



Romans 1:18-2:2—So God Gave Them Over to Reprobate Minds



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18 But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19 They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. 20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.



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26 That is why God abandoned **them** to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

28 **Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God,** he abandoned **them** to their foolish thinking and let **them** do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. 30 **They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents.** 31 **They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.** 32 **They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.**

This text is repeatedly **VERY specific**
Read carefully the text tells us WHO and
WHAT Paul is referring to



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Who was the audience in the Book of Romans? What was the purpose of the book?

- The book must be read in full context – not individual chapters and verses.
- No church yet present in Rome but there were believers
- Gentile Christians who were worshiping with Jews in the Jewish Synagogue were being discriminated against because they were not “God’s chosen special people.”
 - They would have to conform to all of the Jewish customs and rituals to be accepted by the Jews
- Paul is addressing the status of the Jewish people as the “Chosen” and “Illuminated People”



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Look at the case Paul sets up

- **They knew the truth about God because He made it obvious to them. (Vs 18)**
 - Even more so they did not only know ABOUT Him---they knew Him! But refused to worship Him or even give Him thanks! (vs 21)
- **They began to think up what God looked like. (v 21)**
 - e.g. The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)
- **Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools (v 22)**
 - “We threw all our gold in the fire, and this just jumped out, so we worshipped it.”
- **Instead of worshipping God, they worshipped idols (v. 23)**
 - “This is the god that brought us up out of Egypt.”
- **So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. They had chosen truth for a lie, fallen creation instead of the glorious Creator**
 - He allowed them to chose wrong as He does with all of us. (v 24)
- **So “he turned them over” to their lusts (KJV “Reprobate Minds”)—Women with women, men with men**
 - The adoption of the Canaanite fertility gods and goddesses. (Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth) which were “worshipped” in hedonistic sexual ways (orgies, prostitution (including same sex), etc...)



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Paul continues his case, and is about to turn the table

- Since they thought they knew better, God abandoned them to do whatever they thought of—wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip, backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.
- They invented new ways of sinning and encouraged other people to do the same even though they knew the penalty for such actions is DEATH!
 - Only one group of people knew the law of God and the penalty for breaking it.
 - Who was it?

In Chapter 2, verse 1, Paul shows them who he was talking about:

You (*Jews*) may think you can condemn such people (*Gentiles*), but you (*Jews*) are just as bad, and you have no excuse! (because you had the law!) When you (*Jews*) say they (*Gentiles*) are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.

Now that we know the WHO, let's look at WHAT Paul was condemning



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26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful (Greek: ἀσχημοσύνην *aschēmosynēn*) desires. Even the women turned against the natural way (Greek: *physis φύσις*) to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal (Greek: *physis φύσις*) sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful (Greek: ἀσχημοσύνην *aschēmosynēn*) things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

The words natural/normal and shameful

Look at another place where Paul used these same words

1 Cor 11: 13 Judge for yourselves. Is it natural (Greek: *physis φύσις*) for a woman to pray to God in public without covering her head? 14 Isn't it obvious that it's shameful (Greek: ἀσχημοσύνην *aschēmosynēn*) for a man to have long hair? 15 And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering. 16 But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God's other churches.



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Natural way: *physis φύσις* refers to the inherent, God-given, or commonly understood "nature" of something, often influenced by Stoic philosophy in the first century.

Shameful: *ἀσχημοσύνην aschēmosynēn* refers to behavior that deviates from a recognized standard, causing dishonor.

He is clearly using the exact same words to describe cultural norms and expected standards of the day.

Few Christians require women today to keep their hair covered, or men to not have long hair!

Why? Because the culture over time has changed, and doing so no longer discredits the witness of the gospel!

