

Being Given a Reprobate Mind

The First Chapter of Romans analyzes a Relevant Condition in human thinking, that of Reprobate Mindedness. In the Modern Era, we're witnessing an obvious manifestation of this condition. Are we willing to admit that it's what it is?

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The King James Version renders Romans 1:28 this way: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over** to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;..." The New King James renders it this way: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over** to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;" Two key words in this passage are the original Greek for 'reprobate' and 'convenient'.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words has this to say regarding both:

"Reprobate:

[1, G96, *adokimos*]

signifying not standing the test, rejected" (a, negative, *dokimos*, "approved"), was primarily applied to metals (cp. Isaiah 1:22); it is used always in the NT in a Passive sense,

(a) of things, Hebrews 6:8, "rejected," of land that bears thorns and thistles;

(b) of persons, Romans 1:28, of a "reprobate mind," a mind of which God cannot approve, and which must be rejected by Him, the effect of refusing "to have God in their knowledge;" in 1st Corinthians 9:27 (for which See CAST, REJECTED); 2nd Corinthians 13:5-7, where the RV rightly translates the adjective "reprobate" (AV, "reprobates"), here the reference is to the great test as to whether Christ is in a person; in 2nd Timothy 3:8 of those "reprobate concerning the faith," i.e., men **whose moral sense is perverted** and whose minds are beclouded with their own speculations; in Titus 1:16, of the defiled, who are "unto every good work reprobate," i.e., if they are put to the test in regard to any good work (in contrast to their profession), they can only be rejected...."

"Convenient:

[C-2, Verb, G2520, *katheko*]

"to be fitting," is so translated in Romans 1:28, RV; AV, "(not) convenient;" in Acts 22:22, "it is (not) fit." See FIT."

The Greek *katheko* is translated in another place as 'fit' in Acts 22:22. This along with Romans 1:28, we find there's only two places where *katheko* is used. But 'convenient' is perhaps a poor rendition. Considering that the meaning of the word 'convenient' in 1611 English conveyed a different sense than it does in our time, it might be better rendered as 'unconventional', 'abnormal' or 'against propriety'. 'Convenience' as we would think of it today doesn't give the correct sense.

Instinctive Attitudes

The Moffatt version words Romans 1:28 this way: "Yes, as they disdained to acknowledge God any longer, God has given them up to a reprobate instinct for the perpetration of what is improper,..." What's being presented in the context is some form of 'improper' conduct. But then, improper in whose opinion? By accepted society for sure, but even more importantly, unacceptable with God.

What we need to consider are the specifics that are mentioned in the context surrounding this passage, because we're not left to guess how they manifest themselves. The context clearly explains what this reprobate mindedness produces in the character of those God gives over to it.

And, we should be aware that this assignment is beyond the natural carnal mindedness that we all are born with! (Romans 8:7)

Perhaps we should preface this with the realization that "Truth is not always politically correct!"

What should be quite apparent is that a major segment of our modern generation has in a clear and deliberate way rejected God. While they may react very negatively toward this assessment, they have in fact rejected God, and the things of God. The point here is to consider that not only are individuals given over to reprobate mindedness, but major segments of society (what we might call ‘cultural or political parties’) can also exhibit a general consensus that is morally reprobate.

Society Disallows God’s Standards!

We are in our generation seeing the results of a God rejecting (yes, even God-hating) element within society. But we need to consider, is the kind of thinking defined here as being ‘reprobate’ a result of being given a reprobate mind by God, or does that mind result from peoples ultimate choices? In other words, who’s the cause of this?

When we review the entire passage in Romans 1, a number of things are apparent, with some major issues emphasized in bold type.

God’s Regard for Ungodliness

Beginning in Romans 1:18 “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **hold the truth in unrighteousness***;

[19] *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for **God hath shewed it unto them***.

[20] *For the **invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

[21] *Because that, **when they knew God**, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but **became vain in their imaginations**, and their **foolish heart was darkened***.

[22] ***Professing themselves to be wise**, they became fools,*

[23] *And **changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things***.

[24] *Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts,***

to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
[25] *Who **changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

[26] *For this cause **God gave them up unto vile affections**: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

[27] *And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, **burned in their lust one toward another**; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.*

[28] *And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; (on convenient, see comment above)*

[29] *Being **filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,***

[30] ***Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,***

[31] ***Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:***

[32] *Who knowing the judgment of God, that **they which commit such things are worthy of death**, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”*

Can we, by this description of their actions, identify the peoples whom God is turned against and given over to a reprobate way of thinking? When we see an element of our society exhibiting these immoral characteristics, do we react as though it’s just another valid point of view, with no appropriate opposition being called for?

Again, But With Comments

[18] “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **hold the truth in unrighteousness***; (These have a very negative regard for the Way of Truth, and to do that they must at some point have known of it.)

[19] *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for **God hath shewed it unto them***. (God’s existence and revealed knowledge is not something they are ignorant of.)

[20] *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:* (Even the natural world speaks to the existence of a higher Creative Power.)

[21] *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.* (This tells us that a knowledge of God was gradually rejected in favor of intellectual fantasies. Whatever enlightenment they had was turned to darkness under the guise of “higher learning”. But nevertheless, it’s still represented by them as being ‘enlightenment’.)

[22] *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* (Carnal intellectual pursuits led them to regard themselves as superior authorities as to what is right and what is wrong. They remain ignorant of long-term consequences.)

[23] *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* (The natural world takes the place of God. Environmentalism becomes a ‘higher calling’!)

[24] *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:* (Here we are brought to a realization of both the cause and the reason for intellectual rejection of the truths of God. It revolves around morality issues! A perverted orientation in the area of sexuality, in its many expressions, and the contrast with the moral standards of the Word, causes this ‘need’ to reject the idea of a God.)¹ How ‘convenient’!

[25] *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

(Again, worshipping the natural world (as though it just evolved on its own) is the ‘replacement’ theology in lieu of the moral standards of God. At least, Nature doesn’t condemn.)

¹ This can include honoring homosexuality; adultery; extra-marital activities, with its resulting remedy of abortion; sex changes, same sex marriage, trans-genderism, cross dressing, infidelities of every sort; sexual perversions; addictions; pedophilia and the like. It’s interesting to note that one of the major seed beds promoting such thinking are what is referred to as institutions of ‘higher learning’: the world of academia!

[26] *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:* (Here again we’re directed to the underlying cause, God’s moral prohibitions against sexual practices that they seek to openly and freely pursue. Much more openly in our time than ever in the past!) (Interesting side comment, while worshipping “nature” they disregard nature and engage in things that are actually against nature.)

[27] *And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense* (payback) *of their error which was meet* (fitting or appropriate). (And as we see, this phenomenon isn’t limited to one gender!)

[28] *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;* (see comment above on ‘convenience’) It’s when they get into this area of rejecting the knowledge of God that God abandons them to their already preferred ‘reprobate mentality’. Those who embrace this intellectual thought process, excusing their actions thereby, can expect a whole array of similar actions to become ‘normal thinking’ with them.)

[29] *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,* (It extends beyond sexual issues!)

[30] *Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,* (There are relationship issues also!)

[31] *Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

[32] *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”* (This concluding comment is a warning to those of us who might be inclined to assume an ‘acceptance’ stance toward such people.)

The Modern Manifestation

What needs to be pointed out is the reflection of reprobate mindedness in ones’ orientation as it regards personal and societal sexuality. Not only

is homosexuality condoned and promoted, but every other form of infidelity, even in heterosexual relationships, is 'accepted' among these. What society once regarded as 'vile affections' is today considered 'acceptable and normal' and those holding to any 'moral code' are considered to be motivated by hate! God's standards have become identified as hatefulness. How can this be seen as anything but reprobate? A world where good has been deemed evil and evil 'good'! (Isa. 5:20)

When Paul wrote, this wasn't anywhere near as openly flaunted in society as it has become in our time.

Right versus Left

It's also hard to not associate the reprobate mindset to what we today refer to as 'the left'. (This is where we risk being 'politically incorrect'.)

Ecclesiastes 10:2 says this: "*A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.*" Is this insightfulness on Solomon's part, or is it just figurative speech of the day? Do his terms applied back then have any relevance to today's world?

If it were just this statement alone, we might have grounds for being dismissive of the idea. But the context leaves it clear that King Solomon is associating foolishness with 'left oriented' people. Let's look at what wise Solomon explains:

Ecclesiastes 10:1 "*Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.* (Contrast this with Paul's statement, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"!)

[2] *A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.* (Our signature verse.)

[3] *Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.* (In other words, a bona fide fool thinks everyone else is the fool.)

[4] *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.* (Don't abandon your principles, or you may help establish wrong policies.)

[5] *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: (WHAT?? Can political leaders be fools?)*

[6] *Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.* (Fools rule, and what regard do most of them have for the super-rich today?)

[7] *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.* (It's upside down, with low intelligence people raised to high ranks while the sensible ones are sidelined.)

[8] *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.* (Foolish policies will always lead to unforeseen calamity. We're speaking of what are seen as 'breaks-through' against conventional policies, which some would deem 'progressive': (moving forward) breaking with old standards.)

[9] *Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.* (Reinforcing the point of verse 8, speaking of foundational principles (set in stone) being removed and rejected.)

[10] *If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.* (Smart policies will always yield superior results. Doing the same stupid things repeatedly will not make for a different outcome no matter how hard one tries.)

[11] *Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.* (A fool's policies will come back and bite him, without anyone intervening to make it happen!)

[12] *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.* (How many times have we seen that happen? Self-entrapment and double speak.)

[13] *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.* (Bad ideas can often lead to insane situations. Right from his first proposal a fool's foolishness is evident to sensible people!)

[14] *A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?* (Without the wisdom to see the end results of ones' proposals, the fool is on a path to disaster. They love to speak on and on and on. The question is, how many others will he draw into a fool's fantasies?)

[15] *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.* (Society is continually burdened with these foolish misguided proposals. They don't have any idea of how to get to where they want to go!)

[16] *Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!* (Immature self-focused leaders and subordinates, who seek to fill their bellies before they go do any useful work, set a nation up for calamities! So many of our eminent political leaders are continually thinking first of how they can enrich themselves!)

[17] *Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!* (There just is no substitute for wise statesmenly leaders, who seek to strengthen a nation rather than set it on a drunken path that brings it down!)

Recognizing the Political Correlation

Obvious from these verses is the political undertone. It isn't just a local fool being discussed, like some idiot neighbor, but those who have significant influence in society. The nation is blessed when it has leaders who are solidly educated and eminently sensible. But the political environment today discourages sensible people from running!

But, all of this narrative reinforces the statements in Solomon's verse two regarding '**right versus left**' kind of thinking. Is it just coincidence that we today identify 'leftist' and 'far leftist' individuals and parties using that same term, or is there something revealed in Solomon's wisdom and Paul's that is shown to be omni-generational?

However one opts to process the question, we're left with the obvious: 'the foolish' in this ancient book are identified here as being 'left thinking'.

Now reflecting back to Romans 1, the intellectual foolishness we see today is largely founded on rejection of God and the things of God. By... *professing themselves to be 'wise'...* some have embedded themselves into the ranks of foolishness, *Not retaining God in ones' knowledge.* (Rom. 1:28). It's hard to ignore the modern manifestation within academia, the entertainment industry, the media and in the political scene, because there **is** a correlation. It goes to the core of their mentality!

It Begins with Education

Academia, both within higher learning circles, and even at grade school levels, where evolution and situational ethics form the core of academic

philosophy, has set the tone of society in general. We're at this point where nearly a third of the politically involved people in the US, and perhaps an even higher percentage in socialist Europe, are infected with abnormal thinking. We shouldn't think it wasn't planned, and long-ago pursued by those who hate God and resent His Standards.

Trajectory to Insanity

Thinking back, it began with the eager embrace of the Theory of Evolution: the underlying "faith" of God rejecters! This gave the 'intellectuals' their base of confidence to reject the idea of a righteous God who created the world and who set standards of conduct. That left them rather uninhibited as it regards their sexual license. It gave them what they really wanted! Much of our current societal mindset came to be the way it is from that philosophical springboard!

When a person accepts the idea that there IS NO GOD, natural inhibitions fade away. It was the perfectly convenient philosophy, and it has precedent from ancient times as well. "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*"

An Added Consideration

Paul explains the phenomenon in insightful terms, as did Solomon. But Paul associates the sexual preference considerations where Solomon didn't! Solomon's points were more to address whole nations and the political folly that brings a people and a nation to ruin. Paul addresses the condition that rots the core values of a people. He explains God's regard for those who are taken-in by that defiant mentality. What we need to consider is that it's not only personal, but can be broadly societal. There's much going on, plainly obvious, in our time that we must evaluate appropriately.

Why did they NOT like to keep God in their fields of knowledge? Do we know of a better reason? Eliminating God by the 'intellectual elite' and the academic world allows them to reject righteous standards without guilt, those which strengthen a society and yield good and right results. The reprobate minded people will react in outrage against this suggestion, labeling IT as hate. Speaking frankly and factually against those who

hate God is to them ‘hatefulness’, and they see it as an appropriate reason to reflect hatred back!

Reprobate mindedness in its full circle!!

Now, when Solomon wrote, national leaders were installed by various means, heredity being one of them. They had kings, who then chose their own favored subordinates to fill other official positions. There was very little say as to who those chosen people would be. Who the princes were was not by any character quality or by their intelligence or wisdom. Solomon’s precautions were primarily to whoever would choose for the people, for them to make careful choices so as to not fill governmental ranks with foolish leaders. That wasn’t always the case, as history demonstrates. Just review the actions of Solomon’s princely brothers.

Then again, who do our elected officials appoint?

A New Situation

Our situation is that governing leaders are elected by a consensus of the people. The original idea (what we identify it as ‘democracy’) has proven somewhat exceptional in overall historical terms, but we have to realize that a societal drift has been occurring. Moral standards are not what they were originally, up until a generation ago, and the quality of candidates and the preferences of those who elect them doesn’t reflect the moral standards society once embraced.

We have two factors in play. First, those running for office (at both the local level and national level), aren’t usually those of the highest moral character. In most, there’s already the motivational defect spoken of by Christ in Mark 10:42. Secondly, the people who elect the leaders are themselves peoples who could be seen as of ‘reprobate mind’! They wouldn’t even be looking toward a candidate of high moral character! What this means is that no such person has a chance of being elected if the people voting are themselves ‘of reprobate mind’! When these form the majority, a nation is in real trouble!

Every sexual deviation is now not only accepted: (abortion, same sex marriage, homosexuality, promiscuity of every sort), but is favored by new and biased laws. It’s the rare person who isn’t aware of the drift we’ve seen since the 1960’s when situational ethics became the new standard. Roe v. Wade set the tone for a whole array of laws, even now to the point of ‘legalized infanticide’.

And, society in general is either accepting of or is intimidated into silence on all these aberrant lifestyles. We’re all made complicit by law.

What would have been defined in the past as ‘abnormal relationships’ are now not only legalized, and by that action declared ‘acceptable’, but are also actively promoted more and more. And any who speak out against the drift are labeled and in some cases even prosecuted. That of course speaks to the bias against anything the Bible says regarding illicit and adulterous sexual situations.

Is There a Remedy?


Paul wrote of the situation where it involves by and large the moral climate within a society. Solomon wrote to expose the wisdom factor as it affects the political arena. It was Solomon who used the term “*the left*”. Our question is, IS there any correlation between his day, Paul’s day and ours? When any culture makes unwise choices as it regards the moral issues that create a righteous society, can we label it as anything but folly? And does the moral climate factor into the modern political drift?

The ironic thing is, we have today a blend of these two situations in those we today call “the left”!!

Can a nation reverse such a condition before it brings itself to ruin? There’s little precedent to offer that hope. Revelation 16:9 may speak to this possibility.² (This is speaking of the ‘hard core’.)

Can an individual, given over to reprobate mindedness, ever reverse their personal situation? In other words, repent? Let’s keep in mind that their being given over to such thinking was a result of their own choice to reject knowledge of God. But, is there a way out? It likely depends on how deeply embedded the mindset has become. God never refuses to accept genuine repentance.

How God Leaves It:

God pronounces a message to humanity as the Book of Revelation concludes: “*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still...*” Revelation 22:11 In other words, rest assured: Judgment is coming where all of this will be straightened-out. 

² “*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*”