

Clough Deuteronomy Session 13  
Deuteronomy 4:19; Romans 1 & Isaiah 41: The Societal & Individual  
Consequences of Idolatry  
Fellowship Chapel; 2 Feb 10

Tonight we're going to start in Deuteronomy 4 but then we're going to go into an extensive analysis of idolatry and we started that last week but we need to follow it up because I'm afraid that if we don't, when we get to the next part, in chapter 4 of Deuteronomy, we're going to misunderstand some things that Moses is getting at, some of the priorities. In fact, the priority throughout the book of Deuteronomy, in fact, the priority throughout the entire Old Testament about this idolatry thing. We left off in Deuteronomy 4:23-24 and you'll notice in your handout the outline has not advanced; this is the same outline picture that we had last week; we ended on verse 24. So if you'll look at verse 23, that's that repeat command that he has emphasized in this immediate context, "Take heed to yourselves," which means keep your nephesh, and it's an imperative form which means that there's an effort required, there's a choice involved, and that if we don't exercise that choice we are not going to keep, we are not going to guard our souls or our nephesh. So there's a contingency as to whether or not this command is going to be taken to heart.

So it says, "Take heed to yourselves, lest," and he's concerned with this, and we said last week there's a reason why, in that purpose clause it begins with "lest you forget," this is a memory of history. And biblical revelation is an historical revelation. One of the things that in our circles we sometimes are weak in, particularly in forms of children's education, is we teach the Bible over here, then we go to teach mathematics over here, history over here and so on, and all the subjects are disconnected from the Bible. And of course, in a secular school, in a secular education it's systematic and deliberate; God is irrelevant according to the secularist, because obviously that's a theological statement, in spite of the fact that the secularists are trying to maintain a sort of neutrality. This is one that you can't be neutral on. If you are in fact saying that God is not important to algebra you have just made a theological statement because obviously, if God is the Creator and He has designed the creation with structure that can be algebraically described, if algebra in fact recapitulates the logic of our minds, then God is very much involved in algebra. But to say that you can learn algebra without knowing God, yes you can know wrote memory but you don't understand the root practice.

And worst of all, when we are taught this way in a segregated form here's the subtlety that comes in: when we talk about worship we inevitably think of worship as something we do in church for forty minutes a week and it never happens on Monday through Friday or Saturday. But if we learn the other way, the biblical way, we would realize that every part of our work, every part of our labor, when we go out here we look at the snowflakes, it should trigger a response in our regenerate spirits of "thank you, Lord, isn't this neat, this is part of His handiwork." And this is one reason why I think children are bored with a lot of subject materials and so on; of course they are, because there's no meaning to it, there's no real depth meaning to it. And that's the price that we pay by winding up as a

consequence of a truncated view of worship, and we lose the big picture that the Bible presents.

And we'll see this as we go through Deuteronomy because in Deuteronomy God is related to every area of the nephesh, every area of life. There's not one are in the book of Deuteronomy that God doesn't connect to. So the argument of this book is diagrammatically opposite to a secular education. A secular education and the book of Deuteronomy cannot fit together. This book is absolutely against that. Of course, the whole Bible is, but Deuteronomy becomes particularly the case in dealing with social things. So let's look now at our slide that we've seen several times and we want to see why, after Moses says, "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant," or "the contract of Yahweh, your God, which He made with you, and you make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which Yahweh your God has forbidden you, [24] For Yahweh your God is a consuming fire, and a jealous God." Now that's pretty strong language, He is a jealous God and He is a consuming fire. And "consuming fire" he means consuming, He means He burns people up, that's what happened in the wilderness wanderings. So there's a fierceness to God's character that's depicted here, a fierceness, and obviously God is very angry and jealous over idols. So that's why we have to look at this idolatry in a careful sense.

So we've looked at this chart and we've seen that socially people think of the politics and they think of the ethics and they may get down to the ethics level, but few people get down to the epistemological and metaphysical level, and we'll deal with that tonight, again, because that's the foundation. Idolatry is an assault at those bottom layers. Idolatry cuts out the foundation, it's a manifestation of a destruction of those two lower layers. Once those two lower layers collapse your ethics cannot survive and above that your politics and your society cannot survive, they must go down as a house would go down if the foundation was destroyed.

So the diagram here is just to again show us the importance of structure, and in the outline or the handout I have: Hence Moses' emphasis is upon idolatry that modifies the metaphysics and the epistemology, you see both those words underlined. After each of those underlined words you'll see a parenthesis in which I explain exactly what is going on in both areas. In the metaphysical the battle is this; it's a battle between the Creator/creature distinction, and the Continuity of Being, one is biblical, the other is pagan. In the Continuity of Being, man, God's nature are all one. This is why the lady there that started PETA, [Ingrid Newkirk] I forgot her name right now but she said something to the effect, a rat is a dog is a mammal is a man. And that's a beautiful statement of the continuity of nature, in other words, there's just shades of difference but there's not an absolute discontinuity, nothing like the Bible where man is distinguished from everything else because man alone is made in God's image. That is excluded in paganism; in fact, the gods themselves are part of nature. So in the metaphysics there's a battle and it's either "in the beginning God created," or He didn't, it's just a meaningless existence with gods, supermen, God conceived as super men, as super women, floating around in the ethos of cosmos along with everything else, the rocks, the people, animals, and so forth. So that's the choice, that is involved in idolatry.

Now the second place is epistemology, that is how do you know? The battle in epistemology is between revelation in creation and providence interpreted in light of special revelation. In other words, there's two kinds of revelation, there is general revelation that is mute, silent, the snowflake for example, your body, my body, the structure of animals, the structure of plants, seeds, whatever, that's general revelation. And then providence is how that works through time. In other words, the sequence of history. It was Henry Ford who sarcastically at the beginning of the 20th century when asked what history is he said it's the sequence of one damned thing after another. And obviously that's a good statement of total meaninglessness, it doesn't make any sense, it's not going anywhere, and I could care less, well, actually we do care very much as we'll see.

So both metaphysics and epistemology, epistemology is we as believers, because metaphysically we have a Creator-God we now can interpret reality in the light of His verbal revelation, the Scriptures. That's the way we perceive knowledge, and we'll get into that in great detail tonight. That's our view. But the pagan, because he doesn't have the metaphysic of a God-Creator, all he's up to is his hunches, his dreams, his speculations and he has to build everything on that. So that's the battle.

Now, there's a dynamic that we want to look at by turning to Romans 1 because again Paul's analysis of unbelief... remember, Paul gives us this analysis, the idolatry dynamic. In this second slide I'm going to see how there's a sequence that's going on, that starts with our choice. So in Romans 1:18, we're going to ask a series of questions tonight of this text. And the first question we're going to ask is: How can God justify the wrath in verse 18. So let's look at verse 18 and think about the question. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Notice it is not the future tense; this verb is present tense and it means God's wrath is exercised now. So if it's present tense it's something that's going on right now.

So now we have another question: how can we see God's wrath today and how can God justify His anger? Well, let's see why He says what He says. He says, in verse 18, that it's "against ... men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Now does that sound like there is a, how shall I say, a sort of innocence, a sort of naivety, or does the verb "suppress" suggest that there is a choice involved, that it is a deliberate activity? It's a deliberate activity, right? Suppress. So there's an action that people are doing, and so we now have again the metaphysical, the state of affairs, the Creator and in your outline after that question, "How can God justify His wrath?" because the Creator has righteous and just character, a righteous and just character, and creatures with responsibility. See, that follows from the Creator/creature distinction.

So that's the setup, that's the state of affairs that exists, and Paul is not starting an analysis of paganism from some neutral position. He's obviously starting his logic, his analysis, deliberately picking the Creator/creature distinction and analyzing in the light of His presupposition. You have a Creator righteous and just, and creatures with responsibility, and you have a conscious violation of something that the Creator says the creature should do, and that violation is suppressing

"the truth in unrighteousness." Now you can't suppress something if you don't know it, so obviously this verse is saying that the suppressors see and are aware of the truth and are suppressing it. This is a critical distinction to make. This implication is so powerful that it negates the claim of atheism. There are no atheists; if they were, they could argue at the Great White Throne that oh gee, God, your revelation wasn't sufficiently impressive to me, or it was confused, and I really didn't know, so gee, I'm so sorry. That isn't going to fly—all men know God.

And there's an implication that follows from that; all men are innately religious, because all people have a relationship with God. In one sense I understand where we come from in our evangelism when we say would you like a relationship with God? But what we really means is would you like a friendly relationship with God, because the flesh has enmity with God. Well, you don't have enmity with a phantom or a nothing; you have entity with someone in whom you have a relationship. The enmity is one of a relationship. So actually all men, all the time, have a relationship with God, and that is encouraging because when you enter into a conversation with someone about spiritual things and the gospel God is already there; you're not introducing something that isn't there; what you're doing is you're dealing with someone who already has some sort of a relationship with God, sometimes it's pretty deeply buried but nevertheless it's there, so you're not burdened as an evangelist in an evangelistic situation of trying to bring into an existing blankness some sort of new thing. That all men have a relationship with God. So this is, "the wrath of God is being revealed against suppressors of the truth."

Now he made a statement, so now we have to do with verse 19 and that's the next question in the handout, and that is how do all people know God. It's a pretty stunning statement to say that all people know God. We have a right to ask the apostle, well then how is it that all people do know God. And in verse 19 is the apostle's answer. "Because what may be known of God is manifest in them," look at the word "manifest," it means clear. It is "clear in them," or "among them, for God," and now here's the explanation, "for God has shown it to them," so they are the target of revelation ahead of the gospel. The knowledge of God here isn't the gospel; this is what goes before the gospel, this is God-consciousness.

"For what can be known of them is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them." People will say well, wait a minute, how does this revelation.... So that's the next question in the handout. So we go to verse 20, and I, in the handout, have just kind of roughly translated verse 20 because I want you to see a play on words here. If you follow in the outline where I have 1:20, "For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world by the made things understood are clearly seen." Now the word order is screwed up because that's just the way the Greek flows and the translators have to correct that to make it sound nice in English. But what I want you to notice something, is look at the third word in verse 20, in the right order there. What's the third word? It's "unseen," and down below I have aoratos, and that means... the "a" privative, by atheists, it means without seeing, not seeing. So "the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world, by the made things are understood," or "clearly seen," and notice the word "clearly seen," and that word is kathoraos, so kathoraos, if you'll look at the stem, knock off the k, the a, the t, and the h, and you'll see that it's o-r-a-o, that's the verb to see. And when you preface it with k-a-t-h it means

clearly see. And you'll see now by looking at those two Greek words what Paul is doing here is he's kind of using a grammatical shock to make us think through what he's saying and that is, the things you can't see are very clearly seen.

Well wait a minute, what's that? Well, what is it that we can't see? The divine attributes, I mean, in the sense of seeing them physically, but they can be seen through the things that are made. In other words, through creation. So now we have the general revelation, theologians call this general revelation, "understood" modifies the unseen things. So it's revelation by similarity between God's character and creation design. You notice that, creation has form in it, sheep have a certain behavior and size and shape, and it's no accident that when God wants to depict salvation in believers He refers to us as sheep. Why is that? Is that a casual metaphor that some... you know, just an accidental metaphor. No, the very fact is that the sheep was designed from eternity past, that animal has a form from eternity past that is revealing something that when we look at a sheep and God tells us we are like that, He expects us to look at the sheep and draw the conclusion. See, that's what general revelation is about; it depicts a similarity between the physical creation all around us and God.

Now let's look further, verse 20, "...His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Now the "eternal power and Godhead," it's everlasting power, it's constantly there, it's the power that sustains creation and the divine nature, and this word divine nature was used of pagan deities and the idea that such and such idol had the divine nature. But Paul says that God's nature, God's divine nature and His ever-working power is what we are seeing all around us, to the extent that, the conclusion, that no person has an excuse for denying the existence of God, period. There are no atheists, never has been, never will be. Now the fact is that everybody knows God and one of the ways you know that everybody knows God is when something goes bad who gets cursed? Why does that happen? It happens because it's a slip; it's a semantic and emotional slip that lets you know deep down they know very well God is there and they're mad at Him for having this thing happen and so they curse Him. So that slip, we call it Freudian slip, that shows you that deep down, in spite of all the pretense intellectual garbage, deep down there is an awareness of God, to the point where the enmity erupts from time to time and it's like they can't help it, the enmity just erupts in a curse. So Paul, then, is going through this process.

Now in verse 21, the next question on the handout is why does God-consciousness lead to guilt before God? In other words, with all this knowledge, remember the whole argument here is that God is angry, the wrath of God is visible. And we've been asking how, why, what's the mechanics of this wrath of God. Why does God-consciousness lead to guilt before God and verse 21 says "because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful..." nor were thankful, remember, we dealt earlier with the theology of thankfulness and graciousness, and how that is critical; it's not a trivial little word, thankful, because we can't be thankful unless we have a correct theology. We can say we're thankful, but it's always amusing to me, and I've almost fallen out of the chair laughing when I hear people in the media around Thanksgiving day

giving thanks for something, giving thanks for this, and I feel like asking them, why do you bother; by the way, who are you thanking, when we all know as Americans where Thanksgiving came from, it came from Christian worldview.

So God-consciousness leads to guilt because we are not, in verse 21, notice the word "glorify," this is going to come up because of the idolatry issue, so watch the word, "glorify." God, when He is not glorified and when He is not thanked He gets angry, and that's what the passage is saying. This could be of us when we're out of fellowship, same thing. Let's continue verse 21, "but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened, [22] Professing themselves to be wise they became fools," let's just stop there for a moment. So in your handout you'll notice where I have, right before verse 22, at the end of verse 21 I have translated in kind of a literal way, "their non-understanding heart became darkened," and I note that it's passive voice.

Now from this point on in Romans 1 the voice of the verbs switch from active to passive. Now when you have a verb and it switches from active voice to passive voice, what does that tell you? The subject is receiving the action; the subject isn't asserting the action, that's active voice. But when we have a passive voice-he murdered so and so, that's active voice; he was murdered-passive. So in a passive sense the subject receives the action. So now this is interesting, because remember he started out, "the wrath of God is revealed." Now all we've talked about in Romans so far is the character of God, His existence, part of His being has been revealed but we haven't dealt specifically with how is His anger revealed, and now we're seeing it, because the passive voice shows you the judgments of God. "Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him," they "became futile," and the word "futile" there is *mataiototes*, one of the great words of the book of Ecclesiastes in the Septuagint, "became futile in their thoughts," the idea of that word means useless, it means like a breath on a cold day, it's vaporous, it seems to have form but it doesn't last, so their thinking becomes unreal and fanciful, "and their foolish," or "not understanding hearts were darkened," so it's not man, the pagan, who receives enlightenment, it 's the other way around. It's endarkenment, not enlightenment.

And what Paul is arguing here is that that darkening, that progressive intellectual foolishness, that itself is the revelation of the wrath of God. THAT IS the revelation of God, it's the coming apart of man's intellect, the self-destructive tendency of sin and rebelliousness; it will always destroy the creature. The man who led me to the Lord back in college had a neat thing, all of us young Christian guys, we'd gather around in prayer meeting and he said men, always remember this, you don't break God's laws, God's laws break you. And I've never forgotten that, a very sobering statement. And so here we have further, not only do people become foolish, not only do they become foolish, their hearts darken.

Then, verse 22, all the while they're doing this, participle, they're "professing to be wise," now why would they be "professing to be wise?" Because if you trace the cause/effect it's a cover, deep down they know they're foolish because they're turning their backs against God so to convince themselves and others they profess to be wise, "they became

fools, [23] and they changed," and here we get into idolatry, "they changed the glory," and notice, "of the incorruptible God," that's purity without the fall, "into an image made like corruptible man," post fall, because paganism lives in an evil universe. Paganism has no metaphysic of an unfallen reality. It only knows the fallen universe. That's where it lives and that just perpetuates that view.

So now on this slide we want to look at the process. We first have rebellion against God, a sense of guilt and vulnerability to Satanic deceptions. And here we have the starting point, rebellion against God. Now look what happens, you have a sense of guilt because there is guilt, but there's a sense of guilt, and then, because we live in Satan's world, the principalities are always there to whisper deceptions, so now we have a sense of guilt coupled with vulnerability to Satanic deceptions, which we didn't have if we were thankful to God and walking with Him.

Well, that leads to the second thing, now suppression of the truth, this is what Paul is... suppression of the truth but added to that we have Satanic deceptions. Again, the whispering spirits. And this results in a perversion of the sense of dominion. Remember, from Adam forward what were we created to do? To have dominion, to make a garden out of the wilderness, that's dominion. But that dominion impulse doesn't go away. Remember Nimrod? Nimrod had the dominion mandate all right, but he perverted it; sin perverted it.

So now you come down to the third level, perverted dominion means I reengineer reality beginning with my God-sense, and that's idolatry, and that's how we get idolatry started here. Now the last step is idolatry and the impotent flesh; idolatry and the impotent flesh and we've got another problem now, now that we have idolatry that makes it totally separated from God, not we have an impotent flesh, meaning we have no spiritual power and there we get the immorality and the social destruction. So watch the dynamic, the Old Testament doesn't hop from step one to step four; in between it has idolatry and it's not a trivial thing. Idolatry means I am totally reengineering my worldview. It's not creating a little clay monkey, it's what goes into the monkey. It's the voices that have been heard that have elevated the monkey to its status as the grand point of integration. So this is why Moses is going to go again and again against idolatry.

Now, of course it was Sigmund Freud who started depth psychology, but Freud had really nothing on the Scriptures because it's the Scriptures that are the first depth psychology; Freud was trivial compared to the depth psychology of the Scriptures. Here is a chart, and it's is your handout, from Dr. Budziszewski at the University of Texas, and he has traced seven steps of what happens with a violated conscience. A violated conscience is very powerful, and let's scan these, the first one is [1] sin: the greater our trespasses, the more we have to lie about. Isn't that true, the greater the trespass the more we have to lie about. Second point, [2] self-protection; now we're guilty and we know it so now we want to protect ourselves: Each new lie creates a protective around the other lies. Now we begin to build an edifice of lies to our self as well as other. Then the third level is: [3] habituation, practice turns lying into a thoughtless habit. So what has happened to the concept of truth and righteousness by the third step? It's gone. See, this is the wrath

of God, that's what Paul's talking about, he's not talking about the Second Advent here. He's talking about the self-destructive nature of sin.

Then we have [4] self-deception, now this is a critical point; this is why you have professing atheists; "professing atheists" has reached step four because this means that they are unable to bear the fact that systematic lying you begin to believe your lies. This is why an atheist can pass a lie detector test, because it's got to the point in his turning away from God, and it's painful, because God has made that person in His image; he knows very well what's going on, so he's got to cover up the guilt, and finally the guilt is dealt with by suppressing it to the point where he actually believes that he is an atheist.

Next, [5] rationalization; next comes this and we see this socially, it's happening right now in our country: blame the existence of absolute truth for the discomfort of squirming lies, and this is where you have semantic manipulation begins. Now we have cute little terms that we use for what would have been sin-alternate life-style. Now we have a technique, by this time it's a well-developed [6] technique, books are written, speeches are given, essays are written; develop the craft of lying by using a big one (Hitler) or many lies, (like certain corporate managers [vs. whistleblowers]). And then finally, [7] duty turns upside down: if lies are accepted, then they become job requirements, in whatever profession you are in. And that's the pressure of any kind of work place, and that's the perennial dilemma of a believer in a work place.

Now further, let's go down and you'll see the summation, and there's the one with the blanks in it. Idolatry precedes immorality because, blank, because it breaks down the authority of God's revelation... because it breaks down the authority of God's revelation by making man his own authority... by making man his own authority. Man then is no longer motivated and empowered to subdue his fallen flesh and resist the principalities and powers. I keep mentioning the principalities and powers deliberately because we live in Satan's world; Satan is the god of this world. When he tempted the Lord Jesus Christ he offered the kingdoms of this world. Jesus didn't say oh, they're not yours, it was a genuine temptation of Jesus because Satan is the god of this world; the cosmos lies, as John says, it lies passively under the evil one. So if we think we're in a neutral environment, if we think we're in friendly territory, we are a deluded set of soldiers. We are in enemy territory and we are constantly getting thoughts put into our minds, getting situations arranged around us that are evil and we're naïve if we don't think that's the case. That's why the Scriptures keep coming back again and again that fill our minds with the Word of God, be renewed in your mind. The battle is in our minds.

Okay, now let's go to verse 24, beginning in verse 24 all the way to the end, here is the social collapse. This is what happens once the process started, and it gets to the idolatry, you'll notice again verse 23 precedes social collapse. See, it's the same thing, you do not get social collapse, immorality and contortion until you have first absolutely and fundamentally distorted the nature of God. Once that breaks the damn, and here it comes, now we're going to have more of the wrath of God. The destruction socially is a manifestation of the wrath of God. That's why



it says God gave them to the "lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, [25] who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator [who is blessed forever]." Who's doing the hand-over here, who's greasing the sled? It's God who's doing that.

And so what this means, people, there's a practical application here. Social reform will not come because of a program; social reform can only come with dealing with the cause of the social collapse. And the cause of the social collapse is a spiritual rebellion against God. If you don't deal with that you will never solve the social problems. Now this is something fundamentalism has emphasized and has somewhat over-emphasized in the sense that we haven't carried out dominion in one sense in many areas, but the point still remains, that's where the difference between liberal social programs, back in the early 1900s, the liberal dominations and the fundamentalists parted company. It was because the fundamentalists held the line in the denominations and said, and by the way, the fundamentalists, like Moody, they were the ones with the rescue missions, they were the ones that were dealing with the drunkards, they were the ones that were dealing with the drug addicts of their day; they were the ones that were dealing with the criminals, it wasn't the liberal professors sitting in their classrooms; it was these people out on the front lines dealing with it, and they realized that they had to deal with the issue and it had to begin with the gospel. So that's why this whole thing is so important.

Now we'll look at one more, this is a commentary, and it's a sobering one, on the immoralist movements in society that come about. And here's what Budziszewski, I'll go through the chart in a moment but here's a statement that he uses to introduce it in his book: "The immoralist movements," this is a profound statement so listen carefully, "The immoralist movements are not isolated phenomena," ...they "are not isolated phenomena, they are branches of the goetic arts. What does the word "goetic" mean, it means the destruction of nature, it means throwing your fist against design wherever you see it, because wherever you see design you think of the designer. The immoralist movements are not isolated phenomena, they are branches of the goetic arts; they are united in their hatred of the human design, and by extension of its designer."

And so he lists four of them; the first one is homosexuality-the issue there is not seeking protection of homosexuals from cruelty, that's always the party line, that we're just seeking protection from cruelty and I might confess, we have to be careful, homosexuals should not be attacked and brutalized as certain homophobes do, that's happened, and that's wrong, that's not biblical, but what the issue here is not protecting homosexuals, ultimately, that's behind the movement; what's behind the movement is the annihilation of natural boundaries, the destruction of the sexual design of men. And why is that so important? Because that's the foundation of what social institution? Marriage and family. And that's the core of society. And that's why in Romans 1 God gives them up... God gives them up. Wherever you see a burgeoning expanse of homosexuality you are seeing the wrath of God. It's horrifying because it means God is already judging and He's judging by pulling away His grace, if you want to do that, go ahead, be my guest. So that's the movement, but the movement begins and self-consciously arises as an attempt to defy one's sexual design.

Second, euthanasia-it's not seeking an end to pain but it's seeking endless death, it's a glorification of death, death is going to solve all problems; life is beneath death. And that's another thing, paganism has always elevated death. Think in the Old Testament of Molech, why would moms and dads take their babies and burn them to death before the god of Molech? Because by killing them they would stimulate blessing in society. Today we see the same thing; don't have babies because of your carbon footprint, and so besides abortion now we have the environmentalists with their worship of nature over man. The San Joaquin Valley of California it's more important to a fish than to destroy the food supply of one-third of America, because we don't care about man, we elevate only nature; nature is the key, man is the cancer on nature. Then we have cloning-it's not seeking a solution to childlessness, that's the party line, what it is, is tampering with the genetic structure because we want to tamper with God's design. And eugenics-same thing, it is not seeking a cure for disease but it's an overthrow of the Creator by the creature.

These are powerful movements and what Dr. Budziszewski is saying is they're all interrelated, see the big picture; this is the paganism of our time. Fleeing the consequences of God-consciousness and His revelation leads to foolishness; that is the foolishness. Now he gives an illustration here in the next slide and he's going to use the analogy we all can identify with and that's the analogy of a policeman chasing a speeder. So a policeman is chasing a speeding car; the person driving the car knows he's speeding, he knows the policeman is going to judge him, but he tries to outrun the policeman because he has drugs in the car and it's worse for him because of the other baggage that he has, such that when the law begins to come down there's a defiance because it's not just one thing, it's ten other things that are involved. And so here's an example:

"The fear of getting pregnant works only with some level of chastity," in other words, there has to be some sense of God's design. "The fear of getting pregnant works only with some level of chastity, but fornicators try to 'outrun the cop; with contraceptives first, and if contraception fails they try to 'shoot the cop' by getting abortions." So there's a defiance that is increasing in intensity, that's the point you want to see here; there's a set of consequences, almost like drug addiction, that one sin, if it isn't cut off leads to another one, which leads to another one, which leads to another one. And that's because we are ultimately fleeing what we know is right, fleeing from the God who created us and who holds us accountable. And so we have this result. "Those who will not accept..." this is a great statement, "Those who will not accept conscience as a teacher must face it as an accuser, and if they run away they run into even deeper wrong. In this way the conscience urges them to yet further wrong."

Now that last statement may bother some of you but understand what he's saying; he's saying that a violated conscience, after a certain point, drives you further away from God because it's accusing, accusing, accusing, accusing, accusing, I want to stop it, I don't want to hear it, so I will go on, I will become more defiant in the eyes of God.

So finally, we go through all this social upheaval and social destruction, and it concludes in Romans 1:32, "Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but" even worse than doing them, is "approving those who practice them." This is happening also in our society. Peter Olsen, his wife, Barbara Olsen, was a conservative commentator, he was the Attorney General in the Reagan administration, he is now has just come out for gay marriage, as a Libertarian, not as a social liberal. And the Libertarians, the absolute individualists, are arguing for freedom, for freedom to do what you want to do and keep the government out of my business. So we are not philosophically lining ourselves with Libertarianism, we can fight totalitarian government on the side and have them as our allies, but we are not biblically, we cannot be Libertarians.

And here's why, "Emile Durkheim a founder of sociology, posited that there is a limit to the amount of defiant behavior any community can afford to recognize," and this is in your handout. "As behavior worsens, the community adjusts its standards so that conduct once thought reprehensible is not longer deemed so ... Krauthammer wrote, 'It is not enough for the deviant to be normalized. The normal must be found to be deviant.'" So it's only the Christians that are those rebellious people that upsetting people, that have this hatred for people and must be excluded from the councils of the elite. "This situation is thoroughly perverse. Underclass values become increasingly acceptable to the middle class, especially their young people, and middle-class values become increasingly contemptible to the culture elites," says Robert Bork in his book, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*."

Senator Moynihan, years ago from New York had a word, defining deviancy down, and what he meant was you relax the law because you can't enforce it, so the law has to be relaxed. And so that is the pressure that goes on. The cause is not the deviancy; now think biblically, the cause of social collapse is not the deviancy. The cause is rebellion against God in a personal chosen way, and that's the cause; the deviancy is a result. We have to get our social dynamics right or we can't appreciate missions and we can't appreciate evangelism if we get this backwards and try to say that this deviancy we've got to reform, we've got to deal with the social problem. Yes we do, but the debate is how do we do it? If what Durkheim is saying that we're progressively lowering our standards, that's one way of dealing with it, isn't it, if we erase the violations by erasing the law to which it's being violated. So that's a solution, "a" solution, not the biblical one.

So let's now, we've hopefully proven our case that it's the case in the Scriptures that it's idolatry first and immorality second. Now we are going to quickly go through Isaiah 41, that was the reference we gave last time, the sarcastic passages and we just want to comment on a few points there and then we'll get back next time to Deuteronomy.

Isaiah is carrying out Mosaic theology in his ministry, and so in this long extended chapter, chapter 41, there's two sections in it, it's dealing with the time of Cyrus, the rise of the grand Persian King, and as we said before, you see in verse 1 the introduction, "Keep silence before Me, O coastlands, And let the people renew their strength! Let them come near, then let them speak: Let us come near together for judgment. [2]

'Who raised up one from the east? [Who in righteousness called him to his feet?]" You notice it? "Who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Who gave them as the dust to his sword, [As driven stubble to his bow?"

What do you notice about all those questions? Are they asking the economic principles? Or is it a discussion of sociological cause/effects? Or is the question posed about a personal cause behind history, that history has a personal cause and a personal dynamic. Who's behind the rise of Cyrus, they say, and then the answer in verse 4, "Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I am.'" So here God says I am the source of history, the beginning and the end. Verse 5, "The coastlands saw it and they were afraid," this is their reaction to Cyrus. [6] "Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, 'Be of good course!'" and the Hebrew emphasis there in verse 6, it is that paganism, and this is one of those blanks in your handout, paganism sees no ultimate purpose in historical experience, there's no ultimate personal purpose to history. Even the gods and goddesses are fickle and transient beings that wallow on the tarp of chaotic nature. This is their metaphysic underlying their politics.

So again, notice the cause. [7] "So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith," see, it's the same thing, it's this same perverted dominion, it's dynamic that's working again that we saw last time, the rebellion against God which has occurred in these people, which they're trying to cope with the problem, they have suppressed the truth, they are listening to satanic deceptions. Finally their perverted sense of dominion, we will gather around this idolatrous force, maybe as they looked upon it as a good luck charm for their foreign policy, whatever it was. And then finally you have the destruction and this is what happens, in Isaiah he's so sarcastic, he concludes verse 7, which is the end of that section, oh, "the craftsman encourages the metal worker, who smoothes with the hammer... saying it's ready for soldering, and then he fastens it with pegs, that it won't topple over." Now there's a principle here that the Bible presents again and again, and it's on your outline, it's that third principle, "that it might not totter," and that's a key point. The idol is never self-sufficient. Idols are not self-supporting, our God is, because aseity, He's the same yesterday, today and forever, He's the source of all existence. But no idol is. Now where do you see that today in a policy? Here's an interesting thing. In the public educational system, state after state, right now it's Texas that's going through this, state after state that tries to allow classroom criticism of Neo-Darwinism are not permitted. Now isn't that interesting; haven't we talked about free discussion in the educational system; aren't we training people how to think, how to look critically at things? And here it is a marvelous thing; criticism is just automatically eliminated from the classroom. Why? To protect the idol. Idols always need special protections, they need chains to hold them up. And it's a sign of their weakness; this is why Islam is so afraid of the gospel and so afraid of the radio, so afraid of the internet, because the young people might choose against Islam. And so therefore the false religion has to have coercion and chains to support it, because they are ultimately afraid.

Okay, So I list on the outline and we want to go to the next slide here, we won't have time to go through all of this tonight but we'll look at some basic questions here; look at your outline, there's three issues here. The metaphysical question is what is the meaning or purpose of your life? If you get in a serious discussion with someone, that's a good question to pose: what do you think is the purpose of your life. That's a deep question, and somehow you'll get a ha-ha trivial answer to it, but it's a question that cuts all the way t the depths of the soul. What is your purpose for living?

The epistemological question, why should I accept as true what you are saying? People don't think about these things; these are questions that are deep, they get down to the foundation. The ethical question we talked about before, who are you to tell me how to live? Those are fundamental questions and I submit to you, if any adult cannot answer all of those three you are not sufficiently mature in your thinking. And it's sad that we can have people go through graduate level courses and haven't got a clue to answer any of those three questions. But they are absolutely critical.

This diagram is one I did for the seminary guys because I wanted to point out something. I wanted in one diagram to show why we, Bible-believing Christians, why God cannot be replaced by any idol. This diagram says it all. Here's a triangle, God is up at the top, man is down to the left, and nature to the right. What this triangle is does is show you the relationships between God, man and nature, biblically. God knows comprehensively nature; God knows comprehensively man; no debate from the standpoint of Scripture. All right. God has a plan for man, God has a plan for nature, God has thought through every detail for all men at all times everywhere. God has thought through every molecule, every atom, every part of nature. So there's not one man, not one piece of nature that is outside of the knowledge of God, that God has an integrated plan, it's rationally consistent because God thinks systematically.

Here's the problem; man is finite, God is infinite. Man knows partially nature, and man knows partially God. And the only reason that man knows partially nature and partially God is because he is made to be a what? What did God tell Adam to do in Genesis 2, to do what to the animals? To name them. So if he's going to name them then man is involved in a knowledge process. This is the epistemological side of the gospel. And we won't get into the two tests, the two true tests, this is the empirical and logical consistency, but all I want to show tonight is if you give up the Scriptures, if you retreat, if you allow human viewpoint to control your thinking you've lost it. And when you lose this you all free answers to those questions. And we can stand proud and confident on the basis of the Word of God before any audience, any time, anywhere, because there are no answers from these questions apart from the metaphysics of the Bible that there's a Creator and a creature. Everything else follows from that.

And so this is why the chapter ends, Isaiah 41, there's a second barrage of questions, if you look at verse 21 you'll see that, God says to the idols, to the priests who made up these idols, "Present your case, ... Bring forth your strong reasons...." [22] Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them, or declare to the

things to come." See, it's a challenge of the Scripture that the Biblical God throws out, where is your epistemology, how do you know the past forever, and the future, tell us about the future, then we will know that you know. [23] Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do some good, do some evil, that we may be dismayed and see it together. [24] Indeed you are nothing, your work is nothing, and the people who choose you are an abomination."

Boy, talk about tough language, talk about a politically incorrect way of addressing people, look at that one. Look at what he's saying. It's an absolute negation of the entire pagan position, you are nothing! And that goes, sadly, for a lot what passes in our culture today. And not only that, the people who choose you, that is, the people who go along with idolatry, they are an abomination because they are under the influence of evil.

And verse 25 is the challenge, "I have raised up one from the north," that's God bringing up Cyrus, "from the rising of the sun he shall call on My name; and he shall come against the princes as the potter treads the clay." Look at the questions in verse 26, the whole series of questions. "Who has declared the beginning that we may know? [And former times that we may say, 'He is righteous]; Surely no one who knows, surely there is no one who declares, surely there is no one who hears your words." You see, those are absolute negations of the entire pagan position and we walk around like we ought to be ashamed of the Scriptures. People, in the fairy story the emperor has no clothes, and it took one child by the road to have the courage, when all the adults went oh, gee, we wouldn't say that, that's not politically correct, even this little kid blurts it out, the emperor has no clothes. Nobody wants to say it-unbelief has no clothes; it has no basis, it can't answer the big questions. And that's what the prophets are talking about. Look at verse 28, "For I looked, and there was no man; I looked among the, but there was no counselor. Who, when I asked them could answer a word?" You don't have any answers; "Indeed, they are all worthless, their works are nothing, their molded images are wind and confusion."

So we conclude tonight where we started, idolatry is an attack upon the character of God; when you attack the character of God and alter it you destroy the foundations for everything built on top of that. We have a suppression of truth that leads to satanic deception; we cannot avoid being people who go out and seek dominion, but depending on our relationship, whether it's one of enmity with God or friendliness with God we will all be genuine in our dominion or we will pervert it. If we want to reengineer reality we're idolaters and then finally we have immorality on a massive scale and social collapse, and that collapse is a self-destructive process that God has put into us, He's built it into us; that's what's going to happen. That's the consequences. We're free to do it, absolutely free to do that. But we're not is we're not free to avoid those consequences.