

Trading Away the Truth

The Banquet Table of Consequences – Part VI

Romans 1:25

Introduction

My responsibility and mission is not to tell you what you think you ought to hear, or rehearse for you things you would like to hear, or make up things that you would really rather hear. My mission, as God's herald, is to simply repeat and expound on what God has already said. My message is not original and it is not contrived or conceived of by me. It is the message of God's Word alone that must be heard. For when we hear the Bible taught, we hear from God himself, as He is the author of this book.

So often, what we hear Him say in His Word, radically challenges our preconceived notions about life in general. I personally believe that the Bible is the most disturbing book you will ever read. And, it is the most rewarding book you will ever obey.

John Stott wrote, according to Erwin Lutzer, in his book, *Ten Lies About God*, these challenging words,

If we come to the Scriptures with our minds made up, expecting to hear from it only an echo of our own thoughts, and never the thunderclap of God's, then indeed He will not speak to us and we shall only be confirmed in our own prejudices. We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behavior.

Today, we will look at the book of Romans, chapter 1, where we hear the thunderclap of God's truth.

Now, we have previously discovered, in chapter 1, that mankind would rather not hear from God at all. In fact, they have denied the authority and existence of a personal, sovereign God, because that would make them accountable. They would not be able to believe anything they wanted, nor would they be able to behave any way then wanted.

In spite of their persistent denials, the thunderclap of God's Spirit can be heard as the apostle Paul, under the inspiring leadership of God's Spirit, writes, in verses 18 through 23 of Romans, chapter 1,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 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.

Now, verse 24,

Therefore . . .

That is, on the basis of man rejecting God; man refusing to honor God; and man refusing to worship their Creator.

... God gave them over ...

“Paradidomi” is the Greek word for “gave them over”. It refers to both God’s passive role in allowing man to bear the consequences of his unbelief and to God’s active role in causing sinful man to reap the penalty of his immorality. In other words, when man abandons God, God abandons man to the full consequences of his sin.

Three times you read that phrase, “God gave them over.” It is in verse 24, verse 26, and again, in verse 28.

You do not want a holy, righteous, creator God? Then He does not want you. If you abandon God, God will abandon you.

The one who ignores and rejects God, however, does not escape unharmed. Look at verse 24 again.

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them.

In other words, they become users and abusers of one another. They simply treat each other as objects of selfish desire, selfish longing and yet, nothing satisfies. Intimacy is lost as men and women go from one high to the next, from one toy to the next, from one partner to the next; from one spiritual experiment to the next. They are never satisfied; never full; never contented.

Solomon said, in Proverbs, chapter 27, verse 20,
... nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.

The second instance, where we read the phrase, is in verse 26.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions ...

Paul goes on to describe homosexuality and lesbianism and concludes, in the last part of verse 27, that they are,

... receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

The phrase is seen again in verse 28. Look at that verse and continue into the first part of verse 29.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil
...

So, man pays the price of a life filled with spiritual wandering, unhindered wickedness, and unfulfilled passion. They are unable to relate to one another and destroy themselves and each other.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote,

Every man shall one day be seated at a banquet table of consequences.

What you have, in this latter part of Romans, chapter 1, is a description of the banquet table – a table spread with all its pain and evil.

Mankind says, “God we want you to leave us alone. We want to live our lives the way we want. Leave us be!”

And, God does. Then, wandering mankind pays the bitter price.

Down With Man ... Up With Nature!

Now, let us pick up with commentary on why mankind will digress to such sinful and depraved activity. Look at Romans, chapter 1, the first part of verse 25.

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie
...

You could render that first phrase, “they substituted the truth for the lie.”

This has to refer all the way back to the garden, where Satan whispered the very first lie into the ear of Eve, “If you eat of this fruit, you will not die.”

In other words, Satan’s first lie denied the authority and accuracy of God’s word. He is still doing the same thing today.

Exposing the lies:

Let me expose some of the lies of the underworld that assault the truth of God.

That truth is relative

1. The first lie is that truth is relative. If there is no such thing as absolute truth, then God’s truth is merely one of many.

Recently, I was reading an article in *World Magazine* on the subject of education and its early years. The state of Massachusetts passed, in 1647, an act they called, “The Old Deluder Act,” which became the basis for publicly funded schools. It stated,

The chief project of that old deluder, Satan, is to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures . . . it is therefore ordered that every township of fifty households shall appoint one within their town to teach all the children [the Scriptures].

Can you imagine Massachusetts today, or any state, ordering all their public schools to teach the Scriptures so children will be protected from the delusion of Satan's lies?!

That salvation is universal

2. One of the consequences of relative truth is seen in the second lie that salvation is universal and all religions are equally true. That is religious relativism.

One university student parroted the politically correct mantra of the day when he said,

It's okay for you to believe that you're right, but it's not okay for you to believe that someone else is wrong.

That is relativism – and it has been baptized into religion. If you want to believe there is only one true God, then that will be right for you. Do not, however, tell the Hindu he is wrong because he believes in the existence of millions of gods. Everyone is going to heaven, because everyone is sincere.

One author, I was reading, was sitting on a plane next to a woman who was wearing a cross around her neck. He said to her, “We have a wonderful Savior don't we?”

She rolled her eyes and said, “I don't think of the cross like you do.”

She showed him that, beneath the cross, was the Jewish star of David and, beneath that, was a trinket that symbolized the Hindu god Om. She explained, “I've discovered that people find God in different ways. Christianity is but one path to the divine.”

She went on to say that she preferred spirituality to religion.

By the way, you hear that a lot – “I am into spirituality, not religion.”

What do they mean? Frankly, what they mean is that they do not follow a creed – a system of theology based on objective facts – it is all a matter of feelings without commitment.

Look at the Internet sampling of spirituality and you will find something for everyone. There are Web pages such as:

- Spirituality for Today,
- Medical Intuition,
- Jesuit Spirituality,
- Native American Spirituality,
- Transgender Spirituality,
- Spirit Tools for a New Age (a discussion of things such as: pyramids, wands, daggers, and pendulums),
- Spirituality and Health,
- The Inner Self Magazine, and
- Psychotherapy and Spirituality.

Andrew Walker wrote,

We are no longer swayed by one religion alone. Many kinds are for sale, and compete for our attention. We, the consumers, are completely free.

I read an illustration of pluralism in *World Magazine*. Texas oil heiress, Genevieve Vaughan, and her husband, visited Egypt and came across a statue of Sekhmet – the Egyptian goddess of fertility. She said, “I made a vow that if the ancient fertility goddess would help me have a baby, I would build a temple in her honor. Lo and behold, I got pregnant that very month.”

So, in 1993, the temple was finally built off of Route 95 in Nevada. Built by an all-female construction crew, the temple encloses goddesses and the idol of Sekhmet. There is also a full-time priestess who leads weekly rituals for visitors, many who drive in for the major holidays.

If these people are right and there are many paths to God, then Jesus Christ was deceived, for He said, as recorded in John, chapter 14, verse 6,

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

The apostles were deceived as well, for we are told in Acts, chapter 4, verse 12, that they preached of Jesus Christ,

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven, that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.

Then why are people coming up with this stuff? Paul already answered that in Romans, chapter 1, verse 21,

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, . . . but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

That judgment is nonexistent

3. Another lie is that judgment is nonexistent.

Have you noticed that, while most people you talk to believe in a literal heaven, these same people deny the existence of a literal hell.

Paul preached to the Athenians, who had multiple gods and temples. At the end of his sermon, in Acts, chapter 17, verses 30 through 31, he delivered the stunning conclusion,

. . . God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness . . .

I will save further comments on the subject of hell for a summer series. We will purposefully turn off the air conditioners for effect.

That man evolved

4. A fourth lie is that man evolved.

That God is uninvolved

5. Also, there is the lie that God is uninvolved in the universe, both in the past and in the present.

No other lie, in the minds of the last few generations, has so assaulted the character of God and the authority of Scripture than evolution.

Stephen Jay Gould, as quoted in *The Evolution of a Creationist*, by Jobe Martin, postulated in his book, ironically entitled, *Wonderful Life*, that,

There is nothing predestined about our current pre-eminence among large terrestrial fauna. We are the product of a whole series of contingent events in the history of our planet, any one of which could have been reversed to give rise to a different outcome. We are, in short, like every other creature that ever walked or slithered across the earth – we are an accident . . . the survivors . . . we were lucky.

So, what does God say?

John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1 and 2,

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Genesis, chapter 5, verses 1 and 2,

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

You might say, “Well, maybe God did create the world, but He allowed it and man to evolve over billions of years.”

That view, by the way, is called, Theistic Evolution.

Once again, however, Scripture does not allow for it. In Mark, chapter 10, verse 6, Jesus Christ said,

But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

In other words, when creation began, man and woman were also created.

Let us look briefly at the record of God’s Word. Turn to Genesis, chapter 2, verse 7.

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Skip to verses 21 through 23.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, “This is now bone of my bones

. . .

Actually, I think that is what Adam said a little later, after he caught his breath. I think the first thing he said was more like, “Shazzam!”

What you have in the record of Scripture is a fully developed man and a fully adult woman being created in a moment of time. Genesis, chapter 1, also records that trees were created already bearing fruit and stars were created already giving light. That means that the light of the stars was supernaturally stretched in an instant to planet earth.

When Adam woke from his sleep, he was not introduced to a little baby girl, but to a woman. If he had said to Eve, the unforgivable, “How old are you?”, she would have answered, “About thirty seconds.”

If she had said, “Adam, what do have to eat around here?”, he could have pulled a ripe peach off of a tree that had been created only three days earlier.

What might appear to have taken years to develop, would have taken a matter of seconds.

Furthermore, from measuring the distance between the earth and the farthest star and then, calculating the millions of years it would have taken for the light from that star to reach the earth, if God created a fully mature system as Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, tell us, then that light beam is only as old as the star.

Time is nothing to God.

Do you remember when Peter took that sword in the garden of Gethsemane and swung it at the high priest’s servant, thus forever proving that he was a fisherman and not a swordsman? You may remember that he missed the man’s head and, instead, cut off his ear. Jesus Christ stooped down and picked up that man’s ear, walked over to the man, sewed it back on, and said, “Come back in three weeks and we’ll take out the stitches.”

No. There were no stitches, no time was needed for healing, and there was no headache through the night either. Instead, there was instant healing, with no time needed for it to happen!

Evolution destroys the authenticity of God’s Word and dilutes the power of God’s Word. It also enslaves God to work in time and space, when He is beyond and above, not limited to, time and space.

Evolution:

- rejects clear Scripture,
- restricts God’s power, and
- forfeits true worship.

Just think of how many Psalms you would have to cut from your Bible, where David praised God as creator and designer of every living thing.

According to Paul, in Romans, chapter 1, verse 25a, mankind,

. . . exchanged the truth of God for a lie [about God] . . .

In Romans, chapter 1, verse 25b, notice what rebellious man does next,

. . . [He] worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Experiencing the Consequences

In other words, man experiences a number of consequences, by virtue of choosing his speculations instead of inspired Scripture.

Mankind rejects a personal, loving, forgiving Lord

1. The first consequence is that mankind rejects a personal, loving, forgiving Lord.

If you reject God, you reject the Savior. If you reject the Savior, you lose a Redeemer. If you lose the Redeemer, you are left in your sin. If you are burdened with your sin, you lose peace of mind and true freedom.

So, choose yourself, and you become a slave to sin. Choose the Savior, and you become free forever.

Mankind replaces God with other objects of worship

2. The second consequence is that mankind replaces God with other objects of worship.

Man was created with a sense of longing. And, if you do not long after God, you will long after something else.

It might be reflected in the totem pole of the American Indian, the eagle of the Romans, or the sacred cow in India. To this day, in India, it is considered murder to kill a cow and cannibalism to eat the meat. Two hundred million head of cattle are allowed to wander around competing for food and damaging standing crops. Not even the government of India can liberate the nation from the cow’s divinity.

In our culture, the worship of wealth is the god of choice. It might be longing after and devoting great

time and energy to health, physical pleasure, prestige, sports, education, entertainment, success, or power.

An idol is that which occupies your mind with longing, in the place of longing after God and His kingdom.

Mankind abandons the only basis for morality and civility

3. Another consequence is that mankind abandons the only basis for morality and civility.

I was reading recently, in *World Magazine*, an article that gave a time-line of the history of education in America. In 1836, William McGuffey began publishing his *McGuffey's Readers*, which would sell more than one hundred twenty five million copies and teach several generations how to read. The series contained this entry,

If you can induce a community to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures; to question the reality and obligations of religion; to hesitate undeciding, whether there be any such thing as virtue or vice (right or wrong); whether there be an eternal state of retribution beyond the grave; or whether there exists any such being as God, you have broken down the barriers of moral virtue and raised the flood gates of immorality and crime.

Two hundred years later, we are proving him right. The book of Romans is nothing more than a description of the flood gates opening and immorality and crime flooding our culture.

We are going to stop here and continue at another time with the consequences that relate to the loss of human nobility and the rise of animal rights and the sovereignty of nature.

Are you glad the Scriptures are never controversial? The truth is, the thunder of God's voice has been heard from the pages of Scripture. You can either run for shelter into the arms of Jesus Christ, or you can stand out in the open holding the lightning rod of your own speculation – and hope lightning does not strike.

Let me read one passage to you in closing. II Peter, chapter 3, verses through 7,

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But [by His word] the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

I invite you now, to the sheltering arms of the Great Shepherd – the name above all names, the one true and living God, who will rescue you from sin and its eternal consequences.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 5/20/2001 by Stephen Davey.

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