***No Excuse for the Heathen, No. 1
RO07-02***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 1. Our subject tonight is "No Excuse for the Heathen."

**Ungodliness**

We have learned from this book thus far, from the apostle Paul, that the gospel reveals both the righteous of God, which comes by faith, and the wrath of God on unbelief – those who are negative to the revelation of God. Verse 18 has told us that God's wrath is directed against sin, and those who reject divine viewpoint; that is, they suppress the truth of God. We read that these people are guilty of ungodliness, which is a disregard for, and the defiance of the person of God. They reject the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior specifically. They're living as if there was no God. That's what it means to be ungodly.

**Unrighteousness**

They are also guilty of unrighteousness. This is the general practice of sin – living as if God had made no revelation concerning right and wrong on matters of morality. Unrighteousness is the result of ungodliness. First you reject the God of the Bible, and then your reject the morals of the Bible.

**The Heathen**

Well, this, of course, brings up the issue of the status of the heathen who die without any gospel witness. Apart from all that, we indicated that the character God (His absolute alone) would ensure the justice in dealing with the heathen who never hear a missionary. We know that there is an answer to this question – that somehow, just because of what God is in His own character, no one will be in the lake of fire unjustly. The provision of salvation, however, is not a divine obligation. It is an act of God's marvelous grace and His kindness.

**God does not Owe you Heaven**

God does not owe you heaven. And when an individual who operates on human viewpoint sounds off about something such that he says, "This is my right," or, "These are my rights," it is only because he does not realize he only has one right in life. And that is the right to the lake of fire. And that is the result of something of our own guilt, and our own doing, and of the inherited sin by being born into the human race under the federal headship and guilt of Adam, in which we all now participate. We are, on our own account, responsible for going to the lake of fire.

So, God does not owe anybody salvation. God would be perfectly just and perfectly righteous and perfectly true to Himself if He never saved a single individual – if He let all of us receive what we deserve. But, thank God, He did not. We have no claims, however, upon Him.

What we are talking about here is the fact that God has made a complete atonement possible, but that men have suppressed the truth. They have suppressed the truth about what God did in the way of a provision for salvation. And the apostle Paul is going to explain to us how God has made provision so that everybody would come to accept the first thing that is necessary for salvation – to be aware that God is out there.

Now, if a person goes negative toward the realization that God is out there, then that is the end of the line for him. He, in all likelihood, will never hear the gospel. But if it goes positive, then it is also necessary for God to bring the gospel information to him so that he may know about Christ, and receive Him as a personal Savior.

**Jesus Christ**

All of the provision that we have described to you here tonight, you see, of course, revolves around one key personality, and that is the God-man Jesus Christ.

**"The Myth of Christianity"**

We have seen that human viewpoint challenges whether there ever was a person like Jesus Christ on the face of the earth. They challenge the historicity of Jesus Christ. They call this "the myth of Christianity." They say this is something that a cult group in New Testament Times invented; wrote the New Testament books to crystallize it; and, then propagated this fraud, particularly through the gospel, upon the human race. And they discount this as simply a myth (a falsehood). And the atheists, as you know, have no hesitancy about declaring the fact that Jesus Christ never even existed.

**Jewish Historians**

Well, we have shown you that, from non-biblical Jewish writings (that is, Jewish writing outside of the Bible) such as the Talmud, that Jesus Christ is referred to, not sympathetically, but He is described in the writings of the Jewish rabbis. Also, in the writings of the historian Josephus, who lived back there in the first century A.D., the historian Josephus makes direct references to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we have, from the Jewish angle, very definite references to Christ.

**Gentile Historians**

There are other references from the gentile world, and I want to look at those with you also in this session, so that the next time some smart-alec comes along and says, "Jesus Christ never even existed – just check the historical records," you'll be able to say, "I have checked the historical records. I have heard what these writers wrote, and therefore I do know what the references are (both Jewish and gentile) to Jesus Christ, of people who were in that era of history, and I happen to know that they both refer to him as a historical person.

**Thallus**

First of all, there was a man named Thallus who lived around 52 A.D. when he wrote a book tracing the history of Greece, from the Trojan War to his own death. A Christian writer named Julius Africanus, in the year 221 A.D. wrote a book on chronology. Julius Africanus, who in 221 A.D., writing his book on chronology, was acquainted with the writing of Thallus on the history of Greece. And he quote Thallus concerning the darkness that surrounded the cross and the crucifixion of Christ. Thallus wrote about the darkness around the cross of Christ. Julius Africanus quotes him. We don' have the writings of Thallus, but we have the writings of Africanus and the quote he makes from Thallus, where he said, "Thallus, in the third book of his history, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun, unreasonably as it seems to me."

This is indeed, as Julius Africanus said, unreasonable, because a solar eclipses (every astronomy student knows) cannot take place at the time of a full moon. And it was at the season of the Paschal full moon that Christ died. That's when Passover came along. Therefore, just from what any astronomer knows, it would have been impossible that this was an eclipse. This was Thallus' way of trying to get around the problem of a supernatural event.

However, it does establish two facts. The first one is that the biblical record of these events concerning the crucifixion of Christ, which we read in the Bible, were well-known in Rome in non-Christian circles toward the middle of the first century. That much is clear. Otherwise, Thallus would not have known this. This was known in Rome concerning what had happened at the crucifixion of Christ, and that darkness suddenly, at high noon, descended upon the city of Jerusalem.

The second fact that this establishes is that it indicates that the enemies of Christianity tried to explain away the supernatural event surrounding the crucifixion with a natural interpretation of these events.

**The Swoon Theory**

Now, this is still done today. It has not been too many years ago that the liberals were explaining what happened to Jesus Christ on the cross. And they were not questioning whether he ever lived, but that what happened to Jesus Christ on the cross was that He suffered such excruciating pain that He finally passed out. And when they went to look at Him, they thought He was dead, but all he was was fainted. They call that "the swoon theory." He had swooned. So, they decided He was dead, and they took Him off the cross, and they put Him in this tomb, and the tomb was so cool and refreshing that it revived Him, and He got up and walked out. I don't know what He did about the stone. I can't remember that.

I'm talking about some big scholar. This was somebody who knows all about these things. This was not somebody who was inventing things. These are professors in universities who are sitting before classes, and they're teaching theological students this kind of gobbledy-gook.

There are variations of explaining things by natural means. Well, this happened right there from the very first, and that's what Thallus was trying to do.

Now, we have no other gentile writings from the first century that make a reference to Jesus Christ. For 100 years, Christianity was viewed by Rome as an insignificant and crude superstition not even worthy to be referred to in its records. And some of the early church fathers, though they believed that Pilate wrote an official report to Rome about Jesus, and that if you could search the Roman archives, you would have found an official report from Pilate, the church fathers, though they believed it, we have no records that they were correct. That was because all the archives of the Roman Empire are, of course, now destroyed.

Thallus gives us a clue. He does refer to this man Jesus Christ. So, the atheists are wrong that we have no historical references outside of the Bible concerning Jesus Christ.

**The Rome Fire**

However, we also have another writer who is even more significant, named Cornelius Tacitus. He was the greatest Roman historian during the days of the Roman Empire. He was born about 52 or 54 A.D. He wrote a history of Rome during the period of its emperors. He recorded the great fire in Rome during the reign of Nero, and the rumor that Nero had spread – that the Christians started the fire. Nero wanted to rebuild Rome. He got plans drawn up, and then he had to get rid of the Rome that existed, so he ordered it set on fire. As people suffered tremendously from the fire that swept Rome, the rumor went out that the emperor himself, in 64 A.D., had begun the fire. So, the finger of accusation was being pointed by the populace at their own emperor Nero. So, in order to direct the accusation away from himself, he said, "No, it was the Christians who did it."

Now, the Christians were already a disliked group because they refused to participate in the evil lifestyle of the average Roman. And if anybody refused to participate in the evil lifestyle of the society in which he lives, he is immediately suspect, even as that is true today. He is not welcomed, and he is not accepted.

So, the Christians were a very, very wonderfully built-in opportunity for Nero to escape the accusations against him.

**"Christus"**

So, what Tacitus writes is, " ... Nero punished, with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men loathed for their vices, whom the crowd called Christians. 'Christus,' from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor. And the superstition was set for a time only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the plague, but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home.

**"Christos"**

What Tacitus is doing is referring to Jesus Christ in connection with these Christians who are followers of Christus. This account does not sound like something that Tacitus would have secured either from Christians or Jews. The Jews would not have referred to Jesus by the Latin word "Christus," which is the Greek word "Christos," because this word to the Jew in the Hebrew was the Messiah. And the Messiah, of course, referred to the anointed one who was to come to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. So, the Jews would not have called Jesus Christ "Christus." They would not have referred to Him as Messiah, because they loathed Him for the fact that he claimed to be the Messiah. Whatever they would have called Christ, they would have rejected calling him Messiah, and they would not have thought as Tacitus, in all likelihood, and called Him "Christus." Christians called Him "Christus" because they did believe that He was the Messiah. They knew He was indeed the one who had come to fulfill the Davidic Covenant, but He had been rejected, and He is now creating a new thing in the body of Christ: the church.

Well, Tacitus, as a pagan, viewed "Christus" simply as a proper name with no meaning. He didn't attach any meaning to this whatsoever. So, he simply refers to "Christus" as the one whom these Christians follow: "a class of men loathed for their vices, whom the crowd called Christians:" "Christus from whom they got their name."

Now, where did Christians get their name, except from Jesus Christ of Nazareth? What other person in history is on the scene (that there is any reference to) that would fit this declaration of Tacitus? Obviously, there is none whatsoever. The Christian are called Christians because they were named by their enemies. They were given that name "Christians." That was a nickname. They were called "Christians," a name of contempt, because they were followers of "Christos." They were followers of Christ.

Now, Tacitus had access to whatever official information there was about Jesus Christ in the Roman archives, because he was the son-in-law of Julius Agricola, who was the governor of Britain from 80 to 84 A.D. And as one who was related to a governor of one of the provinces, he would have had access to whatever records there were in the Roman archives concerning Jesus. So, if Pilate did send a report to Rome, as the early church fathers believed he did (a report about Jesus Christ), then Tacitus, as a historian, would have been given permission to research those archives, and would have, in all likelihood, been able to find that record if it existed. Perhaps that's exactly where he got this information. This statement by Tacitus, perhaps, does reflect to us that if indeed Pilate sent a record, then Tacitus had this record in the archives of the Roman Empire. Now, if that is true, then that settles the question once and for all whether there ever was a historical Jesus, because you bet your bottom dollar that Pilate was not going to send a report home to Rome concerning a mythical Jesus of Nazareth who never existed.

So, apart from Jewish and Christian writers, Tacitus is the strongest one who mentions Jesus Christ.

Also, you will notice that he does refer to this problem with "Christus" in the time of Pontius Pilate, when Tiberius was emperor. As a matter of fact, only Tacitus refers to Pontius Pilate in ancient writings. Only the Bible; Jewish writers; and, Tacitus refer to Pontius Pilate. So, all of these pieces fit together – that this man "Christus" was related to something that had to do in the time of Pontius Pilate, and a group of people who followed this "Christus" (named after Him – Christians) are now under attack by Nero as those who are being made the scapegoats for a fire that Nero began. Now, that's just as tied together as you can be, and you'd have to be dumb, blind, and stupid to come up with such a remark as Madalyn O'Hair said on the radio program:: "Well, who was this 'Christus?' He didn't say, 'Jesus Christ.' He said, 'Christus; Christus.'" And she kept repeating it: "Christus," like she had something.

So, Tacitus was a Roman writer. He's a dummy. He used the Latin name for Christ. Is that unusual? It's not unusual at all. It is exactly what we would have expected Tacitus to call Him, but by the Latin name.

**Suetonius**

There was another man named "Suetonius." He wrote the lives of the first 12 Caesars. He wrote about 120 A.D. He went from Julius Caesar on through the first 12 Roman Caesars. When he got to the section on the life of Nero again (referring back to this emperor once more), Suetonius refers to Christians and Christianity as a superstition; meaning that it had supernatural claims. The presence of Christians in Nero's reign implies again, as we've said, the presence of Jesus Christ, for whom these Christians were named. Here's what he says:

"Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men addicted to a novel and mischievous superstition." What was their novel superstition? It was that they had supernatural claims. They claimed that they were followers of a God-man: a man who had been supernaturally born without a human father; a man who could perform miracles; a man who was executed by the Roman Empire; a man who came to life again; and, a man who rose from this earth and went to heaven – one supernatural claim after another. And Suetonius refers to this group (this group in the life of Nero, during the era of Nero) as holding to superstitions.

**"Chrestus"**

When he wrote in the life of Emperor Claudius, there is another statement where he says, "As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of 'Chrestus,' he expelled them from Rome." Now, "Chrestus" was the name particularly that Mrs. O'Hair was to make such an issue of on the radio program. Who was this "Chrestus?" Look at what it says: "As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome." That implies that some man named "Chrestus" was in Rome during the reign of Emperor Claudius, causing strife and disturbances among the Jews in Rome.

Well, the name refers to Jesus Christ because, again, it is a variant spelling of "Christus" – the name that we have seen before in the Latin form. And "Chrestus" is just a variant form of that Latin name. Now, we know that the Lord Jesus never was in Rome, let alone for him to be in Rome during the time of Emperor Claudius, who reigned from to 41 to 54 A.D. So, here is a problem. Here, Suetonius, a respected writer, is writing concerning the reign of Emperor Claudius, and declaring to us that in the period from 41 to 54 A.D., there was a man named "Chrestus" in the city of Rome, causing the Jews to be rising up in disturbances and causing disturbances among the Jews.

Now, Suetonius was writing in 120 A.D. That is important to note. He wrote this in 120 A.D. He was referring back, in other words, to records in Roman archives again, and getting the story together as a historian in order to put together the lives of the emperors. Therefore, someplace along the line (what seems to have happened here is that), he found a record about some Jewish quarreling during the reign of Emperor Claudius, and the quarreling was over a man named "Chrestus." And the result was that he assumed that "Chrestus" actually was in Rome during the reign of Claudius, from 41 to 54 A.D., and that He was actually there causing the disturbances; whereas, we know that, in the year 33 A.D., Jesus Christ was crucified and went to heaven. So, He was not on the scene. Suetonius made an assumption that was wrong. He assumed that Christ was actually in Rome, causing the disturbances during the reign of Claudius.

Now, at least, whatever else we may say about it, we do have a non-biblical reference to Jesus Christ. And we also know that, during the reign of Emperor Claudius, there was quarreling among the Jews. As a matter of fact, the friction among the Jews became so great, evidently, from the testimony that was now coming to them from believers (from Christians), and from such sources as our letter of the book of Romans (through the Roman church) the friction of the Jews and their antagonism against Christ was becoming so great that the Emperor Claudius issued an edict, and told all Jews to get out of Rome. You may read about this in Acts 18:1 and the verses which follow, where we are told that the apostle Paul left Corinth and came and met with Priscilla and Aquila, who had recently been driven out of Rome by Emperor Claudius' edict against the Jews.

Let me read it to you: "After these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth, and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome, and came unto them." Now, here, in the New Testament, you have the record of what Emperor Claudius is doing, which is what Suetonius is referring to: "the Christians among the Jews." But while the quarreling was indeed about Jesus Christ, He was not on the scene at the time. Suetonius assumed that from the record he was reading. But nevertheless, Suetonius did read about Christ, and that much we do have established by his reference. This was about 50 A.D. that this problem of the quarreling was going on.

Also, during the reign of Claudius, Suetonius tells us that it was marked by "constant unfruitful seasons," which means famine. This is also interesting, because Acts 11:27-28 confirm that – that during the reign of Claudius, there was a great famine in the empire.

So, our third man here, Suetonius, also makes reference to "Chrestus" (to Christ). Suetonius, as a non-Christian, non-Jewish, pagan writer, outside of the Bible, makes reference to Jesus Christ. He made the mistake of putting Christ out of the right chronological location. But nevertheless, the Jews were squabbling over an historical character – not only a myth.

**Plinius Secundus**

Then another man is Plinius Secundus, or, as he is known as: "Pliny the Younger." He was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. And he wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan. As governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor in 112 A.D., he found himself in conflict with the Christians, who are now growing in considerable numbers. So, he wrote the Emperor Trajan, and he asked him how to deal with the Christians who were so numerous in his province. He reported to the emperor concerning these Christians. Here's what he had to say in his report to the emperor, in the process of which he is asking the emperor: "What should I do about these people?" And here's what he had to say about the "Christians:"

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in hymns to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solid oath not to commit any wicked deed, but to abstain from all fraud, theft, and adultery; never to break their word or deny a trust when called upon to honor it; after which it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind."

Now, here, in the writing of Plinius Secundus, you have a very definite reference to the description of these Christians and their high moral standards as the result of their following of somebody called "Christ," and he names Him very specifically. Now, it is true that he wrote in 112 A.D., but that's not all that far from New Testament times for him not to have been able to have the story straight. It would have been very unlikely that he was talking about some mythical character that didn't exist, and that he would not have known that.

So, he asks advice on how to deal with them, and this is a clear non-biblical to the historicity of Christ.

**The Christ Myth**

So, what is called "the Christ myth" idea is in itself a myth. There is no myth about the fact that Jesus Christ actually existed. We have this from Thallus, via Julius Africanus; from Cornelius Tacitus; from Suetonius; and, from Plinius Secundus. Every one of them are very definite references to an historical person named Christ. There is no ground for doubting the existence of Jesus Christ. There is very definite ground for believing it. The historicity of Christ is axiomatic with any unbiased historian. It's just as certain to a historian as the existence of Julius Caesar is. Only those who choose to suppress the truth concerning Christ will question His historical existence.

So, to quote the Bible, "The fool has said in his heart (in his mind), 'There is no God'" (Psalm 53:1). And you may substitute for the word "fool" the word "atheist."

**A Universal Revelation of God**

In our Scripture, in Romans 1:19, we read about a universal revelation of God. Something has to come to every human being concerning God if he is to be born-again. It all centers around Jesus Christ, so every human being, sooner or later, if he is to be saved, must have the information about this historical person Jesus Christ. So, the apostle Paul gives us some very vital information in Romans 1:19-20 when he says, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it unto them."

In Romans 1:18, he said that: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. It goes against all ungodliness (rejection of the person of God), against unrighteousness (evil practices). And this is directed against men who hold the truth (or suppress the truth – the word means) in unrighteousness."

**The Heathen**

The first word of Romans 1:19, "because," connects verse 19 to verse 18. The Greek word is "dioti." This is a Greek conjunction that indicates cause. He's going to explain why what he says in verse 18 is true. Verse 19 explains how it can be said in verse 18 that the heathen suppress the truth about God in unrighteousness. Now that is the key to this verse. This verse is telling us how the heathen suppress the truth about God.

We are talking about every heathen that ever lived. We're talking about all the heathen in the world today. We're talking about all the heathen who will yet live in the future. Every one of them has suppressed the truth about God. Now, that's the first clue to the answer to the question: What about the heathen who never heard about God? What about the heathen that don't know that God exists? Well, the truth of the matter is there never was a human being who did not know that God exists, unless he was an infant short of mental maturity to grasp this, or unless he was a moron, and a mental incompetent, and thus an infant incapable of grasping this. But the first thing that is pointed out to us is that every human being comes to a place of accountability, and that means a consciousness that God is out there.

So, Paul says, "The wrath of God is against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness because that which may be known." That is several words in English, but only one word in Greek. This is the Greek word "gnostos." This is an adjective that is used as a noun. It's the subject of this sentence: "Because that which may be known." And the way to translate this is: "the knowable." This is going to be the knowable about God, or what can be known. In this case, it's: "the knowable of God." And "of God" should be translated: "concerning God:" "Because the things that are knowable concerning God."

**To Know**

Now, this word comes from a verb that looks like this: "ginosko." And "ginosko" simply means "to know." It signifies knowledge that you take in. It signifies knowledge that comes to you by experience. This is not knowledge which is just intuitive – a knowledge that you have by some sixth sense, so to speak. But this is a verb which indicates that a relationship is established between a person and something else. This person gets to know something, and there is some object out here. A relationship is created between them. In this case, the relationship is between a person and God. This word "ginosko" speaks of getting to know somebody in a way that establishes a relationship with that person.

That's why, for example, the King James Version translates the word "know" in terms of sexual relationships, because this is describing a relationship which is established between two people by that physical act. So, it is described as coming to know that person. But know how? Know in the sense (in terms of the fact) that act is performed, a relationship is established between those two.

So, the verb here is speaking about a person getting to know an object through what he has learned. You can find this used in this way in 1 Corinthians 8:3 and Galatians 4:9.

Now this verse uses the word for "knowing," which indicates that knowledge can establish a relationship between God and a sinner (in this case). Literally, what we're saying here is the knowable concerning God. So, when he uses this word "gnostos," which comes from "ginosko," he's talking about something you may know about God that is going to establish a relationship with that God. That's the point of this word. "Gnostos" is getting to know God in a way that establishes a relationship that continues between you and God. In other words, there is in the universe something that every human being, who has a functioning mentality, can learn about God, no matter where he is. In the deepest jungles of Africa, there is something that you can know about God with just the natural human capacity to think. But what you can know about God, through just natural capacity – not through revelation of the Bible, and not through special revelation yet. Just through natural revelation, you can come to know something about God that establishes a relationship between you and that God.

That's why this is such a significant word: "gnostos" – the knowable concerning God.

Well, this is referring here to natural revelation – what you know apart from the Bible. This which is knowable concerning God comes to every normal human being. It's universal information. It universally comes into the mind of every soul. It is knowledge of God which is external to the soul. This is knowledge concerning which God himself must give you, and He does this through the work of creation, as we shall see in a moment. A normal soul with a functioning mentality is capable of receiving a knowledge about God from creation that will establish a relationship between that soul (that sinner – that heathen) and God who is out there.

So, this verse refers to a revolution which is in the possession of everybody – everyone who ever lived. We may refer to this as simply God-consciousness.

So it says, "Because that which may be known of God (known to establish a relationship) is manifest." The word "is" is present tense, so it is constantly there (the Greek word "eimi"). And it's constantly there. This is knowledge. It's active. It makes itself known through creation. What it makes known is: "manifest." And that's the word "phaneros." "Phaneros" means "open to the sight." It refers to what you see. It refers to the visible creation. And it connects that through the knowable. This happens to be grammatically in the neuter. Also, "knowable" happens to be in the neuter. Therefore, we know grammatically that these two are tied together. What is revealed through creation (what is open in creation) is something that is knowable about God apart from the Bible. What can be done is manifest. And it's manifested "in them," which means "in the sphere of the heathen." It is within each individual heathen mind that this information is known. And it deals with coming to an awareness of the existence of God, or God-consciousness.

Now, once you come to the place of God-consciousness, then you have reached the stage of accountability. So while you are an infant child, and you cannot come to awareness, because your mentality has not developed to that point, and you cannot become aware that God is out there, and you die as an infant, you go to heaven. If you are mentally incompetent for some reason, and you are not able to understand from creation that God is out there, then you go to heaven when you die. But most of us have a normal functioning mind, sooner or later. And you can't say, "Well, what age? Five or six or seven? That is not so. Depending on your surroundings, it may come very early, or it may come considerably later. But before you die, you will become aware of the fact that God is out there. One of these days, you will look up into heaven, and suddenly, you'll realize (you'll become aware) of the fact that you're saying, "You know, something is out there." You'll look at the world about you, and you will say, "Somebody made this. Something must have made this. But I'm not a thing. Would a thing make me? Would a dumb idol made of gold or wood make me? It would make something like himself. I can think. I can choose. I can do things differently.

"I look at the birds. Somebody must have made that bird, but I'm different from that bird. That bird can make a nest. The first time that bird goes to make a nest, he makes it one way. The next time he goes to make a nest, he makes it the same way. The 50th time he makes a nest, it's just like the first one. There's never any change. He knew, instinctively, from the first how to make it, and he never knows how to improve it. If it's cold in the winter, it stays cold in the winter. If it's hot in the summer, it stays hot in the summer. I can think. I can solve these problems. I can make things better. If I can do that, whoever made me must be able to do it, and from what I see around me, He can do it better. He can think better than I can. He knows how to make decisions better than I do. He has the right feelings about things – better than I do."

Then a critical thing happens. Within your soul, a decision was made. You have now come to God-consciousness. You have now come to accountability. And without even putting it in words, there forms in your mind an attitude: "I want to know Him. I want to reach out and find whoever is out there, because if I am what I am, which indicates how much more He must be, then I need him, and I want to know him." And in that moment, you have taken the first step toward eternal life because you have gone positive to God-consciousness. Now God, in His grace, will bring you the information of the gospel, someplace along the line, so that you may receive Christs and close the deal.

That's what this is speaking about – that there is manifested to every human being a knowledge which you may know by your natural capacity that will establish for you a relationship with God in the form of God-consciousness.

So, verse 19 says, "For God has shown it to them." The word "for" is our word "gar" again, which introduces and explanation for the first part of verse 19: "Because that which may be known (the knowable of God) is openly made known within them." This is "in reference to them," and actually "within them" because it is in the mind that it is made known. And then it tells us why: "Because God has shown," and this is the Greek verb "phaneroo," which means, again, to manifest or to make known. It is aorist tense, the point of your awareness of God. It is active. God in grace makes this known. It is indicative. It is a statement of fact. God makes this known (He shows it unto them); that is, to the heathen.

So, what we have said tonight is, first of all, that Jesus Christ is an historical character who actually lived. This is clearly established by the irrefutable, unchallengeable records of the New Testament. This is established by the references of non-biblical Jewish and gentile writers. Therefore, Christ existed. And the fact that God is out there is established by the fact that this may be known of God through creation. Now, verse 20 is going to explain this to us. I am leapfrogging and telling you that it's creation. You don't see that from verse 19. But creation declares to us that there is a God out there, and we're going to see specifically what that creation tells us about God. Verse 20 tells us exactly what creation will tell us about God.

However, one thing it won't tell us is how to go to heaven. So, if you're betting that you're going to get next to God by getting out there and meditating on Sunday mornings out on the hilltop, under the floating clouds, you're mistaken. You will not find the gospel (which you need) in that way. You will find out something, and we're going to look at that specifically. But what this does establish is that there is no normal mind who can ever plead ignorance of the existence of God. Nobody can stand before God at the great white throne, and hear the judgment upon himself to the lake of fire forever, and say, "I didn't know. If only I had known You. If only I had known You existed.” Nobody will say that, for that mouth will be closed, because, while not revealing the gospel necessary to salvation that comes through the special revelation of the Bible and a witness, creation does manifest the existence of God, and it leads one to God-consciousness. Then the issue is going positive or negative to: do I want to know Him? God-consciousness is not salvation, but it is the ground of responsibility on which we will be condemned at the great white throne if we go negative toward our awareness that God is out there.

Positive response at the point of God-consciousness leads the sinner ceases on to gospel opportunity, which again, he may reject, but God will give him the information. Remember that everybody in the world, that has ever lived, has also come to that awareness, and most of them have not cared to know the God who is out there.

**Election**

Well, this is part of election – that God, for some reason that we do not understand, has led us, who are believers, not only to be aware that he is there, but then to follow through and to believe the gospel itself. Verse 20 will complete the story for us next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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