

The background of the image shows ancient Roman ruins. A prominent feature is a large, circular stone structure, possibly a well or a small tower, built from light-colored, weathered stone blocks. To the right, a cross-shaped structure is visible, also made of stone. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall atmosphere is historical and majestic.

ROMANS

Last Week: The Gospel is “Good News”: (Romans 1:2-6)

1. It was promised long ago by God.
2. It is about His Son:
 - He is fully human – a descendent of King David.
 - He is fully God – raised from death by the Holy Spirit.
3. His name is Jesus Christ!
4. He is for everyone ... all people, all nations, all of us.

... But why is Jesus good news... and why do I need him?

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ.

- *It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—both Jew and Gentile.*
- ***¹⁷ This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight ...”***

Issue: Why am I not right in God’s sight?

... what has happened?

*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left
God's paths to follow our own way.*

Isaiah 53:6



All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own way.

Isaiah 53:6

Romans 1-2 describes what “*our own way*” looks like and where it takes us.

Warning: It is not pretty, difficult to digest & politically incorrect.

- it contradicts what *I want to believe* about myself.
- it contradicts what *Canadian culture tells me to believe* about myself.
 - it appears intolerant, non-inclusive & anything but “*progressive*”.
- it is completely true in describing every one of us.



*¹⁸ The **wrath** of God is being revealed against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*

wrath (Gk) – **orge** anger rising up from consistent, sustained rejection.
not a sudden outburst, but a controlled & settled
indignation that has swollen up over a period of time.

Key: *What does God's wrath look like? What does He do?*

- He abandons us to our choices.
 - 3x we are told this (verses 24, 26, 28)
- He lets us have what we want ... *all* of it.

abandon: (Gk) – paradidomi

to hand-over into custody one who is guilty.

to give over into slavery; to let go.

The Point: God's wrath is simply Him letting me experience all of the uninterrupted consequences of my choices.

- He abandons me to what I choose by my own will.
- He lets me leave His path and go my own way.

We enjoy the horrible freedom that we have demanded, and it's terrifying consequences.

C.S. Lewis

11 Jesus told those following him this story: “A man had two sons.

12 The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

13 “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

Three Stages of God's Abandonment:

Stage 1: My Will. – I suppress what I know. (v.v.18-23)

Stage 2: My Body. – I do what I want. (v.v.24-27)

Stage 3: My Mind. – I think as I wish. (v.v.28-32)

Stage 1: My Will. – I suppress what I know. (v.v.18-23)

a. by denying the obvious.

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

Stage 1: My Will. – I suppress what I know. (v.v.18-23)

- a. by denying the obvious.
- b. **by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.**

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.

Stage 1: My Will. – I suppress what I know. (v.v.18-23)

- a. by denying the obvious.
- b. by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.
- c. by creating my own gods, and worshipping them instead.

²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

God's Response: *“I will not stop you ... but I will not go with you.”*

- *“You will now experience ALL you have chosen.”*

*²⁴ **So God abandoned them** to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired.*

Stage 2: My Body. – I do what I want. (v.v.24-27)

a. by denying the obvious.

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

Stage 2: My Body. – I do what I want. (v.v.24-27)

- a. by denying the obvious.
- b. **by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.**

*²⁶ That is why **God abandoned them** to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷ And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.*

God's Response: *“I will not stop you ... but I will not go with you.”*

- *“You will now experience ALL you have chosen.”*

Stage 3: My Mind. – I think as I wish. (v.v.28-32)

Problem: When my mind is gone, I am finished – I no longer recognize the truth and resist the lie.

- objective, universal truth (v. 19) has been suppressed, rejected, denied & rationalized away.
- nothing matters anymore ... except what *I want*. And *nothing* will get in my way.
- **Final Destination:** anarchy, totalitarianism, chaos, genocide.

⁶In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

Judges 17

Stage 3: My Mind. – I think as I wish. (v.v.28-32)

a. **by denying the obvious.**

*²⁸ Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, **he abandoned them** to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹ ... ³² They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.*

Stage 3: My Mind. – I will think as I wish. (v.v.28-32)

- a. by denying the obvious.
- b. by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.

²⁹ Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

³⁰ They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents.

³¹ They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless and ruthless, having no mercy.

God's Response: *“I will not stop you ... but I will not go with you.”*

- *“You will now experience ALL you have chosen.”*

Summary:

1. God *lets me choose* what I do with my life.
2. God has boundaries. He will not join me in my sin & folly.
3. When I choose to reject what I know is right, God releases me to experience the full consequences of my choices.
4. God is not to blame for my problems ... I am.

Spoiler Alert: After letting me experience the full consequences of my rebellion, God rescues me.

*¹⁶ ... This Good News about Christ is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes ... ¹⁷**and telling us how God makes us right in his sight.***”

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own way. Yet God has laid on him the sins of all of us.

Isaiah 53:4-6



