

Are the Heathen Lost? **Romans 1:18-27**

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

In today's Bible lesson, Paul takes up the theme of "lostness." The Scriptures teach we have all sinned so therefore we are all lost before the Lord. The inevitable question that many ask is this...what about those who have never heard of the gospel, Jesus or the Bible? What happens to them?

First, Paul makes it plain that ALL have sinned. He does not place people into qualifications, conditions or categories. We are ALL lost. People living in remote villages without access to modern technology are just as lost as someone sitting in an office on Wall Street or a home on Main Street. More than Paul though, the Bible claims and concludes that all are lost.

Second, we are all lost because we at some point ignored, over-looked or rejected the revelation of God that was available to us. We have the luxury of the Bible and the life of Jesus...two towering revelations from God. The Bible is the written word. Jesus is the living word.

In Romans 1, Paul argued that God has also revealed Himself and His ways in the human conscience and creation. God has placed within every person the knowledge of right and wrong. Because no one has perfectly done everything right all the time, we are lost. There is within each person a God-shaped vacuum or a longing to connect with the Creator God.

God has revealed Himself in the creation. The handiwork of God is visible in the world around us. Nature reflects God's majesty, order and magnificence. There is

enough evidence in the creation to lead us to know that there is a God who can be experienced, encountered and served.

People in remote and isolated villages are lost because they are responsible for the revelation made known to them in their conscience and in creation and they have discounted, dismissed and discarded this revelation from God.

For those who have access to the Bible, the story of Jesus and the Gospel, there is also no defense. Knowledge of and access to the gospel means that we are now accountable for this message and its power. To reject the gospel means we remain lost and in irreconcilable conflict with God.

David Jeremiah has written that man further rejects God by these ways...

- *Irreligion*...dismissing faith for the sake of knowledge and pride
- *Ingratitude*...failing to account for God's blessings personally
- *Intellectualism*...trusting one's own thoughts, ways, wisdom
- *Ignorance*...those who have had the opportunity to receive the gospel but have chosen to reject it
- *Idolatry*...rejecting the true God and constructing a god with human hands and designs
- *Immorality*...flaunting and rejecting God's standards and ways
- *Inversion*...deliberately reversing and changing God's order for the creation (see primarily verse 27)

Applications...

1. Read and carefully study Psalm 19 and the presentation of God's fingerprints in the creation.
2. Take time to thank God for His free gift of salvation and grace.
3. Be able to explain to others why "all" are lost...and even those in remote villages are still lost and separated from God.
4. Evaluate your own ways for worshipping God. How do you do worship Him each day?

Remember: the power of God can turn away the wrath of God and reveal His righteousness.