

June 4, 2015

Man's Rationalization

Romans 1:22-23 (NASB), **“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”**

Here in Romans 1:19-23 the apostle Paul describes the true character of fallen man. The apostle gives us four reasons why everyone is born under God's wrath and condemnation. We have already looked at the first two reasons which were God's revelation and man's rejection of God. Those were given to us in verses 19-21. The third and fourth reasons we will see as we take a close look at verses 22 and 23.

The first reason is man's rationalization which we will look at today. Verse 22 says, **“Professing to be wise, they became fools.”** Yesterday during our study we discussed the recent events surrounding Olympic decathlete Bruce Jenner and his decision to “transition” to becoming a woman. In the eyes of the world this has been lauded as a giant step forward in humankind's progression toward a better more tolerant world. Those who believe in God and in His revealed and inerrant word know better. We know that when man rejects God man then can rationalize any kind of depravity.

In rejecting God's clear revelation about Himself through not just His word but through His creation, men failed to honor and glorify God, failed to give Him thanks, became futile in their philosophical speculations and became foolish and darkened in their hearts. Trying to justify themselves, they rationalized themselves in Romans 1 just as fallen mankind is still doing today. **“Professing to be wise”** about God, about the universe, and about themselves, **“they became”** still greater **“fools.”**

Centuries before the Book of Romans was written David had declared in Psalm 14:1 and in Psalm 53:1 that men who deny God and His truth are fools. Psalm 14:1 says, **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”** In Psalm 53:1 it says the exact same thing. It is this very foolishness that deludes mankind into thinking that they are **“wise.”** The natural man cannot think perfectly about anything. But his thinking is perverted most severely in the spiritual and divine realm, because that is where his sinful rebellion is centered. These things are also beyond his human perception and since he rejects divine revelation, he has no hope of coming to truth himself. His foolish speculations therefore go the furthest astray when he philosophizes about his origin, purpose, and destiny and about the origin and meaning of the universe in which he lives.

You see the mind that is devoid of God's truth has no way then to discriminate between truth and falsehood or error, between right and wrong, between the significant and the trivial, between the truly beautiful and the monstrous, or between the temporal and the eternal. This explains our

cultures obsession with the false, the wrong, the trivial, the depraved, and the temporal.

These dominating worldly speculations often infect the church. Because, for example, gifted and articulate unbelievers have so long and loudly touted evolution as scientific fact rather than philosophical theory, many Christians have been intimidated (myself included back in the day) into accommodating their theology accordingly. In the name of theistic evolution or progressive creationism, they not only compromise scientific integrity but also, and much more disastrously, compromise God's revelation. They accept the unfounded foolishness of unregenerate men above the flawless and inerrant truth of God's Word.

I myself fell into this very trap. Growing up and attending public school and a public university I was inundated with evolutionary theory as truth. I reconciled this in my mind with my faith by telling myself that God didn't actually create the world in a literal 6 days, but that it was just figurative. I further reconciled this by believing that God used evolution to create. It was by the grace of God that I was confronted with the foolishness and yes sinfulness of that line of thinking. If I believe the Bible to be true and to be God's inerrant and all sufficient Word then I *must* believe that He indeed created all of creation in a literal six days.

In a similar approach, many Christians try to adapt God's revelation to men's speculations in the areas of the mind and soul. Intimidated by the ever changing and mutually conflicting theories of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, they foolishly modify or exchange the truths of God's revelation about man in favor of man's ridiculous and absurd conjectures about himself.

The late preacher-theologian Martin-Lloyd Jones once wrote, "The whole drift toward modernism that has blighted the church of God and nearly destroyed its living gospel may be traced to an hour when men began to turn from revelation to philosophy." Thinking they are wise, they became fools because their own speculations can't replace the revelation they reject.

Christian institution after Christian institution that once stood firmly on God's Word has progressively accommodated itself to the intellectual foolishness of the world system. In the name of man's wisdom they have come to reflect the foolishness, and inevitably the godlessness, of the world system of Satan. This is why so many Christian universities and seminaries are Christian in name only at this point.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul wrote, "**For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**" In verse 20 he goes on and asks, "**Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**" Verse 25 says, "**Because of the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**" This is why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "**For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.**"

John MacArthur writes, "The greatest fool in all the world is the person who exchanges God's wisdom of truth and light for man's wisdom of deceit and darkness."