

DIVINE JUSTICE

BIBLE TEXT : **Romans 1:18-25, 28-32; 2:1-16.**

LESSON 381 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Romans 1:18-25

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 uncorruptible 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.

Romans 1:28-32

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;

²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Innocence or Guilt

Were you ever punished when you were not guilty? Perhaps in school you broke a rule that you did not know existed, or perhaps you were scolded by your parents for something your sister or brother had done. Innocent parties are sometimes caused to suffer; but more often, when one suffers, it is because he has done wrong. Boys and girls who have reached the age of accountability cannot say, "I do not know when I am doing wrong."

The Bible teaches us that from the very creation, man has sinned knowingly. When Adam and Eve took of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, they knew that they were doing wrong, although they tried to make excuses for their disobedience. "The serpent beguiled me," Eve said (Genesis 3:13). Adam said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." But what had God said? He had said, "Thou shalt not" (Genesis 2:17).

The Voice of Conscience

God has placed within every person something that is called the voice of conscience. It is one of the means by which God speaks within man telling him what is right and what is wrong. If this "voice" is disregarded, it becomes fainter, and as people harden their heart against God He does not speak so often. Wilful resistance to the will of God dulls the conscience. We should be very careful to listen to that voice.

Does a man need to know the Ten Commandments to know that it is wrong to steal, or wrong to tell lies, or wrong to hate? From the very beginning of time man's conscience taught him right from wrong. The heart is "deceitful" and "desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9), but not the conscience, unless it has become hardened or dulled because of refusing to listen to God's voice. Even the heathen in faraway lands have a conscience that condemns them for committing sin. No man can come up before God in the Day of Judgment and say that because he had no Bible or because no missionary came his way he did not know right from wrong. God's Word teaches us, "They are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). "Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:15).

False Worship

Paul observed some of the people of his day and said that they professed to be wise, but had become fools. He said that some worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator. They had "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." Perhaps as Paul write this chapter his mind went back to the day that he stood on Mars' Hill and observed the people in their false worship. He told the men of Athens not to think of God as an image of "gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:29).

But, you say, we live in Nigeria, a civilised country; we do not worship birds, beasts, creeping things, or images. A warning is given, however, because many people today are not worshiping God. Paul spoke of people who knew God, but glorified Him not

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, covenantbreakers, 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.

Romans 2:1-16

¹ Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

⁷ To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

⁸ But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

⁹ Tribulation and anguish, upon

and were not thankful, so their foolish hearts were darkened.

Deserted by God

We read in verse 24 of Romans 1, that "God . . . gave them up"; it is repeated in verse 26: "God gave them up"; and again in verse 28: "God gave them over." Take heed! As has been said in previous lessons, one sin brings many more. First, they deserted God, and then, in turn, God deserted them. If you take pleasure in sin, and know it is sin, and continue in sin, eventually God will give you up. He may let **your** foolish heart be darkened.

Sins "Worthy of Death"

Beginning with Romans 1:29, we find a long list of sins – some may seem great and some may seem little. But there are no little sins with God. This list includes the very greatest crimes, such as murder. But let us see what else is included in this same group: "Backbiters, . . . disobedient to parents, . . . unmerciful." The last verse of this chapter tells us that "they which commit such things are worthy of death." The laws in some of our states pass the death sentence upon the murderer, but God pronounced eternal death even upon the backbiter, the disobedient, and the unmerciful, unless they repent.

It will be well for us to consider these "lesser" sins for a moment. A "backbiter" is one who speaks evil of one who is absent, with the intention of injuring him or his character. "Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son" (Psalm 50:19, 20). "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Proverbs 17:9). "A whisperer separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16:28). Let us not be found guilty of these sins. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23).

In the Last Days

One of the signs that mark the last days in which we live as the last days is disobedience to parents (II Timothy 3:1, 2). That is one of the things listed as "worthy of death," meaning spiritual death.

Today people are spending many hours watching filthy TV programs. "Comic" books and novels are being read by boys and girls who should be reading their Bibles. Perhaps they who do these things are the ones God's Word is speaking about when it states: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28). The word "reprobate" means "wholly given up to sin." God gave them up. Someone has said, "You are what you read." What do **you** read?

The Judgment Day

God is no respecter of persons. Some day the righteous Judge "will render to every man according to his deeds." The sinner piles up or "treasureth up . . . wrath" for the Judgment Day. But there is eternal life, "glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good." What is your hope "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ"? "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Corinthians 11:31). If you are a sinner, do not hope that there may be a "surprise ending" to your life. You should examine your life by God's Word and know where you will spend eternity.

Time is short; Jesus is coming very soon. Every person who has a desire to make Heaven his home should seek the Lord today with an open heart. God is faithful, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:9, 10).

every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

¹⁰ But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

¹¹ For there is no respect of persons with God.

¹² For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

¹³ (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

¹⁴ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

¹⁵ Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

QUESTIONS

1. Name at least ten sins listed as "worthy of death."
2. Why does man not have an excuse that will be accepted of God for committing sin?
3. Give examples of some who tried to excuse their sin.
4. Give a definition of "sin."
5. What remedy has God provided for sin?
6. What is known as "the voice of conscience"?
7. Why should we always listen to that voice?
8. What punishment awaits those who do evil?
9. What will be the reward of the righteous? Will it pay to be righteous?