Sept. 22, 2002 Northwest Bible Church

# Romans 1:19-21

***What about the heathen?***

## INTRO

In Romans 1:18 Paul has introduced the theme of this section for us. In Romans 1:19-32, he begins to deal with the heathen and show how they deserve God’s wrath.

A question often arises, *If there is salvation only in Christ, then how can God hold the heathen accountable if they have never heard of Christ?*

**I. GENERAL REVELATION GIVES KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (Romans 1:19-20a).**

A. All men know about God. (Romans 1:19). “Because” – in v. 19 begins to give the **reason** for how they suppress the truth.

“that which is known about God” – certain basic truths about God.

“evident” - clearly known, easily known, evident, plain, clear.

“within them” - in their minds.

“God made it evident to them” – This is the work of God to make sure that all men know about Him.

B. What kind of knowledge is meant here?

1) External knowledge of God. See v. 20 – creation.

### a) “invisible attributes” - most prominently God’s greatness, glory, majesty, might, power, wisdom, dominion, justice, righteousness, and His holiness.

### b) “eternal power” – not temporal power but eternal power, the sense that creation is the result of enormous power which can only be explained by the existence of God.

c) “divine nature” - God’s divine excellencies, the divine perfections, His holy virtues. Also God’s goodness in providing for the needs of His creatures, Acts 14:16-17.

2) Internal knowledge of God.

a) Eternity in the heart. Eccl. 3:11

b) God’s law in the heart. Romans 2:14-15.

**II. GENERAL REVELATION MAKES MAN INEXCUSABLE (20b-21).**

A. Man clearly sees the evidence of God in creation (Romans 1:20b). Cf. Ps. 19:1-4.

B. General revelation is sufficient to establish guilt (Romans 1:20b).

C. Knowing God, they reject Him (Romans 1:21).

## III. THE ROLE OF GENERAL REVELATION TO SALVATION

A. Is general revelation sufficient to save? No.

B. Is general revelation suffience to condemn? Yes. If the heathen reject the lesser light of general revelation, they would even more so reject the greater light of the gospel.

## CONCLUSION