

DOWNWARD Spiral ~ Romans 1:21-25

→Scripture Reading Romans 1:18-19, 21-23

INTRODUCTION

Daniel 5:22-23 (NLT) For you have proudly DEFIED the LORD of heaven and have had these cups from His Temple brought before you. You and your nobles and your wives and concubines have been drinking wine from them while praising gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone - gods that NEITHER SEE nor HEAR nor KNOW anything at all. But you have not honored the God who gives you the breath of life and controls your destiny.

Exchanging IMMORTAL for MORTAL ~ Romans 1:21-23

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

James 1:17 (NIV) Every good and perfect GIFT is from ABOVE....

²⁰ They TRADED their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating bull. **Psalm 106:20** (NLT)

Instead of man being **made in God's image**, **man made gods** in his own image - and then descended so low as to worship birds, beasts, and reptiles. Wiersbe

Since men Suppressed the TRUTH about God... LAB

- they would not GLORIFY what they did NOT Believe EXISTED
- they did not feel THANKFUL to a god that did not Exist
- their thinking became POINTLESS
- the LIGHT of TRUTH in people's hearts went DARK

IMPLICATION

→Believing that God EXISTS is the STARTING point for Salvation

²¹ For although they KNEW God...

¹⁹ ...what may be **KNOWN** about God is **plain** to them, because **God has made it PLAIN...**

²⁰ ...His **eternal power** and **divine** nature - have been **clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that **men are without excuse**.

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT) And it is impossible to PLEASE God without faith. Anyone who wants to COME to Him must BELIEVE that God exists...

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT) And it is impossible to PLEASE God without faith. Anyone who wants to COME to Him must BELIEVE that God exists and that He REWARDS those who sincerely seek Him.

→Grumbling and Complaining Destroys Thankfulness

²¹ For although they knew God, they NEITHER glorified Him as God **NOR gave thanks** to Him

>Picture

James 1:16-17 (NIV) Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷ Every GOOD and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...

→How do we Respond to Culture Pursuing DARKNESS?

John 3:19-21 (NIV) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT) ¹⁴ You are the LIGHT of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds SHINE out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Exchanging the TRUTH for LIES ~ Romans 1:24-25

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:20 (NIV) ...Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have HANDED OVER to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Corinthians 5:5 (NIV) ...HAND this man OVER to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Divine judgment is God permitting people to go their OWN way. NAC

Because sex is such a powerful and essential part of what it means to be human, it must be treated with great respect. Sexual desires are of such importance that the Bible gives them special attention and counsels more careful restraint and self-control than with any other desire. One of the clearest indicators of a society or person in rebellion against God is the rejection of God's guidelines for the use of sex. LAB

He found his standards in his own opinions and not in the laws of God. He lived in a self-centered instead of a God-centered universe. Instead of walking looking out to God he walked looking into himself, and, like any man who does not look where he is going, he FELL. BARCLAY

IMPLICATION

→ DANGER do NOT try REPLACE God in any way

²³ and Exchanged the GLORY of the immortal God for...

²⁵ They Exchanged the TRUTH of God for...

Men and women have, as an act of the will, chosen to REPLACE the GLORY of God and the TRUTH of God with lies that justify idol worship and unbridled moral license. As a result of these choices, God has GIVEN them OVER to the pursuit of a life based on idol worship (whether outright or subtle) and philosophies built on their own moral preferences. HNTC

Psalms 81:11-14 (NIV) But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. ¹² So I GAVE THEM OVER to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. ¹³ If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, ¹⁴ how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes!

God GAVE them OVER... BARCLAY

- God gave man free-will
- there is an Element of Judgment

TAKE AWAY ??

Instead of looking to God as the creator and sustainer of life, they see themselves as the center of the universe. They soon invent "gods" that are convenient projections of their own selfish ideas. LASB