

Chapter 1

Verse 21- *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.*

they knew God- This builds upon the previous verse. Through natural revelation, God has made Himself known, but the response of man is to reject His revelation.

became futile in their reasonings- When people reject God, it affects their minds.

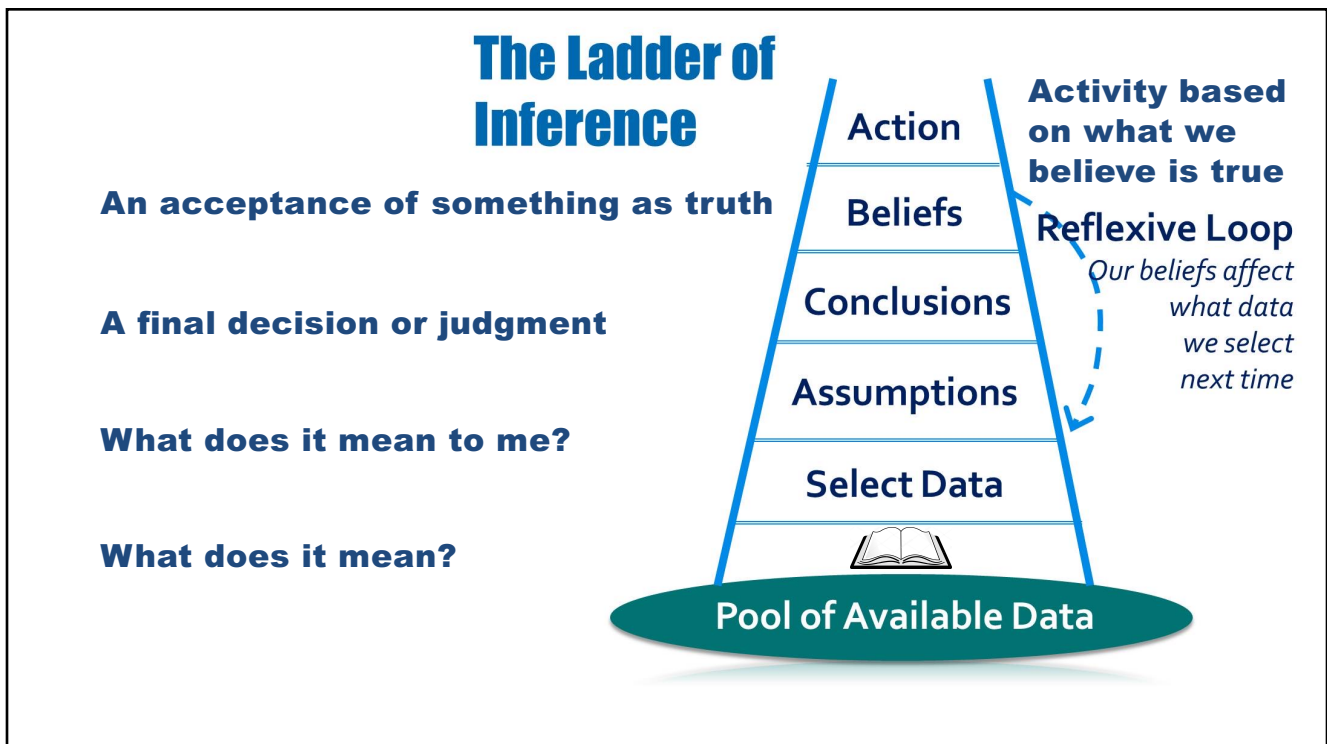
hearts were darkened- Their minds and emotion could not function properly.

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Verse 22- *Claiming to be wise, they became fools,*

they became fools- Those who reject God's revelation become empty in their thinking. This is not a new thought. David wrote that the fool says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). False assumptions lead to false conclusions, which leads to false beliefs (see Ladder of Inference).

Denial of God leads to foolishness, which then leads to a downward spiral described in the following verses.



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Verse 23- *and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.*

an image in the form of corruptible mankind- The next step downward is idolatry (the second commandment). Those who reject God don't even worship other men but creatures (Deut. 4:16-18; Jer. 2:11).

In their perversion, they begin to worship what God has created instead of God.

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Verse 24- *Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.*

God gave them up- Is this passive or active? Paul states this three times (vv. 24, 26, 28). Does He step away and allow man to act like the animals and images they worship, or does He push them into their sin? The participle use here *paredōken- para (alongside) + didomai (to give)* is active. Love is replaced with lust, and to achieve the lusts of their flesh, they dishonor (*atimazesthai-* to treat disgracefully, shamefully) their bodies.

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Verse 25- *For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

exchanged- A transaction takes place. Truth for a lie and they worshiped creatures instead of the Creator.

The first two of God's ten commandments are to not have other gods before Him and not worship or serve any image of any created thing (Exodus 20:3-6).

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Verse 26- *For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged natural relations for that which is contrary to nature,*

As with the previous verses, the sin is named first and then the result. Instead of writing about sexual sin in a general way (v. 24), The Holy Spirit now gets specific as He inspires Paul.

degrading passions- Lesbianism and homosexuality (sodomy) are forbidden in Scripture. (Lev. 20:13- *If there is a man who sleeps with a male as those who sleep with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they must be put to death. They have brought their deaths upon themselves.*)

Homosexuality- Jesus vs. Paul?

“Jesus never thought enough about homosexuality to comment on it. If it wasn’t a big deal with Him, why should it matter to us?”

1. Jesus affirmed that marriage is between one man and one woman.
Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:9
2. Jesus’ words are never in conflict with the rest of Scripture (He wrote them!). He came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it (Matt. 5:17).
3. Silence doesn’t mean consent. He also didn’t speak about abortion, bestiality, incest, and pedophilia, but He would never promote these sins.
4. Jesus confronted and corrected religious thinking of the day that went against Scripture (i.e., the Sabbath), but He did not do so about homosexuality.

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Verse 27- *and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*

natural relations- The biblical standard for natural sexual relations is between a man and a woman. Misrepresentation of this verse supports the idea that men and women are born homosexuals, so their relationships with each other are “natural.”

Gender Vs. Sexual Orientation?

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Verse 27- *and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*

Sodomy is not new. The Greco-Roman society of Paul's day tolerated homosexuality. Barclay notes that “fourteen out of the first fifteen Roman Emperors were homosexuals.”

burned- exekauthēsan (ek- out of + kalo- to burn)

the due penalty of their error- natural consequences of their sin (disease?)

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Verse 28- *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper,*

God gave them up- By removing His restraining/protective hand and as an act of judgment for defiling His natural plan.

depraved mind- *adokimon-* a (not) + *doke* (test). Failing the test of God's standard. Not proven genuine. God does not exist and is not necessary for my life.

This is not eternal judgment. Any person can repent, turn, and submit themselves to the Lord.

Chapter 1

Verse 28- *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper,*

things that are not proper- Paul lists 21 different activities a depraved mind will lead us to in verses 29-32. They are grouped into three parts. The first four are general. The next five relate to envy and its consequences. The final twelve include a variety of sins society would condemn as dangerous to the social fabric (Mounce).

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Verse 29- *people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips,*

unrighteousness- A display of rebellion against God

wickedness- People who take delight in doing wrong

greed- The insatiable desire to have more

evil- Hard to distinguish from "wickedness."

Chapter 1

Verse 29- *people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips,*

envy- The sense of begrudging someone having something you don't want them to have.

murder- The deliberate taking of someone's life (often caused by envy- Cain/Abel).

strife- the love of quarreling and what it brings

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Verse 29- *people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips,*

deceit- Cunning and treachery

malice- The desire to hurt people, spite

gossips- (*psithyristas*) Secret slanderers.

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Verse 30- *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,*

slanderers- *katalalous* (*kata-* against) + (*laleo-* to talk). Those who openly backbite and degrade others.

haters of God- Those who hate God and what He stands for- the impious.

insolent- Treating others with contempt. A sense of entitlement.

arrogant- *hyperēphanous* (*hyper-* above) + (*phaino-* to appear)
To appear above others.

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Verse 30- *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,*

boastful- Constantly bragging on themselves

inventors of evil- Those who take special delight in inventing “original” methods of destroying others.

disobedient to parents,- Those who disobey the authority God has placed over them.

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Verse 31- *without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful;*

without understanding,- People that are “void of understanding.” This is not just a mental weakness. They are stupid because they have all along been unwilling to listen to God

untrustworthy,- They are not to be trusted because they cannot even trust themselves.

unfeeling,- Without natural affection. It was not at all unusual for pagans to drown or in some other way to destroy unwanted offspring (Hendriksen & Kistemaker).

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Verse 31- *without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful;*

and unmerciful;- People without mercy, cruel persons, ruthless ones.

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Verse 32- *and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.*

know the ordinance of God- those guilty in the previous list must not be regarded as being innocent (cannot distinguish between right and wrong). They know that according to God's decree, those involved in such practice are worthy of death. How?

Because God, who is righteous and holy, has revealed himself to them in nature (1:21) and in conscience (2:14, 15).

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Verse 32- *and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.*

approve of those who practice them- When Christians sin they feel sorrow (guilt), and repent, but these who practice sin feel no remorse and encourage others to do the same.

The purpose of chapter one? Paul shows the Romans that man's sin is so great that only God can save him.

Next week...

Chapter 2

**“The Jews Under
The Law”**

