

(4) "Their Hearts Were Darkened": The Folly of World Religions (1:21-23, 25)

# **Romans: The Outwork of the Righteousness of God**

# Their Heart Was Darkened

- “<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- “<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,
- “<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.” (Rom 1:21-23)
- “<sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:25)

# They Knew God

- Deep Down the Heart of All Men, There Is a Sense of Eternity, the Search for Meaning, and the Sourcing from the Ultimate Being.
  - “He has also set eternity in their heart.” (Eccl 3:11)
  - “Nature herself has imprinted on the minds of all the idea of a God”—Cicero
  - “There is a God within us, and we glow when he stirs us.”—Ovid
  - “Call it nature, fate, fortune; all are but names of the one and the same God”—Seneca
  - “God is the ruler of all”—Tacitus

## They Did Not Honor Him, Nor Give Him Thanks

- When Children Take for Granted the Love and Provision of Parents and Become Ungrateful, They Begin to Be Spoiled.
- Men's Ingratitude to God Reveals the Degradation of Mind, and the Corruption of Soul.
  - "I hate ingratitude more in a man
  - Than lying, vainness, babbling drunkenness,
  - Or any taint of vice"
  - —Shakespeare
  - (Viola in "Twelfth Night," Act 3, Scene 4)

# They Became Futile in Speculations

- The Proper Use of Our Mind Would Result in the Following Conclusions from Natural Revelation:
  - There Is a God, Who Is:
    - Almighty as the Creator of the Universe.
    - All Wise as the Designer of the Orders of Creation.
    - Personal and Moral as the Source of Our Personhood and Conscience.
    - Perfect, Infinite and Holy as the Source of Our Idea of Perfection.
    - One Who Wants to Have a Loving Relationship with Us by Creating Us, Sustaining Us, and Revealing Himself to Us.

# They Became Futile in Speculations

- Without Receiving the Special Revelation through the Bible, esp. Jesus Christ, Men Began Futile Speculations:
  - Sin and Temptation Has Three Kinds: Pride, Greed and Fleshliness; the Last Is Universal for All.
  - Those Who Are Primarily Controlled by Pride Will Speculate in the Direction of Philosophy.
  - Those Who Are Primarily Controlled by Greed Will Speculate in the Direction of World Religion.
  - They Are All Futile: Not Profitable in Essence.
  - **“And their foolish heart was darkened”**: Bound in Error.

# The Folly of Philosophy

- “Professing to be wise, they became fools.”
  - Philosophy = “Love of Wisdom”
  - Self Regarded Wisemen = “Foolosophers” —R.A. Torrey
- Spectral Perspective:
  - Extreme Left: Atheism (No God) :
    - Humanism, Communism, National Socialism (Nazism), Existentialism, Original Buddhism, Nihilism (There is Nothing).
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> form Left: Agnosticism (Cannot Know God) :
    - Skepticism (I Doubt if We Can Know God).
    - Logical Positivism (No Truth unless Lab-Proven).
    - Postmodernism( There Is No Truth, No Meta-narrative).
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> from Left: Deism (God Created; but No Interaction Later):
    - Thomas Jefferson.
    - Confucius.

# The Folly of Philosophy

- Historical Perspective:
  - Classical Period (Ancient Greece & Rome):
    - (5<sup>th</sup> Century BC – 5<sup>th</sup> century AD): Socrates, Plato, Aristotle.
    - Knowing Reason, Seeking for Faith.
  - Medieval Period (Christian Europe):
    - (5<sup>th</sup> century AD – 15<sup>th</sup> century AD): Augustine, Aquinas.
    - Having Faith, Seek for Systematic Understanding.
  - Modern Period (Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Revolutions):
    - (15<sup>th</sup> century AD – 20<sup>th</sup> century AD): Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche, Marx.
    - Rejecting Faith, Try to Justifying Reason through Experience.
  - Postmodern Period (Doubt and Disillusionment):
    - (20<sup>th</sup> century AD – 21<sup>st</sup> century AD): Derrida and Foucault.
    - Rejecting Faith and Reason, Rely on Experience Alone.



# The Folly of World Religion

- Spectral Perspective:
  - Extreme Right: Pantheism (All [the World] Is God):
    - Hinduism, New Age, Christian Science.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> from the Right: Polytheism (Many gods):
    - Paganism (Ancient Greece, Rome, Folk Religion).
    - Occults (Sorcery, Witchcraft/Wiccan, Astrology, Satanism, Fortune-telling, Ouija Board etc.).
    - Dualism (Zoroastrianism, Taoism).
    - Popular Buddhism.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> from the Right: Cults and False Religions:
    - Polytheistic: Mormonism.
    - Monotheist Unitarian: Rabbinic Judaism, Islam, Jehovah's Witness.
    - Monotheistic Trinitarian with Wrong Soteriology: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, Liberal Protestantism.

# The Folly of World Religion

- Historical Perspective:
  - Messianism/Christianity Was the First and True Religion (Gen 3:15)
  - Satanism (Spiritual Warfare) Was the Reality behind All False Religions.
    - Lucifer Was a Cherub (Lion, Man, Ox, Eagle), Once the Head of the Servants (Angels) in the Household of God.
    - He Fell due to Jealousy of God's Plan for Man, and Became Satan (Accuser [of Man]) and Devil (Archenemy [of God]).
    - He is Symbolized by a Dragon (Lion, Snake, Ox, Eagle).
    - He Is behind All the False Religions, and Hides behind the Idols to Receive Man's Worship.

# The Folly of World Religion

- Historical Perspective:
  - Liberalism Was the First World Religion (Gen 4):
    - Cain = Acquired (False Messiah, First Murderer).
    - Enoch = Dedication (of Cities, No More Farming due to Curse).
    - Irad = Wild as Donkey (City Life's Result?).
    - Mehujael = Priest of God (Man Made Religion).
    - Methushael = People of God (All Saved, None Condemned).
    - Lamech = Conqueror (of People: Justifying Murder and Lust).
      - Married: Adah (= Ornaments) and Zillah (= Tinkering).
      - Sons: Jabal (Shepherd), Jubal (Musician), Tubal-Cain (Ironsmith).
  - Result: Moral Decadence and Violence (Gen 6:1-6. 13).

# The Folly of World Religion

- Historical Perspective:
  - (2238-2237 BC) Flood: Removal of Nephilim
  - (c.1900 BC) Tower of Babel :
    - Paganism (Polytheism).
    - Chief gods: Egypt: Sun god; Mesopotamia: Moon god.
  - (1900-1500 BC) India: Hinduism (Pantheism).
  - (c.1500-500 BC) Biblical Judaism: Exodus-Kingdom-Exile.
  - (c.500 BC) World Religions and Philosophies:
    - Greece: Early Philosophers.
    - Persia: Zoroaster (Zoroastrianism).
    - India: Gautama (Buddhism).
    - China: Lao Tzu (Taoism) and Confucius (Confucianism).
  - (c. "0" BC/AD) Christianity.

# The Folly of World Religion

- Historical Perspective:
  - Christianity's Development
    - 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Cen.: Apostolic/Patristic Church, Biblical Authority.
    - 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Cen.: Roman State Church => Eastern Orthodox (1054): Traditional Authority.
      - Classical Period of Philosophy: Reason Turned into Faith
    - 6<sup>th</sup> Cen. on: Roman Catholic Church: Papal Authority
      - Medieval Period of Philosophy: Faith Applied through Reason
    - 16<sup>th</sup> Cen. & on: Protestant Denomination: Dogmatic Purity
      - Modern Period of Philosophy: Reason Verified by Experience
    - 18<sup>th</sup> Cen. & On: Evangelical Church: Personal Regeneration
    - 20<sup>th</sup> Cen. & On: Charismatic Church: Personal Experience
      - Postmodern Period of Philosophy: Experience Only
  - Result: Moral Decadence and Violence (Like the Day of Noah)

# Suggestions for Life

- Messianism/Christianity Is the Oldest Religion and the Only True One: Believe It!
  - Philosophers w/o God Are "Foolosophers": Controlled by Pride: Beware!
  - World Religions Are Futile Speculations: Controlled by Greed: Stay Away!
- Biblical Judaism Turned into Christianity at Christ's First Coming: Trust It!
  - Monotheist Unitarian Religions Are False:
    - Rabbinical Judaism Is in Error: Recognize Jesus as Messiah!
    - Islam Is of Pagan Origin (Moon god Worship): It Is Dangerous!
  - Monotheist Trinitarian Religions with Wrong Soteriology Are Futile: Mixed in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox.
- The World Is Repeating Its Path before the Flood: Be Ready for the Second Coming!

# Spectrum of Faiths

