

# **ROMANS - #1B**

## **ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS**

### **LESSON TOPIC**

## **THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN**

### **SCRIPTURE TEXT: ROM. 1:18-28**

**MEMORY VERSE: Rom. 1:18.** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Godlessness rules in the human heart. The soul of man is innately evil. There is none good, no not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All our righteousness is as filthy rags. The heart of man is desperately wicked. We are not born after the will of God, but after the will of the flesh. The image of God in which Adam was originally created, was lost in his sin and we are no longer made in the image and likeness of God. We are made in the likeness of the corruptibility of our lusts and desires coming from our own flesh. Man is not “basically good”, but thoroughly evil. There is no intrinsic righteousness in the human soul; there is only absolute corruptibility and moral degeneracy. Perversion is the essence of the human heart which is, by nature, absent of any influence of divine grace and goodness. Immorality, corruptibility, unrighteousness, putrid wickedness, debauchery and lustful cravings are some of the base characteristics which are the only possible derivatives of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These constitute the seed by which every person of the human family is born.

This is not to say that a person born with these Characteristics cannot be influenced toward some elements of good by the process of parental care and education. However even these cannot override the inward propensity of these characteristics. That is why the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, is so essential. Through this grace, by faith, is the only remedy for man’s fallen nature. By way of the new birth, God imparts unto us a new nature; that of Christ, if it be so that we follow after his teachings. Neither Education, domestication, civilization, technology, affluence nor any other process of human development, regardless as to its societal value, are capable of changing the basic, inherent fallen nature of the human soul. It is altogether sinful within its own power and ability.

This is the message Paul begins with as he writes this epistle to the Roman Christians, who are surrounded on every side by a steadily deteriorating corruptibility, from which they themselves are delivered only by the grace of God. That is also the message for every Christian of every age.

That is what this lesson is about.

## DAILY THOUGHTS AND SCRIPTURES

### MONDAY. ROM. 1;18-23. MAN HAS CHANGED THE GLORY OF THE INCORRUPTIBLE GOD.

#### SCRIPTURE.

V18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world 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 that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23. And changed the glory of the un-corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.

#### COMMENTS.

God has demonstrated in every way possible that he is inexorably against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of every degree and source. He has shown his own righteousness in the creation of the world and every living creature in it, vividly demonstrating his eternal power, Godhead and undiminished holiness and purity.

But man refused to recognize God as sovereign of the universe and being incapable of discerning God's majesty, turned in their hearts to replace God by worshipping creatures of the earth instead of the creator of the earth. They did so under the presumption of being wise, but instead they were fools.

All of this harks back to the time of man's fall and has both followed and multiplied in its egregious corruptibility since that time. As Paul writes to the Roman Christians, he is well aware of the fact that the Roman world is fully pagan, that is, heathen. They worship gods of every conceivable sort, even manufacturing their own. Every household has their own altars set aside for their devotions to their many gods. Far from what might be thought, Rome is a very religious world. They had their supreme pontiff, their priests, vestal virgins, temples all over the empire, along with many occasions throughout the year devoted to religious rituals and ceremonies. And yet, when Paul visited Athens and observed the many devotions they adored, he found the inscription to the "UNKNOWN GOD".

Christianity was established in a deeply religious world, albeit, a world that had no interest in something called "Christianity". They only knew a god (s) which satisfied the lusts and passions of their own desires and fleshly cravings.

### TUESDAY. ROM. 1:24-25. GIVEN UP TO UNCLEANNES.

#### SCRIPTURE.

V24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. 24. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

#### COMMENTS.

“Wherefore” – that is, because of the former words – (V23, those who changed the glory of the incorruptible God to be represented by and even incarnate in, corruptible man or beasts of the field) because of them – God gave them up to uncleanness proceeding from the lusts of their hearts. This uncleanness was of such depth of depravity as to indulge them in gross and vile orgies desecrating the intended use of their own bodies. They changed the truth of God (the truth relating to who and what God is) into totally false representation. This they did by worshipping the “creature” (beasts and birds and creeping things) instead of the creator.

Paul, writing to Roman Christians, is aware that “Rome”, the seat of the Roman Empire, is the “capital” as it were, of a world of paganism; worshippers of gods of every form, except the true God. And this was not confined to Rome or to that era alone. Idolatry, the substitution of anything in the place of, before, or as a facsimile representation of, God himself, was as old as sin. It may be in a physical form or it may be in the form of ideas of the mind or lusts of the heart.

The point Paul is making is that when man turns to idols in any form or for any cause, God is totally intolerant of it. “Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts”. In other words, divine restraint against a plummeting flood-tide of irreversible evil, is removed and the result is an accelerating plunge into the abyss of wickedness, corruption and immorality. It sure sounds like our own society, doesn’t it?

#### WEDNESDAY. ROM. 1:26-27. “GIVEN UP TO VILE AFFECTIONS”.

#### SCRIPTURE.

V26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

#### COMMENTS.

When the heart of man, whether a single individual or an entire society, casts off God and godliness, ultimately God rejects and abandons them. To wit: Antedeluvians, Sodom and Gomorrah, various empires of heathenism, Israel, Romanism of the dark ages, along with countless individuals such as Ahab and Jezebel, and others, are all examples of being rejected of God because of their own wickedness. Reflecting on these, you cannot help but compare them to our own society and our free-fall into the deepest abyss of immorality which it is possible for a vile, corruptible heart and mind to plunge.

It is not enough to reflect on these verses and come away with a right understanding of the very nature of that which they describe as being the gross, vile, corruptible actions and practices which Paul is defining. It is also very important as to why they have now reached the lowest level of human corruption. It is not only because of their wild and lustful passions by which they have imagined and pursued such diabolical depravity. It is more so that they have rejected the truth of (about) God, and therefore God has removed all divine restraint, thus sending them spiraling, out of control, inevitably to the very dregs of rottenness and corruption. That is the meaning of statements in verses (24) "God gave them up to uncleanness"; (V26) "God gave them up to vile affections"; and (28) "God gave them over to a reprobate mind"."

Paul is describing the gross, vile and godless plunge into the cesspool of sexual perversions of every degree and description, into which man, because of his rejection of God, steps over the precipice of divine restraint into the abyss of corruption which has no bottom. These perversions include, but are not limited to the following: fornication, adultery, pornography, prostitution, pedophilia, child sexual molestation, homosexuality, lesbianism, live-ins and a myriad of associated immoralities. Indeed, the very fact that so much of these are publicly accepted behavior is proof that we, as a society, have drifted deep into the very realm which Paul is describing.

These verses specifically describe the despicable perversions of homosexuality and lesbianism. First he describes how women change their natural functions to that which is against nature. And likewise men, leave the natural relationship of women, and burn in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is grossly unseemly. Today's society, world-wide, is more and more accepting and supportive of same-sex life styles, even condemning those who do not sanction them. But Paul describes it as that lust and passion which comes about in response to a denial of God and all godliness, until he removes all restraint from the conscience and thus unbridled passion and lust sinks them into the oblivion of immorality.

#### THURSDAY. ROM. 1:26-27. "SEXUAL PERVERSION – THE MOTHER OF SINS"

##### SCRIPTURE

These are the same scriptures used for Wednesday. Please refer to them.

##### COMMENTS.

That is surely a title that would infuriate a large percentage of society. After all, it is our body and our business, it would be argued. The debate on this subject did not begin with this lesson and it surely will not end here. It has been classified as the oldest profession on earth (prostitution, promiscuous sex) and it is not going to run out of customers in today's society.

The wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah has been classified as the first homosexual society among men based on the events described in Gen. 19:4-11. That may well be a proper assessment. However, don't rule out the antedeluvians from being participants in this ungodly craft, since Gen. 6:5-13, describes them as being filled with "evil imaginations continually", and filled with violence and

corruption. Since their corruption and wickedness filled God with such disgust that he had ever created man, he purposed to destroy them. This is a very violent reaction that could only have been precipitated by wickedness that was most vile.

The nation of Israel is not at all free from plunging into the depths of the gross immoralities of sexual perversion. A study of the debauchery under King Manasseh will lead you to see the base and vile depths of sexual orgies which he set up as “religious practices”. His grandson, Josiah, destroyed all that his grandfather had set up in his cleansing of Judah and Jerusalem. You can add to Manasseh all that Ahab and Jezebel and others did and the picture you get is not just one of setting up some wood idol to worship in the place of God, but also a picture of immoral sexual orgies by which such vain gods were worshipped.

In the world of heathenism and paganism, perverted sexual practices were common place. Ancient Corinth was known as “the city of a 1000 prostitutes”. Rome had her “vestal virgins” and you can be sure they represented more than just keepers of the altar fires.

The Roman church introduced to the “Christian” world “celibacy and monasticism” in the communes of priests, nuns and popes. In spite of many instances of charity, sacrifice and good deeds, their history is saturated with page after page of diabolical sexual misconduct. The revelations of recent sexual abuse among the priesthood of the Roman church, only serves to emphasize centuries of cover up of such perversions. In many cases instead of being infuriated by the blatant, obnoxious and disgusting hypocrisy of such exposures, the hierarchy has tried to keep it hidden and only transferred the transgressors that were caught to a place where they could carry on the lustful sexual passions.

The rest of the “Christian” community cannot say we are clean either. The instances of churches, denominations, ministries and countless unknown individuals that have ruined their profession and trust and have reproached the pure name of Christ are legion. One half of church membership has viewed pornography and the instances of adulterous affairs are rampant. In many cases churches are brothels for supporting and encouraging same-sex marriages, homosexuality and lesbianism. God must be nauseated.

#### **FRIDAY. ROM. 1:28. WHAT IT ALL LEADS TO.**

##### **SCRIPTURE.**

**V28.** And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

##### **COMMENTS.**

“What it all leads to” is certainly an open-ended thought. There is no limit to the path of perverted sex and the wicked imaginations, moral decay and social immorality it pursues. Neither is there any end to “moral relativity” and its growing theme of tolerance and diversity, so loudly demanded by a society given over to that way of life. We are in a moral free-fall, with no hope of a safe landing.

Every segment of society is in a pandemic of sexual perversion. The only reason it is not addressed by the major sources capable of doing so, is that every realm of life is deeply, passionately involved in its practice. If you doubt this simply consider the following areas of society that are well documented in their passionate plunge into some area of sexual perversion. First there is Hollywood (need I say more), politics and government, television (perhaps the most vulgar venue of society), the workplace (David Letterman as an example), universities, Las Vegas (sin city), San Francisco, religious venues and now it is being demanded that the military openly embrace it. There is a recently published book, describing in very graphic, minute detail regarding sexual intercourse, that is now being placed in public libraries – in the children’s section, no less. Finally, the president has decided that he can arbitrarily set aside laws duly passed by congress regarding marriage as being between a man and woman only. The voices of anyone who dares risk their reputation and life by loudly condemning these perverted passions of society, will be ostracized, shouted down, and possibly even brought to court and jail under today’s evolving “justice system.

There is one other prominent focus of society that happens when we give ourselves to the perverted life styles discussed here, and that is that we make ourselves susceptible to a wide range of diseases. A case in point is the awful disease of Hiv/Aids. First, let me say that compassion and care should be extended to anyone affected with this deadly disease. I have no reservations with the millions of dollars spent to help in this dire need. Also, it is very true that not every case of Aids has developed from some promiscuous, careless life style. Even innocent children are, sadly, infected.

That being noted however, Aids is a preventable disease. Eighty (80) percent of all Aids in the world, according to medical opinions, comes from two sources: (1) unrestrained sexual behavior of any kind, especially homosexuality and lesbianism. (2) Drugs and the repeated use of the same needles and the association with those affected. These two are inter-related. They are both choices and therefore are preventable.

The injected persons know this. Medical, political, social and religious authorities know this. Why are they in total silence regarding this known information with no international outcry about these foolish choices about our life? There are approximately 40,000,000 reported Aids victims in the world (and no telling how many unreported), and all that society does is call for more money to defeat it. Why can’t we learn from the one little country in Africa that established a strong sexual abstinence policy and reduced their cases of Aids substantially? Instead the “social program guru’s” condemn them, while calling for more use of “safe-sex” devices and more money.

I am not saying that Aids is a divine, retributive act of judgment of God upon people. What I am saying is this. We live in a society where, by and large, people do not maintain righteousness and purity as God requires and are not willing to seek for and follow his explicit will. As a result they plummet to the bottom of sins deep abyss by their own personal choices for life. AIDS or any other consequence of sin is not a biological compulsion. It is the result of lusts, passion, perversion and corruption.

If you smoke you could get cancer. If you do drugs, any number of consequences could follow. If you are an alcoholic your body and your life will suffer. If you engage in promiscuous sex acts, with numerous partners, while also indulging in a needle-swapping drug culture, AIDs is a likely result.

“SIN IS TO BLAME” is the title of an old hymn and it is true.

### SUMMARY

To begin this summary, let me call attention to the fact that this lesson does not cover verses 29-32. There was so much material in the verses we did cover and an equally large amount of material in the last four verses that it was too much for one lesson. Verses 29-32 will be the basis for the next lesson.

In summary of this lesson I want to bring out a salient point which naturally derives from the substance of the lesson. That substance is the rejection of God; replacing God with unacceptable creatures, thereby being abandoned by God and thus falling into the lowest possible practice of human sexual perversion.

We noted in the lesson how that other societies, such as the Antedeluvians and Sodomites, were also rejected of God as a result of their abandonment of his will and fell into a moral abyss, then being ultimately destroyed because of their pursuit of godless immoralities. What does that say to our own godless society, which we have briefly described as also spiraling into the depths of perversion? Is that the means and the sign of our own destruction? Has God had enough and repents for ever having created man, maybe even for having paid a dear price to try to redeem us from our sins? Who could blame him?

The point to be made here is not just that of increasing permissive immorality, but rather the condition that precipitates such increase. This lesson identifies man’s rejection of God as the cause of man’s ultimate rejection by God, which is followed by a plunge into moral degeneration. Thus the simple question is, has the society of the world rejected God? The question is not whether society believes there is a “higher being” or creator; but whether man has rejected the God of the Bible and all of his will for our lives. That should not be a hard question to answer.

If the answer to that question is yes, then the sequel, using this lesson as a guide, is the abandonment by God of man and his wickedness, followed by the plunge of the world into the pits of perversion. Can any God-conscious, Bible believing person doubt the application to our own society?

The free fall of society in just one generation into a totally immoral state is shocking. From about the 1960s and back, you could characterize the society of man with godly morals and a genuine pursuit of the things of God. In the 1960s came the “sexual revolution” followed by an ever-increasing fall from every spiritual character into vile, moral corruption. The signs of the times do not tell us of coming world-wide revival, they tell us of spiritual disaster.

### QUESTIONS

1. Is there any interpretation that can be assigned to verses 26-27, other than homosexuality and lesbianism?
2. What is the only protection against moral bankruptcy?
3. How would you describe the statement in verse 28, "God gave them up to a reprobate mind?"