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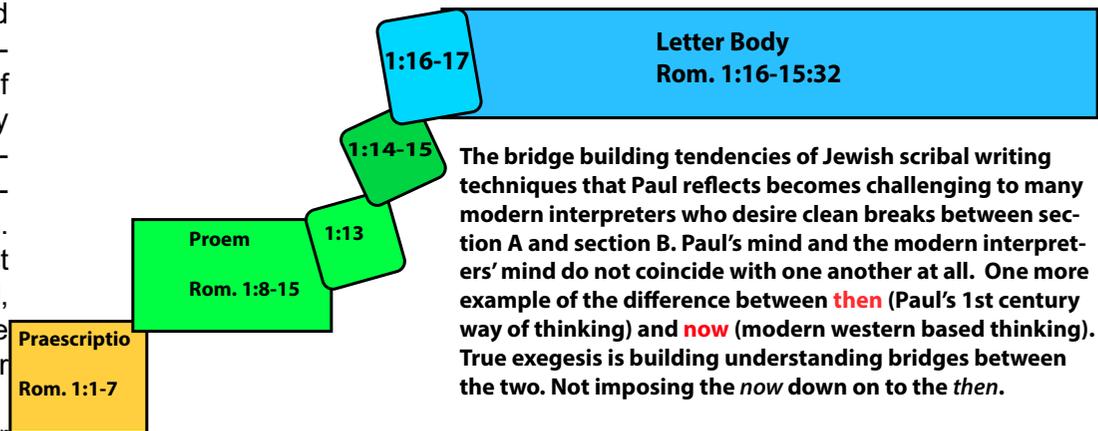
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[THEOLOGICAL AND INTERPRETIVE OBSERVATIONS](#)

### 10.3.3 Letter Body, 1:16-15:33

The determination of the boundaries of the letter body are somewhat challenging, particularly the beginning point. The travel plans section in 15:14-32 stand as a fairly typical ancient letter closing section coming at the close of the letter body and helping to transition into the *Conclusio* segment. But considerable difference of opinion exists regarding the beginning of the letter body after to Proem section. As I argued above, my conviction is that seeking to define a clear beginning point reflects modern western desires for precision. And the letter writing in Paul's world shows much less concern for such precision. Add to that Paul's scribal Jewish training where units of thought often need to be linked together by connectors of some kind, and one thus encounters a situation like in Rom. 1:13-17 where small internal units form a transition from the Proem to the letter body as reflected in the ve chart.

Grammatically, the causal  $\gamma\alpha\rho$  conjunction repeated for both sentences in vv. 16-17 link this unit of text back to vv. 14-



## Romans 1:13-17 Transitions from Proem to Letter Body

The bridge building tendencies of Jewish scribal writing techniques that Paul reflects becomes challenging to many modern interpreters who desire clean breaks between section A and section B. Paul's mind and the modern interpreters' mind do not coincide with one another at all. One more example of the difference between **then** (Paul's 1st century way of thinking) and **now** (modern western based thinking). True exegesis is building understanding bridges between the two. Not imposing the *now* down on to the *then*.



1:8-12 ==> 1:13 ==> 1:14-15 ==> 1:16-17

also clearly, vv. 14-15 provide a conceptual basis for vv. 8-13. His prayer requests along with repeated earlier attempts to travel to Rome reflect his thanksgiving for the witness of the Roman Christians. But all of this emerges out of his sense of divine calling to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Now in vv. 16-17 that sense of divine calling to preach the Gospel rests on the basis of what that Gospel message is and the pride in it that Paul possesses. Additionally, vv. 16-17 serve to set up the discussion of the Gospel that encompasses the rest of the letter body down through 15:33. So just like a linked chain, each of the small units leads to the next unit in vv. 8-17.

The precise structure of 1:18-15:13 is also debated among modern scholars. For most of the modern era until the last few decades, the older dual division of doctrine (1:18-11:36) and practical (12:1-15:13) has dominated the understanding. Although highly questionable literarily, the influence of this perspective has been enormous. Earlier commentators have tried to make this twofold structure a template for virtually all of Paul's letters -- something utterly false and misleading. But beyond this the impact of this twofold structure on theological training in seminaries and divinity schools for the past four hundred or so years is seen in the dividing of degree curriculum into a twofold division of 'classical' and 'practical.' Out of this has often come a priority on the classical / doctrinal over the practical. To be sure distinct directions can be easily seen between theological education in North America and in Europe and the UK. But the dual structure is foundational to both sets of traditions. The so-called Practical Theological studies has generally struggled to gain recognition and anything close to equal standing with the so-called classical studies side. Such impact subsequently shows up in much of church life where how one behaves is not nearly as important as what one believes. Of course, the clear teaching of the New Testament flatly denies and condemns such understanding, as is seen in Jas. 2:14-16; Mat. 7:22-25 et als. Amazingly, the beginning root of all of this lies in this very questionable early modern viewing of the structural contents of the letter body of Romans. This should be a reminder of

15 as a conceptual foundation for the axiomatic principle of Paul's sense of indebtedness. But

how important for interpretation is the structural arrangement of ideas in the biblical text.

What can be said then about any structural arrangement of ideas in 1:18-5:13? First, let it be said that in Romans, more so than any other Pauline letter, a traceable progression of thought surfaces from careful analysis. It doesn't fit any kind of western outline using a I., II., III kind of pattern. Thinking in any of the first century cultures that Paul had exposure to simply does not follow this kind of logic.

What we do encounter is the core concepts in 1:16-17 providing a launch pad for a large number of expansions stitched together very loosely, and sometimes incoherently, over the remainder of the letter body. One should know that the four listings below under the general caption **The Gospel as...** will bunch together often more than one of these launch pad topics for the sake of keeping the posted units of commentary relatively equal in size. This periodic 'spurting out' of a new topic can drive a modern reader up the wall in trying to follow the apostle, simply because we crave logical, smooth progression from section to section. And we're not going to get that in the original Paul. For that pseudo-Paul you have to turn to many of the post-enlightenment commentaries on Romans where what you actually get is the distorted thinking of the commentator, not Paul. My objective for this commentary is to explain to the best of my ability the original Paul and then seek to connect him up to modern thinking in the clearest manner possible.<sup>1</sup> Only then can the actual voice of Paul flow through this text into our Christian experience today. And it is solely through that authentic voice of Paul that the voice of God flows in inspiration to us today.

#### 10.3.3.1 Body Opening: the Gospel, 1:16-18

16 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι. 17 δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

The internal structure of this pericope is clear from the above diagram.

<sup>1</sup>The many proposals made in recent times by commentators with orientation toward the literary side of ancient texts are interesting and often helpful, but most seem to impose too much of some modern methodology onto the text for the analysis. More balance in the methodology used is needed. This seems to be especially problematic for American commentators with a penchant for fadism. Thankfully not all are so oriented. From my observation, the more familiar the commentator is with literary patterns in the ancient world, along with ways of thinking in that world, the better the insights of the commentator.

**Letter Body:**

1.16 γὰρ  
8 Οὐ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον,  
γὰρ  
9 δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν  
εἰς σωτηρίαν  
παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι,  
Τουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον  
καὶ Ἑλληνι.  
  
1.17 γὰρ  
10 δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ... ἀποκαλύπτεται  
ἐν αὐτῷ  
ἐκ πίστεως  
εἰς πίστιν,  
καθὼς γέγραπται·  
  
δὲ  
ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

The second and third γὰρ conjunctions introduce reasons for each preceding statement. Together all three statements (#s 8-10) provide a basis for the declarations in 1:14-15. And Paul sees enough content in these three declarations to flesh out the rest of the letter body, even through the travel plans, down to 15:33 which ends on a note of rejoicing and prayer: Ὁ δὲ

θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, ἀμήν. **And may the God of peace be with all of you, amen.** Do you desire to know the meaning of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον? Rom. 1:18-15:33 gives you the most detailed explanation anywhere inside the NT. And this explanation is summarized in Rom. 1:1b-6 in anticipation of the letter body.

Each of the three declarations needs to be carefully examined since this pericope plays such a pivotal role to the letter body.<sup>2</sup>

**a) Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, for I am not embarrassed by the Gospel.** The verb with the negative Οὐ ἐπαισχύνομαι is followed by the direct object τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The English can't follow this syntax due of the nature of the English verbs used for translation. When ἐπαισχύνομαι has an impersonal object in the NT usage, it is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, **the Gospel** (Rom. 1:16); τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, **witnessing to our Lord** (2 Tim. 1:8); or τὴν ἄλυσίν μου, **my chains** (2 Tim. 1:16). The word group αἰσχύνω, **ἐπαισχύνω**, κατααἰσχύνω, αἰσχύνω, αἰσχρὸς, αἰσχροῦς (→ αἰδώς) forms the backdrop for clearer understanding of the verb.<sup>3</sup> Central is the idea of shame either feeling it (שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת, שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת) or producing it (שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת).<sup>4</sup> Socio-

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<sup>2</sup>Among modern commentators with rhetorical interests prominent in their methodology, this text of 1:16-17 is commonly labeled as *Propositio*.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of a *propositio* in a rhetorical discourse. It sets forth the basic theme or proposition which the author will then advance by a series of arguments. It has been characteristic of some treatments of these verses to see the quotation of Habakkuk as the key foreshadowing what follows in chs. 1–8, but in fact the entire *propositio* needs to be given its due weight. The stress, for example, on the gospel being the power of God for salvation of the Jew first as well as the Gentile foreshadows the discussion in chs. 9–11. Furthermore, the reference to faithful living or living by faith in v. 17 is precisely what chs. 12–15 will focus on. Of course the reference to the righteousness of God is crucial and indicates one of the major themes to be dealt with throughout chs. 1–11. But no one should miss that the one word, with its cognates, which gets repeated four times in this *propositio* is faith/faithfulness/believing. This whole discourse will be an attempt to instruct about the nature of faith and faithfulness. God's own faithfulness in Christ to Jews and his impartiality when it comes to Jews and Gentiles will be under discussion, as will human faith and faithfulness.

Quintilian tells us that it is important, if there are multiple propositions (which is perfectly appropriate: *Instit. Or.* 4.4.2–5), or a cluster of related propositions to be dealt with in the arguments, that they should be enumerated up front, and so there must be a sort of partition (*partitio*) of these propositions, instead of just a presentation of one proposition. In my judgment this is precisely what we find in Rom. 1:16–17

[Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 47.]

<sup>3</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:189.

<sup>4</sup>In contrast to → αἰδώς and αἰδεῖσθαι, αἰσχύνω and αἰσχύνω (or αἰσχύνομαι) remained in common use even in the lower strata of Greek, and must often have replaced the less usual terms. As in all the literature of Hellenistic Judaism, they are thus common in the LXX (mostly in translation of שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת and שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת). Nor are they used in a special sense, except that there is a one-sided application which gives them a certain nuance.

"The verb αἰσχύνω, fully interchangeable with ἐπ- and esp. κατααἰσχύνω, is often found act. in the sense of 'to shame' or 'to bring to shame' (mostly for שׁוֹבֵי־חַיִת). Most frequently God is the subject, and the shame to which He brings is His judgment (ψ 43:9, v.l. ἐξουθενόω; 118:31, 116). The mid. is relatively uncommon, and has the common Greek sense of 'being ashamed' (i.e., of doing something, 2 Esr. 8:22 etc., or of having done something, 2 Ch. 12:6). Mostly αἰσχύνεσθαι denotes experience of the judgment of God; and it is usually difficult to decide whether the form is mid. or pass., i.e., 'to be shamed or confounded,' or 'to be ashamed' in the sense of 'having to be ashamed.' What is in view is not so much the state of soul of the αἰσχυνθεῖς but the situation into which he is brought and in which he is exposed to shame and has thus to be ashamed. That the thought is primarily of one's own despair rather than

logically, it must not be overlooked in understanding the profound sense of shame experienced in a collective oriented society such as the world of Paul. Western individualistic societies have little ability to comprehend the intensity of being shamed in such societies. Modern readers with Asian or rural African backgrounds grasp this far better than anyone else in today's world. For Paul to assert that he feels no shame caused by the Gospel is a powerful assertion of pride and confidence in the Gospel message he proclaimed.

The εὐαγγέλιον asserted here has already been summarized as εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ in 1:1b-6. The centerpiece of it is τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, **His Son** who is Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, **Jesus Christ our Lord**, through whom grace and apostleship has come to Paul. One should note that in the first century Christian use τὸ εὐαγγέλιον only referred to the orally proclaimed message about Christ and salvation, and not to any written document.<sup>5</sup> This second meaning comes in the late second century when the documents about the life of Christ had circulated long enough to need identifying labels.<sup>6</sup> The label τὸ εὐαγγέλιον was attached to not just the first four documents of the NT, but to quite a large number of similar documents focusing on Christ in some manner or another.

Paul's connection to the Gospel as apostle to the Gentiles is a major point for this letter. He has been called by God to proclaim this message to humanity. Central to this point is the profound importance of this message as the only source of authentic spiritual life with God. Thus, as he will go on to explain the Gospel in the letter body, it will consistently be from the perspective of his connection to it. This was the necessary perspective for this letter of introduction to the church at Rome. One will not find in Romans a detached, objective discussion of the Gospel. Such only exists in modern theology textbooks.

#### **b) δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίω τε**

the δόξα of others is shown by the fact that → ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι and εὐφραίνεσθαι are the most common opposites (ψ 34:26 f.; 69:3-5 etc.); indeed, when δοξάζεσθαι (→ δόξα) and → καυχᾶσθαι are the opposites (Is. 45:24 f.; ψ 96:7 etc.), they do not have their Greek sense, but indicate pride rather than good repute. Characteristic are the combinations and parallelisms of αἰσχυνοῦσθαι with ἐντραπῆναι, παραχθῆναι, ἀτιμωθῆναι, ὀνειδισθῆναι, καταγελασθῆναι, ἐπιστραφῆναι, ἀποστραφῆναι εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, ἐκλείπειν, ἠτῶσθαι, ματαιωθῆναι, ἀπολέσθαι, συντριβῆναι etc., which illustrate the breadth of meaning. Since the reference is mostly to the αἰσχυνοῦσθαι of those who are full of proud confidence and expectancy, or to the fact that those who trust in Yahweh will not be confounded, αἰσχυνοῦσθαι often has almost the meaning of 'being disillusioned' (e.g., Jer. 2:36).

"Accordingly, the subst. αἰσχύνη is very seldom used for the 'feeling of shame.' It mostly denotes 'disgrace,' though sometimes with an emphasis on the fact that this also means being ashamed. Its primary reference is to the shame brought by the divine judgment. Here, too, the range of meaning is shown by the combinations with ἐντροπή, ὀνειδισμός, ἀτιμία, etc. It is also characteristic that αἰσχύνη is used for לְצַב or for the equivalent תְּצַב."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 189.]

<sup>5</sup>The common root for εὐαγγέλιον (noun) and εὐαγγελίζω (verb) underscore the oral nature of the idea. The verb stresses the act of speaking while the noun the content of what is spoken. The adverbial prefix εὐ means good while the core stem ἀγγέλ denotes message.

<sup>6</sup>In most of the late first century the label used for the first four NT documents was *Memorabilia de Apostoloi*, [Memoirs of the Apostles](#).

**πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι.** **For it is God's power unto salvation to all who are believing, both Jews and Greeks.** This γὰρ clause provides a reason for the first statement [cf. a)] as the basis of Paul's pride in the Gospel. Paul's pride in the Gospel rests on what it is, not in his proclamation of it. The dynamism embedded in the word δύναμις is virtually impossible to adequately translate over into English. But one can sense something of it from the syntax of this phrase here. The Gospel is not just power, but rather θεοῦ, **God's**, power. The power of One who merely spoke a word and creation came into being. Further, it is power εἰς σωτηρίαν, **into salvation**. This is power to move an individual into a condition of being delivered from his/her sinfulness and eternal fate because of that sinfulness. The experience of being in a saved condition is huge in the letter body of Romans, both in implications for now and for eternity. The implicit movement in the preposition εἰς signals the verb action placing παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, **everyone who believes**, into the whatever is defined by the accusative case object of εἰς, in this instance, σωτηρίαν. But here with the nature of ἐστὶν, the picture of the believer being inside salvation is presented as accomplished fact.

Thus the picture is clear. The Gospel represents God's dynamitic power that puts the believer inside salvation. Important to note the individual being placed inside salvation. It's not everyone among humanity. Instead it is παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, everyone who is believing. The present tense ongoing action designation of τῷ πιστεύοντι means not the individual who has only made a confession of faith. Rather the individual who is in continuous commitment to Christ. Confession is just the beginning of a life long commitment to Christ. This commitment being lived out is what places the individual inside salvation. The importance of this is underscored with 21 uses of the verb πιστεύω just in Romans and sprinkled all through the chapters. Added to that are 39 uses of the noun πίστις scattered all through Romans as well. Exclusively it is the person of πίστις who is inside salvation.

But such opportunity is widely available. The adjective παντι, to every, affirms this. But the appositional 'Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, both first to the Jew and then to the Greek, assert this inclusiveness in emphatic expression. Whereas Paul first used the traditional Greek way of dividing humanity into two groups, Ἑλληνσίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, both to Greeks and barbarians, that is, both to the wise and the ignorant (cf. 1:14), now he utilizes the traditional Jewish way of slicing humanity into two groups, 'Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, to both the Jew first and then to the Greek (=non-Jew). This phraseology is commonly used by Paul with five more instances in Romans: 2:9-10; 3:9, 29; 9:24; 10:12.<sup>7</sup>

As a Jewish Christian, Paul's sense of communicating the Gospel to his own people ('Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον), even in Diaspora Judaism, remained very strong. In his missionary journeys, his approach was always to go first to the Jewish synagogue in a new city to present the Gospel. But careful analysis of Acts 13-28 also reveals that it was here in the Jewish synagogue that he found the first group of non-Jews who typically became the starting core of the churches established. Interestingly in the one or two places with little or no Jewish population in the city, e.g., Athens, here he had his greatest challenges establishing a group of believers in the city. So the synagogue became a pivotal launch pad for preaching the Gospel to non-Jews in his ministry. The role of the Jewish people in the Gospel, alluded to here, will be expanded significantly in chapters nine through eleven.

**c) δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. For God's righteousness in Him is being disclosed from faith into faith, just as it stands written: And the**

<sup>7</sup>"'Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, 'to Jew first, but also to Greek.' 'Jew and Greek' is the Jewish equivalent to the Gentile categorization of the world given in v 14, only here with 'Greek' replacing 'Gentile,' reflecting the all-pervasiveness of Greek culture (cf. 2 Macc 4:36; 11:2; 3 Macc 3:8; 4 Macc 18:20; Sib. Or. 5.264). The two terms form a regular combination in Paul (2:9-10; 3:9, 29; 9:24; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22-24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 2:14-15; 3:28; Col 3:11); and note also 3:1-4 and 11:18, 28-29. The stepping back into a Jewish perspective (following on from v 14) will be deliberate. The phrase here reflects Paul's consciousness that he was a Jew who believed in a Jewish Messiah yet whose life's work was to take the gospel beyond the national and religious boundaries of Judaism. The πρώτον here balances the παντι of the preceding phrase: he does not for a moment forget, nor does he want his Gentile readers to forget ('a certain polemical overtone'—Zeller, *Juden*, 145) Jewish priority in God's saving purpose (cf. 3:3-4; chaps. 9-11); but equally fundamental is his conviction that Jewish priority does not shift the 'terms of salvation' one whit beyond faith. The need to explain and defend this double emphasis is the driving force behind the whole epistle. For 'Ιουδαῖος see further on 2:17." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 40.]

<sup>8</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:174.

<sup>9</sup>"The concept of law exercised so strong an influence on the understanding of all social relationships that even theological reflection on the fellowship established between God and man was decisively affected by it. One may say that law is the basis of the view of God in the OT in so far as it is theologically developed, and that conversely the endowment of legal concepts with religious meaning contributed to an ethicising of law (→ θεός). This is proved especially by the usage of the OT. The concept of law is expressed by a series of terms which are used not merely for the relations of God to man and man to God, but also for the conduct of both God and man as determined by these relations. If vital religious relationships and interconnexions are regulated by a religious norm, it is obvious that this norm is valid for all social relationships, and therefore that law fashions the ethical norm." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:174.]

<sup>10</sup>"That God posits law, and that He is bound to it as a just God, is a fundamental tenet in the OT knowledge of faith in all its variations. The element of unity in the faith of all the righteous in Israel, whether prophets, priests, lawgivers, or men of a less distinctive sociological type, is the acknowledgment of God's law ordering all life both great and small

**just out of faith will live.** In a similar fashion to the second γὰρ clause [cf. b) above] this third clause stands as a basis for the second statement. δύναμις θεοῦ, God's power, is concretized as δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, God's righteousness, by means of faith commitment of the individual believer. The powerful, life changing righteousness of God comes alive in the life of the believer thus enabling him to discover spiritual life both now and for eternity. The anchor point of Habakkuk 2:4 here quoted confirms Paul's point.

Key to this declaration is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται, God's righteousness is being disclosed in Him. What is God's righteousness? Romans is central to answering this question. Out of the 90 uses of δικαιοσύνη in the NT 32 of them are in Romans. It is part of the larger word group δίκη (22x NT; 0x Rom), δίκαιος (159x NT; 7x Rom), δικαιοσύνη (90x NT; 32 Rom), δικαίω (54x NT; 15x Rom), δικαίωμα (22x NT; 5x Rom), δικαίωσις (2x NT; 2x Rom), δικαιοκρισία (1x NT; 1 Rom).<sup>8</sup> But a long list of derivative words also go back to the δίκη-root: δικαίως (5x NT; 0x Rom); δικάζω (0x NT); δικαστής (2x NT; 0x Rom); ἄδικος (46x NT; 1x Rom); ἀδικία (56x NT; 7x Rom); ἀδικέω (45x NT; 0x Rom); ἀδικημα (6x NT; 1x Rom); ἀδικως (1x NT; 0x Rom); ἀντίδικος (5x NT; 0x Rom); ἐκδικέω (24x NT; 1x Rom); ἐκδίκησις (34x NT; 1x Rom); ἐκδικος (5x NT; 1x Rom); ἔνδικος (2x NT; 1x Rom); καταδικάζω (5x NT; 0x Rom); καταδίκη (1x NT; 0x Rom); ὑπόδικος (1x NT; 1x Rom). Clearly the idea of this word group looms large over the pages of both the New Testament and Romans in particular.

One cannot grasp the concept of this word group in the Old Testament outside the norms of the Torah of God.<sup>9</sup> The ethical norms established in the Law of Moses define conduct acceptable to God since these norms reflect God's character as well.<sup>10</sup> The images of God as Ruler and Judge are

very central here.<sup>11</sup> God as a just Judge and Ruler transfers to the divine demand for humans to conduct themselves in a just manner as a condition of their relationship to God.<sup>12</sup> This very rich Hebrew background stands behind this expression δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ that the apostle plays off of in ab-

and forming a basis for hope. There can be no mistaking the causal connexion between the form of tribal religion in which God is not merely the Lord of law but also one who is bound by it. Yahweh is the source of all the bodies of law in the OT.<sup>5</sup> Even in the nomadic period the sacred lot (Ex. 28:30) mediated the divine decision not only in civil law but also in political questions; Yahweh's משפטים, i.e., His institution of valid law, constitute His direction (הורה, Dt. 33:10). In virtue of His quality as chief שפט, His authority as God extends to the concrete relationships of the historical existence of Israel, and the confident question of Abraham (Gn. 18:25J): הֲשֹׁפֵט כְּלִי-הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט: may be a bold challenge, like all attempts to weigh God's actions by human ideas of equity, but as an expression of boundless trust that Yahweh's action, whatever it may be, will correspond to the binding norm of a שפט, it is a valuable testimony to the subjection to the divine decision which was customary from the very first in the groups which served Yahweh.<sup>6</sup> The law of Yahweh is an order of life which cannot be challenged or changed. It is against nature to despise it (Jer. 8:7). תְּמִים כְּעֶלֶוֹ, says the Song of Moses (Dt. 32:4). God's action is a perfect whole which stands because all His ways are right. They are right as the dealings which are worthy of acknowledgment, which give to all men their existence, and which assure them in this existence. Yahweh's law is righteous because He is righteous: הוֹדוּ אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאִין עָלָי צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוֹדוּ. One may rely upon it because it is not crooked or devious; the mind of Yahweh is upright as that of one who is righteous.<sup>7</sup> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:176.]

<sup>11</sup>"In such declarations Yahweh is undoubtedly thought of in terms of His office as Ruler and Judge, as שפט צדיק (Ps. 7:11; Jer. 12:1). At a very early stage in Israel His action was seen from this standpoint even though it had little in common with law in the sense of civil or public law. The Song of Deborah calls the victory of the tribes of Israel צדקת יהוה (Ju. 5:11): 'the righteous rule of Yahweh.' If we follow through the implications of this view, we can see how confidence in the judicial qualities of Yahweh advances the concept of God. For if His benefits are considered as righteous judgment even in victories over peoples with other gods, then some place must be found for the view or the belief that the omnipotent rule of the one Yahweh who decides legal disputes extends to other nations. At any rate, the idea of conducting the case of Israel was a means to interpret the order ruling in the world. The dubious feature in this view is that it necessarily separates into parties those who stand under the rule of Yahweh, so that human judgment is far too readily inclined to anticipate the divine. Thus we can see in prayer a tendency to claim the righteousness of God and to ask for the condemnation of opponents (e.g., Ps. 5:8, 10).<sup>8</sup> The concept of righteousness is robbed of its objective power when an attempt is made to force the Judge on the basis of His sense of right. The point may even be reached where the righteousness of God is thought to be operative only for the righteous and innocent (Ps. 18:25 f.). But we hardly do justice to such sayings if we press them theoretically. They rather show how strong religious motifs can arise from a theological mode of viewing the just God, so that it is no longer possible to understand the concept of divine righteousness in purely formal terms. This concept is a legacy of faith, expressing boundless confidence in the moral will of God, in virtue of which what is good endures and what is evil or lawless falls victim to annihilating judgment. From צדקה as the norm for the fulfilled state of שלום there arises צדקה as action, as the conduct which brings about, renews and secures this state." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:176–177.]

<sup>12</sup>"This applies not merely to God's action but also to man's conduct in relation to God and man. The strongly marked love of the authors of the OT for juridical thinking in relation to ethical and religious conduct means that they have continually before them the picture of the righteous as one who seeks justice before the judge, defending and vindicating his cause against those who are full of malice and deceit. This is the way in which to depict the overcoming of the unrest and need of the righteous by faith in the constancy of the saving will of the covenant God. He helps to right (הצדיק), and the man who is set in the right by His pronouncement is צדיק. Strictly, this picture of the legal process (ריב) is always present when the OT describes as righteous the pious man who is acknowledged by Yahweh. As the judge decides between two parties, pronouncing in favour of the צדיק and against the רשע, the wrongdoer,<sup>9</sup> so Yahweh takes action when He intervenes in the confusion of human affairs on behalf of the pious who keep His laws. Thus צדיק comes to have the sense of 'the pious,' and צדקה, the conduct which is vindicated before a public tribunal and thus leads to pardon,<sup>10</sup> becomes a synonym for 'piety' as recognised by the divine pronouncement.<sup>11</sup> It means much the same as אמונה, i.e., constancy in executing and fulfilling the commands of God through all uncertainty and conflict. צדיק באמונתו יתנה (Hab. 2:4): the just lives, i.e., he escapes the sentence of death demanded by his opponents, on the basis of unshakable fidelity to the command of God.<sup>12</sup> The word אמונה excellently describes the demand made on conduct by faith in God's righteousness and hope of His recognition. The personal misfortune of individuals and the fate of the covenant people often enough seem to justify the view that God's judgment works itself out in the form of condemnation, when misfortune comes on the pious. צדקה does not take here the form of success.<sup>13</sup> In such a situation the thought of righteousness yields to other motifs. Yahweh is a rock to which the righteous finally withdraw for protection against the outside world (Ps. 62:7 etc.). But from this place of refuge it is again possible to make the declaration of faith: לך אדני חסד, 'to thee, O Lord, a sense of right is proper; for thou renderest to every man according to his work' (v. 12). The torture of doubting God's righteousness constitutes the spiritual grief of Job, and the author of the dialogue has tried to depict the experience that when it is a question of confidence in the validity of right between God and man we are dealing with something which we must be able to take for granted. He realises, however, that if the dogma is not to become a hollow phrase it must be projected into a higher sphere than that which is commensurate with human understanding."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:177–178.]

coming under the influence of reason.<sup>13</sup> By the time of Paul, the general idea of *δίκη* is that it is to be defined and enforced by the *πόλις* established by men.<sup>14</sup> It touches all of existence which the state has the duty to enforce by punishment and reward.<sup>15</sup> As the philosopher Plato taught three centuries before Paul, *δικαιοσύνη* is the basic structure both of the state and of the human soul. Living then by *δίκη* elevates one to the status of *δικαιοσύνη* which is the greatest of all virtues, *κρατίστη τῶν ἀρετῶν*. But the religious origins of *δίκη* are not lost in this later Greek thinking applied largely to human conduct. The sacred origin of *δίκη* guaranteed the inherent justness of law.

Thus when Paul sets forth the idea of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* being disclosed in Christ (*ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται*) rather than in either the Jewish Torah or Greek *δίκη*, his thinking was radically challenging to virtually everything taught and believed by both his Jewish and non-Jewish readers / listeners

at Rome. The place of discovery of God's righteousness was exclusively in the person of Jesus Christ. The picture presented by Jesus' life and character defines what God as righteous means. Thus righteousness is not statically defined by law, either Jewish or Greek. Instead, it is dynamic and represented by Jesus as the perfect reflection of God. One should note that nowhere do Paul assert that law either Jewish or Greek is fundamentally wrong. Instead, what he does insist on adamantly is that the exclusive path to discovery of God's righteousness is Jesus Christ. And this discovery uncovers a brand new way of thinking about righteousness and its application to human life. Thus we can easily understand why the rest of the letter body is devoted to unwrapping this radically new way of thinking. It possesses enormous implications for human life and living.

What then is the key for humans to make this discovery? Paul's an-

<sup>13</sup>"The basis and centre of early Greek social life from the 8th to the beginning of the 5th century, and then in the philosophical political theory of the 4th century, is the idea of law as a religious, political and ethical magnitude. It is worth noting that the starting-point for the Greeks is not the rational and logical concept of *δίκη* but the mythical figure of the goddess which bears this name: Hes. Op., 256 ff.

ἡ δέ τε παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα  
κυδρὴ τ' αἰδοίη τε θεοῖς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν.

"With increasing rationalisation and intellectual refinement, Hesiod's robust and tangible goddess seated beside the judgment throne of Zeus becomes in Solon the immanent though no less divine principle of law in the world and in civil life (Fr., 1, 8 [I, 17, Diehl]; Fr., 3, 14 ff. [I, 23, Diehl]).<sup>3</sup> For Solon law is not an invention of man; it is an independent law which, however men may adapt or force it, will always triumph because it is divine. The only difference from Hesiod is that the mode of its divinity is now different. The recognition of *δίκη* in political life carries with it by analogy its presence as universal law in the cosmos (→ *κόσμος*). In the only surviving fragment of Anaximander<sup>4</sup> *δίκη* is an immanent rather than an external force. The movement from a divinity which punishes from without to the immanence of penal retribution leads to the concept of a universal divine norm,<sup>5</sup> as in Heraclitus Fr., 94 (I, 96, Diels): ἥλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν.

"After Solon the greatest proponent of the concept of law is Theognis, in whose sayings we have the much quoted text: ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετὴ ἐστίν (v. 147 [I, 124, Diehl]). In this early period righteousness is not something inward; it is what is legally (→ *νόμος*) laid down by the government in relation to society. We can thus understand why the new concept of *δικαιοσύνη*<sup>6</sup> should include all that is implied by *ἀρετή*. If for Plato *δικαιοσύνη* is the basic structure both of the state (Resp., I–IV) and of the human soul (Resp., IV, 443c ff.), we can see here the influence of the underlying religious components of the origin of *δίκη*. In the ethics of Aristotle too, who devotes a whole book to *δικαιοσύνη* (Eth. Nic., V), *δικαιοσύνη* still occupies the place of honour among all virtues (*κρατίστη τῶν ἀρετῶν*, V, 3, p. 1129b, 27); it is the application of all virtues in human society (ἡ τῆς ὅλης ἀρετῆς χρῆσις πρὸς ἄλλον, V, 5, p. 1130b, 11 f.). Aristotle begins with this general understanding of righteousness as the conjunction of all ethical and political norms. Only secondarily does he distinguish (V, 4, p. 1130a, 14) as one part of virtue the legal righteousness or justice which is concerned with the distribution of honour and money and the regulation of private dealings (V, 4, p. 1130b, 3 ff.; V, 5, p. 1130b, 30 ff.). Purely linguistic investigation confirms this comprehensive usage."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:178–179.]

<sup>14</sup>A major function of the *πόλις*, city, was for the *πολιταί*, citizens, to determine the proper understanding and application of the *δίκη* to the residents. Remember that the *πολιταί* were the recognized elite of the city who formed the governing authority. This structure essentially remained in place and under general adoption by the Romans even in the era of the empire. The modification was that the *πόλις* of Rome assumed world wide authority to determine and execute its interpretation across the empire. This worked itself out differently either through the senatorial provinces or the imperial provinces. Mostly, however, Rome, through the local provinces in very loose structure and administration, merely exercised veto power over the larger cities in the provinces which remained the primary governing agency over the people. The annual appointment of provincial governors in virtually all of the provinces guaranteed minimum interference from Rome in the regional affairs across the empire. The exception was in the imperial provinces where a Roman military officer held the post a military governor. This happened only in provinces perceived to be trouble makers, e.g., in the three provinces among the Jews in Palestine.

<sup>15</sup>It is out of the idea of reward and punishment that the legal sense of rendering verdicts and executing punishments on offenders is derived. Thus terms such as *ἀδικέω*, *act unjustly*; *ἀδικήμα*, *crime*; *ἀδικῶς*, *wrongfully* etc. are derived from the core idea of *δίκη*. The negative idea of punishment is picked up in most NT uses of these terms through the influence of the LXX usage.

ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν  
out of faith into faith  
Romans 1:17



INTERPRETATIONS:

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. From Torah faith      | Into Gospel Faith           |
| 2. From conversion faith | Into faith living           |
| 3. From God's fullness   | Into man's faith commitment |

implied comparison between the Old and New Testaments.<sup>181</sup> And in the eighteenth century John Wesley proposed that the expression has to do with 'a gradual series of still clearer and clearer promises' as first 'revealed by the law' and now 'revealed by the gospel.'<sup>182</sup>

"The fourth-century commentator Ambrosiaster seems to have been the first to have understood the first mention of 'faith' in the expression as referring, in some manner, to God and the second as referring to the one who responds to God, though without spelling out how he visualized 'the faith of God'—and so he wrote, 'What does this mean, except that 'the faith of God' is in him because he promises, and 'the faith of man' is in him because he believes the one who promises.'<sup>183</sup> And Augustine in the fifth century interpreted the expression to mean 'from the faith of those who preached the gospel [particularly, Paul's own faith and his preaching of faith] to the faith of those who heard the gospel preached'—or, more expansively, 'from the faith of words (whereby we now believe what we do not see) to the faith of the things, that is, realities (whereby we shall hereafter possess what we now believe in).'<sup>185</sup>

"Most commentators today, however, have carried on Calvin's understanding that the expression 'marks the daily progress of every believer,'<sup>186</sup> and so have understood ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν as signaling some type of progression of faith in the Christian life. Joseph Lightfoot, for example, interpreted the phrase to mean 'faith the starting point and faith the goal.'<sup>187</sup> James Denney read Paul as saying that God's righteousness in a person's life 'presupposes faith' and 'leads to faith.'<sup>188</sup> And William Sanday and Arthur Headlam understood the phrase along similar lines and so translated it 'starting from a smaller quantity of faith to produce a larger quantity.'<sup>189</sup>

"Others have viewed Paul's second reference to faith (εἰς πίστιν) as an 'emphatic equivalent' of his first reference (ἐκ πίστεως), and have read the expression as emphasizing that the Christian life is 'altogether by faith.'<sup>190</sup> Still others have understood the phrase as being simply rhetorical, and so have read Paul as declaring that a person's response to the Christian gospel, as well as to God's righteousness revealed in that gospel, is 'by faith from start to finish.'<sup>191</sup> And many have attempted to combine all these understandings, as does Joseph Fitzmyer in saying that (1) possibly the expression means 'from a beginning faith to a more perfect or culminating faith,' or (2) possibly ' 'through faith' would express the means by which a person shares in salvation; 'for faith' would express the purpose of the divine plan,' ' or (3) more likely the phrase means that 'salvation is a matter of faith from start to finish, whole and entire.'<sup>192</sup>

"Admittedly, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is notoriously difficult to interpret. But when πίστις is understood in terms of the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה, which means both 'faith' and 'faithfulness,' it is not too difficult to view Paul as having in mind here both (1) divine faithfulness in his use of the genitive phrase ἐκ πίστεως (whether the reference is to the faithfulness of God or the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ, or both), and (2) human faith in his use of the accusative phrase εἰς πίστιν. Viewed in this manner, Paul can be seen here as setting out, in rather cryptic and somewhat perplexing brevity, both of the primary factors involved in God's salvation and reconciliation of humanity: (1) divine faithfulness, which is the source and basis for all that the gospel proclaims, and (2) human faith, which is necessary for its reception.

"The most common way of interpreting ἐκ πίστεως and εἰς πίστιν has been, until recently, to understand them both as referring to a person's faith in God, faith in Christ Jesus, and/or trust in the proclamation of the Christian gospel—not only the second phrase εἰς πίστιν, which is clearly an accusative of direct object and therefore must be understood to signify human faith, but also the first phrase ἐκ πίστεως, which has usually been read as an objective genitive (i.e., the noun in the genitive functions as the object of the verbal idea). So both ἐκ πίστεως and εἰς πίστιν have been usually understood as referring to human faith—that is, to a person's faith in God, in Christ Jesus, and/or in the gospel.

"From the early 1890s to the present, however, there has been a rising tide of scholarly opinion that πίστεως is a subjective genitive functioning as the subject of the verbal idea, thereby signaling that the source and basis for the salvation of any person is the faithfulness of God and/or of Christ Jesus. On such an understanding the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is understood not as referring twice to human faith but first to 'divine faithfulness' as the basis for all that is proclaimed in the Christian gospel and then to 'human faith' as the necessary response for the reception of that 'good news' in a person's life.

"This thesis was first proposed in the late nineteenth century by Johannes Haussleiter.<sup>193</sup> It was popularized in the English-speaking world during the 1950s by Gabriele Hebert<sup>194</sup> and

swer is an idiom: ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, out of faith into faith. Note that the adverbial nature of these two Greek prepositions means that they qualify the verb ἀποκαλύπτεται and not its subject, δικαιοσύνη. The discovery is a faith adventure from beginning to end.

But the precise meaning of the idiomatic phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν has been debated extensively down through the centuries. Clearly the two prepositions specify point of origin, ἐκ, and terminus objective, εἰς.<sup>16</sup> But

<sup>16</sup>"Ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (literally 'out of faith unto faith') has also been extensively debated, both in earlier times and during the past one hundred and fifty years of NT scholarship. Most patristic interpreters understood the expression to mean 'from faith in the law to faith in the gospel,' and so to signify the movement in redemptive history as 'from faith' as expressed in the OT 'to faith' as proclaimed in the NT. Tertullian, for example, commenting directly on this expression in 1:17b, said, 'He [God] removes people from faith in the law to faith in the gospel—that is to say, His own law and His own gospel.'<sup>179</sup> Likewise, Origen argued, 'The first people were in the faith because they believed God and Moses his servant, from which faith they have now gone over to the faith of the gospel.'<sup>180</sup> In the sixteenth century John Calvin referred to most interpreters of his day as understanding 'from faith to faith' as 'an

what are the points of reference? If completely a human angle, then **from faith** refers to Torah and **to faith** means Gospel. This long standing view going back to some of the church fathers has been replaced in modern times by individual perspective rather than group perspective. Thus **from faith means conversion and to faith means Christian living.** But the alternative understanding sees this as divine / human angles: from God's faithfulness to human faith commitment. The Hebrew heritage of אמוּנָה,<sup>17</sup> which means both 'faithfulness' and 'faith,' is understood to be in the background of Paul's meaning of πίστις here.<sup>18</sup> And even the idea of faithfulness for πίστις can be found in the Stoic philosophical literature of Paul's time, although

Thomas Torrance.<sup>95</sup> Karl Barth was the first commentator on Romans to espouse this position in his Römerbrief of 1919, translating ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν as 'from faithfulness unto faith (aus Treue dem Glauben).'<sup>96</sup> It was then advocated by T. W. Manson in his Romans commentary of 1962.<sup>97</sup> And during the past fifty or sixty years this understanding of the conjunction of 'divine faithfulness' and 'human faith' in Paul's theological language—both here in 1:17b and in 3:22a (probably also 3:26 and perhaps 3:30), as well as elsewhere in his letters—has been developed by a number of scholars in various articles and monographs.<sup>98</sup>

"As an indication of the growing acceptance of this thesis, it may be noted that such an understanding has been accepted as an alternative footnote reading for the expression διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3:22 by both the NRSV ('through the faith of Jesus Christ') and the TNIV ('through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'). Further, this interpretation has begun to be proposed by some recent commentators on Romans—principally by Charles Talbert, who in his commentary of 2002 translated (1) ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν here in 1:17 as 'through/out of either God's or Jesus' faithfulness for the faith of humans,<sup>99</sup> (2) διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3:22 as 'through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ,'<sup>100</sup> (3) διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι in 3:25 as 'through his/Jesus' faithfulness in his blood,'<sup>101</sup> and (4) τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in 3:26 as 'the one who lives out of the faithfulness of Jesus.'<sup>102</sup> I, too, argued for this understanding in my Paul, Apostle of Liberty of 1964, my Galatians commentary of 1990, and my article "The Foundational Conviction of New Testament Christology: The Obedience/Faithfulness/Sonship of Christ" of 2004.<sup>103</sup> And I continue to believe that these features of 'divine faithfulness' and 'human faith' are what Paul had in mind when he used this rather cryptic expression ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν here in 1:17b—which expression he will (1) develop further in 3:22 in the context of his expanded thesis statement of 3:21–23, (2) cite in 3:25 and 26 as prominent in the early Christian confessional material that he quotes in 3:24–26, and (3) highlight in his responses of 3:27b–29 and of 3:30 in elucidating his expanded thesis statement of 3:21–23, which repeats and builds on his original thesis statement of 1:16–17.

"There is, of course, much more that could be said—and, indeed, that needs to be said further—about Paul's understanding of 'divine faithfulness' and 'human faith' in Romans and his other letters. And a great deal more could be highlighted regarding contemporary scholarly treatments of ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν here in 1:17b and its cognates elsewhere in Romans and Paul's other letters. But since Paul's understanding of these vitally important matters is set out in only very abbreviated fashion in this opening thesis statement of 1:16–17 and since these same features appear again in 3:21–23, 24–26, and 27–31, it is best to reserve a more extensive discussion for our comments on these later passages."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 176–180.]

<sup>17</sup>"In the OT to believe in God is to acknowledge Him as such, → 187, 9 ff. This includes trust (→ 191, 10 ff.) and hope (→ 194, 14 ff.), fear (→ 188, 20 f.) and obedience (→ 187, 22 f.). But these are a unity, since trust is taken radically (→ 189, 1 ff.) and thus includes the overcoming of both anxiety and self-confidence.<sup>150</sup> Faith is a daring decision for God in man's turning aside both from the menacing world and also from his own strength, → 189, 20 ff. As is sometimes stressed (e.g., Gn. 15:6), it is thus faith in spite of appearances. 'As a confident decision for God it contains within itself suppressed temptation.'<sup>151</sup> This faith in God is not just general trust. It is grounded in what God has done in the past.<sup>152</sup> Hence it has its own firm relation to the past; it is also faithfulness, → 188, 29. The trusting man (יִמְנָן = πιστεύων) is also the faithful man (יִמְנָן = πιστός). Similarly, faith has a firm relation to the future, → 187, 23 ff. It is the assurance that God will do what He has promised. Its opposite is murmuring and doubt (→ I, 729, 28 ff. γογγύζω, → II, 97, 46 ff. διαλογισμός), whereby God is tempted. It is expectant hope (→ II, 522, 22 ff., → 194, 35 f.) and stillness. Again, it has a firm relation to the present as obedience to God's commands (→ 187, 21 ff.), in the fulfilment of which the covenant faithfulness of the people must be demonstrated." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:198.]

<sup>18</sup>"If on this basis we consider the whole development of OT usage, the following answer is the only one which can be given to the question with which we began. The LXX and NT were right when they related their term for faith (πιστεύειν) to the OT stem יָמַן, for in this word is expressed the most distinctive and profound thing which the OT has to say about faith. From a purely quantitative view the use of יִמְנָן may well be secondary to that of other terms, but its qualitative preeminence is undoubtedly to be seen in the fact that assimilation to the content of יָמַן, combined with a more or less strong shift of meaning, must be described as one of the most essential marks of the linguistic development of all the other stems. The reasons for this highly remarkable process are to be sought 1. (linguistically) in the formal character of the stem יָמַן, which shows itself thereby to be the broadest and in content the most fluid term, capable of absorbing new elements without losing its basic sense, so that in the form of the hiphil it embraces the comprehensive, exclusive and personal relation between God and man; 2. (historically) in the fact that the concept יָמַן in this sense was closest to the unique relation between Yahweh and Israel and very quickly came to express the specifically OT divine relationship preserved in the covenant tradition; and 3. (theologically) in the fact that the prophets, especially Isaiah, being led by their own experience and thought to the ultimate depths of the divine relation and to an understanding of its nature, gave the usage a creative profundity and, from the OT standpoint, completion, which, adopted by individual piety, promoted inner triumph over the catastrophes of history and the afflictions of individual life.<sup>148</sup> The significance of the OT view of faith may be seen in the fact that, as an expression of the particular being and life of the people of God which stands both individually and collectively in the dimension of a vital divine relationship, it embraces the whole

it is human and not divine faithfulness. That πίστις can be pitted against ἀπιστέω is seen in 3:3, τί γάρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; [For what? If some are unfaithful, can their unfaithfulness render void the faithfulness of God?](#)

This last interpretive view seems to have more going for it on linguistic, contextual, and historical grounds than do the earlier views which see both references to πίστις as human oriented designations. No where else in ancient literature is the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν found so that some idea could be gleaned as to possible idiomatic meaning. The derived sense of this phrase from the divine / human angles moves along the lines as follows. God in his faithfulness is the source of this disclosure. Man in his faith response becomes the recipient of the disclosure.<sup>19</sup> Not to forget is that the place of this discovery is ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., in Christ.

What is disclosed then is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, [God's righteousness](#)? But what is that? From the above discussion, it becomes clear that divine righteousness references both who God is morally and how God treats people. The tone of the judicial is prominent in the background. God is morally and spiritually the ultimate purity. Although Paul makes limited use of the image of φῶς, [light](#) (2:19; 13:12) in Romans, the idea is present some 13 times in his writings. The image of φῶς, derived from the literal idea of a fire creating light, conveys a variety of meanings. Central to these is the idea of purity crushing darkness along side the idea of illumination in the sense of communication of what is pure. δικαιοσύνη being uncovered (ἀποκαλύπτεται) for understanding and experiencing has to do with the revealing that God's purity as [holy](#), ἅγιος<sup>20</sup> can be counted on to treat believers in a δίκαιος, [just](#)

manner. That is, He will carry out actions toward humanity fully within the framework that He has disclosed through divine revelation. Absolute consistency here is guaranteed. He has no favorites; He never takes short cuts or end arounds; He never violates His own guidelines. He is absolutely δίκαιος thus possessing total δικαιοσύνη. This quality of God possesses dynamism and action.<sup>21</sup> It is not just an attitude or character trait. The dynamism of light encountering darkness is relevant here.

A huge part of the radicalness of Paul's axiom statement here is the ἐν αὐτῷ, in Him, location as the place of this discovery. To the informed Jew, the place of discovering God's righteous was exclusively in the Torah. Key to discovering God as righteous was obedience to the Torah. To the Greek and also Roman reader, the discovery of divine righteousness was also in Law, that is, the laws established by the city state for stabilizing society. The town council composed of the citizens should seek to discover the sacred divine law through deliberation and debate. The apostle rejects both of these traditions in favor of locating that discovery of what is right solely in the life, teachings, and ministry of Jesus Christ. That will take some explaining! Which 1:18-15:33 seeks to provide.

Very importantly then the discovery of God's righteousness centers in τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, [the Gospel](#). The inner connection between τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is undeniable in vv. 16-17. The Gospel is the message communicating God's righteousness in the discovery of it by people. The communicating of that message unleashed God's power. This because communication is the uncovering and exposing of God's righteousness to an unrighteous world. The verb ἀποκαλύπτεται from ἀποκαλύπτω means to

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span of this form of life, even to the final depths which are disclosed only when, under the threat to human existence, certainty in God releases new energies of faith and life." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:196.]

<sup>19</sup>"ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, 'from faith to faith.' As the verb πιστεῦειν ('believe') shows, πίστις for Paul has the twofold sense: both of belief that — acceptance of the truth/reliability of what has been said (cf. 4:3; 6:8; 10:9, 16; 1 Cor 11:18; Gal 3:6; 1 Thess 4:14; 2 Thess 2:11-12); but also of consequent trust in, reliance upon (4:5, 24; 9:33; 10:11; Gal 2:16; Phil 1:29), as expressed particularly in the initial act of being baptized, that is, identifying with Jesus in his death (6:3-4) and placing oneself under his lordship (10:9). The old debate polarizing 'objective' faith and 'subjective' faith is passé (cf. further Kuss, 131-54; Lührmann, Glaube, 55-59). Paul will go on to analyze the plight of man as his failure to accept this status of complete dependence on God (1:21, 25, 28), including his fellow Jews whose narrower definition of covenant righteousness in terms of ethnic identity and 'works' (9:6-13) in Paul's view involved a departure from the fundamental recognition that faith on man's side is the only possible and sufficient basis to sustain a relation with God, as exemplified above all in Abraham's unconditional trust and total dependence on God and his promise (see further on 4:4-5, 18-21). Nygren's warning of the danger of understanding Paul's *sola fide* legalistically (67-72) runs ahead of Paul's exposition but is nevertheless important and valid. That πίστις can also mean 'faithfulness' (quite likely in Gal 5:22 and 2 Thess 1:4; in the latter it stands alongside ὑπομονή, 'patience, steadfastness') and is used by Paul of God's faithfulness (3:3, which is the next passage in which it appears) is certainly significant, as his use of the Habakkuk quotation shows." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 43.]

<sup>20</sup>"The ΑΓ-family of Greek words is most extensive. In biblical Greek it is found not only in words like ἅγιος, ἀγιάζειν, ἀγιαστήριον, ἀγιότης and ἀγιωσύνη, but also in such words as ἀγνός, ἀγνίσειν, ἄγνισμα, ἀγνισμός, ἀγνεία and ἀγνότης. Here, indeed, it enjoys its most significant history."<sup>1</sup> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:88.]

<sup>21</sup>Thus the full range of the δικ- stem of verbs surfaces throughout the letter to the Romans, as we have already shown.

uncover something that has been hidden or out of sight.<sup>22</sup> The righteousness of God in Christ has been hidden to the world until the Gospel is proclaimed thus making it known. Thus Paul's pride in the Gospel (v. 16), and his commitment to preach it to all humanity (vv. 14-15). He sees a calling to this ministry as a profound privilege and blessing from God.

The final modifier of the verb ἀποκαλύπτεται is the adverbial comparative clause introduced by the conjunction καθὼς, **just as**.<sup>23</sup> The clause is two part: a) core verb γέγραπται in the intensive perfect passive voice form, it

**stands written**, and b) the Old Testament quote from Hab. 2:4, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, **And the just shall live out of faith**, that functions as the clause subject of γέγραπται.<sup>24</sup>

The introductory scripture quote formula καθὼς γέγραπται reflects a solemn declaration: 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 21.<sup>25</sup> The comparative nature of καθὼς sets up the base criterion against which what goes before is to be measured. Thus δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, is to be measured by ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ

<sup>22</sup>Note the word group καλύπτω, κάλυμμα, ἀνακαλύπτω, κατακαλύπτω, ἀποκαλύπτω, ἀποκάλυψις with the root forms καλύπτω, κάλυμμα meaning to hide or hidden, while the ἀπό prefix changes the meaning to uncover or remove from hiddenness. ἀνακαλύπτω is similar but is limited to unveiling a persons' face as in 2 Cor. 3:18 at the figurative meaning. Its opposite is κατακαλύπτω meaning to veil or cover up, as is used in 1 Cor. 11:6-7. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:556.]

<sup>23</sup>Καθὼς γέγραπται ('just as it is written') is used here and another twelve times in Romans (3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 9, 21) to introduce immediately following biblical quotations. Outside Romans, however, καθὼς γέγραπται is found in Paul's letters only three times in 1 Corinthians (1:31; 2:9; 10:7) and twice in 2 Corinthians (8:15; 9:9). Its usage is in line with the distribution of biblical quotations in his letters. Of the approximately 83 quotations of Scripture in Paul's letters — or about 100 biblical citations if one disengages conflated texts and separates possible dual sources — well over half appear in Romans (45 of 83 citations or some 55 to 60 OT passages of a total of about 100), whereas elsewhere in the Pauline corpus there are only 15 quotations of biblical passages in 1 Corinthians, 7 in 2 Corinthians, 10 in Galatians, 4 in Ephesians, 1 in 1 Timothy, 1 in 2 Timothy, and none in 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, or Titus. So it is understandable that most of the occurrences of what seems to be a rather distinctive type of introductory formula used by pious Jews and (presumably) by Jewish Christians — whether understood in its Hebrew form as כאשר כתיב ('just as it is written') or as expressed in Greek translation as καθὼς γέγραπται — appear in Romans, where over half of Paul's biblical quotations are found.

"Nonetheless, it still needs to be recognized that most of the places where this Jewish type of introductory formula appears most prominently in Paul's letters are in Romans, with the occurrences of this formula being much less frequent in the other Pauline letters that contain OT quotations. This has some importance for an understanding of what Paul writes in Romans (even though, admittedly, at this point only of rather minor importance) — particularly if the Christians at Rome, both Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, had been extensively influenced by the theology, ways of thinking, and religious language of the mother church at Jerusalem. Further, and possibly more significant for our present purposes, this particular introductory formula καθὼς γέγραπται appears principally in those sections of the letter where Paul is arguing in a distinctly Jewish and/or Jewish Christian manner with his addressees: four times in the first section of the letter's body middle (1:16–4:25) and seven times in the third section (9:1–11:36). It is also found once in the letter's body closing (15:14–32) when Paul explains to his Roman addressees why he has not come to them earlier and uses this introductory formula at 15:21 to introduce his quotation of Isa 52:15 in support."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 180–181.]

<sup>24</sup>"The quotation from Hab 2:4 is known to us in basically four different versions, including Heb 10:38:

MT הַיָּשָׁרִים יִחְיֶיךָ בְּאֵמוּנָתְךָ **the righteous (man) by his faith(fulness) shall live**

LXX ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται **the righteous out of my faith(fulness) shall live**

Paul ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται **the righteous out of faith/faithfulness(?) shall live**

Heb ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται **my righteous one out of faith/faithfulness(?) shall live**

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 44.]

<sup>25</sup>2b. **of pronouncements and solemn proceedings write down, record**: a vision Rv 1:19; commandments, parables Hv 5:5f. ταῦτα πάντα 5:7. εἰς βιβλίον (Tob 12:20) **Rv 1:11**. Pass. ἐν τ. βιβλίῳ J 20:30; of the book of life ἐν τῷ β. (τῆ β.), ἐπὶ τὸ β. **Rv 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; cp. 20:12; 22:18f** (s. EpArist 311). Esp. freq. is the perf. γέγραπται (abundantly

πίστεως ζήσεται, as the established framework for understanding. Hab. 2:4 sets the limits for understanding the main expression.

Thus determining the limits of meaning for the OT quote are important for understanding the declaration about the righteousness of God being re-

attested as a legal expr.: Dssm., B 109f, NB 77f [BS 112ff, 249f]; Thieme 22. Cp. also 2 Esdr 20:35, 37; Job 42:17a; Jos., Vi. 342) as a formula introducing quotations fr. the OT (cp. Jos., C. Ap. 1, 154) **Mt 4:4, 6f, 10; 21:13; Mk 11:17; 14:27; Lk 4:8; 19:46.** ὡς γέγραπται (SIG 45, 44; Inscr. d. Asklepieion von Kos A, 14 ed. RHerzog, ARW 10, 1907, 401; Just., D. 56, 8; 86, 5 al.) **Mk 7:6. καθὼς γέγραπται** (SIG 736, 44 [92 B.C.]; CPR I, 154, 11; cp. 1 Esdr 3:9; Da 9:13 Theod.; 2 Ch 23:18) **Mk 1:2; Ac 15:15; Ro 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8;** 1 Cl 48:2 al. οὕτως γέγραπται 1 Cl 17:3. καθάπερ γέγραπται (PCauer, Delectus Inscr. 2 1883, 457, 50f [III B.C.]; IPergamon 251, 35 [II B.C.]; oft. in pap, e.g. PRev 29, 9 [258 B.C.] καθάπερ ἐν τ. νόμῳ γέγρ.); as v.l. in **Ro 3:4; 9:13; 10:15;** and **11:8.** γέγραπται γάρ **12:19; 14:11; 1 Cor 1:19;** 1 Cl 36:3; 39:3; 46:2; 50:4, 6. γεγραμμένον ἐστίν **J 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34** (γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ as 2 Esdr 18:14. Cp. Inscr. d. Asklepieion [s. above] ln. 9 τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς νόμοις; Just., D. 8, 4 τὰ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γ.; 57, 3 γ. ἐστίν, so also w. acc. and inf. 79, 2); 12:14. ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος (cp. 4 Km 23:24; 1 Ch 29:29; 2 Ch 16:11) **1 Cor 15:54.** κατὰ τὸ γ. (SIG2 438, 13 and 84; SIG 955, 22f; 1016, 6 al.; PEleph 2, 13 [285 B.C.]; 2 Esdr 3:4; 18:15; cp. 1 Esdr 1:12; Bar 2:2) **2 Cor 4:13.** ἐγράφη **Ro 4:23; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11.** W. a specif. ref. (4 Km 14:6; 2 Ch 23:18; 1 Esdr 1:12; Da 9:13; Just., D. 34, 6 and 8; 79, 4. Cp. Diod S 9, 30 ὡς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ περὶ διαδοχῆς βασιλέων=in the book of the succession of kings; Philod., Περὶ εὐσεβ. p. 61 Gomp. ἐν τοῖς ἀναφερομένοις εἰς Μουσαῖον γέγραπται; Ael. Aristid. 33 p. 618 D.: γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ [a peace treaty]; 34 p. 654): in the book of Psalms **Ac 1:20;** in the second Psalm **13:33;** in the book of the prophets **7:42;** in Isaiah **Mk 1:2** (cp. 2 Ch 32:32); in the Decalogue B 15:1. Also of noncanonical apocalypses: (Diod S 34+35, Fgm. 33, 2 ἐν τοῖς Σιβύλλης χρησμοῖς εὐρέθῃ γεγραμμένον ὅτι κτλ.); Eldad and Modat Hv 2, 3, 4; Enoch B 4:3, cp. 16:6. Of dominical words 4:14; 14:6 (JFitzmyer, NTS 7, '60/61, 297–333). Pilate's official pronouncement bears the mark of administrative parlance: ὁ γέγραφα, γέγραφα what I have written I have written, i.e., it will not be changed (on the pf. cp. the expr. taken over fr. the Romans κέκρικα=I have decided once for all Epict. 2, 15, 5. Pilate's action means that Caesar has spoken, Dig. Just. 1, 19, 1. For the repetition of the same form of the pf. s. Gen 43:14; for the repetition of the word γ. see Aeschion Iamb. [IV B.C.] 6, 9 [Diehl3, '52, fasc. 3, p. 122] ἔγραψεν ὄσσω ἔγραψω'). **J 19:22.** Cp. the solemn tone **Rv 5:1** (s. Ezk 2:10) βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὄπισθεν a scroll covered w. writing inside and on the back.—W. acc. of pers. or thing (Bar 1:1; Tob 7:13 S; 1 Esdr 2:25 al.): write about someone or someth. ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς about whom Moses wrote **J 1:45;** of righteousness **Ro 10:5.** Also περί τινος (Diod S 2, 36, 3; 14, 96, 3; 1 Esdr 2:17; Esth 1:1p; 1 Macc 11:31) **Mt 26:24; Mk 14:21; J 5:46; Ac 13:29** (on ἐτέλεσαν τὰ γεγραμμένα cp. Diod S 14, 55, 1 and Just., D. 8, 4 ποιεῖν τὰ γεγρ.). ἐπί τινα w. reference to someone **Mk 9:12f;** ἐπί τινι **J 12:16.** τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τ. προφητῶν τῷ υἱῷ τ. ἀνθρώπου Lk 18:31 (on διὰ τ. π. cp. Esth 8:10 [= ὑπό 9:1]; the dat. designating the pers. written about is made easier to understand by ref. to 3 Macc 6:41; 1 Esdr 4:47). W. ὅτι foll. (cp. X., An. 2, 3, 1; Just., D. 49, 5 al.) **Mk 12:19; Ro 4:23; 1 Cor 9:10.**—In a traditional formulation: μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται not beyond what has been written **1 Cor 4:6** (s. ὑπὲρ B)."

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 207.]

<sup>260</sup>Paul's quotation of the latter part of Hab 2:4, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται ('the righteous [or 'the Righteous One'] will live by faith'), has presented commentators with a number of difficulties. One major problem has to do with how this text was read in Paul's day. The MT and 1QpHab 7.17 have וְצַדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִי, 'but the righteous/just person by his faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live.' The preposition ב' ('by') and the third person pronominal suffix י ('his') joined with אֱמוּנָה make it clear that the verse is talking about the 'faith,' 'faithfulness,' or 'fidelity' of a 'righteous' or 'just' person. But what is signified by 'faith,' 'faithfulness,' or 'fidelity' (אֱמוּנָה)? Who is this 'righteous' or 'just' person (צַדִּיק)? And what is meant by 'he shall live' (יֵחִי)?

"The Greek translations of Hab 2:4b, however, set up a number of other textual and interpretive problems. One family of LXX texts represented by MSS κ, B, Q, and W\* reads ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται ('but the righteous/just one by my faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live'), thereby making it clear by the use of the Greek first person pronoun μου ('my') for the Hebrew third person pronominal suffix י ('his') that the πίστις ('faith,' 'faithfulness,' or 'fidelity') in view is God's faithfulness. Another family of LXX texts represented by MSS A and C reads ὁ δὲ δίκαιος μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται ('but my righteous one by faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live'), suggesting by its positioning of the Greek first person pronoun μου ('my') a close connection between 'the righteous one' and God himself. Further, the article ὁ ('the') in both Greek versions suggests that δίκαιος ('righteous') is to be understood not just generically as 'anyone who is just or righteous' but more specifically in a substantive sense as 'the just or righteous one.'

"There is also a fragmentary Greek reading of this final portion of Hab 2:4 in a scroll of the Minor Prophets found in cave 8 of Wadi Habra that seems to read as follows: [δίκ]αιος ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ ζήσεται ('the righteous by his faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live').<sup>106</sup> And three other Greek translations of the OT, all dating from the second century A.D., present somewhat different versions of this final phrase of Hab 2:4: (1) that of Aquila of Pontus (early second century) reads καὶ δίκαιος ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ ζήσεται ('and the righteous by his faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live'); (2) that of Symmachus 'the Ebionite' (mid or late second century) reads ὁ δὲ δίκαιος τῆ ἑαυτοῦ πίστει ζήσεται ('but the righteous one, based on his own faith/faithfulness/fidelity, shall live'); and (3) that of Theodotion (c. 180–90) reads: ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ ζήσεται ('but the righteous one by his faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live').

"The Dead Sea covenantors applied Hab 2:3–4 to their own situation, understanding these verses as exhorting a strict observance of the Mosaic law and an absolute fidelity to the sect's founding teacher. Thus their comment on וְצַדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִי ('but the righteous/just one by his faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live') is as follows:

the entire verse as follows:

Look at the proud!

Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

A bit of interpretive translation is done here of the Hebrew text:<sup>27</sup>

הַנֶּה עֹפֵלָה לֹא־יִשְׂרָהּ נִפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה

The singular forms הַנֶּה, **the proud man**, and י. **his**, are taken collectively with a plural translation rather than individually. More literally, the MT text reads,

Look at the proud man.

His spirit is not right in him,

**but the righteous man comes to life by his faith.**<sup>28</sup>

This switch from the singular 'man' to the collective 'proud' is legitimate given the ancient Jewish collective society.

The translation in the LXX is distinct:

ἐὰν ὑποστείληται,

οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ.

**ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται.**

The interpretation of this concerns all those who observe the law in the house of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgment because of their suffering and because of their fidelity to the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>107</sup>

"The rabbis of the Talmud seem to have coupled Hab 2:4b with Gen 15:6 as two important *testimonia* passages having to do with the nation's inheritance of Abraham's meritorious faith<sup>108</sup> and thus viewed Hab 2:4b as presenting a summation of the whole Mosaic law in one principle: 'faithfulness rewarded by faith.'<sup>109</sup>

"In the NT the author of Hebrews gives an interpretive rendering of Hab 2:3–4 (Heb 10:37–38) in support of his exhortation to his addressees not to draw back from their faith in and faithfulness to 'the One who will soon come and not delay.' But the purpose of that anonymous Jewish Christian author was different from that of Paul in Romans. Likewise, the Greek text on which that author based his exhortation seems to have been different from Paul's, being evidently drawn from the LXX reading found in MSS A and C (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, 'but my righteous one on the basis of faith/faithfulness/fidelity shall live'). Paul in Gal 3:11, however, quotes Hab 2:4b in arguing for the supremacy of faith, using, it seems, some type of conflation of the Hebrew text and one of the then existing Greek translations — though without including 'his' from the Hebrew or either 'my' or 'his' from the Greek."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 182–183.]

<sup>27</sup>*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary, 1990), Hab 2:4.

<sup>28</sup>"The MT clearly has in view the *ṣādīq*, the righteous man. At the time of Paul this would be understood to be the man who is a faithful member of the covenant, who fulfills the obligations laid upon him by the law of the covenant as a loyal Jew; namely, faithful observance of and devotion to the law as the ideal of Jewish piety. This self-understanding of 'the righteous' is particularly prominent in the Psalms (1:5–6; 5:12; 7:9–10; 14:5; etc.), in the wisdom literature (e.g., Prov 3:32–33; 4:18; 9:9; 10:3, 6–7; etc.; Wisd Sol 2:10, 12, 16, 18; 3:1, 10; etc.), in 1 Enoch (e.g., 1.8; 5.4–6; 82.4; 95.3; 100.5), and in the Psalms of Solomon (2:38–39 [LXX 34–35]; 3:3–8, 14 [LXX 11]; 4:9 [LXX 8]; etc.). The same understanding of the Hebrew of Hab 2:4 is evident both in the Qumran pesher ('it concerns the observers of the law ...'; cf. 1QpHab 7.11; 12.4–5; 4QpPs37 2.14, 22), in the range of Greek versions which held more closely to the MT form of the text despite the LXX, and in the rendering of the Targum. 'One believes in that one obeys the law' (Michel). See further on 2:13; 4:2–3; 10:2–3; also 5:19. The LXX in some contrast embodies an assertion with which Paul would certainly have had no quarrel—that individual righteousness is a product of God's fidelity to his obligations to humankind, to Israel in particular by virtue of Israel's being his chosen people." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 45.]

<sup>29</sup>"How, then, did Paul use Hab 2:4b here in Rom 1:17b? First of all, as Ernst Käsemann has rightly insisted, it must be recognized that 'Paul's interpretation of Hab 2:4 neither does justice to the OT text nor finds any support in Jewish exegesis.'<sup>119</sup> He did not quote the text according to either the MT or the best MSS of the LXX. Likewise, he did not have in

If he is timid,

My soul is not pleased with him;

**but the just man out of My faith will live.**

The role of God in the LXX version of the saying is much more prominent, than in the Hebrew MT. Paul seems to favor the major family of LXX mss rendering above the MT but drops the pronoun μου in his rendering of the Greek text: ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

Does the apostle deliberately drop the pronoun μου in order to create room for the anarthrous ἐκ πίστεως to encompass both God's faithfulness and the believer's faithfulness? It seems likely so. The parameters of the Hab. 2:4 text in Rom. 1:17 assert ἐκ πίστεως as the source of ζήσεται for ὁ δίκαιος. Being ὁ δίκαιος before a holy God means ζήσεται. Such cannot be achieved by the individual or by his own effort. Its unique, exclusive source is ἐκ πίστεως. The faithfulness of the believer depending upon the faithfulness of this holy God is the point. One should note with the English words, as well as for the Greek word πίστις, that faithfulness arises out of faith commitment, and represents but a continuation of it in daily living. ἐκ πίστεως covers both in the lifetime of the individual. Our commitment to Christ is consistently lived out daily over the remainder of our life.<sup>29</sup> Thus ἐκ

πίστεως εἰς πίστιν correctly interprets ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται against the Hebrew backdrop of God's faithfulness to do the righteous thing in His treatment of the individual who is faithful in his commitment to Christ (ἐν αὐτῷ) through the Gospel. In this comes the discovery of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in one's experience with God.

### 10.3.3.2 The Gospel as God's Righteousness, 1:18-4:25

One of the perplexing challenges of the letter body is to assess literary pericopes at the differing levels of length that clearly are present in the text. Our post-enlightenment interpretive tendency is to insatiably crave to group smaller units into larger units. More recent commentators reflect this in a more sophisticated manner than was generally true half a century ago or longer. Those with a strong focus on rhetorical literary analysis seem most inclined toward this approach.<sup>30</sup>

The structuring of the letter body in 1:16-15:33 into four or five sub-

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mind in his use of the Greek verb ζήσεται ('he will live') simply deliverance from a military invasion and death, as did the prophet Habakkuk in his use of the Hebrew יהיה. Nor did he understand the Hebrew אמונה or the Greek πίστις to mean primarily a person's own 'integrity' or 'faithfulness' to God and his law, as did most Jews of his day. Rather, Paul interpreted this OT testimonium passage from a Christian perspective, using it, it seems evident, in support of a Christian understanding of 'faith' and 'life' — perhaps even viewing the subject of the sentence, 'the righteous one' (Hebrew קַיִן, Greek ὁ δίκαιος), as having messianic significance.

"Principally, however, Paul used this Habakkuk *testimonium* in support of his emphasis on 'faith' as the only proper response to God's gift of 'righteousness,' which is 'now being revealed in the gospel,' just as he did in Gal 3:11. For 'the righteousness of God' is not only 'based on the divine faithfulness' (ἐκ πίστεως), it also calls for 'a response of human faith' (εἰς πίστιν). It is, Paul insists, only on the basis of 'divine faithfulness' and a response of 'human faith' that a person can 'live' (Hebrew יהיה, Greek ζήσεται) — with 'life' used here as equivalent to the experience of 'salvation' (σωτηρία) and a positive response to the gift of 'God's righteousness' (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ), which were highlighted earlier in this thesis paragraph of 1:16–17. And it is this insistence on 'divine faithfulness' and a 'human response of faith' for the experience of 'salvation' that Paul elaborates on and develops further throughout Romans, particularly in Section I (1:16–4:25) and Section III (9:1–11:36) of the body middle of his letter to the Christians at Rome."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 185–186.]

<sup>30</sup>A fairly common pattern from this methodology structures the letter body as:

**1:16-4:25**

**5:1-8:30**

**9:1-11:36**

**12:1-15:13**

Dividing points are seen usually in the resurfacing of earlier combinations of word and phrase, along with obvious signals of new content emphasis. Thus 1:16-17 and 3:21-4:25 are seen as positive 'inclusio' borders of the negative orientation of 1:18-3:20.

The second section of 5:1-8:30 continues the theme of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ but with emphasis upon peace and reconciliation along with an internal unifying repetition through διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ or the cognate ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (5:1 / 8:30 and 5:11, 21; 6:23; 7:25).

9:1-11:36 more clearly holds together as a subsection of the letter body largely through content elements. The point of contention by modern commentators is the literary function and setting of the unit. A parenthesis interruption? An integral focus growing out of 5:1-8:30? And many other proposals.

Also 12:1=15:13 is commonly considered the final sub-unit section of the letter body. The one variable is the 'travel plans' unit of 15:14-32/33. Most with familiarity of ancient letter patterns consider this unit to function as the closing of the letter body that transitions into the letter Conclusio at 16:1.

<sup>31</sup>Hermeneutically, it is a fair question to raise as to whether a modern structure must be used for interpretation in order for the interpretation to make clear sense. My hesitant answer is 'Maybe.' But a clear distinction must be maintained between it and whatever original structure out of Paul's world and mind that is concluded. One major test of authentic interpretation is correctly synchronizing the two patterns.

groups has some merit from a modern perspective. But to insist that such a structuring was in the thinking of either Paul, or his writing secretary Taticus, is a completely different matter. The frequent repetition of words and phrases consistently throughout the letter body argues strongly against such assessment. Was Paul's thought completely unstructured? Probably not. But also clear is that whatever structure that may be reflected in the letter body does not follow modern western patterns derived from logic rather than text analysis.<sup>31</sup>

In dropping down to the next lower level of unit division, the following places seem to signal turning points: **2:1** (Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος), **17** (Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπινομάζη); **3:1** (Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου), **21** (Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται); and **4:1** (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν). Something of a pattern of concentric circles moving from the outside to the center seems to be the general pattern here. Humanity's guilt altogether (1:18-32), followed by a focus upon Jews and God fearing Gentiles (2:1-3:20), followed

by a focus upon God's provision for all humanity (3:21-4:25). The negative is followed by the positive.<sup>32</sup> The combination of both unit themes and rhetorical signals of theme shifts stand behind this assessment.

### 10.3.3.2.1 God's Wrath against Human Sinfulness, 1:18-32

18 Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὄργη θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, 19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνέρωσεν. 20 τὰ γὰρ ἄορατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἶδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, 21 διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. 22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν 23 καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνης φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν. 24 Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς· 25 οἵτινες μετέλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. 26 Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες. 28 Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, 29 πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρῶς πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς 30 καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὑβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 31 ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας· 32 οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking,

<sup>32</sup>Of course, even smaller sub-units of text materials will surface upon closer examination. These will be analyzed in the subsequent treatments of the mid-level units under 10.3.2.2.#s. Again one must remember this structuring represents a more modern structure. But it seeks to uncover the presence of any group patterns present in the original Greek text of Romans.

and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

A check of the diagram below reveals at minimum a twofold division of ideas in vv. 18-32. Verses 18-23 stress the corruption of humanity in general, while with the threefold stating of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς, God gave them over to... (#s 16, 17, 20) in vv. 24-32 defines how God responds to the rejection of His efforts to reveal Himself. Less well defined is the first segment of vv. 18-23. The lead declaration # 11 in v. 18, Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὄργη θεοῦ, for being revealed God's wrath, clearly signals a connection to the preceding statement # 10 in v. 17 by repeating the verb ἀποκαλύπτεται and by the coordinate causal conjunction γὰρ. But the verb subject shifts from δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, God's righteousness, to ὄργη θεοῦ, God's wrath. This lead statement # 11 is followed by several follow up core statements (#s 12-15) in vv. 19-23, and found in 3 sentences (vv. 18-23).

The connectors among these follow up statements are very insightful as to the organizational structure: διότι, wherefore; #12, γὰρ, for ]; [#13, γὰρ, for; διότι, wherefore; ἢ, or; ἀλλ', but; καὶ, and]; [# 14, ---; #15, καὶ, and]. The brackets [ ] indicate sentences. The causal conjunctions διότι and γὰρ are major signals of efforts to explain and defend preceding statements. The

1.18 γὰρ  
**11** **Ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργὴ θεοῦ**  
 ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ  
 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων  
 | ἐν ἀδικίᾳ  
 τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν...κατεχόντων,  
 1.19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν  
 ἐν αὐτοῖς·  
 γὰρ  
**12** **ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφάνέρωσεν.**  
 1.20 γὰρ  
 ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου  
 τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα  
**13** **τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ...καθορᾶται,**  
 ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύνამεις καὶ θειότης,  
 εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους,  
 1.21 γνόντες τὸν θεὸν  
 διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
 ἢ  
 ----- --- -- ---- ηὐχαρίστησαν,  
 ἀλλ'  
 ----- ἐματαιώθησαν  
 ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν  
 καὶ  
 ----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.  
 1.22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ  
**14** **ἐμωράνθησαν**  
 1.23 καὶ  
**15** **ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφάρτου θεοῦ**  
 ἐν ὁμοίωματι εἰκόνος  
 φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
 καὶ  
 πετεινῶν  
 καὶ  
 τετραπόδων  
 καὶ  
 ἐρπετῶν.

others add additional assertions to the lead reason in each series.

The progression builds off the lead statement (#11) of the uncovering of the wrath of God in this world. This first part (#s 12-16) develops the modifying expressions ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, upon every expression of ungodliness and wickedness of the individuals who are suppressing the Truth by wickedness. Then the second part (#s 17-20) defines God's response to this rejection of divine Truth around the core assertion παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεός, God handed them over, three times (#s 16, 17, 20).<sup>33</sup> This understanding of the structure of this pericope will provide the organizing basis

<sup>33</sup>Two rhetorical conventions embedded in this passage are immediately evident. Most obvious is the thrice-repeated phrase 'God gave them over' (παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεός) in vv. 24, 26, and 28, all used, it seems, to hold together the structure of 1:24–31 and to drive home the impact of what is being said in that part of the passage. Likewise in vv. 23, 25, and 26 the verb 'they exchanged' appears three times, first as a simple aorist (ἠλλαξαν) and then twice more as a compound aorist (μετήλλαξαν), with the compound form evidently meant to intensify the significance of the verb's action and the ominous sound of the final Greek syllable of the word (-ξαν), which would ring in the minds of the hearers and resonate in their memories.

"Both repetitions of 'God gave them over' and of 'they exchanged' may be classified rhetorically as *anaphora* (i.e., the repetition of a phrase or word at the beginning of a series of successive statements)—though they could also be viewed as instances of *paronomasia* (i.e., the play on two or more words in a relatively brief context that are similar in form, that sound alike, or that make use of different meanings of the same word). Jean-Noël Aletti has proposed a number of other possible rhetorical features in 1:18–32 (as well as in 2:1–3:20).<sup>5</sup> But these two instances of *anaphora* (or *paronomasia*) are the most obvious rhetorical conventions in the passage.

"Two observations about these two sets of anaphora (or paronomasia) in 1:18–32 need, however, to be highlighted: (1) such rhetorical conventions, whether in oral or written communication, were always intended to function as aids for the understanding and remembrance of what was said or written, and (2) their inclusion in whatever written material they appear suggests something of an original oral setting for that material. Thus when

1.24	Διὸ	
16	παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς	
	ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν	
	εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν	
	ἐν αὐτοῖς·	
1.25	οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ	
	ἐν τῷ ψεύδει	
	καὶ	
	----- ἐσεβάσθησαν	
	καὶ	
	----- ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει	
	παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα,	
	ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς	
	εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,	
	ἀμήν.	
1.26	Διὰ τοῦτο	
17	παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς	
	εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας,	
	γὰρ	
18	αἱ τε θήλεια αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν	
	εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,	
1.27	ὁμοίως	
	τε	
	καὶ	
	ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας	
19	οἱ ἄρσενες...ἐξεκαύθησαν	
	ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν	
	εἰς ἀλλήλους,	
	ἄρσενες (ἐξεκαύθησαν)	
	ἐν ἄρσεσιν	
	τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι	
	καὶ	
	τὴν ἀντιμισίαν -----	
	ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν	
	ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.	

of our interpretation. Some of the idiosyncracies present in the Greek text will be treated in the exegesis below.

### 10.3.3.2.1.1 God's Wrath revealed but rejected, 1:18-23

18 Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, 19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνέρωσεν. 20 τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἶδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, 21 διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. 22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν 23 καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

The diagram sketches out this portion of the text visually in order to make clearer how the core ideas of the text are organized together.<sup>34</sup>

### 10.3.3.2.1.1.1 Basic Declaration, 1:18-19a

Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ

Paul includes these two instances of anaphora, it may be presumed that he does so (1) with the hope that his addressees will better understand and remember what he writes, but also (2) with the suggestion that what he writes has a history in some type of past oral communication — whether drawn from his own past preaching or from an earlier writing that incorporated such oral communication, or both.

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the*

*Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 192-193.]

<sup>34</sup>One of the modern interpretive disputes centers on the relation of Rom. 1:19-32 to the Wisdom of Solomon, especially [13:1-14:31](#). This section along with some isolated statements in chapters 11 and 12 are a part of Section Three: "A Glorification of the Jews," in 11:2-19:22. Part One is "The Book of Eschatology" (1:1-6:8) and Two: "An Oration of Wisdom" (6:9-11:1). Written by Hellenistic Jewish authors sometime between 50 BCE and AD 10, the document speaks to the wrath of God on the pagan world of Paul's era. In this Jewish writing that precedes the letter to the Romans by at least half a century, one hears similar declarations to many of Paul's statements in Rom. 1:19-32. Was Paul depending on this writing for his statements in 1:19-32? Some have sought to make such a case. The fatal flaw is that the core ideas for both the Wisdom of Solomon and Rom. 1:19-32 are found in numerous texts

1.28 Καὶ  
καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν  
ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει,  
20 **παρέδωκεν αὐτοῦς ὁ θεὸς**  
εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,  
ποιεῖν τὰ ἴμῃ καθήκοντα,  
1.29 πεπληρωμένους  
| πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ  
| πονηρίᾳ  
| πλεονεξίᾳ  
| κακίᾳ,  
μεστοὺς φθόνου  
| φόνου  
| ἔριδος  
| δόλου  
| κακοθεΐας,  
ψιθυριστὰς  
1.30 καταλάλους  
θεοστιγχεῖς  
ὑβριστὰς  
ὑπερηφάνους  
ἀλαζόνας,  
ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν,  
γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,  
1.31 ἀσυνέτους  
ἀσυνθέτους  
ἀστόργους  
ἀνελεήμονας·  
1.32 οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες  
| ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες\_  
| /-----|  
| ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν,  
----- οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν  
| ἀλλὰ  
| καὶ  
----- συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσοσιν.

ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς. **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth, because what is knowable about God is clear among them.** Essentially the lead statement (#11) asserts the uncovering of God’s wrath, Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ, as a critical element of the uncovering

of the Hebrew Bible, e.g., Num 16:46; 18:5; Josh 9:20; 22:20; Pss 38:1; 102:10; Isa 60:10; Jer 10:10; 21:5; 32:37; 50:13; Zech 7:12. Secondly, the condemnation of the non-Jewish pagan world was relatively universally asserted in the wide body of non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writings of this period, most all of which originated in Diaspora Judaism. This literature was widely circulated not only in Jewish circles, but in Christian circles for the first several centuries.

Rather than contending for a highly questionable Pauline dependence upon the Wisdom of Solomon, a much more likely connection is that the apostle chose language and perspectives out of early Christian and Jewish preaching familiar to his readers in order to convey his view of the dynamics of paganism in its rejection of the wrath of God being disclosed to them through the created order.

When, therefore, Paul began his proclamation of the Christian message in his letter to Christians at Rome, he began in a way that he believed would be familiar to and appreci-

ated by his addressees—that is, in a manner that reflected a rather distinctive type of Jewish presentation and ethos. Christians at Rome, whatever their ethnicity, seem to have been extensively influenced by Jewish Christianity and so would probably have readily understood such an approach and accepted it. Further, it was a type of approach and form of argumentation that would have been very well known and appreciated by Paul as a Jewish Christian—even though, as one who declared himself to be “all things to all people, so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22), he may not have usually used this type of approach or form of argumentation in his own evangelistic ministry to Gentiles.

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 195.]

of God's righteousness in Christ, δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται (v. 17; #10 in diagram). Here stands a very important theological point. God's righteousness in Christ is inseparably linked to God's wrath. The two concepts cannot be disconnected from one another. And to deny one is to deny the other! God is not righteous without His wrath! The causal γὰρ conjunction links the two ideas in this manner.

Immediately then comes the questions What is that wrath? and How is it being uncovered to what humanity? The phrase ὀργὴ θεοῦ, [wrath of God](#), is

commonly found throughout the NT with some 36 instances of ὀργή. Only five of these instances references human anger; the rest God's. Twenty-one of the 36 instances, however, are found in Paul's writings, with 12 of them in Romans: 1:18; 2:5 (2x); 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22 (2x); 12:19; 13:4, 5. One translation issue relates to whether ὀργὴ θεοῦ is best translated [God's wrath](#) or [God's anger](#).<sup>35</sup> Is there a difference since ὀργή means both in biblical usage.<sup>36</sup>

The difference between θυμός and ὀργή, both of which can be trans-

<sup>35</sup>"It is not easy to find an appropriate term for God's wrath. The literal translation of wrath may suggest far too much—'God's rage' or 'God's anger.' There is certainly a semantic component of anger in the biblical expression of wrath, but it is important to try to find some term which will avoid wrong connotations and at the same time focus upon God's act of judging. Some translations actually employ 'God's judgment because of his anger' in an effort to represent both semantic components of wrath. In many languages one cannot speak of 'wrath ... coming down' since neither an emotion nor an event of judging can come down from heaven upon all the sin and evil of men. Hence a rather considerable restructuring of the semantic components of this first clause is usually necessary. An appropriate equivalent in some languages is 'God has revealed how, in his anger, he will judge all the sin and evil of men.' On the other hand, in some languages one cannot speak of judging sin and evil, because one can only judge people who are sinful and evil. Therefore one must say: 'God has revealed how he will judge men for all the sin and evil which they have done.'" [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 22.]

<sup>36</sup>ὀργή, ἦς, ἡ (Hes. et al. in the sense of 'temperament'; also 'anger, indignation, wrath' (so Trag., Hdt.+)

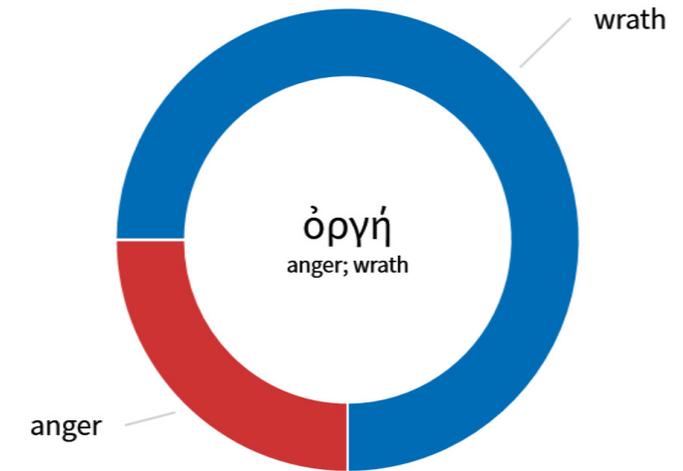
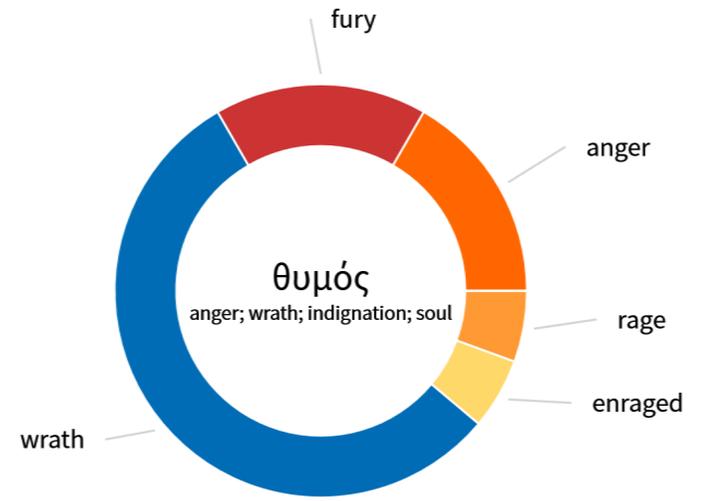
**1. state of relatively strong displeasure, w. focus on the emotional aspect, anger** GPt 12:50 (s. φλέγω 2). W. πικρία and θυμός **Eph 4:31**; cp. **Col 3:8** (on the relationship betw. ὀργή and θυμός, which are oft., as the product of Hebrew dualism, combined in the LXX as well, s. Zeno in Diog. L. 7, 113; Chrysipp. [Stoic. III Fgm. 395]; Philod., De Ira p. 91 W.; PsSol 2:23; ParJer 6:23). W. διαλογισμοί **1 Ti 2:8**. W. μερισμός IPHd 8:1. ἡ ἀθέμιτος τοῦ ζήλους ὀρ. the lawless anger caused by jealousy 1 Cl 63:2. ἀπέχεσθαι πάσης ὀρ. refrain from all anger Pol 6:1. μετ' ὀργῆς angrily (Pla., Apol. 34c; Esth 8:12x; 3 Macc 6:23; JosAs 4:16 μετὰ ἀλαζονείας καὶ ὀργῆς) **Mk 3:5**; βραδὺς εἰς ὀρ. slow to be angry **Js 1:19** (Aristoxenus, Fgm. 56 Socrates is called τραχὺς εἰς ὀργὴν; but s. Pla., Phd. 116c, where S. is called πρότατο 'meekest'). ἐλέγγετε ἀλλήλους μὴ ἐν ὀρ. correct one another, not in anger D 15:3 (ἐν ὀργῇ Is 58:13; Da 3:13 Theod.). Anger ἄφρονα ἀναιρεῖ 1 Cl 39:7 (Job 5:2); leads to murder D 3:2. δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐκ ἐργάζεται **Js 1:20**; originates in θυμός and results in μῆνις Hm 5, 2, 4.—Pl. outbursts of anger (Pla., Euthyphro 7b ἐχθρὰ καὶ ὀργαί, Rep. 6, 493a; Maximus Tyr. 27, 6b; 2 Macc 4:25, 40; Jos., Vi. 266) 1 Cl 13:1; IEph 10:2 (B-D-F §142; W-S. §27, 4d). JStelzenberger, D. Beziehung der frühchristl. Sittenlehre zur Ethik der Stoa '33, 250ff. S. also Ps.-Phocyl. 57f; 63f and Horst's annotations 153, 155–57.

**2. strong indignation directed at wrongdoing, w. focus on retribution, wrath** (Πανός ὀργαί Eur., Med. 1172; Parmeniscus [III/II B.C.] in the schol. on Eur., Medea 264 Schw. τῆς θεᾶς ὀργῆ; Diod S 5, 55, 6 διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν of Aphrodite; Philostrat., Vi. Apoll. 6, 29; SIG 1237, 5 ἔξει ὀργὴν μεγάλην τοῦ μεγάλου Διός; OGI 383, 210 [I B.C.]; LXX; En 106:15; TestReub 4:4; ApcEsdra 1:17 p. 25, 11 Tdf.; ApcrEzk pap. Fgm. 1 recto, 6 [Denis, p. 125]; SibOr 4, 162; 5, 75f; Philo, Somn. 2, 179, Mos. 1, 6; Just., D. 38, 2; 123, 3; oft. Jos., e.g. Ant. 3, 321; 11, 127; Theoph. Ant. 1, 3 [p. 62, 21].—EpArist 254 θεὸς χωρὶς ὀργῆς ἀπάσης) as the divine reaction toward evil (παιδεύει ἢ καλουμένη ὀρ. τοῦ θεοῦ Orig., C. Cels. 4, 72, 4) it is thought of not so much as an emotion (οὐ πάθος δ' αὐτοῦ αὐτῆν [sc. ὀργὴν] εἶναι φαμεν Orig., C. Cels. 4, 72, 1) as the outcome of an indignant frame of mind (judgment), already well known to OT history (of the inhabitants of Nineveh: οἱ τὴν ὀρ. διὰ μετανοίας ἐκάλυσαν Did., Gen. 116, 22), where it somet. runs its course in the present, but more oft. is to be expected in the future, as God's final reckoning w. evil (ὀρ. is a legitimate feeling on the part of a judge; s. RHirzel, Themis 1907, 416; Pohlenz [s. below, b, end] 15, 3; Synes. Ep. 2 p. 158b).—S. Cat. Cod. Astr. V/4 p. 155.

*a) of the past and pres.:* of judgment on the desert generation ὄμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου (Ps 94:11) **Hb 3:11; 4:3**. In the present, of Judeans ἔφθασεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀρ. the indignation (ὀργὴ abs.= ὀρ. θεοῦ also **Ro 12:19**—AvanVeldhuizen, 'Geeft den toorn plaats' [Ro 12:19]: TSt 25, 1907, 44–46; [on 13:4; 1 Th 1:10]. Likew. Jos., Ant. 11, 141) has come upon them **1 Th 2:16** (cp. TestLevi 6:11; on **1 Th 2:13–16** s. BPearson, HTR 64, '71, 79–94). Of God's indignation against sin in the pres. ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀρ. θεοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν **Ro 1:18** (JCampbell, ET 50, '39, 229–33; SSchultz, TZ 14, '58, 161–73). Of God's indignation against evildoers as revealed in the judgments of earthly gov. authorities **13:4f** (here ὀρ. could also be punishment, as Demosth. 21, 43). The indignation of God remains like an incubus upon the one who does not believe in the Son **J 3:36** (for ἡ ὀρ. μένει cp. Wsd 18:20). Of the Lord's wrath against renegade Christians Hv 3, 6, 1. The Lord ἀποστρέφει τὴν ὀρ. αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τινος turns away (divine) indignation from someone (ἀποστρέφω 2a) Hv 4, 2, 6.—Of the wrath of God's angel of repentance Hm 12, 4, 1.

*b) of God's future judgment specifically qualified as punitive* (ἐκφυγεῖν τὴν ὀρ. καὶ κρίσιν τοῦ θεοῦ Theoph. Ant. 2, 14 [p. 136, 16]) ἔσται ὀρ. τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ **Lk 21:23**; ἡ μέλλουσα ὀρ. **Mt 3:7; Lk 3:7**; IEph 11:1. ἡ ὀρ. ἢ ἐρχομένη **1 Th 1:10**; cp. **Eph 5:6; Col 3:6**. σωθησόμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς ὀρ. **Ro 5:9**. οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀρ. God has not destined us for punitive judgment **1 Th 5:9**. θησαυρίζειν ἑαυτῷ ὀργὴν (s. θησαυρίζω 2b and PLond VI 1912, 77–78 ταμιευόμενος ἑμαυτῷ ... ὀργὴν and 81 εἰς ὀργὴν δικαίαν [opp. internal hostility, line 80]; s. SLösch, Epistula Claudiana 1930, 8. Claudius reserves to himself punitive measures against ringleaders of civil unrest; the par. is merely formal: in our pass. it is sinners who

1.18 γὰρ  
**11** **Ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργὴ θεοῦ**  
 ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ  
 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων  
 | ἐν ἀδικίᾳ  
 τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν...κατεχόντων,  
 1.19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν  
 ἐν αὐτοῖς·  
 γὰρ  
**12** **ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν.**  
 1.20 γὰρ  
 ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου  
 τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα  
**13** **τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ...καθορᾶται,**  
 ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δυνάμεις καὶ θειότης,  
 εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους,  
 1.21 γνόντες τὸν θεὸν  
 διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
 ἢ  
 ----- ηὐχαρίστησαν,  
 ἀλλ'  
 ----- ἐματαιώθησαν  
 ἐν τοῖς διαλογοῖσιν αὐτῶν  
 καὶ  
 ----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.  
 1.22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ  
**14** **ἐμωράνθησαν**  
 1.23 καὶ  
**15** **ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ**  
 ἐν ὁμοίωματι εἰκόνας  
 φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
 καὶ  
 πετεινῶν  
 καὶ  
 τετραπόδων  
 καὶ  
 ἐρπετῶν.



ensure divine indignation against themselves) **Ro 2:5a**. This stored-up wrath will break out ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς (s. ἡμέρα 3bβ) vs. **5b**. Elsewhere, too, the portrayal of the wrath of God in Paul is predom. eschatological: ὀρ. καὶ θυμός (s. θυμός 2) **Ro 2:8** (cp. 1QS 4:12); cp. 1 Cl 50:4; δότε τόπον τῇ ὀρ. **Ro 12:19** (s. 2a above; τόπος 4). Cp. **9:22a**. ἐπιφέρειν τὴν ὀργὴν inflict punishment **3:5** (s. 13:4f under a above; s. Just., A I, 39, 2). Humans are τέκνα φύσει

ὀργῆς by nature children of wrath, i.e. subject to divine indignation **Eph 2:3** (JMehlman,

Natura Filii Irae etc. '57). τέκνα ὀργῆς AcPICor **2:19** (on gnostic opponents of Paul). Cp. σκευὴ ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπόλειαν objects of wrath prepared for destruction **Ro 9:22b**. Of the law: ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται it effects/brings (only) wrath **4:15**.—In Rv the term is also used to express thoughts on eschatology **6:16**; **11:18**. ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀρ. αὐτῶν the great day of their (God's and the Lamb's) wrath (s. above) **6:17**. Ὁ τὸ ποτήριον τῆς ὀρ. αὐτοῦ the cup of his wrath **14:10** and οἶνος τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀρ. τοῦ θεοῦ **16:19**; **19:15**, s.

lated as **anger**, is that θυμός tends to reference more often human anger than divine anger. But especially in Revelation one finds τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, **His wrath**, and τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's wrath**, used interchangeably. Of interest is the combination of both like in Rev. 16:19, τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου **τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ**, **the wine cup of the fury of His wrath**. Here θυμός stresses the intense emotion while ὀργή the action expressing the intense emotion. Similarly is Rev. 19:15, τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ οἴνου **τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς** τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος, **the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty One**. But one should not forget that both terms can be used interchangeably with one another, and also as separate entities (e.g., Col. 3:8 // Eph. 4:31; Rev. 14:10). The Hebrew, especially the prophetic, background will stand behind τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's wrath**, with strong emphasis upon the expression of that anger of God in judgment.

Of importance also is the timing of the pouring out of this divine wrath. The biblical text frequently speaks of God having expressed His wrath in past events and also in present time events (cf. 2. b in the above footnote for listing). But very common is the eschatological expression of God's wrath on the Day of Judgment. For example just in Romans see 2:5, 8; 4:15; 9:22 et als. Clearly here in 1:18-32 the present time expression of divine wrath is the focus. That is, the expressing of God's anger and punishment upon sinful conduct is an ongoing matter that spans the 'moment' in time whenever it is.<sup>37</sup>

The two modifying prepositional phrases of the verb Ἀποκαλύπτεται θυμός 1 and 2 (AHanson, *The Wrath of the Lamb*, '57, 159–80).—ARitschl, *Rechtfertigung u. Versöhnung* II4 1900, 119–56; MPohlenz, *Vom Zorne Gottes* 1909; GWetter, *D. Vergeltungsgedanke bei Pls*1912; GBornkamm, *D. Offenbarung des Zornes Gottes* (Ro 1–3): ZNW 34, '35, 239–62; ASchlatter, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit* '35, 48ff; GMacGregor, NTS 7, '61, 101–9; JHempel, *Gottes Selbstbeherrschung*, H-WHertzberg *Festschr.*, '65, 56–66. S. also κρίσις, end: Braun 41ff and Filson.—B. 1134. DELG 1 ὀργή. M-M. DLNT 1238–41. EDNT. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 720–721.]

<sup>37</sup>"The ὀργή θεοῦ was a familiar concept in the ancient world — divine indignation as heaven's response to human impiety or transgression of divinely approved laws, or as a way of explaining communal catastrophes or unlooked for sickness or death (TDNT 5:383–409). Paul takes up this well-known language as a way of describing the effect of human unrighteousness in the world (vv 19–32), though clearly, in Paul's view, 'wrath' is not something for which God is merely responsible, 'an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe' (Dodd; Macgregor, 105; similarly Hanson, *Wrath*, 85, 110), nor merely an attitude of God (far less a vengeful attitude of God), but something God does (see Travis, 37–38). The parallel with 'the righteousness of God' would be sufficient indication of this, especially when taken in conjunction with other references to God's wrath later in Romans (3:5; 9:22; 12:19), and the repeated παρέδωκεν of vv 24, 26, and 28 puts the issue beyond dispute (cf. Ladd, *Theology*, 407; Robinson, *Wrestling*, 18–21; Maillot, 62). Not merely a psychological or sociological process is in view but a process on earth in which heaven (οὐρανοῦ) is involved." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 54–55.]

<sup>38</sup>"Who Is Discussed in 1:18–32? As for who is being discussed in 1:18–32, it must be acknowledged that Wis 13:1–14:31 presents a number of vehement, even rather vitriolic, denunciations of Gentiles and conditions in the Gentile world, which are then followed by self-congratulatory statements about Jews and the Jewish world. So Paul's use of material drawn from Wis 13–14 could also be understood as his denunciation of the godlessness and wickedness of non-Jews in the Gentile world. Some commentators, in fact, have argued that Paul in 1:18–32 is speaking exclusively regarding 'the situation of the Gentile world.'<sup>18</sup>

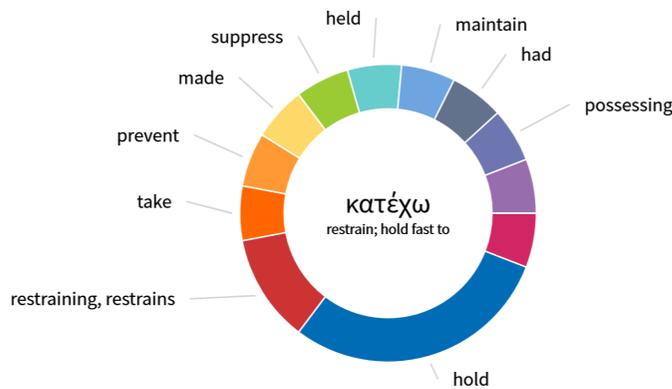
"But though Paul uses material drawn from Wis 13–14 in speaking about idolatries, immoralities, and injustices, it needs also to be recognized that he never once in 1:18–32 uses

throw light on these questions of what and how.

*First is ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, from Heaven.* The origin of this discovery is coming from Heaven, not from earth. One of the interpretive issues is the syntactical role of the prepositional phrase ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ. Is it adjectival? Or, adverbial? If adjectival, then the idea is **God's wrath from Heaven**. But if adverbial, then it is **God's wrath is being revealed from Heaven**. The post position of the phrase obscures the syntactical function. That is, it follows both the potential verb and the noun that it could modify. Normally prepositional phrases in Greek precede what they modify. But the inherent adverbial role of a Greek prepositional phrase favors the adverbial function. Although the difference in meaning is ultimately not too much, the preferable understanding is that God's wrath is being disclosed from Heaven as a divine action. Human initiative is not present in this discovery.

God is in the process of letting humanity know that He is profoundly displeased with its sinful behavior. Exactly how He is making this known will be explained beginning in verse 19. But what arouses His anger is defined in the following second prepositional phrase.

*Second is ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, upon all acts of ungodliness and wickedness from men who are suppressing the truth in wickedness.* This addresses the question of who the apostle is targeting in vv. 18-32. The Wisdom of Solomon clearly pits non-Jewish Gentiles as pagans and over against the glorious Jewish world. Often Paul has been understood to be doing the same thing.<sup>38</sup> But is he?



No! He is not! The language of Paul targets a broad group, not merely a non-Jewish group. Here in the lead declaration that group is defined as ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, **men who suppress the**

**come short of God's Glory.** This is a human problem, not just a Gentile problem. The defense section below (vv. 19-23) and more spells this out clearly and undeniably.<sup>39</sup>

What is it in humanity that occasions this wrath? Two aspects provides Paul's initial answer. First, ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν, **against every ungodly expression and every express of wickedness**, and then second τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, **who are suppressing the Truth in wickedness.**

a) ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν, **against every ungodly expression and every express of wickedness.** The two nouns ἀσέβεια and ἀδικία linked together underscore the vertical and horizontal dimensions of human life. Toward God there is ἀσέβεια, the opposite of σέβασμα, pious expressions of devotion to God.<sup>40</sup> And then toward others stands ἀδικία, the opposite of δικαίωμα, just action toward another.<sup>41</sup> Together they encompass the totality of human life and label it as sinful (cf. 1 Jn. 5:17a, πᾶσα ἀδικία ἄμαρτία

**Truth in wickedness.** The implication here is what Paul concludes in 3:23, πάντες γὰρ ἡμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, **for all have sinned and**

the term ἔθνος ('heathen,' 'pagan,' 'Gentile,' or 'nation'). Rather, in his theme statement of 1:18 he uses the more generic expression ἄνθρωποι ('men,' 'persons'), and thus should be understood as speaking not only about Gentiles but about all humanity. As Bruce Longenecker has rightly argued: 'It is not the gentile condition alone that Paul is describing here but a more fundamental anthropological condition which includes in itself no ethnic differentiation.'<sup>19</sup>

"Later in 2:1–16 the apostle will speak in rather broad fashion to 'whoever you are who passes judgment on someone else' about God's judgment as being without impartiality against all who sin, whatever their ethnicity. Then in 2:17–29 he will narrow his focus to speak specifically to Jews about any form of Jewish legalism. And finally in 3:1–20 he will narrow his focus yet further to speak about the situation of the Jews before God. Here in 1:18–32, however, Paul's focus is best understood as being on humanity generally — even though he uses material that originally had to do only with the idolatries, immoralities, and injustices of non-Jews, that is, with the 'godlessness' and 'wickedness' of the Gentile world."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 196.]

<sup>39</sup>"That a degree of irrationality or incalculability was often manifest in the operation of divine wrath was also evident to classical thought (as expressed particularly in the concept of 'fate' — see, e.g., OCD). Jewish thought is familiar with the same feature, but within its monotheistic system found it more of a problem; cf. 2 Sam 24:1 and 15–16 with 1 Chron 21:1, 14–15; Job 19:11; Ps 88:16 (TDNT 5:402); and the apocalypticist's puzzled 'How long?' Paul too is conscious of the same problem (3:5; 9:22). Here he expounds the concept in highly moral terms (vv 19–32), but these verses contain the beginning of an answer which he elaborates later in terms of the individual (chaps. 6–8) and of humankind as a whole, Jew and Gentile (chaps. 9–11). In brief, his resolution is that the effect of divine wrath upon man is to show that man who rebels against his relation of creaturely dependence on God (which is what faith is) becomes subject to degenerative processes. Deliverance from these comes through returning to the relation of faith. Such a return does not mean that wrath ceases to operate against man in his fleshliness, but that it becomes part of a larger process whose end is liberation and redemption from all that occasions and involves wrath; cf. Herold — 'The eschatological judgment of wrath comes about in accordance with covenant and promise, because it will lead to redemption and to salvation' (Zorn, 301). That this fuller understanding of God's wrath emerges from the gospel (or at least Paul's expression thereof) is true, but the actual operation of wrath Paul affirms to be clearly visible in human behavior (Althaus; Michel; Bruce; Travis, 36; against Barth, Shorter; Leenhardt; Schenke, 888; Cranfield; cf. Filson, 39–48; Kuss; Wilckens). For the eschatological dimension of 'wrath' see above under ἀποκαλύπτεται and on 2:5." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 55.]

<sup>40</sup>Note the larger word group: σέβομαι, σεβάζομαι, σέβασμα, Σεβαστός, εὐσεβής, εὐσέβεια, εὐσεβέω, ἀσεβής, ἀσέβεια, ἀσεβέω, σεμνός, σεμνότης. [Werner Foerster, "Σέβομαι, Σεβάζομαι, Σέβασμα, Σεβαστός, Εὐσεβής, Εὐσέβεια, Εὐσεβέω, Ἀσεβής, Ἀσέβεια, Ἀσεβέω, Σεμνός, Σεμνότης," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:168.]

<sup>41</sup>"πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων, 'all impiety and unrighteousness of men,' is an all-embracing phrase. In Greek thought it would include hostility to or disregard for what was generally accepted to be good religious practice (typically failure to observe the state cultus) and unlawful conduct toward others (TDNT 1:154). That Paul intends a clear distinction between the words is unlikely, as also the suggestion that he had in mind the two tables of the law (as suggested by Schlatter, 49, and implausibly elaborated by Wilier, 12ff.; but see TDNT 5:190). Such sins were all of a piece in Jewish thought and the phrase is comprehensive, not analytic (cf. Philo, *Immut.* 112; *Spec. Leg.* 1.215; *Praem.* 105). In fact ἀσέβεια is hardly used by Paul (only here and 11:26 in the undisputed Paulines; ἀσεβής only in 4:5 and 5:6), whereas ἀδικία is the more dominant concept (1:29; 2:8; 3:5; 6:13; 9:14; also 1 Cor 13:6; 2 Cor 12:13; 2 Thess 2:10, 12), and, as its repetition here shows, it clearly embraces the full range covered by the more comprehensive phrase in itself." [James D. G.

ἐστίν, **all wickedness is sin**). Thus human activity stands contrary to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. That is, humanity is not treating God justly like He treats them.

b) τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, **who are suppressing the Truth in wickedness**. This adjectival modifying participle phrase that is linked to ἀνθρώπων defines human actions against both God and others. The plural ἀνθρώπων from ἄνθρωπος, as opposed to ἄνδρες from ἀνὴρ, signals both male and female inclusion, and thus is better translated as **people, individuals, or persons**.

What humanity is doing with God's uncovering His wrath is τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων. Key here is the verbal κατεχόντων. This present tense participle from κατέχω means literally to hold something down to prevent it from functioning. Overwhelmingly this has a negative implication, although in very rare instances it can be positive such as in Acts 27:40. In Rom. 1:18, clearly the idea is negative. Wicked humanity is holding down the Truth of God in order to prevent it from disclosing the wrath of God to them. In a very real sense, they are guilty of a 'cover up' of divine Truth while God is doing an 'uncovering' of His wrath as a warning of His displeasure with how humanity is living.

Of critical importance here is the perspective of τὴν ἀλήθειαν, **the Truth**. This is not truth as an abstract concept as in modern western thinking. Instead it is truth as defined by God, as the later text variants (ar vg<sup>cl</sup> sa; Ambst) reflect in altering the phrase to τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ in order to be very clear. Paul makes it clear in 2:8, τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ **ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ** πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς, **but to those who also disobey the Truth out of hubris, but to those obeying wickedness there come wrath and fury**. Compare also 3:7, ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's Truth**. Truth in the Bible is defined by John 14:6 which reflects the traditional Jewish background understanding. God as the Creator defines what is true. Everything that conforms to God's being and behavior is true. False is what doesn't conform to God. Added to that is the contention of the absolute holiness of God as well as His righteous character (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ). Thus 'suppressing the Truth' is preventing God's wrath from revealing itself to the awareness and consciousness of sinful humanity. Paul's thought is much more than merely denying the wrath of God. It instead is deliberate efforts to hobble that Truth

and keep it from getting through to human awareness.

But how? ἐν ἀδικίᾳ is Paul's answer. Note the δικ- stem with the alpha privative attached giving it the opposite meaning. Man's behavior is the exact opposite of the just behavior of God. This translates into a wide range of harmful, destructive actions toward others as Paul makes clear in the seven uses of ἀδικία in Romans: 1:18 (2x), 29; 2:8; 3:5; 6:13; 9:14. And this doesn't include the other five uses in 1-2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, and 2 Timothy. Thus 12 of the total 25 uses of ἀδικία in the NT are found in Paul's writings. Humanity's injustice to others is a major issue in the New Testament. One of the most dramatic uses comes from the mouth of Christ in Luke 13:27 (27-30), καὶ ἐρεῖ λέγων ὑμῖν· οὐκ οἶδα [ὑμᾶς] πόθεν ἐστέ· ἀπόστητε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ πάντες ἐργάται ἀδικίας. **And He will speak saying to you, "I do not know you, i.e., who you are; depart from me all you workers of wickedness.**

The use of ἀδικία -- only here verses the dual reference above -- is primarily because inside the Pauline vocabulary especially this term actually covers both ideas.<sup>42</sup> So Paul's referencing of ἀδικία here sufficiently references the evil sinfulness of humanity in a summarizing manner.

The use of the preposition ἐν with the locative of sphere (or locational dative) noun captures a depth of meaning not translatable fully into English. The Hebrew אַ stands behind this preposition ἐν with the sense of not only where but how. The wickedness of humanity is not only where the suppression of divine Truth is located, but it also is the means by which this Truth is suppressed. Therefore our wickedness not just keeps us from seeing the wrath of God being expressed in our world, it actively seeks to keep that wrath from working in our world.

Paul's Jewish Christian targeted readers would have understood the assertion of wickedness in the non-Jewish world around them. But Paul asserts the universal presence of this in all of humanity. Such accusations would also have been challenging to the non-Jewish Christian readers at Rome. Particularly in the imperial capital where arrogant pride in all things being good if Roman reigned supremely. Might makes right was the prevailing principle in place there. The apostle thus seeks to shatter such thinking from both heritages. Neither Jew nor Gentile could claim being anything but ἀδικία and all were guilty of τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, **suppress-**

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Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 55-56.]

<sup>42</sup>"The noun ἀσέβεια ('godlessness') is used in Deut 9:5 (LXX) with respect to the wickedness of 'the nations' in opposition to Israel and is found elsewhere in ancient Jewish Greek writings in the sense of 'wickedness' or 'violence.'<sup>150</sup> It is an expression, however, that is seldom used by Paul, appearing in Romans only here and at 11:26.51 The noun ἀδικία ('unrighteousness,' 'lawlessness,' 'evil,' 'wickedness,' 'injustice'), however, is found frequently in Jewish and Christian writings for all sorts of lawlessness, injustice, and deception,<sup>52</sup> and it appears fairly often in Paul's letters.<sup>53</sup>" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 203.]

ing the Truth in their wickedness. This would need proof if to be acceptable.

The beginning of this proof is attached as a dependent clause διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς on to the core statement verb Ἀποκαλύπτεται. This is followed by a main clause statement introduced by γὰρ. This kind of thought structure drives Bible translators crazy. And most of the time they reverse the structural pattern so that it works logically in modern western languages. For example, note the NRSV use in v. 19 of the coordinate causal 'for' to translate the Greek subordinate διότι, but the subordinate causal 'because' for the Greek coordinate γὰρ. The loss here is the way Paul thinks in favor of a modern western way of thinking. Over the years that I have been diagraming the Greek text since the early 1980s, I have observed this pattern far more times than I can remember. It is just a different pattern of logical construction of ideas from anything in western ways of arranging ideas. We go typically from the broad to the narrow. But Paul's world quite often went from the narrow to the broad structuring of ideas. When such is observed, the subordinated clause syntactically takes on special meaning content wise.

The foundational point of the διότι clause is simply that the knowable thing about God is clear in their midst: διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς. Behind this stands the conviction that humanity on its own can know absolutely nothing about God. Only what God chooses to reveal can be known about Him, nothing beyond that.<sup>43</sup> In the subsequent main clause declarations more details meant by τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ are expressed. But the combination of the substantival adjective τὸ γνωστὸν with the predicate adjective φανερόν via the copulative verb ἐστιν makes it abundantly clear

<sup>43</sup>"διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, 'because what can be known about God is evident to them.' τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 'what can be known about God, God to the extent that he can be known, God in his knowability' (BGD, TDNT 1:719; only here in Paul). Clearly implicit here is the conviction that God is not knowable in himself (a very strong conviction in Judaism—e.g., Exod 33:20; Deut 4:12; Sir 43:31; Sib. Or. 3.17; Philo, Som. 1.65–66, 68–69; Post. 16–20; Josephus, War 7.346; Ap. 2.167), but that he has made himself known to some extent. The phrase here probably includes the sense of what is common knowledge about God (so also φανερόν, 'visible, clear, plainly to be seen, open, evident'), hence the severity of the indictment at the end of v 20." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 56.]

<sup>44</sup>"Also clear is the fact that some sort of natural theology is involved here. The claim is more or less explicit in vv 19–20. And Paul is certainly conversant with and indeed indebted to a strong strand of like-minded Hellenistic Jewish wisdom theology. The parallel between Wisd Sol 12–15 and vv 19–32 is too close to be accidental; note Wisd Sol 13:1–9 (see further on 1:20c, 21b, 23, 24, 26–27, 29–31; also SH 51–52 and those cited in Dunn, *Christology*, 306 n.9; and for a broader survey Daxer, 3–58; Herold, 188–209, sees the same scheme of thought in 1:16–18 and Wisdom; Sib. Or. 3.8–45 shows a strikingly similar influence; and cf. already Job 12:7–9 and Ps 19:1–4). *Very relevant for the background of Paul's thought at this point, then, is the interplay in Jewish wisdom between the hiddenness and revelation of divine wisdom* (see particularly Job 28; Bar 3:15–4:4), which forms the warp and woof of a natural theology. In Philo in particular the Logos can be defined precisely as 'God in his knowability,' with creation as it were a 'shadow' cast by God by means of which the Creator may to some extent be discerned (Leg. All. 3.97–99; see Dunn, *Christology*, 220–28). ἐν αὐτοῖς could be translated 'in them,' or 'among them,' but also 'to them' with ἐν standing for the dative (BGD, ἐν IV.4.a). The ambiguity probably reflects the common belief in a direct continuity between human rationality and the rationality evident in the cosmos." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 56–57.]

<sup>45</sup>Most English translations scramble the syntactical structure of the Greek so that it is not possible to clearly follow Paul's reasoning. Very notably here is the NRSV. The problem with this is that Paul's first century thinking is re-contextualized into a twentieth-first century modern North American way of thinking. The distinctive in Paul's thought patterns is thus lost in translation.

that God has the exclusive initiative in revealing Himself to humanity. This reflects to a certain extent the Jewish wisdom literature heritage in Paul's day.<sup>44</sup> God is knowable in the created order but only to those with the right spiritual eyes to see the presence and activity of God in creation. Natural man can look at creation and see nothing.

**10.3.3.2.1.2 Defense of Declaration, 1:19b-23.** 19b ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν. 20 τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἄιδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, 21 διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠυχάριστησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία. 22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν 23 καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνος φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν. 19b because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

Just a quick glance at the diagram below underscores the series of justifying statements that largely make up the content of this pericope.<sup>45</sup> Also what stands out is the use of the conjunction διότι as signaling two key points of emphasis in defense of his contention of humanity's guilt in v. 18.

	1.19	διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς·
12		γὰρ ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν.
	1.20	γὰρ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα
13		τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ...καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦς ἀναπολογήτους,
	1.21	γνόντες τὸν θεὸν διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ----- --- -- ---- ηὐχαρίστησαν, ἀλλ' ----- ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδιά.
14	1.22	φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν
15	1.23	καὶ ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρμοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν.

Essentially these two points focus on what God did (#s 12-13, vv. 19-20) and how humanity responded (#s 14-15, vv. 21-23). Then vv. 24-32 depict God's response to humanity's response to God's action. The structure formula is simple: ==> God acts, <== humanity reacts, and <== God reacts to humanity. To a fair degree, Paul is using a modified OT Deuteronomist paradigm.

**What God did, vv. 19b-20.** 19b ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν. 20 τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦς ἀναπολογήτους, **19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;**

After attaching the causal διότι clause to Ἀποκαλύπτεται in order to assert the accessibility of awareness of God's wrath based on a divine revelation that is made clear to humanity, Paul then follows this with amplification at a main clause level, but still with a causal thrust. The knowability of God is possible simply because ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν, **for God made it clear to them.** Note the play on words between the adjective φανερόν, **clear** (v. 19a), and the verb ἐφάνερωσεν, **made clear** (v. 19b). No question about the divine initiative in revelation. It happens because God acts, and in no other way.<sup>46</sup> Depraved humanity could search a million years and come up with zero more understanding than that at the beginning.

Now what is it that can be known about God in His creation? **The second γὰρ clause in v. 20 provides the answer:**<sup>47</sup> τὰ γὰρ

<sup>46</sup> ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν, 'for God has shown them.' Φανερώω appears little outside the NT (including other pre-Christian Jewish writings — only once in LXX and in Philo; see TDNT 9:3-4). Consequently its frequent occurrence in the NT (49 times) is rather striking and helps underline the early Christian sense of being a religion of revelation (cf. particularly

3:21; 16:26; 1 Cor 4:5; Col 1:26; 3:4; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3; Heb 9:26; 1 Pet 1:20). The clause here emphasizes that God's knowability is not merely a characteristic or 'spin-off' of creation but was willed and effected by God. Even so, and despite Käsemann's careful qualifications, we still have to speak of a 'natural theology' — that is here, of a revelation of God through the cosmos, to humankind as a whole, and operative since the creation of the cosmos. 'Observation of created life is sufficient to show that creation does not provide the key to its own existence' (Barrett). That is well said; but Paul speaks primarily (v 21) of an actual knowing of God (Kuss, 45; Rosin; Lührmann, 26; Harrisville; see also Lyonnet, Quaestiones, 1:78-88). Whether it is a saving knowledge is another question which Paul does not address here (cf. particularly Nygren and Robinson, Wrestling, 22-23); see further 2:6-16." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 57.]

<sup>47</sup> The postpositive γὰρ in this verse is evidently meant to be explanatory in nature. Yet almost every statement in the explanation has been a matter of dispute among exegetes and theologians. What are τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ('the invisible things of him [God]')? What is meant by ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ('from the creation of the world')? What is signified by τοῖς

ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, **for the invisible things about Him from the creation of the world are being recognized by those made knowable things, which are both His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse.** The logic, working in reverse direction, is that a causal main clause supports (γὰρ) the preceding causal main clause which supports (γὰρ) the dependent causal clause (διότι), which supports the lead statement in v. 18. It becomes clear then that the διότι clause takes on special importance beyond that normally ascribed to dependent adverbial clauses. How to preserve that in translation into modern western languages is the virtually impossible dilemma for Bible translators. It simply

ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται ('they have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made')? What is to be understood by ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης ('his eternal power and divine nature')? And how does the final statement of this verse function: εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους ('so people are without excuse')?

"Further, it needs to be noted that much of the language in 1:20 reflects more the religious language of the Greek world and Hellenistic Judaism during the first Christian century than it does the language of Paul himself. For example, certain key terms are either absent from or extremely rare in Paul and the rest of the NT, such as the noun θεϊότης ('divine nature'), which appears only here in the NT, and the adjective αἰδῖος ('eternal'), which can be found only here and in Jude 6. Both of these terms, however, seem to have been fairly common in the Greek and Jewish Greek writings of the day<sup>68</sup> — which, of course, raises questions about how Paul understood these terms when he used them here in 1:20."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 206–207.]

<sup>68</sup>"τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, 'for his invisible characteristics from the creation of the world are perceived intellectually in the things which have been made, both his eternal power and deity.' The language here is scarcely characteristic of earliest Christian thought (καθορᾶω, 'perceive,' and θεϊότης, 'divinity, divine nature,' occur only here in the NT; αἰδῖος, 'eternal,' elsewhere only in Jude 6; and ποίημα, 'what is made,' only here and Eph 2:10). It also for the most part plays an insignificant role in the OT. But it is familiar in Stoic thought: the closest parallel to the ἀόρατα/καθορᾶται wordplay comes in Pseudo-Aristotle, *de Mundo* 399b. 14 ff. (ἀόρατος τοῖς ἔργοις ὁρᾶται); and for θεϊότης cf. particularly Plutarch, *Mor.* 398A; 665A (see further Lietzmann). And it is presumably through Stoic influence that the language entered the Jewish wisdom tradition (αἰδῖος — cf. Wisd Sol 2:23; 7:26 = a description of Wisdom; θεϊότης — in LXX only in Wisd Sol 18:19) and influenced Philo (for whom ἀόρατος and αἰδῖος in particular are favorite terms; see, e.g., TDNT 5:368–69; 1:168); hence also the only other occurrence of ἀόρατος ('unseen, invisible') in Paul comes in the Wisdom hymn of Col 1:15–16. The same is in large part true of both the term and concept κόσμος (TDNT 3:877–78, 880–82). The concept of κτίσις, 'creation,' was also common to Greek as well as Hebrew thought; though it should be noted that the Christian exclusive use of κτίζω/κτίσις for the act and fact of divine creation reflects the same Hebrew exclusiveness in the use of בָּרָא 'to create' (see TDNT 3:1000–1035; TDOT 2:242–49), in distinction to the much less discriminating use of Greek thought (see LSJ). The verb maintains the sense of qualitative distinction between Creator and creature which is such a fundamental feature of Judeo-Christian theology (see also on 9:20). δύναμις, 'power,' though more common in other connections (see on 1:16), here belongs within the same frame of reference (cf. Wisd Sol 13:4; Ep. Arist. 132; Josephus, Ap. 2.167), so that it can be used as a way of speaking of God's self-revelation and creative energy both in the singular (Wisd Sol 7:25; Mark 14:62; cf. Acts 8:10) and in the plural (particularly Philo, where the Logos can be described as the "sum" of the powers; cf. Dunn, *Christology*, 225).

"Paul thus is clearly and deliberately following Hellenistic Judaism in using this kind of language as an apologetic bridge to non-Jewish religious philosophy (Fridrichsen; Pohlenz; Bornkamm, "Revelation," 50–53; Bietenhard's discussion is too narrowly focused) — a fact which must decisively influence our understanding of the meaning he intended his readers to derive from it. Paul is trading upon, without necessarily committing himself to, the Greek (particularly Stoic) understanding of an invisible realm of reality, invisible to sense perception, which can be known only through the rational power of the mind. With Philo he presumably would not want to say that the rational mind is able to reach or grasp God. And he ensures that his language, however indebted to Stoic thought, should not be understood in terms of Stoicism by giving prominence to the thought of creation ('from the act of creation ... the things which have been made'; 'Paul speaks not of Ideas, but of things and events which manifest God's power' [Schlatter; cf. Acts 14:17]), and by setting it within an apocalyptic framework (the revelation of divine wrath from heaven; cf. Michel, Wilckens). The intention of the Apostle is not to infer God's being from the world, but to uncover the being of the world from God's revelation' (Bornkamm, "Revelation," 59). The value of the language, however, is that it enables him to appeal to this commonplace of Greek religious philosophy: that rational man recognizes the existence of God (even though invisible) and his nature as eternal power and deity. That is to say, however precisely the phrase νοούμενα καθορᾶται should be rendered ('clearly perceived' [RSV]; 'visible to the eye of reason' [NEB]), it is scarcely possible that Paul did not intend his readers to think in terms of some kind of rational perception of the fuller reality in and behind the created cosmos (cf. BGD, νοέω 1a; TDNT 5:380). That this is no longer a widely acceptable world-view should not, of course, influence

is not how we think.

**τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, for the invisible thing about Him are being clearly seen in the things of creation which are understandable.** The core assertion is τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ... καθορᾶται, **the invisible things about Him...are being seen clearly.** Everything else between the subject and the verb is an adverbial modifier. Then the two subsequent nouns in ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, **that is, both His eternal power and deity,** then stand as appositional modifiers of the subject τὰ ἀόρατα, **the invisible things.**

What then can be known about God? Two invisible qualities about Him, Paul answers.<sup>48</sup> τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ affirms something grasped with the intel-

lect. The Greek adjective ἀόρατος, -ον simply means **unseeable** (ἀ + ὄρατος) being taken from the verb ὀράω **to see**. The NT use of this adjective is limited to Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:17; and Heb. 11:27. In Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; and Heb. 11:27 the adjective references God as not visible physically to the human eye. In Col. 1:16, ἀόρατος, -ον stands in contrast to τὰ ὀρατὰ, the visible things. With the subsequent sets of expressions, the τὰ ὀρατὰ means something concrete over against the abstract:

<b>τὰ ὀρατὰ:</b>	<b>καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα:</b>
εἶτε θρόνοι	εἶτε κυριότητες
εἶτε ἄρχαι	εἶτε ἐξουσίαι
<b>things visible:</b>	<b>and things invisible:</b>
whether thrones	or lordships
whether rulers	or powers

The contrasts here are closely linked to one another with ὀρατὰ being the tangible expression of the ἀόρατα the invisible or abstract. Thus the invis-

our exegesis of Paul. At the same time, the extent to which Paul was prepared to build his argument on what was not a traditional Jewish world-view, and indeed to commit himself to it at this crucial opening stage of his exposition, even if as an *ad hominem* argument, reveals a breadth and a boldness in his apologetic strategy."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 57–58.]

<sup>49</sup>"Clarifying 'what can be known about God,' Paul speaks first in this verse of τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ (literally 'the invisible things of him,' that is, 'God's invisible attributes') and goes on to identify those attributes generally as 'his eternal power and divine nature' (ἡ αἰδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης). In so saying, the apostle sets out the basis for the distinction that Origen later enunciated between (1) 'something about God that can be known,' which is revealed to all people by the fabric of God's created world, and (2) 'something about him that is unknown,' which becomes known only by God's further revelations of himself — that is, his further revelations of himself first in his dealings with the primal families of history, with the Jewish patriarchs, with the lawgiver Moses, with the Jewish prophets, and with the entire nation of Israel, as recorded in the Jewish (OT) Scriptures, and then through the ministry, teachings, and redemptive work of his Son, Jesus Christ, together with the activities of his Holy Spirit, as portrayed in the Christian (NT) Scriptures and as experienced in the personal and corporate lives of Christian believers.<sup>69</sup>

"By τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ Paul undoubtedly had in mind God's attributes or essential qualities, which, according to the OT, the Talmud, and such NT passages as Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17; and Heb 11:27, are 'invisible' to humans.<sup>70</sup> The clarification of this expression by the phrases ἡ αἰδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις ('his eternal power') and [αὐτοῦ] θεϊότης ('[his] divine nature') is, admittedly, rather general. But these phrases speak, at least, of the existence of a divine being who is powerful, and they imply that humanity is in some significant sense both dependent on and responsible to that being."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 207.]

<sup>50</sup>"The expression ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ('from the creation of the world') could be read in a number of ways, for the preposition ἀπὸ ('from') is used in the NT to signify a number of things — most commonly (1) separation, (2) source or origin, or (3) means or cause, but also (4) the temporal idea of duration. And since a number of parallel NT constructions use ἀπὸ in this temporal sense,<sup>71</sup> it seems best to view the preposition in this first part of 1:20 as signifying the temporal idea of 'since' and to understand that what is said here is that 'ever since the creation of the world' all people have had some knowledge of 'God's invisible attributes' — that is, 'his eternal power and divine nature.' This is not to deny that a general knowledge of God can be derived from the fabric of the created universe, for that is what is declared in the very next statement of this verse ('they have been seen, being understood by what has been made'). But it is to say that to view ἀπὸ here as having reference to source is to set up a redundancy with the statement that immediately follows, and therefore it seems best, for both lexical and logical reasons, to understand the preposition in this statement of 1:20a in a temporal sense.<sup>72</sup>" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 208.]

<sup>51</sup>"Ever since God created the world translates the Greek noun phrase 'from the creation of the world.' Paul qualifies what he means by the *invisible qualities of God*, that is *his eternal power and his divine nature*. Although these qualities are invisible, *men can perceive them in the things that God has made*. The noun rendered *divine nature* occurs only here

ible traits of God now become 'seeable' in the creative act of God through the material world.<sup>49</sup> God has taken the initiative in creating the world to disclose something about Himself to humanity. And this 'something' calls upon thinking creation to respond to its Creator appropriately.

The first modifier of the verb καθορᾶται is ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου. The meaning of the preposition ἀπὸ is important here.<sup>50</sup> Although it basically means 'separation,' this can be either space or time. Obviously here it is a temporal meaning, **since the creation of the world**. That is, **from the time of the world being created onward** the invisible things have been being made clear. The perfective sense of the present tense passive voice of καθορᾶται from καθοράω is the meaning here. All during the point from creation to the present moment, God is making clear His power and deity in what is embedded into creation. This continues to be given to the creature man with the demand for proper response to his Creator, that of submission.

The second modifier of the verb καθορᾶται. This continuing revelation to humanity in creation by God is located τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται.<sup>51</sup>

1.20 γὰρ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου  
τοῖς ποιήμασιν  
νοούμενα

13 τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ... καθορᾶται,  
ἢ τε ἄϊδιος αὐτοῦ | δύνამις καὶ θειότης,  
εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦς ἀναπολογήτους,  
|  
1.21 | γνόντες τὸν θεὸν  
διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
ἢ  
----- --- -- ---- ηὐχαρίστησαν,  
ἀλλ'  
----- ἐματαιώθησαν  
ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν  
καὶ  
----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδιά.

This very esoteric philosophical expression is subject to several possible meanings.<sup>52</sup> The locative of place / locational dative case functioning noun

in the New Testament; the corresponding adjective occurs in Acts 17:29; 2 Peter 1:3, 4. The verb rendered *perceive* implies knowledge, understanding, and mental awareness. Since the Gentiles can perceive what God is like through the world that he has made, *they have no excuse at all*; and the Jews, who pass judgment on others, are in the same condition (see verse 2:1).

"It is not easy to combine such expressions as his invisible qualities and have been clearly seen. How can what is not visible be clearly seen? In some languages, therefore, it is necessary to speak of 'can be clearly known'

or 'can be fully understood.' In a number of instances the specific qualities must actually precede the general statement about their being invisible. Hence the order of components in verse 20 may be changed as follows: 'Ever since God created the world, people can clearly understand that his power never ceases and that he is truly God. These characteristics cannot be seen, but they can be known.' The second sentence of verse 20 may then be translated: 'People can know this about God because of the things which God has made.' And the last sentence may be rendered: 'As a result, they cannot have any excuse for what they have done' or '... hellip; there is no way in which they can defend what they have done.'

[Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 23.]

<sup>52</sup>"The statement τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται ('they have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made') raises a number of questions regarding what exactly is being signified. The intensive verb καθοράω ('see clearly,' 'observe closely'), which appears here in its third person plural present passive form ('they have been clearly seen'),<sup>73</sup> is found only here in the whole NT. It frequently appears, however, in classical and koine writings — though in these secular materials it usually denotes an external observation, not necessarily with any mental apprehension or understanding. On the other hand, the verb νοέω ('apprehend,' 'understand,' 'perceive,' 'gain insight into'), which appears here as a nominative plural neuter present passive participle ('being understood'), is found a further thirteen times in the NT and always connotes some type of apprehension or understanding.<sup>74</sup> Thus it seems that both of the ideas of (1) external observation of data and (2) inner apprehension or understanding of that data are present in this statement — similar to the use of the simple verbs ὁράω ('see') and νοέω ('understand') in Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14; and John 12:40 (quoting Isa 6:10). So we may conclude that Paul is not merely speaking of people having observed certain data having to do with God's eternal power and divine nature — or, more minimally, that such data is available for people to see — but that 'all people' have also had, and continue to have (unless they have suppressed or perverted what has been seen), some appreciation or understanding of the significance of that data for their own lives.

"Greek and Roman philosophers argued that while the 'ultimate reality' that stands behind everything that exists cannot be seen, the human mind can reason inductively from the pattern and functions of what exists ('the cosmological argument'), as well as from the nature and qualities of human beings themselves ('the ontological argument'), and thus, by means of a succession of observable effects and their postulated causes, draw certain conclusions regarding a 'first principle,' 'first cause,' or original 'unmoved mover.'<sup>75</sup> Jews also thought somewhat along these lines.

"Yet however much Jewish thinkers might evidence agreement with such quasi-theistic speculations, they could never accept the metaphysical tenets of the ancient philosophers regarding indirect causation, a non-personal first principle or final cause, or the innate ability of the human mind to reason back to that first unmoved mover. For God's actions in creating and preserving the world were understood by Jewish thinkers to be both personal and direct, and so theistic deduction was considered possible only because God himself had implanted a revelation of himself in the warp and woof of his created universe.

"It was for Jews a matter of God's revelation of the basic features regarding himself that he consciously built into in his creation, and not that of people's ability to ferret out such features by their own intellect or reasoning. That is, for Jews even an elemental knowledge of God did not constitute some sort of 'natural theology' that bases itself on human reason and works its way back inductively by means of a succession of observable effects and postulated causes to some non-personal 'first cause' or 'unmoved mover.' Instead, a 'revelation in creation' has been implanted and maintained by God himself in the fabric of the universe that he himself created — a revelation that calls on all of God's creation, both personal and non-personal, to respond to God, the creator, appropriately. Such a 'general revelation' in creation, together with the relation of that revelation to God's 'special revelation' in the

τοῖς ποιήμασιν, from ποίημα, **the made thing**, locates the action of the verb καθορᾶται as taking place in the things created. The invisible things being seen clearly is observed in creation.

The third modifier of καθορᾶται is the adverbial circumstantial participle νοούμενα that via the nominative neuter plural spelling goes back through the verb καθορᾶται<sup>53</sup> to its subject τὰ ἄορατα. The present passive voice participle in the circumstantial role attaches an accompanying circumstance to the action of the verb, often with the sense of a result or consequence of the verb action being defined by the participle. This is clearly the intent of the participle here. To see deeply into something (καθοράω)

written Torah, is eloquently portrayed in Ps 19, with the ;general revelation; in creation spoken of in vv. 1–6 (which begin with the affirmation 'the heavens declare the glory of God'; the skies proclaim the work of his hands;) and God's 'special revelation' highlighted in vv. 7–13 (which begins with the declaration 'the Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple'). To such a divine revelation in two forms, the only truly appropriate human response is that set out in v. 14: 'May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.'

"God's revelation in creation is also referred to in a number of Jewish writings composed during the period of Second Temple Judaism, and so during a time roughly contemporary with Paul—most prominently Wis 13:1–9 (cited earlier) and Sib Or 3:8–45. Most often the references to God's revelation in creation in these materials of Second Temple Judaism are to be found in discussions of how Abraham came to recognize the existence of God.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, there appear in the Talmud similar statements about how the patriarch Abraham came to discover the existence of God by reasoning back from what exists in creation to a first cause, as in Genesis Rabbah 38:13 and 39:1.<sup>77</sup>

"Paul was hardly original in arguing that although God is invisible, his basic attributes — that is, 'his eternal power and divine nature' (ἡ τε ἄϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης) — (1) can be discerned from his creation and so to some extent (2) can be 'understood by what has been made' (τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα). Further, it appears evident from his statements here in 1:19–20 that Paul believed that every person, in whatever time, place, or circumstance, knew the basic truths about God because of God's revelation of himself in his creation. And while such a basic knowledge of God as revealed in God's creation is hardly ever alluded to in his letters to his own Christian converts (i.e., other than here in his letter to Rome), it comes to the fore in two contextualized forms in Luke's portrayals of Paul's evangelistic preaching to Gentiles: first in Acts 14:15–17 to a group of Gentile country people, then in Acts 17:24–27 to a group of Gentile philosophers who viewed themselves as knowledgeable and sophisticated.

"The first reason set out in 1:19 as to why God's wrath is now being expressed against humanity — because God has made 'plain' to everyone by means of his creation a basic knowledge of 'his eternal power and divine nature,' but they have failed to respond appropriately — is concluded here in 1:20 by the statement 'so people are without excuse' (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους). The preposition εἰς with the articular infinitive τὸ εἶναι is a common construction in koine Greek for signaling result. Yet it frequently also carries the nuance of purposeful result. So while the phrase is most naturally translated 'so people are without excuse,' it may also suggest purpose: 'so that people would be without excuse.'"

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 208–210.]

<sup>53</sup>For those unfamiliar with ancient Greek an unexplained pattern was very common both in classical and Koine Greek usage. Very frequently neuter plural verb subjects were set up with singular verb spellings. All kinds of unsubstantiated explanations have been put forth, but the reality is that this unusual pattern is just of the the quirks of these two ancient forms of Greek. And this is what we encounter with ἄορατα, subject nominative neuter plural adjectival noun, and καθορᾶται, third singular verb.

<sup>54</sup>Note carefully the the logic used by Paul which follows this path:

- 1) God's righteousness is being uncovered to humanity (v. 17).
- 2) God's wrath is being uncovered to humanity as a part of the broad process of uncovering His righteousness (v. 18)
- 3) A part of the uncovering of His wrath is His making clear what is knowable about Him (v. 19)
- 4) The invisible things of His eternal power and deity can be closely examined in creation in order to grasp who He is (v. 20)
- 5) But humanity did not do this and thus is without excuse when the wrath of God falls on them both now and in eternity (v. 21-32). Thus God is completely justified (δίκαιος) in pouring out His wrath upon sinful humanity. And as δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ suggests, He will. His temporal punishments are different in methodology to the eschatological judgment. He just takes His hands off sinful humanity and allows their destructive sinfulness to destroy them.

<sup>55</sup>"In the syntax of v. 20, I understand the expression ἡ τε ἄϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης to be in apposition to the subject, 'God's invisible attributes.' The word 'namely' in my translation indicates such apposition, but the expression itself requires further explanation. When a single article is followed by two or more nouns connected by 'and,' this 'produces the effect of a single notion.'<sup>71</sup> In this case δύναμις ('power') and θεϊότης ('deity') are linked with καὶ ('and'), producing the odd expression 'God-power.'<sup>72</sup> This unique formulation combines

together of these two nouns δύναμις and θειότης by the common article ἡ for both and also the τε...καί conjunction pattern dramatically underscores a single entity here and not two separate entities. The ἀόρατα, *invisible things of God*, are defined as connected to His God-power. That is a power which is not human but God based. Added to that is the placing of the adjective ἄϊδιος, *eternal*, which sets up modification of both nouns equally. It should be noted that ἄϊδιος is not the normal, Jewish based referencing of eternity found inside the NT. Instead, its use only here and in Jude 6 is very philosophically Greek oriented language. Thus it is this central invisible quality about God that is being revealed in creation to humanity. The various ways this power expresses itself accounts for the plural frame of reference in τὰ ἀόρατα.

The next modifier of the verb καθορᾶται is the adverbial result infinitive

phrase εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, *with the consequence that they are without excuse*.<sup>56</sup> Again we encounter the subordinate element playing a significant role in the progression of thought. The consequence of the being closely seen action in καθορᾶται of God's invisible traits is that humanity has no excuse for not properly responding to God's revelation of Himself in creation.

The predicate adjective ἀναπολογήτους, from ἀναπολόγητος, -ον, is found only here and in 2:1 in all the NT. Built off of the verb ἀπολογέομαι for defending oneself, the compound form conveys the idea of *not being able to defend oneself*. Of course, here is the idea of mounting a self defense that would be acceptable to God. The judicial and court room stand in the background here against the eschatological day of judgment. Some faint echoes of this idea are found in a few of the Hellenistic Jewish writings.<sup>57</sup> Yet cursory comparison reveals significantly different perspectives

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the crucial terms 'God' and 'power' from the thesis statement in v. 16 with the classical Greek concept of ἀϊδιος ('eternity')<sup>73</sup> that occurs in Hellenistic philosophy of religion<sup>74</sup> and is found elsewhere only in Wis 18:9, where it refers to the divine origin of the law. The distinction popularized in medieval dogmatics between θειότης as pertaining to the divine nature and attributes and θεότης (Col 2:9) as the divine personality<sup>75</sup> was not reflected in Hellenistic usage and should not be read back into Romans.<sup>76</sup> [Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 155–156.]

56 The infinitive introduced by the preposition εἰς usually signals purpose for the verb action being defined. But this preposition on occasion can and does shade off into the idea of result in the sense of intended result. Such is the case in Rom. 1:20; 3:16; 4:18; 6:12, 16; 8:15; 7:4; 10:10; 13:4, 14.

**εἰς w. the result of an action or condition indicated into, to, so that:** αὐξάνειν εἰς ναόν grow into a temple **Eph 2:21**. πληροῦσθαι εἰς τι **3:19**. λυπηθῆναι εἰς μετάνοιαν be grieved so that repentance takes place **2 Cor 7:9**. Of prayer ἀναβαίνειν εἰς μνημόσυνον **Ac 10:4**. ὁμολογεῖν εἰς σωτηρίαν confess to salvation = so as to receive salvation **Ro 10:10**; cp. **1:16; 1 Pt 2:2**; εἰς ἔπαινον κτλ. to praise etc. **1 Pt 1:7**; εἰς βοήθειαν (1 Ch 12:17; Jdth 6:21; JosAs 23:4) **Hb 4:16**; cp. **10:39; Rv 13:3; Ro 6:16; 8:15; 13:4, 14; 1 Cor 11:34; 2 Cor 2:16** al.; εἰς κενόν (s. κενός 3) **2 Cor 6:1; Gal 2:2; Phil 2:16; 1 Th 3:5**. σχίζειν εἰς δύο tear in two **Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38**. Cp. Gpt 5:20 (cp. Polyb. 2, 16, 11; Lucian, Symp. 44, Tox. 54; 1 Km 15:29; Tob 5:3 S; 1 Macc 9:11; Ath. 18, 3 ὦρον ... εἰς δύο ἐρράγη). W. subst. inf. foll. so that **Ro 1:20; 3:26; 4:18; 6:12; 7:4; 1 Th 3:13; 2 Th 2:10f; Hb 11:3** al.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 290.]

<sup>57</sup>**Wisdom of Solomon 13:1-9.** 13 Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει, οἷς παρῆν θεοῦ ἀγνωσία καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀγαθῶν οὐκ ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι τὸν ὄντα οὔτε τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντες ἐπέγνωσαν τὸν τεχνίτην,† 2 ἀλλ' ἢ πῦρ ἢ πνεῦμα ἢ ταχινὸν ἀέρα ἢ κύκλον ἀστρῶν ἢ βίαιον ὕδωρ ἢ φωστῆρας οὐρανοῦ πρυτάνεις κόσμου θεοῦ ἐνόμισαν.† 3 ὦν εἰ μὲν τῇ καλλονῇ τερπόμενοι ταῦτα θεοῦ ὑπελάμβανον, γνώπωσαν πόσω τούτων ὁ δεσπότης ἐστὶ βελτίων, ὁ γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους γενεσιάρχης ἐκτίσεν αὐτά.† 4 εἰ δὲ δύνανται καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐκπλαγέντες, νοησάτωσαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν πόσω ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτὰ δυνατώτερός ἐστιν.† 5 ἐκ γὰρ μεγέθους καὶ καλλονῆς κτισμάτων ἀναλόγως ὁ γενεσιουργὸς αὐτῶν θεωρεῖται.† 6 ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπὶ τούτοις μέμψις ἐστὶν ὀλίγη, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ τάχα πλανῶνται θεὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ θέλοντες εὐρεῖν.† 7 ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ ἀναστρεφόμενοι διερευνῶσιν καὶ πείθονται τῇ ὀψει, ὅτι κατὰ τὰ βλεπόμενα.† 8 πάλιν δ' οὐδ' αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί.† 9 εἰ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι ἵνα δύνωνται στοχάσασθαι τὸν αἰῶνα, τὸν τούτων δεσπότην πῶς τάχιον οὐχ εὔρον;†

13.1 For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; 2 but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. 3 If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them. 4 And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who formed them. 5 For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator. 6 Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him. 7 For while they live among his works, they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful. 8 Yet again, not even they are to be excused; 9 for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

**Assumption of Moses 1:13.** 12 For He hath created the world on behalf of His people. 13 But He was not pleased to manifest this purpose of creation from the foundation of the world, in order that the Gentiles might thereby be convicted, yea to their own humiliation might by (their) arguments convict one another.

between Paul and his Jewish peers.<sup>58</sup> This subordinate infinitive phrase brings the idea of **God's showing humanity clearly invisible traits about Himself in His creation** to the logical point that humanity thus becomes accountable to respond appropriately in submission and praise to this Creator God. Failure to do so is inexcusable!

**How humanity responded, vv. 21-23.** 21 διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠύχαρίστησαν, ἀλλ' ἔματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. 22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν 23 καὶ ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνος φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν. **21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.**

Here again we encounter a continuation of the subordinate elements with the lengthy διότι clause. It complements the subordinate infinitive phrase by defining the response of sinful humanity. This is followed with main clause amplifications of this rejection presented in the subordinate διότι clause. In summary, humanity rejected the movements of God to reveal Himself in creation to them. They are accountable for this response and have no excuse for their rejection.

1.21	γνόντες τὸν θεὸν	Now to
-	διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν	take a closer
	ἢ	
-	----- -- ---- ἠύχαρίστησαν,	
	ἀλλ'	
+	----- ἐματαιώθησαν	
	ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν	
	καὶ	
+	----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.	

indeed, to their own humiliation, that they might by their arguments convict one another.' Yet theologically, in the context of Paul's broader teaching, and particularly as expressed elsewhere in Romans, Chrysostom's words about humanity's lack of response to God's revelation of himself in creation remains true: 'God did not set so great a system of teaching before the heathen in order to deprive them of any excuse but so that they might come to know him. It was by their failure to recognize him that they deprived themselves of every excuse.'<sup>78</sup> [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 210–211.]

<sup>59</sup>"Paul begins here to make the transition into more familiar Jewish categories. γνόντες τὸν θεόν, 'having known God' (cf. 1 Cor 1:21; Gal 4:9; John 10:15; 17:3; 1 John 4:7–8). If in Greek thought 'to know God' is to perceive God as he really is (TDNT 1:690–91; cf. v 18), in Hebrew thought there was a strong sense of knowledge as an acknowledging, a motivational recognition which expressed itself in the appropriate worship and obedience (as in Judg 2:10; 1 Sam 3:7; Ps 79:6; Hos 8:2; cf. TDNT 1:704–7; Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:213 ['knowledge of God is a lie if it is not acknowledgment of him']); note Wisd Sol 16:16." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 59.]

look at the details in vv. 21-23. First, the details of the διότι clause. Notice the balanced sets of pairs, first negative and then positive. The οὐχ... ἀλλ', **not...but**, structure sets this up. The adverbial participle γνόντες τὸν θεόν, **having come to know God**, summarizes the discussion in vv. 18-20. The verbs also function in pairs:

οὐχ...ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠύχαρίστησαν,  
ἀλλ'  
ἐματαιώθησαν... καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη  
**They did not honor nor give thanks,**  
**but**  
**they became crazy and their heart became darkened**

The aorist tense both for the participle and then for the four regular verbs here pictures completed action not just in past time. The gnomic quality of the aorist tense is working here to picture reality across time at any point past, present, and future. This would be true at any point of time that might be investigated. Take a look at humanity anytime and this is the picture you will see.

The adverbial participle phrase γνόντες τὸν θεόν, **although having known God**, comes first. This more Jewish and less Greek oriented phrase implies coming to some awareness of God's actions in the created world.<sup>59</sup> As mentioned above this phrase summarizes the potential of God's actions in the above discussion. Both δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and ὀργή θεοῦ are **being uncovered**. ἀποκαλύπτεται. **God is showing humanity the invisible things about**

[Robert Henry Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 415.]

<sup>58</sup>"Linguistically, 'they are without excuse' (αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, literally 'the inexcusability of them') may be paralleled by what is said about Gentiles in the penultimate sentence of *Wis* 13:1–9—which, as we have argued earlier, Paul probably knew and may have drawn on when writing Rom 1:19–32: 'Further, they are not to be pardoned (πάλιν δὲ οὐδ' αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί).' A parallel may also be found in *Assumption of Moses* 1:13, where God's purpose in creation is said to be 'in order that the Gentiles might thereby be convicted;

Himself: τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ... καθορᾶται. These are the clearly knowable things about God: διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν...; ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν. With the uncovering, making clear, causing to see clearly these understandable things, νοούμενα, etc. what is then possible for humanity to discover? The answer is then γνόντες τὸν θεὸν, [having come to know God](#). Not in a saving knowledge, but in a grasping of His invisible traits flowing out of His eternal God power, ἄϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, in creation, ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν.

The Jewish tone reflected here is important to grasp for it explains vv. 21-23.<sup>60</sup> The Greek tone would assume that given this divine activity humanity would then be able to understand clearly who God is with mental comprehension. But the Jewish tone demands a response to this divine activity of acknowledgement and submission to this Creator God. Human-

<sup>60</sup>"With δοξάζω, 'glorify, honor,' however, we move more fully into Jewish categories (cf. already Exod 15:1, 2, 6, 11, 21). To 'glorify God' is to render the appropriate response due to his δόξα, 'glory,' the awesome radiance of deity which becomes the visible manifestation of God in theophany and vision and which can only bring home to the individual concerned his finite weakness and corruption (e.g., Exod 24:15-17; cf. 20:18-20; Isa 6:1-5; Ezek 1; see also on 6:4 and 9:4; TDNT 2:238-42). So elsewhere in Paul (15:6, 9; 1 Cor 6:20; 2 Cor 9:13; Gal 1:24) and the NT (e.g., Mark 2:12; Luke 23:47; Acts 4:21; 1 Pet 2:12).

"The οὐχ ἠύχαριστησαν, 'were not thankful,' is not to be understood as a kind of standard formality (as could the earlier epistolary use; see on 1:8). In contrast here Paul is obviously thinking more in terms of thanksgiving as characteristic of a whole life, as the appropriate response of one whose daily experience is shaped by the recognition that he stands in debt to God, that his very life and experience of living is a gift from God (cf. 4 Ezra 8:60); cf. Kuss. In Paul's perspective this attitude of awe (the fear of the Lord) and thankful dependence is how knowledge of God should express itself. But human behavior is marked by an irrational disjunction between what man knows to be the true state of affairs and a life at odds with that knowledge. This failure to give God his due and to receive life as God's gift is Paul's way of expressing the primal sin of humankind.

"ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν, 'they became futile in their thinking,' διαλογισμός, 'thought, opinion, reasoning': see also on 14:1. Although μάταιος is well enough known in Greek literature in the sense 'vain, empty,' ματαιότης (8:20; Eph 4:17; 2 Pet 2:18) and ματαιώω (only here in NT) are almost exclusively biblical in usage. As such Paul's commentary will be heavily influenced by the ruthless negative judgment of the psalmist (39:4-5; 62:9; 78:33; 144:4; esp. 94:11) and particularly Ecclesiastes (1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17; etc.) on the brevity of life and on the worthless character of so much that takes place in life. And note again the close parallel in Wisd Sol 13:1; also Jer 2:5 (see also Lagrange). Paul's implication is plain: where life is not experienced as a gift from God it has lost touch with reality and condemns itself to futility. See also on 8:20.

"ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία, 'their foolish hearts were darkened.' Cf. particularly Ps 75:6 [LXX 76:5]: οἱ ἀσύνετοι τῇ καρδίᾳ ..., which begins, γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ θεός (75:2 [LXX 76:1]); 1 Enoch 99.8. For σκοτίζω in the figurative sense with reference to the organs of religious and moral perception, cf. 11:10 (quoting Ps 68:24) and T. 12 Patr. (T. Reub. 3.8; T. Levi 14.4; T. Gad 6.2). ἀσύνετος, 'void of understanding, not able to understand' (cf. 1:31; 10:19). καρδία had a broader use than its modern equivalent ('heart'), denoting the seat of the inner life, the inner experiencing 'I,' but not only in reference to emotions, wishes, or desires (e.g., 1:24; 9:2), but also in reference to the will and decision making (e.g., 2 Cor 9:7) and to the faculty of thought and understanding, as here (see BGD; Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 305-33); see also on 2:15 and 8:27. Paul's point is that man's whole ability to respond and function not least as a rational being has been damaged; without the illumination and orientation which comes from the proper recognition of God his whole center is operating in the dark, lacking direction and dissipating itself in what are essentially trifles."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 59-60.]

<sup>61</sup>Although beyond Paul's immediate writing strategy in 1:18-32, the apostle does get to what happens with a positive response to God both as Creator and Redeemer in 3:21-31. A reaching out to God via His revelation in creation will bring the necessary fuller revelation in Christ (via a divinely led messenger) so that one can experience the salvation deliverance from the fate of his sinfulness in eternal damnation. Chapter five also elaborates somewhat on this topic as well. The ultimate example of faith commitment to God stands as Abraham, as Paul contends in chapter four.

<sup>62</sup>Some grammar explanation for those unfamiliar with the twists and turns of ancient classical and Koine Greek that are not usually possible to reproduce in modern western languages. The transitive verb nature usage of both the participle γνόντες and the two verbs ἐδόξασαν and ἠύχαριστησαν means a direct object is required. Here it is τὸν θεόν, [God](#). At first it might seem to only be modifying the participle γνόντες. But in the placing of the direct object, τὸν θεόν it also links to the two verbs ἐδόξασαν and ἠύχαριστησαν as their direct object as well. [Knowing Him, not honoring Him](#), and not [giving thanks to Him](#) becomes the contextual meaning here.

ty's failure here and instead its opposite response in rejecting God reflects Paul's Jewish perspective on this topic.

What would have been the proper response to this discovery of God in creation? If the negative οὐχ is removed from the first two responses mentioned in v. 21, ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠύχαριστησαν, one has the proper response expected from humanity by God to His revelatory action in creation: [to honor Him and to give thanks to Him](#). The two verbs, very close in meaning from δοξάζω and εὐχαριστέω respectively, define the universal human expected response to God as Creator.<sup>61</sup>

But humanity as a whole did not respond properly and as required. The four verbs in sets of two depict this rejection of God's self revelation in creation.<sup>62</sup>

- διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
 ἢ  
 - ----- ---- -- ---- ἠύχαρίστησαν,

These two negative expressions define human rejection of God. They

did not glorify God as God<sup>63</sup> nor give thanks to Him as God.<sup>64</sup> Reflection on the creature order of the world revealed to them ἢ τε ἄϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, both His eternal power and deity. Such is very possible to see clearly (κατεχόντων, v. 18). God Himself made it clearly observable (v. 19). But instead of honoring this God of eternal power and deity, they refused to do so. Instead of giving thanks for such a magnificent gift as the created world, they refused to give thanks to God. Rather than a positive response, a rejection of God was given.

+ ----- ἐματαιώθησαν  
 ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν  
 καὶ  
 + ----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.

The second set, which is cast as the opposite of the first set through the

οὐχ... ἄλλ', not...but, construction, actually continues the negative perspec-

<sup>63</sup>"With δοξάζω, 'glorify, honor,' however, we move more fully into Jewish categories (cf. already Exod 15:1, 2, 6, 11, 21). To 'glorify God' is to render the appropriate response due to his δόξα, 'glory,' the awesome radiance of deity which becomes the visible manifestation of God in theophany and vision and which can only bring home to the individual concerned his finite weakness and corruption (e.g., Exod 24:15-17; cf. 20:18-20; Isa 6:1-5; Ezek 1; see also on 6:4 and 9:4; TDNT 2:238-42). So elsewhere in Paul (15:6, 9; 1 Cor 6:20; 2 Cor 9:13; Gal 1:24) and the NT (e.g., Mark 2:12; Luke 23:47; Acts 4:21; 1 Pet 2:12)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 59.]

<sup>64</sup>"The οὐχ ἠύχαρίστησαν, 'were not thankful,' is not to be understood as a kind of standard formality (as could the earlier epistolary use; see on 1:8). In contrast here Paul is obviously thinking more in terms of thanksgiving as characteristic of a whole life, as the appropriate response of one whose daily experience is shaped by the recognition that he stands in debt to God, that his very life and experience of living is a gift from God (cf. 4 Ezra 8:60); cf. Kuss. In Paul's perspective this attitude of awe (the fear of the Lord) and thankful dependence is how knowledge of God should express itself. But human behavior is marked by an irrational disjunction between what man knows to be the true state of affairs and a life at odds with that knowledge. This failure to give God his due and to receive life as God's gift is Paul's way of expressing the primal sin of humankind." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 59.]

<sup>65</sup>ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν, 'they became futile in their thinking.' διαλογισμός, 'thought, opinion, reasoning': see also on 14:1. Although μάταιος is well enough known in Greek literature in the sense 'vain, empty,' ματαιότης (8:20; Eph 4:17; 2 Pet 2:18) and ματαιώω (only here in NT) are almost exclusively biblical in usage. As such Paul's commentary will be heavily influenced by the ruthless negative judgment of the psalmist (39:4-5; 62:9; 78:33; 144:4; esp. 94:11) and particularly Ecclesiastes (1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17; etc.) on the brevity of life and on the worthless character of so much that takes place in life. And note again the close parallel in Wisd Sol 13:1; also Jer 2:5 (see also Lagrange). Paul's implication is plain: where life is not experienced as a gift from God it has lost touch with reality and condemns itself to futility. See also on 8:20." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 59-60.]

<sup>66</sup>ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά, 'their foolish hearts were darkened.' Cf. particularly Ps 75:6 [LXX 76:5]: οἱ ἀσύνετοι τῇ καρδίᾳ ..., which begins, γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ θεός (75:2 [LXX 76:1]); 1 Enoch 99.8. For σκοτίζω in the figurative sense with reference to the organs of religious and moral perception, cf. 11:10 (quoting Ps 68:24) and T. 12 Patr. (T. Reub. 3.8; T. Levi 14.4; T. Gad 6.2). ἀσύνετος, 'void of understanding, not able to understand' (cf. 1:31; 10:19). καρδιά had a broader use than its modern equivalent ('heart'), denoting the seat of the inner life, the inner experiencing 'I,' but not only in reference to emotions, wishes, or desires (e.g., 1:24; 9:2), but also in reference to the will and decision making (e.g., 2 Cor 9:7) and to the faculty of thought and understanding, as here (see BGD; Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 305-33); see also on 2:15 and 8:27. Paul's point is that man's whole ability to respond and function not least as a rational being has been damaged; without the illumination and orientation which comes from the proper recognition of God his whole center is operating in the dark, lacking direction and dissipating itself in what are essentially trifles." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 60.]

While the first set highlight the vertical -- humanity to God -- view, the second set stresses the horizontal -- humanity to humanity -- view. And also from a negative angle. These verbs define an inward corruption leading to complete dysfunctionality. The two verbs ἐματαιώθησαν and ἐσκοτίσθη depict individuals becoming totally crazy<sup>65</sup> and a complete inner darkening taking place.<sup>66</sup> Both are powerfully blunt and direct expressions. And they pack a one - two punch: the individuals themselves are 'crazified' and their inner capacity to make intelligent decisions is turned off into darkness. The passive voice form of both verbs highlights the loss of these abilities as coming from God's punishing actions of holding them accountable for their rejection of Him. It anticipates the more detailed explanation in vv. 24-32.

This first expression ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν, but they became crazy in their thinking, is much blunter than what is found in most English translations. And it is repeated in the first strophe of the pair of amplification statements in vv. 22-23: φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν, while claiming to be wise, they became crazy. The aorist passive voice verb ἐματαιώθησαν, from ματαιώω, is part of a larger word group inside the NT with stinging tones of condemnation: μάταιος (12x), ματαιότης (9x), ματαιώω

(2x), μάτην (5x), ματαιολογία (1x), ματαιολόγος (1x).<sup>67</sup> The idea is of vanity in which appearance doesn't not match reality.<sup>68</sup> This idea of being emptied of all substance while trying to maintain the appearance of it is the point of its use here in both instances. Its repetition as the lead accusation in each set establishes the phony appearance which is then defined by the second verb of each strophe: ἐσκοτίσθη and ἤλλαξαν. These actions amplify the point of the jettisoning of substance from humanity by their rejection of God's self revelation in creation. One of the common uses of the adjective μάταιος is in regard to idols. They appear to be deities, but in reality are just worthless hunks of wood and/or metal. To worship them is then the epitome of empty, worthless action.

In the first use of ἐματαιώθησαν, the locational phrase ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν identifies where this emptying of substance takes place. The noun διαλογισμός here denotes the process of reasoning or thinking by a person. Thus the action of wiping out any substance occurs to the ability to think or reason through an idea. Those rejecting God's self-revelation loose the capacity to reason through with comprehension what they should be detecting in creation, the revelatory action of God as Creator. They look at creation and cannot see God at work whatsoever.

What then is the impact of this loss? καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία, **and their senseless mind becomes darkened.** A creative double play on meaning happens here with the verb ἐσκοτίσθη that is particularly poignant to Paul's original audience. Intellectual superiority was one of the prides of the Greek (cf. v. 14) and often the contrasting metaphors of light and darkness in that Greek world symbolized brilliant intellect (light) and ignorance (darkness). But in Paul's Jewish world the metaphors also signaled the purity of God's holiness and the darkness of humanity's sinfulness.<sup>69</sup> Not only did humanity loose its mind in rejecting God's revelation in creation, it also lost its innocence and plunged itself into a bottomless pit of evil darkness.

The subject of the verb ἐσκοτίσθη is ἡ...καρδία which literally means **heart**. The figurative use of καρδία is very dominant in both the LXX OT

<sup>67</sup>Otto Bauernfeind, "Μάταιος, Ματαιότης, Ματαιώω, Μάτην, Ματαιολογία, Ματαιολόγος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:519.

<sup>68</sup>The word μάταιος<sup>1</sup> — and the related word group — corresponds to the older sense of 'vain.' It denotes the world of appearance as distinct from that of being. The emphasis may be on the fact that what is called μάταιος, e.g., a word, does not rest on the causes which it alleges, 'deceptive,' Hdt., VII, 10 η. The absence of an effect may also be stressed, 'in vain,' 'to no purpose': τὰ μάταια ἀναλώματα, P. Oxy., I, 58, 20. If the ref. is to the human will, μάταιος may castigate an offence, 'wicked': αὐτουργίαι μάταιαι, of the act of Oresres, Aesch. Eum., 337; but often it simply means 'pointless,' χαρὰ ματαία, Aesch. Sept. c. Theb., 442. Both the basic meaning and the more detailed senses may be applied to persons too.<sup>2</sup> [Otto Bauernfeind, "Μάταιος, Ματαιότης, Ματαιώω, Μάτην, Ματαιολογία, Ματαιολόγος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:519.

<sup>69</sup>This is a particularly prominent theme in the Johannine writings (33x φῶς, **light**, alone, as against 13x in Paul; 72x in NT) for addressed to the believing communities of the province of Asia toward the end of the first century.

translation (947x) and the NT (156x). In the LXX it expresses in Greek the Hebrew words לֵב (448x) and לִבְיָ (191x) for heart. The Hebrew often uses both these words figurately to refer to the interior, invisible part of human existence. Additionally, the volitional, the choosing / deciding part of the individual, was believed to be located in the heart of the person. Thus Paul's use of καρδία as what is becoming darkened by rejection of God's revelation is especially pointed. The darkening of the καρδία means not just the loss of sensible thinking but the 'evilization' of the choosing part of humanity. The καρδία then takes on the quality of being ἀσύνετος which also is very blunt. The heart can't make intelligent decisions about God because it has lost the capacity to add two plus two and get four, the sense of ἀσύνετος. The alpha privative ἀ added to σύνετος literally means the inability to make things fit rationally and sensibly.

1.21 γνόντες τὸν θεὸν

διότι οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
ἢ  
----- --- -- ---- ἠύχαριστήσαν,  
ἀλλ'  
----- ἐματαιώθησαν  
ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν  
καὶ  
----- ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία.

T h e s e  
four strophes  
in two sets  
of two com-  
bine to paint a  
dire picture of  
consequence  
for humanity  
when it turns

its back on the recognition of God's revelatory action in creation. Instead of responding in praise and thanksgiving that reaches out to the one Creator, humanity has rejected God and in the process doomed itself to the inability to discover God in creation at all. This is the impact of rejection set forth in the subordinating διότι statements in the sentence of v. 21 going back to give basis for the efforts of God to make His invisible God power clearly knowable in creation (v. 20).

The next compound sentence in vv. 22-23 function as further amplification of the four διότι clause assertions and especially the second set of two.

1.22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ  
**14** ἐμωράνθησαν  
 1.23 καὶ  
**15** ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ  
 ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ  
 φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
 καὶ  
 πετεινῶν  
 καὶ  
 τετραπόδων  
 καὶ  
 ἔρπετῶν.

This amplification is done at the main clause level, thus heightening the importance of them. The communication impact of this ancient way of thinking is to place massive emphasis upon the disastrous

**ἐματαιώθησαν**  
**έσκοτίσθη**

**ἐματαιώθησαν**  
**ἤλλαξαν<sup>70</sup>**

The lead verb ἐμωράνθησαν asserts the basic impact of humanity's rejection of God. The second pair of verbs amplify the ἐμωράνθησαν in distinct ways but complementary ways. In v. 21, ἐσκοτίσθη depicts the darkening of the choosing capacity of the people making them incapable of choosing the right path. And both the mental and the negative ethical aspects of the figure of darkness are included. But the second verb ἤλλαξαν, **they exchanged**, signals the capacity to still choose, but not to choose wisely or correctly. What is the dumb headed choice? To worship the created rather than the Creator!

impact of humanity's rejection of God's self revealing efforts in creation.

The literary structuring of these ideas is important to note. It mirrors the structure of the subordinate διότι clause with one deviation. The parallels can be stressed (in the red type).

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Thus the participle phrase γνόντες τὸν θεὸν, **although knowing God**, in v. 21 matches the participle phrase φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ, **although claiming to be wise** in v. 22. Then the closeness of the second set of verbs in the διότι clause with the two main clause verbs is obvious:

### Subordinate διότι clause (v. 21): Main clause (v. 22):

<sup>70</sup>One, upon noticing this intricate structure, would be inclined to raise the question Why? Quite clearly this structure didn't happen by accident. The answer lies in the first century communication strategy of making ideas as easy to memorize and remember as possible. When an idea takes on greater importance in the intention of the composer, the goal is to clearly communicate this to the readers and listeners of this text. Since most in the assembly would have been focusing on memorization rather than mere reading, help them through embedding structures that make memorization easier. The vast majority of the individual families inside each of the house church groups would not have their own copy of this letter. Each time the letter was read and discussed in the gatherings, more and more of the text was committed to memory. Interestingly, modern anthropological studies have proven that oral oriented cultures have astoundingly greater skills at memorization than do visual oriented cultures such as in the industrialized world.

<sup>71</sup> **φάσις, εως, ἢ** (φημί; Pla.+; ins, pap, LXX, TestAbr, ParJer; Philo, Aet. M. 143) orig. 'information' concerning a crime, then gener. **information concerning a pers. or event, report, announcement, news** (TestAbr A 5 p. 82, 28 [Stone p. 12] al.; pap) ἀνέβη φάσις τῷ χιλιάρχῳ ὅτι **Ac 21:31** (ἀνέβη because it went up to the Tower Antonia).—DELG s.v. φημί II B. M-M.

**φάσκω** impf. ἔφασκον (Hom. et al.; ins, pap, LXX, Philo; Jos., Ant. 3, 305; 7, 250; Just., Tat.) **to state someth. w. confidence, say, assert, claim** foll. by acc. and inf. (PRyl 117, 19; Philo, Somn. 2, 291; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 145) **Ac 24:9; 25:19**. In an affirmation made concerning the speaker, after the nom. of the ptc. we have the inf. w. predicate nom. φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοί **Ro 1:22**; after the acc. of the ptc., the inf. w. the predicate acc. τοὺς φάσκοντας εἶναι ἀποστόλους **Rv 2:2** t.r. (Erasmian rdg.).—DELG s.v. φημί II. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1050.]

is the answer.<sup>72</sup> The high value attached to being σοφός in Paul's world spread across almost all the cultures of that time. The word group σοφία, σοφός, σοφίζω stood in contrast to other word groups having to do with understanding and knowledge.<sup>73</sup> Typically the σοφός word group stressed possession of superior or extraordinary insight and knowledge of reality, whereas the other word groups referenced the capacity for understanding. As a general trait, humanity claimed to have achieved extraordinary insight into life and reality. Does this sound like Genesis 3 narration of the fall? A few commentators, mostly in the British tradition, have asserted that Paul in vv. 19-32 is giving his interpretive update of the OT narration of the fall of humanity.<sup>74</sup> But the basis for such comparisons is more than questionable.<sup>75</sup> Clearer

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<sup>72</sup>φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν, 'claiming to be wise they became fools.' σοφία, 'wisdom,' was highly prized throughout the ancient world, as the wisdom tradition within Judaism itself demonstrates. In Stoicism in particular, the σοφός, 'wise man,' was the ideal to be aspired to (cf. TDNT 7:473). In using ἐμωράνθη Paul may have in mind Jer 10:14, particularly since it is part of the Jewish polemic against idolatry which Paul takes up in the following verses. Whether its use in Matt 5:13//Luke 14:34 throws light on its usage here is unclear: salt μωρανθή, 'became insipid,' in the sense of being unfitted to fulfill its function as salt.

"The irony here is intentional and heavy: men claim to be wise, to have achieved the appropriate balance between their theoretical (rational) knowledge and its practical application. But their lives demonstrate the contrary, that their conduct does not match what they know of God. The tragedy is that they do not recognize the disparity: despite this folly they still claim to be wise; their futility is the measure of their wisdom (cf. 1 Cor 1:18–25; TDNT 4:845–47; 7:521)."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 60.]

<sup>73</sup>From the adjective σοφός, which is first attested from the 6th century and is common from Theognis and Pindar on, there developed quite early the abstract noun σοφία (Ionic σοφίη Hom. Il., 15, 412 [though → n. 4]; Hom. Hymn. Merc., 483 and 511) and the verb σοφίζομαι (ναυτιλῆς σεσοφισμένος, Hes. Op., 649), then σοφιστής (from Pind. and Herodot.).<sup>1</sup> An important point is that in contrast to specific epistemological terms like γνώμη (→ I, 717, 10 ff.), γνῶσις (→ I, 689, 13 ff.), σύνεσις, μάθημα, ἐπιστήμη and others, in which we have verbal abstracts, σοφία is derived from an adjective and always denotes a quality, never an activity. This is the reason for the great shift which took place in its meaning.<sup>2</sup> In general σοφία denotes a materially complete and hence unusual knowledge and ability. In the early Greek period any practical skill of this kind counted as wisdom, then during the classical period the range of meaning was strongly restricted to theoretical and intellectual knowledge, and finally in the usage of the philosophical schools of Hellenism and later antiquity the practical element was united again with the theoretical in the ideal picture of the wise man. In formation σοφός belongs to the type of *nomina agentis* represented by αἰοδός, though any other connection is most uncertain.<sup>3</sup> [Ulrich Wilckens and Georg Fohrer, "Σοφία, Σοφός, Σοφίζω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:467.]

<sup>74</sup>Here the echo of the Adam narratives becomes quite strong. Not that Paul alludes to it explicitly, although the γνώστον of v 19 may recall Gen 2:9. It is rather that the description of human aspiration for greater knowledge and a position of high regard which actually results in a decline into disadvantage and a position of low regard, set as it is in aorist terms, is obviously modeled on the account of man's fall in Gen 3. The emphasis in the fall narratives on 'knowledge' invites the use Paul makes of it, and enables him to formulate the same emphasis as Gen 3 in terms which a Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish audience would recognize and respond to. Considerable use was made of the Genesis account of man's fall in Jewish theology of this period (here note Wisd Sol 2:23–24; Jub. 3.28–32; Adam and Eve; 4 Ezra 4:30; and particularly 2 Apoc. Bar. 54.17–19, which uses Adam in a similar piece of polemic; see further on 5:12); and the influence of the Genesis narratives is also evidenced outside the Judeo-Christian tradition proper, as the Hermetic tractate Poimandres in particular demonstrates (see Dodd, *Greeks*, esp. 145–69). That v 23 has in mind also the idolatry of the golden calf at Mount Sinai (Ps 106:20; see on 1:23) does not weaken the conclusion drawn here (pace Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 197), since in Jewish tradition the idolatry of the golden calf was frequently associated with the fall of Adam: idolatry was the prime indication of the depth of man's fall, and Israel's own fall into idolatry at Sinai after God had chosen them to be his people was seen as the equivalent in Israel's history to Adam's fall after creation (cf. Jervell, *Imago*, 115–16, 321–22). See further Hooker, "Adam"; Wedderburn, "Adam," 413–19; Dunn, *Christology*, 101–2. [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 60–61.]

<sup>75</sup>**1:22** James Dunn has argued that Paul's statement 'while claiming to be wise, they became fools' (φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν) of 1:22 is an 'obviously deliberate echo of the Adam narratives'<sup>81</sup> and 'obviously modeled on the account of man's fall in Gen 3.'<sup>82</sup> This thesis was first proposed by Morna Hooker,<sup>83</sup> and has been lauded and developed by Alexander Wedderburn.<sup>84</sup> It rests largely on the observations (1) that the verbs ἐξάπεστειλεν ('he sent forth/banished') and ἐξέβαλε ('he cast/drove out') of Gen 3:23–24 (LXX) are similar to the verb παρέδωκεν ('he gave/delivered over') of Rom 1:24, 26, and 28, (2) that there is an emphasis in both the narrative of Genesis 3 and Paul's statement here on the human desire for greater knowledge apart from that given by God, which results in a decline into a position of disadvantage and decidedly lower regard, and (3) that the Genesis account of the fall of Adam appears widely in the writings of Second Temple Judaism, often as a paradigm for humanity's sinful condition.<sup>85</sup>

"Other scholars, however, have found such an intended parallel between what Paul says in Romans 1 and the story of Adam's fall in Genesis 3 quite difficult to accept. Joseph Fitzmyer, for example, observing that (1) the verbs of Gen 3:23–24 (LXX) and Rom 1:24, 26, and 28 are, though close in meaning, still somewhat different in form (as Hooker herself acknowledged), and arguing that (2) 'the alleged echoes of the Adam stories in Genesis are simply nonexistent,' has concluded that 'this interpretation reads too much of Genesis into the text' and therefore is to be rejected.<sup>86</sup> And Stanley Stowers, building on the work of John Levison in his *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, has pronounced the parallels drawn be-

and more helpful is what Paul had written a few years earlier to the Corinthians from Ephesus about wisdom in [1 Cor. 1:18-2:10](#).<sup>76</sup> Most relevant to Rom. 1:22 is 1 Cor. 1:21, ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν, [in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom](#). No one can 'think' his way back to God! But that has not prevented countless millions of people from trying to do so.

The main clause verb states the contrastive opposite to the claims of humanity. The adverbial concessive function of the participle φάσκοντες clearly sets up a contrastive tension between the participle action and the finite verb action. The sense becomes [in spite of claiming to be wise they became morons](#). The contemporaneous action between the present tense participle and the aorist verb underscores that their making claims played an important role in making morons out of them. In his early statement to the Corinthians Paul stated this idea clearer: οὐχὶ ἐμώρηνεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; [Did not God make moronic the wisdom of the world?](#) (v. 20b). In this earlier discussion, Paul contends that the clearest, most obvious way of doing this was through the preaching of the message of the cross (vv.

tween Romans 1 and the story of Adam's fall in Genesis 3 to be 'profoundly unconvincing,' largely because 'the reading of Genesis that interpreters assume is transparent did not yet exist in Paul's time' — for, as Levison has demonstrated, 'Jewish literature before 70 C.E. shows little interest in the effects of Adam's transgression.'<sup>87</sup>

"The best that it seems possible to say is (1) that Paul may have been thinking of Adam's fall in Genesis 3 when he wrote Rom 1:21–22, and so echoes of that Genesis account are to be found in his language of these verses, or (2) that his Christian addressees might have thought of such a background and connection when they read this portion of his letter. But whatever the merits of such a possibility or possibilities (which I personally think to be tenuous), Paul's words here are certainly in line with what he wrote earlier in 1 Cor 1:18–2:10 about human wisdom, with its feigned stance of superiority and its vaunted assertions of independence from God vis-à-vis the wisdom given by God."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 211–212.]

<sup>76</sup>Some of the church fathers in commenting on this statement of Paul sought to make special application of this assertion to the philosophers of their day:

[Whom did Paul have in mind in speaking of those who claimed to be wise but became fools? Origen speculated that "while these things apply to all human beings who possess natural reason, they more specifically apply to those called philosophers who are wise in the things of this world — whose job it is to ponder the creatures of this world and everything which is made in it, and from the things which are seen, to perceive in their minds the things which are invisible."](#)<sup>88</sup> It was, therefore, commonly asserted by both patristic and medieval commentators that Paul had in mind principally the Greek philosophers — particularly, as often identified, such ancient philosophers as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Democritus, and Epicurus. Yet as John Calvin rightly insisted:

[All men have sought to form some conception of the majesty of God, and to make Him such a God as their reason could conceive Him to be. This presumptuous attitude to God is not, I maintain, learned in the philosophical schools, but is innate, and accompanies us, so to speak, from the womb.... The error of forming an image of God did not originate with the philosophers, but was received from others, and also stamped by their own approval.](#)<sup>89</sup>

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 212–213.]

<sup>77</sup>In writing [καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν](#) ('and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image made to look like a mortal human being—or like birds or animals or reptiles'), Paul expresses an even more disastrous consequence of humanity's rebellion against God and people's failure to give God thanks. This statement echoes the damning language used of Israel in LXX Ps 105:20 (MT 106:20): 'They exchanged (ἠλλάξαντο) their Glory (τὴν δόξαν) for the likeness/similitude (ἐν ὁμοιώματι) of a bull which eats grass'—which is, of course, a reference to the people of Israel constructing the idolatrous golden calf in Exod 32. Likewise, it echoes the description of Israel in Jer 2:11: 'My people have exchanged (ἠλλάξαντο) their Glory (τὴν δόξαν, i.e., their God) for something that does not profit.'" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 213.]

20- 25). Here to the Romans that same essential idea is asserted across the span of time in God's actions of thwarting the falsely assumed wisdom of humanity.

What was the impact of this become morons? The second strophe καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ... defines the action of become a moron. It also parallels the second strophe of the first second of assertions in v. 21b: καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία, [and their senseless heart became darkened](#). When their choosing skill (= καρδία) lost the light of God's presence they lost the ability to make sensible decisions about God. Consequently, they exchanged the Presence of the immortal God for something else.<sup>77</sup> In the background here stands a couple of OT texts:

**Psalm 106:20** (LXX 105:20). καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ἐν ὁμοιώματι μόσχου ἔσθοντος χόρτον.†

[They exchanged the glory of God in them for the image of an ox that eats grass.](#)

**Jer. 2:11.** εἰ ἀλλάσσονται ἔθνη θεοὺς αὐτῶν; καὶ οὗτοι οὐκ εἰσιν θεοί. ὁ δὲ λαός μου ἠλλάξατο τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, ἐξ ἧς οὐκ ὠφελήθησονται.†

Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.

Here the people of God rather than humanity is the point of reference. In the psalm, the reference is to the golden calf built at Sinai by the Israelites. The prophet Jeremiah condemns the tendency toward idolatry by the Israelites of his day. Paul's language in Rom. 1:23 is especially close to that in the LXX psalm.

Also contextually important is the parallel verb μετήλλαξαν used in vv. 25 and 26:

v. 23: ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν...they **exchanged the Presence of the immortal God for...**

v. 25: οἵτινες **μετήλλαξαν** τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν... **who exchanged the truth of God for...**

v. 26: αἶ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν **μετήλλαξαν** τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς...for **their women indeed exchanged natural intercourse for...**

The second verb μετήλλαξαν from μεταλλάσσω and the first verb ἤλλαξαν from ἀλλάσσω have the common source of ἀλλάσσω which literally means to **alter or change** either in the sense of replace something with something different or remake something into something different.<sup>78</sup> It comes out of a number of different words built off the same root stem.<sup>79</sup> The compound verb μεταλλάσσω has the same meaning as ἀλλάσσω but with the prepositional prefix of **μετα-** intensifying the verbal action. In other words, μεταλλάσσω

<sup>78</sup>"The basic meaning is 'to make otherwise' (from → ἄλλος). Outside the NT we find both act. and med. in the trans. signif. of 'to alter,' 'to give in exchange,' or 'to take in exchange,' as also in the intrans. signif. of 'to change.' In the NT we find only the trans. act. and pass., not med." [Friedrich Büchsel, "Ἀλλάσσω, Ἀντάλλαγμα, Ἀπ-, Δι-, Καταλλάσσω, Καταλλαγή, Ἀποκατ-, Μεταλλάσσω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:251.]

<sup>79</sup>Note the word group **ἀλλάσσω**, ἀντάλλαγμα, ἀπ-, δι-, καταλλάσσω, καταλλαγή, ἀποκατ-, **μεταλλάσσω** [Friedrich Büchsel, "Ἀλλάσσω, Ἀντάλλαγμα, Ἀπ-, Δι-, Καταλλάσσω, Καταλλαγή, Ἀποκατ-, Μεταλλάσσω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:251.]

<sup>80</sup>"While the repetition of this expression does not seem intended to mark out any distinct stages in the development of Paul's presentation, as a rhetorical anaphora (i.e., the repetition of a phrase or word at the beginning of a series of successive statements) it was evidently used — first as a simple aorist in 1:23, then in heightened fashion as a compound aorist in 1:25 and 26 — to intensify the significance of the verb's action, with the ominous sound of the final Greek syllable (-ξαν) probably meant to ring in the ears of the hearers and resonate in their memories." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 213.]

<sup>81</sup>The English word 'glory' often used to translate δόξα is woefully inadequate and largely meaningless to the majority of readers. Plus the corruption of the idea in Roman Catholic tradition makes it even less helpful.

<sup>82</sup>"The word δόξα in secular Greek literature meant 'opinion' or 'estimation.' It was, however, used by the translators of the LXX for the Hebrew word כְּבוֹד, which denotes an external appearance of 'glory,' 'majesty,' or 'splendor.' So it came to connote the presence of God himself in all his 'glory,' 'majesty,' and 'splendor.'<sup>91</sup> In John 1:14 the Evangelist proclaims that the eschatological manifestation of God's 'glory' has taken place in 'the Word made flesh,' God's one and only Son. The term ἀφθάρτος ('immortal') is used by Paul only with respect to God — here in 1:23 in contrast to 'mortal (φθαρτός) humans,' and later in 1 Tim 1:17 in doxological praise 'to the immortal (ἀφθάρτω) King eternal.'" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 214.]

is ἀλλάσσω with wheaties!<sup>80</sup> With the modifying prepositional phrases ἐν and εἰς, the Hebrew background equivalent כְּבוֹד הַיְהוָה comes to the surface. For example, in LXX Jeremiah 2:11. This since in the Greek literature both verbs are only used with the preposition πρὸς or with a genitive or dative case noun. This pattern signals the Jewish heritage of Paul helping to frame his thoughts here. This threefold repetition of the idea of exchanging in these two verbs serves to heighten the corruption of the darkened mind that has lost its sense of the presence of God revealed in creation. The replacement activity is both idolatry and sexual immorality.

What was altered was τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ, **the Presence of the immortal God**. It was **turned into / replaced** with ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετῶν, **into / with likenesses of the image of mortal man and of birds and four-footed animals and reptiles**. What can be seen / learned of God in His creation? In v. 20 the answer is ἡ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, **His eternal power and deity**. Here in v. 23 the answer is τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ, **the Presence of the immortal God**.

The δόξα clearly references the **Shekhinah** presence of Almighty God.<sup>81</sup> That is, when correctly gazing upon creation one should be able to sense the Presence of Almighty God in the overwhelming display of divine power.<sup>82</sup> This ought to elicit the response of reaching out to this powerful God in submissive honoring and praising of Him. This is the 'best case' scenario.

But the worst case scenario is what happens from humanity when gaz-

ing on God's creation. They replace the divine Presence with worship of different parts of the creation by making images of them.<sup>83</sup> Humanity doesn't see the Creator in creation.<sup>84</sup> Yet, sensing some kind of extraordinary power at work, they single out humans, birds, animals, and reptiles as objects of worship.<sup>85</sup> The use of ἀλλάσσω prohibits any interpretation of trying to get to God through creation. These created objects of God's creation in no way symbolize God Himself. Note that the objects behind the idolatry here are living creatures, not inanimate objects as are the images. Some sense of a dynamic power behind the creation is reflected in this choice of worshipped objects. The material world didn't just happen on its own. In one sense then, the idolatry of the modern world is more corrupt than even that of Paul's day. In tracing this descent into the abyss of idolatry, Paul echoes some of the OT prophetic satire regarding the worthlessness of idols. Note as one example [Isa. 44:9-20](#).<sup>86</sup>

This text of vv. 18-23 summarizes the tragedy of human rejection of God at the most basic level. God reaches out to reveal His divine power through His creating the material world. The serious human as a part of that creation can sense the Presence of the divine power of God by gazing at the magnificent work of God's creation. But this has not been the human

response. Rather humanity has rejected God as Creator and thus chosen instead to worship objects made with its own hands to represent aspects of that creation. In one sense, this text parallels the OT account of the fall of humanity through Adam and Eve in the Garden in Genes 3. But Paul goes much further and has a different objective in his letter to the Romans. He is accounting for the evil in the world of his day, particularly at this point the non-Jewish evil, as well as across the span of human history. But the distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish breaks down quickly when pressed into details within the text. He has fundamentally all of humanity in view in vv. 18-23.

Beginning in v. 24-32 the apostle will account for the reaction of God to this rejection by humanity. Idolatry is fundamentally the consequence asserted in vv. 21-23. But immoral behavior receives the greater attention in vv. 24-32. Although to the modern reader the connection between religious idolatry and immoral human behavior may seem odd, careful analysis of Paul's words uncover something human history and human social history in particular have made dramatically clear. Turn your back on God and you end up in some form of idolatry. And idolatry will always lead to indescribable immorality.

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<sup>83</sup>"The use of ὁμοίωμα, 'close likeness' (see on 5:14, 6:5, and 8:3), and εἰκών, 'image' (cf. particularly Rev 13:14-15; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; see on 8:29), may have been prompted by the fact that the same terms are used as equivalents in Deut 4:16-18. The deliberate use of both, when one or other might have been thought sufficient, may be an example of the Semitic habit of repeating an idea for effect (cf. Moulton, *Grammar* 2:419-20); but here it is probably intended to increase the distance between the reality and that which the idol is supposed to depict — a copy of a copy, inadequate even as a representation ('the inferior, shadowy character' [Barrett]); Lagrange cites the possibly parallel 1 Macc 3:48; we might also compare Plato's allegory of the cave: what man sees is but the shadow of the figures on the wall (Republic 7.514-17). That εἰκών is prompted by the thought of man as God's image is possible but less likely, since it refers also to 'birds, beasts, and reptiles' (see discussion in Wedderburn, "Adam," 416-19), though the influence of Gen 1:20-25 may nevertheless be discernible in the choice of the last four nouns (Hyldahl)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 61-62.]

<sup>84</sup>"There is a subtle irony in the description (v 23) of the ultimate step in this chain of decline, the lapse into idolatry. While the Jewish implied reader would presumably consider idolatry to be something characteristic of the Gentile world, the language here evokes biblical allusions to Israel's fall into idolatry. 'Exchange of glory' echoes the wording of the allusion in Ps 106:20 (LXX 105:20) to the episode of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32) — a lapse which explicitly provoked God's wrath (Exod 32:10-12) and also the language of Jer 2:11, where Israel is condemned for abandoning the Lord to go after other gods (See Note for details). What is 'exchanged' in idolatry for the 'glory of God' is 'likeness' (homoίωμα) and 'image' (eikōn) of something merely human or less than human." [Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 6, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 67-68.]

<sup>85</sup>"It is this awful descent into various forms of idolatry — based, as it is, on humanity's rebellion against God, vaunted independence from God, and therefore failure to respond in praise and thankfulness to God — that lies at the heart of 'the human predicament,' both in humanity's past history and in its experience today. And it is this problem of idolatry that is under 'the wrath of God,' as announced in 1:18 — and that expresses itself in disastrous ways in human lives, as will be portrayed in what follows in 1:24-31." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 214-215.]

<sup>86</sup>"Paul no doubt had in mind the magnificent satire of Isa 44:9-20 (of which there are several echoes in vv 22-23). Not least in influence would be the sustained polemic in the second half of Wisd Sol: note particularly 11:15; 12:2-4; 13:10, 13-14; 14:8; 15:18-19 (cf. also Ep. Arist. 138). Typical also for the background here is the sustained polemic of the Letter of Jeremiah (Ep Jer) and the repeated attacks of Sib. Or. 3 (note particularly again 3:845). Jeremias, "Röm 1:22-32," draws particular attention to T. Naph. 3.2-4. Schulz sees the background as rooted more in Jewish apocalyptic (cf. 1 Enoch 91.4 ff; 99.2 ff.; Sib. Or. 3.6 ff.; T. Mos. 1.13; 2 Apoc. Bar. 54.17-22). See further Str-B, 3:53-60, 60-62." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 61.]

### 10.3.3.2.1.2 God's Response to this Rejection, 1:24-32

24 Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς· 25 οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. 26 Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἷ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσενσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἦν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες. 28 Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, 29 πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς 30 καταλάλους θεοσυγεῖς ὑβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 31 ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας· 32 οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν\* τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die — yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

This pericope outlines God's response to humanity's rejection of Him. It is a dreadful depiction of God stepping away from protective watchcare over humanity in order to allow it to follow its own sinful cravings into destruction and ruin. Key to this unit of text is the three-

<sup>87</sup>A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ro 1:24.

fold repetition of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν / εἰς..., *God handed them over to...* (vv. 24, 26, 28). "The words sound to us like clods on the coffin as God leaves men to work their own wicked will."<sup>87</sup> What God handed humanity over to tells the basic story:

v. 24, ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, *in the lusts of their hearts to degradation...*

v. 26, εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, *degrading passions...*

v. 28, εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, *to a debased mind...*

Their own sinful, depraved existence takes over control of their lives and plunges them into destruction and ruin. The decision making side of humanity is completely corrupted and comes disjointed from the ability to make proper decisions as a creature in the world. It can no longer detect God's Presence in creation and is left to its own devices which plunge it into ruin.

Also important to note here are the connecting links with each of these three statements.

First is διὸ in v. 24 which links both the declaration in vv. 24-25 back to vv. 18-23 and also the entire unit of vv. 24-32 to it as well. The inferential conjunction διό sets up in explicit statements something considered implied in the preceding section. Here the response of God to the rejection of Him by humanity is considered implicit and now is spelled out in detail. Only one totally ignorant of God will think that God would not react to humanity

1.24	Διὸ	παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς	τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν
		ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις	τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν
		εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν	ἐν αὐτοῖς·
1.25		οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ	
		ἐν τῷ ψεύδει	
		καὶ	
		----- ἐσεβάσθησαν	
		καὶ	
		----- ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει	
		παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα,	
		ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς	
		εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,	
		ἀμήν.	
1.26	Διὰ τοῦτο	παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς	
		εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας,	

rebuffing Him in rejection.

Second in vv. 26-27 is the causal idiomatic phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, **because of this**. The antecedent of the neuter singular demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο is vv. 24-25. The second παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... statement in vv. 26-27 stands as the basis for the first statement in vv. 24-25.

Third in vv. 28-32 is Καὶ, and, with the pre-field comparative subordinate καθὼς clause which gathers up the central premise of God responding to rejection of Him. This third παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... brings to a summarizing close this depiction of disaster in the long vice listing of consequences for humanity in rejecting God.

### 10.3.3.2.1.2.1 God handed them over to uncleanness, 1:24-25.

24 Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς· 25 οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

The Διὸ links this back to vv. 18-23 by stating explicitly what was considered implicit in the previous text unit. What is this? The core answer is παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς, **God handed them over...** The threefold repetition of this identical expression in vv. 24-32 make it clear that this is Paul's central point. In vv. 18-23, the point had been made that God had disclosed His divine power in the action of creating the world. If humanity would gaze upon this marvelous work they could recognize the divine Presence of God in all this. Then their proper response would be to reach out in submissive honoring and praising of God. The implication here, to be developed in chapter three, is that God in reaction would have sent His messengers with the full disclosure of God in His saving power in Christ to them. But instead, humanity chose to reject this potential disclosure of God and not honor or praise Him. What then would God do in response?

Vv. 24-32 answer that question with the core assertion that God simply steps away from His watchcare over humanity and lets it follow its own depraved, sinful passions into its ruin. Additionally one must not overlook the larger contextual point established in v. 18 that all of this represents the central point that Ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, **God's wrath is being uncovered from Heaven**. This depiction is presented

	γὰρ	αἱ τε θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν
		εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,
1.27	ὁμοίως	
	τε	
	καὶ	
	ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας	
	οἱ ἄρσενες... ἐξεκαύθησαν	
		ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν
		εἰς ἀλλήλους,
	ἄρσενες (ἐξεκαύθησαν)	
	ἐν ἄρσεσιν	
	τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι	
	καὶ	
	τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν... ἀπολαμβάνοντες.	
	ἣν ἔδει	
	τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν	
	ἐν ἑαυτοῖς	
1.28	Καὶ	
	καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν	
	ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει,	
	παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς	
	<b>εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,</b>	
1.29	ποιεῖν τὰ   μὴ καθήκοντα,	
	πεπληρωμένους	
	πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ	
	πονηρίᾳ	
	πλεονεξίᾳ	
	κακίᾳ,	
	μεστοὺς φθόνου	
	φόνου	
	ἐριδος	
	δόλου	
	κακοηθείας,	
1.30	ψιθυριστὰς	
	καταλάλους	
	θεοσυγεῖς	
	ὑβριστὰς	
	ὑπερηφάνους	
	ἀλαζόνας,	
	ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν,	
	γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,	
1.31	ἀσυνέτους	



from it.<sup>89</sup> The two derivatives ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμέω take on the sense of intense cravings and intersect ἡδονή, *lust*, often in meaning.<sup>90</sup> While in NT usage (38x for ἐπιθυμία, and 31x for ἐπιθυμέω) they can reference normal or positive desire, mostly they follow the dominant Greek and Jewish Greek especially negative meanings of sinful cravings.<sup>91</sup> These cravings reside in human life and thus stand as the driving forces in the decision to reject

<sup>89</sup>θύω originally denotes a violent movement of air, water, the ground, animals, or men.<sup>1</sup> From the sense of 'to well up,' 'to boil up,' there seems to have developed that of 'to smoke,' and then 'to cause to go up in smoke,' 'to sacrifice.'<sup>2</sup> The basic meaning of θυμός is thus similar to that of πνεῦμα, namely, 'that which is moved and which moves,' 'vital force.'<sup>3</sup> In Homer θυμός is the vital force of animals and men, θυμὸν ἀποπνεῖειν: Il., 13,654; λίπε δ' ὄστ' ἄρα θυμός: Il., 16, 743. θυμός then takes on the sense of a. desire, impulse, inclination, b. spirit, c. anger, d. sensibility, e. disposition or mind, f. thought, consideration.<sup>4</sup> This richly developed usage in Homer and the tragic dramatists is no longer present in the prose writers, e.g., Plato, Thucydides. For them θυμός means spirit, anger, rage, agitation. In Jewish Gk. θυμός is common in this sense. The LXX uses it for אַחַד, תַּמָּה, תַּרְוֵן, כַּעַס etc. Philo makes frequent use of θυμός,<sup>5</sup> and Joseph. often has it for anger.<sup>6</sup> [Friedrich Büchsel, "Θυμός, Ἐπιθυμία, Ἐπιθυμέω, Ἐπιθυμητής, Ἐνθυμέομαι, Ἐνθύμησις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:167.]

<sup>90</sup>In Greek philosophy ἐπιθυμία is the waywardness of man in conflict with his rationality. It is estimated ethically rather than religiously.

"In Hebrew and Jewish religion there is condemnation not merely of the evil act but also of the evil will. The Decalogue forbids stealing and the desire for the goods of others, including their wives. The inability in obedience to God to renounce what may be in themselves natural and legitimate desires, the longing for sexual satisfaction outside marriage, is called sin in both J and E in Nu. 11 and Gn. 39. Self-discipline in the sexual sphere even to the control of one's glances is a duty of the righteous from the time of 2 S. 11:2 and Job 31:1. The demand for renunciation and for obedience for God's sake increases in the post-exilic period with the tightening of legalism and the rise of ethical reflection, in both of which may be seen the influence of Hellenism. Regular ascetic practices like fasting, scrupulosity in keeping the Sabbath, and the regulation of meats, become constituent elements in piety. Sexual asceticism takes on significance at different levels. The consciousness of sin becomes more profound, and with it attention to the impulsive, passionate desire which withstands renunciation and obedience for the sake of God.<sup>16</sup> There are moving complaints concerning the evil heart which will not renounce or obey.<sup>17</sup> The view is reached that desire is the chief of all sins.<sup>18</sup> The will of God can be expressed in the single formula: not to desire.<sup>19</sup>

"In the OT and Judaism ἐπιθυμία is an offence against God, who demands of man total obedience and love from the whole heart, Dt. 5:5.

"In Jewish Greek ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν can denote a sin. This usage is plainly dependent in part on the Stoic usage, and in part a result of the above development in Judaism. The lines converge. The LXX uses ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν predominantly for constructs of the stems הוה and חמך.<sup>20</sup> ἐπιθυμία is mostly *vox media*.<sup>21</sup> But without addition ἐπιθυμία is also used for base and ungodly desire, e.g., at Nu. 11:4, 34; 33:16, 17; Dt. 9:22; ψ 105:14.<sup>22</sup> ἐπιθυμία κάλλους is sinful sexual desire in the male, Prv. 6:25; Susanna 32; cf. Sir. 40:22. ἐπιθυμεῖν is also used of pious striving, and sometimes of eschatological expectation, Is. 58:2; ψ 118:20; Am. 5:18. ἐπιθυμία is very common in Philo.<sup>23</sup> In Platonic fashion it is used along with λόγος and θυμός to denote the lowest part of the soul,<sup>24</sup> and after the manner of the Stoics it is also used for the four passions,<sup>25</sup> which in constant warnings and admonitions Philo summons us to combat, combining Stoic moralism and the strictest Jewish legalism, and breaking forth in powerful declamations. We find a similar combination of Stoic and Jewish elements in the use of ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν in 4 Macc. The theme here is that what rules over the impulsive in man is reason,<sup>26</sup> and the impulsive includes first of all ἐπιθυμία, with which are ranged ἡδονή, φόβος and λύπη (1:22, 23), and which arises out of sensuality (1:3; 3:11–16) and sexuality (2:4, 5). In Josephus ἐπιθυμία is mostly *vox media*,<sup>27</sup> but it can also be used for sinful desire.<sup>28</sup>

"In Rabbinic theology the equivalents of NT ἐπιθυμεῖν are תַּחַתְּהוּת and חמך,<sup>29</sup> and for ἐπιθυμία we have רַעַר רַעַר,<sup>30</sup> except that this denotes a general disposition in man rather than the actual impulse in concrete individuality. For this the term is תַּחַתְּהוּת. M. Ex. 15:1: לעשות תאוותם כדי ('to work their desire'); Tanch. אשן § 6 (15a): of the adulterer and adulteress שיעשו תאוותן ואלא . . . אינן מבקשים ('they seek only to do their desire'); Tanch. שגו § 1 (102b): ויצר הרע אומר נאכל ונשתה ונעשה כל תאוותינו ('evil impulse says: We will eat and drink and do all our desire')."

[Friedrich Büchsel, "Θυμός, Ἐπιθυμία, Ἐπιθυμέω, Ἐπιθυμητής, Ἐνθυμέομαι, Ἐνθύμησις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:169–170.]

<sup>91</sup>In the NT ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν are rare in the Gospels, more common in the Epistles. As in current speech, they are often *vox media*. Hence they may be used for the natural desire of hunger, Lk. 15:16; 16:21, or longing, Lk. 22:15; 1 Th. 2:17, also Rev. 9:6 (ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν); Ac. 20:33; Jm. 4:2, or a desire for the divine mysteries, Mt. 13:17; Lk. 17:22; 1 Pt. 1:12,31 or for anything good, Phil. 1:23; 32 1 Tm. 3:1; Hb. 6:11.<sup>33</sup> Mostly, however, they indicate evil desire in accordance with the Greek and Jewish development considered under A. They may be characterised as such by information as to the object: Mt. 5:28: αὐτήν (a woman); Mk. 4:19: περὶ τὰ λοιπά; 1 C. 10:6: κακῶν, or the direction: Gl. 5:17: κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, or the vehicle: 1 C. 10:6; Jd. 16; R. 1:24: τῶν καρδιῶν; R. 6:12: τοῦ σώματος; Gl. 5:16; Eph. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:16; 2 Pt. 2:18: τῆς σαρκός; 1 Jn. 2:16: τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν Jn. 8:44: τοῦ πατρός (the devil); 1 Jn. 2:17, the world; 1 Pt. 4:2: ἀνθρώπων; Rev. 18:14: τῆς ψυχῆς, or the manner: σαρκικαί, 1 Pt. 2:11; κοσμικαί, Tt. 2:12; νεωτερικαί, 2 Tm. 2:22; κακή, Col. 3:5; τῆς ἀπάτης, Eph. 4:22; ἀνοήτους, 1 Tm. 6:9; ἰδίας, 2 Tm. 4:3; 2 Pt. 3:3; ταῖς πρότερον, 1 Pt. 1:14; φθοράς, 2 Pt. 1:4; μiasμοῦ, 2 Pt. 2:10 But ἐπιθυμία (R. 7:7, 8; Gl. 5:24; 1 Th. 4:5; 2 Tm. 3:6; Tt. 3:3; Jm. 1:14, 15; 1 Pt. 4:3) and ἐπιθυμεῖν (R. 7:7; 13:9; 1 C. 10:6) can be used for sinful desire without any such addition. In this regard 1 C. 10:6 plainly follows Nu. 11:4. The compression and extension of the tenth commandment into a simple οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις in R. 7:7; 13:9 finds a parallel in 4 Macc. 2:6: μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν εἶρηκεν ἡμᾶς ὁ νόμος, and it is thus pre-Pauline. There is no point in asking whether Paul is here following Jewish or Stoic usage. The two had long since merged in respect of the use of ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν. Apart from πάθος ἐπιθυμίας at 1 Th. 4:5 there is nothing distinctively Stoic in Paul. The antithesis of λογισμός and ἐπιθυμία is not found in him. *ἐπιθυμία is evil, not because*

God's self revelation in the created world.

**εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, to uncleanness.** What God handed sinful humanity over to is simply uncleanness.<sup>92</sup> The primitive concept of coming into contact with power as potentially dangerous now takes on in Judaism the ethical and religious connotation of needing cleansing from the unclean before daring to seek contact with a holy, pure God. Humanity has polluted itself in rebellion against God and thus must be cleansed before making contact with God as the ultimate purity and expression of holiness. The Jewish sacrificial system stood as the agent of cleansing in this quest for God. But the

pivotal role of ethics in the issue of clean / unclean must not be overlooked. The rules of purity in the Torah, e.g., the Holiness Code, define a life lived in purity as part of this quest for contact with God. Another critical point in the first century Jewish perspective is that uncleanness can be passed to others via mere contact. Touching someone or something unclean thus became the horror of the religious Jew. Very elaborate rituals of ceremonial cleansing then became essential not only for worshipping God but for one's eternal destiny. In such a system, only the super pious could ever hope to make contact with God and to enter into His eternal presence.<sup>93</sup>

*it is irrational, but because it is disobedience to the command of God.* Basically, then, his conception of ἐπιθυμία is OT and Jewish, not Stoic. For Paul, who alone in the NT offers an explicit doctrine of sinful man, ἐπιθυμία is a manifestation of the sin which dwells in man and which controls him, but which is dead apart from the ἐπιθυμία stirred up by the Law, R. 7:7, 8. That desire is a result of the prohibition of sin reveals the carnality of man, Gl. 5:16, 24, his separation from God, his subjection to divine wrath, R. 1:18 ff. In James (1:14, 15) ἐπιθυμία is regarded as the constant root in man of the individual acts of sin to which the author's attention is mainly directed. The special feature in Jn. is the connection between desire and the world, 1 Jn. 2:15–17. Desire arises out of the world, constitutes its essence and perishes with it.<sup>34</sup>

"What the NT has to say concerning ἐπιθυμία is not based on the reflection which seeks to dissect the nature of man. It is part of the preaching of repentance. The seriousness of man's God-given duty has to be fully impressed upon him in order to stir his will to resolution in self-denial. There is here taken seriously that which moral self-observation cannot establish of itself. The essential point in ἐπιθυμία is that it is desire as impulse, as a motion of the will.<sup>35</sup> It is, in fact, lust, since the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain.<sup>36</sup> ἐπιθυμία is anxious self-seeking. Only exceptionally do we read of an ἐπιθυμεῖν of love;<sup>37</sup> ἐπιποθεῖν is normally used. In ἐπιθυμεῖν man is seen as he really is, the more so because ἐπιθυμία bursts upon him with the force of immediacy. Even after the reception of the divine Spirit, ἐπιθυμία is always a danger against which man must be warned and must fight.<sup>38</sup>"

[Friedrich Büchsel, "Θυμός, Ἐπιθυμία, Ἐπιθυμέω, Ἐπιθυμητής, Ἐνθυμέομαι, Ἐνθύμησις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:170–171.]

<sup>92</sup>This negative noun is a part of a very diverse group of terms built off a common root: καθαρός, καθαρίζω, καθαίρω, καθαρότης, ἀκάθαρτος, ἀκαθαρσία, καθαρισμός, ἐκκαθαίρω, περικάθαρμα. One must avoid the temptation of injecting modern ideas of sanitation into these Greek terms. Clean and unclean sanitation wise was not a common idea in Paul's world. From a modern assessment, virtually all of first century hygiene was deplorable.

Instead of hygiene being the determiner of clean and unclean in Paul's world, religion served this role. And this particularly the Judeo-Christian religious heritages.

The term is used of physical, religious (ritual and cultic) and moral purity. It is an important concept which accompanies religious thought through its various stages.

1. καθαρός a. "clean" (from dirt), opp. ῥυπαρός. b. "clean," "free," opp. πλήρης, μεστός: ἐν καθαρῷ, Hom. Il., 23, 61; c. "morally free" from stain, shame etc.: ἀδικίας, Plato Resp., VI, 496d, καθαρὸς χεῖρας, Hdt., I, 35; d. "clean," "free from adulteration": χρυσίον καθαρώτατον, Hdt., IV, 166. καθαρίζειν, a later Hellenistic form from καθαίρω,<sup>1</sup> a. literally, "to cleanse" (from dirt etc.): τὸ γεώργιον P. Lips., I, 111, 12; b. figur., esp. of the cultic restoration of violated cleanness: [μηδένα] ἀκάθαρτον προσάγειν (sc. to the temple). καθαριζέστω δὲ ἀπὸ σ[κ]όρων κα[ὶ] χοιρέων κα[ὶ] ἰγ[γ]υναϊκός, Ditt. Syll.3, 1042, 2 ff. (2/3 cent. A.D.); 736, 37 (92 B.C.); Jos. Ant., 10, 70 τὴν χώραν. καθαρότης, already in class. Gk. both literally and figur.: Plato Leg., VI, 778c; Iamb. Vit. Pyth., 13: ψυχῆς καθαρότητα; Ep. Ar., 234: μέγιστον ... τὸ τιμᾶν τὸν θεόν· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν οὐ δώροις οὐδὲ θυσίαις, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς καθαρότητι καὶ διαλήψεως ἀσίας.

2. In the LXX καθαρός is predominantly used for ὁῖος; like → a. Ez. 36:25; ὕδωρ, like → c. of ritual (Lv. 7:19; 10:10) and moral purity (Ps. 51:10; Hab. 1:13), like → d. Ex. 25:11: χρυσός. Much less often it is used for בָּר; (basic meaning "to be free") (Ps. 24:4) or for נָקִי (from נָקָה, "to be emptied," hence "clean"), "clean," "innocent" (Job 4:7), or for רָךְ (subsidiary form of רָכַח), "to be shining, clean," hence ethically "innocent" (Job 15:15; 25:5). καθαρίζω is used predominantly for רָהַט qal and pi (pass. hitp) (Gn. 35:2; Lv. 12:7, 8; 14:4, 7 f.), occasionally for נָקָה pi (pass. ni) (Ex. 20:7; 34:7; Dt. 5:11; ψ 18:12 f.). Often it is also used for כָּפַר pi (Ex. 29:37; 30:10) and sometimes for כָּסַח pi (Ex. 29:36; Lv. 8:15).<sup>2</sup> καθαρίζω and ἐξιλάσκεσθαι are synonyms: Lv. 14:18; 12:8; 16:30. Declarative of pronouncing clean by the priest, Lv. 13:13. καθαρότης<sup>3</sup> in Ex. 24:10 A for ὁῖος; cf. also Wis. 7:24; ψ 88:45 Σ.

[Friedrich Hauck and Rudolf Meyer, "Καθαρός, Καθαρίζω, Καθαίρω, Καθαρότης, Ἀκάθαρτος, Ἀκαθαρσία, Καθαρισμός, Ἐκκαθαίρω, Περικάθαρμα," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:414.]

<sup>93</sup>In the Talmudic and Midrashic literature, as in the OT, the terms 'clean' and 'unclean' are used in both a cultic and an ethical sense. Most of the statements can be grouped accordingly, though the distinction between the cultic and the ethical is fluid.

"The Palestinian ideal of the sanctifying of the everyday<sup>33</sup> is the impulse behind the creation of the ritual prescriptions which, on the basis of the OT laws of purity, affect the total

For those first readers of this letter with a Jewish background, the mention of 'uncleanness' as what God handed sinful humanity over to carried life of the Jew.

1. Cultic Uncleanness.

a. For Judaism Levitical uncleanness<sup>34</sup> is something which clings to the unclean man or thing and which can be transferred to others. Distinction is made between the source of uncleanness (אָב הַטְּמֵאָה)<sup>35</sup> and what is infected (וְלֹד הַטְּמֵאָה), Toharot, 1, 5. Among the unclean are reptiles, those defiled by the dead,<sup>36</sup> fallen beasts, normal sexual issues, those afflicted with issues, their excretions, couches and beds, also lepers and dead bones, Kelim, 1, 1–4. The corpse is partly a simple centre of uncleanness and partly the principal source (הַטְּמֵאָה אֲבוֹת).<sup>37</sup> According to distance from the source there are first, second, third and fourth degrees of uncleanness (עַל־רֵאשׁוֹן לְטִמְאָה etc.). Men, vessels and clothes are only infected directly, and are of the first degree. Hands (Jad., 3, 1), profane meats and drinks (הַלֵּיִן), are susceptible to second degree infection, consecrated things of lesser rank, e.g., first-fruits to the priests (תְּרוּמָה) to the third degree, and sacrifices to the fourth.<sup>38</sup> The intensity of infection weakens a stage with each transmission. If a man or object is defiled only to the degree that he no longer infects his own class but a Levitically more susceptible class, he is called "unfit" (פְּסוּל).<sup>39</sup>

"b. Transmission of uncleanness is by touch (מַגֵּעַ), carrying (מֵשֵׂא), pressing (sitting or lying etc., מְדַרְס), the entry of what is unclean into the empty space (רֵיוֹעַ)<sup>40</sup> of a vessel, or of a leper into a house (בִּיאָה),<sup>41</sup> of being under the same roof as a corpse (אֶהְיֶה).<sup>42</sup> In addition the seven liquids (מַשְׂקִיִּין or מְכַשְׂרִיִּין), and dry, and as such immune, means of nourishment, if mingled with them, can also make capable of defilement.<sup>43</sup>

"c. The degree of uncleanness means exclusion from the corresponding consecrated thing, if of lesser degree, and sacrifice as well as the prescribed purifications, if of higher. There is a systematic presentation in Kelim, 1, 5. Here are ten stages of uncleanness. 1. If the prescribed interval for purification has run out,<sup>44</sup> but the required sin offering has not been brought (מִתְקַטֵּר כַּפּוּרִים), a priest may not partake of the offering (אֲסוּר בְּקִדְשׁ), though he is allowed teruma and tithes. 2. If one has taken a bath and the required interval of purification (up to evening) has not expired (טְבוּל יוֹם), only tithes are allowed.<sup>45</sup> 3. One who has incurred nightly pollution (בַּעַל קִרְי) is barred from all consecrated things.<sup>46</sup> 4. One who has lived with a woman in her period (בּוֹעֵל נִדָּה) is himself a source of uncleanness.<sup>47</sup> 5. One who is afflicted with an issue, and who defiles his bed and seat<sup>48</sup> after two discharges, must wash in flowing water, but does not have to sacrifice. 6. After three discharges he must also sacrifice. 7. One who is cast out by the priest under suspicion of leprosy (Lv. 13:4–5, 21, 26, 31–33) defiles the house if he enters (בִּיאָה). But he need not let his hair be wild, or tear his clothes, or shave, or offer birds. 8. A confirmed leper must do these things. 9. A member which can be regarded as a dead bone brings defilement if touched or carried.<sup>49</sup> 10. If, however, there is so much flesh on it that healing might have been possible on the original body, it defiles like a corpse anything under the same roof with it (אֶהְיֶה). Even Palestine, which is more holy than Gentile countries, is divided into ten degrees of holiness, so that the unclean may be refused entry according to the holiness of a place, Kelim, 1, 5–9. Thus lepers are shut out of walled cities; a dead body may be taken out of a city but not brought in again; those afflicted with issues, also menstruous women and women after child-birth, may not approach the temple hill; Gentiles<sup>50</sup> and those defiled by a corpse may not come into the inner courts of the temple; a יוֹם טְבוּל is not allowed to enter the court of women; one who has gone through the prescribed ritual but omitted the sin offering may not enter the court of Israelites etc.

"d. To what extent an object can be defiled depends not only on the kind of infection but also on the make and material. Thus shallow vessels of wood, leather, bone or glass cannot be defiled, whereas deeper ones can, Kelim, 2, 1. Both shallow and deeper metal vessels can be defiled, 11, 1. The extent of defilement also varies. Deep vessels of wood, leather, bone and glass are made unclean on all sides, whereas earthen or bitumen vessels are made unclean only on the inside, 2, 1. The hollow at the base is defiled, but the exterior is immune. On the other hand, in the case of vessels which are defiled on all sides, distinction must be made between the exterior and the handle.<sup>51</sup> Thus we read in Kelim, 25, 8 that if someone has taken up such a vessel, he need not fear his hands becoming unclean so long as he has taken it by its handle. To guard against uncleanness, one must take note of the material and lid of vessels. Kelim, 10, 1: 'The following vessels, which may be sealed with a good lid,<sup>52</sup> protect their contents: vessels of cow dung, bitumen, stone, earth, clay, fish-bone or fish-skin, the bone or skin of a sea animal, and pure vessels of wood protect (against uncleanness).'

"Other objects in common use may differ according to form, material and use. Thus Kelim, 24, 1 distinguishes three kinds of shield: 1. the round shield, which can be defiled by pressure, since soldiers use it to sit on as well as to fight with;<sup>53</sup> 2. the jousting shield, which can be defiled by contact with a corpse (→ n. 36); 3. the small Arabian shield, which is immune.

"The question of clean and unclean also plays a role in economic life. Raw leather can become capable of defilement according to the use to which the owner decides to put it. It takes on the qualities of the object which it is to become. But it is not yet subject to the laws of defilement while in the possession of the tanner, since he is not the final owner, Kelim, 26, 8.

"e. Apart from the Essenes, other Jewish and half-Jewish groups were deficient from the standpoint of the Pharisaic view of purity,<sup>54</sup> The clothes of an 'am ha'arez defile a Pharisee if he sits on them:<sup>55</sup> Chag., 2, 7. The wife of a Chaber may help the wife of an 'am ha'arez in baking only so long as she does not add water to the flour,<sup>56</sup> Shebi, 5, 2 (Git., 5, 9). Samaritan women are unclean from childhood, Nidda, 4, 1.<sup>57</sup> Their men have the degree of impurity of those who co-habit with a menstruous woman, loc. cit. (→ n. 47). The wives of Sadducees are like those of Samaritans if they live in the old way; if they change, they are like full Jewesses, ibid., 4, 2.

"The Gentile is unclean. He cannot visit the temple (→ 419). Vessels and objects used in idolatry are forbidden to Jews (e.g., AZ, 2, 3 ff.). Houses must not be built in close proximity to a temple (AZ, 3, 6) etc. Intercourse with non-Jews is defined as follows (AZ, 5, 12): 'If a Jew buys a vessel from a Gentile, he must cleanse it by washing what is usually washed, by scalding what is usually scalded, by heating what is usually heated.'

"f. In apparent opposition to what we have said is the Rabbinic statement that the Holy Scriptures defile the hands, Jad, 3, 5. The term is a technical one for the Canon. The idea

huge meaning and significance. To the non-Jewish Greek reader unclean-ness signaled contamination with the demonic and was to be avoided at of defilement is supposed to have arisen as follows.<sup>58</sup> The scrolls were kept with the teruma, but there was a fear of their being eaten by mice. Hence, to separate them from the teruma, they were declared unclean, b. Shab., 14a par. This later story is a legendary explanation of an older fact. The original point is different. Clean and unclean originally express the same situation, namely, that something is devoted to the deity, taboo. Later, with less gloomy views of deity, the taboo concept comes to express distance. An unclean man is banned from the sanctuary. But only in a few cases does this come through consecrated things.<sup>59</sup> This is why the Scriptures can cause defilement. Already Jochanan b. Zakkai is ignorant of the true point of this; hence his helplessness in face of the vexing question of the Sadducees, Jad., 4, 6, We can thus understand why a later generation advanced a legendary, but rational, explanation based on temple practice. That this is in fact a secondary explanation is shown by the persistence of the taboo concept in b. Meg., 32 a par: 'He who takes up a book of the Torah with bare hands<sup>60</sup> will be buried naked.'<sup>61</sup>

## 2. Cultic Cleansing.

"To restore Levitical cleanness it is necessary to cleanse by water. Distinction is made between 1. washing (נטילה); 2. sprinkling (הזקה); 3. bathing (טבילה). In certain cases d. a sin-offering is also required (כפרה). Vessels are cleansed by water; they are dipped, scalded or heated. But some utensils may also have to be destroyed, e.g., Kelim, 2, 1; 11, 1. In this case the damage is so great that further use is impossible, Kelim, 17 *passim*. In the act of purification regard must also be had to the period of impurity (7 days in the case of death, Nu. 19:11).

"Since water is the most important means of purification, we may briefly review the six stages of water purification according to Miq., 1, 4–8. 1. Water from ponds, cisterns and hollows, stagnant reservoir water or bath water, if less than the prescribed 40 seahs, is adequate, if not defiled, for preparing the gift of dough (תלה) and for ritual washing of the hands; 2. replenished reservoir water may be used for the priestly tribute (תרומה) and for washing the hands; 3. bath water of more than 40 seahs cleanses both men and vessels; 4. a little spring to which drawn water has been added is like a bath if collected, but otherwise like a pure spring which cleanses vessels irrespective of the amount of water; 5. מים מוכין (meaning uncertain, perhaps 'water from mineral springs') cleanses if flowing; 6. flowing water is the most effective of all; it can cleanse those who have an issue, can be used to sprinkle the leper, and is suitable for replenishing the water of expiation.

"The most common act of cultic cleansing is washing the hands (נטילה ידים).<sup>62</sup> This takes place before grace at meals. The water used before the opening grace is called מים ראשונים, and that used before the closing grace מים אחרונים. According to R. Idi b. Abin the first is a Rabbinic command (מצוה), the second is commanded in the Torah (חובה). There can also be a cleansing of the hands during the meal, but this is not commanded; it is thus voluntary (רשות).<sup>63</sup> Levitical cleansing of the hands is also necessary at times of prayer. Perfectly correct recitation of the schema', according to R. Jochanan (→ n. 61), should take place as follows. After the discharge of necessary tasks, one should wash the hands, put on the tefillin, and then say the 'Hear, O Israel' and pray, b. Ber., 15a. If water were not available in Palestine, sand could be used, and the custom was not commonly practised in Babylon, loc. cit.

"If in the moment of prayer a Jew finds himself in a state of Levitical impurity, he should not pray as usual, Ber., 3, 4: 'If someone has defiled himself over night, he recollects (merely) the 'Hear O Israel' in his heart. At meals he says (merely) the grace after;' 3, 5: 'If someone is saying the prayer of eighteen petitions, and he is defiled by a discharge, he breaks (it) off.'<sup>64</sup>

"Levitical purity is also required for the study of the Law, but the Rabbis are not agreed as to the rules, b. Ber., 22a. As may be seen from the conduct of a pupil of Jehuda b. Bathyra (c. 110 A.D.), there was hesitation to pronounce the words of the Torah in a state of Levitical uncleanness, b. Ber., 22a.<sup>65</sup>

## 3. The Attitude of the Rabbis to the Law.

"The attitude of the Rabbis to the laws which burden and affect the whole of life is summed up by Jochanan b. Zakkai in Pesikt., 40b (Buber): 'In your life, it is not the corpse that defiles (מטמא) and not the water that cleanses (מטהרים); it is an ordinance of the King of all kings. God has said: ... No man has the right to transgress my statutes ...'<sup>66</sup> We must suppose, however, that this attitude was reached by only a few. The more common, popular opinion was that all uncleanness belongs to the realm of death and demons, and that apotropaic means may be used to remove it.

"Sometimes, if only in a few places, there is a freer attitude to the Law. According to b. Ber., 19b it is customary, for the honour of a mourner who is in the lead, to follow even on an unclean way<sup>67</sup> if this is taken by him. It is told of Eleazar b. Zaddoq (c. 110 A.D.) that in his day one would have leapt to meet Jewish kings even over coffins with corpses. According to Chaninah, the priestly leader (c. 70 A.D.), sorrow for the destruction of God's house must be so great that one should be ready to forego a bath and to endure Levitical uncleanness, b. Ta'an, 13a. In general, however, the stringency of the Law, and inner obligation to it, are hereby shown to be all the stronger. A pupil who sat under Jehuda b. Bathyra was afraid to read because of Levitical uncleanness. The Rabbi said that he should not be afraid, and should let his words shine forth, since the words of the Law, like fire, cannot be defiled, b. Ber., 22a. The pupil represented the common view. The teacher was more liberal, but only in so far as he ascribed to the Law the same purifying force as fire. He did not reach the religious height of Jochanan b. Zakkai. This can be seen from a second incident. In contrast to the strict Aqiba, who would not allow anyone defiled by pollution to enter the house of instruction, Jehuda b. Bathyra would at least allow the study of practical wisdom (דבר ארץ). When he himself was Levitically unclean, his students asked him to lecture on practical wisdom. 'He descended, bathed, and only then taught them. They turned to him: Did not our teacher instruct us that he who is affected by a sexual issue should study halakhoth of practical wisdom? He replied: If I lighten the Law for others, I make it heavier for myself,' b. Ber., 22a. The saying displays the inner bondage to the Law for which any movement of liberation is too great a burden of conscience.

all costs.<sup>94</sup> As it later came to touch on human morality, one would need to remember that philosophical morality in Paul's world was a different thing than religious based morality in the Judeo-Christian traditions. Some overlapping at individual points did occur, as a [comparison](#) of the vice and virtue lists of Paul and his contemporary, the Stoic philosopher Seneca, confirms. But deep and profound differences dominate the two approaches.

Thus Paul's contention is that God in responding to humanity's rejection of His revelation simply turned them over to [uncleanness](#), εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν. Note the absence of the article and thus the designation of ἀκαθαρσία as an abstract dynamic force at work. When ἐπιθυμῖαι are controlling the decision making process, humanity will then choose ἀκαθαρσία rather than God every time. Rom. 6:19a offers further commentary on this: ὡσπερ γὰρ παρεστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν, [for just as you presented your body members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness upon lawlessness...](#)

**[τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, so that they are dishonoring their own bodies among themselves.](#)** This adverbial result infinitive phrase

[Friedrich Hauck and Rudolf Meyer, “Καθαρός, Καθαρίζω, Καθαίρω, Καθαρότης, Ἀκάθαρτος, Ἀκαθαρσία, Καθαρισμός, Ἐκκαθαίρω, Περικάθαγμα,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:418–423.]

<sup>94</sup>“This general development is obviously followed in Greek religion.<sup>4</sup> The primitive stage is plainly reflected in ancient ideas of a dangerous force which makes unclean and which is connected with the mysterious processes of birth, sex, sickness and death.<sup>5</sup> Historical Greek religion is plainly at the second stage. The gods are regarded as exalted forces which are friendly to man. The demand for cultic purity is dominant. The man who dares to approach deity must be careful not to violate it by anything contradictory.<sup>6</sup> The whole field of the demonic becomes alien to deity, and must be kept at bay by the cultus. Rules originally designed as a protection against the demonic threat now become cultic regulations for the proper respecting of the holy nature of the gods. Hence a mass of cultic rules is fashioned, and the purity of the one concerned is assured by preparatory dedications (ἀγνεῖα). Only in a state of cleanness can a man draw near to the deity. On the other hand, we have rules for καθαρμοί which are designed to remove any uncleanness incurred.<sup>7</sup> In the first instance, this system of purification is purely cultic. It is not moral. But along with cultic purification the Greek world has also a private system which diligently seeks by purification and abstinence etc. to ward off demonic influences. There is here, e.g., in the Orphics and Pythagoreans, a sublimation of the concept of purity. Positive purity of life can be sought as well as freedom from demons.<sup>8</sup> Philosophical thinking in particular helps to separate the concept of cleanness from the cultic sphere and to set it in the spiritual sphere of personal morality.<sup>9</sup> Even in the cultic sphere the demand for moral purity is finally recognised as a presupposition for drawing near to deity.<sup>10</sup>” [Friedrich Hauck and Rudolf Meyer, “Καθαρός, Καθαρίζω, Καθαίρω, Καθαρότης, Ἀκάθαρτος, Ἀκαθαρσία, Καθαρισμός, Ἐκκαθαίρω, Περικάθαγμα,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:415–416.]

<sup>95</sup>“ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, 'that their bodies might be dishonored among themselves,' i.e., might be treated in a way lacking in respect for them (in accordance with the purpose for which they were created); so, 'degraded.' In linking idolatry and sexual license Paul continues to follow the line of Jewish polemic, as expressed not least Wisd Sol 14:12–27. For the denunciation of homosexual practice see on 1:26–27.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 62.]

<sup>96</sup>“In contemplating God's dealing with humanity, the following factors must always be taken into account: (1) God's will for people, (2) God's establishment of a moral order in his creation on behalf of created humanity, (3) God's ordaining of human freedom so that loving relationships may be established, (4) people's failure to respond in praise and thankfulness to God, and (5) the inevitable personal and moral consequences of people's rebellion against God, independence from God, and failure to respond positively to God. In a real sense, as John Robinson has observed with respect to the expression 'God gave them over,'

He [God] leaves pagan society to stew in its own juice. The retribution which overtakes it, resulting in automatic moral degradation, is what “comes on” almost like a thermostat when, as it were, the moral temperature drops below a certain point.<sup>99</sup>”

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 216.]

defines the consequence of humanity being turned over to ἀκαθαρσία. This fascinating assertion stresses damage being done to the physical aspect (τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν) of human life, and this is happening in a corporate context (ἐν αὐτοῖς) rather than merely as individual ruin.

The verbal action in the infinitive ἀτιμάζεσθαι from ἀτιμάζω has the sense both of dishonoring and of degrading. Our physical existence is a product of divine creation that has as its purpose to bring honor to God. The alpha privative attached to τιμά- means the opposite of τιμάω that defines showing proper respect and honor for everything about us as a creation of God. Thus to treat the body dishonorably means to abuse it and to shame it through actions contrary to the divine purpose in creation. Although the word group ἀτιμάζω, ἀτιμάω, ἀτιμία, ἄτιμος, -ον, and ἀτιμώω largely reference improper sexual conduct,<sup>95</sup> behind the Jewish-Christian perspective stands the premise that God created our bodies for His honor and thus our use of them should be within the framework of His defining of honorable actions.<sup>96</sup> This principle is the starting point for understanding the concept of morality and ethics from a Christian viewpoint. The relative

clause that follows underscores this point and then leads up to the immoral sexual behavior in vv. 26-27.

Within the Jewish framework one should not understand τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν as only referencing the human physical body. σῶμα from a Jewish-Christian view denotes our physical existence or life. Clearly the body is the central point of that but σῶμα is more than just the physical body.<sup>97</sup> Out of this comes, for example, Jesus' assertion of sin with a lustful look rather than the mere physical action of sexual abuse of a woman.

The prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς tags this activity of dishonoring as in the context of corporate life. Although various interpretations of this phrase have been offered, most wrongly assume the modern culture of individualism and ignore the collective culture of the first century world.<sup>98</sup> Interactions including sexual actions becomes the locus of the dishonoring activities by humanity. Thus the NRSV translation of "among themselves" reflects an acceptable English rendering of ἐν αὐτοῖς.

**οἵτινες μετέλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, who exchanged the Truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.** This relative clause has a qualitative nature due to the use of the qualitative relative pronoun ὅστις, ἧτις, ὃ τι used to introduce it. Via the antecedent of the

masculine plural pronoun οἵτινες being αὐτοῖς / αὐτῶν and thus ultimately αὐτοῦς, the pronoun references humanity taking the replacement action of μετέλλαξαν.

What did they replace?<sup>99</sup> τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's Truth**. What is this? Biblically speaking ἀλήθεια represents a correct, proper manifestation of God Himself. The context here of divine creation signals that what can be seen (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 19a) in the created order is an accurate representation of ἡ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, **His eternal power and deity** (v. 20b). This God Himself makes clear (ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν, v. 19b) in His creation. But this awareness of God as all powerful Creator humanity has rejected and thus discarded as of no value to them. This rejection is the 'crazifying' of their thinking and the darkening of their decision making ability (vv. 21b-22).

Thus out of this 'dumbing down' consequence they decided that discovering God in His creation is of no value or interest to them. Sin and depravity has taken control of their lives. Besides, making such a discovery of the all powerful God means the obligation to submit to Him in honoring and giving Him thanks (v. 20a). They have no interest in doing such. Yet they feel the impulse to worship something, even if it is not God.

What did they replace God's Truth with? ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, **with a lie**. What is

<sup>97</sup>For Jews and other middle easterners, the body represented the material definition of existence that provided the basis for establishing connections to others. Through the body the individual linked up to other people in various relationships. Thus the contamination of the body via sin represented disaster for healthy relationships. On the other hand, for the Greeks the body represented the self defining of existence that enable one to establish individuality and uniqueness over against others. But it was material and thus irretrievably corrupt and a barrier to true self fulfillment.

The consequence of this is best seen in the contrasting views about resurrection. Jews could not conceive of an existence after physical death without a bodily structure for such life. Relationship both with God and with His people in Heaven require a body suited for eternity. But Greeks conceived afterlife as the merging of one's 'soul,' the supposed spark of the divine, freed of the body back into the conscienceless of the force that stands behind all existence, the Soul. No individual existence weighted down by a body was the objective. A resurrection body represented the failure to achieve the merger of the human soul back into the eternal Soul of the universe.

<sup>98</sup>"The reading αὐτοῖς is to be preferred to ἑαυτοῖς on the ground of better attestation and also because the reflexive would be a natural improvement as soon as the tendency to understand the verb as middle made itself felt. (There is no justification here for reading αὐτοῖς as αὐτοῖς.) Various interpretations of ἐν αὐτοῖς have been offered, the main ones being: (i) 'among them';6 (ii) 'among themselves' (cf. εἰς ἀλλήλους in v. 27);7 (iii) 'through themselves' (i.e. in an instrumental sense);1 (iv) 'in their own persons' (i.e. being affected in their own persons).2 Of these the first is perhaps the most natural. We may understand the sense to be that the result of their having been delivered up to uncleanness is that among them their bodies are dishonoured and abused. (On the suggestion that Paul intended to bring out a correspondence between their abuse of God's glory (v. 23: cf. v. 21) and their bodies' being dishonoured see the introduction to this subsection.)" [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 122–123.]

<sup>99</sup>The verb ἀλλάσσω carries the idea of ἄλλος, other, central to its core meaning. The sense of changing something into something else is seen where only the direct object is used without specifying the 'other.' That is seen clearly in Act. 6:14 where the charge is leveled that Jesus' teachings would change the traditions of Moses. Also, Paul uses it for referencing the change that occurs to believers in the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-52).

When the 'something else' is given it normally in Jewish-Christian writings is introduced by the Greek preposition ἐν, which reflects the influence of the Hebrew preposition עַל. The secular Greek typically would use a dative case spelling of the noun or on rare occasions the Greek preposition εἰς. Here the sense shifts more to the English language idea of replacing something with something else. A more profound sense of transformation is intended, not just turning something into something else. This is the use made by Paul in Rom. 1:23 of ἀλλάσσω, as well as the compound form μεταλλάσσω in vv. 25 and 26.

a lie, biblically speaking? In modern western understanding a lie is a claim that doesn't correspond to established facts. Although loosely connected to the third century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle, that understanding of a lie did not dominate even ancient Greek thinking, much less ancient Jewish and Christian perspectives. It is a purely post-enlightenment perspective. For early Christians, the Jewish heritage framed what was a lie. And that was anything contradicting God's nature and actions. Factual or non-factual did not enter into consideration. If one rejected what God said or did, he automatically bought into a lie. So, since humanity rejected God's self-revelatory actions in creation, it automatically bought into a lie which meant self-deception and delusion.<sup>100</sup> Consequently its actions would never be legitimate or proper.

This consequently led to idolatry which is pictured in καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῆ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, **and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator**.<sup>101</sup> This summarizing statement in v. 25b reaches back to ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετῶν, **for likenesses of the image of mortal man and of birds and of four-footed animals and of reptiles** in v. 23b. Since man-made gods

are much easier to manage, they turned to idols reflecting animated things in the created world. One must not forget that in Paul's world virtually the entire population professed belief in a god or gods. Atheism was a minuscule part of the population and limited to educated elites.<sup>102</sup> Thus in that world especially rejection of God meant turning to other assumed deities via idolatry. Modern western culture tends to make the same fatal mistake, but only in more subtle and clever ways.

The interesting referencing of τῆ κτίσει, **creature**, and τὸν κτίσαντα, **Creator**, reflects a very Jewish perspective,<sup>103</sup> rather than Greek or Roman.<sup>104</sup> God stands behind all physical existence of everything both animate and inanimate. In the beginning of creation, everything was good and acceptable to God as the two creation narratives in Genesis 1-2 affirm. The entrance of sin through human disobedience has contaminated this creation profoundly and throughout every part of its existence. But despite the depths of perversion existing in creation, early Christianity shared to some extent the hope of eschatological redemption for creation with apocalyptic Jewish writers of this beginning era.<sup>105</sup> Here in Romans the apostle is centered on the corrupting of humanity through its abuse of the rest of creation.

<sup>100</sup>τὸ ψευδὸς can be used collectively, meaning 'lies,' and as an obvious antithesis to man's proper response to God (Pss 4:2; 5:6; Jer 3:10; 13:25); in Ep Jer 47 in anti-idol polemic, as here. But NEB'S 'bartered away the true God for a false one' is a little too free." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 63.]

<sup>101</sup>ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῆ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, 'they worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator.' σεβάσθαι, 'worship,' occurs only here in the NT and rarely elsewhere (TDNT 7:172-73). For λατρεύω see on 1:9; here cf. particularly Acts 7:42. In this case Paul is obviously thinking of cultic worship as such, or the pagan worship of idols which Jews found so abhorrent; though if the ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν is intended to balance the ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠγαθήσθησαν of v 21, a broader reference is by no means excluded. On the fundamental perception of God as Creator in the Jewish piety of the period see TDNT 3:1019; see also on 1:20.

"For the typical Jew it was always an indication of the ludicrous folly of other religions that they preferred to worship the creature rather than the Creator, to worship indeed the creation of their own hands (see on 1:23). The reply that the images were only representations of deity is already met by the emphasis on God's invisibility (v 20), glory, and incorruptibility (v 23). The idol is a lie (ἐν τῷ ψεύδει), a falsification of reality which distorts all man's perception (vv 21-22) and consequent attitudes and conduct. Paul would certainly affirm that the typical association between pagan idolatry and sexual license was no accident: the more base the perception of God, the more base the worship and corresponding conduct appropriate to it (cf. Wisd Sol 14:12)."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 63.]

<sup>102</sup>Only among some of the philosophical schools would one find practicing atheists. And even here the line of demarcation between atheism and agnosticism was blurred considerably. The serious followers of these schools amounted to much less than 10% of the population and were looked at with scorn by the mass of the population. Western societies have never begun to approach the level of religious orientation that typified the first century Roman world.

<sup>103</sup>The Jewish view is best summarized in Psalm 33:9 הַיְהוָה הוֹצִיא אֶת הַיָּם וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַיַּבֵּשׁ, **For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm**. LXX 32:9, ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν, καὶ ἐγενήθησαν, αὐτὸς ἐνετείλατο, καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

<sup>104</sup>"The view of creation in the NT reflects in its essentials the OT point of view. Emerging as it did out of the Judaism of the 1st cent., the early church accepted as its Scripture Judaism's sacred texts, and its early writers explained the meaning of Jesus and of the early church in light of these texts. While describing their world on the basis of the OT point of view, early Christian writers also interpreted the OT in light of Christ, and this led to a number of adaptations of the OT picture of creation." [Theodore Hiebert, "Creation," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006-2009), 1:786.]

<sup>105</sup>Many apocalyptic Jewish interpreters developed in detail the anticipation of the new heavens and new earth introduced by Isaiah 56-66. The emphases of their developments varied, including: the restoration of Israel (Jub. 4:26; 1 Enoch 45:4-5); the transformation of the righteous in a final resurrection (2 Apoc. Bar. 51:1-16); the liberation of the natural

All of this stands in sharp contrast to the heritage of Paul's non-Jewish readers at Rome.<sup>106</sup> The material world has its origins out of chaos and world (1 Enoch 51:4–5); and the return of the creation to its original state of goodness (2 Apoc. Bar. 73–74). The persistent conviction of the apocalyptic perspective is that the new age to come will be decidedly different from—and qualitatively better than—the present evil age.

"Paul reflects this apocalyptic context when, in 2 Corinthians 5:17–18, he depicts a radical disjuncture between 'old things' (ta archaia) and 'new things' (kaina). Such words suggest much more than individual transformation. Indeed, Paul argues that God reconciled 'all things' (ta panta) through Christ, including presumably the entire natural world. If 2 Corinthians 5:16–17 provides a glimpse of the beginning of the new creation, other passages presage the completion of the new creation. According to Romans 8:18–25 'the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay' (Rom 8:21), while, according to Ephesians 1:10, 'all things ... things in heaven and things on earth' will be gathered up in Christ (see 1 Cor 15:24–28).

"It is not possible to choose definitively between these options. Nor is it necessary, for all three mutually illuminate each other. The convert, as part of a community of faith, enters the cosmic drama of re-creation that God inaugurated at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will bring to completion at the Parousia (see Eschatology)."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 189–190.]

<sup>106a</sup> In the religion of many peoples chaos stands at the beginning of being and becoming.<sup>2</sup> It may be understood mythically as Tiamat, as the original water,<sup>3</sup> as the abyss, as night<sup>4</sup> or darkness. But the decisive point is that it is felt to be something supremely negative, abstracted and unqualified. Chaos is the world without its form in history, in space and time. It is unfashioned matter as a mythical quantity.<sup>5</sup> Hence it can also be described philosophically as ἄπορον, as that which is without quality, or as μὴ ὄν, as that which has no being in the true sense.<sup>6</sup> Man thus moves away as far as he can from the present being of the world. The world arises out of chaos because in it are seeds,<sup>7</sup> or an egg,<sup>8</sup> the cosmic egg, or a bud. Or there is reference to chaos as the 'mother which fashions all things.'<sup>9</sup> This implies a cosmic becoming after the analogy of becoming in nature. As the plant develops spontaneously out of the 'lifeless' seed, so does the world out of unqualified chaos. There is a basic similarity when psychological processes are substituted for the organic processes of natural life, e.g., longing, desire, eros etc.<sup>10</sup> For behind these psychological processes are natural strivings (as distinct from conscious processes of will). In Indian thought the attainment of self-consciousness belongs here — the first movement of self-apprehension.<sup>11</sup> Natural categories are also evident when the embrace of a mythical divine couple<sup>12</sup> stands at the beginning of becoming. All these ideas are the final limits to which thought can go if it is to interpret the origin of the world in meaningful categories.<sup>13</sup> But if the cosmic egg almost develops of itself, and desire is natural and spontaneous, a final riddle remains which is harshly exposed in the Egyptian idea of the self-copulation of the original god.<sup>14</sup> The 'beginning' in these trains of thought is only a relative one.<sup>15</sup>

"In the course of this natural occurrence there arise figures of a different kind, forces of order which shape things consciously as compared with natural becoming and striving: δημιουργοί (on this → 1023). Arising ultimately out of chaos,<sup>16</sup> they are not absolutely free. Zeus is subject to fate.<sup>17</sup> At the death of the gods chaos swallows up its children again. Yet these figures have a measure of autonomy in relation to chaos. They are against it. They fight against their own ancestors.<sup>18</sup> Out of their corpses they fashion the world.<sup>19</sup> By these forces of shape and order man is formed, but out of the defeated power of chaos.<sup>20</sup> Hence man is pledged to the forces of order, and it is no accident that in this context there is reference to a goal of human life which is related to the gods.<sup>21</sup> These myths show that, while man is part of nature, he transcends it. The meaning and goal of his life are not in nature. He does not owe his existence to it alone. Those who have made him have a claim on him. They are his legitimate lords (→ κύριος). Nevertheless, in so far as the δημιουργοί who have fashioned men are secondary to the power of chaos, man's obligation to them is not final, nor can they give to man the ultimate goal of his being. Man is more or less resigned to fate, esp. in the form of death.<sup>22</sup>

"If the ordering of matter and forms is here secondary to the conflict between the demiurge and the powers of chaos, there is another view which more or less equates the two. This view was developed by the Indians<sup>23</sup> and esp. the Greek philosophers, beginning with the Hylozoists,<sup>24</sup> who found in original matter the original principle of all life, by way of the Eleatic School<sup>25</sup> and Empedocles<sup>26</sup> to Stoicism, which basically equated πάσχον, matter, and ποιοῦν, the guiding principle = Zeus = original fire = πρόνοια = εἰμαρμένη.<sup>27</sup> The world is for Stoicism a great circular movement which turns back upon itself. To integrate oneself into this movement, to play well the role assigned to man by nature, Zeus or providence, is the task which is set for man by his place in the cosmos, by his nature: ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν. As the world is directed by reason, so man should follow reason. As the world is a harmonious whole, so man should strive after harmony, ἀταραξία. As the demiurges are autonomous in relation to chaos and yet not completely free, so conversely Stoicism regards πρόνοια as material. And yet the Stoic can speak of Zeus and honour him in the most personal terms.<sup>28</sup> There is another inconsistency. The course of the world is ineluctable, and after an ἐκπύρωσις the same course repeats itself. Its only meaning and purpose is to do this.<sup>29</sup> What, then, is the source of the ethical passion of Epictetus? How can man play badly his part in the cosmic drama? The system has no answer to these questions, and the implied second inconsistency, along with the first one, is a sign that without a personal encounter between the Creator and man the creature there can be neither well-founded ethical instruction nor indeed a livable life.

"Finally, matter and the forms can be brought into confrontation and the latter given at least logical precedence over the former. In this respect the meaning and import of the statements made are often doubtful. Thus we cannot decide here whether the idea of creatio e nihilo really stands behind the conception of creator-gods.<sup>30</sup> In many religions, however, there may be observed a tendency to pick out one god — he may alternate fairly freely within a polytheistic pantheon — as the creator, and to give him precedence as such over the others and over all things. Thus in a hymn<sup>31</sup> the moon-god Sin is called: Fruit which is born of itself, mother's womb which bears all things, father, begetter of gods and men, begetter of all things, lord, ruler of the gods, who alone is exalted in heaven and on earth, who decides in heaven and on earth, whose decree no man alters. It is also said of him that his word causes the green herb to spring forth, nourishes hearth and herd, and establishes truth and right. The nature formulae originally used of primitive chaos are here transferred to a demiurge, and he is thus the first god who is not restricted by any prior chaos and who has unlimited power over nature, humanity and the world of the gods.<sup>32</sup> The same is true in Egypt,<sup>33</sup>

pretty much remains in it through time. Contradictory views abound across the first century world of Paul outside of Judaism about the origins of the material world.<sup>107</sup> These non-Jewish readers would identify the resulting chaos of idolatry and immoral behavior readily observable in their world. But the origin of this, as contended by Paul, would be very new, and perhaps challenging to them.

The pair of verbs ἐσεβάσθησαν<sup>108</sup> καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν define what humanity did in replacing the Truth of God with a lie. The first term, ἐσεβάσθησαν, is rarely used inside the NT and the apostolic fathers to refer to genuine

Assyria,<sup>34</sup> India.<sup>35</sup> The most explicit in this connection is Aelius Aristides, who in his hymn to Zeus expressly contests the nature myths which subordinate Zeus to the forces of chaos and who consciously gives him a position of primacy: ἦν τε ἄρα ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ ἔσται εἰσαεὶ, Or., 43, 9 (Keil). He originated of himself, and the deduction is: οὕτω δὴ ἀρχὴ μὲν ἀπάντων Ζεὺς τε καὶ ἐκ Διὸς πάντα. If Zeus and the world are then made simultaneous, *ibid.*, 10, this is only to show the speed of Zeus' work (ποιεῖν); there was no ἀντικώπων.<sup>36</sup> In this connection we should also mention the many and varied attempts to understand creation as a miracle, as a personal act of power, whether it be creation by word or creation by certain psychic states of the creator, e.g., ecstasy. The point here is to emphasise that creation is an act which is beyond human conception. But if it is a magical act, the decisive force does not lie in the meaning of the word spoken but in the magical power of the word itself, which may at a pinch be divorced from the meaning. To understand creation as magic is to see at work in it a mysterious power which may be separated from the creator. It is not to see the creator as a person. These notions are all moving in the direction of a personal act of will, but they cannot reach this because creation alone is not enough to give a personal view of God. Hence these divine figures cannot be grasped as truly personal. The decisive personal element, action in history, is not stated of them. This is true in the Greek world. Philosophical reflection makes of Zeus an abstract quantity. We see this already in Anaxagoras, who perceives the rule of νοῦς in all things (διακοσμεῖν).<sup>37</sup> The world then owes its being to the idea of the good or to absolute being. In Plato's Timaeus, of course, a δημιουργός plays a not very clear role as a kind of intermediary between the world of ideas and that of phenomena.<sup>38</sup> Acc. to Diog. Laertes Plato's teaching is as follows: δύο ... ἀρχάς, θεὸν καὶ ὕλην, ὃν καὶ νοῦν προσαγορεύει, καὶ αἴτιον. The hyle is ἀσημάτιστος καὶ ἄπειρος, ἀτάκτως κινουμένη, but God regards τάξις as better than ἀταξία, and He therefore fashions the hyle.<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere, however, emanation formulae and images are used.<sup>40</sup> This is consistently worked out in Neo-Platonism. Acc. to Plotinus the supreme God, who can be grasped only by way of negation, has within Himself the ladder of beings according to natural necessity, and He releases them from Himself, though not by way of emanation, since this would be a diminution of substance.<sup>41</sup> The result is on the one side the high estimation of the beauty of the cosmos, the reflection of the divine harmony, and on the other side aversion to earthly things and to matter, and an ascetic striving for the all and the one. How the many can flow from the one, evil from the all-good, and matter from that which is above being, is not clear even when the series and stages of emanation are greatly extended, and the result is that for man the goal of life can lie only in the impersonal. Man is a bundle of different parts which are destined to be dissolved again. Gnosticism developed this view of the world in many different ways. A particular place is occupied by the teaching of Zarathustra, which assumes the existence of two original powers of good and evil that are engaged in a conflict in which man is summoned to take sides.<sup>42</sup> Later all creation is divided between these powers. The first tractate of the Corp. Herm. solves the riddle of the world in the same way by assuming the existence of two original, though not simultaneous, forces, cf. also the Manichees."

[Werner Foerster, "Κτίζω, Κτίσις, Κτίσμα, Κτίσις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:1001–1005.]

<sup>107</sup>Sidenote: The crazy, often incoherent and frequently contradictory views of origins in Paul's world demonstrate clearly that unredeemed man in no way, shape, or form can 'think his way back to God.'

<sup>108</sup>Derivatives of the stem σεβ- [σεβόμαι, σεβάζομαι, σεβασμα, Σεβαστός, εὑσεβής, εὑσεβεια, εὑσεβέω, ἀσεβής, ἀσεβεια, ἀσεβέω, σεμνός, σεμνότης] are used very commonly in Gk. and are a typical expression of Greek piety. In marked contrast is the LXX, which, if it does not avoid the group altogether, is very restrained in its use of it. This is particularly noteworthy in respect of εὑσεβής, εὑσεβεια and εὑσεβέω. These important Greek terms are used extensively only in 4 Macc. The LXX is not so restrained in relation to ἀσεβής, ἀσεβεια and ἀσεβέω, though most of the instances are in the Wisdom literature. Almost more surprising is the usage of the NT, for here the whole group, apart from ἀσεβέω etc., is used in a Christian sense, with one exception, only in the Pastoral Epistles, Jude and 2 Peter. In the post-apostolic fathers σεβ- does not occur at all in Ign. or Did. These facts demand explanation." [Werner Foerster, "Σέβομαι, Σεβάζομαι, Σέβασμα, Σεβαστός, Εὑσεβής, Εὑσεβεια, Εὑσεβέω, Ἀσεβής, Ἀσεβεια, Ἀσεβέω, Σεμνός, Σεμνότης," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:168–169.]

<sup>109</sup>The σεβ- stem words are found almost exclusively in the Pastoral Epistles, Jude and 2 Peter inside the NT.

<sup>110</sup>λατρεύειν comes from λάτρον, 'reward,' 'wages'; cf. λάτρις, 'hireling,' more generally 'servant'; cf. also the Lat. latro, 'robber.' Hence the first meaning of λατρεύειν is 'to work or serve for reward,' then 'to render services,' 'to serve,' with no thought of reward and irrespective of whether the one who serves is a slave or free." [Hermann Strathmann, "Λατρεύω, Λατρεία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:58–59.]

Both the noun and the verb come to denote overwhelmingly cultic religious service, mostly in regard to priestly service in the tabernacle and Jerusalem temple centered around the offering of sacrifices. Service to pagan gods can also be referenced by these two words as seen here in Rom. 1:25. Still the outward actions are the primary emphasis. This feature is what make both terms ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν particularly appropriate to Paul's use in reference to idolatry by humanity.

Thus religious worship and service is given τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, **to the creature rather than to the Creator**. God is both ignored and replaced by humanity as the object of worship.<sup>111</sup> Pagan **idolatry** enters the picture with all its ruinous consequences.<sup>112</sup> And in Paul's world it was deeply linked to sexual immorality.

**ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. Who is blessed forever. Amen.**

As reflected in the diagram, this adjectival relative clause goes back to τὸν κτίσαντα, **the Creator**. As a typical Jewish *benedictio* prayer expression, it also became widely used among early Christians as well.<sup>113</sup> Any devout Jew would quickly utter praise to the one true God when discussing paganism. Both the Jewish Christians and the former God-fearer non Jewish readers of this letter would readily identify with Paul's doxological words

here.

The core idea ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητός lifts words of praise

παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα,  
ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητός  
εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,  
ἀμήν.

to God as worthy to receive such. The first adverbial modifier εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας is the appropriately Jewish designation of eternity, over against the very Greek αἰδῖος (cf. v. 20b) and αἰεί (cf. 2 Cor. 6:10). In Jewish and Christian teaching, eternity is an endless succession of the forward movement of time, not a static timelessness as taught in Greek tradition. The adverbial ἀμήν "gives to the benediction a note of special solemnity and also of personal involvement."<sup>114</sup> This is also observable in 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:24. Traditionally the ἀμήν represents the congregational affirmative response to words of scripture read as a part of temple worship. As these words would have been read in the various house church groups around the city of Rome, this would have evoked a verbal ἀμήν from those listening to the reading of the letter. Thus affirmation would be given to the declaration of the blessedness of God, i.e., His praise worthiness.

Thus this first of three παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεός... εἰς declarations sees God walking away from humanity to allow their own ἀκαθαρσίαν to over-

<sup>111</sup>"παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα = not merely 'more than the Creator' (a force which the preposition might bear), but 'passing by the Creator altogether,' 'to the neglect of the Creator.' " [W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of the Romans*, 3d ed., International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 46.]

"παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα. παρά with the accusative here has the sense 'rather than', 'in preference to', 'instead of'. Compare Lk 18:14 (λέγω ὑμῖν, κατέβη οὗτος δεδικαιωμένος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ παρ' ἐκείνῳ), where the NEB renders παρ' ἐκείνῳ—probably correctly—'and not the other'. This use is an extension of the quite well-established use in the sense 'more than'.<sup>6</sup> For the general thought compare Wisd 13:1–9; Philo, Op. Mund. 2 (τινὲς γὰρ τὸν κόσμον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν κοσμοποιὸν θαυμάσαντες)." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 124.]

<sup>112</sup>"It is Paul's view that human beings, created in God's image, will always worship something, and the only alternative to true worship in a universe where there is only one true God is worship of creation or one or another of God's creatures. Possibly Paul is thinking of the images of the emperor in Rome and elsewhere that were testimonies to idolatry (cf. Acts 17; Wis. 14:17: 'When people could not honor monarchs in their presence, since they lived at a distance, they imagined their appearance far away and made a visible image of the king whom they honored, so that by their zeal they might flatter the absent one as though present').<sup>22</sup> According to v. 24 degraded minds lead to degraded bodies. Notice the repeated theme that 'God gave them up' in vv. 24, 26, 28 to both a debased mind and debased behavior." [Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 68–69.]

<sup>113</sup>"ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν, 'who is blessed for ever, Amen.' A thoroughly and typically Jewish benediction (Gen 9:26; 14:20; 1 Sam 25:32; 2 Sam 18:28; 1 Kgs 1:48; 8:15; 2 Chron 2:12; Ps 41:13; Tob 3:11; 8:5; Luke 1:68); like all devout Jews, Paul would declare God's blessedness in his daily prayers (the Eighteen Benedictions; קְרִיָּה = εὐλογητός). The formula, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord' quickly became established in Christianity (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3). See also 9:5; TDNT 2:760, 764; and further on 12:14. Here Paul uses the blessing as a way of distancing himself from worship which does not recognize that all blessing and blessedness lies in God alone and from any life not lived in dependence on that blessing before all else. The 'Amen' underlines Paul's commitment to this truth; for the established place of ἀμήν in Jewish and Christian prayer and doxology as signifying the worshiper's concurrence see TDNT 1:335–37; in Paul see 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 1 Cor 16:24; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Phil 4:20; 1 Thess 3:13; also Eph 3:21; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 63–64.]

<sup>114</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 125.

power them in disaster. As depraved sinners, humanity already lives ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν, **in the control of the passions dominating their decision making abilities.** The first path into disaster is idolatry which is emphasized in vv. 24-25. Idolatry here is depicted simply as ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, **they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.** This assertion defines the previous depiction in v. 23: καὶ ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν, **and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for likenesses of the image of mortal man and of birds, and of four-footed animals and of reptiles.** Such perversion represents the consequence τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, **so that they dishonored their own bodies among themselves.** This indictment of immoral conduct hints at the traditional close linkage of idolatry and sexual immorality, which comes to the forefront in the second declaration of vv. 26-27 with its exceedingly blunt condemnation of homosexuality.

#### 10.3.3.2.1.2.2 God handed them over to degrading passions, 1:26-

**27** Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἶ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες. **26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.**

The internal structure here moves along the lines of an assertion (#17) supported by two claims (#s 18-19). The second declaration of abandonment by God is followed by a pair of assertions defining homosexual activity as the expression of πάθη ἀτιμίας, **dishonoring passions.**<sup>115</sup>

The connection of this second declaration of abandonment by God is

1.26 Διὰ τοῦτο  
παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς  
εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας,  
γὰρ  
αἶ τε θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν  
εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,  
1.27 ὁμοίως  
τε  
καὶ  
ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας  
οἱ ἄρσενες...ἐξεκαύθησαν  
| ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν  
| εἰς ἀλλήλους,  
ἄρσενες (ἐξεκαύθησαν)  
ἐν ἄρσεσιν  
τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
καὶ  
τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν...ἀπολαμβάνοντες.  
ἣν ἔδει  
τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν  
ἐν ἑαυτοῖς

clearly linked to the first one in a number of ways. Of course, the most obvious connection is the repeating of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς..., using not only the identical words but also the exact same sequencing of these words. But also the opening prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, **for this reason**, reaches back to the preceding sentence of vv. 24-25. Their idolatry results in God walking away from them in His wrath. And this opens a flood gate of immorality into their lives, that God's Presence could have prevented. Another link is the close meaning between εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, **into dishonoring passions** (v. 26) to εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, **into uncleanness** (v. 24) with these two parallel prepositional phrases. Although different words, the ideas are virtually synonymous with each other. Plus the expression in v. 24 has the two additional descriptors with ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν, **in the passions of their hearts**, and τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, **so that they dishonored their bodies among themselves.** These add additional definition to the central idea being presented by Paul in the εἰς prepositional phrases.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup>"In this verse any reference to men must, of course, be to 'persons.' In the present verse passions is equivalent to 'lusts.' The sin to which Paul has reference is homosexuality among women; homosexuality among men is referred to in the following verse. In most languages there is a perfectly proper manner of referring to homosexual activity. The reference to shameful passions may simply be translated by some generic term for homosexual relations, or it may require a very general expression such as 'they have bad sexual desires' or 'they have the wrong kind of sexual desires.' This can then be followed by the two statements, the one referring to women and the other to men. The second sentence in verse 26 may simply be translated as 'women have sexual relations with women, which is not the way it should be.' This final phrase is simply a way of indicating the unnatural character of such acts." [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 27.]

<sup>116</sup>"εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας answers to εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν in v. 24. ἀτιμίας (a genitive of quality, the meaning of the phrase being 'passions which bring dishonour') takes up the τοῦ

**V. 26a, the declaration:** *Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, For this reason God handed them over to dishonoring passions.* The repetition of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς..., *God handed them over to...* from v. 24 retains the same meaning in this second instance. The connecting link of Διὰ τοῦτο, *for this reason*, sets up the second usage as a justifying amplification of the first declaration, thus creating the expectation of more details to come in this second declaration. The new information then follows beginning in the object of the preposition εἰς as πάθη ἀτιμίας, *dishonoring passions*.

The bulk of the new information then comes in the compound reason given in the independent causal γὰρ clause in vv. 26b-27. Here homosexual activity is described as the πάθη ἀτιμίας which God handed rebellious humanity over to for its destruction. Now we have more information on the table about εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, *to uncleanness*, in v. 24. Not only does it include idolatry (v. 25), but also sexual perversion (vv. 26b-27). But more information is needed before the entire picture is on the table. And that comes in v. 28b with εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, *to a debased mind* with the accompanying amplification in vv. 28b-32. Here a lengthy vice list of evils is put on the table to depict the perverted thinking of rebellious humanity.

The fate of humanity via God's wrath in this world is here referenced as εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, *to dishonoring passions*. What does this mean? Always two sources of defining meaning for words must be followed in order to gain a correct understanding: the etymological meaning and the contextual meaning. The second normally refines and limits the first category by applying the first meaning to specific situations.

The etymological meaning comes out of a study of the origins of the word and by tracing how the word has been used over the times from its first appearance to the time of the use in the text being analyzed. For words used in the original Greek text of the New Testament that must include analysis of several layers of usage across not just Greek but how it was understood by Jewish writers all the way from the Septuagint translators of the Hebrew text in the second century before Christ and includes the body of literature of Greek writings by Jewish writers through the first Christian ἀτιμάζεσθαι, κ.τ.λ. of v. 24." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 125.]

<sup>117</sup>For the really committed linguist, tracing out the history over time for the Latin word(s) used for the NT Greek word is a necessity. And this doesn't stop with just the Latin. Numerous other ancient Mediterranean world languages into which the text of the NT was translated in the first few centuries have to be similarly examined as well. These include quite a large number of languages, known in scholarly circles as [Versions of the New Testament](#). Brief summations of this kind of background analysis are built into the major Greek lexicons of the New Testament vocabulary. At a more detailed, and easier to understand level are the [theological dictionaries of the NT](#). The limitation are these are the limiting of the list of words to only those perceived to have some theological impact. The ultimate one of these is the ten volume English translation of the Kittel's project titled in English *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

<sup>118</sup>πάσχω, παθητός, προπάσχω, συμπάσχω, πάθος, πάθημα, συμπαθής, συμπαθέω, κακοπαθέω, συγκακοπαθέω, κακοπάθεια, μετριοπαθέω, ὁμοιοπαθής, πραϋπάθεια

century. Additionally some attention needs to be given to its usage in Christian, Jewish, and secular writings after the apostolic era of the first century, mostly as a check on how usage may have shifted the defining of the historical meaning(s) of the word. Clearly this happens in the church fathers, especially those writing in Greek as well as the Latin writers in emerging western Christianity.<sup>117</sup>

The second source of determining word meaning is its context in usage. The thought flow in the sentence where the word is use normally determines which one of the possible 'dictionary' meanings is most appropriate. But more importantly are contextual signals indicating what the author intended with his usage. For example, with εἰς πάθη here we clearly understand that this prepositional phrase is intended to define in part the parallel εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν in v. 24. Thus uncleanness has to do with human passions. Plus the context for vv. 26-27 make it additionally clear that εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας is defended and described as the homosexual practice introduced in the compound main clauses with the conjunction γὰρ in vv. 26b-27. So any definition of what Paul specifically meant here by εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας must take these clear contextual signals into consideration as well as the etymological definition. But because of the third parallel prepositional phrase εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (v. 28b) coming off the identical declaration, the scope of εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας in v. 26b must not be limited to just homosexual activities. A long vice list follows in vv. 29-32 detailing a variety of dishonoring passions committed by depraved humanity. While these three fates of ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθη ἀτιμίας, and ἀδόκιμον νοῦν clearly are not synonymous with one another, they are unquestionably closely linked together and thus must be explained in close tandem with one another.

Now what is εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας? The etymological background of both these words πάθη ἀτιμίας gives insights that are helpful. Although πάθος is only used 3 times inside the entire NT, with all in Paul's writings, the noun is a part of a very diverse word group that helps throw light on the root idea in the ancient world.<sup>118</sup> The foundational verb πάσχω carries with it the idea of experiencing something externally, and more often is harmful or

evil.<sup>119</sup> The noun πάθος, derived from the verb, shares a common trajectory in meaning, mostly at the idea of an 'experience,' more often than not as harmful.<sup>120</sup> Over time the noun came to also reference an internal craving for externally derived experiences, again, more often harmful than beneficial. Interestingly in the LXX πάθος surfaces only in Prov. 25:20 labeling sickness as a bad experience. But in lengthy discussions in the Jewish Fourth Maccabees written about the same time of Paul's letter to the Romans, πάθος is discussed at length as an evil impulse.<sup>121</sup> This reflects Jewish perspectives on πάθος simultaneous to the time of Paul. Paul's use of πάθος in Rom. 1:26; Col. 3:5, and 1 Thess. 4:5 is very much in line with the Jewish perspective of his time. It stands as an evil impulse resident in humanity due to its depraved nature. This clearly is reflected in the contextual defining of πάθος in vv. 26b-27, which is noted below.

The adjective use of the genitive case noun ἀτιμίας from ἀτιμία, comes from the same word group as the infinitive ἀτιμάζεσθαι, from ἀτιμάζω, **to dishonor**, in v. 24b. Whereas its opposite τιμή connoted the idea of esteem

[Wilhelm Michaelis, "Πάσχω, Παθητός, Προπάσχω, Συμπάσχω, Πάθος, Πάθημα, Συμπαθής, Συμπαθέω, Κακοπαθέω, Συγκακοπαθέω, Κακοπάθεια, Μετριοπαθέω, Όμοιοπαθής," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:904.]

<sup>119</sup>πάσχω,<sup>1</sup> used from Hom. on, means basically 'to experience something' which comes from without and which has to be suffered: 'something encounters me,' 'comes upon me' etc. Often, also in philosophy, the antonym of verbs of free action like ἔρξαι, Hom. Od., 8, 490; Aesch. Ag., 1564, ῥέζειν, Pind. Nem., 4, 32, δρᾶν, Aesch. Choeph., 313; Gorg. Fr., 11, 7 (Diels6, II, 290, 13 f.), ἐνεργεῖν, Corp. Herm., XII, 11 (Scott, I, 228, 34), → II, 652, 23 ff.; cf. also πάσχειν as the pass. of ποιεῖν, Aristot. Cat., 4, p. 2a, 4; Metaph., V, 7, p. 1017a, 26 etc. Originally πάσχω is not a *vox media*.<sup>2</sup> The use in Hom. shows plainly that its original sense was 'to suffer evil.' This was perhaps given with the etym., → n. 1. Later, with appropriate additions, it could be used for experiencing anything that might come." [Wilhelm Michaelis, "Πάσχω, Παθητός, Προπάσχω, Συμπάσχω, Πάθος, Πάθημα, Συμπαθής, Συμπαθέω, Κακοπαθέω, Συγκακοπαθέω, Κακοπάθεια, Μετριοπαθέω, Όμοιοπαθής," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:904.]

<sup>120</sup>πάθος, used from the tragic poets,<sup>1</sup> is a noun which shares the history of πάσχω → 904, 4 ff. It first denotes an 'experience': πάθει μάθος Aesch. Ag., 177 (→ 906, 15 ff.): τὸ συντυχὸν πάθος, Soph. Ai., 313. Even without addition it is used in *malam partem* for 'misfortune,' 'mishap,' 'defeat,' 'sickness' etc. The meaning 'mood,' 'feeling,' 'emotion' etc. is very common in both a good sense and a bad; cf. the def. in Aristot. Eth. Nic., II, 4, p. 1105b, 19 ff.: τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινόμενα τρία ἐστί, πάθη δυνάμεις ἕξεις ... λέγω δὲ πάθη μὲν ἐπιθυμίαν (→ III, 168, 22 f. and n. 6), ὀργὴν (→ 385, 1) φόβον, θράσος, φθόνον, χαράν, φιλίαν, μῖσος, πόθον, ζῆλον, ἔλεον (→ II, 478, 14 ff.), ὅλως οἷς ἔπεται ἡδονή (→ II, 913, 4 ff.; → IV, 315, 7 ff.) ἢ λύπη. This meaning is often in *malam partem*: 'passion,' 'impulse'.<sup>12</sup> Cf. ἐκτὸς τοῦ πάθους εἶναι, Teles, p. 56 (Hense) or ἔξω τῶν παθῶν γίνεσθαι, Dio C., 60, 3 as the Cynic-Stoic ideal of ἀπάθεια or ἀταραξία, cf. also → II, 495, 21 ff. Under Pythagorean influence is the use of πάθος for 'changes,' 'modifications,' 'processes,' Plat. Resp., X, 612a; τὰ περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν τε καὶ τὴν γῆν πάθη, Phaed., 96b c; also 'attribute' (opp. οὐσία): ἐστί καὶ ἀριθμοῦ ἴδια πάθη, οἷον περιττότης, ἀρτιότης, Aristot. Metaph., I, 2, p. 985b, 29. As a rhetorical tt. for emotional expression: "pathos," cf. πάθος ποιεῖν in Aristot. Rhet., III, 17, p. 1418a, 12.<sup>3</sup> [Wilhelm Michaelis, "Πάσχω, Παθητός, Προπάσχω, Συμπάσχω, Πάθος, Πάθημα, Συμπαθής, Συμπαθέω, Κακοπαθέω, Συγκακοπαθέω, Κακοπάθεια, Μετριοπαθέω, Όμοιοπαθής," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:926–927.]

<sup>121</sup>Elsewhere it is found only in 4 Macc., though here 63 times (only 1:14, 24; 13:4 sing.). The whole work is meant to be a φιλοσοφώτατος λόγος on the theme εἰ ἀυτοδέσποτός ἐστιν τῶν παθῶν ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμός, 1, 1 (→ IV, 286, 21 ff.). The πάθη here are emotions, not as *pura naturalia*,<sup>5</sup> but as bad impulses (opp. ἀρεταί, 1:30). Cf. → II, 916, 30 ff.<sup>6</sup> [Wilhelm Michaelis, "Πάσχω, Παθητός, Προπάσχω, Συμπάσχω, Πάθος, Πάθημα, Συμπαθής, Συμπαθέω, Κακοπαθέω, Συγκακοπαθέω, Κακοπάθεια, Μετριοπαθέω, Όμοιοπαθής," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:927.]

<sup>122</sup>The hugely powerful social role of honor and shame in the world of Paul is hardly understandable in the modern world, particularly in westernized society. Although important in our contemporary society, its impact upon life in the first century world of Paul was so much more intense as to make comparisons between the two virtually impossible. To be sure, across the myriads of localized cultures in the Mediterranean world, shaming and honoring took on distinctive tones. But the common core was the collective or communal structure of all of these societies. In our world, only people with a background in Asian and rural African culture can begin to grasp the significance of these experiences.

and high respect, the noun ἀτιμία denoted the opposite, of one being in low respect and esteem. Honor and dishonor generally connect the same pair of contrastive ideas.<sup>122</sup> Paul's use of ἀτιμία seven times (Rom. 1:26; 9:21 1 Cor. 11:14; 15:43; 2 Cor. 6:8; 11:21; 2 Tim. 2:20) gives perspective to how this root idea can be expressed by different English words. Additionally his use of the related verb ἀτιμάζω in Rom. 1:24 and 2:23 provide additional insight. Giving in to these 'dishonoring passions' was to experience the worst public shaming imaginable in that world. I say public shaming because this action was done by God Himself upon humanity, and it was universal upon all who succumb to such passions. God did not walk away from depraved humanity secretly or in private. The debauchery defining the lifestyle of humanity is an open, public declaration of the abandonment by God in His wrath.

Since πάθη ἀτιμίας (v. 26b) defines one primary aspect of ἀκαθαρσίαν (v. 24b), what then constitutes πάθη ἀτιμίας in concrete activities? The compound causal clause (γὰρ) in vv. 26b-27 provides the first stage of answer.

Interestingly, Paul does something unique here in describing the evil of homosexuality from both the male and the female perspectives. Condemnation of homosexual activity in ancient literature centers almost completely on the deviation of males.<sup>123</sup>

**V. 26b, 1st reason: αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, for the females exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural.**

What is depicted here is female homosexual activity.<sup>124</sup> The inclusive language used by Paul has strong Greek tones in describing a practice found primarily outside middle eastern Semite traditions such as that of the Jewish people. Note that Paul uses the inclusive gender oriented Greek

<sup>123</sup>Female lesbian activity is seldom mentioned, largely due to the very secondary status of women in virtually every ancient culture. In Judaism, the stinging condemnation of female homosexual activity comes in the Talmudic preservation of Jewish teachings: Sifra Lev. 18:3; b. Sabb. 65a; b. Yebam. 76a.

<sup>124</sup>αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 'for their females changed the natural function into what is contrary to nature.' Both θήλειαι and ἄρσενες (v 27), 'females, males,' are used presumably because Paul has in mind particularly their sexual relationship, and indeed sexual compatibility (cf. Mark 10:6//Matt 19:4; Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28). Female homosexual practice is mentioned before male, possibly because the more aggressive character of male sexuality, as indicated in v 27, makes for a better crescendo. χρῆσις can be used, as here, in the sense of 'relations, function,' especially with reference to sexual intercourse (BGD)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 64.]

<sup>125</sup>*arsēn* occurs in cl. Gk. from Homer onwards, sometimes in the Attic form *arrēn* (often in papyri, and also Philo, Josephus and Rom. 1:27 v. 1). (On the form see Funk § 34 (2); Moulton, Grammar, II, 103.) It means male as opposed to female, *thēlys* (cf. Plato, Leg. 2, 9 p. 665c; K. Preisendanz, Papyri Graecae Magicae, I, 1928, 15, 18). *thēlys* is also found from Homer onwards as an adj. meaning female, but also with the art. meaning woman (e.g. Hdt. 3, 109; Xen., Mem. 2, 1, 4). On the phrase *arsēn kai thēlys*, male and female, cf. Plato, Rep. 454d; Aristot., Met. 988a 5.

"OT *arsēn* occurs some 54 times in the LXX canonical and uncanonical writings, chiefly for the Heb. *zākār*. It appears in the phrase *arsen kai thēly*, male and female, in Gen. 1:27 (Heb. *zākār ūneqēbāh*) of the creation of male and female in the → image of God (cf. also Gen. 5:2; 6:19f.; 7:2f., 9, 15f.; Lev. 3:1, 6; 12:7, referring not only to man and woman but to the male and female of animal species in the flood story and in sacrifice). The male is referred to on his own in Gen. 17:14, 23 (the institution of male → circumcision as the → covenant → sign); Exod. 1:16ff., 22; 2:2 (Pharaoh's attempt to exterminate the Israelites by destroying male infants); Exod. 12:5 (the Passover → lamb had to be a male without blemish); and Lev. 1:3, 10; 4:23; 22:19; Mal. 1:14 (in connection with sacrifice); Lev. 6:29, 7:6 (of priests); Lev. 18:22; 20:13 (in condemnation of homosexual practices); Lev. 27:3, 5ff. (in the valuation of the people); Num. 1:2; 3:40 (in the census of the people); Num. 31:17f.; Jos. 17:2; Jdg. 21:11f. (in historical narratives); Job 3:3; Isa. 26:14; 66:7; Jer. 20:15; 30:6; Sir. 33:26 (23); 2 Macc. 7:21; 4 Macc. 15:30 (of males generally). The references to the male and female correspond to those to man and woman generally in the OT. On the one hand, there is the recognition in Gen. of the divinely instituted parity in that man and woman together constitute the image of God, and their complementary roles in the transmission of life in both the human and the animal realm. On the other hand, there are certain roles (e.g. in receiving the covenant sign, in the priesthood, and in certain → sacrifices) that only the male may fill."

[C. Brown, "Ἄρσην," ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther, and Hans Bietenhard, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 2:562.]

<sup>126</sup>At this point a notation is important about the Bible's use of sexual language and terminology. "The Bible is not a prudish book, though interpreters through the centuries have exerted great efforts to 'de-sex' the Bible (for instance, by adopting an allegorical method for interpreting the Song of Songs). But neither is the Bible pornographic or medical in its description of sexual matters. Often the biblical authors use simile and metaphor to describe the sexual organs or the sexual act." [Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 777.] The ancient world was much more direct in its depiction of human sexuality than is most of western oriented society, particularly the English speaking segment under the lingering impact of Elizabethian Britain.

Yet "there is no verb in the Bible that means 'to have sexual intercourse,' rather the idea is conveyed by a series of euphemistic metaphors. The first two are used frequently enough that they may be frozen metaphors. The very common 'to know' indicates that to engage in sex entails learning new things about the body and personality of one's partner (cf. Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 1 Sam 1:19). To 'lie down' with someone of course hints at one of the most common positions for the sex act (Gen 19:32; 22:19; 38:26; Lev 18:22; Deut 28:30). More colorful expressions include 'playing' (Gen 26:8), 'plowing' (Judg 14:18) and 'grinding grain' (Job 31:10).

"Crude metonymy for women as sexual objects appear in Judges 5:30 (the NIV translates 'girl,' but the Hebrew is coarse slang [i.e., vaginas]; cf. Eccles 2:8, where women are referred to as 'breasts')."

γὰρ  
18 αἱ τε θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,

term αἱ...θήλειαι, **females**, from θῆλυς, -εια, -υ, rather than the much more common γυνή, since it could have been taken to reference only married women. Plus the combination ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ, **male and female**, were common especially in early Jewish Christian writings (cf. also Matt. 19:4; Mk. 10:6; Gal. 3:28).<sup>125</sup>

The core of the depiction is the verb μετέλλαξαν with the object and the prepositional phrase modifier: **to change something into something else**.<sup>126</sup> Here the contrast between τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν being turned into τὴν παρὰ

φύσιν is pivotal. The adjective φυσικός, -ή, -όν and the noun φύσις denote the heart of the contrast. These Greek terms reflect a strongly Greek mindset of what is determined genderwise by physical birth. But they are not limited just to gender establishment at birth.<sup>127</sup> Additionally, they denote what is considered normative behavior, thinking, emotions etc. for both animals and plants. Trees as a distinct species of the plant world possess a specific φύσις, as well as a man and a woman. In the contemporary Stoic philosophical teaching in Paul's world, success in life for the human was achievable only in discovering every aspect of one's φύσις and then conforming one's life to it totally. Deviation from any aspect of one's φύσις meant disaster and failure.

In the Greek writings of Judaism of this period the idea was applied but reframed around finding success in obeying the Torah as the key for conformity to one's φύσις. This way of Jewish thinking was readily available in Diaspora Judaism. Thus Paul could employ this terminology with confidence that his initial readers at Rome, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, would clearly understand his assertions. He then took an essentially Jewish stance and gave it strong Christian endorsement with appropriate modifications.

Lesbianism therefore represents a disastrous deviation (πάθη ἀτιμίας)

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[Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 778.]

Also it must be remembered that sexual body parts not externally visible are never labeled with any precision, as would be true in modern terminology. For example the Hebrew בֶּטֶן (beten) and the Greek κοιλία (koilia) simply mean body cavity or hollow area. Thus both terms can refer to the stomach, belly, abdomen, the reproductive organs of both men and women, or in the instance of the female to the womb and related parts. Cf. Mounce, William D. Mounce's *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006, S.V, "Womb."

<sup>127</sup>For first-century Mediterraneans, nature (*physis*) referred first of all to what was customary and usual: either for a given ethnos or people, a given species of animals, or even a given person or animal. In this sense, the natural stood opposed to the conventional or legal, that is, the behavior decided upon by a person or group with legal power. The term also referred to what, was usual in the qualities of all that existed, all creation—what is instinctive, species-specific. What happened, customarily and recurrently was natural, traceable to origins, to creation. Planets naturally moved erratically. Honey naturally tasted sweet. The Greek word translated as 'nature' could also refer to the genitals, male or female (see LSJ ad verbum).

"What is natural is 'what is instilled by nature in all creatures. It is not proper to the human species alone but to all animate beings of the sky, earth and sea. From it comes intercourse between male and female, which we call marriage, also the bearing and bringing up of children. Observation shows that other animals also acknowledge its force' (Justinian, *Institutes* 1.1.2).

"Ancient Romans call this *ius naturale* (often poorly translated as 'natural law'). *Ius* stands opposed to *lex*. *Ius* is an innate entitlement or empowerment deriving from creation; it is what determines what is 'natural' and 'according to nature.' *Lex* is a decision by some rational authority, such as the emperor, senate, or king. In antiquity nature did not mean, as it does for us, the autonomous area of concern of the contemporary 'natural' sciences, the 100 percent sameness of all reality known through experimentation and laws of 'nature' in physics, chemistry, and biology and by analogy in sociology and psychology. This is 'nature' as conceived by Descartes (1596–1650) and the 'new science' of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Giambattista Vico (1668–1744). This perspective separated the empirical from the personal or spiritual. Laws of nature were the regularities of the empirical world, observable and testable and formulated, if possible, in the univocal language of mathematics. The category was then applied by analogy (based on a perception of God as legislator) to laws of nature."

[Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 229–230.]

<sup>128</sup>ἐκκαίω, Att. ἐκκάω, fut. -καύσω: aor.1 ἐξέκαυσα Hdt.4.134, but part. ἐκκέαντες E.Rh.97:—burn out, τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τινοῦς Hdt.7.18; τὸ φῶς Κύκλωπος E.Cyc.633, cf. 657 (anap.):—Pass., ἐκκάεσθαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς to have one's eyes burnt out, Pl.Grg.473c.

from God's standards in human creation of male and female. It becomes one expression of ὀργή θεοῦ, *God's wrath*, that is being uncovered into public exposure for those with the spiritual eyes to see (v. 18).

**v. 27, 2nd reason:** *ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες, and likewise also the males abandoning natural intercourse with females were consumed with their passion for one another, males with males committing shameless actions and receiving the penalty which is due for their delusion in their own person.*

This more detailed depiction of the male side of homosexual activity comes down even harder on such actions among humanity. The correlative adverb ὁμοίως, *likewise*, links the two declarations together as being similar in their thrust. The core expression of the main clause οἱ ἄρσενες... ἐξεκαύθησαν uses dramatically figurative expression to depict severely intense passion for sexual encounter with another male. The compound verb ἐκ + καίω, *I burn out*, is only found here inside the NT. This use is at the figurative level of meaning whereas the verb in secular Greek literally could define the lighting of an intense fire, the burning down of some building etc.<sup>128</sup> The gnomic aorist passive voice form ἐξεκαύθησαν highlights being

1.27	ὁμοίως
τ ε	καὶ
	ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας
19	οἱ ἄρσενες... ἐξεκαύθησαν
	ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν
	εἰς ἀλλήλους,
	ἄρσενες (ἐξεκαύθησαν)
	ἐν ἄρσεσιν
	τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι
	καὶ
	τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν... ἀπολαμβάνοντες.
	ἣν ἔδει
	τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν
	ἐν ἑαυτοῖς

completely consumed by something. Interestingly, the Louw-Nida lexicon lists this use as an idiom ἐκκαίωμα ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει with the sense of “**having a strong, intense desire for something.**”<sup>129</sup>

This core expression of οἱ ἄρσενες... ἐξεκαύθησαν, **the males...burn intensely**, is extensively modified in order to fill out the completed idea. What is burning inside them is ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν, **with their passion**. Again this *hapax legomena* usage (1 time in the NT) of ὄρεξις denotes intense passion, often of a sexual nature. Rarely does ὄρεξις denote in secular Greek intense striving for something like nourishment etc. The verb, however, ὀρέγομαι is thusly used in 1 Tim. 3:3 for aspiring to be a bishop and in Heb. 11:16 for striving for a ‘better country, that is, a heavenly one.’ But in 1 Tim. 6:10 the same verb denotes a ruinous striving after riches by many in Paul’s world.

**II. light up, kindle**, τὰ πυρά Hdt.4.134, cf. E.Rh. 1.c.; ἐκκέας τῶν ξύλων ἅττ’ ἂν ἦ δανότατα Ar.Pax1133 (lyr.): metaph., ἐ. πόλεμον, ἐλπίδα, Plb.3.3.3, 5.108.5; τοὺς θυμούς D.H.7.35; τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὀργὴν Plu.Fab.7; provoke to anger, ἔκ με κάεις Herod.4.49; inflame with curiosity, excite, τινά Luc.Alex.30; ἴση φιλοτιμία πρὸς τε τὸν δῆμον ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὸν δῆμον πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς ἐκκαύσαντες Plu.Agis2:—Pass., to be kindled, burn up, τὸ πῦρ ἐκκάεται Eur.340; ἐ. τὸ κακόν Pl.R.556a; ὀργὴν ἐκκαῆναι LXX 2Ki.24.1; ἄ δῆμος ἐξεκάετο Plu.TG13, cf. Luc.Cal.3, etc.; ἐ. εἰς ἔρωτα Alciph.3.67, cf. Charito.1.1; ὑπὸ μέθης Parth.24.2.

2. stimulate τὴν βλάστησιν Thphr.CP2.1.3.

**III. scorch**, ἐκκαίων ἄ ἥλιος Arist.Pr.867a20; of thirst, parch, Luc.Dips.4.

[Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 508.]

<sup>129</sup>**25.16 ἐκκαίωμα ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει**: (an idiom, literally ‘to burn with intense desire’) to have a strong, intense desire for something—‘to be inflamed with passion, to have a strong lust for, to be inflamed with lust.’ ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους ‘(men) were inflamed with lust for one another’ Ro 1:27. In some languages the equivalent idiom is ‘to boil with desire,’ ‘to feel hot in the genitals,’ or ‘to prefer to die rather than to do’.” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:290.]

This is one of several expressions in the NT denoting strong desire. These are listed as topic 25.12-25.32 in the L-N lexicon.

<sup>130</sup>The sequential relationship between an adverbial participle and the finite verb it is attached to as a modifier is determined by the tense of the participle mainly. Aorist tense forms inherently denote completed action, and thus the aorist participle suggests completed action before the occurrence of the finite verb action. With a main clause verb in the aorist tense also, the principle still holds true despite both actions being in past or completed time. Clearly this is the case with a temporal adverbial role for the participle. But this core role can shade off into causality, manner etc. English translations have great difficulty preserving the sense of sequence especially in these derivative roles for the Greek participle.

What are the males being consumed by in seeking? εἰς ἀλλήλους, **for one another**, is the answer. The reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλων denotes interaction between individuals. This points toward homosexual interactions, but the context here makes it unquestionable that this is what Paul means. First, the adverbial participle phrase, ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας, modifying the main clause verb ἐξεκαύθησαν, denotes prior action to that of the verb with the aorist participle ἀφέντες: **after having left off the natural relationship with the female.**<sup>130</sup> Clearly τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν specifies euphemistically sexual intercourse. Once the males stopped having sex with females, they were consumed with passion for one another -- this is the clear meaning of Paul’s statement. The euphemism χρῆσις, used in this discussion (cf. vv. 26, 27), clearly refers to sexual intercourse via the context of the usage. Taken from the verb χρῶμαι, **I make use of**, the noun χρῆσις can specify simply ‘use’ of any kind. With

the adjective attached in τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν (both times) the idea becomes clearly **the established use** by nature or natural existence. Even more clear becomes the larger expression τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας, **the natural use with the female**. When this is set over against the elliptical τὴν παρά φύσιν (= τὴν χρῆσιν παρά φύσιν) to denote what is natural over against what isn’t natural, then the point of the reference becomes unquestionable.

Sexual actions between the male and the female are the natural, normal, established use. And for Jews, this norm is a divinely established standard. But sexual actions between members of the same sex go beyond the natural and thus come under condemnation as a violation of God’s Torah. Just taken by itself the condemnation aspect could be the society

which determines what is called τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν. But not only the Jewish context out of which these ideas flow, but the distinctly Christian context being established by Paul in vv. 18-32, means that God alone is the one who determines τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν. And when humanity rebels against His norms, they stand in rebellion against Him and thus under His wrath. The thunderous indictment παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας then falls upon them.

But Paul is not yet finished amplifying the point of τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, **the beyond natural use**. The core clause expression οἱ ἄρσενες... ἐξεκαύθησαν is defined in much greater detail by the elliptical expression ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν, **males with males**, implying the verb ἐξεκαύθησαν as illustrated in the above diagram. This ellipsis is then expanded further by two participle phrases in tandem with each other:

τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
καὶ  
τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν...ἀπολαμβάνοντες

<sup>131</sup>"ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι, 'males with males committing what is shameless.' ἀσχημοσύνη, 'shameless deed,' 'indecent act' (NIV). Like the cognate adjective it can be used with reference to the exposure of the sexual organs (as regularly in the LXX, e.g., Exod 28:42; Nah 3:5; Ezek 16:8; and particularly Lev 18 and 20, where more than two-thirds of the LXX references occur; in the NT only 1 Cor 12:23 and Rev 16:15; see also BGD). The whole phrase (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι, 'committing the shameless act') indicates clearly that not merely homosexual tendency or desire is in view, but the genital act itself. Scroggs, *Homosexuality*, 115, suggests that Paul has in mind here pederasty in particular, but Paul's indictment seems to include all kinds of homosexual practice, female as well as male, and was not directed against one kind of homosexual practice in distinction from another." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>132</sup>It represents the worst kind of eisegesis of the text imaginable. And it follows the exact same fool headed reasoning of the KJV Only group of people claiming infallibility for the KJV translation. One never begins with conclusions from his own contemporary culture and then turn to scripture to prop them up by twisting the meaning of sacred text to fit the pre-conceived ideas. Nothing legitimate about such exists.

<sup>133</sup>"In the Greco-Roman world homosexuality was quite common and even highly regarded, as is evident from Plato's Symposium and Plutarch's Lycinus. It was a feature of social life, indulged in not least by the Gods (e.g., Zeus' attraction to Ganymede) and emperors (e.g., Nero's seduction of free-born boys was soon to become notorious). The homosexual reputations of the women of Lesbos was well established long before Lucian made it the theme of his fifth Dialogue of the Courtesans (second century A.D.).

"But Jewish reaction to it as a perversion, a pagan abomination, is consistent throughout the OT (Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs 23:7), with the sin of Sodom often recalled as a terrible warning (e.g., Gen 19:1–28; Deut 23:18; Isa 1:9–10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6; Ezek 16:43–58). In the period of early Judaism, abhorrence of homosexuality is not just part of the reaction against Greek mores, since we find it also in those most influenced by Greek thought (Wisdom Sol 14:26; Ep. Arist. 152; Philo, Philo 135–37; Spec. Leg. 3.37–42; Sib. Or. 3:184–86, 764; Ps. Phoc. 3, 190–92, 213–14; Josephus, Ap. 2.273–75); note also the sustained polemic against sexual promiscuity and homosexuality in T. 12 Patr. (particularly T. Lev. 14.6; 17.11; T. Naph. 4.1) and in Sib. Or. (e.g., 3.185–87, 594–600, 763); see further Str-B, 3:68–74. In other words, antipathy to homosexuality remains a consistent and distinctive feature of Jewish understanding of what man's createdness involves and requires. That homosexuality is of a piece with idolatry is taken for granted (as several of the same passages show), both understood as a demeaning of the people who indulge in them. The link between man's fall (Gen 3) and sexual perversion (as here) is also typically Jewish, since Gen 6:1–4 also played a considerable part in Jewish attempts to account for the origin of sin (Jub. 4.22; 5.1–10; 7.21; 1 Enoch 6–11; 86; T. Reub. 5; T. Naph. 3.5; CD 2.18–21; etc.). Elsewhere in the NT see 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Pet 2; Jude 7."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65–66.]

<sup>134</sup>The idea that Jesus somehow approved it simply because he didn't address it is ludicrous. The social and sinful actions addressed in the four gospels touch on issues unique to Palestinian Judaism. With capital punishment strictly enforced for homosexual activity in the traditional Judaism dominating the middle east, the practice was virtually unknown not just among Jews but among all the Semitic ethnic groups of the eastern Mediterranean which had similar if not more stern prohibitions against it.

The similarities of Paul's condemnation with those in the Wisdom of Solomon, written around 50 BCE and targeting Hellenistic Judaism from within traditional Judaism, provide helpful insight into this perspective. Chapters 11-15 especially give special emphasis upon the wrath of God against non-covenant Israel: "For you tested them [covenant Israel] as a

indecent behavior committing  
and  
the penalty...receiving back

The relative clause ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, **which is divinely mandated for their deceit with one another**, is also attached to ἀντιμισθίαν as an adjective modifier. The position of ἐν ἑαυτοῖς makes it modifying both ἀπολαμβάνοντες and ἔδει, which is not possible to make clear in translation.

Male homosexual activity of all varieties is clearly defined by ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν, **males with males**.<sup>131</sup> The idea that some limited type of homosexual activity is specified here to the exclusion of other types is not only clearly false but silly.<sup>132</sup> Paul's Christian stance runs counter to the Greco-Roman culture and stands consistent with the virtually unanimous Jewish condemnation of the practice in all its forms.<sup>133</sup> Paul's stance is consistent with other NT writers as well. This text, vv. 26-27, is the clearest detailed condemnation of homosexuality in the NT.<sup>134</sup>

The parallel participles set up contrastive points for this unit expression.

The placing of their direct objects in front of the participles sets up further contrast.

τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
καὶ

τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν...ἀπολαμβάνοντες

The first participle κατεργαζόμενοι, from κατεργάζομαι, denotes humans producing action, while the second participle ἀπολαμβάνοντες, from ἀπολαμβάνω, denotes humans receiving action from outside themselves. What they produce are τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην, *shameless acts*, of the most perverse nature.<sup>135</sup> What they get back as a consequence is τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, *the penalty*.<sup>136</sup> The precise meaning of this penalty is then defined by the modifying relative clause ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, *which is divinely mandated for their deception among themselves*.

The first participle phrase τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι is much blunter than English translations suggest.<sup>137</sup> It asserts sexual activity with genitals. The noun ἀσχημοσύνη often is used for αἰσχύνη in reference to the shame of nakedness, e.g., Rev. 16:15.<sup>138</sup> The primary emphasis is not on feeling shame but in being publicly shamed or disgraced. The deviate homosexual activity seldom brought feelings of shame to the individuals in-

involved. But within the Jewish and Christian framework such activities were of such public shame as to call for formal action both by God and by the community.

Since certain execution was the normal reaction of the Jewish community, Jewish individuals seldom ever engaged in such actions knowing that discovery would mean their death. The uniform perspective of the Christian writers on homosexual practice is that it was an 'outsider' activity that did not exist inside the communities of believers. The likelihood is that, should such practice surface inside any Christian community, especially with converted Jews as a part of it, the demand would have been to follow the Jewish tradition of either executing the individuals or a minimum of forcing them out of the community until proof of repentance was established. This would be the logical conclusion of how closely the Christian perspective found in the NT follows the surrounding Jewish perspective on the topic. The possibility of the Christian community adopting acceptance of any form of homosexual practice is zero.

The second participle phrase καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες, *and the penalty which is divinely mandated for their deception among themselves is coming back strongly*. Here Paul sees

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parent does in warning, but you examined the ungodly as a stern king does in condemnation" (11:10). Both temporal and eschatological divine judgments are treated. Traditional Jewish linkage of idolatry and sexual perversion of all kinds are linked (cf. 14:22-27).

<sup>135</sup>ἀσχημοσύνη, ης, ἡ (ἀσχήμων)

**1) behavior that elicits disgrace, shameless deed** (Anacharsis [600 B.C.] in Diog. L. 1, 103 in pl.; Pla.; PLond 1915, 23; Epict. 2, 5, 23; Vett. Val. 61, 31; Sir 26:8; 30:13; TestLevi 10:3; Philo, Leg. All. 2, 66; 3, 158; Jos., Ant. 16, 223; SibOr 5, 389) **Ro 1:27** in a vice list.

**2) appearance that deviates from a standard, unbecoming appearance, abnormality**, of Judas's genitals Papias (3:2); embarrassing condition, of Mary's pregnant condition GJs 17:3.

**3) a state of disgrace, disgracefulness**, associated w. nakedness **Rv 3:18** v.l. (s. αἰσχύνη 2).

**4) someth. considered too private for public exposure, nakedness** euphem.= genitals (Ex 20:26; Dt 23:14; Lev 18:6ff Hb. תְּלִיפִי בְּלֵפֶינִי τὴν ἄ. **Rv 16:15**.—DELG s.v. ἔχω. M-M. [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 147.]

<sup>136</sup>ἀντιμισθία, ας, ἡ (so far found only in Christian writers; Theoph., Ad Autol. 2, 9; Clem. Al.) expresses the reciprocal (ἀντί) nature of a transaction as **requital based upon what one deserves, recompense, exchange**, either in the positive sense of reward or the negative sense penalty, depending on the context. τὴν αὐτὴν ἄ. πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς widen your hearts (cp. **2 Cor 6:11**) in the same way in exchange **2 Cor 6:13** (on the acc. s. B-D-F §154; Rob. 486f).—ἀπολαμβάνειν τὴν ἄ. receive the penalty **Ro 1:27** (FDanker, in Gingrich Festschr. 95). ἄ. δίδοναι τίτι make a return 2 Cl 1:3; 9:7. ἀντιμισθίας ἀποδίδοναι τίτι 11:6; 15:2. μισθὸν ἀντιμισθίας δίδοναι give a recompense in return 1:5.—DELG s.v. μισθός. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 90.]

<sup>137</sup>"The whole phrase (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι, 'committing the shameless act') indicates clearly that not merely homosexual tendency or desire is in view, but the genital act itself. Scroggs, *Homosexuality*, 115, suggests that Paul has in mind here pederasty in particular, but Paul's indictment seems to include all kinds of homosexual practice, female as well as male, and was not directed against one kind of homosexual practice in distinction from another." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>138</sup>It is part of a large number of Greek words referencing shame and shamelessness in some manner or another. For a listing see Louw-Nida lexicon topics 25:189-25.202 under Shame, Disgrace, Humiliation. Frequently the shame comes out of deviant sexual activity of some sort.

the homosexual actions as coming back upon the participants as a divinely mandated penalty. The self-destructiveness of such passions is falling upon such individuals in the surrounding society of humanity at large. God then is taking care of this evil in society. His penalty now is simply to walk away from these individuals in turning them over to their own destructive passions, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας (v. 26a). The other NT passages dealing with homosexual actions target eschatological condemnation as the main penalty imposed by God.

The characterization of these homosexual actions as τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν, for their deception (v. 27c) provides another insight from Paul. The noun

πλάνη is connected to a large word group, all with the sense of wandering around.<sup>139</sup> Typically this idea of wandering was in the context of being lost and wandering away from the correct path.<sup>140</sup> At the figuratively level the concept shifts over to being off the moral path or the intellectual path that is prescribed. This wandering astray can be deliberate or the result of ignorance of the truth.<sup>141</sup>

The point of the relative clause use with ἦν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς is divinely held accountability for such deviant sexual behavior. The use of the impersonal verb δεῖ in the imperfect ἔδει form denotes a necessary event taking place due to divine requirement.<sup>142</sup> Thus ὁργὴ θεοῦ, **God's**

<sup>139</sup> πλανᾶω, † πλανᾶομαι, † ἀποπλανᾶω, † ἀποπλανᾶομαι, † πλάνη, † πλάνος, † πλανήτης, † πλάνης\* → ἀπατάω I, 384 f. → γινώσκω, I, 689–719. → ὁδός, V, 42–96.

[Herbert Braun, “Πλανᾶω, Πλανᾶομαι, Ἀποπλανᾶω, Ἀποπλανᾶομαι, Πλάνη, Πλάνος, Πλανήτης, Πλάνης,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:228.]

<sup>140</sup> πλανᾶω means 'to lead astray,' πλανᾶομαι 'to go astray,' πλάνη and πλάνος 'going astray,' πλανήτης and πλάνης 'one who leads astray,' all at first in a topographical sense, which persists into the Hell. period. a. πλανᾶω: Argos causes Io to wander, Aesch. Prom., 573. b. πλανᾶομαι, ἀποπλανᾶομαι: Men wander about, Thuc., V, 4, 3; Plat. Ep., XI, 358e; Eur. Hel., 598; Lys., XII, 97; Plut. Lucull., 34 (I, 515b); Epict. Diss., II, 12, 3; Luc. Pergr. Mort., 16; Luc. Verae Historiae, II, 27; BGU, II, 372 II 20; cf. also members of the body, Emped. Fr., 57 (Diels7, I, 333, 11 and 14); 5 Democr. Fr., 152 (Diels7, II, 125, 34), physical powers, Plat. Tim., 86e; 88e; 91c, the body, Plat. Tim., 43b, body-bound souls after death, Plat. Phaed., 81d; 108c, animals (πλανᾶομαι of horses which wander off the race-course, Hom. Il., 23, 321, the earliest instance of the group, ἀποπλανᾶομαι of wild bees and wasps which have neither leader nor goal, Aristot. Hist. An., V, 23, p. 554b, 23), rumours, Soph. Oed. Col., 304, trouble, Aesch. Prom., 275, dreams and apparitions, Hdt., VII, 16, the αἰτία at the origin of the world, Plat. Tim., 48a. Sometimes places are noted, sometimes the use is abs. The use of πλανᾶσθαι for wandering stars is debated in Plat. Leg., VII, 821c; 822a on account of the implied lack of plan or rule, but the word is common in Aristot. (Meteor., I, 8, p. 346a, 2). c. πλάνη, “going astray,” threatens the embryo, Democr. Fr., 148 (Diels7, II, 171, 25). The journeys of men represent a wandering (cf. Hdt., II, 103), e.g., of Paris-Alexander (Hdt., II, 116), of Plato (Plat. Ep., VII, 350d), also Demeter (Orpheus Fr., 15 [Diels7, I, 13, 15]). d. The oldest instance of πλάνης is in Hipponax Fr., 65 (Diehl3, III, 98). The context is uncertain, but the word is beyond question. The term occurs as a noun (plur.) for the maenads spurred on by Bacchus (Eur. Ba., 148 vl.). As an adj. it is used of a wretched life of wandering (Eur. Heracl., 878) and from Democr. Fr., 86 (Diels7, II, 105, 7)6 it is used of the planets.7 e. πλάνος, too, is used adj. of the planets, Manetho Astrologus, IV, 3.

"Sometimes the special sense of going astray is not so prominent. Thus πλανᾶομαι, ἀποπλανᾶομαι: the adherents of the crypteia, inuring themselves to fatigue, 'wander' day and night through the whole land (Plat. Leg., 633c); blood and breath 'pulse' through all parts of the body (Hippocr. περί τροφῆς, 31). πλάνη: The account tells of the wisdom of Solon and of his journey, Hdt., I, 30; the wandering stars accomplish temporally measured, numerous and wonderfully intricate journeys, Plat. Tim., 39d; 40b. πλανήτης: Merchants are defined as those 'who journey to cities' (πλανῆται ἐπὶ τὰς πόλεις, Plat. Resp., II, 371d; cf. also Ps.-Xenophon. Cyn., V, 17).

"Of special significance is the use of the group for certain figures in class. tragedy who wander about. The Io of Aesch., frightened away by Argos at the behest of Hera, wanders off (πλανᾶομαι, Aesch. Prom., 565); her wanderings (πλάνη and πλάναι, 576, 585, 622, 784) lead her through Greece, Macedonia, and Asia Minor to Egypt. The blinded Oedipus is also a wanderer (πλανήτης, Soph. Oed. Col., 3, 124); he wanders about, guided by Antigone (πλανᾶομαι, 347); his wandering (πλάνος, 1114) only ends in Colonus.<sup>8</sup> The group is not used in this sense in Hom., nor is it found for the wanderings of Demeter in the two Homeric hymns of the same name.<sup>9</sup> Esp. in the figure of Io — this is what makes her, and in some sense Oedipus, typical of the race — two things are clear: the lack of goal affects man inwardly too, for geographical wandering is combined with spiritual aberration; then this wandering is not ultimately without goal, for it seeks a goal in accordance with divine fiat, cf. πλάναι θεήλατοι in Plut. Def. Or., 16 (II, 418e) → 231, 20–232, 31."

[Herbert Braun, “Πλανᾶω, Πλανᾶομαι, Ἀποπλανᾶω, Ἀποπλανᾶομαι, Πλάνη, Πλάνος, Πλανήτης, Πλάνης,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:229–230.]

<sup>141</sup>"In the non-geographical sense the word group denotes vacillation and then absence of goal in the field of knowledge, speech and action. Often this absence is affirmed even though no reasons are given. When reasons are mentioned they are in the main either naive or more sophisticated epistemological reasons; only rarely are they metaphysical or religious. Even in this case the deity can sometimes be regarded as the original author, though hardly as the authority before whom there is responsibility for the deficiency." [Herbert Braun, “Πλανᾶω, Πλανᾶομαι, Ἀποπλανᾶω, Ἀποπλανᾶομαι, Πλάνη, Πλάνος, Πλανήτης, Πλάνης,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:230.]

<sup>142</sup>"That the divinely ordered punishment for sin is to be handed over to the power of that sin, to be left to its consequences, is the theme throughout this section (παρέδωκεν: vv 24, 26, 28), which is given further emphasis here (cf. particularly Wisd Sol 11:16; 12:23, 27; T. Gad 5.10)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary

wrath, is at work via letting those engaged in deviant sexual behavior be destroyed by their own sinfulness. This is the τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, [the penalty](#), imposed upon such individuals, who have gone astray from God's pre-assigned path through life.

ἐν ἑαυτοῖς is correctly translated [in their own persons](#) by the NRSV. The use of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ, -ῆς, -οῦ, rather than the reciprocal ἀλλήλων (cf. v. 27c), underscores the penalty falling upon each individual guilty of such deviant behavior.<sup>143</sup>

The participle ἀπολαμβάνοντες with its direct object τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν denotes a receiving back of the penalty deserved by deviant actions. From ἀπολαμβάνω, the core idea is receiving something from a specified source either stated explicitly or implied implicitly. The larger expression including the adjectival relative clause stresses that the penalty divinely imposed on those with deviant sexual behavior is completely just and deserved. Unlike with the anger of pagan deities, the ὀργὴ θεοῦ imposed upon sinners is completely just and a response to the deviant behavior of sinners rather than arbitrary and capricious. It is consistent with the principle of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, [the righteousness of God](#) (v. 17).

Thus in these first two units (vv. 24, 26; then 28) defined by the παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... core expression the impact of God walking away from those rejecting Him via His self disclosure in creation is first idolatry and next homosexuality.<sup>144</sup> Unquestionably both are cast as expres- (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>143</sup>ἀλλήλων denotes interactive exchange among members of a group, while ἑαυτοῦ denotes individual action among members of a group.

<sup>144</sup>Also one must not overlook the larger picture established by Paul in this discussion of vv. 18-32. The third παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... unit comes in vv. 28-32 with a Ponders's Box of evil actions given in the standard ancient vice form. This unit paints the ultimate picture of evil of virtually every imaginable kind being unleashed upon sinful humanity as a consequence of God walking away from humanity in turning it over to its own self destructive passions. Thus a 'stair-casing' of these three units in vv. 24-32 portray the ever widening impact of God's wrath being expressed upon sinful humanity in this world.

<sup>145</sup>**Lev. 18:1-5.** 18.1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am the LORD your God. 3 *You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not follow their statutes.* 4 My ordinances you shall observe and my statutes you shall keep, following them: I am the LORD your God. 5 You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the LORD.

Moses returns to this introductory premise in vv. 24-30 in the conclusion. This warning levels the threat of being completely thrown out of the community of the Israelites for any violation:

24 Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for by all these practices the nations I am casting out before you have defiled themselves. 25 Thus the land became defiled; and I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and commit none of these abominations, either the citizen or the alien who resides among you 27 (for the inhabitants of the land, who were before you, committed all of these abominations, and the land became defiled); 28 otherwise the land will vomit you out for defiling it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from their people. 30 So keep my charge not to commit any of these abominations that were done before you, and not to defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>146</sup>One of the links of Rom. 1:18-32 back to Lev. 18 and 20 is the LXX use of ἀσχημοσύνη. "ἀσχημοσύνη, 'shameless deed,' 'indecent act' (NIV). Like the cognate adjective it can be used with reference to the exposure of the sexual organs (as regularly in the LXX, e.g., Exod 28:42; Nah 3:5; Ezek 16:8; and particularly Lev 18 and 20, where more than two-thirds of the LXX references occur; in the NT only 1 Cor 12:23 and Rev 16:15; see also BGD). The whole phrase (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην καταπραζόμενοι, 'committing the shameless act') indicates clearly that not merely homosexual tendency or desire is in view, but the genital act itself." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

sions of ὀργὴ θεοῦ upon sinful humanity. The worship of idols and deviate sexual behavior are closely linked by Paul with the latter emerging out of the former as a dominant tendency.

This raises interesting historical and ethical questions about such linkage. Is this a uniquely Christian viewpoint, not found elsewhere in the first century world? Why was homosexual behavior singled out rather than deviant sexual behavior of all kinds? Is there any inner dynamic that would explain the connection between idolatry and homosexuality? These and a host of additional questions emerge from this discussion, especially in vv. 24-32.

The answer to the question of the uniqueness of Paul's Christian view of a connection between idolatry and homosexual activity is essentially no. In the discussion of principles of propriety in human sexual relations found in Leviticus 18, the high moral standards demanded of the Israelites stands in contrast to the opposite practiced by the Canaanites and the Egyptians.<sup>145</sup> In the midst of announcing a series of prohibitions homosexual action is listed as one of the abominations of the Lord; cf. vv. 22-23: [22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. 23 You shall not have sexual relations with any animal and defile yourself with it, nor shall any woman give herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it: it is perversion.](#)<sup>146</sup> It comes immediately after the reference to the idolatry of Molech in v. 21: [You shall not give any of your offspring to sacrifice them to Molech, and](#)

so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. For more details on Molech practices see 20:1-9. No overt linkage is made here in 18:21-23, although the idolatry of both the Egyptians and the Canaanites is clearly linked to a long list of deviate sexual behavior. The patriarchal structure of society for the Israelites is clearly assumed with the legal demands being leveled at the Israelite male overwhelmingly. One should note that the foundational premise for these warnings is God's call to the Israelites to be holy as He is holy: *You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine* (20:26).

This basic OT stance condemning homosexual activity and linking it to the religious paganism of the Egyptians and the Canaanites is continued in the intertestamental Jewish literature having either a traditionalist Hebraistic viewpoint reflecting Judean and Jerusalem views and also Hellenistic Jewish writings reflecting the Diaspora Judaism that Paul grew up in while

in Tarsus. The often referenced discussion found in the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon* (e.g., 13:1-9) produced in the century just prior to the beginning of the Christian era clearly affirms the linkage of not only homosexual activity but all other forms of deviant sexual behavior to idolatry. Further the *Testament of Naphtali* 3:2-4, also produced prior to the second century AD, condemns such behavior as a perverted expression of idolatry.<sup>147</sup>

Quite interestingly religion and human sexual activity were closely linked in the myriad of Greek and Roman religions of Paul's day. The human adoption of both heterosexual and homosexual activity was in large part based upon the belief that the gods also indulged in both kinds of sexual actions. Thus from the Greek view, human engagement in homosexual actions on earth merely reflected the example of the gods.<sup>148</sup> Yet in many Greco-Roman circles in Paul's world, homosexual activity was condemned as 'unnatural' (cf. Paul's τὴν παρὰ φύσιν [χρησίων] in v. 26c).<sup>149</sup> One must always

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<sup>147</sup>3. Be ye not therefore eager to corrupt your doings through excess, or with empty words to deceive your souls; because if ye keep silence in purity of heart, ye shall be able to hold fast the will of God, and to cast away the will of the devil. *Sun and moon and stars change not their order; so also ye shall not change the law of God in the disorderliness of your doings. Nations went astray, and forsook the Lord, and changed their order, and followed stones and stocks, following after spirits of error. But ye shall not be so, my children, recognizing in the firmament, in the earth, and in the sea, and in all created things, the Lord who made them all, that ye become not as Sodom, which changed the order of its nature. In like manner also the Watchers<sup>6</sup> changed the order of their nature, whom also the Lord cursed at the flood, and for their sakes made desolate the earth, that it should be uninhabited and fruitless.*

[Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, the Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages*, trans. R. Sinkler, vol. 8, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 27.]

<sup>148</sup>"In the Greco-Roman world homosexuality was quite common and even highly regarded, as is evident from Plato's Symposium and Plutarch's Lycinus. It was a feature of social life, indulged in not least by the gods (e.g., Zeus' attraction to Ganymede) and emperors (e.g., Nero's seduction of free-born boys was soon to become notorious). The homosexual reputations of the women of Lesbos was well established long before Lucian made it the theme of his fifth *Dialogue of the Courtesans* (second century A.D.)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>149</sup>"What did people in Paul's world mean by natural and unnatural sexual intercourse? There is an interesting passage in Artemidorus's *Oneirocritica* that offers a set of categories typical of early second-century Hellenism, perhaps earlier as well: 'In the section on sexual intercourse (*synousia*), the best method of arrangement will be to consider firstly examples of sexual intercourse that is natural (*kata physin*), legal (*kata nomon*) and customary (*kat'ethos*); secondly examples of sexual intercourse that is illegal (*para nomon*); and thirdly examples of sexual intercourse that is unnatural (*para physin*)' (*Oneirocritica* 1.78, White 1975:58). The groupings are pertinent, since in Romans Paul begins his categories with intercourse against nature, followed by a list of behaviors, including intercourse, against law, in context of the law of Israel. What would such intercourse against nature include? While Paul specifies only two instances, Artemidorus observes that the sexual intercourse that is against nature is any sexual position apart from the frontal position, which is the only one 'taught them (humans) by nature' (*to de sygchrēta monon hypo tēs physeōs didachthentes*). The reason for this is that all species have a sexual position proper, to themselves, and 'humans have the frontal position as their, proper one [*anthropous to men oikeion schēma to proschrēta echein*]; they have devised the others when they gave in to insolence, dissipation and debauchery' (*Oneirocritica* 1.79, White 1975:63).

"Thus a female's sexual intercourse against nature, as Artemidorus notes, includes all other positions, specifically those in which the female role is not passive. This is in line with the Mediterranean gender concern that males are active and forceful, while females are passive and controlled. In this perspective, since males cannot engage in the frontal position with each other, their sexual relations have to be against nature.

"If we follow Artemidorus, intercourse against convention or law (*para nomon*) is essentially incest of various types. Similarly oral sex is considered 'doing the unmentionable' (*arretopoiesthai*). The Hellenistic sensibility was that persons doing oral sex cannot 'share mouths,' that is, kiss or eat together (*Oneirocritica* 1.79, White 1975:63-64). Paul, too, knows an unmentionable sexual relation, that of a male who marries his father's wife (1 Cor 5:1-2).

"People in Paul's world offered various explanations for anomalies such as females behaving like males or males behaving like females. An explanation in Phaedrus's *Fables*

remember that sin in the modern popular definition means violation of established moral standards. For Jesus and the apostles it means deviation from God's standards of behavior.<sup>150</sup> For the Greco-Roman world, unnatural behavior wasn't necessarily sinful behavior, just unnatural behavior against the established norms of Greek and Roman society, or more precisely the asserted ideals of individual philosophers in that world.

What therefore becomes clear is that Paul's Christian view builds to a slight degree off the Greco-Roman linkage of religion and sexual behavior but with a negative thrust to Paul's stance. It essentially is presented to the Christians at Rome as coming within the well established framework of the Hebrew / Jewish teaching in place for centuries prior to Paul.<sup>151</sup>

Why would homosexual activity be singled out as a reflection of the corrupting influence of idolatry? The Jewish tendency is to condemn all deviant sexual activity, which means sexual actions outside formal marriage, as a violation of God's Torah. Homosexual actions are a part of this category of deviant sexual activity. But a likely answer to why Paul singled out homosexuality as the corrupting impact of idolatry is found in his use of the very Greek and non-Jewish terms φύσις, *natural*, and τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, *unnatural*. This language appealed to established Greek and Roman perceptions of sexual propriety and impropriety based on human creatureliness and anatomy. Most of Paul's readers at Rome would have been very familiar with philosophical contention of sexual standards based on the 'natural' constitution of humanity. To that audience especially the highlighting of homosex-

(4.15) accounts for 'tribadic females and effeminate males' by recounting that Prometheus got drunk when making human beings and attached some male genitals to female people and some female genitals to male people by mistake.

"Philo offers the view that apart from boys used in pederasty, the passive partners in male sexual relations are actually androgynous persons who got that way either by birth or continual same-gender sexual relations to the point of castrating themselves (Spec. Laws III.7.37–42). These passive partners demean male honor. For Romans and Israelites of the period, these passive partners demeaned male honor, and it was precisely this denigration of male status that made the passive male partner reprehensible. For Philo the active male partner in same-gender male sexual contact was usually a married male seeking sexual titillation from just such a passive partner — to the Hellenistic and Roman way of thinking just described, a 'transsexual.' The passage from Philo suggests that this was the usual same-gender male sexual contact that Paul knew from his culture as well.

"Paul, in turn, shares a similar view, although he explicitly ascribes same-gender sexual relations to idolatry. While Paul may have shared Hellenistic sensibilities, his ethnos (people) had its own ethos (customs) that supported the us-against-them boundary that controlled Paul and that Paul articulates. It seems this was the common viewpoint of first-century Israelites."

[Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 230–231.]

<sup>150</sup>As an important side note, the Greek word for 'behavior' *κατάστημα* appears only one time in the entire NT. This is in Titus 2:3 where older women at Crete are admonished to be "*reverent in behavior*," meaning the way they conduct themselves. This is then defined as not slandering others and not being slaves to drink.

<sup>151</sup>"Likewise important for understanding Paul's rationale in highlighting homosexuality when explicating the connection between idolatry and immorality is the fact that Paul viewed homosexuality as the most obvious result of humanity's failure to respond appropriately to God's revelation in creation. For though it was often asserted by those who practiced it that homosexuality was 'natural' — even, as argued both then and today, a legitimate feature of divine creation — Paul viewed such a claim as in direct opposition to the moral order established by God in creation, where only in marriage do a man and a woman "become one flesh" (Gen 2:24)." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 218.]

ual actions as 'unnatural' would not have found any in disagreement. This Greek terminology usage, embedding the traditional Jewish condemnation of homosexual activity as produced by idolatry, represents a sensible combining of the two worlds of Paul's Christian readers at Rome. It gives much greater persuasiveness to Paul's point, which is ultimately distinctly Christian, that God simply walks away from a humanity that rejects His self revelatory actions in creation in order to allow rebellious humanity to be consumed by its own destructive passions. At some future point when some of humanity wake up to their sick state of being, His grace will reach out in the offer of redemption. But, as Paul will argue in Romans especially, this will always be but a remnant, never the majority of humanity.

Clearly built into Paul's point is the assumption that sinful humanity has rejected its Creator and in so doing has sought to worship the creation rather than the creator. Such error has opened the door for deviant sexual behavior of which homosexual conduct is a clear example. Built into it is a divinely mandated penalty of God's wrath as the destructive dynamic behind their ruinous sinful behavior. But this is not all. The rejection of God for idolatry has opened a Ponders's Box of evil which the apostle moves on to discuss in vv. 28-31.

Before moving on to the next unit, a brief overview of the New Testament texts dealing with homosexual behavior needs to be presented.

#### ***Paul's additional statements:***

**1 Cor. 6:9-10.** 9"Ἡ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν;

μη πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἄρσενοκοῖται 10 οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοιδόροι, οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν.

9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, **sodomites**, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers — none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

In this vice listing of evils the apostle reminds the Corinthians of those actions which prohibit one from being a part of God's kingdom, especially eschatologically in eternity.<sup>152</sup> To be sure, the apostle makes use of the literary device of Vice List / Catalogue that existed extensively among the Greek and Latin moral philosophers. Even some of vices in Paul's list here commonly show up in most of those philosophical lists. But the early

1900s view that Paul borrowed these items from the Greek philosophers has been thoroughly proven false. The use of common literary devices along with limited common vocabulary does not in any way imply adoption of the philosophical framework or perspective of either side of the parallel usage. Paul's entire view of ethical accountability to God differs sharply from the Stoic view of ethics which also uses the literary device and some of the same vice items in the catalogues.<sup>153</sup> Most often Paul is compared to his Stoic contemporary Seneca who wrote extensively on morality in the first century, and made heavy use of vice and virtue catalogues in his writings.<sup>154</sup> The profound differences of meaning just with common words in the catalogues between the two writers is remarkable, not to mention the words unique to each writer. Thus it represents a huge interpretive mistake to assume that either depended on the other for their ideas.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>"Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor perverts, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the avaricious, not drunkards, not slanderers, not the greedy will inherit the kingdom of God: Using polysyndeton for rhetorical effect Paul links the first seven vices together with *oute*, 'neither,' but reverts to a simple negative (*ou*) to add the final three vices on the list (asyndeton). In the ten-item catalogue of vices Paul reiterates and expands the idea tersely stated in v. 9a, namely that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom. The ten-item list illustrates what Paul understands by 'unjust' (*adikoi*). The resumptive 'inherit the kingdom of God' forms an *inclusio* with the finale of v. 9a and indicates that an eschatological nuance is not to be excluded from the injunction not to go astray." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 236.]

<sup>153</sup>C. H. Dodd argued convincingly in his *Gospel and Law* (1951) that the basis of Paul's ethics is to be 'sharply distinguished from that of contemporary Greek moralists, who from the time of Aristotle have set out to provide a self-contained and self-justifying system of ethics.'<sup>102</sup> For while he conceded that a considerable overlap of specific content exists, in Paul and the NT, he also insisted that ethics flows from a response to the gospel which forms part of the identity of Christian believers (including their inheritance of the OT).<sup>103</sup> Evidence of similar patterns of style and parenetic catalogues within the NT (1 Thess 4:1–9; 5:14–18, with 1 Pet 1:13–22; 2:11; Heb 13:1–3) owe more to a common catechetical *Sitz im Leben* than to the Hellenistic settings proposed by Vögtle, as the detailed work of P. Carrington and E. G. Selwyn suggests.<sup>104</sup>

"This precisely fits the *Sitz im Leben* of 1 Cor 6:9–11 (and 5:9–11), which Paul introduces by **do you not know that ...?** It also coheres with Moule's stress on motivation as the key to the ethical significance of such material and 'obligation.'<sup>105</sup> Dodd lists six distinctive themes in such Pauline settings: (1) sitting loose to earthly possessions in the light of eschatology (not in Stoic self-sufficiency; cf. 1 Cor 7:29–34; Rom 13:11, 12); (2) the newness of the new life (1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:17), often in the context of baptism (or conversion-initiation, see 1 Cor 6:11); (3) corporate solidarity, or 'belonging' to one another as a new corporate identity (1 Cor 12:12–27; cf. 1 Cor 6:1–8); (4) the imitation of Christ, or transformation into Christ's image (1 Cor 11:1; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5–11); (5) the motivation of ἀγάπη instantiated concretely (1 Cor 8:1–3; 13:1–13; Rom 13:8–10); and (6) tacit or explicit allusions or appeals to the words of Jesus (Rom 12:16; 13:7; 1 Cor 7:1–7; 8–11, 12–16; 9:14).<sup>106</sup> If the background is catechetical, this transforms the significance of such a 'list' into guidelines explicit for teaching on the nature of the Christian life."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 442.]

<sup>154</sup>J. N. Sevenster reveals that countless times 'Paul and Seneca ... use similar words in entirely different meanings.'<sup>107</sup> Paul's concern is precisely not harmony with the universe, but harmony with the likeness of God in Christ (1 Cor 2:13–16).<sup>108</sup> Seneca repeatedly discusses *virtus*; Paul alludes only once to ἀρετή (Phil 4:8 [apart from the Pastorals]).<sup>109</sup> 'Virtue is essentially an anthropocentric notion.'<sup>110</sup> Typical is Seneca's praise of bravery (*fortitudo*), whereas ἀνδρεία 'does not occur in Paul or in the whole of the NT.'<sup>111</sup> In their use of ethical imagery they remain apart.<sup>112</sup> Even wisdom has different meanings in each of the two writers: for Seneca, the wise man remains 'inwardly inviolable'; 'the wise man reigns over the whole world' (cf. 1 Cor 4:8); Paul's concept of wisdom derives from God's ways in Christ (1 Cor 1:24; 1:30; Col 2:3), which are received as a gift rather than achieved as a goal.<sup>113</sup> [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 443.]

<sup>155</sup>Because Paul's vice lists are not uniform in their content, but vary from letter to letter, it is clear that each list is 'customized' to fit the situation of each group being addressed by each letter. The lists address 'outsider' values incompatible with Christian values. These values are present in the surrounding culture of each Christian community being addressed. As with the Corinthians, some of the Christian converts may have come out of practicing some of these values prior to conversion, as 1 Cor. 5:11 asserts: καὶ ταῦτα τινας ἦτε· ἀλλ' ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλ' ἡγιασθητε, ἀλλ' ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. **And this is what some of you used to be. But you were**

Here, as in Rom. 1:24-32, the linkage of idolatry and deviant sexual behavior is clear with the first five of the ten items of the vice list: οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλόατραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται. [Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites](#). This mixture of religion and deviant sexual behavior draws heavily upon the Hebrew Bible and Jewish traditions for its foundational ideas. As we have already shown, Paul's ideas are formulated within the framework of his Jewish religious heritage rather than from any dependence upon contemporary Greco-Roman thinking. Some distinctive Greek terms are used clearly, but the definition of them depends upon the Jewish foundation instead.<sup>156</sup>

Considerable discussion on the precise meaning of οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται can be found in commentaries of the last century.<sup>157</sup> But careful analysis of their meanings in Paul's world and with Paul's obvious attribution of Christian meaning to them moves clearly to the conclusion that μαλακός, -ή, -όν with its literal meaning of soft or effeminate specified the passive partner in male homosexual activity, while ἀρσενοκοίτης designates the more aggressive male in male homosexual actions, and probably the generic plural includes the female side of lesbian activity as well.<sup>158</sup> The two

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[washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God](#). A few of these pagan values still haunt some of the Corinthians, namely heterosexual activity outside marriage, as 6:12-20 indicates. The warning of the vice list, however, is that continued practicing of these pagan practices excludes one from being a child of God who will spend eternity in Heaven with God and His people.

<sup>156</sup>"The inclusion of 'homosexuals' on the list of vices in 6:10 is apparently the first recorded use of the term *arsenokoitai* (cf. 1 Tim 1:10; Sib. Or. 2.73). The neologism may derive from the prohibitions cited in Lev 18:22 and 20:13. It came to denote male homosexual activity, which was, in the eyes of Jewish authors such as Philo, Josephus, and the Pseudo-Phocylides, a sign of Gentile moral depravity. Paul apparently shared the Jewish prejudice on the sexual mores of Gentiles (see Rom 1:24–27; 1 Thess 4:5). 'Perverts' (malakoi) is a term that was pejoratively used in Hellenistic Greek to describe passive partners, often young boys, in homosexual activity." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 236.]

<sup>157</sup>"We can deal here only with the principal exegetical argument of Boswell and Scroggs, which is that the noun ἀρσενοκοίτης in the first Christian century — which term appears explicitly in the Pauline corpus only in 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10 but is certainly also to be understood with respect to the phrase ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν ('male with male') in Rom 1:27 — meant only 'male prostitution' or 'pederastic sexual activity' and does not include the whole range of homosexual practices. One important point in rebuttal of such a claim is the fact that the noun ἄρσεν ('male') and the verb κοιμάσθαι ('to have intercourse') appear in the LXX of both Lev. 18:22 and 20:13, which are the biblical passages that explicitly forbid a man lying with another man 'as with a woman.' And Paul, knowing not only the Hebrew text of his Jewish (OT) Scriptures but also the Greek translation (LXX), could hardly have viewed these prohibitions of Leviticus as having reference only to 'male prostitution' and/or 'pederasty' and not to the whole range of homosexual practices — explicitly all forms of male homoeroticism (i.e., 'gay' activities), but also inferentially all forms of female homoeroticism (i.e., "lesbian" activities)." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 218–219.]

<sup>158</sup>The Greco-Roman culture tended to condemn harshly the μαλακός as completely 'unnatural' and a forsaking of the established norms of being an aggressive male. The translation of 'male prostitute' is woefully inadequate, even misleading. Better is the use of 'pervert' but even this is not clearly on target with what Paul is talking about.

I'm not sure that translating ἀρσενοκοῖται as 'sodomites' is much better given the rare use of this English word in contemporary speech. Even though the etymology of 'sodomite' comes out of the OT city of Sodom famous for its homosexual practices, most modern people do not know the Bible well enough to understand this. The use of ἀρσενοκοῖται in Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9, and 1 Tim. 1:10 reflects the understanding of male homosexual practice inclusively and the plural spelling most likely includes the female side of lesbian practice as well.

<sup>159</sup>οὔτε πόρνοι . . . οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται.

terms are used in tandem with one another to encompass the full range of homosexual activity, viewed from each partner's perspective.

Paul's point is to drive home the point that participation in such practices unquestionably exclude one from being a part of God's kingdom, that is, being a child of God in redemption. The inclusio use of ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν (v. 9b) / οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν (v. 10b) makes this point very clear. Deviant sexual behavior of all kinds, meaning sex outside of marriage, are included in the list that excludes one from the Kingdom of God.<sup>159</sup>

**1 Tim. 1:8-11.** 8 Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι καλὸς ὁ νόμος, ἐάν τις αὐτῷ νομίμως χρῆται, 9 εἰδὼς τοῦτο, ὅτι δικαίω νόμος οὐ κέῖται, ἀνόμοις δὲ καὶ ἀνυποτάκτοις, ἀσεβέσιν καὶ ἀμαρτωλοῖς, ἀνοσίοις καὶ βεβήλοις, πατρολώαις καὶ μητρολώαις, ἀνδροφόνοις 10 πόρνοις ἀρσενοκοίταις ἀνδραποδισταῖς ψεύσταις ἐπιόρκοις, καὶ εἴ τι ἕτερον τῆ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀντίκειται 11 κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ, ὃ ἐπιστεύθην ἐγώ.

[8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. 9 This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those](#)

who kill their father or mother, for murderers, 10 fornicators, *sodomites*, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching 11 that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

Here the emphasis in this vice list centers on a rationale for the necessity of divine law. Again deviant sexual behavior -- πόρνοις ἀρσενοκοίταις -- is contained in this listing of 15 items of either specific sins or categories of sinning. πόρνοις designates heterosexual activity outside marriage, while ἀρσενοκοίταις specifies homosexual activity. Again, the plural use here transcends just the male practice to include also female practice of same-sex actions, here as well as in the other three instances of the term inside the NT.

The context of vv. 8-11 is established in vv. 3-7 with a condemnation of false teachers aspiring to be νομοδιδάσκαλοι (v. 7).<sup>160</sup> False teachers inside the Ephesian community of believers have assumed the law specifies minimum requirements for salvation along the lines of traditional Jewish teaching. Paul intensely denies this error and asserts the proper role of divine law, which is to lay out the parameters of sinful conduct that brings eternal damnation. Then in vv. 8-11, a sample listing of this kind of conduct is listed in the standard vice listing commonly found in Paul's world. To be sure the apostle creatively groups together the items for ease of memorization.<sup>161</sup> This listing randomly specifies specific sinful actions that prohibit one from being a part of God's people and that often typify the behavior of those outside the Kingdom of God. As is true with other vice lists, this one is customized to fit the situation at Ephesus. The intent behind the listing is the targeting of antinomians as a false teaching by such teachers as Hymenaeus and Alexander (cf. vv. 12-20). People practicing such behavior

are not to be allowed inside the community of believers.

#### **Peter's statement:**

**2 Peter 2:6-10a.** 6 καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας καταστροφῆ κατέκρινεν ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀσεβεῖν τεθεικῶς 7 καὶ δίκαιον Λῶτ καταπονούμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς ἐρρύσατο· 8 βλέμματι γὰρ καὶ ἀκοῇ ὁ δίκαιος ἐγκατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἀνόμοις ἔργοις ἐβασάνιζεν· 9 οἶδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν, 10 μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μισμοῦ πορευομένους καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας.

6 and if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by their lawless deeds that he saw and heard), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment 10 — especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.

**2 Peter 2:18.** ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις τοὺς ὄντως ἀποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφομένους,

For they speak bombastic nonsense, and with licentious desires of the flesh they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error.

#### **Jude's statement:**

**Jude 7.** ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον

<sup>160</sup>Vv 8–11 constitute the second of four subsections in vv 3–20. On the surface they may appear to be a digression. Paul used the sarcastic title 'teachers of the law' in v 7, and it is possible that vv 8–11 are a correction of any possible misconception that he has a low view of the law. But vv 8–11 are more than that. Vv 3–20 set the stage for the rest of the epistle. The heresy as described in vv 3–7 has two flaws: (1) a misuse of the law (1 Tim 1:8–11) and (2) a corresponding misunderstanding of the role of God's grace and mercy in salvation (1 Tim 1:12–17). The paragraph forms an integral part of the response of the epistle to the Ephesian situation, acting as a corrective to the opponents (cf. Spicq, 1:330, 332–33; Form/Structure/Setting on 1 Tim 1:3–7). [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 30.]

<sup>161</sup>Vv 8–11 do not provide a complete presentation of Paul's view of the law. Even the discussions in Romans and Galatians are limited. The PE present only Paul's view of the law that is relevant to the historical situation. The literature on Paul and the law has mushroomed since Sanders's work, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). For a summary see T. Schreiner, *Paul and the Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), and his bibliography.

"The list of fourteen vices in vv 9–10 describes the kinds of people for whom the law was laid down and contrasts them with the one kind of person—the 'just'—for whom the law was not intended. The list follows distinctive, yet inconsistent, literary patterns. Paul pairs twelve terms into eight groups. He also employs alliteration with an initial alpha, most of the words being formed with an alpha privative much like the English un-. The salient feature of the vice list is its resemblance to the Decalogue, upon which it is based. The first three couplets are offenses against God, corresponding to the first four commandments in the Decalogue. The remaining vices, offenses against people, correspond to the next five commandments."

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 30.]

τούτοις έκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐτέρας, πρόκειται δεῖγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι.

Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

These very similar declarations by both Peter and Jude reflect even more closely the traditional Jewish condemnation of homosexual activity largely based upon the tradition of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18:16-19:29. The judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah stands as the condemnation of God upon homosexual behavior in the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 11:23-24 and Luke 17:28-32. This reflects a virtual universal stance in the Jewish intertestamental literature. The phrase ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς (v. 7) contains clear allusion of unnatural sexual behavior including homosexual conduct. Also the phrase ἀνόμοις ἔργοις (v. 8b) carries similar allusions. To Paul's Jewish Christian readers in Rome familiar with the prevailing Jewish interpretation of Sodom and Gomorrah, these allusions clearly included homosexual activity in the deviant sexual behavior.

The coining of the term Sodomite beginning in English with the 14th century and popularized by the KJV as a reference to homosexual conduct is interesting.<sup>162</sup> Although based on the Hebrew שַׁדִּי meaning sacred prostitute, the idea of unnatural sexual intercourse between same sex partners came to be associated with Sodom in the Jewish literature especially with homosexual practice in connection to idolatry.<sup>163</sup> This carried over to Christian viewpoint. The biblical account in Genesis 19 of the city's destruction came to be seen as a preview of the eternal damnation awaiting all outside the people of God, including those engaged in homosexual behavior. This is unquestionable in Jesus and the apostles of the first century.

<sup>162</sup>Historically, the English term sodomy (derived from the story of SODOM and GOMORRAH in Gen. 18–19) has referred to any kind of nonprocreative sexual act, although it is usually applied specifically to homosexuality. The KJV uses the term sodomite to translate Hebrew *qādēš* H7728 ('set apart [for the use of the deity]'; Deut. 23:17; 1 Ki. 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Ki. 23:7), which evidently refers to a male shrine PROSTITUTE. In the NT the NRSV uses the same word to translate Greek *arsenokoitēs* G780 (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10), probably meaning 'pederast,' a man who assumes the dominant role in homosexual activity." [Moisés Silva and Merrill Chapin Tenney, *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, Q-Z* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 2009), 552.]

<sup>163</sup>The wickedness of the Sodomites appears to have been so heinous and debasing as to have become proverbial (Gn 13:13; 18:20, La 4:6, Is 3:9, cf. 2 P 2:6, Jude 7). The term 'Sodomite' (שַׁדִּי) is used in Scripture to describe offences against the laws of nature which were frequently connected with idolatrous practices (cf. Dt 23:17, 1 K 14:24; 15:12, 2 K 23:7; see art. SODOMITE). The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah is referred to by our Lord as a warning to those who reject the offer of the gospel (Mt 10:15; cf. Jude 7, 2 P 2:6). A spiritual or typical meaning is applied to the word in Revelation (11:8)." [Edward Hull, "SODOM," ed. James Hastings et al., *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology* (New York; Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's Sons; T. & T. Clark, 1911–1912), 559.]

<sup>164</sup>**2 Peter 2:9-10.** 9 οἷδεν κύριος εὐσεβεῖς ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι, ἀδίκους δὲ εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως κολαζομένους τηρεῖν, 10 μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ πορευομένους καὶ κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας. **9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment 10 —especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.**

The references in Second Peter treat the rescue of Lot who exemplifies the righteous out of the immoral cesspool of Sodom and Gomorrah as encouragement that God can also deliver His people, the Christian community, from the corruption of the immoral world around them.<sup>164</sup> The Christian community thus seeks God's leadership and empowerment to avoid these pagan sins.

Jude 7 is even blunter in its condemnation of homosexual behavior, which it defines as τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον τούτοις έκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐτέρας, **the same manner as these to indulge in sexual immorality and to pursue unnatural lust.** Those engaging in such deviant sexual behavior πρόκειται δεῖγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι, **serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.** As the larger context of vv. 8-23 makes very clear, this kind of immoral behavior is a part of what the false teachers advocate among the believing community. This in turn signals their paganism being disguised as Christian teaching. These false teachers will suffer the same fate as the lost and the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Summary.** What can then be learned about the practice of homosexuality from scriptural teachings just in the New Testament against the backdrop of its first century world? Let me list some of the lessons to be learned from Rom. 1:18-27. The final scripture text unit of vv. 28-32 will add some additional lessons to this listing.

**1) NT biblical understanding must be within the framework of ancient Hebrew and Jewish understandings.**

In order to get at a proper and accurate understanding of the teaching of Paul to the Roman Christians here one absolutely must understand at least the contours of the traditional Jewish teachings by the time of the middle of the first century when Romans was written. Apart from this per-

spective, no correct interpretation of Rom. 1:18-27 is possible. The above exegesis has sought diligently to give full attention to this essential background understanding.

The Israelites from the time of Abraham onward lived in a world where religion and sex were strongly linked.<sup>165</sup> The middle eastern fertility orientation of most of the pagan religions in Egypt and especially in Canaan presented real challenges to the developing monotheism of the Israelites. To be sure, sex in religion for their pagan neighbors meant mostly heterosexual deviation from marriage commitments. Sacred temple prostitutes presented continual temptation to the Israelite males.<sup>166</sup> Evidently homosexual activity in the middle east was generally condemned by virtually all the various ethnic groups in the Fertile Crescent. Yet it existed enough to warrant coming under the penalty of execution in the Israelite Torah of God. Yet a careful reading of the OT texts strongly indicates that it was not

singled out as being the worse violation of God's laws. It falls within the scope of all deviant sexual behaviors, that is, beyond heterosexual intercourse between a married man and woman. This is the divine ideal clearly preserved in the OT from Genesis onward.

From the outset, the Israelites strongly condemned sexual activity of any kind that was linked to religious worship, particularly public worship gatherings. Condemnations of sex orgies in the cultic practices of most of the Canaanite groups of people became a distinguishing trait separating out the Israelites from their pagan neighbors.<sup>167</sup> Sexual intercourse was in no way any kind of worship action acceptable to God. God is the essence of holiness and moral purity.

Thus the OT treats nakedness as something to be avoided with strenuous effort. Several Hebrew words are used a total of 53 times in reference to having one's genital area exposed.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup>This stands in the background of the extensive use of deviant sexual behavior, mostly adultery, as a metaphor for idolatry. The sacredness of God's relationship with Israel lent itself to being compared to the sacredness of human marriage. Israel's dabbling in idol worship then naturally represented adultery, a violation of her relationship with God. To worship an idol for the Israelite represented spiritual 'whoredom' on his part.

<sup>166</sup>Christianity had its origins out of a Judaism that had been purged of idolatry, and there is little mention of idolatry in the Gospels. The NT concerns about idolatry came from penetration into the gentile world where a variety of religions involved ideas and practices similar to those found in the ANE. Fertility cults, emperor worship, and the mystery religions were practiced throughout the Greek and Roman world (see Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 41–46; 138–67) and these involved both the use of images/statues and the worship of other gods, either of which constituted idolatry in the eyes of early church leaders whose roots were in Judaism. Paul found Athens to be a city full of idols (Acts 17:16). He confronted idolatry in Ephesus (Acts 19:24–41) and in keeping with the perspective of Judaism declared that “gods made with hands are no gods at all” (see Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 149–54). In some instances Paul seems to have argued that the idols have no real existence (1 Cor 8:4), while in others he suggests that there is a demonic reality that underlies the idolatrous practices (1 Cor 10:20). Paul explains the origin of idols as human rejection of God's revelation which replaces the worship of the Creator with the worship of a creature (Rom 1:18–23). The NT exhorts believers to flee idolatry (e.g., 1 Cor 10:14), and the Jerusalem Council advised all believers to avoid things sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29). The NT also understands idolatry as putting anything in the place that God alone should occupy as the proper focus of obedience and worship (e.g., Col 3:5). [Edward M. Curtis, “Idol, Idolatry,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:380–381.]

<sup>167</sup>This is connected in part to the monotheistic view of religion by the Israelites in contrast to the polygamous views of their pagan neighbors. Canaanite religions typically included both male and female deities who engaged in intercourse. So human sexual intercourse represents in this polygamous system but a human reflection of the actions of the gods.

In the ancient Near Eastern world view, the sexual activity of human beings, then, is simply an earthly reflection of what takes place in the divine realm.

The OT, however, presents a radically different theology from that of the surrounding nations. Genesis 1 and 2 announce that God created the cosmos and the first human beings. There is only one God, and divine sexual activity does not enter into the picture of creation. As we will see, the Bible uses sexual images to describe God; however, God is clearly neither male nor female. Sexuality is a result of creation, not a quality of the Creator. God creates both male and female “in his image” (Gen 1:27 RSV). Though God is frequently imaged as a male (king, father, warrior), it is not unusual for God to be pictured as a female (mother, Lady Wisdom). God is, nonetheless, no more a male or female than he is a rock or a shield (Ps 18:2).

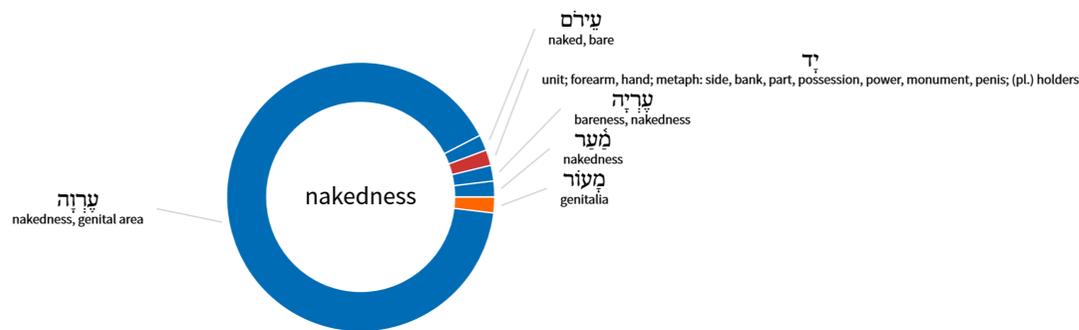
[Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 776.]

<sup>168</sup>**NAKEDNESS** [מַעֲרֹמְרֹמִים *ma'or, erwah*; γυμνότης *gymnotēs*]. The basic idea of the term *nakedness* is 'to lay bare,' 'to expose,' 'to reveal,' or 'to uncover.' The terms are often euphemisms for genitalia (e.g., Gen 9:22; Lev 18:9). The term *nakedness* has several meanings in the Bible.

"Humans are born naked and die naked (Job 1:21; Eccl 5:15 [Heb. 5:14]). Related is the statement that humans were originally naked and without shame (Gen 2:25). Nakedness is also a sign of dire poverty. As part of the call to help the poor, the Israelites are encouraged to clothe the naked (Isa 58:6–7; Job 22:6; 24:7, 10), a call Jesus continues (Matt 25:36, 43).

"Nakedness before God is prohibited. Israelites are not to ascend the steps of an altar and expose their nakedness (Exod 20:26 [Heb. 20:23]; compare Rev 3:18). More pointedly, the priests are to wear linen breeches when they serve in the tent or at the altar to cover their nakedness (Exod 28:42).

"Nakedness, as an exposure of the most shameful kind, is a sign of or a call for divine judgment (Isa 3:17; 20:2–4; 47:3; Hab 2:15; Mic 1:11; Nah 3:5). This usage often depicts



But this does not mean that sex is inherently bad. Human sexual intercourse is the way of perpetuating humanity. This view is clear in the Old Testament. Yet the Hebrew text does not contain many direct terms depicting sexual actions. Instead, euphemisms are used to portray sexual activity.<sup>169</sup> Sometimes the metaphors used, however, can evoke rather graphic imagination.<sup>170</sup> This can pose challenges for modern translators so far removed from the cultural mind-set of ancient Israel. This reserve often sets apart the thinking and viewpoints of the Israelite / Jewish mind-set from others in their world.

Although the experiencing of pleasure from sexual actions is acknowledged, the clear objective of them is the producing of children. This mandates keeping sexual action strictly within the framework of marriage. Any and all deviations from this norm are sinful and an abomination to God. For

a city or nation as a 'female' who has been sexually unfaithful to her husband or sexually promiscuous (see Hos 2:2–13 [Heb. 2:4–15]). The prophets often announce Yahweh's judgments on Israel and Judah in this way (Ezek 16; 23).

"To uncover the nakedness of another is a euphemism for sexual intercourse or an uncovering or shaming of a male family member through intercourse with his wife (repeatedly in Lev 18 and 20, both part of the Holiness Code material; see the story of Noah's nakedness in Gen 9:20–29). The Holiness texts identify family relations by prohibiting males from having intercourse with specific females related by blood or marriage."

[Frank H. Gorman, "Nakedness," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 217.]

<sup>169</sup>"There is no verb in the Bible that means 'to have sexual intercourse,' rather the idea is conveyed by a series of euphemistic metaphors. The first two are used frequently enough that they may be frozen metaphors. The very common 'to know' indicates that to engage in sex entails learning new things about the body and personality of one's partner (cf. Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 1 Sam 1:19). To 'lie down' with someone of course hints at one of the most common positions for the sex act (Gen 19:32; 22:19; 38:26; Lev 18:22; Deut 28:30). More colorful expressions include 'playing' (Gen 26:8), 'plowing' (Judg 14:18) and 'grinding grain' (Job 31:10).

"Crude metonymy for women as sexual objects appear in Judges 5:30 (the NIV translates 'girl,' but the Hebrew is coarse slang; cf. Eccles 2:8, where women are referred to as 'breasts')."

[Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 778.]

<sup>170</sup>"Certainly the most sexually explicit of all biblical books on the matter of sexuality is the Song of Songs. The poet(s) of these passionate love songs often use imagery to refer to the male and female erogenous zones. Space permits only a sample. In a poem descriptive of the woman's beauty and generically identified as a song sung as a prelude to lovemaking (Pope, 55–56, 67, 142, 144), the man likens the woman's breasts to 'twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies' (Song 4:5 NIV). The image evokes the anticipation of touch. It is an image of gentleness. Later, at the end of a similar descriptive song, the man describes his beloved's body as a slender palm tree whose clusters of fruit are her breasts. In a moment of passion he cries out, 'I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.' (Song 7:7–8 NIV). This image is more visual than the first, showing that his romantic intentions are focused on the woman's breasts." [Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 777.]

ancient Jews, divine creation itself makes this clear, not to mention basic human anatomy. To be sure procreation played a central role in the sexual mores of Israel's pagan neighbors. But the unbridled achieving of pleasure from sexual actions pushed the boundaries way beyond the martial relationship for males in the patriarchal world of the middle east.

When an exploration of the intertestamental Jewish literature concerning sexual behavior is made, one concludes that the Judaism which emerged out of the Babylonian exile maintained the teachings of the Old Testament strictly. Some of the ideas were reinterpreted into the contemporary urbanized life of Jews from the rural and small town perceptions embedded into the OT. In the centuries just before and including the beginning Christian era, Jewish thinking often sought to interact with first Greek and then Roman thinking. Jewish philosophers such as Philo in the century before Christ wrote in the heavily Hellenized Alexandria Egypt as well as to the huge Jewish populations in what is now modern Turkey which were also heavily influenced by Greek thinking. Writings such as the Wisdom of Solomon, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs et als. vigorously condemn the deviant sexual behavior, including homosexual activities, of the Greeks in distinguishing religious Jews from the paganism that surrounded them.

One of the innovative ways of making their case was the employment of terms found only in very Greek, non-Hebrew languages such as 'natural'

and 'unnatural.' The concept of something being 'natural,' φύσις, does not exist inside the Hebrew Bible. But this perspective of φύσις was common in the Greek speaking world in application to life and living standards.<sup>171</sup> The Greek Jewish writings utilize the terminology, but inject it with traditional Jewish definitions and assumptions largely related to God as the Creator of all life. As a communication strategy to make their point of the superiority of Judaism over all other religions and philosophies, it enabled them to get their message across clearly and with understanding.

When one examines each of the NT passages that speak to deviant sexual behavior, especially homosexuality, the influence of this contemporary Jewish stance upon early Christian writing and thinking is unquestionable. The essential points of the sinfulness of deviant sexual behavior, of its close linkage to idolatry etc. found in the Jewish literature are reproduced in tact inside the NT. This extends even to the use of the specialized Greek vocabulary of φύσις etc. And this is particularly true for the apostle Paul. The advantage of communication in Greek to a readership in the church at Rome largely conditioned by both the Greek terms and thinking as well as the limited Hellenistic Jewish utilization of it represents a very smart move by the apostle. His Christian view point was essentially already made. He needed only to give it a clear Christian tone and perspective which affirmed the OT views.

Yet, as Paul reflects in Romans one, some distinctive Christian perspectives emerge. Most noticeable in chapter one of Romans is that the condemnation of paganism, in contrast to covenant Israel, readily found in the Jewish writings is reshaped into a condemnation of depraved humanity

<sup>171</sup>"There is no Hbr. equivalent for the word φύσις and hence we find the term only occasionally in LXX works orig. written in Gk. (3 and 4 Macc., Wis.), while the adj. φυσικός does not occur at all. In the pseudopigr. φύσις and φυσικός occur a few times in Test. XII in spite of a possible Hbr. original. Several passages reflect current Gk. usage, 'nature' (→ 254, 9 ff.) of water that it can quench, Wis. 19:20, 'talent' par. συνήθεια and ἦθος, 4 Macc. 13:27, 'species'<sup>159</sup> (or 'natures'?) of animals, Wis. 7:20, πᾶσα θνητὴ φύσις 'each mortal being,' 3 Macc. 3:29, once of God, who has compassion on men 'according to (His) nature,' 4 Macc. 5:25. In 4 Macc. universal nature which over-rules all life (→ 259, 16 ff.) is contrasted with law and also, in very non-Greek fashion, with reason. In the speech of Antiochus it is the giver of such gifts as good-tasting swine's flesh, 4 Macc. 5:8 f. But the pious and steadfast reason of the mother of the seven martyrs can triumph even over 'nature.' φύσις ἰερά here is par. to the power of parental love, the ties of birth and their πάθος, 15:13, cf. 16:3 and v. also the advisers in the soul of the mother: nature, birth, love of children, and the agonies of the sons, 15:25.

"The sense of 'physical nature' occurs in Test. XII, cf. of sleep ἔκστασις φύσεως, Test. R. 3:1,160 the power of anger which is doubled by sickness παρὰ τὴν τῆς φύσεως, Test. D. 3:5. The adj. is used in the same sense: ἡ φυσικὴ δύναμις as distinct from the help of others and the power of wealth, 3:4, cf. οἱ φυσικοὶ 161 ὀφθαλμοί, 2:4."

[Helmut Köster, "Φύσις, Φυσικός, Φυσικῶς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 9:266-267.]

<sup>172</sup>To be sure what constitutes official marriage has varied among both Jews and Christians over the centuries. The guarantor of official marriage as either the church / synagogue and/or the state is largely a product of Roman Catholic influence from the second century AD onward. By making marriage one of the holy sacraments, the RC church took over the authority of establishing officially recognized marriages. With the establishment of state religion for Christianity in the four century AD, the government largely came to affirm marriages that had been established by the RC church. The Protestant Reformation brought deep changes in western society with both church (RC and Protestant churches) and the government assuming dual authority. Various governments in the western world have assumed differing levels of authority. Typically the dynamic in today's world is that the state must have final authority in recognizing marriages. This is critical for property ownership, business transactions and liability, etc. But whether or not the state recognizes marriage ceremonies

at large by Paul. This becomes particularly clear from Paul's use of OT concepts of condemning deviant sexual behavior and other moral failures that mostly targeted the Israelites in his portraying of the evils of humanity in general. Paul begins with a vigorous condemnation of sinful humanity universally before moving in chapter two to focus on the religious hypocrisy by individuals professing to be God's people, whether Jewish or non-Jewish.

As already noted, understanding where Paul is coming from in Rom. 1:18-27 is essential to correct grasping of his points made to his initial readership. This Hellenistic Jewish mind-set about sexuality and deviant sexual behavior in general provides the proper foundation for interpreting Paul. He affirms this perspective without modification or any negation of any essential point. To contend that Paul adopts the Greek thinking even just in part rather than the Jewish views cannot be successfully defended. This is obviously clear in comparing the texts. Any deriving of timeless principles on the topic of deviant sexual behavior including homosexuality must then fit this framework and not conflict with it.

What are some implications that flow out of this foundational principle? Those lessons listed below represent some of the implications.

## **2) God's negative posture toward deviant sexual behavior is made abundantly clear in the NT.**

Both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament are in clear agreement that sexual activity is strictly limited to a male and female within the framework of official marriage.<sup>172</sup> Its divine purpose is for producing

children. Therefore any sexual activity outside this well defined parameter represents sinful rebellion against the will of God. And it is action held in strict accountability by God both now and on the Day of Final Judgment. The stance of the scriptures is that this represents the revealed will of God for all time. And for all humanity. There is no serious questioning of this understanding of the Bible, either Jewish or Christian.

Homosexual activity is briefly considered in both the Old and New Tes-

taments, not because it was of little importance. But rather, primarily because it did not represent a significant problem for either the Israelites or Jews, nor for early Christians -- even those living outside Palestine in a sea of paganism where such was practiced. For example, Lev. 18:22, 29 forbids the practice of homosexual activity.<sup>173</sup> And Lev. 20:13 pronounces the death penalty upon every engaging in such practice.<sup>174</sup>

Although not all the penalties laid out in the Holiness Code in Leviticus

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conducted by ordained clergy or not, or whether an additional civil ceremony is mandated, depends on the particular government. Generally European and Latin American countries require a civil ceremony with the religious ceremony purely optional. North America tends to recognize the conducting of a religious wedding ceremony by an ordained minister who at the time is officiating as an authorized representative of the state as well as of the church. In all instances, a certificate of a wedding ceremony must be filed with the state for an official marriage to exist.

In the world of the Old Testament and first century Christianity that followed the existing Jewish norms, the process involved neither state or church. Marriage was established by a formal ceremony conducted by the two families represented by the bride and groom. A formal contract of marriage was signed by the guardians of each the bride and groom, since marriage was a family experience and not just an individual experience by the couple.

When Christianity began making inroads into the non-Jewish world in the middle of the first century, the wedding traditions altered somewhat to follow the particular ethnic customs of the two families connected to the couple getting married. But weddings and marriages were still arranged by the two families with the couple having minimal or little to say in the situation. How much input the couple had depended upon the ethnic customs represented and upon distinctive family patterns usually determined by the stances of the two fathers involved.

There was no acceptable 'living together' outside of formal marriage. Marriage was universally mandated for acceptable sexual behavior. And this was particularly true for the female. Different cultures reflect differing levels of toleration for deviant sexual behavior outside marriage by the male, but generally had no toleration for such by the female. Prostitution was largely based on the use of female slaves, readily available for hire in brothels and in the temples.

<sup>173</sup>Lev. 18:22 BHS.

LXX. καὶ μετὰ ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικός· βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστιν.†  
Vulg. cum masculo non commisceberis coitu femineo quia abominatio est †  
NRSV. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

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Lev. 18:29 BHS.

LXX. ὅτι πᾶς, ὃς ἂν ποιήσῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν βδελυγμάτων τούτων, ἐξολεθρευθήσονται αἱ ψυχαὶ αἱ ποιούσαι ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῶν.†  
Vulg. omnis anima quae fecerit de abominationibus his quippiam peribit de medio populi sui †  
NRSV. For whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from their people.

<sup>174</sup>Lev. 20:13 BHS.

LXX. καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικός, βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφότεροι· θανατούσθωσαν, ἔνοχοί εἰσιν.†

22 וְאֶת-זָכָר לֹא תִשָּׁבּ מִשָּׁכְבִי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הוּא:

29 כִּי כָל-אִשָּׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מְכַל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת  
הָאֵלֶּה וְגִכְרָתוֹ הַנִּפְשׁוֹת  
הַעֲשׂוֹת מִקְרָב עִמָּם:

וְאִישׁ אִשָּׁר יִשָּׁבּ אֶת-זָכָר מִשָּׁכְבִי אִשָּׁה  
תוֹעֵבָה עָשָׂן שְׂגִימָהּ מִזֶּה  
יוֹמָתוֹ דָּמִיהֶם בָּם:

20 were enforced consistently, the death penalty for homosexual conduct was one of those which was strictly enforced. When such severe measures were adopted by the Israelites, the forbidden practices ceased to be a major issue among Israelite and then for Jewish people living in the Land of Promise. Where inconsistent enforcement became the pattern, problems persisted, such as adultery. All this stands in the background of the minimal treatment of the issue of homosexuality in early Christian writings, while considerable space is devoted to issues such as marital infidelity, i.e., adultery. These were the actual problems taking place in the world of the readers of the texts.<sup>175</sup>

The application of the strong stance against homosexual behavior found inside the OT to the first century world of Judaism and apostolic Christianity necessitated some modification. Execution of offenders along side adultors and others remained possible in Roman occupied Palestine. But Diaspora Judaism was a different matter in most regions of the Mediterranean world outside the Jewish Land of Promise. Where strong Greek presence and heritage existed, e.g., Alexandria Egypt and the Roman provinces of Asia,

Macedonia, and Achaia, the Greek practice of homosexuality meant for Jews that any offenders inside their communities would simply be expelled from the community.<sup>176</sup> But the Hellenistic Jewish writings of this period, namely of Philo, *Josephus* et als., do not indicate much problem with homosexual actions by Jews, even Diaspora Jews.<sup>177</sup> Their discussions uniformly come at it as an outsider and not an insider issue. And this stance is also reflected in the beginning Christian discussion inside the NT.

### **3) Neither Paul nor other NT writers make any distinction about differing forms of homosexual activity.**

Among the isolated modern defenders of homosexuality among Christian writers,<sup>178</sup> the case in favor depends exegetically entirely upon a very shallow use of eisegesis rather than careful, legitimate exegesis of the scripture texts, mostly of Rom. 1:26-27. Numerous other scholars have severely critiqued this futile attempt to defend some forms of homosexuality.<sup>179</sup>

The argument contends that all that Paul condemns in Rom. 1:26-27

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**Vulg.** qui dormierit cum masculo coitu femineo uterque operati sunt nefas morte moriantur sit sanguis eorum super eos †

**NRSV.** If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.

<sup>175</sup>One of the reasons for no 'systematic theology' existing in the scriptures is the theoretical nature of the subject. The biblical text has zero interest in theory. The functional approach to life reflected in ancient Judaism leads the biblical writers to focus on real needs and issues in their world. God's Word is structured to address these issues, not theoretical ones.

This means that biblical interpretation must re-address itself to the contemporary issues of each period of time in human history. The Bible is no handbook of religion. Instead, it addresses how God acted and spoke to His particular people at a certain time and place. Out of this divine action then comes the voice of God to each succeeding generation of His people when proper interpretation occurs. This is the fundamental nature of scripture. Treating the scripture otherwise automatically means mistreating it!

<sup>176</sup>Such 'toning down' of the OT demand for execution seems extensive to modern western readers. But in the intensely collective, not individualistic, societies of not only the Jews but virtually all ethnic groups across the Mediterranean world of that time, expulsion from the community was generally considered worse than execution. In that kind of world, one's identity and value were determined exclusively by group membership and had nothing to do with anything resident within the individual. Joining a group was no real option, particularly if you had been expelled from another. Expulsion meant sinking into a world of nothingness with no sense of identity or value. This is why Paul sometimes defines expulsion from the Christian community as a 'turning over to Satan.' Cf. 1 Cor. 5:5.

<sup>177</sup>cf. Wisdom of Solomon 14:26; Epistle of Aristeas 152; Philo, De Abrahamo 135–37; De Specialibus Legibus 3.37–42; Sibylline Oracles. 3:184–86, 764; Pseudo-Phocylides 3, 190–92, 213–14; Josephus, Contra Apionem 2.273–75); also the sustained polemic against sexual promiscuity and homosexuality in Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (particularly Testament of Levi 14.6; 17.11; Testament of Naphtali 4.1) and in the Sibylline Oracles (e.g., 3.185–87, 594–600, 763); see further H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, 4 vols. (Munich: Beck'sche, 1926–28)

[James D. G. Dunn, Romans 1–8, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>178</sup>Among the more influential are the following:

John Boswell in *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980)

L. W. Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

<sup>179</sup>Richard B. Hays, "Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to John Boswell's Exegesis of Romans 1," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 14 (1986) 184–215.

Marion L. Soards, *Scripture and Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.

David F. Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of APENOKOITAI (1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10)," *Vigiliae christianae* 38 (1984) 125–53

idem, "Homosexuality: The Relevance of the Bible," *Evangelical Quarterly* 61 (1989) 291–300.

is pederasty,<sup>180</sup> while other forms of first century homosexual practice are ignored. This is based on a highly questionable interpretation of ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν, **male with male** (v. 27). But as has been in detail pointed out, this is clearly not the point of Paul when the full context of vv. 26-27 is given consideration. Clearly, the parallel lesbian and homosexual references in

idem, “Early Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality,” *Studia Patristica* XVIII:2 (1989) 329–34.

<sup>180</sup>Male prostitution using anal penetration.

<sup>181</sup>Somewhat similar to paralleling lesbianism and homosexuality in the Greek literature is Plato, *Laws*, 1.636c

For this your States are held primarily responsible, and along with them all others [C] that especially encourage the use of gymnasia. And whether one makes the observation in earnest or in jest, one certainly should not fail to observe that **when male unites with female for procreation the pleasure experienced is held to be due to nature, but contrary to nature when male mates with male or female with female, and that those first guilty of such enormities were impelled by their slavery to pleasure.** And we all accuse the Cretans of concocting the story about Ganymede. [D] Because it was the belief that they derived their laws from Zeus, they added on this story about Zeus in order that they might be following his example in enjoying this pleasure as well. Now with the story itself we have no more concern; but when men are investigating the subject of laws their investigation deals almost entirely with pleasures and pains, whether in States or in individuals. These are the two fountains which gush out by nature’s impulse; and whoever draws from them a due supply at the due place and time is blessed—be it a State [E] or an individual or any kind of creature; but whosoever does so without understanding and out of due season will fare contrariwise.

[Plato, *Laws*: English Text, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. R. G. Bury, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London; New York: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd; G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1926), 41–43.]

καὶ τούτων τὰς ὑμετέρας πόλεις πρώτας ἂν τις αἰτιῶτο καὶ [636c] ὅσαι τῶν ἄλλων μάλιστα ἄπτονται τῶν γυμνασίων· καὶ εἶτε παίζοντα εἶτε σπουδάζοντα ἐννοεῖν δεῖ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐννοητέον ὅτι **τῇ θηλείᾳ καὶ τῇ τῶν ἀρρένων φύσει εἰς κοινωνίαν ἰούση τῆς γεννήσεως ἢ περὶ ταῦτα ἡδονὴ κατὰ φύσιν ἀποδεδόσθαι δοκεῖ, ἀρρένων δὲ πρὸς ἄρρενας ἢ θηλειῶν πρὸς θηλείας παρὰ φύσιν καὶ τῶν πρώτων τὸ τόλμημ’ εἶναι δι’ ἀκράτειαν ἡδονῆς.** πάντες δὲ δὴ Κρητῶν τὸν περὶ Γανυμήδη μῦθον [636d] κατηγοροῦμεν ὡς λογοποιησάντων τούτων· ἐπειδὴ παρὰ Διὸς αὐτοῖς οἱ νόμοι πεπιστευμένοι ἦσαν γεγονέναι, τοῦτον τὸν μῦθον προσεθηκέναι κατὰ τοῦ Διός, ἵνα ἐπόμενοι δὴ τῷ θεῷ καρπῶνται καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἡδονήν. τὸ μὲν οὖν τοῦ μύθου χαίρω, νόμων δὲ πέρι διασκοπούμενων ἀνθρώπων ὀλίγου πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ σκέψις περὶ τε τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ τὰς λύπας ἔν τε πόλεσιν καὶ ἐν ἰδίῳ ἡθεσιν· δύο γὰρ αὐτὰι πηγαὶ μεθεῖνται φύσει ῥεῖν, ὧν ὁ μὲν ἀρυτόμενος ὄθεν τε [636e] δεῖ καὶ ὁπότε καὶ ὁπόσον εὐδαιμονεῖ, καὶ πόλις ὁμοίως καὶ ἰδιώτης καὶ ζῶν ἅπαν, ὁ δ’ ἀνεπιστημόνως ἅμα καὶ ἐκτὸς τῶν καιρῶν τάναντία ἂν ἐκείνῳ ζῶη.

[Plato, *Platonis Opera*, Ed. John Burnet (Medford, MA: Oxford University Press, 1903).] Plato takes a dim view of homosexual actions since they are based on a quest for pleasure. Heterosexual actions are superior since they seek procreation.

The Jewish mention of both sees both as strictly prohibited by God in the Torah. Pseudo-Phocylides, *Sentences* 191-192, follows the Torah prohibitions against deviant sexual behavior including homosexuality. This summary of Torah commandments parallels Philo’s *Hypothetica* 7:1-9 and Josephus, *Contra apionem* 2:190 - 219. As an example, note Josephus’ statements:

25. (199) But then, what are our laws about marriage? **That law owns no other mixture of sexes but that which nature hath appointed, of a man with his wife, and that this be used only for the procreation of children. But it abhors the mixture of a male with a male; and if anyone do that, death is his punishment.** (200) It also commands us also, when we marry, not to have regard to portion, nor to take a woman by violence, nor to persuade her deceitfully and knavishly; but demand her in marriage of him who hath power to dispose of her, and is fit to give her away by the nearness of his kindred; (201) for, saith the Scripture, “A woman is inferior to her husband in all things.” Let her, therefore, be obedient to him; not so, that he should abuse her, but that she may acknowledge her duty to her husband; for God hath given the authority to the husband. A husband, therefore, is to lie only with his wife whom he hath married; but to have to do with another man’s wife is a wicked thing; which, if any one venture upon, death is inevitably his punishment: no more can he avoid the same who forces a virgin betrothed to another man, or entices another man’s wife. (202) The law, moreover enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women to cause abortion of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind: if anyone, therefore, proceeds to such fornication or murder, he cannot be clean. (203) Moreover, the law enjoins, that after the man and wife have lain together in a regular way, they shall bathe themselves; for there is a defilement contracted thereby, both in soul and body, as if they had gone into another country; for indeed the soul, by being united to the body, is subject to miseries, and is not freed therefrom again but by death; on which account the law requires this purification to be entirely performed.

[Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 806.]

[199] Τίνας δ’ οἱ περὶ γάμων νόμοι; μῖζιν μόνην οἶδεν ὁ νόμος τὴν κατὰ φύσιν τὴν πρὸς γυναῖκα, καὶ ταύτην εἰ μέλλοι τέκνων ἕνεκα γίνεσθαι. τὴν δὲ πρὸς ἄρρενας ἀρρένων

unjustifiable lexicologically, etymologically, and historically. This has been clearly demonstrated by those rebutting the homosexual advocates. The above exegesis of these two verses should have made this clear.

When Paul alludes to the condemned pagan practices of homosexual in the non-Jewish and non-Christian world of the Roman believers in this letter, he speaks of homosexual conduct in all its forms as a reflection of God's wrath being poured out now upon behavior deemed *πάθη ἀτιμίας*, *dishonoring passions*, expressed by both females and males. They have rejected God and He thus rejects them by turning them over to these dishonoring passions. By every contextual standard it is inconceivable that Paul only means one minor form of homosexual practice found in the pagan world of his day.

The closest that the New Testament ever comes to distinguishing between homosexual actions is the pair of complementary terms οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται in the vice list of 1 Cor. 6:9-10<sup>182</sup> As the above exegesis amply demonstrates, the two terms designate homosexual activity from the aggressive / passive perspectives of the two partners. This very Greek oriented terminology views the actions of homosexuals and lesbians (note the inclusive plural) from the aggressive male and the passive female stances in the activity. But the two terms do not define a particular category of homosexual activity, just the adopted stances in the actions. And quite clearly the header statement at the beginning asserts that all those in the list are excluded from God's Kingdom both now and in eternity: "Ἡ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ πλανᾶσθε, **Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't be deceived:** Then note the terminus repeating of this in order to make an even stronger point ἐστύγηκε, καὶ θάνατος τούπτιμιον εἶ τις ἐπιχειρήσειεν. [Josephus, *The Life, Against Apion: Greek Text*, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. I, The Loeb Classical Library (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1966), 372.]

<sup>182</sup>**1 Cor. 6:9-10.** 9 Ἡ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ **οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται** 10 οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοῖδοροί, οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν.

**9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers — none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.**

<sup>183</sup>"One net result of the preceding paragraphs is to vindicate greater originality and broader scope for Paul's brief references. Yet Paul does not single out same-sex intercourse as specially perverted or monstrous. He lists it alongside theft, drunkenness and perjury, as well as adultery and murder (see Virtues and Vices). The paucity of Paul's references is inconsistent with its being incomparably execrable, but this fact does not imply its relative unimportance. The broader context of his teaching on sexuality supports the view that he saw same-sex activity as so self-evidently contrary to God's creative purpose as to allow of such brief—but eloquent—mention.

"Certainly Paul could not have envisaged some facets of contemporary debates, such as 'monogamous' same-sex relationships between persons of homosexual preference. It is nevertheless a safe conclusion that, whatever might be said about individual orientations or dispositions, Paul could only have regarded all homosexual erotic and genital behavior as contrary to the creator's plan for human life, to be abandoned on conversion (cf. 1 Cor 6:11; see Ethics)."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 414.]

about exclusion: βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν, *none of these will inherit God's Kingdom.*

#### **4) Homosexual activity of all kinds is condemned as one of many types of deviant sexual behavior.**<sup>183</sup>

The failure of conservative commentators on this topic is the all too common tendency to make homosexual conduct the preeminent sin worse than all others. The taking of Paul's singling out of homosexual activity in vv. 26-27 in no way implies that this sin is considered worse in Christian circles than the other sins mentioned in vv. 28-31. Via his using Greco-Roman based evaluations through the un-Jewish reference to τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν / τὴν παρὰ φύσιν homosexual actions becomes the clearest way to illustrate deviant sexual actions to a readership heavily conditioned to evaluating actions by whether they are natural or unnatural. The consensus of the philosophers, particularly the Stoic philosophers such as Paul's contemporary Seneca, was that homosexual activity represented an unnatural sexual action.

The way of the structuring of the vice lists in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 and 1 Tim. 1:8-11 makes it clear that homosexuality is but one type of deviant sexual behavior condemned by God. In 1 Tim. 1:10, ἀρσενοκοῖταις is listed after πόρνοις, immoral persons inclusively practicing heterosexual actions outside marriage. In 1 Cor. 6:9, οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται are listed after οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ with πόρνοι designating immoral sexual actions outside marriage, and μοιχοὶ designating immoral sexual actions outside marriage by married individuals. One can only conclude from examination of these listings that the apostle Paul both condemned

homosexual actions but did not consider them any worse than heterosexual actions outside of marriage. The latter receives much more treatment simply, cf. 1 Cor. 6:12-20, because it represented problem areas for newly converted Christians coming out of a world where such heterosexual actions were considered normative and 'natural.'

This broader NT defining of deviant sexual activity to include all forms of sexual encounter outside marriage, whether heterosexual or homosexual, conforms to the view point of the Hebrew Bible and of Jewish intertestamental writings, especially Hellenistic Jewish writings.<sup>184</sup> In neither the Christian nor the contemporary or preceding Jewish literature is homosexuality elevated to a worse status before God than other deviant sexual behavior.<sup>185</sup> All is condemned by God. This is the uniform view of these two streams of religious heritage flowing out of the Old Testament.

When homosexual activity is elevated to the worst possible sin status in modern religious based polemics against it, such an assertion has no basis either in scripture nor in the ancient Judeo-Christian writings about it. In these writings, it is sinful before God, along with adultery and immorality. This phony elevation of status ultimately diminishes the credibility of the case against the propriety of homosexual behavior. It loses any legitimate foundation in Christian or Jewish scripture. The label of homophobia then gains some credibility in regard to those opposing homosexual behavior.

This in no way diminishes the clearly sinful nature of such sexual behavior. Instead, it does belong to a biblical listing of sinful activities, which prohibit one from being a part of God's kingdom either now or especially

in eternity. In truth, most of the other items in these biblical listings have far greater influence and power over humanity as a whole. Particularly in regard to sinful sexual actions contained in most of these lists, marital infidelity and heterosexual promiscuity are much more prevalent in modern society. And if measured simply by quantity, these are the worst sins of a sexual nature among people in today's world.

#### **5) Religion and deviate sexual behavior are closely linked.**

Sometimes in modern religious defending of homosexuality the claim is made that modern practices not linked to the worship of some idol are exempted from the biblical condemnation of homosexual activities, since the Bible links idolatry and homosexuality. But such a view profoundly misunderstands the biblical linkage of religion and deviant sexual activity.

This linkage has several aspects. Historically, the early Israelite experience in the Land of Canaan after the Exodus exposed them to indigenous ethnic groups whose life revolved around their differing versions of religion. Overwhelmingly these religions in Canaan were fertility based, which means that religion and human sexuality are deeply entwined with one another. Most of their worship experiences included sexual orgies with sacred prostitutes of the individual religion.<sup>186</sup> The Israelites were repeatedly warned to shun idolatry and all the sins associated with it. Because of the orientation of the biblical materials toward the leaders of Israel rather than the common folk, it is not easy to assess just how strong the tendency among the masses of the Israelites was during this time.<sup>187</sup> This temptation,

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<sup>184</sup>The starting point is Lev. 18:1-29 which treats a wide range of prohibited sexual behaviors. Homosexuality is but one of the prohibitions, coming toward the middle of the listing. This text provides a foundational launch pad for later Jewish and Christian teaching on deviant sexual behaviors.

<sup>185</sup>Both Jewish and Christian teachers are more concerned about quantity of sinful behavior than quality of sinful behavior. Thus the behaviors taking place more often among the supposed people of God tend to receive more attention and condemnation. And this centers on heterosexual misbehavior outside of marriage.

<sup>186</sup>Typically the temple prostitutes were slaves owned by the temple. Additionally, in some instances wives of worshippers would function as prostitutes in the place of worship. In the ANE heterosexual actions dominated these orgies, since homosexual activities were virtually universally condemned in this part of the ancient world.

<sup>187</sup>"It is difficult to assess the extent of idolatry among the general population of Judah and Israel because the relevant biblical accounts are generally polemic in nature and make little attempt at statistical analysis; in addition the focus tends to be on the leadership rather than describing the practices of the common people. The texts describing the participation of the people in idolatry give a conflicting impression of its extent. The accounts of Baal worship during the time of Ahab suggest that the worship had a fairly extensive popular following. 1 Kgs 18:19 reports that there were 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mt. Carmel with Elijah. In the midst of Elijah's discouragement, God declares that there were 7,000 who had not bowed down to Baal. If the number is not a figurative one, it would represent a fairly small portion of the population that had remained loyal to Yahweh. At the same time that Jehu killed all the worshippers of Baal—some 10 years after the death of Ahab—he gathered them together in one temple and had 80 soldiers kill the entire group (2 Kgs 10:18–28). The perspective of the prophets is that the people of both Israel and Judah were, at many points in their history, not deeply committed to strict obedience to the covenant; instead, they were involved, at least at a popular and superstitious level, in syncretistic religious practices, often influenced by their Canaanite neighbors whose religion seems to have retained many common features despite significant chronological, cultural, and geographical differences among those who practiced it (Oden 1976: 31–36)." [Edward M. Curtis, "Idol, Idolatry," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 380.]

however, remained strong until the Babylonian Exile which marks a clear turning point away from tendencies to worship other gods.<sup>188</sup>

The Judaism which Christianity emerged out of in the first Christian century had been purged of idolatry and the inclination toward it.<sup>189</sup> The apostle Paul's condemnation of it to Christian communities of Corinth in First Cor-

inthians largely reflected both Hellenistic Jewish and Christian negative views of idolatry.<sup>190</sup> These, however, reflect practices in the Greco-Roman world outside either the Jewish<sup>191</sup> or Christian communities. Paul's words in First Corinthians target some tendencies of Christian converts to lapse back into some of their pre-Christian Greco-Roman practices.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>"Despite the prohibition of images in Israel's official religion and the contempt for images found throughout the prophets, a number of biblical passages make it clear that the problem of idolatry continued through much of Israel's history. It was only after the Babylonian Exile that the problem was effectively eradicated. The exact nature of what is described is often not clear since the authors do not normally distinguish between worshipping other gods (with or without images), the worship of images, and the worship of Yahweh using images. From the standpoint of the official religion described in the Bible all were equally repugnant." [Edward M. Curtis, "Idol, Idolatry," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 379.]

<sup>189</sup>"Christianity had its origins out of a Judaism that had been purged of idolatry, and there is little mention of idolatry in the Gospels. The NT concerns about idolatry came from penetration into the gentile world where a variety of religions involved ideas and practices similar to those found in the ANE. Fertility cults, emperor worship, and the mystery religions were practiced throughout the Greek and Roman world (see Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 41–46; 138–67) and these involved both the use of images/statues and the worship of other gods, either of which constituted idolatry in the eyes of early church leaders whose roots were in Judaism. Paul found Athens to be a city full of idols (Acts 17:16). He confronted idolatry in Ephesus (Acts 19:24–41) and in keeping with the perspective of Judaism declared that "gods made with hands are no gods at all" (see Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 149–54). In some instances Paul seems to have argued that the idols have no real existence (1 Cor 8:4), while in others he suggests that there is a demonic reality that underlies the idolatrous practices (1 Cor 10:20). Paul explains the origin of idols as human rejection of God's revelation which replaces the worship of the Creator with the worship of a creature (Rom 1:18–23). The NT exhorts believers to flee idolatry (e.g., 1 Cor 10:14), and the Jerusalem Council advised all believers to avoid things sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29). The NT also understands idolatry as putting anything in the place that God alone should occupy as the proper focus of obedience and worship (e.g., Col 3:5)."

[Edward M. Curtis, "Idol, Idolatry," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 380–381.]

<sup>190</sup>"The fullest discussion in the NT on idolatry and idol worship is found in what is now known as Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Earlier, in a letter no longer extant, Paul had told the Corinthians not to associate with those who called themselves believers, but who were still practicing idolatry (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–11). In the Corinthians' reply to him about this command they must have put up some resistance to it, or at least asked for clarification about it, for beginning at 1 Corinthians 8:1 and continuing through 11:1 Paul devotes his attention to the topic of idolatry using the vocabulary of the LXX, e.g., *eidōlothyton* ('food sacrificed to idols,' 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19; cf. also *hierothytos*, 'meat offered in sacrifice,' 1 Cor 10:28), *eidōla* ('idols,' 1 Cor 12:2) and *eidōleion* ('the temple of an idol,' 1 Cor 8:10) and vocabulary not found in the LXX, such as *eidōlolatria* ('idolatry,' 1 Cor 10:14) and *eidōlolarēs* ('idolater,' 1 Cor 10:7).

"One of the sins that Paul condemned at Corinth and which he was concerned to correct involved those Christians who had turned away from idols (1 Cor 12:2) to serve 'the living and true God' (see 1 Thess 1:9, which may echo early missionary preaching, cf. Acts 14:15). In spite of this conversion, they continued to go back to the idol temples (which, in a city like Corinth, could evidently function as a sort of restaurant) and there eat the food that had been sacrificed to the idol. Apparently the Corinthian believers were able to do this in good conscience because they had come to 'know' that 'no idol in the world really exists' and 'there is no God but one' (1 Cor 8:4 NRSV). The suggestion has been made that the Corinthians' 'knowledge' was informed by a Hellenistic-Jewish argument that knowledge of the one true God imbued the knower with a wisdom that allowed them to dismiss pagan idols as religious nonsense (see Horsley, Wright)."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 425.]

<sup>191</sup>"Despite the assumption on the part of most students and scholars of biblical texts that Judaism is simply by nature anti-idolatry, much of this is an impressionistic rendering of the OT's rhetorical program and owes little to a developed understanding of Judaism in the Greek and Roman periods. A more developed understanding might help to illuminate more clearly some of the reasons for the continuation and development of Jewish anti-idolatry in the Second Temple period. Typically, NT scholars discussing the phenomenon of idol worship in the Greco-Roman world make little distinction between kinds of idol-worship. However, this unfortunate conflation is not indicative of the state-of-play in the Greco-Roman period. The import and export of religious ideas throughout the Mediterranean basin in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian world brought to the fore not just similarities between the cultures of this area but also differences. One source of conflict in the Roman period revolved around such a difference, namely, the differences between ancient Roman religious sensibility and the equally ancient Egyptian zooatry (worship of animal gods)." [B. W. R. Pearson, "Idolatry, Jewish Conception of," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 526.]

<sup>192</sup>"**Roman Religious Xenophobia and Jewish Attitudes Toward Idolatry.** While space precludes a full examination of the characteristics of this period, the phenomenon of Roman religious xenophobia calls for attention. While Rome enjoyed its status as the center of the known world, it seems relatively clear that the implications of this hub like position were not always well received by the Romans themselves. Rome was full of different people groups and all of their accompanying elements: ethnic dress, cultural practices, religions,

What is clear from the available evidence outside the NT is that idolatry and deviant sexual behavior were prominent in the Greco-Roman practices of idolatry somewhat similar to what the Israelites had encountered in Canaan.<sup>193</sup> In the urbanized societies of the Greco-Roman world the

food, work habits, languages, etc. We read of Roman suspicion of especially religious practice on multiple occasions, the most obvious for the NT being the expulsion of all Jews from Rome under Claudius (Priscilla and Aquila, who left Italy and came to Corinth [Acts 18:2] were probably part of this expulsion; cf. Cicero *Flac.* 28.66–67; Horace *Sat.* 1.4.142–43; 1.5.100; 1.9.67–72 for Roman anti-Semitism or -Judaism). Roman xenophobia was not limited to the Jews, however. We have many examples of alien cults receiving stringent criticism (e.g., Livy 39.15.3, regarding alien cults in general; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* 2.19, regarding worship of the Phrygian mother, who was, in an expression of the Roman equivocation on these matters, later highly honored by the Claudian emperors; cf. La Piana, 397–402). But the Egyptian cults seem to have received special attention (cf. Rouillet, 1–12). This was probably due to a variety of factors: some religious and cultural, others economic (especially with regard to the dependence of Rome upon the grain supply from Egypt).

"From a religious and cultural perspective, however, Egyptian zoolatry seems to have been particularly repugnant to the Roman mind. When visiting Egypt, Augustus is recorded to have refused to visit the temple of Anubis, since the worship of a dog was completely beneath him (Dio Cassius *Hist.* 51.16). Juvenal, in his *Satires* 15.1–8, 11–13, presents a particularly scathing attack and mockery of the Egyptian predilection for animal worship. In addition, in *Satires* 6.489, 526–41, he specifically connects the worship of Egyptian gods with illicit sexual license (cf. Grant, 35). We also have evidence that there was official resistance to the importation to Rome of the Egyptian gods as well as popular support for them (cf. Tertullian, *Ad Nat.* 1.10; Apol. I 6; Valerius Maximus 1.3.4). Still, it seems that the Romans could also display respect for the dedication with which the Egyptians (and non-Egyptian initiates of the Egyptian religions) viewed their zoomorphic gods. In the mid-first century, the remaining members of the first Triumvirate, in need of public support after the death of Caesar, built the people of Rome a temple of Isis and Sarapis (Dio Cassius *Hist.* 47.15).

"The dominant political and military power in the Mediterranean world had a tradition of anti-Egyptian sentiment. In this cultural-semantic context we may very well have precedents in the OT that lend themselves to reinterpretation in light of the current cultural situation, but as components in other thematics of fresh origin. It is unlikely that it was the OT/Jewish critique of Egyptian religion that spurred the Romans into their anti-Egyptian polemic. We must not forget that the Jews themselves came under the same Roman prejudicial judgment as did the Egyptians. They were even ridiculed by Juvenal in the same context as the Egyptians (Juvenal *Sat.* 6.542–47, directly after the passage mentioned above with regard to the Egyptians). Moreover, this conflation of Jews and followers of the Egyptian cults is reflected in a series of expulsions which took place in the late republic and early imperial periods. As Tacitus records in *Annals* 2.85, relating the 'expulsion of Egyptian and Jewish rites [under Tiberius in A.D. 19; on the dating here, cf. Slingerland, 50–51 n. 42] the senate declared that four thousand adult ex-slaves tainted with those superstitions should be transported to Sardinia.... The rest, unless they repudiated their unholy practices by a given date, must leave Italy.'

"The trend towards intercultural quarrels between the conquered people groups of the Roman East is likely the motivating factor in this regard. First under the Greeks, then under the Romans, the various groups were forced to vie for respect in the eyes of their overlords (both of which were notoriously 'young' culturally, at least in comparison to their Eastern subjects) (cf. [pseudo]Eupolemus frag. 1 [Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 9.17.8–9]; and Bickerman, 218–36). It follows from this presuppositional perspective that one people group would make use of the overlord's own denigration of another threatening people group both to obtain favor in the eyes of the overlord and to position themselves above the other group. This is an effective—if sycophantic—strategy. While we would not suggest that this is the only motivation for Jewish attitudes toward idolatry, its consideration is lacking in modern scholarship."

[B. W. R. Pearson, "Idolatry, Jewish Conception of," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 528–529.]

<sup>193</sup>Not only did the polytheism of religion in this world tolerate deviant sexual behavior, it encouraged it through the mythological tales of erotic actions among the male and female deities. This established the standards of normalcy for eroticism among humans, especially for those worshipping such deities.

The Greek deities connected especially with deviant sexual behavior included:

- Aphaea, local goddess associated with fertility and the agricultural cycle
- Aphrodite, goddess of love, beauty and sexuality
- Aphroditus, god of male and female unity, the moon and fertility
- Artemis, goddess of the hunt, wild animals, wilderness, childbirth, virginity, fertility, young girls and health and disease in women
- Cybele, Phrygian Earth Mother goddess who embodies the fertile earth
- Demeter, goddess of agriculture and the fertility of the earth
- Dionysus, god of wine and festivity, associated with fertility
- Eros, god of sexual love, fertility and beauty
- Priapus, Greek god of fertility, gardens and male genitalia
- Gaia, Earth Mother and goddess of the fertile earth
- Hera, goddess of the air, marriage, women, women's fertility, childbirth, heirs, kings and empires
- Ilithyia, (also called Eileithyia) goddess of childbirth and midwifery, likely of Minoan or earlier origin.

connecting of the religious fertility rites with a favorable harvest under the blessings of the gods receded into the background. Religion and sex were merely linked. Heterosexual activity dominated since most deviant behavior sought some kind of divine blessing connected to procreation. Homosexual activity sought emotional satisfaction and thus had little religious motivation behind it.

Careful examination of the New Testament must, however, take note of a pattern that is essential for correct interpretation. The NT documents

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Pan, god of shepherds, flocks, mountain wilds, hunting and rustic music; associated with fertility

Phanes, primeval deity of procreation and the generation of new life

Priapus, rustic god of fertility, protection of livestock, fruit plants, gardens and male genitalia

Rhea, goddess of fertility, motherhood and the mountain wilds

Tychon, a daemon imagined as a boy

The Roman list is even longer:

Bona Dea, goddess of fertility, healing, virginity, and women

Candelifera, goddess of childbirth

Carmenta, goddess of childbirth and prophecy

Ceres, goddess of agriculture, grain crops, fertility and motherly relationships; equated with the Greek goddess Demeter

Diana, goddess of the hunt, wilderness, the moon and childbirth; equivalent to the Greek Artemis

\*Domidicus, the god who leads the bride home

\*Domitius, the god who installs the bride

Fascinus, embodiment of the divine phallus

Fecunditas, goddess of fertility

Feronia, goddess associated with fertility and abundance

Flora, goddess of flowers and spring

Inuus, god of sexual intercourse

\*Jugatinus, the god who joins the pair in marriage

Juno, goddess of marriage and childbirth; equivalent to the Greek goddess Hera

Liber, god of viniculture, wine and male fertility, equivalent to Greek Dionysus; in archaic Lavinium, a phallic deity

Libera, goddess of female fertility and the earth

Lucina, goddess of childbirth

Mars, god initially associated with fertility and vegetation, but later associated with warfare and the Greek god Ares

\*Manturna, the goddess who kept the bride at home

Mutunus Tutunus, phallic marriage deity associated with the Greek god Priapus

Ops, fertility and earth-goddess

Partula, goddess of childbirth, who determined the duration of each pregnancy

\*Pertuda, goddess who enables penetration

Venus, Roman goddess of love, beauty and fertility

Picumnus, god of fertility, agriculture, matrimony, infants and children

\*Prema, goddess who holds the bride down on the bed

Robigus, fertility god who protects crops against disease

\*Subigus, the god who subdues the bride to the husband's will

Terra, earth goddess associated with marriage, motherhood, pregnant women, and pregnant animals; equivalent to the Greek Gaia

Venus, goddess of love, beauty and fertility, equivalent to the Greek goddess Aphrodite

\*Virginiensis, the goddess who unties the girdle of the bride

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\* These 8 gods/goddesses consummate marriage and some of them are listed in the *Indigitamenta*.<sup>[4]</sup>

[Taken from "List of Fertility Deities," [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fertility_deities)]

focusing on Jesus' ministry, i.e., the four gospels, contain almost no mention of idolatry. This, because idolatry was not an issue in first century Palestinian Judaism. In addition to the dominant reference point of idolatry being the worship of an established deity typically represented by a carved image of some sort, the interesting statement of Paul in Col. 3:5 signals an expanding of this traditional meaning to include the conceptual idea of idolatry, i.e., devotion to something other than God: *Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία, Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).*<sup>194</sup> What Paul expresses here, however, is in line with the contemporary Jewish teachings about idolatry.<sup>195</sup>

This broader scope of what idolatry includes argues strongly against the modern argument that homosexual not overtly linked to standard idolatry is okay in the teachings of scripture. Not only does Col. 3:5 negate such an argument, but even more is Eph. 5:5,

τοῦτο γὰρ ἴστε γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης, ὃ ἐστὶν εἰδωλολάτρης, οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ.

**Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

<sup>194</sup>The feminine gender relative pronoun ἣτις can go back to either the feminine noun immediately in front of it *πλεονεξίαν*, or it can just as legitimately go back to the entire listing of vices, since all are feminine singular nouns (w. the one exception of *πάθος*).

<sup>195</sup>"Which is idolatry" is attached to 'greed.' *Εἰδωλολατρία* may be a Christian formation; Paul is our earliest attestation (1 Cor. 10:14; Gal. 5:20; otherwise only 1 Pet. 4:3 in biblical Greek), though the term occurs also in *Testament of Judah* 19:1; 23:1 (both v.l.) and *Testament of Benjamin* 10:10, and its cognates in *Testament of Levi* 17:11 and *Sibylline Oracles* 3.38. The concern, however, is typically and peculiarly Jewish. The second of the ten commandments (Exod. 20:4–5; Deut. 5:8–9) summed up a Jewish antipathy to any attempt to make an image of God or gods, a concern which was deep-rooted and which colored Jewish attitudes to Gentiles throughout our period. Hence the classic polemics of Jewish monotheism against the syncretistic idolatry of other religions (Isa. 44:9–20; Wis. 12–15; Ep. Jer.; Sibylline Oracles 3.8–45). Also typically Jewish was the conviction that idolatry was closely tied to sexual license (Num. 25:1–3; Hos. 4:12–18; Ep. Jer. 43; Wis. 14:12–27; 2 Enoch 10:4–6; Testament of Benjamin 10:10—*πορνεία* and *εἰδωλολατρία* cause alienation from God [ἀπηλλοτριώθησαν θεοῦ; cf. Col. 1:21]; reflected also in Rom. 1:23–27 and 1 Cor. 10:7–8), an attitude inherited by the first Christians (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:20; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 21:8; 22:15; Didache 5:1). The assumption that *πλεονεξία*, particularly as sexual greed, is a form of idolatry is shared by Eph. 5:5.

"It is worth noting that both of the early critiques of religion in the modern period — religion as projection of human needs and desires (Feuerbach) and the Father figure as a projection of suppressed sexuality (Freud) — are anticipated here. 'Greed' is a form of idolatry because it projects acquisitiveness and personal satisfaction as objective go(o)ds to be praised and served. It is in fact idolatry thus understood which is the legitimate target for the critiques of Feuerbach and Freud. Religion understood essentially as response to the numinous and the beyond in the midst is less vulnerable."

[James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 215–216.]

<sup>196</sup>In the modern non-western world, the more standard idea of idolatry will be the dominant practice.

<sup>197</sup>"Paul's audience is mainly Gentile Christians, and it is their beliefs and their behavior he is mainly concerned about altering. The problem is that he is dealing with entrenched habits of the heart and, furthermore, does not have the same clout he would have if his audience were mostly his own converts. What sort of rhetorical strategy then will work in such a situation?"

"Paul chooses to use foundational arguments that have a leveling effect, putting Gentile and Jewish Christians on the same footing. This, in effect, raises the status or standing of the

Modern idolatry in western society mostly comes clearly under the scope of this expanded perspective in Paul's statements in these two passage.<sup>196</sup> And psychologically and sociologically, its linkage is the common quest for pleasure to the exclusion of submission to God and His ways. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul understood clearly that such questing for pleasure represented a hugely destructive dynamic which God simply allowed to take over complete control of the ones rejecting His self disclosure. As such it becomes an expression of His wrath. Homosexuality, as the clearest example of this destructive quest to a pagan mind-set, quite clearly flows out of idolatry, whether understood in the standard fashion or in the expanded definition of early Christian teachings. Both express rejection of God for something else.

**6) Paul's treatment of human depravity in 1:18-32 reveals an ingenious creativity in arguing for an essentially traditional Jewish perspective while using very Greek and non-Jewish language and frameworks.**

How could the apostle make a case for the depravity and misery of humans to an audience newly liberated from it but having to defend themselves as Christians to a pagan world around them?<sup>197</sup> Paul was no modern preacher 'Bible thumper' who merely quoted -- usually out of context and with false meaning -- scripture. Just about as important as the content

of Paul's discussion in Rom. 1:18-32 is how Paul approached making his case to a Roman Christian audience who mostly did not know him personally. Add to that is his objective of introducing himself in a way to encourage their support of his anticipated later mission of preaching the Gospel in the western Mediterranean just as he was finishing up doing in the eastern part at the time of the writing of this letter from Corinth in the mid 50s of the first century. In this writing strategy, we can learn how to better make our case for the apostolic Gospel to the pagan world of our day.

This scripture passage is a study in highly creative writing strategy for presenting one's views to a specific readership. In its essence, Paul blends beautifully the moral and religious framework of his Jewish heritage with the language and terminology of non-Jewish and non-Christian language which communicated well his message to a Christian readership with either a Jewish or non-Jewish religious and cultural background. In so blending these two entities he expresses a unique and distinctly Christian message centered in Christ. Achieving such a high level of effectiveness is no small feat!

Understanding how Paul did this is not only critical for proper understanding of his message, but also it sets a helpful example for Christians today seeking to communicate the apostolic Gospel. One of the greatest failures of North American Christianity today is its huge deficiencies in communicating the Gospel of Christ to a world dying in its sin and depravity. And these deficiencies mostly exist at the very same two points where the apostle excelled in his communication of the Gospel: failure to deeply understand the apostolic Gospel and failure to know how to communicate well that understanding to a modern western hemispheric audience.

While I would not dare pretend to know how to communicate well the precious Word of God to a North American audience, I am convinced that understanding clearly how Paul did it so well to his first century audience should open up some possible paths to our doing the same work much

Jewish Christians, who are currently at a disadvantage in Rome. Paul on the one hand will argue that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, so any attempts by Gentiles to portray themselves as inherently better than Jews or Jewish Christians or more favored by God will not work. On the other hand, Paul will make clear that God's plan of salvation by grace through faith, while in essence impartial, does not mean that God will renege on promises to those he already had a relationship with before Christ—namely Jews. Supersessionist rhetoric in Rome is undercut."

[Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 58.]

<sup>198</sup>"Paul thus is clearly and deliberately following Hellenistic Judaism in using this kind of language as an apologetic bridge to non-Jewish religious philosophy (Fridrichsen; Pohlenz; Bornkamm, "Revelation," 50–53; Bietenhard's discussion is too narrowly focused) — a fact which must decisively influence our understanding of the meaning he intended his readers to derive from it." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 58.]

<sup>199</sup>"Philo uses καθοράω 34 times.<sup>2</sup> The relation to sense perception is here less prominent (only Det. Pot. Ins., 87; Agr., 95; Op. Mund., 45, 54; Leg. All., II, 26; Sobr., 6). Elsewhere the ref. is to intellectual perception, as may be seen partly from the obj. (e.g., Leg. All., II, 57; Ebr., 83), partly from God as subj. (e.g., Migr. Abr., 135; Spec. Leg., I, 330, cf. τὸ θεῖον, Som., I, 91), partly from the use which connects ὀφθαλμός and ὄμμα with διάνοια (Spec. Leg., I, 54; Poster. C., 118) or ψυχή (Conf. Ling., 92; Congr., 145; Gig., 44; Plant.,

better than has been the case.

How did Paul do it? First a summary of the Jewish side, then followed by the Greco-Roman side, and finally the Christian distinctives.

**Jewish side.** Unquestionably the starting point for Paul's depiction of human depravity begins with the Hebrew Bible. The holiness code of Leviticus becomes the source of understanding for morality, while the creation accounts in Genesis 1-2 define the core issue of human sinfulness. Both texts are located in the very authoritative Torah, the Law of Moses, and thus take on additional importance for anyone with Jewish heritage, like that of the apostle Paul. With a segment of the Christian community possessing that same Jewish heritage, and a portion of the non-Jewish segment coming out of the God-fearers who were sympathetic to the moral teachings of the Jews, the apostle was communicating to an audience who understood this perspective quite well.

But Paul's treatment of the Torah in his discussion of vv. 18-32 also reflects a contemporary Jewish interpretation of the Torah, especially a Hellenistic Jewish viewpoint. He demonstrates awareness of numerous Jewish texts on human depravity that were produced in the first century BCE and first century AD worlds. The exegesis above attempts to explore many of these texts, as well as provide full referencing of these sources. Both terms, phrases, and core concepts of Hellenistic Jewish writings in the same general time period are borrowed and usually slightly modified in meaning by the apostle. Compare for example πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων (v. 18) with their use in Philo's *Quod Deus Immutabilis sit.* 112; *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.215; *De Praemiis et Poenis* 105.<sup>198</sup> Familiar terms even with slightly modified meanings communicated well to Paul's readership. An example of this is also καθοράω in v. 20. It is widely used in Hellenistic Jewish writings but not with the exact same meaning as in Rom. 1:20.<sup>199</sup> In the limited LXX use of καθοράω the idea of sense perception is mostly referenced, but in the Hellenistic Jewish usage intellectual perception is

dominant. Paul reaches back to sense perception in his use in Rom. 1:20. He also links the sense perception of καθοράω with intellectual perception via the use of νοούμενα -- something not found in the Hellenistic Jewish writings.

What becomes very clear from close scrutinizing of the terminology used by Paul is a very thorough knowledge of the Hellenistic Jewish literature of his time. Its essential understanding of the Torah Paul adopts but not without some modification to more clearly reflect his Christian understanding.

**Greco-Roman side.** Of course the clearest illustration of his knowledge of the Greco-Roman approach to the material world and to morality developed by the philosophers is the use of the very non-Jewish idea of 'nature,' φύσις (cf. v. 26).<sup>200</sup> To be sure this idea does surface in some of the

Hellenistic Jewish literature, e.g., *Testament of Naphtali* 3:2-4, but the idea is very Greek and Roman in origin. This frame of reference regarding the wrongness of homosexual activity became a much easier way of making the apostle's point that such actions are the product of ἀκαθαρσίαν, **impurity**, which dishonors the body (τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν; v. 24). Such πάθη ἀτιμίας, **dishonoring passions** (v. 26) as homosexual actions represent **God's wrath** ὀργή θεοῦ (v. 18) totally overwhelming the participants with God's abandonment of them (παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς...; vv. 24, 26, 28).

While homosexual activity was especially prevalent among Greeks, it plagued the Roman culture as well but not as extensively.<sup>201</sup> It was virtually nonexistent among Jewish people, even Hellenistic Jews, because of the capital offense penalty attached to it in the Torah (Lev. 18, 20) and prac-

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22; cf. Leg. All., III, 171, ψυχικῶς II, 81). There is also a plain connection with intellectual perception in the common phrase ὀξὺ καθορᾶν, Deus Imm., 63; Fug., 19, 121 etc.; Virt., 5 shows dependence on Plat. Leg., I, 631 c; → 335. Since God is subj. when there is a link with ἀόρατα in Deus Imm., 29 and ἀθέατα in Migr. Abr., 115, there is no par. to R. 1:20 (Sobr., 6, where we have ἀθέατα, is obviously not a par.). That there is no connection with νοῦς (par. to that with διάνοια or ψυχή, → supra), seems to be plainly linked with the fact that Philo does not use ὀφθαλμὸς τοῦ νοῦ, → 376. καθοράω and νοῦς are even in antithesis in Leg. All., II, 26. When we turn to Joseph., the use of καθοράω, as one would expect from the mostly narrative character of his writings, is predominantly for sense perception, e.g., Ant., 8, 106; 9, 84; Bell., 1, 59; 3, 241 and 286; 6, 64. The sense 'to look down,' still to be seen in Ant., 15, 412, is so far lost in 3, 36 that καθορᾶν can be used of seeing Moses as he came down from the mount. But we also find the transf. sense 'to perceive,' 'to inspect,' e.g., Bell., 2, 523; 3, 130 and 331; 4, 307; 7, 171." [Wilhelm Michaelis, "Ὀράω, Εἶδον, Βλέπω, Ὀπτάνομαι, Θεάομαι, Θεωρέω, Ἀόρατος, Ὀρατός, Ὀρασις, Ὀραμα, Ὀπτασία, Αὐτόπτης, Ἐπόπτης, Ἐποπεύω, Ὀφθαλμὸς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 5:379.*

<sup>200</sup>Differing background standards defined what was natural and unnatural. Early on φύσις referred to plants and the distinctive forms and growth patterns by groupings or types which we label as species. Each plant had a φύσις.

Later the term began to be applied to humans with reference to distinctive forms. A male possessed a certain φύσις, while the female another φύσις. These are established at birth and thus govern how life is to be lived out. (Isocr. 4, 105 φύσει πολίτης; Isaeus 6, 28 φύσει υἱός; Pla., Menex. 245d φύσει βάρβαροι, νόμῳ Ἕλληνες; Just., A I, 1, 1 Καίσαρος φύσει υἱῶ; SIG 720, 3; OGI 472, 4; 558, 6 al.; PFay 19, 11.—Theoph. Ant. 1, 13 [p. 86, 16]).

Phrases such ἡ φύσις ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη, human nature, gradually emerge where the idea is expanded to include inner qualities as well as outward shape of the body: Pla., Tht. 149b, Tim. 90c; Aristot. 1286b, 27; Epict. 2, 20, 18; Philo, Ebr. 166 al.; Aelian, VH 8, 11 τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσις θνητή; TestJob 3:3 ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φ.; Orig., C. Cels. 1, 52, 13; Just., A II, 6, 3 τῇ φύσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Eventually in the Greek thinking "φύσις is everything which by its origin or by observation of its constitution seems to be a given." [Helmut Köster, "Φύσις, Φυσικός, Φυσικῶς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 9:253.*] Philosophical streams such as the Ionian thinking extends the idea to the abstract idea of what constitutes the precise nature of a human being measured against the idealized non-material world. That is, an ultimate human being exists in abstraction and serves as the standard for measuring natural and unnatural in the material realm.

In Stoic moral philosophy the 'unnatural' and the 'against nature' come to be designated by κατὰ / παρὰ φύσιν. Note Paul's τὴν παρὰ φύσιν (Rom. 1:26) implying the full expression τὴν παρὰ φύσιν χρῆσιν. For Stoics the telos formula, the objective of life formula, of achieving as close to perfection as possible grows out of the idealized φύσις in this life. Thus living in conformity to this φύσις is essential to achieving such a goal.

Here the moral questioning of homosexual conduct comes into the picture here since such activity is παρὰ φύσιν, **against nature**. Thus such behavior is to be avoided. It pushes the individual deeper into corruption thus away from the telos objective of perfection. (Diod S 32, 11, 1 παρὰ φύσιν ὁμιλία; Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 109 §511; Athen. 13, 605d οἱ παρὰ φύσιν τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ χρώμενοι=those who indulge in Aphrodite contrary to nature; TestNapht 3:4; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 39 ὁ παιδεραστής τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ἡδονὴν διώκει=a lover of boys pursues unnatural pleasure; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 273; Tat. 3:4; Ath. 26, 2; on φ. as definer of order s. JKube, TEXNH und APETH '69, esp. 44-46; on relation to κτίσι in Paul, s. OWischmeyer, ZTK 93, '96, 352-75). [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1070.*]

<sup>201</sup>Cf. H. Licht, *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932), esp. 411-98*

ticed among the Jews.<sup>202</sup> Other ANE ethnic groups had similar traditions. The discussions of both lesbianism and homosexuality in the Hellenistic Jewish literature are from the vantage point of this horrific corruption of human life by the pagan Gentiles.

But among the Greek and Roman moral philosophers such as Seneca whose life span almost exactly matched that of the apostle Paul, homosexual activity was typically seen as unnatural.<sup>203</sup> Both birth and the idealized abstraction of human φύσις mandated heterosexual activity as the norm, the natural. Indulging in homosexual actions represented enslavement to degrading, de-humanizing passions that made progress toward the *telos* objective of perfection impossible for the philosophers.

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D. M. Robinson and E. Fluck, *A Study of Greek Love-Names, Including a Discussion of Paederasty and Prosopographia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1937; repr. New York: Arno, 1979)

K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978)

<sup>202</sup>See Let Aris 152; Philo, De Abrahamo 26.135–36; De specialibus legibus 2.14.50; Josephus, Contra Apion 2.25, 199; Sib Or 2:73; 3:185–87, 594–600, 763; 5:386–433; 2 En 10:4; T Levi 14:6; 17:11; T Naph 4:1. [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016).]

<sup>203</sup>"The whole problem of the Greek concept of nature comes to light in the idea of natural law. To be sure, φύσις is always a final court and never a created thing. On the one side, however, it can be grasped only rationally, so that knowledge of it, including the norms derived from nature, will always be open to discussion. On the other hand it rules out the power of human decision, since the knowledge of nature leads to a close-knit causal nexus from which man cannot escape to the degree that he is himself nature. Freedom is thus possible only in the inwardness or spirituality in which man is either ready for concurrence in virtue of his freedom of soul (as in Middle and Later Stoicism under the obvious influence of Plato and the Academy) or he turns away from the natural world altogether (as in Gnosticism). Only the Jewish and Christian belief in nature as the creation of God was able to solve these problems. And only here did the concept of natural law become significant, since man could relate himself to the Creator and Lawgiver as the ultimate critical court." [Helmut Köster, "Φύσις, Φυσικός, Φυσικῶς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:266.]

<sup>204</sup>**Lev. 20:13.** καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῆ μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικός, βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφοτέροι· θανατούσθωσαν, ἔνοχοί εἰσιν.†

**If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.**

**Lev. 18:22-23.** 22καὶ μετὰ ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικός· βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστίν.† 23καὶ πρὸς πᾶν τετράπου οὐ δώσεις τὴν κοίτην σου εἰς σπερματισμὸν ἐκμανθῆναι πρὸς αὐτό, καὶ γυνή οὐ στήσεται πρὸς πᾶν τετράπου βιβασθῆναι· μυσερὸν γάρ ἐστίν.†

**22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. 23 You shall not have sexual relations with any animal and defile yourself with it, nor shall any woman give herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it: it is perversion.**

<sup>205</sup>"From the basic stem with its sense of causing abhorrence.<sup>1</sup> βδελυρός and its derivatives βδελυρέομαι and βδελυρία are often found in the secular field to denote an improper attitude, often in connection with such related expressions as ἀναίσχυντος, μαρὸς, θρασύς. In particular this word group denotes a shameless attitude.<sup>2</sup> Also deriving from this stem are the words βδελύσσομαι, βδελυγμία, βδέλυγμα, βδελυκτός, βδελυγμός; the last three are not found except in Jewish and Christian literature;<sup>3</sup> βδελύσσομαι is a middle pass. with acc. in the sense of "to loathe," "to abhor," though it later takes on the more intensive meaning of "to censure" or "to reject."<sup>4</sup>

βδελυρός and its derivatives are not found in biblical usage,<sup>5</sup> but the word group associated with βδελύσσομαι emerges the more strongly in the LXX. The act. form seems to take on the sense of "to make abhorrent" or "to cause to be abhorred" (Ex. 5:21; Lv. 11:43; 1 Macc. 1:48) with the class. sense of the mid. and the further common sense of "to abhor," "to reject," as also with the true pass. of "to come to be abhorred" (Is. 49:7; 2 Macc. 5:8; Sir. 20:8). The perf. pass. has the sense of "to be abhorrent or unclean" (Hos. 9:10; Lv. 18:30; Job 15:16 [with ἀκάθαρτος]; Prv. 8:7; 28:9; Is. 14:19; 3 Macc. 6:9). There are also examples of the pass. in the sense of "to act abominably" (3 Bas. 20:26; ψ 13:1; 52:1). Corresponding to the sense of "to abhor" is βδέλυγμα, "the subject of abhorrence," βδελυκτός as a verbal adj. "abhorrent," "unclean," βδελυγμός (Na. 3:6) == βδελυκτός νομίζεσθαι.

"The constructions deriving from the stem βδελυρ- are not found in the Bible because the Bible is not concerned to emphasise the abhorrent nature of things but to describe in a plastic and anthropomorphic expression the attitude and judgment of God in relation to things which He hates. Fundamental to the concept βδέλυγμα, βδελύττεσθαι in the LXX is the fact that God has a contrary mind and rejects; this is the guiding rule for the people Israel. In the legal parts of the Bible the reference may be to things which are culturally (== aestheti-

in the OT, denotes something / someone utterly hated by God, and in His judgment such individuals must be removed.

The apostle does not deal with the community responsibility to carry out that divine judgment via executing the individuals largely because the issue he is dealing with at Rome is not an insider issue. But the idea of a divine judgment penalty is maintained by linking the penalty to ὀργή θεοῦ, **God's wrath**. The temporal judgment nature of the OT demand now becomes the destructive impact of πάθη ἀτιμίας, **dishonoring passions**, overwhelming the

participates. God's action of 'walking away' from such individuals (παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς...) becomes the implimentation of His wrath in a temporal judgment. Thus Paul develops the Christian perspective on the basis of the Hebrew / Jewish theological foundation.

Paul's basic dependence (vv. 18-20) upon Jewish perspectives is additionally seen in his placing divine revelation in the material world created by God.<sup>206</sup> And yet the way he uses these Jewish perspectives is distinctive to Paul with the emphasis upon a 'general revelation' thesis in the created

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cally?) 'unclean,' 'repugnant' or 'abhorrent,' and especially to certain pagan things which are particularly abominable to the God of the OT. Thus idols themselves (== שְׁקִיזִים) may be called βδελύγματα. This usage is found in the writing prophets (Isa. 13:27; 39:35; 51:22; Ez. 5:9, 11; 6:9 etc.), but in them there is an extension which makes βδελύγμα parallel to ἀνομία (Jer. 4:1; Ez. 11:18; 20:30; Am. 6:8; ψ 5:7; 13:1; 52:1; 118:163; Job 15:16). In the Wisdom literature this development leads to the point where the opposition to paganism disappears and the word simply denotes God's hostility to evil (Prv. 8:7; 11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8 f., 26; 20:17; 21:27).

This mode of expression persists in the Rabbinic lit. (M. Ex. 20:21: תועבה כל גבהי לבב קרוים; תועבה כל גבהי לבב קרוים),<sup>6</sup> though the older usage is also found, cf. the reference to the command to abstain from certain meats in terms of "abhorring" them (b. AZ, 66a == b. Chul., 114b; b. Shab., 145b שקוצים). The word group תעב is also used of those who are permanently or temporarily forbidden to marry (b. Nidd., 70a; j. Jeb., 4, 6b and b. Jeb., 11b; in 44b מתועב לפני המקום means abhorred by God).

"In many passages of the Torah especially the question might be raised how far there is perhaps a natural aesthetic as well as a religious element in the word group βδελυκ-,<sup>7</sup> as, for example, when the eating of certain animals is described as an abomination, or incest or pagan ways of life are called abominable. Probably for the OT, which recognizes God as the Creator of the world which is good, the two elements are inseparable on profounder theological reflection, so that even in respect of what is abhorrent the view of God is basic.

The word group βδελυκ- in the LXX<sup>8</sup> is a. a regular translation of the word group תעב (92 times). There are 6 exceptions in Jer., Ezr., Chr., Ez.; and Prv. In Ez. the word group תעב occurs 44 times, and 30 times βδελυκ- is not used; ἀνομέω and derivatives are used in 24 of these. On 8 occasions out of 21 תעב is not rendered βδελυκ- in Prv., ἀκάθαρτος, ἀκαθαρσία are used 5 times. Again, b. βδελυκ- is used relatively infrequently for certain Heb. terms for idols, along with other attempted renderings such as ἔδωλον, γλυπτόν, χειροποίητον, μάταιον, δαμόνιον, ἔνθυμα, ἐπιτήδευμα. c. It is used quite often for the word group שִׁגְרָה (9 times in Lv., 20 in the prophets incl. Da., elsewhere only 3 times), along with such renderings as προσοχθίζειν, προσόχθισμα.

The LXX continued the extension of the term begun in the prophets, and helped to liberate it from natural and aesthetic connections (→ 598), partly by equating it with ethical concepts like ἀνομία (for תועבה, 599), and partly by pouring into it the purely ethical content acquired by תועבה especially in Prv. (→ 598), and thus giving it a completely new orientation. This is particularly plain in Sir. 15:13, where the LXX has πᾶν βδελύγμα for the double term רעה ותועבה. As an expression of the dualistic antithesis between the will of God and that of man, βδελύγμα can also denote the repugnance of the ungodly to the will of God (Prv. 29:27; Sir. 1:25; 13:20).

"In the use of the word group βδελυκ- in the OT, there is reflected some part of the obligation of Israel to separate itself from everything pagan in the natural life of the people. In the NT this conflict is loosed from its national and natural foundation. Hence the word is not much used. At R. 2:22: ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς, there is correspondence to the secular use, though also a hint of paganism. In Rev. we are more in the sphere of OT and Rabbinic usage, as shown by the fact that βδελύγματα in 17:4f. are "abominations linked with heathenism," and by the similar allusion in 21:8: τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμακοῖς καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος ... ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ ..., and 21:27: πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ὁ ποιῶν βδελύγμα καὶ ψεῦδος ... In Tt. 1:16: βδελυκτοὶ ὄντες καὶ ἀπειθεῖς, the reference is more general. Jesus follows the prophetic use and that of the Wisdom literature in Lk. 16:15: τὸ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν βδελύγμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. While βδελύγμα has here its very concrete significance, and thus denotes the object of the strongest (because natural) aversion among men, it also serves to express the reaction of the holy will of God to all that is esteemed among men; it thus breaks quite free from the natural and aesthetic and also the cultic connotation.

"In Mk. 13:14 and par.: ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδελύγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ,<sup>9</sup> the expression βδελύγμα ἐρημώσεως is taken from Da. 12:11, where it denotes the desecration of the temple by an image or altar of Zeus. It thus refers to Antichrist, as shown by the masc. construction and a comparison with 2 Th. 2:3 f."

[Werner Foerster, "Βδελύσσομαι, Βδελύγμα, Βδελυκτός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:598-600.]

<sup>206</sup>"It was for Jews a matter of God's revelation of the basic features regarding himself that he consciously built into in his creation, and not that of people's ability to ferret out such features by their own intellect or reasoning. That is, for Jews even an elemental knowledge of God did not constitute some sort of 'natural theology' that bases itself on human reason and works its way back inductively by means of a succession of observable effects and postulated causes to some non-personal 'first cause' or 'unmoved mover.' Instead, a 'revelation in creation' has been implanted and maintained by God himself in the fabric of the universe that he himself created — a revelation that calls on all of God's creation, both personal and non-personal, to respond to God, the creator, appropriately. Such a 'general revelation' in creation, together with the relation of that revelation to God's 'special revelation' in the written Torah, is eloquently portrayed in Ps 19, with the 'general revelation' in creation spoken of in vv. 1-6 (which begin with the affirmation 'the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies

world. Both the Wisdom of Solomon 13:1-9<sup>207</sup> and the [Sibylline Oracles 3:8-45](#) present these basic ideas differently. He clearly is not quoting any sources, although the formal structuring of his ideas suggests some basic dependency upon external sources.<sup>208</sup>

proclaim the work of his hands') and God's 'special revelation' highlighted in vv. 7–13 (which begins with the declaration 'the Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple'). To such a divine revelation in two forms, the only truly appropriate human response is that set out in v. 14: 'May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.'

"God's revelation in creation is also referred to in a number of Jewish writings composed during the period of Second Temple Judaism, and so during a time roughly contemporary with Paul—most prominently Wis 13:1–9 (cited earlier) and Sib Or 3:8–45. Most often the references to God's revelation in creation in these materials of Second Temple Judaism are to be found in discussions of how Abraham came to recognize the existence of God.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, there appear in the Talmud similar statements about how the patriarch Abraham came to discover the existence of God by reasoning back from what exists in creation to a first cause, as in Genesis Rabbah 38:13 and 39:1.<sup>77</sup>

"Paul was hardly original in arguing that although God is invisible, his basic attributes—that is, 'his eternal power and divine nature' (ἡ τε ἀϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης) — (1) can be discerned from his creation and so to some extent (2) can be 'understood by what has been made' (τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα). Further, it appears evident from his statements here in 1:19–20 that Paul believed that every person, in whatever time, place, or circumstance, knew the basic truths about God because of God's revelation of himself in his creation. And while such a basic knowledge of God as revealed in God's creation is hardly ever alluded to in his letters to his own Christian converts (i.e., other than here in his letter to Rome), it comes to the fore in two contextualized forms in Luke's portrayals of Paul's evangelistic preaching to Gentiles: first in Acts 14:15–17 to a group of Gentile country people, then in Acts 17:24–27 to a group of Gentile philosophers who viewed themselves as knowledgeable and sophisticated."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 209–210.]

<sup>207</sup>**Wis. 13:1-9 NRSV.** 13.1 Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει, οἷς παρῆν θεοῦ ἀγνωσία καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀγαθῶν οὐκ ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι τὸν ὄντα οὔτε τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντες ἐπέγνωσαν τὸν τεχνίτην, † 2 ἀλλ' ἢ πῦρ ἢ πνεῦμα ἢ ταχινὸν ἀέρα ἢ κύκλον ἀστρῶν ἢ βίαιον ὕδωρ ἢ φωστῆρας οὐρανοῦ πρυτάνεις κόσμου θεοῦς ἐνόμισαν. † 3 ὡν εἰ μὲν τῇ καλλονῇ τερπόμενοι ταῦτα θεοῦς ὑπελάμβανον, γνῶτωσαν πόσω τούτων ὁ δεσπότης ἐστὶ βελτίων, ὁ γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους γενεσιάρχης ἔκτισεν αὐτά· † 4 εἰ δὲ δύναμις καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐκπλαγέντες, νοησάτωσαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν πόσω ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτά δυνατώτερός ἐστιν· † 5 ἐκ γὰρ μεγέθους καὶ καλλονῆς κτισμάτων ἀναλόγως ὁ γενεσιουργὸς αὐτῶν θεωρεῖται. † 6 ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπὶ τούτοις μέμψις ἐστὶν ὀλίγη, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ τάχα πλανῶνται θεὸν ζητοῦντες καὶ θέλοντες εὐρεῖν· † 7 ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ ἀναστρεφόμενοι διερευνῶσιν καὶ πείθονται τῇ ὄψει, ὅτι καλὰ τὰ βλεπόμενα. † 8 πάλιν δ' οὐδ' αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί· † 9 εἰ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι ἵνα δύνωνται στοχάσασθαι τὸν αἰῶνα, τὸν τούτων δεσπότην πῶς τάχιον οὐχ εὔρον; †

13.1 For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; 2 but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. 3 If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them. 4 And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who formed them. 5 For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator. 6 Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him. 7 For while they live among his works, they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful. 8 Yet again, not even they are to be excused; 9 for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

<sup>208</sup>"The passage shows a highly formal structure (cf. the presentation of the text above). First comes an overarching thematic statement (v 18) of the revelation of God's wrath in the face of human wickedness that 'suppresses the truth' (about God). Then, by way of presupposition to what is to come, this suppression is shown to be 'inexcusable' (vv 19–20). There follows the main statement in three great 'waves' flowing across the text (vv 21–31) each hinging around the striking statement, 'God gave them up' (v 24; v 26; v 28). The 'waves' do not refer to three separate, sequential instances of rupture in divine-human relations. Each points to the same 'original' lapse on the human side and the same corresponding reaction of God. The repetition drives home the all-important correspondence between human failure with respect to God and the lapse into captivity to all manner of viciousness that follows." [Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 6, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 64.]

<sup>209</sup>"Structurally significant for the development of the exposition in 1:18–32 is the threefold repetition of (μετ)ῆλλαξαν in vv 23, 25, and 26, matched by the threefold repetition of παρέδωκεν in vv 24, 26, and 28. These create a powerful sense of the vicious circle of human sin — failure to acknowledge God leading to degenerate religion and behavior, human pride reaping the fruit of human depravity (vv 24, 26–27) and general nastiness (vv 29–31). Popkes's structural analysis points to vv 19–20 as focusing the principal emphasis on human inexcusableness. Quite influential has been Klostermann's division of vv 22–32 into three sections (vv 22–24, 25–27, 28–32), determined by the idea of the appropriateness of the judgment to the sin described. Maillot notes the threefold development: vv 19–23—sin against the truth of God; vv 24–27—sin against nature; vv 28–32—sin against others.

"Also indicative of Paul's ability as a writer are the neat wordplays ἀφάρτου// φθαρτοῦ, κτίσει// κτίσαντα, ἄρσενες// ἄρσενισιν, ἐδοκίμασαν // ἀδόκιμον, φθόνου// φόνου, and

leads to divine judgment here presented as God walking away from rebellious humanity to let it be consumed by its own destructive passions. How this divine wrath implements itself through humanity's destructive passions (vv. 26-31) is distinctively Pauline in presentation and is not found elsewhere. Then the linking of this divine wrath (vv. 18-32) as an expression of God's righteousness (vv. 16-17) is also uniquely Pauline.

**7) The timeless teaching of Jesus and the apostles is that deviate sexual behavior of all kinds precludes one from being in the Kingdom of God both now and in eternity.**

Several timeless aspects of Rom. 1:18-27 should become clear by now. Most importantly, deviant sexual behavior, which means sexual activity outside of formal marriage, is now, has always been, and will forever be abhorrent to our holy God. Paul makes this abundantly clear using the foundation of the OT and traditional Hellenistic Jewish viewpoints. Homosexual activity is highlighted not because it is worse than adultery<sup>210</sup> or immorality<sup>211</sup> but simply because to a Greco-Roman readership its evil nature

ἀσυνέτους // ἀσυνθέτους in vv 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, and 31, and the formulation of the vice list in vv 29–31, starting with its four general words ending with -ία, and rounded off with the alliterative sequence of four (or five!) beginning with the negative ἀ-. Black notes that vv 28–32 read like part of a spoken diatribe: 'they resemble, in some respects, the section in Attic comedy known to the ancient rhetoricians as the pnigos, a long passage to be spoken in a single breath.'

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 53–54.]

<sup>210</sup>**adultery**, illicit sexual relations with someone other than one's marriage partner. In the OT adultery had a precise and limited definition: sexual relations between a married (or betrothed) woman and any man other than her husband. Adultery, therefore, was committed only against a husband, never against a wife. It was considered a most grievous transgression (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Lev. 18:20), to be punished by the death of both parties (Deut. 22:22-24). There is no actual evidence that this punishment was ever carried out, but it may have been in certain instances, and the threat of execution still existed in the first century (cf. John 7:53-8:11). The law was probably intended to ensure that any child born to the wife was really the husband's child, since it was considered crucial for the husband to have offspring, so that the family name could be perpetuated.

"In the NT period, it appears that the definition of adultery was extended in its scope. For example, the teaching of Jesus was understood to mean that a husband could now be held responsible for committing adultery against his wife (Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18). Adultery was forbidden by various NT writers (Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:19; James 2:11).

"Adultery was sometimes used as a symbol of the unfaithfulness of the people toward God (e.g., Hos. 9:1; Matt. 12:39)."

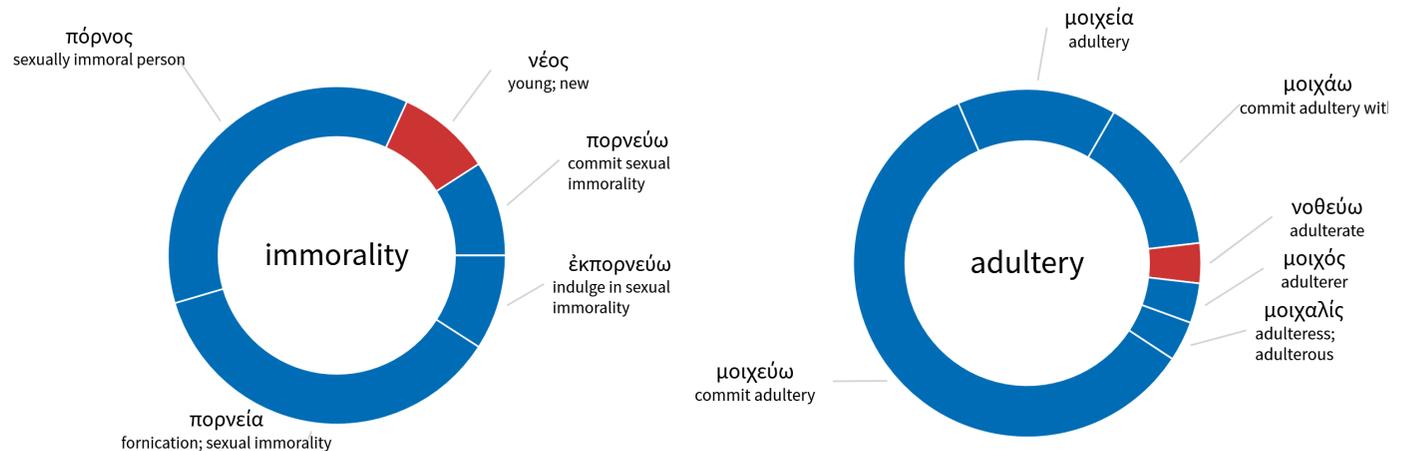
[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 13–14.]

<sup>211</sup>**IMMORALITY** (Gk. porneía).† Sexual activity contrary to biblical principles. The RSV also translates the Greek term as 'fornication' (so KJV throughout), 'unchastity,' and 'impurity.'

"Paul is particularly concerned with such behavior, listing it among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). He views it as a deterrent to participation in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21) and suggests marriage as a proper preventative to immoral sexuality (1 Cor. 7:2). Specific concerns include incest (5:1) and prostitution (6:12–20; cf. 2 Cor. 12:21).

"In the book of Revelation, immortality is used figuratively with regard to pagan practices, including idolatry and sacred prostitution (Rev. 2:14, 20–21)."

[Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 518.]



was easier to demonstrate, especially in light of the moral philosophers' negative stance toward it. And what Paul condemns is homosexual activity of every kind. No legitimate argument for Paul intending only one type of such practice is possible either in Rom. 1:26-27 nor 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10. Paul's view is based on the Lev. 18 and 20 condemnation of homosexuality inclusively.

To be sure, such practices of homosexuality existed in the pagan society of Rome and generally were condemned by the moral philosophers such as the Stoic philosopher Seneca. But this negative view outside Jewish and Christian perspectives was very different. It saw homosexuality as

'unnatural' and this meant being based upon human lust which inherently was ruinous to successful achievement of the *telos* objective of perfection and mastery of the corrupt material side of existence. For Paul -- and for Hellenistic Jewish writers also -- homosexuality was an abomination to the holy God and represented not only something He hates but also condemns as violating His commands and objectives for procreation via sexual actions, τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας (v. 27). Yet, here and especially in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10, the sin of homosexual activity is not worse than every other sexual action outside of marriage.

The implication of Paul in 1:26-27 is that deviant sexual activity represents rebellion against God and that such actions bring upon the individual God's wrath both in this life and in eschatological judgment. In both the Hebrew Bible and in early Christianity, formal marriage of a man and a woman to one another is tremendously valued as something sacred to Almighty God. Gen. 2:24 remained the standard for both Judaism and Christianity well past the beginning Christian century.<sup>212</sup> And it will remain the standard until the end of time. Any sexual action beyond those inside marriage constitute deviant sexual behavior that is condemned by God. And one should also especially note from 1 Cor 6 and 1 Tim 1, as well as some other NT texts, that this deviant sexual behavior defined inclusively prohibits one from being a part of the Kingdom of God both now and in eternity.<sup>213</sup>

### 10.3.3.2.1.2.3 God handed them over to a debased mind, 1:28-32

28 Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, 29 πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς 30 καταλάλους θεοσυγεῖς ὕβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 31 ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας· 32 οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

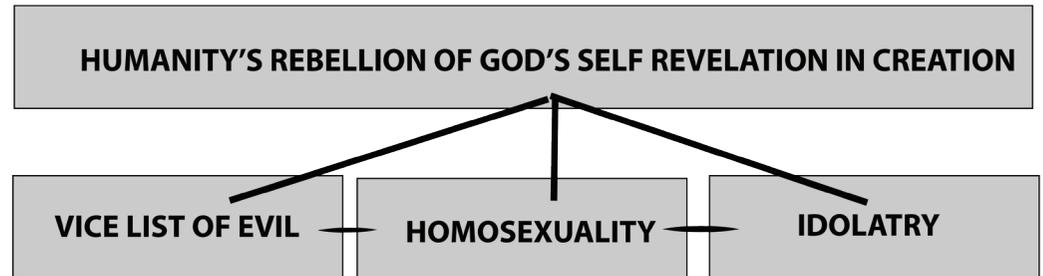
28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with

<sup>212</sup>Gen. 2:24 LXX. ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.†

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

<sup>213</sup>For more details see my listing of the "New Testament Vice Lists" at [cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com).

## ROMANS 1:18-32 STRUCTURAL OUTLINE



The sequence is simply:

- 1) God reveals Himself in creating the world (vv. 18-20)
- 2) Sinful humanity rejects that self revelation in creation (vv. 21-23)
- 3) God turns humanity over to its own self destructive passions (vv. 24-32)

**God's action produces a human action to which God in turn responds.** The grammatical structure is formal and well defined. Humanity wanted nothing to do with God whom they couldn't control. So they turn to idolatry in worshiping aspects of the creation. Humanity becomes without excuse in such rebellion against their Creator. The ruinous nature of such rebellion becomes clear when God responds (vv. 24-31). "Like clods of dirt falling in on top of the casket," God walks away from humanity in turning it over to its own destructive passions. Note the threefold repetition of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... in vv. 24, 26, 28. This is His response to their turning creation into an object of worship: μετήλλαξαν (vv. 25, 26) and οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει (v. 28). This divine reaction to humanity's rebellion is seen as ὀργὴ θεοῦ, God's wrath (v. 18). All of this is in turn seen as a part of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, God's righteousness (v. 17).

One should not see a 'staircasing' of the three expressions of παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... in vv. 24, 26, 28. These are essentially three directions of divine wrath implemented upon humanity in its rebellion against God. Inner connection among the three do indeed exist, but each stands separately as an expression of God's wrath.

every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heart-

less, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die — yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

This third of the three uses of the formula παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... in vv. 18-32 introduces a vice listing of sinful actions as expressions of God's wrath. The expansion elements immediately attached to the verb παρέδωκεν are distinct for each instance.

εἰς...:

v. 24, εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, *to uncleanness*

v. 26, εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, *to dishonoring passions*

v. 28, εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, *to a debased mind*

connectors:

v. 24, Διὸ, *wherefore*

1.28 Καὶ  
καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν  
ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει,  
**20 παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς**  
εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,  
ποιεῖν τὰ ἴμῃ καθήκοντα,  
1.29 πεπληρωμένους  
| πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ  
| πονηρίᾳ  
| πλεονεξίᾳ  
| κακίᾳ,  
μεστοὺς φθόνου  
| φόνου  
| ἔριδος  
| δόλου  
| κακοθεΐας,  
1.30 ψιθυριστὰς  
καταλάλους  
θεοσυγεῖς  
ὑβριστὰς  
ὑπερηφάνους  
ἀλαζόνας,  
ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν,  
γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,  
1.31 ἀσυνέτους  
ἀσυνθέτους  
ἀστόργους  
ἀνελεήμονας·  
1.32 οἵτινες τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες  
| ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες  
| ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν,  
----- οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν  
| ἀλλὰ  
| καὶ  
----- συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσοσιν.

v. 26, Διὰ τοῦτο, **for this reason**

v. 28, Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, **and just as they did not wish to have God in their understanding.**

purpose / result infinitives:

v. 24, τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, **so that they might dishonor their bodies among themselves**

v. 26, -----

v. 28, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, **so that they might do the things not proper to do.**

The remaining expansion elements move to the distinctive emphasis of each unit of expression, usually a single sentence.<sup>214</sup> First, an emphasis upon idolatry. Second, an emphasis upon homosexuality. Third, a general listing of vices. All of which becomes expression of ὀργὴ θεοῦ, **God's wrath.**

This third stating of παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... in v. 28 has the most extensive set of modifiers of the three instances. Of course, the meaning of this core expression here remains the same as with the previous two instances in vv. 24 and 26. What God handed rebellious humanity over to in this third instance is εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, **to a debased mind.** Contextually, this compares to εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, **to dishonoring passions** (v. 26) and εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, **to uncleanness** (v. 24). Clearly, these three items are intended to expand ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία, **they became crazy in their thinking and their senseless heart became darkened** (v. 21). The darkness of indescribable evil descended over their thinking and decision making abilities, just like a totally blinding fog.

<sup>214</sup>The three sentences are 1) vv. 24-25; 2) vv. 26-27; and 3) vv. 28-32. The core expression is παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς..., **God handed them over to....**

<sup>215</sup>νοῦς is part of a large word group of terms built off the common stem: νοέω, νοῦς, νόημα, ἀνόητος, ἄνοια, δυσνόητος, διάνοια, διανόημα, ἔννοια, εὐνοέω, εὐνοια, κατανοέω, μετανοέω, μετάνοια, ἀμετανόητος, προνοέω, πρόνοια, ὑπονοέω, ὑπόνοια, νοουθετέω, νοουθεσία

[Johannes Behm and Ernst Würthwein, "Νοέω, Νοῦς, Νόημα, Ἀνόητος, Ἄνοια, Δυσνόητος, Διάνοια, Διανόημα, Ἔννοια, Εὐνοέω, Εὐνοια, Κατανοέω, Μετανοέω, Μετάνοια, Ἀμετανόητος, Προνοέω, Πρόνοια, Ὑπονοέω, Ὑπόνοια, Νοουθετέω, Νοουθεσία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:948.]

<sup>216</sup>One should note that uniformly across OT and ancient Jewish writings the νοῦς is located τῇ καρδίᾳ, in the physical heart, rather than in the head. For instance, cf. John 12:40. Jewish use of this term is rather limited. "In Sir. and the Hexapla translators we do not find νοῦς (except for Sus. 9 Θ). There is in fact no clear Heb. equivalent for the Gk. term. Though νοῦς has many meanings, it is in the main too intellectualistic to be easily used by OT translators. Heb. cannot express intellect or reason, and this was the aspect of νοῦς which was obviously felt to be determinative, and which was avoided [G. Bertram]." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–). fn 3, page 953 of vol. 4]. Six of the 13 LXX uses of νοῦς translate either כֵּץ (*lēḥ*) or כִּבְּץ (*lē-ḥāḥ*), both meaning heart.

<sup>217</sup>ἀδόκιμος, *the opp. of δόκιμος, is used of persons* (ἀδόκιμοι σοφισταί, of Gk. historians, Jos. Ap., 2, 236; ὡς μὴ ... ἀδόκιμοι παντάπασιν ἐν τῇ πόλει γένοιτο, Xenoph. Resp. Lac., 3, 4) *and things* (... λόγοις καὶ βουλαῖς καὶ πράξεσιν ἀδοκίμοις ... Philo Conf. Ling., 198, τὸ ἀργύριον ... ἀδόκιμον, Is. 1:22)." [Walter Grundmann, "Δόκιμος, Ἀδόκιμος, Δοκιμή, Δοκίμιον, Δοκιμάζω, Ἀποδοκιμάζω, Δοκιμασία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:255.]

<sup>218</sup>**Rom. 1:21.** διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠγαπήθησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία.

Consequently they became controlled by religious and moral uncleanness, dishonoring passions, and a debased mind.

εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, **to a debased mind** references a mental capability completely nullified. νοῦς means mind as the faculty for intellectual perception, sometimes also for sensory perception. This can indicate either the entity for thinking or the process of thinking and forming intellectual ideas in the 24 NT uses.<sup>215</sup> It is overwhelmingly a Pauline word with 21 of these uses in the letters of Paul, and where Romans (6x) and First Corinthians (7x) reflect 13 of those instances.<sup>216</sup> The modifying adjective ἀδόκιμον with the alpha privative denotes something unqualified and thus worthless or useless.<sup>217</sup> The phrase ἀδόκιμον νοῦν means either a mind completely worthless for making correct decisions, or a process of thinking so unqualified as well. Probably both meanings are included in the expression. Thus in God's wrath, rebellious humanity was turned over to an incapacitated mind to make decisions about what to do.

With the connector Καὶ introducing this third unit, it is linked to the second unit (vv. 26-27) as another consequence of humanity's rebelling against God. But the adverbial comparative clause introduced by καθὼς sets up an interesting parallel to the discussion in v. 21.<sup>218</sup> Thus καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν

	<sup>1,28</sup> Καὶ	θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν
	καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν	ἐπιγνώσει,
	ἔχειν	<b>just as they</b>
	ἐν ἐπιγνώσει,	<b>did not wish</b>
20	παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς	<b>to have God</b>
	εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,	
	ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,	sion for each

in full understanding, repeats, in summary manner, v. 21. The idea here is acknowledgment of God in submission to Him. It gathers up the four previous assertions of rebellion in vv. 18, 21, 23, 25 into a concise accusation. The comparative aspect set up by the dependent conjunction καθώς means that just as they didn't want God, He then doesn't want them. Consequently He παρέδωκεν αὐτούς, [handed them over](#).

The verb ἐδοκίμασαν from δοκιμάζω, is graphically describing a negative desire, which is well captured by the NRSV with the English idiom [they did not see fit](#). Of course this is linked to the ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, [debased mind](#). And also it amplifies the ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία (v. 21) which comes with οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠυχάριστησαν (v. 21). And it occurs in spite of γνόντες τὸν θεὸν (v. 21). δοκιμάζω in this context means [accepting something as proven, thus to approve](#).<sup>219</sup> The concept both here and in v. 21 involves much more than mere intellectual perception of God. Thus γνόντες τὸν θεὸν (v. 21) via His creation opens the door potentially to ἐν ἐπιγνώσει (v. 28), that is, [full acknowledgment of God](#). And it is only this acknowledge that ultimately counts. This is the possibility offered by God through His creation action. But humanity instead [refused to glorify God and give thanks to Him](#) (v. 21, οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠυχάριστησαν). These actions define τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει (v. 28). Thus full acknowledgment of God requires the human response of praise and thanksgiving to God.

The rather unusual expression τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, [God to have in full knowledge](#), alludes specifically to the refusal to praise and give thanksgiving to God in v. 21. The infinitive phrase τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν direct object of [for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened](#).

<sup>219</sup>2) to draw a conclusion about worth on the basis of testing, *prove, approve*, here the focus is on the result of a procedure or examination.

a. *prove by testing*, of gold (Isocr., Panathen. 14, 39; SIG 334, 45 [on monetary assoc. s. other reff. in SEG XLII, 1851]; Pr 8:10; Sir 2:5; Wsd 3:6) **1 Pt 1:7** (on testing of character cp. Pind., P. 10, 67f); Hv 4, 3, 4; cp. **1 Cor 3:13** (JGnilka, Ist 1 Cor 3:10–15 ein Schriftzeugnis für d. Fegefeuer? '55). τὰς ψυχὰς Ἀρπτ 3.

b. *accept as proved, approve* (PEleph 1, 10; POxy 928, 7 ἵνα ἐὰν δοκιμάσης ποιήσης; PTebt 326, 10) w. acc. τι ISm 8:2. οὐς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε whom you consider qualified **1 Cor 16:3**. ἐδοκιμάσαμεν σπουδαῖον ὄντα we have tested and found him zealous **2 Cor 8:22**. ἐδοκίμασε γὰρ ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐνέγραψεν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν ἀριθμὸν τὸν ἡμέτερον Hs 9, 24, 4; cp. λίθους v 3, 5, 3. δ. τὸ ἀγάπης γνήσιον prove the genuineness of love **2 Cor 8:8**. ἐν ᾧ δοκιμάζει for what he approves **Ro 14:22**. δ. τὰ διαφέροντα approve (or discover s. under 1) what is essential **Ro 2:18; Phil 1:10**. W. inf. (Appian, Iber. 90 §392, Bell. Civ. 2, 114 §475; Jos., Ant. 2, 176, Vi. 161 simply = intend, wish) οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει they did not see fit to have a true knowledge of God **Ro 1:28** (anticipating the opposite in 12:2.—WReiss, 'Gott nicht kennen' im AT, ZAW 58, '40/41, 70–98). W. indir. quest. foll. δ., τί τὸ θέλημα τ. θεοῦ approve (or discover s. under 1) what God's will is **12:2**. Pass. (Prov. Aesopi 171 P. φίλος καὶ ἵππος ἐν ἀνάγκῃ δοκιμάζονται=stand the test; Jos., Ant. 3, 71) δεδοκιμάσμεθα we have been found worthy w. inf. foll. **1 Th 2:4a**. δεδοκιμασμένος tested, approved of genuine prophets D 11:11 (Diod S 4, 7, 1 δεδοκιμασμένος of the story writer who has a good reputation; cp. SIG 807, 9; PFay 106, 23; 2 Macc 4:3); cp. Hm 11, 7, 16 (s. 1 above); πνεῦμα δεδοκιμασμένον v 2, 4; of Jesus **Ac 2:22** D.—B. 652. DELG s.v. δοκάω etc. EDNT. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 255–256.]

the verb οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν conveys the sense of opting out of having God connected to them in any manner. The prepositional phrase ἐν ἐπιγνώσει defines the sphere of opting God out, that is, in full acknowledgement of Him. The deeper understanding specified by ἐπιγνώσις (cf. also 3:20; 10:2) carries in this context the sense of experiential acknowledgement of God. This is not mere intellectual acceptance of the idea of God. Rather, it is acknowledgment of God out of experiencing Him directly.

This is a blunt, graphic depiction of the larger expression in verse 21. It clearly defines a posture of rebellion and rejection. This in turn sets up the reaction of God to this rebellion. Humanity's rejection of God is not a rejection of the idea of God. In Paul's world, atheism rejected the idea of any and all gods. Consequently one would have found very few atheists in the first century Greco-Roman world where well over 99% of the population believed in deity of some sort. This rejection that Paul depicts here is not an adoption of atheism. Quite clearly, this rejection of the one true God is the adoption of substitute gods in idolatry. Just traveling through the larger cities of the Mediterranean world each with massive numbers of pagan temples dedicated to a whole host of idolatrous images would make this point very clearly.

The final adverbial modifier ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα of the main clause verb παρέδωκεν comes just before the lengthy adjectival participle phrase (vv. 29-32) introduced by πεπληρωμένους that reaches back to αὐτούς. This infinitive functions either as a purpose expression (in order to do) or possibly as a result expression (so that they have done). Syntactically it fulfills a function similar to τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν, [so that they dishonor](#)

their bodies, in v. 24b. Thus it stands in parallel structure to this earlier infinitival expression. Just as God hands humanity over to uncleanness so that they dishonor their bodies (v. 24), God also hands over humanity to a debased mind so that they do the things improper to do (v. 28). The inner connection of these two infinitive phrases coming off the identical verb should be clear. The second infinitive phrase essentially repeats the first one in the core idea. But additionally it also sets up the lengthy vice list that follows in vv. 29-31. The grammatical function of the two infinitives is the same and probably falls in the category of intended consequence. This is partly purpose -- anticipation of objective -- and partly result -- impact of the main verb action. Ancient Greek infinitives commonly fulfilled such a role in the literature.<sup>220</sup>

The idea of ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, to do the things not proper, is relatively clear. The present tense infinitive ποιεῖν shifts the emphasis from a

debased mind, ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, to a pattern of improper actions. Experientially the first leads to the second, and this is intended by Paul here as well. If one's thinking has been paralyzed to where it can't work correctly, inevitably then the person's actions are not going to work correctly either. Plus, Paul's point here is that God fully understood this when He turned humanity over to a debased mind.

The sense of propriety is expressed by καθήκοντα, the neuter plural accusative present participle form of καθήκω. Only used here in all of Paul's letters and just once elsewhere in the NT at Acts 22:22, this very Greek idea of what is permissible or allowable is designated.<sup>221</sup> For the Greek philosophers what constituted proper actions was κατόρθωμα, full duties. The delineation of these came out of philosophical reasoning.<sup>222</sup> The Stoic philosophical defining of improper with the label ἀμάρτημα gave some background to Paul's use here of τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα.<sup>223</sup> He did not label them

<sup>220</sup>"Purpose is only 'intended result,' as Burton<sup>4</sup> argues. Radermacher (N. T. Gr., p. 153) says that the difference between purpose and result in the inf. is often only in the more subjective or objective colouring of the thought. It is hard to draw a line between conceived result and intended result. Blass<sup>5</sup> explains a number of examples as result that I have put above under Purpose, as Rev. 5:5; 16:9. It is largely a matter of standpoint. The line of distinction is often very faint, if not wholly gone. Take Rev. 5:5, for instance, ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ἀνοῖξαι. The lion had opened the book and so it was actual result. So also Ac. 5:3, σιὰ τί ἐπλήρωσεν ὁ σατανᾶς τὴν καρδίαν σου, ψεύσασθαι σε. Ananias had actually lied. In the ancient Greek also the distinction between purpose and result was not sharply drawn.<sup>6</sup> The inf. may represent merely the content and not clearly either result or purpose, as in Eph. 3:6, εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη. Cf. also 4:22, ἀποθέσθαι. This is not a Hebraistic (Burton) idiom, but falls in naturally with the freer use of the inf. in the κοινή." [A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 2006), 1089.]

<sup>221</sup>"From popular use the term is adopted by Zeno (according to Diog. L., VII, 108) into the vocabulary of philosophy, where its use is varied and sometimes not wholly perspicuous.<sup>2</sup> In general one may say that τὸ καθήκον (or τὰ καθήκοντα) denotes that which is fitting or suitable for man, namely, the demands and actions which arise out of the claims of environment and which critical reason sees to be in harmony with his nature, cf. Diog. L., VII, 107 ff.; Stob. Ecl., II, 85, 12 ff. καθήκον is here to be distinguished from κατόρθωμα as the middle-point between κατόρθωμα and ἀμάρτημα. As such a μέσον it does not occupy morally neutral ground where actions are morally indifferent (Stob. Ecl., II, 86, 10 f.: πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ καθήκον ἐν λογικῷ ζῳῳ γινόμενον ἀμάρτημα εἶναι., cf. II, 93, 14 ff.; 96). On the contrary, it denotes obligations which both the wise and the unwise recognise to be binding and fitting, though each from his own standpoint (cf. Epict. Diss., II, 17, 31: θέλω δ' ὡς εὐσεβῆς καὶ φιλόσοφος καὶ ἐπιμελής εἰδέναι, τί μοι πρὸς θεοῦς ἐστὶν καθήκον, τί πρὸς γονεῖς, τί πρὸς ἀδελφούς, τί πρὸς τὴν πατρίδα, τί πρὸς ξένους (cf. Ench., 30).) [Heinrich Schlier, "Καθήκω (τὸ Καθήκον)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:438.]

<sup>222</sup>"Thus there are three kinds of καθήκον in Epict.: *first*, duties in respect of natural needs and for the advantage of man; *second*, duties which law and custom have made generally valid; and *third*, duties which may conflict with the ordinary moral sense, e.g., self-sacrifice on behalf of friends, Diss., II, 14, 18, or love of others," Diss., IV, 10, 12 etc. But Epict. also gives us an older description of the sphere of καθήκον which demonstrates the breadth of the concept, Diss., III, 7, 25: οὐκοῦν καὶ καθήκοντα τρισά: τὰ μὲν πρὸς τὸ εἶναι, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὸ ποιεῖν εἶναι, τὰ δ' αὐτὰ τὰ προηγούμενα, i.e., καθήκοντα which relate to the fact and nature of existence and to moral decision within it (cf. Cic. Off., III, 20). In virtue of this broader and narrower use, it is understandable that καθήκον should tend to replace κατόρθωμα. Thus κατόρθωμα occurs only once in Epict., in the ancient Stoic antithesis to ἀμάρτημα, Diss., II, 26, 5; καθήκειν and κατορθοῦν can also be used interchangeably, cf. Diss., II, 26, 5 with Ench., 42; Diss., I, 7, 1 with II, 3, 4. Chrysipp. already has τέλειον καθήκον for κατόρθωμα (Stob. Ecl., II, 85, 18; cf. IV, 5). If τέλειον καθήκον is in some sense contrasted with μέσα καθήκοντα, it denotes neutral obligations like γαμεῖν, πρεσβεύειν, διαλέγεσθαι, cf. II, 96. The μέσον καθήκον is what Epict., like Chrysipp., calls ἐκλογὴ κατὰ φύσιν, and what he distinguishes from moral καθήκον, which is for him προηγούμενον." [Heinrich Schlier, "Καθήκω (τὸ Καθήκον)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 438-439.]

<sup>223</sup>"No less famous a Stoic than Seneca was an advisor and mentor to Nero at the very time Paul wrote Romans, and Seneca's influence and the popularity of Stoicism was surely not minimal in Rome. Thus it may indeed have been part of Paul's rhetorical strategy to offer up critiques of pagan culture that had some contact with the popular philosophy extant in Rome in that day. Such a critique might be more readily received by Gentiles than one which only echoed Jewish sources. As Epictetus said, 'There are certain punishments assigned as it were by law for those who are disobedient to the divine dispensation' (*Discourses* 3.11.1). In v. 32 Paul implies that some knowledge of God still remains even when it has been repressed. One is still held responsible for what they have done with what they knew about God.<sup>30</sup> This is written with the flourish of ancient rhetoric, in the style of the preacher of

ἀμάρτημα because sin is against God and is much more profound than just improper actions.<sup>224</sup>

The idea of actions being τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα for Paul goes into this more profound realm of rebellion against God. The [vice list](#) that follows fleshes out more of the specifics.<sup>225</sup> One of the interpretive questions here emerges as to whether Paul is using τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα in the pagan sense of sinful humanity committing actions that even paganism judged improper, not to speak of those with some knowledge of God's Torah.<sup>226</sup> Whether this is accurate or not depends largely on comparing the content of the subsequent vice list with the listings outside of Judeo-Christian writings in the ancient world. If Paul's listing is distinct from the non-Christian listings, then the view that τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα alludes to things God has determined that 'don't fit' gains credibility over the 'pagan meaning' view. The exegesis below then opens up clearer understanding here of Paul's intent in using this very

all ages, and would be recognized for what it is—a dramatic expression of a widespread malaise, of a human condition whose character as a whole is demonstrated by its failure to control or to find an answer to its most depressing features and worst excesses.<sup>31</sup> [Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 70.]

<sup>224</sup>Paul does use extensively this word group of ἀμαρτία, ἀμαρτάνω, ἀμάρτημα, ἀμαρτωλός some 57 times just inside Romans.

<sup>225</sup>Such catalogs of vice are well known in the ancient world, particularly, as we might expect from the preceding phrase, among the Stoics (see particularly Lietzmann). But similar lists also appear in different strands of Judaism; again, significantly, Wisd Sol 14:25–26; but see also, e.g., 4 Macc 1:26–27; 2:15; T. Reub. 3.3–6; T. Lev. 17.11; 1QS 4.9–11; 2 Enoch 10.4–5; 3 Apoc. Bar. 8.5; 13.4; the list in Philo, Sac. 32 has more than 140 items! (see further Daxer, 46–52; Easton, 1–8; Wibbing, 14–76; Vögtle, esp. 227–32; Kamlah, chap. 2). They are common also in the earliest Christian literature (see especially Mark 7:21–22; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19–21; Col 3:5, 8; 1 Tim. 1:9–10; 2 Tim 3:2–5; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 22:15; 1 Clem 35.5, which is almost certainly modeled on Rom 1:29–31; Did. 2–5; and Barn. 18–20); see also on 13:13. The difference in contents (e.g., Paul's lengthy list here has only two or three items in common with Philo's in Sac. 32), as also indeed with the similar lists in Paul himself, indicates that Paul is not simply taking over a standard catalog from elsewhere or adapting his message completely to the moral perspective of other systems. So too the degree to which its structuring depends on verbal features (association of sounds, grouping of words with initial ἀ-; see Form and Structure) implies that Paul is not concerned to castigate particular sins above all others as distinctively non-Christian. Rather the implication is that he is simply appealing to a widespread recognition in conventional morality that there are features of social life which are to be condemned. The more distinctive Judeo-Christian emphasis comes not with the list itself (which is not to be characterized as anti-Gentile [Dabelstein, 85]), but in the understanding of such a state of affairs as the consequence of God's 'handing over,' as evidence of God's final wrath on his rebellious and disordered creation (cf. further Wilckens)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 67.]

<sup>226</sup>From the negative form, and the content of what is called unseemly, it is evident that the term is not used here in its specific philosophical sense. In philosophical usage what is contrary to καθήκον is always τὸ παρὰ τὸ καθήκον, Diog. L., VII, 108; also Epict. Diss., I, 7, 21; 28, 5 etc.; Philo Leg. All., II, 32, though cf. Cher., 14. What Paul means by this undefined μὴ καθήκοντα is that which is offensive to man even according to the popular moral sense of the Gentiles, i.e., what even natural human judgment regards as vicious and wrong. In accordance with the decision which they have made against the Creator, God finally abandons them to a blunted sensibility. Religious indifference is followed by moral. Perverted by a wrong basic attitude, the Gentile is possessed by destructive passions and overthrown by all kinds of vices. He thus loses all vestiges of the humanity which even the healthy pagan respects." [Heinrich Schlier, "Καθήκω (τὸ Καθήκον)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:439–440.]

<sup>227</sup>Such lists of vices were based on the premise that wicked people tended to practice all vices, just as good people practiced all the virtues. Philo Judaeus produced possibly the world's longest vice list — some 140 elements (*Sacrifices of Cain and Abel* 32)! Although the literary convention of the vice list cautions us against excessive attention to specific items, one cannot help in this case noting that the list contains few vices associated with human weakness, such as drunkenness or lust. The list focuses instead on the malign and antisocial vices that are often associated with 'strong' people: 'insolent, haughty, boastful ... heartless, ruthless' (1:30). The cold-hearted vices that seek to do harm to others or build up the self at others' expense are far worse than vices of weakness that mainly bring distress to the self. In a fine rhetorical reversal of his starting point (those who knew God did not give him glory), Paul says of these people, 'Although they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but approve of those who practice them' (1:32). This

Greek phrase τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα.

**The vice list (vv. 29-31).** The syntactical structure of this list is interesting. The list itself in vv. 29-31 is set up by the adjective functioning participle πεπληρωμένους whose accusative masculine plural spelling attaches the participle back to the personal pronoun αὐτούς, [them](#). It is strategically placed after the infinitive phrase direct object participle phrase τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα that asserts things not proper to do. Thus the listing is attached to the adjective functioning participle πεπληρωμένους and accomplishes two roles. The items on the list define what is not proper to do, while these items are linked to the humanity, i.e., αὐτούς, whom God handed over to a debased mind. Here is the Pondera's Box of evil, unleashed by humanity's rejection of God, and produced directly by the inability of humanity's debased mind to know and do what is proper which is defined in v. 21a.<sup>227</sup>

The internal arrangement of the various items is also interesting and

important to study. The block diagram visually highlights this. The individual items are cast either with the dative / genitive singular spellings or the accusative plural spellings. Particular emphasis is given to the first two groups with the idea of 'fullness' attached first by πεπληρωμένους, **having been filled with...** and then by μεστούς, **full of...** Then a random listing of items using the masculine accusative plural spellings follows beginning with ψιθυριστάς, **gossips**, and ending with άνελεήμονας, **ruthless**.

This is then followed by the qualitative relative clause introduced by οἵτινες. This alternative type of relative clause elevates the expression syntactically above being a mere adjective modifier but doesn't quite bring it to the level of an independent clause. Nothing like this exists in modern western languages and so it presents a dilemma to Bible translators. The vice listing has ended and now a commentary observation about those committing these improper actions is added. It does bring this rather lengthy sentence in vv. 28-32 to a close, but with a somewhat elevated point yet not quite at the same emphasis level of the core clause παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (v. 28b), around which everything else revolves in the entire

1.28	Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, <b>παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς</b> εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ ἴμῃ καθήκοντα,
1.29	πεπληρωμένους   πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ   πονηρίᾳ   πλεονεξίᾳ   κακίᾳ, μεστούς φθόνου   φόνου   ἔριδος   δόλου   κακοθεείας, ψιθυριστάς
1.30	καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὑβριστάς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἔφευρετάς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 1.31 ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους 1.32 άνελεήμονας· οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες   ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες_   /-----    ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, ----- οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν   ἀλλὰ   καὶ ----- συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

sentence.<sup>228</sup> Understanding this very intense, compacted expression of

is indeed willful rebellion and disobedience." [Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001), 36.]

<sup>228</sup>This text in vv. 18-32 clearly forms what in ancient linguistics was termed a periodic sentence, ἐν περιόδῳ. Or to use Aristotle's label, κατεστραμμένη, i.e., a compact sentence. This means that much higher idea content is packed into fewer words, in large part due to carefully conceived organizational structuring of the ideas. Here contextual influence on the meanings of individual words and phrases is all the more important. This style contrasts with the 'running style' where ideas are more loosely put together. Most of the NT writings are done in a running style of composition. For a helpful discussion see Robertson, A. T., "Two Kinds of Style," *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*.

thought becomes critically important for proper interpretation.

**πεπληρωμένους πάση ἀδικία πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία, filled with every kind of wickedness: immorality, covetousness, evil (v. 29a).**<sup>229</sup>

The perfect passive participle *πεπληρωμένους*, taken from *πληρώω*, carries the idea of humanity having been filled to capacity with every kind of wickedness. The perfect tense passive voice participle connotes the idea of an action of filling which carries continuing consequence. Humanity's rejection of God's self-revelation in creation opened the flood gates for this filling with wickedness. And this has produced devastating impact that continue on into eternity.

Interestingly, the first item of vice is *πάση ἀδικία*, which is something of a header item setting up a broad reference which covers the following items. The noun *ἀδικία* has already been mentioned 2 times in v. 18 at the beginning of this larger discussion. There it links to *ἀσέβεια* in the phrase *ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων, against all ungodliness and wickedness of men*. Here humanity's religious rebellion is signaled by *ἀσέβειαν* and its moral / behavioral rebellion is signaled by *ἀδικίαν*. That general sense (Logos Bible Software, 2006), p. 432.

<sup>229</sup>One important note to observe. Each of the numerous vice listings inside Paul's writings are unique and do not contain the exact same items. Cf. Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19–21; Col 3:5, 8; 1 Tim. 1:9–10; 2 Tim 3:2–5; Titus 3:3. Instead, each listing is 'customized' to the point at hand in the individual discussions.

What does this imply? First, that Paul did not draw from any formalized listings of sins developed in early Christianity. Unlike Roman Catholicism which centuries later began drawing up lists of sins with differing evaluations of their seriousness, apostolic Christian understood that sin is sin and all of it is wrong before God.

Second, the broad idea of sinning covered everything contrary to the expressed will of God in scripture. References to it in terms of specific actions would always be limited to those activities the writer felt more relevant to his targeted readership at the time of writing to them. In no way does this diminish the importance of unnamed sins. Rather, it highlights the reality that NT writers are seeking to speak to very specific situations at very specific times in their lives, both collectively as a community of believers and individually as followers of Jesus Christ. That becomes the timeless filter through which their writings must be re-interpreted to later groups and individuals. Only in this way do we every get to the voice of God speaking to us in scripture.

Third, any collating of a large list from the existing lists found inside the NT would be a waste of time because it would not be exhaustive nor inclusive of everything considered sinful in apostolic Christianity. All of the various lists are but representative of the larger reality of sinful activity that displeases God. A similar conclusion comes with comparing Paul's vice lists with those outside the NT. For example, comparing Rom. 1:29-31 with Philo's lengthy listing of 140 specific sins (*De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 32) shows only two items common to both lists. The tendency toward cataloguing specific sins always reflects a mechanistic approach to life and a departure from a relationship with God viewpoint. Sin within a relationship takes on a personal tone and an intensity which stood at the forefront of importance for early Christianity.

<sup>230</sup>This is a part of the word group of *ἀδικος, ἀδικία, ἀδικέω, ἀδικημα*, all of which carry the negating alpha privative prefix.

[Gottlob Schrenk, "Ἄδικος, Ἀδικία, Ἀδικέω, Ἀδικημα," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:149.]

These words represent the flip side of the opposite idea represented by the word group *δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρισία*. Here the ideas of justice and righteousness are central. Of course, these ideas are not defined in scripture by human laws or reasoning. Rather, the character and the actions of God define them. What is just, is what God does. Not what people do. He sets the standard which people must adhere to. As Creator and Redeemer, He has complete authority to do so.

[Gottlob Schrenk, "Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:174.]

<sup>231</sup>Interestingly scribal copyists of this text in the first seven or eight centuries had trouble with the sequencing of these three items of vice.

The word *πορνεία* ("fornication") is included in this list of vices in some MSS, sometimes before *πονηρία* ("wickedness"), as in the TR, and sometimes after *πονηρία*, as reflected in the Vulgate. Probably, however, *πορνεία* was not originally in the text, as witness its omission in uncials  $\kappa$  A B and Origen and Basil. It likely came about, as Bruce Metzger has suggested, by a conflation of *πονηρία* and *πορνεία*.<sup>3</sup> *Πονηρία* ("wickedness") and *κακία* ("wickedness," "depravity") are interchanged in some MSS.

of *ἀδικία* is maintained here in v. 29. Now in this third unit of *παρέδωκεν* αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... (vv. 24-25; 26-27; 28-32), the inclusive focus on human wickedness is laid out in the vice list. The attributive adjective *πάση* emphasizes this inclusiveness. Built into *ἀδικία* is also the idea of injustice as wicked conduct.<sup>230</sup> The alpha private prefix to *ἀδικία* signals its origin from the opposite idea of *δικία*. Given the unique perspective of both the Hebrew Torah and Jesus with the apostles, the concept of *ἀδικία* represents actions contrary to the being and essence of God and contrary then to what He demands of humanity, which He created and will hold accountable on the Day of Judgment.

Thus Paul's point in Rom. 1:29 is to assert that humanity's rebellion has led to the wrath of God being implemented now with God simply walking away from humanity and turning it over to a debased mind. This has unleashed a floodgate of *ἀδικία* among humans that is destroying them.

The three items listed together with *ἀδικία* as the cover term are *πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία, immorality, covetousness, and evil*.<sup>231</sup> The meaning of the second item *πλεονεξία* is relatively clear as intense greed for what

someone else has.<sup>232</sup> What is more difficult to determine is the distinctive meanings of *πονηρία* and *κακία*. The two words are very close in meaning, but do carry unique slants on the idea of evil. *πονηρία* carries the idea of uselessness that descends into evil and bad actions.<sup>233</sup> A rotten orange can be *πονηρία* and thus comparable to a human being in terms of worthlessness. Although linguistically *πονηρία* compares to the Hebrew terms

הַרְעָה and רַע, and sometimes רַע, the LXX often also uses *πονηρία* for הַרְעָה and רַע. But *κακία* is used to translate these two Hebrew terms as well.<sup>234</sup> Thus for NT writers who mostly worked out of a Hebrew thinking pattern even while writing in Greek as a learned foreign language, the two terms take on close meaning to one another.<sup>235</sup> The sense of being completely worthless as a debased human being is the distinct sense of *πονηρία*.

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 191.]

<sup>232</sup> *πλεονεξία, ας, ή* (*πλεονέκτης*) the state of desiring to have more than one's due, *greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness* (so Hdt., Thu.+; Aristoxenus, Fgm. 50 p. 23, 36ff [*πλ.* as the vice pure and simple]; Diod S 21, 1, 4 [*πλ.* as the μητρόπολις τῶν ἀδικημάτων]; Musonius 72, 9; 90, 10 H.; Dio Chrys., Or. 67 [17] περί πλεονεξίας: 6 μέγιστον κακῶν αἴτιον; 7 μέγιστον κακόν; Ael. Aristid. 39 p. 733 D.: *πλ.* is among the three most disgraceful things; Herm. Wr. 13, 7; pap, LXX; Test12Patr; GrBar 13:3; ApcMos 11; EpArist 277; Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 173, Praem. 15 al.; Jos., Bell. 7, 256, Ant. 3, 67; 7, 37 al.; Just., D. 14, 2; Tat. 19, 2; Ath., R. 21 p. 74, 9; Theoph. Ant. 1, 14 [p. 92, 7]) B 10:4; w. other vices (as Diod S 13, 30, 4 in catalogues of vices. On these s. AVögtle, Die Tugend-u. Lasterkataloge im NT '36) **Ro 1:29...** [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 824.]

<sup>233</sup> *πονηρία* means 'defectiveness,' also 'physical sickness,' in both animals and men, *πονηρία ποδῶν* and *πονηρία ὀφθαλμῶν*, Plat. Hi., II, 374c. Plat. can call sickness a *πονηρία σώματος* as opp. to *ἀδικία* as a *πονηρία ψυχῆς*, Resp., X, 609c. The material 'imperfection' of a skill can also be called *πονηρία*.<sup>1</sup> *πονηρία* also means 'lack' of rain and air, Ael Nat. An., 17, 40; deficient state of virtues, Xenoph. Cyrop., VII, 5, 75, also 'offensiveness,' Plut. Quaest. Conv., IV (II, 671a).

"A broad span is covered by the political sense (→ 547, 29 ff.) of *πονηρία*, the *πονηρία τῶν δημηγορούντων*, Isoc., 8, 108, τῶν ῥητόρων who enrich themselves;<sup>2</sup> *πονηρία* is 'baseness,' 'depravity,' 'spite,' Lys., 14, 9 and 35; Demosth. Or., 21, 19; Xenoph. Mem., III, 5, 18; Ditt. Or., 519, 11 (Emperor Marcus Julius Philippus): πάντων ἥρεμον καὶ γαληνὸν βίον διαγόντων *πονηρίας* καὶ διασεισμῶν πε(π)αυμένων.

"*πονηρία* is the 'intentionally practised evil will,' ἐκ προαιρέσεως in contrast to conduct ἐκ θυμοῦ.<sup>3</sup> *πονηρία* συνεχῆς 'unceasing baseness' is *μοχθηρία*, moral uselessness, Aristot. Eth. Nic., VII, 9, p. 1150b, 35. Similarly *πονηρία* is to be distinguished from *ἄγνοια* and *ἄβελτερία* 'stupidity.' *πονηρία* affects others, *ἄβελτερία* only the one who acts. The original social signification of the term (→ 547, 23 ff.) may be discerned here.<sup>4</sup> Its essential feature acc. to Demetrius Fr., 4 (CAF, I, 796) is that it is always out for gain—something which may still be seen in the NT use. In the Hell. period *πονηρία* is increasingly used in a gen. sense without specialisation,<sup>5</sup> though it should be remembered that Plat. and others also use it thus in antithesis to *ἀρετή*, Plat. Theaet., 176b; Aeschin. In Ctesiphontem, 172; Aristot. Rhet., II, 12, p. 1389a, 18."

[Günther Harder, "Πονηρός, Πονηρία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:562–563.]

<sup>234</sup> Here *πονηρία* is the equivalent of הַרְעָה and רַע. Elsewhere these words are transl. *κακία* in the LXX (→ III, 476, 32 ff.). The translators of the various books show preferences for the one term or the other but no fundamental distinction is made between *πονηρία* and *κακία*. There is a tendency in this direction only in the Gk. text of Qoh. Here *κακία* is used for רַע and הַרְעָה in the sense of 'misfortune,' 'injury,' 'dark mien' Qoh. 5:12; 7:3, and only once for הַרְעָה in the sense of 'wickedness,' 7:15. For this *πονηρία* is used 2:21 (par. ματαιότης); *πονηρία* also means 'what is evil, wrong' under the sun in 6:1; 11:10. The situation is much the same in Ex.<sup>8</sup> In the other books the distribution is as follows: Gn., Dt., 1 and 2 S., 1 and 2 K., Job, Prv., Minor Prophets, Ez. and in the main Macc. use *κακία*, while Ju., Neh. and Is. prefer *πονηρία*. Ju. is unique, for here there has been revision. A has *κακία*, which in the LXX, as in Philo, is more common than *πονηρία*, while B prefers *πονηρία*.<sup>9</sup> Both words are used without essential distinction in Ps., Wis. and Sir. Sometimes in the LXX *πονηρία* is used for other originals like תִּרְעָה, 10 אָן, 11 נָצַר, 12 and לָמַע, 13 *πονηρία* is also used adjectivally in the LXX as a gen. qual., λόγοι οἱ γογγυσμὸς *πονηρίας* ψ 140 (141): 4; Sir. 46:7. In a few verses Α and Σ use *πονηρία* in the moral sense where LXX has *κακία*, Qoh. 7:15 Α; 1 Βασ. 25:28 Σ." [Günther Harder, "Πονηρός, Πονηρία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:564.]

<sup>235</sup> In the NT *πονηρία* occurs only in a moral sense, especially in a very generalised way, as in lists of vices, e.g., R. 1:29.<sup>14</sup> Here, alongside *πλεονεξία* (→ 272, 15), it denotes moral worthlessness as a result of avarice, Vg nequitia, 'uselessness.'<sup>15</sup> Neither here nor in 1 C. 5:8 can any sharp distinction be made between *πονηρία* and *κακία*.<sup>16</sup> In the list of vices in Mk. 7:22 *πονηρία* occurs alongside *κακία*. Here again, especially in the plural, *πλεονεξία* and *πονηρία* are closely related, probably because both occur in formulae of a catechetical type.<sup>17</sup> In Ac. 3:26 *πονηρία* is used in the plural for various kinds of 'iniquity,' cf. the plural use in the post-apostolic fathers, → 566, 18 ff.

"The situation is similar in the list in Lk. 11:39. Here again it occurs in the vicinity of wickedness based on covetousness, ἀρπαγή.<sup>18</sup> In Mt. 22:18, however, *πονηρία* is the concealed wicked purpose of the Pharisees to bring about the undoing of Jesus.<sup>19</sup> In Herm. s., 9, 19, 2 διδάσκαλοι *πονηρίας* are called ὑποκριταί. The same genitive of quality is used in Eph. 6:12, πνευματικὰ τῆς *πονηρίας*. It is a characterising genitive<sup>20</sup> to which the collective term πνευματικά (the world of spirits) is added.<sup>21</sup> This world is here depicted in its badness, malice and ungodliness. Its day is thus the ἡμέρα *πονηρία* (→ 554, 14) in which it must be resisted.<sup>22</sup> The genitive is in no case to be regarded as subjective as though one had to contend

But κακία,<sup>236</sup> while carrying a similar negative meaning as πονηρία, does give a slightly different slant. Its opposite is ἀρετή, *virtue*, and thus ἀγαθός, *good*.<sup>237</sup> Thus the sense of lacking any positive social value is built into the idea of κακία.<sup>238</sup> This deficiency reaches inward into the very depths of one's being.

These three expressions of ἀδικία reach into one's character and inner being. Together they paint a portrait of darkness and moral blackness saturating the inner self of humans. The next segment is closely connected.

**μεστούς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, full of envy leading to murder, strife, deceit, craftiness (v. 29b).**

The somewhat rarely used (9x) adjective μεστός, -ή, -όν is built off the verb μεστῶ (1x NT use in Acts 2:13) meaning to fill a container with some-

thing (genitive case noun). The adjective then means 'full of ...' and is used here and at 15:14 in Romans.

with the spiritual realm produced by or belonging to wickedness, i.e., the spiritual side of wickedness.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this error lies behind the omission of ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις in p46. This topographical note shows that the reference is to the current demonological idea of a world of ungodly spirits in the middle layer of heaven."

[Günther Harder, "Πονηρός, Πονηρία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:565–566.]

<sup>236</sup>It is a part of the word group κακός, ἄκακος, κακία, κακόω, κακοῦργος, κακοῦρεια, κακοποιέω, κακοποιός, ἐγκακίεω, ἀνεξίκακος [Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοῦρεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:469.]

<sup>237</sup>"This word is related to κακόν as → ἀρετή is to ἀγαθόν. It is the quality of a κακός, and it can also signify the outworking of this quality, sometimes in the plural." [Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοῦρεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:482.]

<sup>238</sup>An interesting side note: The adjective ἄκακος with the alpha privative means one who does not do bad. It does automatically imply a just person. Only a person who does not engage in evil.

<sup>239</sup>"Between φθόνου and φόνου — addition to the assonance — there is a certain inner connexion (cf. Gen 4:1ff; Mt 27:18 = Mk 15:10). We might perhaps go further, and suggest that all the evils denoted by the four genitives which follow φθόνου are very often to be explained as fruits of envy. The omission of δόλου by A is probably accidental." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 130.]

<sup>240</sup>Defining the semantic domain of jealousy or envy is somewhat challenging. "A number of meanings in **Subdomain V Envy, Jealousy** involve a measure of resentment, but this is not as focal a feature as it is in the set of meanings in **Subdomain W Resentful, Hold a Grudge Against** (88.167–88.170)." [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996).]

<sup>241</sup>φθονέω G5783 (phthoneō), be envious; φθόνος G5784 (phthonos), envy.

"In secular Gk., phthoneō can mean to bear ill-will of a general kind, but more often it is used specifically to express the envy which makes one man grudge another something which he himself desires, but does not possess. The noun phthonos is used in a similar way. Frequently it appears with zēlos, jealousy, but several classical writers are careful to distinguish between these two apparent synonyms. Aristotle, for example, defines zēlos as the desire to have what another man possesses, without necessarily bearing a grudge against him because he has it; while phthonos is concerned more to deprive the other man of the desired thing than to gain it. 'The envious are those who are annoyed only at their friends' successes' (Xenophon).

"OT Neither phthoneō nor phthonos appears in the canonical literature of the LXX, though the idea is apparent in such verses as Prov. 14:30, and the noun is found in the apocryphal writings of I Maccabees and Wisdom (where the coming of death into the world is attributed to the devil's phthonos, Wis. 2:24).

"NT In the NT phthoneō is found only once (in Gal. 5:26, where 'envying one another' is set in sharp contrast to 'living by the Spirit'). phthonos occurs nine times in all: (a) In the Epistles it features in several lists of bad qualities which characterize the unredeemed life. It is one of the 'works of the flesh' which are opposed to the 'fruit of the Spirit' in Gal. 5:19–24. It marks out those whom God has given up to a 'base mind' (adokimon noun, Rom. 1:29). It is a feature of life before conversion (Tit. 3:3), to be 'put away' by those who 'grow up to salvation' (1 Pet. 2:2). And it is symptomatic of pseudo-Christian teaching which trades on controversy and wordy dispute (1 Tim. 6:4)."

[D. H. Field, "Envy," ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther, and Hans Bietenhard, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub-

der, φόνου, was a commonly held viewpoint. The noun φθόνος denotes the attitude / posture of jealousy, while the verb φθονέω denotes expressing this attitude in concrete actions.<sup>242</sup> The words ζήλος and φθόνος are often joined together for emphasizing more strongly the attitude of jealousy.<sup>243</sup>

The four nouns that follow φθόνου are φόνου (16x NT; 1x Rom) ἔριδος (9x NT; 2x Rom) δόλου (11x NT; 1x Rom) κακοηθείας (1x NT; 1x Rom), and they define specific aspects produced by φθόνου (9x NT; 1x Rom).<sup>244</sup> The action orientation of each of these four nouns is fairly apparent in translation.<sup>245</sup> Translating the words with the built in structure pushes the English to something along these lines:

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lishing House, 1986), 1:557–558.]

<sup>242</sup>When both a noun and a verb share a common root stem, as here, in ancient Greek this signaled an inherent action orientation built into the noun. The noun would not merely specify a passive concept, but rather a dynamical idea. When another genitive case noun is attached to it, the genitive noun either designates what triggers the action or else what the inherent action produces when triggered. The latter is the case here with the four subsequent genitive case nouns attached to φθόνου. The shared stem between the noun and verb is the most reliable signal of a 'noun of action.' The English translation equivalent is one of the least reliable signals.

<sup>243</sup>"THESE words are often joined together; they are so by St. Paul (Gal. 5:20, 21); by Clement of Rome (1 Ep. § 3), 4, 5; and virtually by Cyprian in his little treatise, *De Zelo et Livore*: by classical writers as well; by Plato (Phil. 47 e; Legg. iii. 679 c; Menex. 242 a); by Plutarch, *Coriol.* 19; and by others. Still, there are differences between them; and this first, that ζήλος is a μέσον, being used sometimes in a good (as John 2:17; Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 9:2), sometimes, and in Scripture oftener, in an evil sense (as Acts 5:17; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:20; Jam. 3:14, in which last place, to make quite clear what ζήλος is meant, it is qualified by the addition of πικρός, and is linked with ἐρίθεια): while φθόνος, incapable of good, is used always and only in an evil, signification. When ζήλος is taken in good part, it signifies the honorable emulation, I with the consequent imitation, of that which presents itself to the mind's eye as excellent: ζήλος τῶν ἀρίστων (Lucian, *Adv. Indoct.* 17): ζήλος τοῦ βελτίονος (Philo, *de Præm. et Pæn.* 3); φιλοτιμία καὶ ζήλος (Plutarch, *De Alex. Fort. Or.* ii. 6; *An Seni Resp. Ger.* 25); ζήλος καὶ μίμησις (Herodian, ii.4); ζηλωτῆς καὶ μιμητῆς (vi. 8). It is the Latin 'æmulatio,' in which nothing of envy is of necessity included, however such in it, as in our 'emulation,' may find place; the German 'Nacheiferung,' as distinguished from 'Eifersucht.' The verb 'æmulor,' I need hardly observe, finely expresses the difference between worthy and unworthy emulation, governing an accusative in cases where the first, a dative where the second, is intended. South here, as always, expresses himself well: 'We ought by all means to note the difference between envy and emulation; which latter is a brave and a noble thing, and quite of another nature, as consisting only in a generous imitation of something excellent; and that such an imitation as scorns to fall short of its copy, but strives, if possible, to outdo it. The emulator is impatient of a superior, not by depressing or maligning another, but by perfecting himself. So that while that sottish thing envy sometimes fills the whole soul, as a great dull fog does the air; this, on the contrary, inspires it with a new life and vigour, whets and stirs up all the powers of it to action. And surely that which does so (if we also abstract it from those heats and sharpenesses that sometimes by accident may attend it), must needs be in the same degree lawful and laudable too, that it is for a man to make himself as useful and accomplished as he can' (Works, London, 1737, vol. v. p. 403; and compare Bishop Butler, Works, 1836, vol. i. p. 15)." [Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), 86–88.]

<sup>244</sup>For readers without background understanding of Greek, all five nouns are in the genitive singular spelling: -ου (masc / neuter 2 decl), -ος (fem 3rd decl), -ας (fem 1st decl). Note that -ας beginning with ψιθυριστῶν is accusative feminine plural 1st decl. For former Greek students remembering all these nuances is what separates the A from the D level student. Knowing also the root stem spelling of each noun is what determines the meaning of the ending.

<sup>245</sup>Similarly, jealousy and murder may be translated as 'they are very jealous of one another' and 'they kill one another.' Fighting is a Greek word which means 'strife' or 'party spirit,' resulting in sharp argument and dissension. Deceit may be equivalent to 'they deceive one another.' Malice is a word which occurs only here in the New Testament and is defined as 'the tendency to put the worst construction on everything.' Malice may be rendered in some languages as 'they are always thinking the worst of others.'" [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 29.]

<sup>246</sup>"Ps.-Ammon Adfin. Vocab. Diff., s.v. (Valckenaer, p. 148) defines the word as κακία κεκρυμμένη. Aristot. says of it: ἔστι γὰρ κακοήθεια τὸ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντα, Rhet., II, 13, p. 1389b, 20 f.; Plat.: ... ἀσημοσύνη καὶ ἀρρυθμία καὶ ἀναρμοστία κακολογίας καὶ κακοηθείας ἀδελφά, Resp., III, 401a. It is also found in popular speech, e.g., B. Grenfell, *An Alexandrian Erotic Fragment* (1896), 60, 13.

"In the LXX, apart from Est. 8:12 f., it occurs only in 3 and 4 Macc. Cf. esp. 4 Macc. 3:4: κακοηθειάν τις ἡμῶν οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ καμφοθῆναι τῇ κακοηθείᾳ δύναται ἄν ὁ λογισμὸς συμμαχησάι. It always means 'wickedness,' 'malice'."

[Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακῶ, Κακόργος, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:485.]

full of such jealousy that leads to murdering people, creating strife and dissension among people, deceiving other people, and always being hurtful to others. The final noun from κακοήθεια is virtually untranslatable into clear English. It denotes a base character that sees others as perpetual threats who need to be eliminated.<sup>246</sup> It is the guy with a 'chip on his shoulders' intensified about a thousand times. Syntactically the spelling κακοηθείας (κακός + ἦθος), along with coming at the end of this list, puts it parallel to the related κακία at the end of the previous list. The items listed here are infrequent inside Romans largely because they assume a non-Christian posture and behavior. Once

Paul moves past the depiction of pagan humanity at the beginning of the letter, these behaviors become irrelevant to addressing a Christian community.<sup>247</sup>

**ψιθυριστὰς καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὕβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless (vv. 29c-31).**

No particular organizing structure is apparent here, apart from the last four behaviors all beginning with the Greek letter alpha.<sup>248</sup> Again translation into single equivalent words in one of the modern western languages is virtually impossible. The value systems between the 'then' and the 'now' don't match up very evenly. For example, with ψιθυριστὰς (1x NT; 1x Rom) and καταλάλους (1x NT; 1x Rom).<sup>249</sup> These two words both "denote people who go about to destroy other people's reputations by misrepresentation.<sup>1</sup> The difference between ψιθυριστής and κατάλαλος is that the former denoted specifically one who whispers his slanders in his listener's ear, whereas the latter means a

slanderer quite generally, irrespective of whether he whispers his calumnies or proclaims them from the house-tops — though the fact that it is used immediately after ψιθυριστής makes it natural to understand it to refer here in particular to the more open sort of slanderer. The ψιθυριτής is, of course, the more vicious and dangerous kind, inasmuch as he is one against whom there is virtually no human defence."<sup>250</sup> The struggle in translation is reflected in the NRSV using "gossips, slanderers" in translation which miss the special sense of these two Greek words entirely.

θεοστυγεῖς, plural form from θεοστυγής, -ές, is also only used here in the entire NT. It has a passive meaning -- **hated by God** -- and an active meaning -- **hating God**. Some interpretive debate exists over which of these is the intended point of the apostle Paul here. Mostly likely the active meaning is what Paul was intending here.<sup>251</sup> The larger context suggests that rebellion against God could lead one to becoming a hater of God.

The following three traits seem to be closer related to one another: ὕβριστὰς (2x NT; 1x Rom), ὑπερηφάνους (5x NT; 1x Rom), ἀλαζόνας (2x NT; 1x Rom). They show up together in other vice lists: Test. Lev. 17:11; Mark 7:22; 1 Clem 35.5;

<sup>247</sup>The situation at Corinth is somewhat different with some of these behaviors mentioned in regard to the Christian community, e.g., 1 Cor. 3:3 and 2 Cor. 12:20. There the listing signals a false Christianity that is still inwardly pagan while professing to be Christian outwardly. These pagan behaviors expose the false profession.

<sup>248</sup>"ψιθυρισταχς, καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὕβριστὰς, ὑπερηφάνους, ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,. As with κακοήθεια, ψιθυριστής, 'whisperer, rumor-monger, tale-bearer,' κατάλαλος, 'slanderer,' and θεοστυγής, 'hating God,' all occur only here in the NT and are little used elsewhere (though note again 1 Clem 35.5); such piling up of epithets invites the use of less familiar terms. Elsewhere θεοστυγής has the sense 'hated by God, God-forsaken' ('hateful to God' [NEB]), but the active meaning is presumably intended here (BGD), unless we should take it adjectively with the following word, 'despisers hated by God' (TDNT 8:306); see also 5:10. ὕβριστής, 'violent, insolent' (in the NT only here and 1 Tim 1:13), ὑπερήφανος, 'arrogant, proud,' and ἀλαζών, 'boaster, braggart' are all obvious candidates for inclusion in a list of socially undesirable characteristics (e.g., T. Lev. 17:11; Mark 7:22; 1 Clem 35.5) and make a natural association elsewhere, as in Wisd Sol 5:8 and 2 Tim 3:2 (see BGD in each case). ἐφευρετής, 'inventor, contriver'; only here in NT; similar phrases in 2 Macc 7:31; Philo, Flacc. 20; and Virgil, Aen. 2.164. γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 'disobedient to parents'; particularly abhorrent for a Jew (Deut 21:18) and a mark of 'the last days' according to 2 Tim 3:2.

"ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας, 'senseless, faithless, loveless, merciless,' 'without brains, honor, love or pity' (NJB). For ἀσύνετος see on 1:21. ἀσύνθετος, 'faithless'; perhaps pointedly chosen since its literal meaning is 'covenant breaking' (cf. particularly its use in LXX [Jer 3:7–11]), though in a list of vices in its present context the sense 'undutiful' may be more in Paul's mind (BGD). ἄστοργος, 'unloving, lacking family affection,' and ἀνελεήμων, 'unmerciful,' occur elsewhere in the lists of 2 Tim 3:3 and Titus 1:9 (late variant reading) respectively."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 68.]

<sup>249</sup>Side note: the versification mark #30 between these two obviously connected words is horrible. It should have been placed in front of ψιθυριστὰς. Robert Estienne (a.k.a. Stephanus), who added these numbers in 1551 while en route from Paris to Lyons, France, either forgot his Greek and didn't realize that -ὰς on ψιθυριστὰς did not mean the same thing as it did on the previous word κακοηθείας. Or else, this was one of those many places where his horse stumbled when he reached down to place the verse number in the Greek text he was using. Over the centuries since the poor horse has been blamed for most of these mistakes!

<sup>250</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 130–131.

<sup>251</sup>"Elsewhere θεοστυγής has the sense 'hated by God, God-forsaken' ('hateful to God' [NEB]), but the active meaning is presumably intended here (BGD), unless we should take it adjectively with the following word, 'despisers hated by God' (TDNT 8:306); see also 5:10." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 68.]

Wisd Sol 5:8 and 2 Tim 3:2. ὑβριστής denotes both violence and insolence.<sup>252</sup> That is, violent actions against others prompted by utter contempt for them. ὑπερήφανος, -ον denotes a haughty arrogance convinced of its superiority to others. ἀλαζών denotes a braggart who is convinced of his superiority to others.<sup>253</sup> Taken together these three traits picture an individual with intense feelings of supremacy to others which opens the door both to verbal bragging and to violence.

The common phrase pattern ties the next two traits together syntactically: ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, **inventors of evil actions**, and γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, **rebellious toward parents**.<sup>254</sup> ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν connotes one who cleverly devises new ways of harming and hurting others. γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, **disobedient to**

<sup>252</sup>"Cognate with ὕβρις (the word which denotes the insolent pride, familiar theme of classical Greek tragedy, which brings upon the man who indulges it νέμεσις, the retribution of the gods, but which was also used to denote any wanton act of violence against another man bespeaking contempt for his person), ὑβριστής means, according to LSJ, a 'violent, wanton, licentious, insolent man'. In the NT it occurs only here and in 1 Tim 1:13, though the verb ὑβρίζειν and the noun ὕβρις occur, respectively, five and three times. It is best understood here as signifying the man who, in his confidence in his own superior power, wealth, social status, physical strength, intellectual or other ability, treats his fellow men with insolent contemptuousness and thereby affronts the majesty of God." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 131.]

<sup>253</sup>"ὑπερηφάνους,5 ἀλαζόναζ. For this association compare Wisd 5:8; Stobaeus, Flor. 85:16 (quoted by Field). ὑπερήφανος is adequately represented by 'arrogant'. ἀλαζών denotes the man who tries to impress others by making big claims. It was used of the braggart, the charlatan, the quack, the impostor. The word is probably used here with the graver end of its range of meaning in mind. We may think of the 'frantic boast and foolish word' of the heathen heart, the sort of thing which is reflected in Isa 10:7–11, in fact all the presumptuous claims and ostentatious behaviour of men by which they seek to impress one another, and very often delude themselves." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 131–132.]

<sup>254</sup>"ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν and γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς are associated simply because they are both two-word phrases. The former of them, far from being 'a curious expression',<sup>1</sup> is an incisive characterization of men's capacity for committing 'The oldest sins the newest kind of ways' — we may think especially of their inventiveness in forging ever more hateful methods of hurting and destroying their fellow men." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 132.]

<sup>255</sup>"γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, 'disobedient to parents'; particularly abhorrent for a Jew (Deut 21:18) and a mark of 'the last days' according to 2 Tim 3:2." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 68.]

<sup>256</sup>"One who lacks σύνεσις is **void of understanding, senseless, foolish**, implying also a lack of high moral quality (Kaibel 225, 3; Sir 15:7; TestLevi 7:2)." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 146.]

<sup>257</sup>"**ἄσύνθετος, ον** (s. συντίθημι; Pla.+; PFamTebt 15, 69 and 90; Eth. Epicur. col. 19, 19; Herm. Wr. 14, 6) **pert. to such as renege on their word, faithless**. The noun συνθήκη refers to a formal agreement or compact; an ἄσύνθετος pers. does not keep an agreement (Hesychius and Suda explain ἄ.: μὴ ἐμμένων ταῖς συνθήκαις; cp. Demosth. 19, 136; Jer 3:7–11) **Ro 1:31**. In favor of the sense undutiful in this pass. is the ref. to disobedience that precedes (γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς; cp. PCairMasp 97 verso D, 84 ἄ. παῖς). The term appears in a list of vices (as Ptolem., Apotel. 3, 14, 35 Boll-B.); s. also ἄσύνθετος a.—AFridrichsen, ConNeot. 9, '44, 47f: 'self-willed.'—DELG s.v. τίθημι. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 146–147.]

<sup>258</sup>"ἄστοργος:<sup>2</sup> 'without natural affection'. Among the various words for 'love' in Greek τοργή was the one which particularly denoted family affection. In this connexion Barclay aptly refers to the prevalence in the Graeco-Roman world of Paul's day of the practice of exposing unwanted babies and also of actual infanticide.<sup>1</sup> Paul's contemporary, Seneca, takes for granted the drowning of weakly or deformed babies: 'Portentosos fetus exstinguimus, liberos quoque, si debiles monstrosique editi sunt, mergimus. Non ira, sed ratio est, a sanis inutilia scernere'.<sup>2</sup>" [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 132–133.]

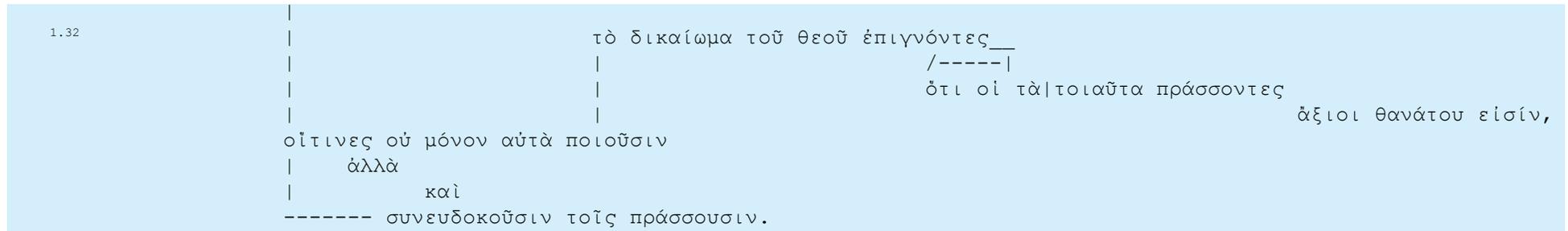
<sup>259</sup>William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 146.

**parents**, is a particularly Jewish perspective which was considered especially heinous in Paul's time.<sup>255</sup> In 2 Tim. 2:12 this is considered a signal of 'the last days.'

The last four traits ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστοργους ἀνελεήμονας all begin with the letter alpha. The first two are linked to one another via assonance (=ἄσυν- spelling plus adding θ), rather than via common meaning. ἄσύνθετος, -ον denotes mindlessness or foolishness.<sup>256</sup> But ἄσύνθετος, -ον denotes someone ignoring or not keeping agreements.<sup>257</sup> ἄστοργος, -ον<sup>258</sup> references "one who is **lacking in good feelings for others**, thereby jeopardizing the maintenance of relationships (e.g. political and familial) that are essential to a well-ordered society; **hardhearted, unfeeling, without regard for others**."<sup>259</sup>

ἀνελεήμων, -ον is somewhat connected to ἄστρογος, -ον in that it denotes unmercifulness in actions toward others. It represents the opposite of ἔλεος.<sup>260</sup>

**The Vice List Commentary, v. 32.** οἷτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν. **Who are such who although knowing that those practicing such things are worthy of death, not only do them but also encourage those practicing them.**



The qualitative relative clause introduced by οἷτινες also goes back to the personal pronoun αὐτοῦς in the core declaration παρέδωκεν αὐτοῦς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν in v. 28. The masculine plural οἷτινες<sup>261</sup> links up to the masculine plural αὐτοῦς. Thus it is depraved humanity that has been handed over to a base mind by God that is the focus here. The core internal structure as illustrated in the above diagram asserts that this pagan humanity operating out of a base mind practices the items mentioned in the vice list. But also encourages and applauds all others who practice this evil as well. These two involvements in evil practice come in spite of knowing full well that such individuals are deserving of the divine sentence of death.

Thus two main points along with a secondary point are made by this relative clause.

**Minor point:** τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, **although having known full well the decree of God that those practicing such things are worthy of death.**

The adverbial concessive functioning aorist participle ἐπιγνόντες sets up a prior condition standing in contrast to the present time ongoing actions

<sup>260</sup>See the word group ἔλεος, ἐλεέω, ἐλεήμων, ἐλεημοσύνη, ἀνέλεος, ἀνελεήμων [Rudolf Bultmann, “Ἐλεος, Ἐλεέω, Ἐλεήμων, Ἐλεημοσύνη, Ἀνέλεος, Ἀνελεήμων,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:477.]

<sup>261</sup>From ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι

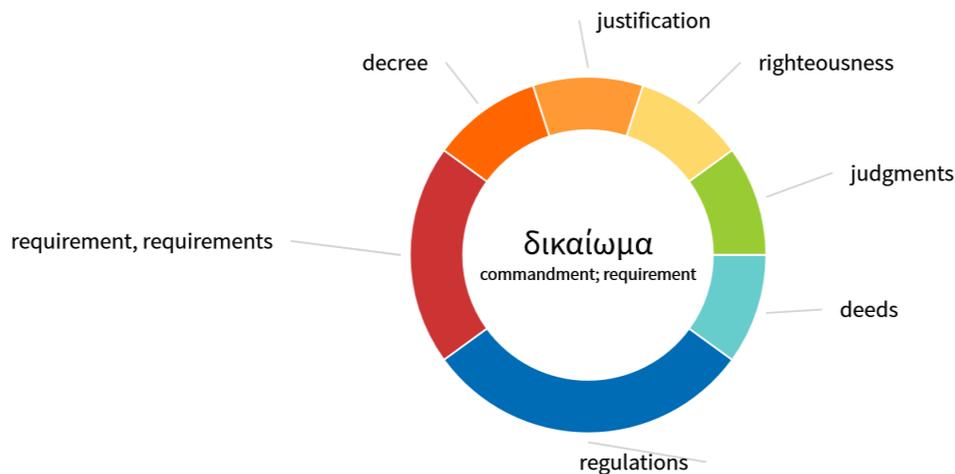
<sup>262</sup>δικαίωμα is a part of the word group δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρισία with one of the richest theological perspectives in the NT. [Gottlob Schrenk, “Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:174. ]

of the two main clause verbs. That prior condition is depicted as **being fully aware** from the verb ἐπιγινώσκω. This reaches back to γνόντες τὸν θεὸν in v. 21 as both a repeat and an extension of this previous assertion. Humanity through creation did not fully know God, but they knew full well that their behavior was terribly wrong. Even the pagan moral literature reflects the offensiveness of wrong behavior by humans to the gods. This basic moral awareness claimed for humanity in v. 32 adds rich background to the earlier assertion φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοί, **while claiming to be wise**, in v. 22a.

Their being turned into morons (ἐμωράνθησαν, v. 22b) happened out of a false claim to wisdom which had denied the very basic knowledge of God available to them through creation. But this process of being morons did not erase a haunting sense that their sinful behavior merited death.

The intriguing syntax in v. 32a puts τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ as the direct object of the participle ἐπιγνόντες. And with the ὅτι clause that follows in the double accusative grammar construction the participle stands as an accusative of predicate object which defines the content of τὸ δικαίωμα. Thus, that practicing the sins listed in the above vice list merits death is what God’s decree is about. And sinful humanity fully understands this foundational principle. There is something embedded into humanity via divine creation that creates this awareness. Humanity may accept it or deny it, but cannot claim that it didn’t know it. This assertion anticipates the ἀναπολόγητος, **without excuse**, claim in 2:1 which is applied to a smaller segment of humanity specifically.

A closer look at these two elements is important. **What is τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ, the decree of God?**<sup>262</sup> Out of the 10 NT uses of δικαίωμα, five



of them are in Romans: 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4. The richness of meaning challenges Bible translators to find the right English word for each use as determined by the context. “In consequence of the action (words in -μα), the δικαιοῦν which establishes right gives rise to δικαίωμα. This is the fixed form of δίκαιον, whether as a legal claim, a written right (and therefore a legal document), a statute or ordinance, or a judicial sentence, especially of punishment. It also signifies the legal act corresponding to this ordinance or requirement, and therefore the actualisation of justice.”<sup>263</sup>

Quite clearly here via the context τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ would reference the collective wrongness of the actions specified in the vice list of vv. 29-31. This is determined to be wrong by God, not by human reasoning.<sup>264</sup> Since many of the sins listed in vv. 29-31 are not specifically named in the Torah, one should avoid equating τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ with the Torah of the OT,

although much overlap between the two does exist. The apostle here envisions τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ as above and broader than Torah as found in the Books of Moses. Plus with the root stem of δικαίωμα impacting the idea, what God determines and sets forth as law, νόμος, is inherently just and right, because it will be consistent with his nature. Also don't overlook even the randomness of the listing of items in each of the NT vice lists. Ultimately τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ would include any action not deemed to be consistent with who God is and how He acts. Additionally, the ability of δικαίωμα to emphasize penalty and punishment handed out by God upon offenders is always a part of the deeper idea. Thus τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ cannot be reduced down to some kind of mechanistic listing which can function as an inclusive check off list for behavior evaluation as good or bad. God's demands upon humanity go way, way beyond such, as is reflected in ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἅγιός εἰμι ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν, **be holy, because I am holy** (Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; cf. Mt. 5:48, ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.). It is this deeper understanding that stands behind Rom. 2:13-16.

**How does ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσὶν define the idea of τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ?** The τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ creates awareness of ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσὶν. This is the connection. Thus this deeper awareness of God's decree that comes through divine creation creates in depraved humanity an awareness that sinful behavior deserves the penalty of death. Every human being at least in the beginning of his / her life was intuitively aware that some behavior is wrong and deserves severe penalty. The hardening impact of sin may indeed dull that awareness in adulthood, but it still remains present even though denied or ignored. It came through divine creation of the individual as well as through creation

<sup>263</sup>Gottlob Schrenk, “Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:219.

<sup>264</sup>“That the sense of 'statute,' 'requirement' or 'ordinance' is the most common in the NT accords with the close link between the language of the NT and that of the LXX. Lk. 1:6 is in full agreement with LXX usage: ἐντολαὶ καὶ δικαίωματα (→ 220). On the other hand, the distinctive use of the term in Paul shows that in such expressions as τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ or τοῦ νόμου he goes beyond the LXX in his main employment of the word; for in the LXX the plural is preferred, and, even where the singular is used, it normally refers to one of many statutes. The closest parallel to Paul's use is to be found in passages like Prv. 8:20; 19:25. In R. 1:32 (τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες) the reference is to the knowledge of God's statutes or ordinances which obtains among men, so that the corruption of worship and sexual life and the general disintegration of society are worthy of death (with perhaps a play on the sense of 'punishment' or 'sentence,' → 220). In Paul's eyes it is important to emphasise that there is for the Gentiles a recognisable divine order which is to be embraced, not as a sum of commands, but (in the sing.) as the one divine will. There is an intentional distinction when in R. 2:26 Paul refers to the statutes of the Law in the plural: τὰ δικαίωματα τοῦ νόμου. Nor is it accidental that in 8:4, which refers to the fulfilment of this demand by walking in the Spirit, the singular is used again to denote the Law in its unity: τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου. In Hb. 9:1 δικαίωματα λατρείας means ordinances of divine service or cultic rules; in 9:10 the reference is to the carnal ordinances of precepts concerning meats and purification. Here the LXX plural is adopted (→ 220) and the term is not given the radical significance which it bears in Paul.” [Gottlob Schrenk, “Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:221.]

generally.<sup>265</sup> The claim “I didn’t know” has no validity at all.

The precise wording of the ὅτι clause does merit consideration. The depiction of fallen humanity comes in a participle phrase οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες that functions as the subject of the verb εἰσὶν. πράσσοντες, from πράσσω, defines, via the present tense form, ongoing practicing of the sinful actions. This is not an accidental slip into sin. But rather a commitment that reflects a lifestyle pattern of activity. What their lifestyle is immersed in is τὰ τοιαῦτα. This qualitative demonstrative pronoun from τοιοῦτος, -αῦτη, -οῦτον, references at minimum the sinful actions listed in the vice list in vv. 29-31. Many commentators are convinced that the antecedent of the pronoun in the neuter plural spelling here includes also the homosexual activity (vv. 26-27) and the idolatry activity (v. 25). The qualitative nature of the pronoun τὰ τοιαῦτα, rather than the direct relative equivalent ἃ, from ὅς, ἥ, ὅ, denotes not just these listed sinful behaviors but includes all similar behaviors that are considered sinful as well.

<sup>265</sup>Whether or not this is a part of the imago Deo referenced in Gen. 1:26 is not clear: IMAGE [עִלְמָא tselem; εἰκόνας *eikonos*, εἰκόν *eikōn*]. Western theology has exaggerated the significance of this OT idea well beyond what exists in scripture. Very different Hebrew terms are used between Gen. 1:26, 5:1, and 9:6, which are the exclusive beginning references in the OT.

The image of God terminology clearly affirms the preeminent position of humanity in the created order and declares the dignity and worth of man and woman as the special creations of God. The ANE background that appears to stand behind the biblical idea provides an appropriate base for such a declaration about humankind. It is not as clear whether other elements of the Egyptian understanding of images are implied through the figure as well. Perhaps the image of God idea suggests that humankind is the primary place where God manifests Himself; perhaps the figure implies that it is humanity that stands in a special relationship to God and that should function both like God and on His behalf; it does seem clear, in the light of the Near Eastern parallels, that the term has less to do with form and appearance than with function and position in the created order of things.

This suggestion as to the origin of the image of God terminology suggests that a term that entered Israel’s tradition at an early date remained somewhat isolated in that tradition without being developed elsewhere in the preexilic literature. It seems likely that the danger presented to Israel’s religion by idolatry precluded that use until after the Exile had eliminated idolatry as a major problem. In the new religious context created by the Exile and return, the “image of God” motif was again taken up and developed both in the intertestamental period and in the NT.

[Edward M. Curtis, “Image of God (OT),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 391.]

<sup>266</sup>“Properly, 'bringing up the other beam of the scales,' 'bringing into equilibrium.' and therefore 'equivalent': Philo Leg. All., III, 10: ἀξίως γὰρ οὐδεις τὸν θεὸν τιμᾶ, ἀλλὰ δικαίως μόνον· ὁπότε γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῖς γονεῦσιν ἴσας ἀποδοῦναι χάριτας ἐνδέχεται—ἀντιγεννησαι γὰρ οὐχ οἷόν τε τούτους—, πῶς οὐκ ἀδύνατον τὸν θεὸν ἀμείψασθαι ... κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν τὸν τὰ ὅλα συστησάμενον; so R. 8:18: οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι 'they are not of equal weight.' ἄξιόν ἐστιν 'it is appropriate or reasonable' (1 Cor. 16:4; 2 Th. 1:3). The use of ἄξιος or ἀνάξιος shows that two distinct magnitudes are equal or equivalent; an act 'deserves' praise or punishment: Jos. Bell., 5, 408: εἰ καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν γενεὰν ἐλευθερίας ἢ Ῥωμαίους κολάσεως ἀξίους ἔκρινε; so in the NT: μισθοῦ, τιμῆς, τροφῆς, πληγῶν, δεσμῶν, θανάτου ἄξιος, Mt. 10:10, Lk. 10:7; 12:48; 23:15, 41; Ac. 23:29; 25:11, 25; 26:31; R. 1:32; 1 Tm. 5:18; 6:1; Rev. 16:6. As Inschr. Priene, 59, 3: ἐπιστροφῆς ἄξιος, 'worthy of consideration,' so 1 Tm. 1:15; 4:9: πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος, 'worthy in any wise to be received.' Supremely, God is worthy to be praised: Rev. 4:11; 5:12,1 or the Lamb to open the seal: Rev. 5:2, 4, 9. Yet the context suggests that in the latter passages ἄξιος almost has the sense of 'in a position to' (cf. 1 C. 6:2). Figuratively we have καρποὶ ἄξιοι τῆς μετανοίας 'corresponding to repentance' (Mt. 3:8 and par.; Ac. 26:20). [Werner Foerster, “Ἀξιος, Ἀνάξιος, Ἀξιώω, Καταξιώω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:379.]

<sup>267</sup>This is the first appearance of a word ('death') which will play a leading role (see chaps. 6–8 Form and Structure), but it does not yet have the full force of that later usage. That he is thinking here of the death penalty for particular sins is hardly likely (Dupont, Gnosis, 27, cites Philo, Mos. 2.171, but there the thought is directed solely against idolatry). Nor that he has simply indulged in a too sweeping denunciation which disregards the difference between private vice and public crime. More likely is it that he deliberately reverts to the Gen 2–3 narratives, which provided the basic paradigm for the earlier part of the analysis (vv 19–25; see above on 1:22), so that in this way too v 32 provides a concluding summary of the

οἵτινες...οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν  
ἀλλὰ  
καὶ  
----- συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

through eight, where 21 of these uses are found, develop this idea in Romans in detail.

**Major point 1:** οἵτινες... οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν, **who are such that not only are they doing these things.**

Several interpretive issues come to the surface here. The one that catches more attention is whether guilt is incurred for both practicing the sinful lifestyle and for encouraging others in it as well. The clear answer of the text is yes for both. The encouraging of others in sin is just as wrong as participating in it for oneself. Both merit eternal death.

The qualitative relative nature of οἵτινες adds the additional tone of hu-

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preceding verses. All these examples of things unfit (vv 29–31) are of a piece with Adam’s/man’s rebellion, and evidence of his continuing distance from God and of his standing under the primeval sentence of death (Gen 2:16). In reverting to a more Jewish analysis Paul might be in danger of losing some of his audience, though he probably had done enough to gain the assent of those less familiar with the Jewish scriptures; but to express his judgment in more specifically Jewish terms is important in providing a transition to the next stage of the indictment (cf. Kamlah, 18–19)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 69.]

<sup>268</sup>Necessaria metitur utilitas; supervacua quo redigis? Voluptatibus itaque se mergunt, quibus in consuetudinem adductis carere non possunt, et ob hoc miserrimi sunt, quod eo pervenerunt, ut illis quae supervacua fuerant, facta sint necessaria. Serviunt itaque voluptatibus, non fruuntur, et mala sua, quod malorum ultimum est, et<sup>145</sup> amant. Tunc autem est consummata infelicitas, ubi turpia non solum delectant, sed etiam placent, et desinit esse remedio locus, ubi quae fuerant vitia, mores sunt. VALE

[*Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, Volume 1-3, ed. Richard M. Gummere, vol. 1 (Medford, MA: Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1917–1925), 262.]

Utility measures our needs; but by what standard can you check the superfluous? It is for this reason that men sink themselves in pleasures, and they cannot do without them when once they have become accustomed to them, and for this reason they are most wretched, because they have reached such a pass that what was once superfluous to them has become indispensable. And so they are the slaves of their pleasures instead of enjoying them; they even love their own ills,<sup>[4]</sup> – and that is the worst ill of all! Then it is that the height of unhappiness is reached, when men are not only attracted, but even pleased, by shameful things, and when there is no longer any room for a cure, now that those things which once were vices have become habits. Farewell.

[Seneca, "Moral Letters to Lucilius: Letter 39," [wikisource.org](http://www.wikisource.org).]

<sup>269</sup>6. Take heed therefore ye also, my children, to the commandments of the Lord, following the truth with singleness of face, for they that are double-faced receive twofold punishment. Hate the spirits of error, which strive against men. Keep the law of the Lord, and give not heed unto evil as unto good; but look unto the thing that is good indeed, and keep it in all commandments of the Lord, having your conversation unto Him, and resting in Him: for the ends at which men aim do show their righteousness, and know the angels of the Lord from the angels of Satan. For if the soul depart troubled, it is tormented by the evil spirit which also it served in lusts and evil works; but if quietly and with joy it hath known the angel of peace, it shall comfort him in life.

[Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., “The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, the Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages*, trans. R. Sinkler, vol. 8, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 31.]

<sup>270</sup>Having shown his awareness of the fair degree of moral sensibility particularly among his Stoic contemporaries, Paul thinks here more of another prominent side of Greco-Roman society where the moral sensibility is not in evidence, but only delight in political intrigue, manipulation, and power or pleasure in human vice as popularly portrayed in comedy and mime (Bultmann, “Glossen,” 281 n.6). That his denunciation is overdrawn and too all-embracing should not be made grounds for criticism. The analysis here is not to be judged in relation to a modern carefully documented survey of social trends. This is written with the flourish of ancient rhetoric, in the style of the preacher of all ages, and would be recognized for what it is—a dramatic expression of a widespread malaise, of a human condition whose character as a whole is demonstrated by its failure to control or to find an answer to its most depressing features and worst excesses." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 69–70.]

manity being turned over to a base mind are the kind of people who.... That is, their very nature is such that they are disposed toward these two patterns of behavior.

Depraved humanity then is hell bent on αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν, **doing these things**. Somewhat similar is the emphasis of Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher contemporary of Paul, in *Epistulae* 39.6.<sup>268</sup> Even contemporary Judaism expressed generally related ideas, e.g., *Testament of Asher* 6.2.<sup>269</sup> But Paul’s perspective is distinctly Christian.<sup>270</sup> The antecedent of αὐτὰ, the neuter plural pronoun, is the vice list, the homosexuality, and the idolatry mentioned in vv. 24-31. The two verbs specifying action, πράσσω and ποιέω, are used interchangeably with no distinct meaning for each one. The present tense spellings uniformly for both verbs through v. 32 underscore ongoing actions that form a lifestyle pattern of activity.

**Major point 2:** οἵτινες...ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν, **but also**

they are such who applaud those practicing such things.

The οὐ μόνον, **not only**, phrase in the first core statement links it to this second statement via ἀλλὰ καὶ, but also. Both patterns of activity thus merit death, and even depraved humanity recognizes this.<sup>271</sup> Whether or not it is willing to acknowledge this is another question. The compound verb συνευδοκέω (συν+ευ+δοκέω) carries with it the sense of approving and encouraging being blended together. The idiomatic English of the NRSV “**applaud**” catches the essence of the Greek verb quite well. The substantival participle τοῖς πράσσουσιν becomes the dative of direct object of συνευδοκοῦσιν. The elliptical participle assumes αὐτὰ with the sense of **those practicing such things**. Or, **the practitioners**.

<sup>271</sup>“And, in any case, there is no need to explain away the natural meaning of the words; for it is surely true, as Apollinarius,<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> Isidore of Pelusium,<sup>3</sup> Calvin,<sup>4</sup> and a good many others have seen, that the man who applauds and encourages<sup>5</sup> others in doing what is wicked is, even if he never actually commits the same wicked deed himself, not only as guilty as those who do commit it, but very often more guilty than they. There are several factors involved. Apollinarius drew attention to one of them when he said: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ποιῶν, μεθύων τῷ πάθει, ἡττάται τῆς πράξεως· ὁ δὲ συνευδοκῶν, ἐκτός ὄν τοῦ πάθους, πονηρία χρώμενος, συντρέχει τῷ κακῷ.<sup>6</sup> To draw attention to the fact that the man who does the wrong will often be under great pressure, as for instance that of passion, whereas the man who looks on and applauds will not normally be under any similar pressure, is not at all to diminish the guilt of the doer, but it is to reveal the greater culpability of the applauder. His attitude will very often be the reflection of a settled choice. But there is also the fact that those who condone and applaud the vicious actions of others are actually making a deliberate contribution to the setting up of a public opinion favourable to vice, and so to the corruption of an indefinite number of other people. So, for example, to excuse or gloss over the use of torture by security forces or the cruel injustices of racial discrimination and oppression, while not being involved in them directly, is to help to cloak monstrous evil with an appearance of respectability and so to contribute most effectively to its firmer entrenchment.” [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 135.]

<sup>272</sup>“The recording of ethical lists in the Hellenistic world extends formally from the Homeric era yet comes into full bloom among Socratic and post-Socratic moral philosophers, notably the Stoa. Because of interaction between Stoic and Christian discourse in the first century, vice and virtue lists serve a practical rhetorical function as a conventional method of moral instruction in both. This is true even when the two life views diverge radically in terms of the means and the end of the moral life. In the hands of the writers of the NT, the ethical catalog constitutes an important part of early Christian paraenesis.” [J. D. Charles, “Vice and Virtue Lists,” ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1252.]

<sup>273</sup>“**vice** \ˈvɪs\ noun

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin vitium fault, vice] (14th century)

1 a : moral depravity or corruption : WICKEDNESS

b : a moral fault or failing

c : a habitual and usually trivial defect or shortcoming: FOIBLE <suffered from the vice of curiosity>

2 : BLEMISH, DEFECT

3 : a physical imperfection, deformity, or taint

4 a often capitalized : a character representing one of the vices in an English morality play

b : BUFFOON, JESTER

5 : an abnormal behavior pattern in a domestic animal detrimental to its health or usefulness

6 : sexual immorality; especially : PROSTITUTION

synonymy see FAULT, OFFENSE

[Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).]

<sup>274</sup>“VICE: A habit acquired by repeated sin in violation of the proper norms of human morality. The vices are often linked with the seven capital sins. Repentance for sin and confession may restore grace to a soul, but the removal of the ingrained disposition to sin or vice requires much effort and self-denial, until the contrary virtue is acquired (1866).” [Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 903.]

<sup>275</sup>“Vice is a chronic and habitual transgression of the moral law, as distinguished from those transgressions which result from momentary temptation. It is a phase of sin (q. v.),

tioning of specific misbehaviors by the writers of the NT. Sometimes these are brought together into lists. But often they are mentioned individually or in groups of two or three items. A vice list will be understood to refer to some type of cataloguing of misbehaviors in ancient literature. The number of items varies greatly for just a few items to substantial numbers.

Second, clearly defined terminology is essential for clarity. In the history of this topic, clarity is seldom found with differing meanings being attached to the more common terminology.<sup>276</sup> Careful analysis of specific writers necessitates some awareness of what each writer means by the set of terms when discussing this topic. To be sure, not every writer himself reflects clear definitional understanding of the set of terms he employs. But in order to avoid misinterpreting a given writer's perspective we must have some

sense of what the specific writer means by the terms he uses.<sup>277</sup> Most helpful for this determination is whether the writer is approaching the topic purely from a philosophical view point. Or, especially important, whether religious thinking shapes the view point. Among Christians, the apostolic era is one general set of perspectives. Later Christian thinking from the second century on attaches loads of additional baggage to most all of these terms, this is true across the language board from early Greek and Latin writers all the way to the various modern western languages writers. And this baggage always carries, either Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant definitions. The goal of achieving clarity is actually not hopeless, as it might seem at this point. But clarity will never surface if the mistaken assumption of modern definitions is read back into the various writers especially in the

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and the remarks there made are applicable here. Vice, like every other habit, is the product of repeated acts, and, as the vicious habit strengthens, the mind of its victim becomes less and less conscious of the evil of which it is the slave, until sin is committed almost without knowing it. The hatefulness of vice both to God and man is shown in the whole of God's moral government in the world. Even in this world vice is foredoomed by the unmistakable judgment of God, and the human agents of the sentence, although they be themselves under similar condemnation, allow the law to be just. Exalted virtue secures the admiration of even the worthless, and vice, when punished, is as universally acknowledged by both good and bad to have met with its deserts. Societies for the suppression of vice have been organized in different countries, and meet with universal approval. Their object is to co-operate with the properly constituted legal authorities in preventing and suppressing the various vices which are prevalent and most flagrant.

"The greater hopelessness of vice than mere sin very clearly bespeaks the wrath of God. The evil consequences of youthful folly may be lightly thought of for a time, but they remain as a root of bitterness to mar the peacefulness of more mature years. Even an imprudent choice of vicious companions will often meet with the same severe retribution as a course of downright vicious action. It has been decreed that vice, and everything that directly or indirectly belongs to it, should not go unpunished; and its escape from condemnation, so far as its own nature is concerned, is utterly hopeless. The Scriptures are very positive in their denunciations of vice (see Heb. 2:1–3; 3:7–19; 4:1–13; 6:4, 6; Rom. 1:29–32)."

[John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Vice," *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1881), 10:772.]

<sup>276</sup>"Ethical lists' is a modern designation for lists or catalogs of virtues and vices that occur frequently in the NT, particularly in the epistolary literature, and are very important for understanding early Christian ethics. There are several terminological problems involved in these designations. First, the adjective *ethical* is a modern designation for these lists; there is no Greek term used in the NT to label them. The related Greek words **ethos** (ἔθος) and **ēthos** (ἤθος) both mean 'custom, habit, manners.' The plural form of **ēthos** is **ēthē** (ἤθη), meaning 'disposition, character,' and the adjective formed from this word, **ēthikos** (ἠθικός), came to mean 'ethical' or 'moral' and was used as the formal term for one of the three main categories of Hellenistic philosophical thought (particularly in Stoicism and Epicureanism; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 7.39–40; 10.30): logic, physics and ethics (**to ēthikon** τὸ ἠθικόν). The terms *virtue* and *vice* are also modern designations for the ethical lists found in the NT. The terms *virtue* (**aretē** [ἀρετή]; Latin *virtus*) and *vice* (**kakia** [κακία]; Latin *vitium*, *vitiositas*) were technical terms for the two antithetical categories of behavior in the Greek philosophical tradition (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.28; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.6; Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.15). For Paul (1 Cor 5:8), **kakia** and **ponēria** (πονηρία) could be understood as general synonyms for 'wickedness, moral depravity,' the antonyms of which were *sincerity* (**eilikrīneia** εἰλικρίνεια) and *truth* (**alētheia** ἀλήθεια), yet he could also use both terms in a vice list as two of several particular forms of wickedness or moral depravity (Rom 1:29; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Titus 3:3; 1 Clem. 35:5, 8)." [David E. Aune, "Lists, Ethical," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 3:671.]

<sup>277</sup>This appears to be more significant for virtue lists than for vice lists terminology.

Virtue, a term used in various significations. Some define it to be "living according to nature;" others, "universal benevolence to being." Some, again, place it "in regard to truth;" others, in the "moral sense." Some place it in "the imitation of God;" others, "in the love of God and our fellow-creatures." Some, again, think it consists "in mediocrity," supposing vice to consist in extremes; others have placed it in "a wise regard to our own interest." Dr. Smith refers it to the principle of sympathy; and Paley defines it to be the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness. Some of these definitions are certainly objectionable. Perhaps those who place it in the love of God and our fellow-creatures may come as near to the truth as any. See Edwards and Jameson, *On Virtue*; Grove and Paley, *Moral Phil.*; Cumberland, *Law of Nature*, i, 4; Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, ii, 8, 77; Watts, *Self-love and Virtue Reconciled*, 2d vol. of his Works, last ed.—Buck.

The standard of virtue is the will of God as expressed in nature (including the human constitution) and his written word. See Fleming and Krauth, *Vocab. of Philos.* p. 487, 548, 907.

[John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Virtue," *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1881), 801.]

pre-modern era. Our primary focus here is on the ancient world and understanding their viewpoint within the framework of their world. Then, and only then, can we have a solid basis for drawing legitimate applications to our world today.

<sup>278</sup>"The grouping of ethical values into lists surfaces in diverse cultures of antiquity, from Iran and India to Egypt and Mediterranean cultures. To the extent that religion as practiced by ancient civilizations is characterized by the striving and performing of its adherents, the function of the ethical list can be seen as a natural extension. Enumerating behavior or dispositions to be emulated or avoided can serve a wide array of purposes—both polemical and nonpolemical, prescriptive and descriptive. Ethical lists in the Hellenistic world during the Homeric era occur in diverse literary and nonliterary contexts, as the work of Vögtle has demonstrated. Numerous inscriptions, frequently at gravesites (see Burial) and memorials, list virtues in honor of military generals, officeholders, doctors and judges. In Hesiod, one encounters lists of transgressions of the children against parents and transgressions against the gods (Hesiod Theog. 77–79, 240–64). Aristophanes utilizes the ethical catalog as part of a satire in a parody of the Eleusinian mysteries (Aristophanes Batr. 5.145). And Seneca employs ethical catalogs to describe, with considerable flair, his disgust with the banal trivialities of the theater as well as how fellow Romans indulge in the discovery of new vices (Seneca Brev. Vit. 10.4)." [J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1252.]

<sup>279</sup>"Greco-Roman authors who use the lists include Pseudo-Aristotle (On Virtues and Vices), Pseudo-Cebes (Fitzgerald and White 1983), Cicero (e.g., Tusc. 4.11–27), Pseudo-Crates (e.g., Ep. 15), Pseudo-Diogenes (e.g., Ep. 28), Dio Chrysostom (Mussies 1972: 67–70, 172–77), Diogenes Laertius (e.g., 7.92–93, 110–12), Epictetus (e.g., Diss. 3.20.5–6), Pseudo-Heraclitus (Attridge 1976: 25–39), Horace (e.g., Ep. 1.1.33–40; 6.12), Lucian (Betz 1961: 183–211), Maximus of Tyre (e.g., Or. 36.4c), Musonius Rufus (e.g., Frag. XVI), Onasander (Dibelius and Conzelmann Pastoral Epistles Hermeneia, 158–60), Philostratus (Petzke 1970: 220–27), Plautus (e.g., Pseudolus 138–39, 360–68), Plutarch (e.g., Mor. 468B, 523D; see the indices in Betz 1975: 367 and 1978: 581), Seneca (Bultmann 1910: 19 n. 3), Soranus (Vögtle 1936: 79–80), Teles (e.g., Frag. IVA), Virgil (e.g., Aen. 6.733), and various astrologers, including Ptolemy (= Claudius Ptolemaeus), Teucer of Babylon, and Vettius Valens (Vögtle 1936: 84–88; Kamlah 1964: 137–39). In addition, lists of virtues and vices occur in the Corpus Hermeticum (Kamlah 1964: 115–36), especially in tractates I and XIII (Grese 1979: 111–12, 121, 127–28, 131–33)." [John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 857.]

<sup>280</sup>"Although the virtues *andreia* ("courage"), *phronēsis/sophia* ('wisdom'), *sōphrosynē* ('prudence') and *dikaiosynē* ('justice') individually play a central role in the ethical teaching of Socrates, schematization first presses to the fore in Plato, who is the first to designate four 'cardinal' *aretai*. (Formal presentation of the cardinal virtues appears initially in Plato's *Republic*, even when similar formulations of the moral ideal predate this by more than a century—for example, in Aeschylus [Sept. c. Theb. 610]). Xenophon writes profusely on ethical topics — among these, order of the home, healthy relationships, the treatment of slaves, political and military obligations — and yet is not enamored of the fourfold schema. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle distinguishes between ethical, political and social virtues on the one hand and intellectual virtues on the other. For the most part Aristotle resists the fourfold schema that had arisen largely out of the Pythagorean love of the number four, considered to be symbolic of life's completeness." [J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1252–1253.]

<sup>281</sup>"The prototypal use of ethical catalogs begins with Zeno (340–265 B.C.), founder of the Stoa, and is expanded under the Stoic teachers who follow. The early masters, notably Chrysippus (280–210 B.C.), tend to use 'virtue' and 'knowledge' (*epistēmē*) interchangeably, a practice that is significant for the Stoic understanding of ethical discourse. Stoic definitions of the cardinal virtues illustrate this conceptualization: justice is knowledge of what is due or right; temperance is knowledge of what to choose or not to choose; prudence is knowledge of what to do or not do in a given situation; and courage is knowledge of what should and should not be feared.

"Stoic moral doctrine mirrors both a return to and an expansion of the tetradic schema that characterized Socratic and Platonic ethical teaching. Organization serves an important recall function in Stoic pedagogy. Proceeding from the four cardinal virtues, Stoic teaching derives multiple subsets of virtues. Chrysippus, for example, divides the *aretai* into two groups of cardinal (*prōtai*) and subordinate (*hypotetagmenai*) virtues, with a lengthy list of subordinates thereto attached. One of the most comprehensive catalogs of virtues comes from the Stoic Andronicus, who compiled the writings of his master Chrysippus and whose list contains no fewer than twenty *aretai* (SVF 3.64). All in all, the tetradic schema of organizing vice and virtue for didactic purposes occurs more frequently in earlier Stoic lists, with later teachers typically dividing cardinal traits into subsets. We encounter in Andronicus a bewildering array of variety and detail—he lists twenty-seven kinds of *epithymia* ('lust'), twenty-seven kinds of *lypē* ('sorrow'), thirteen kinds of *phobos* ('fear') and five kinds of *hēdonē* ('pleasure') (SVF 3.397, 401, 409, 414), although his list pales by comparison with that of Philo, who identifies 147 vices to personify the 'friends' of the *philēdonos*, the hedonist (Philo Sacr. 32).

"The ethical list, which concretizes the moral struggle of the Stoic life view, is not merely confined to philosophical discourse. It appears as well in the poets — relatively frequently in Virgil (e.g., Aen. 6.732) and Horace (Ep. 1.1.33–40), for example — and in popular literature. The more popularized form of vice and virtue lists, while sharing a common vocabulary with Stoic philosophers, loses the tighter schematization that had characterized the scholastics. Those preaching moral uplift to the masses expand the form of the ethical catalog to include new concepts, particularly additional vices. These lists are far from the convoluted philosophical constructs that were advanced by the academic philosophers. People, upon hearing and reflecting, saw themselves in these lists — whether by vice or by virtue. Practical needs of the masses encouraged the use of ethical lists in a popular format.

**1) Vice Lists served differing roles for ancient writers.**<sup>278</sup> In the Greek and Roman philosophical traditions<sup>279</sup> much effort was devoted to organizational structuring of perceived virtues and vices.<sup>280</sup> But the Stoics did more with ethical lists than the other traditions.<sup>281</sup> One should note, however, that the

discussions as well as the limited impact was felt overwhelmingly at the aristocratic and highly educated levels of first century society. Although the Stoics especially sought to educate the masses, the impact was minimal at best. The levels of immorality among the masses were extensive and rampant.

When examining this philosophical tradition, careful attention must be paid to the complex philosophical ethical lists and the popular catalogues of vices and virtues. The philosophical lists focus on prioritizing and grouping various virtues and vices. This structural organization does not surface in the popular catalogues which also have a greater fluidity of listing. The popular lists mainly served to instruct the masses on proper behavior. Little, if any, religious motivation stands behind any of these listings. Most are built around being wise or foolish as members of society.

For the Judeo-Christian traditions, the listings used religious devotion as the foundation for defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, especially within the particular religious community. From the Jewish side, Torah obedience was the defining standard, while commitment to Christ and reflecting His presence served as the defining structure. Both tradi-

tions viewed the listings from the perspective of behavior acceptable to God or not. One should note that the Jewish approach saw these lists as important guidelines for gaining acceptability with God. But for Christians, these listings gave instruction on how to please Christ out of gratitude for His saving action on the cross. In more detail, they functioned as signals of an obedience that enabled the very presence of Christ to shine through the individual to encourage others (cf. Mt. 5:16-18).

One commonality, however, across virtually all of these lists in the ancient world is their individual distinctiveness. As far as I can determine from extensive analysis of these materials, no two lists completely match across all of the various traditions both religious based and philosophical based.

One question is related to this first point of the distinctives of the ancient lists: what levels of dependency across different traditions seem to be present? Early on almost a century ago at the beginning of modern era analysis of these vice and virtue catalogues, the initial assumption was that the NT writers were heavily dependent upon the non-religious philosophical traditions, and in particular upon Stoicism.<sup>282</sup> Within the Greek and the Roman philosophical traditions, only at the point of the four 'cardinal virtues'

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"As a rule, Stoic ethical catalogs do not possess a rigid hierarchy of virtues so as to suggest a moral progression leading to an ethical climax. All virtues stand in close connection to each other; all constitute a natural unity. No particular order or arrangement of virtues or vices came to typify popular usage, although *paronomasia* is frequently achieved through the word order. Stoic ethical lists were not intended to be all-inclusive, and the presence or absence of particular features in a list reflects the values of the author (Malherbe).

"To the Stoic mind, where there exists an antithesis of one virtue, the same necessarily applies to others. For example, the health of one's soul suggests the possibility of psychological sickness. Similarly, the experience of wisdom points to folly; contentment, anxiety; brotherly kindness, enmity; and so on. Just as a virtue can be standardized, so can the corresponding vice.

"The *Sitz im Leben* of the dualistic schema is generally agreed to be the propaganda of the moral philosophers. Accordingly, those heeding their advice were considered wise; those casting it aside, foolish. This dualism allows easy incorporation into Hellenistic-Jewish as well as NT literature. In many respects, a conversion to Judeo-Christian faith is conceived of in terms not unlike a conversion to the wisdom of philosophy. Consequently, the ethical list has a useful role in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian postconversion paraenesis. The consensus of classical scholarship is that NT ethical catalogs in form and function derive from Hellenistic usage. Notwithstanding the views of D. Schroeder, who believes the NT catalogs mirror Israel's ethical dualism in the Day-of-the-Lord expectation and Deuteronomic blessings and curses, and more recently R. P. Martin, early Christian appropriation of Stoic categories in the NT is abundant, commensurate with and reflective of Stoic-Christian interaction in the first century (Zeller; Charles 1997).

"An impressive array of literature provides a window into the world of ethical discourse roughly contemporary with the early Christians. By its hortatory character, molded against the backdrop of Greco-Roman culture, this served as ethical 'propaganda through the living word with personal [i.e., practical] effects' (Wendland, 84). Exemplary writings that make abundant use of the ethical catalog are those of Philo (c. 20 B.C.–A.D. 50), Seneca (c. 4 B.C.–A.D. 65), Epictetus (c. A.D. 50–130), Musonius Rufus (c. A.D. 65–80), Dio Chrysostom (c. A.D. 40–120), Plutarch (A.D. 50–120) Philostratus (late second century A.D.) and Diogenes Laertius (third century A.D.)."

[J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1253–1254.]

<sup>282</sup>Writing in 1932 B. S. Easton said: 'It is now generally recognized that the catalogs of virtues and vices in the New Testament are derived ultimately from the ethical teaching of the Stoa.' He also noted that such lists were fairly abundant in Hellenistic Jewish literature (esp. Philo). If this was the case, then the Pauline lists could be influenced by Stoicism directly or through Hellenistic Judaism.

"In more recent times other suggestions have been put forward. Wibbing notes similarities between the NT lists and those found in the Qumran literature (esp. 1QS), though he admits that there are features of the Pauline lists which distinguish them from the Jewish lists, including those of Qumran.

"Kamlah divides Paul's virtue and vice lists into two categories, the paraenetic catalogs (e.g., Col 2:20–3:17) having a background in the Hellenistic syncretism of the mystery religions, and the descriptive catalogs (e.g., Gal 5:19–23) having, he claims, a background in ancient Iranian religion. However, the dualistic cosmology of ancient Iranian religion has

was there dominating consensus. And even here, not universal agreement can be found. The deeper one goes into the details of various listings, the greater the diversity of perspective one discovers. Among the philosophers so much variation of assumptions, presuppositions, even methodological procedure for determination etc. exists that a widespread consensus of appropriate and inappropriate behavior just didn't exist.

Particularly, when it comes to developing a taxonomy of structure for organizing the many perceived vices, and even virtues, the diversity of viewpoint becomes especially clear. It should be noted that the rather negative evaluation of not being able to achieve a consensus of views is a modern western perspective not shared in the ancient world. The ancient

no place in the Pauline understanding of virtues and vices (nor in ethical teaching of other Christian or Jewish writings).

"Martin, following Schroeder, argues for a return to the OT-Jewish tradition as the preferred background for Paul's lists of vices and virtues."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 963.]

<sup>283</sup>"While vice and virtue lists in the narrower sense do not appear in the OT, the tradition of ethical catalogs finds a secure place in the literature of Hellenistic Judaism. Not infrequently these are vice catalogs that are in some way related to sins delineated in the Decalogue. Because Judaism of the intertestamental period is situated in Hellenistic culture, touch points with Stoic philosophy are frequently detected. In reading this literature one senses both polemical and nonpolemical interaction between Jewish and Stoic worldviews.

**3.1. Philo.** A. Vögtle's description of Philo reflects an individual who is at home in both worlds: 'By the sheer number and length of virtue and vice lists, Philo seems to have achieved the measure of the Stoic popular philosophers' (107). This impression is confirmed by a survey of Philonic literature (e.g., Philo Sac. 20–27; Leg. All. 1.19.56; 2.23, 24; Spec. Leg. 3.63). Philo is particularly fond of the classical fourfold schema, frequently alluding to the four cardinal passions — lust, sorrow, greed and fear (e.g., Philo Praem. Poen. 419; Exsecr. 159–60). The number four is so important to him that the four headwaters of the river flowing through Eden (Gen 2:8–14) point to four cardinal virtues (Philo Leg. All. 1.19.56; 2.23, 24).

"While Philo is anchored to the ethical teaching of the OT, he always manages to return to the Stoic emphasis on struggling against vice. From the standpoint of faith, Philo views obedience as important because it produces virtue, just as disobedience and unbelief have a downward ethical trajectory. Stoic categories and OT ethics are able to stand side by side. Philo exemplifies the extent of Stoic influence during the last two centuries B.C. and through the first century A.D. He demonstrates graphically how religious truth could be clothed in relevant literary and philosophical categories of the day, even when Philonic allegorizing may seem to have overextended itself in its attempts to reconcile Hellenistic moral philosophy and the OT.

**3.2. The Wisdom of Solomon.** The Wisdom of Solomon is another relevant example of Hellenistic influence on Judaism. In this work the reader encounters the four cardinal virtues, whose tutor is said to be the wisdom of God (Wis 8:4, 7). Correlatively, serving false gods is the equivalent of ignorance (agnoia) and must be countered with the gnosis of God (Wis 14:22). In *Wisdom of Solomon* 14:25–26 a lengthy list of vices proceeds characterizes the life that is absent the knowledge of God; it manifests 'blood and murder, theft and fraud, depravity, faithlessness, disorder, perjury, suppressing the good, ingratitude, soulful defilement, sexual confusion, marital disorder, adultery and licentiousness.' Stoic influence in Wisdom can also be seen in the admonitions toward reflection (e.g., Wis 4:11; 12:10). The author is not concerned, however, to correct the sins he catalogs; rather, he is content merely to list the depths of depravity to which Gentiles have descended.

"Although ethical lists appear in the writings of the Qumran community, Qumran ethical teaching is molded primarily by the dualism of the righteous and unrighteous, light and darkness — characteristic Qumran theology — and less by Hellenistic literary-rhetorical patterns of vice and virtue (cf. however Wibbing and Kamlah). The Rule of the Community commends humility, patience, charity, goodness, understanding, intelligence, wisdom and a spirit of discernment (1QS 4:3–6) while condemning greed, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and ill temper, folly and insolence, lustful deeds and lewdness, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart (1QS 4:9–11)."

[J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1254–1255.]

<sup>284</sup>"Although ethical lists appear in the writings of the Qumran community, Qumran ethical teaching is molded primarily by the dualism of the righteous and unrighteous, light and darkness — characteristic Qumran theology — and less by Hellenistic literary-rhetorical patterns of vice and virtue (cf. however Wibbing and Kamlah). The *Rule of the Community* commends humility, patience, charity, goodness, understanding, intelligence, wisdom and a spirit of discernment (1QS 4:3–6) while condemning greed, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and ill temper, folly and insolence, lustful deeds and lewdness, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart

Greco-Roman philosophical world did not much care about reaching consensus. Making one's case for a viewpoint the most persuasively as humanly possible was the ultimate goal. This was the best path to truth for the ancient world, not the reaching of some kind of general consensus.

## 2) Paul draws heavily from the Hellenistic Jewish tradition of vice lists.

The role of the OT is core conception of right and wrong but it does not develop listings of virtues and vices.<sup>283</sup> Later traditional Judaism such as that of the Qumran community in the first Christian century also avoided the influences of Hellenistic culture in contrast to that of Diaspora Judaism that was heavily influenced.<sup>284</sup> Hebrew dualism is something distinct from vice

(nor in ethical teaching of other Christian or Jewish writings).

and virtue listings.<sup>285</sup> There is simply right behavior and wrong behavior, primarily measured by the determination of the Torah of God.<sup>286</sup>

Both the philosophical and the popular types of vice list postings surface in the intertestamental Hellenistic Jewish literature.<sup>287</sup> Philo's systematization is largely built around a fourfold set of foundational virtues.<sup>288</sup> Philo's lengthy discussions dominantly represent the philosophical approach. He holds the record for developing the longest list known in the ancient world with 147 specific vices categorized (cf. Philo Sacr. 15–33; Leg. All. 86–87;

(1QS 4:9–11)." [J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1254–1255.]

<sup>285</sup>"Moral law codes were common in the Ancient Near East. These lists of laws, such as the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1772 BC), detail the prescribed social behaviors relating to property, family, and social contracts. Although these codes do not contain virtue and vice lists proper, they list acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The influence of these contemporary law codes on the structure of the Mosaic Law is evident. However, unlike the ancient Near Eastern law codes, the Mosaic Law depicts God as loving; His people benefit more than He does from their covenant; property violations are not seen as capital offenses; and notably it mentions God's love and the love He requires from others (see Exod 20; 34:6; Lev 19:1–18; Deut 6:5). The mention of love and the emphasis on motivation and attitude made Israelite law much more virtue-based than other law codes of the time." [Timothy L. Jacobs, "Virtue and Vice Lists," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).]

<sup>286</sup>"The Hebrew Bible contains surprisingly few lists of sins. Simple lists occur in Jer 7:9 and Hos 4:2, which presuppose the sins forbidden in the Decalogue (Exod 20:1–17; Deut 5:6–21), and in Prov 6:16–19, which gives seven evils hated by God (cf. Prov 8:13). Similarly, lists of virtues are brief and appear in descriptions of God (Exod 34:6–7; Num 14:18; Pss 86:15; 103:8; Jonah 4:2), of humans endowed by God (Exod 31:3; 35:31; Eccl 2:26), and of righteous men (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3). In the judgment of most scholars (e.g., Wibbing 1959: 26; Conzelmann *1 Corinthians* Hermeneia, 100; Schweizer 1976: 463 n. 13; Betz *Galatians* Hermeneia, 282), however, these lists neither constitute a fixed literary form nor serve as the models for later Jewish and Christian catalogs." [John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 858.]

<sup>287</sup>"In contrast to the Hebrew Bible, lists of both virtues and vices are quite numerous in later Jewish literature. They vary widely in both form and content, with some reflecting the influence of the Decalogue (Berger 1972: 272–73) and others that of Greek philosophy. The lists appear, for example, in Apocalypse of Abraham 24, 3 Baruch (4:17; 8:5; 13:4), 1 Enoch (10:20; 91:6–7), 2 Enoch (9:1; 10:4–6; 34:1–2; 66:6; Kamlah 1964: 160–62), Jubilees (7:20–21; 21:21; 23:14), 4 Maccabees (1:2–4, 18, 26–27; 2:15; 5:23–24; 8:3), Philo (Lagrange 1911: 539–42; Lietzmann *An die Römer* HNT, 36; Vögtle 1936: 107–13; Wibbing 1959: 27–29; Kamlah 1964: 50–53, 104–15), Sybilline Oracles (Bussmann 1975: 155–57), Testament of Abraham 10 (rec. A), Testament of Moses 7, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Vögtle 1936: 102–06; Wibbing 1959: 31–33; Kamlah 1964: 171–75), Wisdom of Solomon (8:7; 14:22–26; Easton 1932: 1–3), and in rabbinic literature (Klein 1909: 94–101; Francke 1930: 24–27; Kamlah 1964: 150–60; contrast Vögtle 1936: 106–07), as well as in the writings of Qumran. The double catalog in IQS 4:3–14 has received particular attention (Wibbing 1959: 43–76; Kamlah 1964: 39–50; von der Osten-Sacken 1969: 150–63) in regard to Gal 5:19–23 and other early Christian texts (Braun 1966: 1.172, 212–14; 2.289–301; Mussner *Galaterbrief* HTKNT, 392–95)." [John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 858.]

<sup>288</sup>"Philo is particularly fond of the classical fourfold schema, frequently alluding to the four cardinal passions — lust, sorrow, greed and fear (e.g., Philo Praem. Poen. 419; Exsecr. 159–60). The number four is so important to him that the four headwaters of the river flowing through Eden (Gen 2:8–14) point to four cardinal virtues (Philo Leg. All. 1.19.56; 2.23, 24)." [J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1254.]

<sup>289</sup>**Wisdom of Solomon 14:22–27.** 22 Εἴτ' οὐκ ἤρκεσεν τὸ πλανᾶσθαι περὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γνῶσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ ζῶντες ἀγνοίας πολέμῳ τὰ τοσαῦτα κακὰ εἰρήνην προσαγορεύουσιν.† 23 ἢ γὰρ τεκνοφόνους τελετὰς ἢ κρύφια μυστήρια ἢ ἔμμανεῖς ἐξάλλων θεσμῶν κώμους ἄγοντες† 24 οὔτε βίους οὔτε γάμους καθαρούς ἐτι φυλάσσοουσιν, ἕτερος δ' ἕτερον ἢ λοχῶν ἀναιρεῖ ἢ νοθεύων ὁδυνᾷ.† 25 πάντα δ' ἐπιμιξέ ἔχει αἷμα καὶ φόνος, κλοπὴ καὶ δόλος, φθορά, ἀπιστία, τάραχος, ἐπιπορκία,† 26 θόρυβος ἀγαθῶν, χάριτος ἀμνηστία, ψυχῶν μiasμός, γενέσεως ἐναλλαγὴ, γάμων ἀταξία, μοιχεῖα καὶ ἀσέλγεια.† 27 ἢ γὰρ τῶν ἀνωτύμων εἰδώλων θρησκεία παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας ἐστίν.†

22 Then it was not enough for them to err about the knowledge of God, but though living in great strife due to ignorance, they call such great evils peace. 23 For whether they kill children in their initiations, or celebrate secret mysteries, or hold frenzied revels with strange customs, 24 they no longer keep either their lives or their marriages pure, but they either treacherously kill one another, or grieve one another by adultery, 25 and all is a raging riot of blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury, 26 confusion over what is good, forgetfulness of favors, defiling of souls, sexual perversion, disorder in marriages, adultery, and debauchery. 27 For the worship of idols not to be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil.

Further, held in common by the philosophers, the Hellenistic Jewish writers, and by Paul, particularly in Rom. 1:18-32, is that vices are the product of passions in human life. One especially sees this emphasis in Philo's *Allegorical Interpretations* 27.85-87 and also *On the Virtues* 34.181-182.<sup>290</sup> In the latter writing, the point is also stressed that worshiping the true God is central to gaining control over passions and neutralizing their negative impact. The first century document Fourth Maccabees, written about the same time as Romans, adopts even more the Greek thinking of the potential of reasoning, φρονήσεως, to subdue passions which lie as the source

<sup>290</sup>Philo also adopts some of the popular structuring of Greek philosophical methods, especially at the point of the four cardinal virtues. A layering of virtues and vices by categories at a more popular level can be seen in his claims of the superiority of Moses over Philo in *Sacrifices* 3.8-4.18. Notice particularly 4.14-16.

(14) What, then, is the truth in these matters which we are considering? Why, that wickedness is older than virtue in point of time, but younger in power and rank. Therefore, when the birth of the two is narrated, let Cain have the precedence; but when a comparison of their pursuits is instituted, then let Abel be the first; (15) for it happens to the being that is born, from his very swaddling clothes till the time when the innovating vigour of his ripe age extinguishes the fiery heat of his passions, to have for his foster brethren, folly, intemperance, injustice, fear, cowardice, and the other evil things which are born with him, every one of which his nurses and tutors foster and cause to grow up within him; by their habits and practices banishing piety, and by their uniform instructions introducing superstition, which is a thing nearly akin to impiety. (16) But when the child has now passed the age of youth, and when the impetuous disease of the passions has become mollified, as if a calm had come over them, then the man begins to enjoy tranquillity, having been at length and not without difficulty strengthened in the foundation of virtue, which has allayed that continued and incessant agitation which is the greatest evil of the soul. Thus wickedness has the superiority in point of time; but virtue in point of rank, and honour and real glory.

§ 14 τί οὖν καὶ τὸ ἐν τούτοις ἀληθές; κακίαν ἀρετῆς χρόνῳ μὲν εἶναι πρεσβυτέραν, δυνάμει δὲ ἀξιώματι νεωτέραν. ὅταν μὲν οὖν ἡ γένεσις ἀμφοῖν εἰσάγηται, προεκτρεχέτω ὁ Κάιν· ὅταν δὲ ἐπιτηδεύσεων σύγκρισις ἐξετάζηται, φθανέτω ὁ Ἄβελ. § 15 γενομένην γὰρ τῷ ζῶν συμβέβηκεν εὐθὺς ἔτ' ἐκ σπαργάνων, ἄχρις ἂν ἡ νεωτεροποιὸς ἀκμῆς ἡλικία τὸν ζέοντα φλογμὸν τῶν παθῶν σβέση, συντρόφους ἔχειν ἀφροσύνην ἀκολασίαν ἀδικίαν φόβον δειλίαν, τὰς ἄλλας συγγενεῖς κῆρας, ὧν ἐκάστην ἀνατρέφουσι καὶ συναύξουσι τιτθαὶ καὶ παιδαγωγοὶ καὶ ἐθῶν καὶ νομίμων εὐσέβειαν μὲν ἐλαυνόντων δεισιδαιμονίαν δὲ πρᾶγμα ἀδελφὸν ἀσεβεία κατασκευαζόντων εἰσηγήσεις καὶ θέσεις. § 16 ὅταν δὲ ἡδὴ παρηβήσῃ καὶ ἡ τῶν παθῶν παλμῶδης νόσος χαλάσῃ, καθάπερ νηνεμίας ἐπιγενομένης, ἄρχεται τις γαλήνην ἄγειν ὅψε καὶ μόλις βεβαιότητι ἀρετῆς ἰδρυθεὶς, ἢ τὸν ἐπάλληλον καὶ συνεχῆ σεισμόν, βαρύτατον κακὸν ψυχῆς, ἐπράυνεν οὕτως μὲν δὴ τὰ χρόνου πρεσβεῖα οἴσεται κακία, τὰ δὲ ἀξιώματος καὶ τιμῆς καὶ εὐκλείας ἡ ἀρετή.

[Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten, "The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology" (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005).

Charles Duke Yonge with Philo of Alexandria, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 95.]

<sup>291</sup>**4 Macc. 2:15.** 15 Καὶ τῶν βιαιοτέρων δὲ παθῶν κρατεῖν ὁ λογισμὸς φαίνεται, φιλαρχίας καὶ κενοδοξίας καὶ ἀλαζονείας καὶ μεγαλαυχίας καὶ βασκανίας·†  
**15 It is evident that reason rules even the more violent emotions: lust for power, vainglory, boasting, arrogance, and malice.**

<sup>292</sup>For further Hellenistic Jewish examples see Sib. Or. 2:254–282; 3:377–80; T. Reub. 3:3–8; T. Levi 17:11; T. Iss. 7:2–6; Apoc. Bar. 4:17; 8:5; 13:4. For rabbinic perspectives that reflect little Greek influence see the discussions in Mishnah and Talmud sources: M. 'Abot 3:11; 4:21; m. Soṭa 9:15; b. Soṭa 42a; b. Sanh. 75a).

<sup>293</sup>"The Two Ways motif, drawing on two ways or paths as a metaphor for a life of vice or virtue, was frequently used in the Greco-Roman world. This metaphor was a staple of Jewish wisdom, eschatology and apocalyptic and is prominent in the teaching of Jesus and in early Christian paraenesis. We find the Two Ways motif in the paraenesis of James 4, the light and dark contrasts in the epistles of John (see John, Letters of) and the eschatological contrasts in 2 Peter 2:1–2. The metaphor is introduced similarly in Didache 1–6 and Barnabas 18–21, leading to extensive Two Ways material. Ignatius gives two ways of life and death as ultimate alternatives, but no moral exhortation is included (cf. McKenna, 403–6; Bauckham, 238–43; van de Sandt, 40–41; Aune, 197)." [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1158–1159.]

<sup>294</sup>"A related Second-Temple Jewish form is the Two Ways tradition. This is best exemplified by the Qumran text, 1QS 4:3–14, where the two ways are aligned with the 'spirit of truth [or light],' and the 'spirit of perversity [or darkness].' Likewise the Testament of Asher utilizes this motif (T. Asher 1:3–9; 2:5–8), where the 'two ways' are further defined as 'two mind-sets, two lines of action, two models, two goals . . . everything is in pairs, the one over against the other' (T. Asher 1:3–4). The influence of this Two Ways tradition on the NT has been variously assessed (see Suggs, Wibbing), with Paul's listing of the works of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:19–26 being a focal point of investigation (see, e.g., Longenecker). Whatever conclusions one might draw regarding the influence of the Jewish Two Ways tradition on the NT literature, the tradition is clearly developed in the apostolic fathers (Did. 1–5; Barn. 18–20; Herm. Man. 6.2.1–7; see 3 below)." [Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1191.]

the starting point with the central role of the will of God. But Hellenistic Judaism, which Paul grew up in, furnished the structuring framework of listing these virtues and vices. His Christian experience, then, gave him the distinct insights into the details. Both his Jewish and non-Jewish readers

of this letter to the Romans had sufficient background awareness of these concepts to enable the apostle to effectively communicate a Christian message using these structures.

3) *Each list in Paul and the other NT writers is distinct.*<sup>295</sup> Quite a lot of

<sup>295</sup>**4.1. The Logic and Language of Virtue and Vice.** The use of the ethical catalog by NT writers derives from its function in Hellenistic and Jewish literature. As with Judaism, the theological motivation behind its usage is the dualism in which the righteous and unrighteous are typified. In the NT, both strands — Hellenistic form and Jewish theological assumptions — merge in the Christian paraenetic tradition (Charles 1997).

"Ethical catalogs appearing in the NT take on two syntactical arrangements, as identified by A. Vögtle and S. Wibbing. They can be polysyndetic, such as the list in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, where members are bound together rhetorically through the repetition of conjunctions in close succession ('Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolators nor adulterers nor prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor greedy persons nor drunkards nor revilers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God'); and they can be asyndetic, such as in Galatians 5:22–23a, where no connective particle is used ('But the fruit of the Spirit consists of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, humility and self-control'). The lists distributed throughout the NT are fairly evenly divided between polysyndetic and asyndetic forms. D.E. Aune detects a third category, 'amplified' lists, which are more discursive in form, and cites 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7 as an example.

"Thirteen virtue lists appear in the NT, all but two of which are found in epistles: 2 Corinthians 6:6–8; Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 4:32; 5:9; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 4:12; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:10; James 3:17; 1 Peter 3:8; and 2 Peter 1:5–7. This listing excludes 1 Corinthians 13, which concerns the theological virtues and contains particular features of the ethical catalog. Twenty-three vice lists are found in the NT, all but two of which also occur in epistles: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Romans 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Corinthians 6:9–10; 12:20–21; Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 4:31; 5:3–5; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 1:9–10; 2 Timothy 3:2–5; Titus 3:3; James 3:15; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3, 15; Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15 (see DPL and DLNTD, Virtues and Vices).

"The Pastoral Epistles contain the densest usage of ethical lists in the NT, all of which suggest a social location of the audience not unlike that of 2 Peter, in which the foundations of morality are being called into question. S. C. Mott calls attention to the fact that adverb forms of three of the four Platonic cardinal virtues—prudence (*sōphrosynē*), uprightness (*dikaosynē*) and piety (*eusebeia*) appear together in Titus 2:12 with the verb *paideuein* ('educate' or 'train'). Seen thusly, the ethical end of salvation, at the least, manifests the goal of virtue posited by Hellenistic moral philosophy (see also the vocabulary of 2 Tim 3:16: *pros paideian tēn en dikaosynē*, 'training in righteousness'). N. J. McEleney identifies in the Pastorals the presence of five basic elements as part of a literary strategy: references to the law, a background of pagan idolatry, moral dualism, transfer of Hellenistic conceptions of vice and virtue to the Christian context and eschatological punishment.

**4.2. New Testament Vice Lists.** Despite the variety found in the ethical catalogs of the NT, there appears to be an 'early Christian paraenetic formula' that characterizes numerous NT vice lists. Those sharing this schema have the function of reminding the readers of what characterized their former life; thus Paul to the Corinthians: 'And this is what some of you used to be' (1 Cor 6:11a; cf. Rom 13:13; Tit 3:3; 1 Pet 4:3). Furthermore, idolatry (*eidōlōlatría*) and sexual impurity (*epithymia*, *porneia*, *akatharsia* or *aselgeia*) appear together frequently in NT vice lists (e.g., 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 21:8; 22:15). This may well correspond to the twin stereotypes of pleasure (*hēdonē*) and lust (*epithymia*) that frequently appear in pagan lists. There is reason to believe, as B. S. Easton (4–5) suggests, that the Hellenistic Jewish literary form of denouncing Gentile practice via lists of grossly depraved deeds was adopted by the NT writers, for whom it served a useful purpose.

A regularly appearing feature in the Christian paraenetic tradition is the formula *apotithēmi* ('put off') plus a list of vices. This pattern occurs in Romans 13:13; Ephesians 4:22 (again in 4:25); Colossians 3:8 and 1 Peter 2:1.

**4.3. New Testament Virtue Lists.** Fewer conventional formulas accompany virtue lists than vice lists in the NT. This may derive from the fact that for Christian writers righteousness rather than moral goodness *per se* is essential. The NT's most noteworthy listing of virtues, which has not been listed as an ethical catalog *per se*, is the recording of beatitudes in Matthew 5, with which none of the other NT lists share any affinity. On the whole, NT virtue lists both bear similarity to and diverge from their pagan counterparts. For example, the qualities of an elder listed in 1 Timothy 3 are reminiscent of qualities necessary of a military general; in the same vein, the lists in Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:7–8; 3:1–2 and 1 Timothy 3:2–3 diverge little from pagan usage (Easton, 11). The opposite, however, can be said of the virtue lists in Galatians 5:22–23 and 1 Timothy 6:1.

**4.4. The Form and Function of New Testament Ethical Lists.** Vice and virtue lists in the NT function paraenetically in different contexts. They may be used for the purpose of antithesis (e.g., Gal 5:19–23 and Jas 3:13–18), contrast (e.g., Tit 3:1–7), instruction (e.g., 2 Pet 1:5–7) or polemics (e.g., 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:3–5; 2 Tim 3:2–5). Although these lists resist any attempts at being reduced to a single Urkatalog or set pattern, the rhetorical effectiveness of ethical catalogs lies in the fact that content is emphasized by means of repetition or cadence. Occasionally, though not necessarily, alliteration or assonance and inclusio enhance their descriptions. A unified structure is hard to detect, and rhetorical motivation is not always apparent, with the notable exceptions of Philippians 4:8 and 2 Peter 1:5–7. The latter, unlike other catalogs of virtue in the NT, depicts a natural progression that is rooted initially in faith and finds its climax in Christian love. The reader may assume that the progression and climax of virtues in 2 Peter 1 is mirroring a concrete situation in which there has been a fundamental ethical breakdown (Charles 1997, 44–98, 128–58). In order to address this crisis, the writer is utilizing a standard hortatory device to underscore the necessity of the moral life as proof of one's profession both to the Christian community and to the world (2 Pet 1:10; 3:11).

diversity surfaces in comparing the vice lists in Paul,<sup>296</sup> and also through the rest of the New Testament. The complementary nature of these listings is an important part of a general understanding.<sup>297</sup> Just exactly how these lists, particularly the vice lists, functioned has been explored in depth with modern scholars.<sup>298</sup> Interestingly, considerable use of ethical listings continued to play an important role for Christians in the next several centuries after the apostolic era.<sup>299</sup> The Greek and the Roman moral philosophical

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"Given the considerable variety with which virtue catalogs appear in Jewish and early Christian literature, the repetition of particular virtues in NT and subapostolic lists may point to an additional function. The inclusion of *pistis* ('faith'), *agapē* ('love') and *hypomonē*; ('endurance') in 2 Peter 1:5; Revelation 2:19; Barnabas 2.2ff. and 1 Clement 62.2 are evidence to Vögtle that virtue catalogs may have acquired in the apostolic paraenetic tradition a catechetical function (54; see also 1 Clem. 64; Herm. Man. 8.9; Ign. Eph. 14.1). That Christian catechesis may have been preserved in such a format is not implausible; a catalogical format is faintly suggested by confessions of faith such as are found in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 2:11–13. Irrespective of their precise function, for the writers of the NT virtues are no artificial mechanism. Rather, they are a natural expression of one's organic union with Christ, indeed the fruit of divine grace."

[J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1255–1256.]

<sup>296</sup>"Paul's lists resemble, in some cases, those developed in Hellenistic Judaism to depict the depravity of the Gentile world (cf., e.g., Rom 1:29–31; Wis 14:25–26). These lists had a regular form in which idolatry is seen as the root cause of many other vices. Paul appears sometimes to include such lists without much adaptation to the context (e.g., 1 Cor 6:9–10). On other occasions his lists are adapted (to a lesser or greater extent) to the context (Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:25–32; 5:3–5; Col 3:5, 8)." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 963.]

<sup>297</sup>"Ethical lists are prominent in Paul's letters, as he addresses particular situations and provides specific instruction. In Galatians 5:16–23, Paul contrasts a list of generic works and desires of the flesh with the generic fruit of the Spirit. Although the list addresses a particular situation, it may be seen as partially depicting the foundations of morality in the imitation of divine characteristics. In 2 Peter 1:5–7 the Apostle Peter presents another list as the foundation of morality. It includes virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. The differences between these two lists show that New Testament virtue and vice lists illuminate each other, as they both overlap and differ." [Timothy L. Jacobs, "Virtue and Vice Lists," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).]

<sup>298</sup>"The fullest list of NT catalogs of virtues and vices is given by Mussies (1972: 67, 172), who cites as examples the following:

"*Virtue Lists*: 2 Cor 6:6–7a; Gal 5:22–23; Eph 4:2–3, 32–5:2; 5:9; Phil 4:8; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 3:2–4, 8–10, 11–12; 4:12; 6:11, 18; 2 Tim 2:22–25; 3:10; Titus 1:8; 2:2–10; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 3:8; 2 Pet 1:5–7; (1 Cor 13:4–7).

"*Vice Lists*: Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:3–5; Col 3:5–8; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3, 15; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.

"While other scholars would delete some of Mussies' examples and/or add further instances (e.g., Luke 18:11), there is a broad consensus that the lists played an important role in both early Christian parenesis and polemic (Karris 1971; 1973). Debate has centered on the origin of the NT lists. Various Hellenistic (e.g., Lietzmann *An die Römer* HNT, 35–36; ANRW 25/2: 1088–92), Jewish (e.g., Seeberg 1903: 9–44; 1905: 109–29; Daxer 1914: 25–58; Wibbing 1959), and Iranian (Kamlah 1964; Suggs 1972: 65–73) sources have been proposed, but no solution has become definitive (so Käsemann 1980: 49–50; Coetzer 1984: 37–39). Of the NT lists, greatest attention has been paid to those in the Pauline corpus (Larsson 1962: 210–23; Furnish 1968: 84–89; Schweizer 1976), especially those in the Pastoral Epistles (McEleney 1974; Mott 1978; Donelson 1986: 171–76).

"The functions of the NT lists are broadly analogous to their use outside of early Christian literature. For example, Greco-Roman philosophers frequently began their speeches with a list of vices in order to depict the wretched moral condition of the masses. Paul, similarly, uses a vice list at the beginning of Romans (1:29–31) to depict the condition of people who have not appropriated the knowledge of God (Malherbe 1987: 24, 31–32). Again, lists of virtues are employed in both philosophical tractates and the NT to delineate the qualifications and characteristics of good leaders, such as the ideal king or bishop (Malherbe 1986: 138–39)."

[John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:858.]

<sup>299</sup>"Many of the Apostolic Fathers, the apologists, the authors of the NT Apocrypha and Nag Hammadi Codices, the theologians, and other early Christians made frequent use of lists of virtues and vices. In general, these lists have received surprisingly little scholarly attention. Recent exceptions to this neglect include studies by Rambaux (1978) of Tertullian's lists and by Mussies (1981) of a personified list of vices and virtues in the Gnostic treatise *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II,106,27–107,17). Examples of the non-canonical lists cited in secondary literature include the following:

"1. Apostolic Fathers: Barn. 2:2–3; 18–20; 1 Clem. 3:2; 30:1, 3, 8; 35:5; 62:2; 64:1; 2 Clem. 4:3 (see Donfried 1974: 114–18); Did. 2:1–5:2; Herm. Mand. 5.2.4; 6.2.3–5; 8.3–5, 9–10; 11.8, 12; 12.2.1; 12.3.1; Sim. 6.5.5; 9.15.2–3; Vis. 3.8.3–7; Ign. Eph. 3:1; Pol. Phil. 2:2; 4:3; 5:2; 12:2.

"2. Apologists: Aristides, Apol. 8; 9; 11; 13; 15; Athenagoras Res. 21; 23; Justin Apol. II,2; 5; Dial. 14; 93; 95; 110; Theoph. Autol. 1.2; 2.34.

"3. New Testament Apocrypha: Acts Andr. 8; 10; Acts John 29; 35–36; Acts Paul and Thecla 17; Acts Pet. 2; Acts Phil. 90; Acts Thom. 12; 28; 55–56; 58; 79; 84–85; 126 (see Klijn 1962: 218–19); Apoc. Paul 5–6; Apoc. Pet. 22–34 (see Dieterich 1913: 163–95); Ps-Clem. Hom. 1.18; 2.44; 8.23; 11.27; 17.16; Ps-Clem. Rec. 4.36; 9.17.

and cultural use of vice and virtue catalogues was too deeply embedded into this increasingly non-Jewish version of Christianity that emerged in the second century. Thus on the virtue side, the three Christian virtues of faith, love, and hope were added to the traditional secular four virtues (e.g., Plato: wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage<sup>300</sup>) in order to form the seven perfect virtues. On the vice side, the best known listing to emerge was the seven deadly sins list: pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth. The usefulness of such listings in instruction and memorization prompted their continual popularity.

Paul's specific use of vice lists (Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:3–5; Col 3:5–8; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 3:3) largely depends upon the situation being addressed in the surrounding context of the listing.<sup>301</sup> All of the listings possess the Christian distinctive of reflecting divinely mandated moral obligations to God, rather than the 'self-help' approach of the secular philosophers. But for Paul and apostolic Christianity these are not paths enabling believers to gain God's acceptance. Instead, they represent 'products' (ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός, Gal. 5:22) which reflect the impact of the presence of God in the believer's life. The τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός, *works of the flesh* (Gal. 5:19–21) reflect what typified the pre-Christian life and now pose a spiritual danger to believ-

ers not walking under the control of God's Spirit.

Limited help comes from a syntactical categorization of Paul's lists into those with connectors between the items (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9–10) and those without connectors, i.e., asyndetic (e.g., Gal. 5:22–23a).<sup>302</sup> This does not address either the intention of the listing nor the contextual contribution to a larger point being made.

C. G. Kruse has divided Paul's ethical lists into five groups based on an assessment of function:

1. **To depict the depravity of unbelievers.** Examples are Rom. 1:29–31 and 1 Cor. 5:9–11.
2. **To encourage believers to avoid the vices and to practice the virtues.** Examples are Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:19–23; Eph. 4:25–32; 5:3–5; Phil. 4:8–9; Col. 3:5, 8–12; Tit. 2:3–5, 6–8, 9–10; 3:1–3.
3. **To expose / denounce the failure of the false teachers.** Examples are 1 Tim. 1:3–11; 6:4–5.
4. **To describe what is required of church leaders.** Example are 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22–25; 3:2–7, 8–13; Tit. 3:2–5; 1:6–8.
5. **To advise a young pastor.** 2 Tim. 3:2–5, 10.

The various vice lists<sup>303</sup> uniformly represent behaviors inconsistent with

<sup>300</sup> Nag Hammadi Codices: I,80,3–11; 85,7–12; II,18,14–31; 106,27–107,17; VI,23,12–17; 30,34–31,7; 39,22–33; VII,37,26–35; 84,19–26; 95,20–33. For other Gnostic lists, see Pistis Sophia 102; 127; 146–47; Irenaeus Haer. 1.29.4.

<sup>301</sup> Other: Altercatio Simonis et Theophili 21; Ps-Clement, de virg. 1.8; Clement of Alexandria Strom. 2.6, 20; 7.12; Const. App. 2.6, 24; 7.18, 33; Ps-Cyprian, adv. aleat. 5; Hippolytus, Haer. 4.15–26; John Chrysostom, Cat. 1.32–33, 36 (Series Stavronikita); 2.16, 39, 42–43 (Series Montfaucon); and Tertullian (see Rambaux 1978: 212–13). For additional Christian vice lists, see esp. Resch 1905: 117–24.

"Lists of virtues and vices continued to play an important role in later Christianity. The three 'theological' virtues of faith, hope, and love were added to the four Platonic-Stoic 'cardinal' or 'natural' virtues to form the 'Seven Virtues' (Zöckler 1904; Kirk 1920: 29–48). The most famous vice list was that of the 'Seven Deadly Sins,' which were held to be pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth (Zöckler 1893; 1897: 253–56; Kirk 1920: 265–68; 1932: 201 n. 4). The popularity of such lists resided, above all, in their utility for moral instruction and exhortation."

[John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 858–859.]

<sup>302</sup> The opposite vices in the dominate Stoic systems played off the virtue list of Plato: "folly (**aphrosynē** ἀφροσύνη), profligacy (**akolasia** ἀκολασία), **injustice** (adikia ἀδικία) and cowardice (**deilia** δειλία)." [David E. Aune, "Lists, Ethical," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 671.]

<sup>303</sup> One should take note that of the 13 virtue lists in the NT all but two surface in the letters of the NT. Of the 23 vice lists in the NT all but two surface also in the letters. The two exceptions are in Matt. 15:19 and Mark 7:21–22.

<sup>302</sup> The value of this approach to analysis lies in comparing those listings in the NT to those either in Jewish writings or in the Greek and Latin writings of this period of time. Additionally this categorization approach helps distinguish true cataloging from the OT tendency of providing random lists on rare occasions. The cataloging of a list carries sets of assumptions about the significance and role of the lists that are different from what one typically finds in the OT. In regard to the NT this helps set 1 Cor. 13 apart as not a virtue list such as Gal. 5:22–23.

<sup>303</sup> **1. The Function of Paul's Ethical Lists.**

"The ways the lists are used in the Pauline letters fall into essentially five categories: to depict the depravity of unbelievers, to encourage believers to avoid vices and practice virtues, to expose or denounce the failures of false teachers, to describe what is required of church leaders and to advise a young pastor.

authentic Christian commitment, as well as being behavior typical of pagans.<sup>304</sup> Ongoing participation in any of these excludes one from being in a saving relationship with Christ and from the sharing of eternal blessings with the people of God in heaven.

From the classification of Prof. Kruse, Rom. 1:29-31 focuses on a basic depiction of depraved human behavior typified in those outside of Christ. This list falls basically into the first type of listing by syntactical assessment, although vv. 29b-31 are asyndetic in structure. As the block diagram visually illustrates it is well organized into these two patterns:

**Syntactical structured:**

v. 29a, Header: πεπληρωμένους πάση ἀδικία  
Consequences: πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία

v. 29b, Header: μεστοὺς φθόνου  
Consequences: φόνου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας,

**Asyndetical Structure:**

vv. 29c-30a: ψιθυριστὰς καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὕβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας,

**"1.1. To Depict the Depravity of Unbelievers.** The list of vices in Romans 1:29–31 is used to depict the depravity of those (Gentiles) who suppress God’s truth. In 1 Corinthians 5:9–11 Paul, when seeking to correct a misunderstanding arising from his 'previous letter,' lists various types of immoral people. He had not meant that his readers should dissociate themselves from all such immoral persons, but only from Christians who lived immorally.

**"1.2. To Encourage Believers to Avoid the Vices and Practice the Virtues.** This is the predominant use made of the lists in the Pauline letters. In Romans 13:13 Paul lists those things which believers must lay aside as they seek to live honorably as people of the new day. Various types of wrongdoers are listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 to warn the Corinthians (some of whom were defrauding one another and taking one another to court; see Law Suit) that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God. In 2 Corinthians 12:20 Paul lists a variety of moral failures he feared he might still find among the Corinthians when he paid his third visit. In Galatians 5:19–23 Paul reminds his readers that freedom from the Law was no excuse to gratify the desires of the flesh (listed in Gal 5:19–21); it should lead rather to the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (listed in Gal 5:22–23). The lists of virtues and vices found in the Prison letters (Eph 4:25–32; 5:3–5; Phil 4:8–9; Col 3:5, 8, 12) all function as incentives to urge the readers to have done with the vices listed, and to practice the virtues. Several lists are included in Titus as part of the behavioral instructions to be passed on to various groups within the Christian community on Crete: the older women (Tit 2:3–5); the younger men, for whom Titus is to be a model (Tit 2:6–8); and slaves (Tit 2:9–10). Titus 3:1–3 includes virtues to be pursued by all believers, as well as vices to be shunned which were a part of their behavior before they were saved (see Pastoral Letters).

**"1.3. To Expose/Denounce the Failure of the False Teachers.** Twice in 1 Timothy lists are included in advice about dealing with false teachers: In 1 Timothy 1:3–11, Timothy is told to curb the activities of certain false teachers who were ignorant of the fact that the Law is not intended for the innocent but the lawless, an illustrative list of whose characteristics is then given (1 Tim 1:9–10); and in 1 Timothy 6:4–5 a list of the vices of the false teachers themselves is provided.

**"1.4. To Describe What Is Required of Church Leaders.** In 1 Timothy 6:11 there is a list of the virtues which Timothy, as a servant of God, should pursue, and 2 Timothy 2:22–25 lists the vices which he is to avoid and other virtues which he is to pursue. The virtues required of, and the vices to be avoided by, those appointed as bishops, deacons, elders are set out in 1 Timothy 3:2–7, 8–13; and Titus 1:6–8 respectively.

**"1.5. To Advise a Young Pastor.** A list of vices is used to warn Timothy of the behavior he will encounter in the last times (2 Tim 3:2–5), and a list of virtues is included to remind him of the way in which his mentor, Paul, conducted his life (2 Tim 3:10)."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 962.]

<sup>304</sup>One should not absolutize the items in these vice lists to suggest that every non-believer will engage in every item in the listings. By the inherent nature of a catalogue, these items reflect typical behaviors that can be detected across the spectrum of paganism.

20	παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς
	εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,
	ποιεῖν τὰ  μὴ καθήκοντα,
1.29	πεπληρωμένους
	πάση ἀδικία
	πονηρία
	πλεονεξία
	κακία,
	μεστοὺς φθόνου
	φόνου
	ἔριδος
	δόλου
	κακοηθείας,
	ψιθυριστὰς
1.30	καταλάλους
	θεοστυγεῖς
	ὕβριστὰς
	ὑπερηφάνους
	ἀλαζόνας,
	ἔφευρετὰς κακῶν,
	γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,
1.31	ἄσυνέτους
	ἄσυνθέτους
	ἀστόργους
	ἀνελεήμονας ·

v. 30b: ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,

v. 31: ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας·

Does this pattern suggest the use of pre-existing sources by Paul? Perhaps, although none have ever surfaced in the available literature. Intentional arrangement by Paul is much more likely. But for what purpose?

In the first category, some echoes are present of the philosophical prioritizing of certain vices with related consequences listed after each of the two groups. The role of the participle *πεπληρωμένους* in contrast to the adjective *μετούς* is more than merely “filled with” and “full of.” The first group in the impact section depicts broad inclusive behaviors, while the impacts of the second center more on attitudes and postures toward others. This is consistent with the two header listings of *πάση ἀδικίᾳ* and *φόνου*. Paul avoids the philosophical attempt of complete inclusiveness of the most basic foundation for all vices. Instead, he asserts what the philosophical approach intended, that some behaviors inevitably lead to other behaviors. Humanity does not exist in a behavioral cafeteria where picking and choosing individual vices can be done at will.

In the second category, the logical sequencing of the items becomes apparent with close examination. Here the intention is in agreement with the similar asyndetic patterns elsewhere, that individual vices do not exist in isolation from others. They tend to ‘run in teams’ with one leading to the others. Additionally, the specific devices used in sequencing made memorization of the items easier.

The composite impact of Paul’s arranging of these vices underscores both his sensitivity to the existing patterns of arrangement of vices among the writers of his time. But also, it stresses the fuller impact of evil that exists in a depraved humanity. He has no need to give any attempted listing of every vice among humanity. That would have been counter productive, since new ways of being evil are surfacing all the time among humans.

Instead, his summary listing serves his larger purpose well for exposing in the third segment of vv. 18-32 what the ultimate potential for evil is for those outside Christ. And it is humans in this kind of evil that God walks away from (*παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς...*, vv. 24, 26, 28) when humans rebel against His self-revelation in the created world. Not just idolatry and homosexuality become the destroying dynamics, but a whole Ponders’s Box of evil is unleashed upon humanity as an expression of His wrath (*ὀργῇ θεοῦ*, v. 18). This does not in any way diminish God’s love (*ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ*) for fallen humanity (cf. esp. chap 8). To the contrary, it is an affirmation of that divine love which affirms His willingness to allow rebellious humanity to go its

own way but in the knowledge that with His provision of a way back in the redemption of Christ many of fallen humanity would repent of their rebellion and return in submission to His will and demands. This indeed is the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, *righteousness of God* (v. 17) at work in the world. Now the dynamical nature of His righteousness is easier to grasp.

### **Summary conclusions from 1:16-32.**

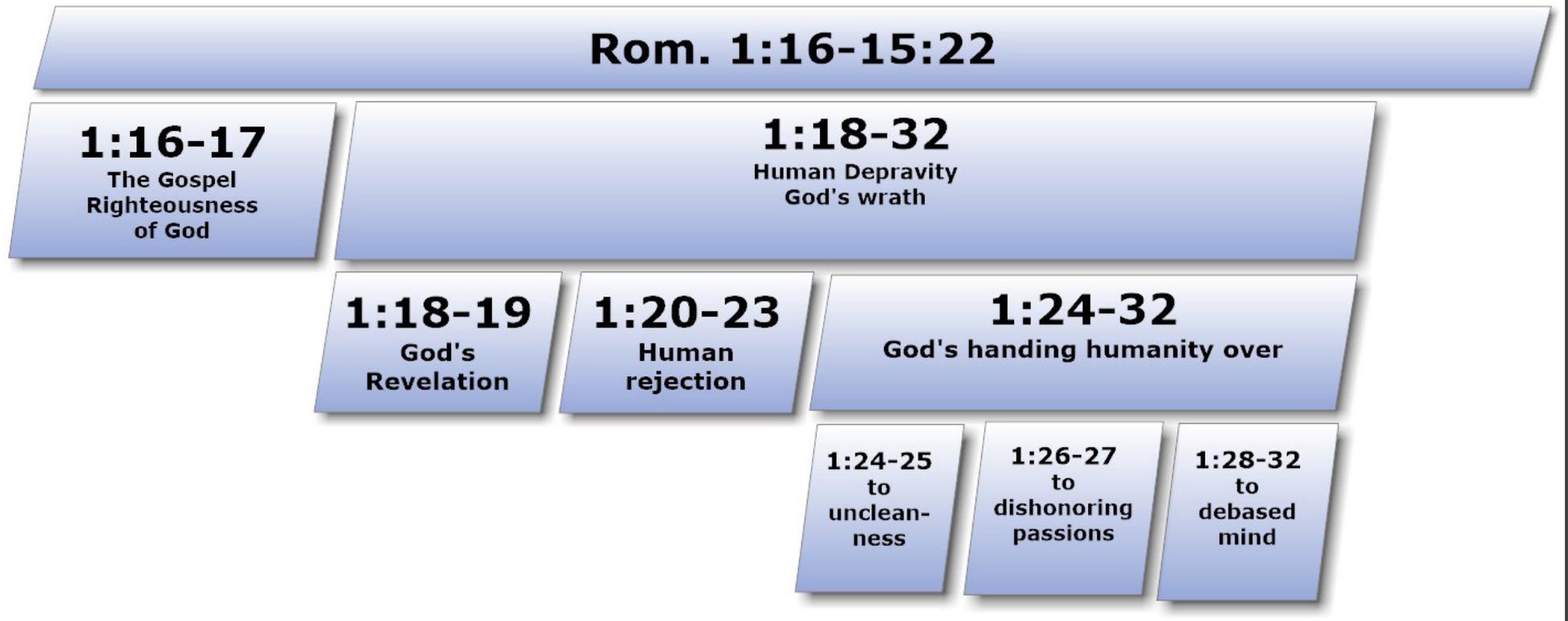
In v. 17 Paul asserts the uncovering of God’s righteousness in the Gospel (*δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται*). That is, the justness of God’s treatment of sinful humanity is seen in the provision of redemption in Christ. Of course the profundity of the idea of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* is so deep as to go beyond words to describe. How does one ever grasp the purity of a holy God? Nothing tainted with sin and corruption can survive in the full presence of such a pure God as the Creator of the universe. The marvelous disclosure of God Himself is *the Gospel*, *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (v. 16). This is the vehicle for *σωτηρίαν*, salvation. And it comes to *παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι*, *everyone believing*, no matter whether they are Jew or Gentile.

Thus if you want to discover the justness of this holy God in dealing with sinful humanity, you must come to Him in faith commitment (v. 17, *παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι*). This is a long time principle with its foundation in the spiritual heritage of ancient Israel (*καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται*). How does this *justness of God*, *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, function in our world?

First, it works through *God’s wrath*, *ὀργῇ θεοῦ* (1:18-32). One can never understand God’s justice apart from understanding His wrath! A holy God cannot tolerate sinfulness either in Himself nor in His creation. In uncovering (*ἀποκαλύπτεται*) the depth of this central reality of God, Paul verbalizes what God Himself has disclosed from Heaven. This ultimate source of revelation *from Heaven*, *ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ*, rather than from any human source must not be ignored or overlooked. Also this divine disclosure of God’s wrath is targeting *ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων*, *against all godlessness and wickedness of people suppressing the Truth in wickedness* (v. 16). Divine Truth, i.e., God’s being and actions as defining truth, stands in profound conflict with human wickedness, and is systematically eradicating it in the divine plan for eternity.

God’s justice along with His wrath is discovered at the most basic level in creation. In creating the material world, God embedded revelation of Himself into that creation. Thus *τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ*, *the knowable about God* (v. 19) is clear to humanity in creation. How? *ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν*, *for God has shown them*. What has He shown of Himself to humanity through creation? *τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ*, *the invisible realities about Himself* (v. 20)! These

# Romans 1:16-32 Charted



are made clear through His action of creating: ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα, *from the creation of the world in the things He made knowable*. And what are these? ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, *which indeed are His eternal power and deity*. What consequence comes upon humanity from this? εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, *so that they are without excuse!* Given the potential for becoming aware of God in His eternal power and deity, humanity has no justification for not responding in proper reaction.

But how has humanity responded? Vv. 21-23 detail humanity's response to God's self-revelation in creation which is presented in vv. 18-20. The coordinate conjunction διότι sits up the response with two pairs of human reaction to God's self revelation. The first two (#s 1 & 2 below) define a failure to do what would have been appropriate response. The second two (#s 3 & 4 below) define the destroying actions coming out of humanity's

failure to respond properly. These four actions take place in spite of their γνόντες τὸν θεόν, *having known God* (via creation) (vv. 20-21).

**γνόντες τὸν θεόν**

*Although having known God,*

- 1) οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν  
*they did not glorify God as God*
- 2) ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν,  
*nor did they give thanks,*
- 3) ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν  
*Instead they became morons in their thinking,*
- 4) καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία  
*and their senseless hearts became totally dark.*

Note this well defined pattern set up by the apostle here. οὐχ... ἢ . . .

stands in contrast to ἀλλ'... καὶ. The second pair spells out consequences from the first two failures. The passive voice verbs in the second set assert these disasters as ὀργὴ θεοῦ, **God's wrath**, coming down upon them. Then out of this disastrous human response the continuing reaction worsens humanity's plight (vv. 22-23):

**φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ**  
**while professing to be wise**

- 5) ἐμωράνθησαν  
**they became morons**
- 6) καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετῶν.  
**and they exchanged the Presence of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man and birds and four footed animals and reptiles.**

The repeating of ἐματαιώθησαν in 5) from 3) heightens the depths of stupidity reached by humanity for its failures. Plus it stands in sharp contrast to the delusional thinking that they are **wise**, σοφοὶ, when in reality they have become morons. Thus out of this delusional idiocy they turn to idolatry, the utter opposite of ἐδόξασαν and νῦχαρίστησαν which they should have done. In this more detailed depiction of idolatry, Paul sets up the third segment: God's response to their response (vv. 24-32).

This third unit of vv. 18-32 is well organized into three sentences around a repeating triad principle: παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς εἰς..., **God handed them over to...** (vv. 24-25; 26-27; 28-32). This core statement stands as foundational to each sentence. The central idea of this core principle is that God simply turns loose of humanity and hands them over to destructive forces. This actions constitutes expressions of ὀργὴ θεοῦ, **God's wrath**. Does this mean that God ceases to work in His created world? Not at all. It does underscore, however, that God will not force Himself upon a humanity that wants nothing to do with Him. That humanity is accountable and will in death pay the ultimate price of eternal damnation for its rejection of God. But God gives humanity that choice.

The αὐτούς, **them**, here includes all of humanity. The similar Hellenistic Jewish literature sees **them** as referring to the non-covenant, Torah disobedient Gentile world. Although some have tried to lock Paul into that same box, his language refuses to be limited to just Gentiles. His reference to ἀνθρώπων in v. 18, which αὐτούς in vv.24, 26, 28 goes back to, is clearly a designation of all humanity in the tradition of Genesis 1-3. The so-called fall of humanity in Genesis 3 provides the defining backdrop for Paul. Yet Paul is not attempting to give a Christian interpretation of the Genesis narrative. Rather, his thinking plays off the OT perspective. It defines ongoing ex-

pressions of God's wrath upon a humanity living in rejection of God across the tracks of time until the eschatological end. A timeless divine truth is being put on the table for Paul's readers for understanding the people of their world in ancient Rome in the middle of the first Christian century. And it has equal relevancy to any believing community at any point of time and place. A major signal of this is the uniform use of the gnomic function of the aorist verbs across the unit of text. The pattern of self-revelation by God in creation; rejection of that revelation by humanity; and God's turning them over to their destructive desires is repeated over and over down through the centuries of human history. Both by individuals and by groups of people that ultimately envelope all of humanity.

This is an essential element of the Gospel message commissioned by God for His servants like Paul to proclaim. But just around the corner in God's turning humanity over to its own self-destructive ways is the action of God in compassion and love intervening in Christ in order to make a way of escape, a way of salvation, possible. When depraved humans turn in life long faith surrender (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, v. 17) to this eternally powerful God, His love takes hold of their life in a miraculous turn around from rebellion to perpetual praise and thanksgiving. The full story comes in the first eight chapters of this letter, not just in the first chapter. Actually, it takes fifteen chapters of this letter to get everything connected to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον on the table, which the Roman Christians needed to read and hear.

The just action of God turning rebellious humanity over in this core declaration is accompanied in all three instances in vv. 24-32 by defining details painting a dark and foreboding picture of the potential ruin produced by sinful rebellion against God. The thought structure is uniform in all three sentences. God turns sinful humanity over to ----, and this produces evil behavior that destroys.

*In v. 24, it is εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, **to uncleanness**. The situation of humanity's inner life is ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν, **in the passions of their hearts**. The result of the turning over is τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, **so that they dishonor their bodies among themselves**. This in turn leads to idolatry: οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν, **who are such that they exchanged the Truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creations rather than the Creator who is blessed forever, amen**. Thus a stinking filth settles over humanity that perverts them into worshipping the created rather than the Creator.*

*In v. 26, it is εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, **to dishonoring passions**. This picks up on τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς in v. 24b and stresses sexual mis-*

behavior as the product of πάθη ἀτιμίας. The most obvious expression of sexual misbehavior in Paul's non-Jewish world was homosexuality, which is set forth in inclusive depiction with αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες, *for indeed their females exchange the natural use for one beyond the natural and in similar fashion the males also forsake the natural use with a female and are consumed in their passion for one another, male for male committing shameless actions, and then receiving for their deceiving error the punishment mandated by God.* Paul's use of natural / unnatural, which is very unhebraic but very Greek, signals homosexuality by both genders as the target of condemnation not because it was considered worse than other sexual misbehaviors, but because it was the one

<sup>305</sup>This poses real challenges to sincere Christians seeking to speak the Truth of the Gospel to a pagan world. And particularly in relation to hot button topics such as homosexuality. Let me share some personal observations here.

1) The believer must not compromise nor exaggerate the Truths of the God. Unquestionably homosexual conduct of every kind is uniformly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament is one of many actions labeled an abomination to God. Along with virtually all other sexual misbehaviors the societal punishment for such was execution. In the Judaism of Jesus' limited world of Palestine, the punishment for these misbehaviors remained execution, as John 7:53-8:11 illustrates. But for the Judaism outside Palestine, i.e., Hellenistic Judaism, the penalty changed to exclusion from the Jewish community.

2) Homosexual activity did not take place in the Christian communities especially outside Palestine. The uniform perspective of the NT is that this pagan activity is an outsider activity among those not-believing in Jesus Christ. Were it to have surfaced inside the church, the attitude toward it would have been consistent with Hellenistic Judaism: exclusion from the community. This was the approach of Christianity for other sexual behaviors outside of marriage, as Paul demonstrates in 1 Cor. 5. Jesus did not deal with homosexuality simply because in the Palestinian Judaism He spoke to, the death penalty still was in force and homosexuality did not exist there. Paul deals with it primarily in Rom. 1:26-27 as an outside example of sexual misbehavior to an audience who could easily understand it as such.

3) The pattern of Hellenistic Christianity's excluding those guilty of sexual misbehavior from the community should be the timeless model for believers. We live in a world much more like that of Paul's churches than of churches in Judaea and Galilee. In regard to the US, those oriented to a 'gay' lifestyle are still full citizens of the US under the constitution. The additional legal principle of separation of church and state preserves the rights of individual churches to retain control over their membership and leadership requirements. Thus US Christians have every right to control membership rights within their church. But they do not have the right to impose those perspectives on the surrounding society! To insist on doing is to abandon the right for self-determination inside the church community. The 'community' inside the church does not and should not equal the 'community' of the surrounding society.

4) Thus believers find themselves clearly at times between the horns of Luther's Zwei Reiche dilemma. We live at once, as long as we are in this world, in both a depraved world and a redeemed world. Inside the Christian community we have legal rights protected by the US constitution to self-governance. But whatever is determined inside the church cannot and must not be imposed on the world outside the church.

To be sure, our values can be put on the table in the secular market place for consideration and in advocacy. But they are but one of many views on that table, and no view whatever its source can be forced on society apart from a majority of society adopting it. This is democracy. Anything else is not democracy. And the core rights of the minority must be protected in society and by the governing structures established by every society. Our Baptist forefathers in the Colonial Era of the US learned this by shedding their blood and giving up the lives of many of their leaders.

5) When the pressure of decision etc. becomes acute for believers over the issue of homosexuality, extraordinary resistance must be exerted against the two evil temptations of compromise and exaggeration. To compromise the clear teaching of the sinfulness of homosexuality in scripture is a path to disaster and to incursion of ὀργὴ θεοῦ.

But just as wrong is to exaggerate the sinfulness of homosexuality beyond that of the many other sexual misbehaviors also condemned in scripture. I've notice among Christians opposing homosexuality a parallel tendency is to overlook or ignore the sins of adultery, prostitution, and fornication. Interestingly this seems to especially be the case of leaders, both political and religious. One must also not make the stupid mistake of measuring the wrongness of any sin by the number of times it is mentioned or not mentioned in scripture. Some apply this false measurement and conclude that homosexuality must not be bad if Jesus didn't mention it and if only a few scriptures surface condemning it. If the quantity measurement

sexual misbehavior most commonly condemned in the philosophical moral philosophies of Paul's day. The OT standard of sexual intimacy limited to a man and woman in official marriage is upheld and any sexual behavior beyond this is an abomination to God. This is reflected in the listing of it in the middle of sexual misbehaviors both in the Torah of the OT as well as the vice lists elsewhere in Paul and the other NT writers. Sexual activity outside of marriage is condemned as an expression of God's wrath upon a rebellious humanity. The deeper insight here sees πάθη ἀτιμίας, *dishonoring passions*, which motivate sexual misbehavior, as ultimately destructive both of humanity and the society formed by humanity. If ever a society needed to understand this eternal spiritual principle, it is modern western pleasure oriented society. Self-centered gratification seemingly stands behind almost every aspect of modern western society.<sup>305</sup>

*In v. 28, it is εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, to a debased mind.* But it not just idolatry

and sexual misbehavior that rebellion against God that engulfs humanity. Their rejection of God (καθώς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, [just as they did not consider having God in full understanding](#)) prompted God to turn them over to a completely corrupted and malfunctioning process of thinking. This inability to make correct decisions led to the opening of a Pondera's Box of evil, which is set forth in a typical ancient vice list format in vv. 29-31. The list is set up as defining ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, [doing the things not proper](#). The people doing these things are those designated by αὐτούς via attaching the participle *πεπληρωμένους* to the pronoun. The masculine plural ending of the participle reaches back to the masculine singular pronoun.

The apostle adopts the Hellenistic Jewish use of the Greco-Roman vice and virtue listing, since in his world the tool had a long track record of acceptance and usefulness in instruction particularly for teaching moral behavior principles. Unlike the Greek and Latin models, the Hellenistic Jewish tradition found in writings like the Wisdom of Solomon were anchored in the OT Torah heritage of defining sin and misbehaviors around the will of God expressed in divine revelation. This provided the apostle a preexisting model with an appropriate value system at its core. Yet it wasn't Christian. Thus Paul's contribution is to use the existing model but with distinctive Christian content and orientation. Paul shows particular sensitivity to the established Greek and Latin models with his structuring the vice list in vv. 29-31, first using the secular philosophical layering of vice items into sources and products (v. 29a) and then secondly an awareness of the popular model of asyndetic structuring using sequential grouping of items (vv. 29b-31). Such sophisticated use of the well known model of a vice list contributed heavily to the persuasiveness of his argument of remnant misbehaviors reflecting the wrath of God upon rebellious humanity. Also like the existing model was clearly understood, no vice list was intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it was illustrative of what is possible to happen. Since Paul's writ-

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is applied then adultery is by far the worse sexual misbehavior mentioned in scripture, since it receives far greater attention in both the Old and New Testaments. But such false measuring rods completely ignore a fundamental historical aspect of scripture: the religious leaders speak to specific people in specific situations with specific needs. There is no emphasizing problems that didn't exist with their intended audiences. To have done this would have been to give false information to their audiences.

For me, the challenge is always first and foremost to be completely 'biblical' in my views and practices. I don't care whether it's Baptist or Christian or neither. Ultimately only one set of values will be applied to my life, those established by God in His Word. These will determine my eternal destiny. Every other value is secondary and ultimately of no importance to me.

This means that sin is sin, and I am in opposition to it. But it also means that I fully recognize that I live in two worlds simultaneously. And that I must affirm my values inside the limits of both worlds. As long as the US constitution affirms the full citizenship rights for its citizens even though conducting themselves in various kinds of sexual misbehaviors, I am committed to affirm them as a US citizen and their legal rights to live by their values as protected by law. I have no right to destroy their rights nor crush them simply because they choose to live by values different from mine. Unquestionably, I have no legal or moral right to violate or ignore the legal rights of other citizens living by different values. As a Christian I must be fully committed to principles of justice and equality both under God and under law.

ings are the first of all the documents in the NT to be composed (late 40s to late 60s), his influence was significant upon other NT writers, even the gospel writers who adopt this very non-Hebrew literary pattern in order to communicate the teachings of Jesus to their readers in the second half of the first century.

The point of the vice list in vv. 29-31 is to show the potential for destructive behaviors coming from rebellion against God. The destructive behavior stems from a [debased thinking](#), ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, that cannot produce correct decisions and so becomes an expression of ὀργή θεοῦ, [God's wrath](#) upon rebellious humanity.

Then in order to further underscore his point he adds his personal commentary to the vice list in v. 32. It repeats the contrastive tension first expressed in vv. 18b-20, then in v. 27c, with the summarizing declaration of v. 32: τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, [although knowing the righteous decree of God that those committing such practices deserve death](#). In spite of this awareness, depraved humanity not only continues living by these wrong actions, they also become cheer leaders of others also living by the same set of corrupting values. Thus no argument can be made against the point that eternal death should be their fate.

What we have clearly in vv. 29-32 is the statement of eternally relevant divine Truth given to Paul to put in written expression as God's eternal will. Understanding this is essential for first knowing the ὀργή θεοῦ, wrath of God. And knowing His wrath is essential for understanding the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, [the righteousness of God](#). That is, how and why God's actions toward depraved humanity are always just and proper, since they always reflect God's very nature and being. Further, awareness of these aspects is essential for understanding τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, [the Gospel](#). Paul had come to this understanding and was then prompted by God to share it with the believing community in mid-first century Rome. When he hoped to arrive there later

on, the community should already have a basic grasping of this Gospel which Paul preached to the lost world. Hopefully they would have fully embraced this understanding of Gospel and be prepared to enthusiastically support Paul in spreading it to the western regions of the Roman empire.

By the divine preservation of this text as sacred scripture, we also have the privilege as modern believers to understand the richness of Gospel and then embrace it not only for our own spiritual benefit but be eager to share it with the depraved humanity all around us.