

2108-OUR RESPONSE to GOD'S REVELATION-Rom 1.19,20

Paul has just said that he is **not** ashamed of the **gospel**, for it saves *everyone who believes* it [16]. God's **righteousness** is displayed in the gospel - Jesus Christ being the **Righteous One** who represented and **took the place** of sinners and in making **atonement** for **all** their sins. Paul then mentions God's **wrath!** It has been being *revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* [18]. But they suppress that *truth* [18c]. People do **not want to think** about God being against **unrighteous** living - so they just suppress the very idea of God. But Paul replies: 'You won't get away with that, you have **no** legitimate **excuse** in dismissing the idea of God for He has made Himself clearly known - and you **have to respond** to His revelation! **Everyone** has to, because everyone knows there is a God. God **expects everyone** to **respond** to Him! Of course, some have **more revelation/light** than others! But **all** have some knowledge!

Paul says that *ever since the creation of the world* God's **invisible attributes...have been clearly perceived** [20]. *the things that have been made* by God **testify** to His existence/Being, and they are **plain** ...*because has shown it to them* [19] *So they are without excuse* [20]

God **has** revealed Himself in what is known as **General** revelation! I.e., in **3 ways**: (a) **Creation** [20]! Someone/something **made** the world and ourselves! (b) In **Conscience** – because we pass **moral judgment** on behaviour [2:1-3] and God's *law is written on their hearts* [2:15]! Sin has **not completely** obliterated morality from our natures. Jesus said even '**evil parents** know how to give **good** gifts to their children' [Mat 7:11] (c) In **Providence** – in the things that happen, the **timing** of events, the **purpose** of events, in **answer to prayers**. **History in retrospect** confirms a God in charge!

Then Special Revelation - in the **Bible!** Many people can testify to God's voice in Scripture coming with power/conviction in the heart and soul! Also the fulfilled **prophecies** (100+ in Daniel 10, so accurate that some critics say the book was written **after** the events took place)! What a testimony to its accuracy!

Jesus constantly settled arguments by *it is written...* and that **settled** the matter! What was right, what was Truth, what was justice! *If they*

*speak not according to **this Word** it is because they have **no light** in them [Isa 8:20AV] Luke wrote that you may have **certainty** concerning the things you have been taught - re Jesus and His Words/works!*

Paul says the **reason** why men deny God's existence is that as soon as evidence appears, they **suppress** the whole idea of God, they seek with all their hearts to find **some other 'solution'** to the evidences of God in creation. But the Bible's position is that God **has revealed** Himself in creation, in our consciences, in Providence, in Scripture.

*Now God demands a **response** to the revelation of Himself! All intelligent beings have to respond to God's **general** revelation for all 'see it!' And those who have the **additional Special** revelation of Himself in God's Word should have a greater response! We all have to **reply**, to **react** to God's self-revelation in life and in Scripture. God wants us to **acknowledge** Him and respond in **faith/love!** But usually we just **ignore** the wonderful creation - right or wrong?

Now God **speaks** to **all** kinds of people – even those **outside** of the Covenant Community of His people! God told **Abimelech** that he had Abraham's wife Sarah![Gen 20:1-6] God even speaks to **wicked people** like **Balaam** [Num 23:16, 24:2] God spoke to **Pharaoh Neco** of Egypt 'to hurry...' [2 Chro 35:21] We are not sure **how** God spoke but Bible tells us that God spoke to these people outside of His favoured people Israel. In the NT God directed the **Magoi** (aliens to Israel) to the child Jesus! But just because God spoke to people does **not** mean they are **saved** people and are going to heaven! Not at all! But God in mercy/love or for some purpose **warns** His enemies!

So **all** people have **some** awareness of God, no matter how small!! But God is a God of **justice** and therefore **only expects** people to respond in accordance with the **light that they have - not to the light they do not have!** Only to what they **do know!** God does **not expect those deprived** of His Special revelation to respond with the same degree of knowledge as those who have taught and brought up in the Bible! Those who have been given 'Light' will have to give account of that 'Light' – those in darkness, cannot respond in the same way!

As far as knowing the Xn gospel is concerned there **are** those who do **not** have a **clue** 'How to be saved!' They **lack** a Bible or parents or a

preacher who could show them the way of salvation! They will be **lost, not** because they did not 'come to Christ', or know **how** to be saved, but because of their own personal **sin** when they sinned against their **own conscience**, when they **did** what **they knew** to be wrong! Everyone does things they know to be wrong - right!

Jesus tells a parable about a *servant who knew his master's will but did **not** get ready or act according to his will, will receive a **severe** beating. But the one who did **not know**, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a **light** beating. Everyone to whom **much** was given, of him **much will be required**, and from him to whom they entrusted **much**, they will demand the **more**. But the one who did **not know** and did what deserved a beating, will receive a **light** beating* [Luke 12:47,48]! *Ie, the more we have, the more will be expected from us! If we have **not** been **given much** then God will **not expect much** in return! That is **justice** – a **Biblical** principle! So, this shows how **important** it is that the Church **evangelises** so that people hear about Jesus **free** salvation by **faith**, not works! Look at Paul's **earnest** response in **1:14,15**), he is *under **obligation**...I am **eager**!*

Now, those lost because they **lacked** the Light of the **gospel**, will have much **less** to bear than the person who heard the gospel, and **deliberately rejected** it! Those who said '**No**' to **Jesus** will have a **worse** end than those who never heard about His love/mercy and never received the **invitation** to come for forgiveness and mercy!

There are some people in this world who have **not** had much of **anything** in this life. They did not get a good start or finish in life! They had a bad upbringing from drunken parents and drug addicts and where the home environment was anything but pure and wholesome. Far less did they get guidance about salvation and Truth. They got **no encouragement** to find out what was right and what was wrong. In fact there are those who, when showing an interest in the things of God were **put-off** the whole idea and told that there is no God, 'So don't start getting religious!' So, what chance have the **students of Richard Dawkins** got who dismisses the whole idea of God? Such people will have a lesser judgment than those who had light! So, **not** everyone receives an **equally full revelation** of God!

*There is also the matter of a **bad witness/bad experience** of **Xnity**!

*Now someone who has **never** read or heard the gospel and has never had it **explained** to them, or never **understood** the gospel and has **only met** with **bad** and **inconsistent experiences** of Christianity, when such people **reject Christianity**, they have **not really** rejected the Christ, but only a counterfeit Christ! (I have met with those who have said: 'No need to come here, I have had enough 'Christianity', I met with plenty Xns, but in their **private lives** they are **revengeful**, and **lie**, and **cheat**, are **hypocritical**, and **jealous**, and **proud**, and **suggestive** - no thanks'!) Such people are **disillusioned** about Xnity and have not truly understood it. **APP** How important it is that Xns do **not** live **double lives** and truly **reflect** Christ in their daily lives!!

So what kind of response does God expect from those who do not have the Bible? One of the responses **God expects** from **everyone** is **thankfulness** for what they do have. To be **UNthankful** is a **big sin** with God! Paul says that those who are *lovers of self* and **not lovers of God** are ... **ungrateful** [2Tim 3:2], also here *did not honour Him as God or give thanks to Him!* [21] That is, those who do **not acknowledge God** (in whatever way they understand Him by the revelation they have had of Him, and they are **dependent** on Him'. To '**turn away**' from the **idea** that we have Someone to thank for the many blessings we enjoy– is dishonouring to God! To **deliberately banish** the **thought**, that there is a God who **loved** us and **provided** for us, is truly **reprehensible**! Paul says *give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* [1Thes5:18]

Here Paul says *do you presume* [presume=Gr **despise**] *on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience?*[2:4]! You used **hear people say** when they would come from a **hospital** or an **asylum**, 'We are not thankful enough!' If we are not thankful, then we are like the **animals**! 'If you have a narrow escape in the car, and do **not** thank God, you are being **ungrateful**! You are a believer in **fate**!

What response does God expect from US who have the gospel confront us **every week**? **Believe** in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved? But **more!** *whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me* [Mar 10:38] Jesus: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me* [John 10:27] **APP** Are you following Jesus wherever He takes you?