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”*

Our Lord talks about the rulers of Israel, most specifically the Pharisees. Let them alone. Let them go. The restraints are off.

God is not restraining him, and he has no capacity to restrain himself.

Acts 7:37-42, *“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’*

³⁸ *“This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles³⁷ to give to us, ³⁹ whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ ⁴¹ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴² Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:*

They did not want the leadership of Moses, who represented God.

Gave them up, let them go. That was the choice they made, and He let them go.

Acts 14:16, *who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.*

Whether we are talking about all nations or Israel, there is a point at which God lets them go. God gives them up.

How did this ever happen?

How did God ever get to the point where He gave people up, where He just turned them over, let them go?

What is it that brings God to such a place where He gets so angry, so full of wrath that He lets people go, that He just takes off the restraint?

V 16, Paul is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He unfolds the gospel the salvation for everyone that believes.

V 18, the wrath of God has been revealed.

God is angry. He is so angry that He gives men up. He lets them go, takes off the restraints. Why?

V 18, they have the revelation of truth.

V 19, God has made it manifest.

V 20, manifest through the creation of the world so that men without excuse.

V 21, rejection of God.

V 22, Rejection led them into rationalisation.

V 23, Rationalisation leads to Religion.

- Man has revelation,
- followed by rejection,
- followed by rationalization,
- His empty imaginations tell him that he is wise, and
- Man makes his own religion.

Man starts worshiping all the created things and violating the first commandment God gave.

At this juncture, God lets men go.

Why?

Because they have gone so far away from Him.

Hosea 4:17, *“Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.*

God says that, You have forsaken Me and I forsake you.

The human race is not on an ascent to God, the human race is on a descent from God.

Which leads to the results.

V 24, When God gives men up, they sink into reprobation that is almost beyond description. Because when the restraints are off.

How is God's wrath being revealed?

It is being revealed in His giving men up. For when He gives them up to their sinfulness, that in itself is the working of His wrath.

He could restrain men, but He is so angry with their apostasy that He lets them go, and the consequence of their own sin is the outworking of His wrath.

Men today who live their own life in sin are seeing the wrath of God unfolding through the result of their own sinfulness.

The terrible disasters that come into people's lives because of their incessant sinfulness is the outworking of the present expression of the wrath of God.

Judges 10:13, *Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.*

You abandon Me, I abandon you.

2 Chronicles 15:1-2, *Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. ² And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.*

2 Chronicles 24:20, *Then the Spirit of God ^[a]came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.'* "

You forsook Him, He forsakes you.

Divide the text into three parts. Each of the three is introduced by the statement, "God gave them up."

The first marks, now think with me, the essence of sin.

The second marks the expression of sin.

The third marks the extent of sin.

Each begins with the same Greek verb paradidōmi, or paradidōmi, which means "to give up."

God just took His hands off, pulled the restraints back and just let them go in their sin, and sin brings its own consequence.

One of the problems in our society is that we are working furiously to remove the consequence of sin. All the medicines they have invented to stop venereal disease when venereal disease is God's way of stopping immorality. As soon as you can deal with venereal disease you can free up everybody to do whatever they want. There is a sense in which God just lets men go, takes away His restraints, gives them their freedom, and they go on in their sins and reap the results.

Without revealing fire from heaven, God pours out His wrath on a day-to-day basis as He abandons men to the destructiveness of their own compounded sin.

We have a world of liars, cheaters, thieves, robbers, gossipers, disobedient, loveless, and proud boasters, because God let them go. There is no way to restrain that.

Though sin is a result of God's wrath, God does not make men sin. He just abandons them to their own perversity.

God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, cannot look upon iniquity. God is always good and right and true. God does not sin and tempts.

But God will abandon men to their own perversity as a part of His judgment. He loosens the restraints and man's depraved desire takes over.

For a long time, it seemed as though the restraints were there, and things were different. In the last 50 years it just seems that God has just taken them off and we are reaping all the results.

God lets men go to the consequence of their sin and all the while endeavours to reach them with the message of His salvation.

The gospel begins with the fact that God let men go. But it is these very men, the world of people like you and I, that He has abandoned to their sinfulness, that He calls back later in Romans in the redemptive invitation of the gospel.

2 Peter 3:9, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward ^[c]us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

1 Corinthians chapter 6 you have a list that is almost identical to Romans chapter 1.

1 Corinthians 6:11, *And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

God has abandoned man, yet He calls man back to Himself. The abandonment is from that pristine knowledge where men knew God and ran from God, and now God runs and calls them back.

V 24, *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves,*

The word "wherefore" indicates the judgment of God's wrath finding its reason in the preceding verses. God gave them up because they had revelation, they turned it to rejection, then rationalization and finally in their idolatry, false religion.

God gave them up to uncleanness/ impurity.

The essence of man's sinfulness. Man is on the inside impure.

It is an internal impurity. Man is given over to a rottenness on the inside.

The nature of man or the heart of man, the internal part. The problem with man is that inside down deep he is a rotten, vile sinner, uncleanness, and impurity.

The thought of the phrase, "through the lusts of their own hearts."

"Their own hearts" emphasizes that they are self-willed. Their own heart, do what you want, do your own thing, do whatever you feel like doing, let your lust tell you what to do.

Because their hearts are unclean, out of it comes filth.

Proverbs 4:23, *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

Jeremiah 17:9, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

When God gives men up He gives them up to uncleanness, which comes out of their own insides.

"Heart" means the thinking processes, the will, internal character.

Man abandoned by God has only to do what his heart tells him to do, and his heart is corrupt. He has no other norms, no other standards, no other principles than his own desires.

Those desires come out of a perverted heart turned over to its own devices and utterly sinful. They eventually manifest themselves in physical perversion.

Man is basically rotten.

Romans 3:10, *"There's none righteous, no not one."*

How many?

Not one!

Romans 3:11-18, *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." ¹³ "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; ¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways; ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

Romans 3:23, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Man is basically vile. The problem is because his basic nature comes from within him, and within him is rottenness.

Mark 7:21-23, *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

Proverbs 10:20, *The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; The heart of the wicked is worth little.*

It has no worth because it has no good that it can produce.

Isaiah 44:20, *He feeds on ashes; A deceived heart has turned him aside; And he cannot deliver his soul, Nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"*

Ezekiel 14:3, *"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?"*

They cause themselves to fall because they are so filled with evil. Evil-perverted desires mark men.

V24, *"They dishonour their bodies between themselves."*

This gives meaning to the lust of the heart. You would not know what the lust of the heart was unless you had a phrase like this to show you how it works itself out.

They do not know how to handle their bodies. They pervert God's intended use for the body. They turn to fornication, sexual activities, sexual deviations, sexual perversion, sexual promiscuity.

If there ever has been a society preoccupied with it, it is us. We are just like every other society that has ever been around, only some have covered it up better. In their freedom from God's truth, they turn to perversion and even inversion of the created order.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour,⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

If you are a believer, you ought to know how to control body.

Why?

Because the Spirit of God is there, and He can control those things.

We have an entire world of this. This society flaunts the body endlessly. We exploit the body.

We have turned the body into an instrument of lust.

'The one-night-stand kit,' manufactured by the Kit and Caboodle Company of Parkridge, New Jersey. The one-night-stand kit is a small packet designed for women to carry in their purses to use in the event they meet a man they have never known before and end up in his apartment and need certain utensils. In the one-night-stand kit are a toothbrush with toothpaste already built into it, a razor, a comb, a packet of, packet of shampoo, packet of mouthwash and a shower cap. 'Everything in the one-night-stand kit is totally disposable and portable,' said Marsha Hirsch, a partner in the manufacturing firm.

The one-night-stand kit is designed to make women 'feel free.'"

Free?

Incredible slavery!

That is the bondage of sin. There is a terrifying disregard for human dignity, for the honour of the body.

It comes from within, out of the heart, and manifests itself in a dishonouring of the body. They are unclean, they are lustful, they are perverse.

Why?

Because God let them go to the consequence of their own sinfulness. God is not about to judge nations God is judging them already.

Why?

V 25, "they exchanged the truth of God for the lie."

They had the truth of God written in their hearts, visible around them and they did not want it and they rejected it and they exchanged it for the lie. This means they exchanged the true God for false gods.

What is the lie?

The lie is that God is not God, that God does not have to be obeyed or honoured or glorified.

That is the lie that Satan has been pushing off since the Garden. They believed the lie that God is not God, God is not to be praised and honoured and glorified and obeyed. They believed the lie. It is not unusual that God is called "the truth."

Jeremiah 13:25-27, This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the Lord, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. ²⁶ Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face,

That your shame may appear. ²⁷ I have seen your adulteries And your lustful neighings, The lewdness of your harlotry, Your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! Will you still not be made clean?"

Their own idols made with their own hands in their own image and in that of animals and bugs and birds, expressions of their own evil desires, gods of their own liking and their own making, they worshiped rather than the true creator.

They worshiped and served and so, they deserved their punishment. Men deserve their punishment. They are without excuse.

The reason God gave them up to the essence of their evil hearts so that it would express itself in the corruption between their bodies was because they exchanged the true God for the lie.

They worshiped the idols and the things they love rather than the Creator.

Men today worship cars, they worship houses, they worship clothes, they worship their bodies, they worship women, they worship success, they worship money, they worship false gods in a religious environment. They have idols ad infinitum, ad nauseum, but not God, and that's why God gave them up. He gave them up to the essence of their evil hearts.