



Without excuse

“For 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.”

Romans 1:20

One of the most famous atheists of the twentieth century was the British philosopher Bertrand Russell, the author of a book entitled *Why I Am Not A Christian*. Russell asserted that the Christian faith has no basis in reality and that any truly rational person would reject the claims of religion. For Russell, faith was nothing more than evidence of a person’s gullibility. When he was on his deathbed, Russell was asked what he would say to God if he found himself in God’s presence after he died. In answer to this question Russell replied, *“I should reproach Him for not giving us enough evidence.”*

What’s the explanation for this unbelief? Is it that men like Bertrand Russell haven’t received enough evidence to see what we see? Is it that we’ve searched for God and found Him, whereas the atheist intellectuals of the world haven’t been able?

Scripture tells us a different story. Paul’s message in Romans 1:20 is that everyone knows the truth. Everyone knows that there is a God, because God hasn’t hidden Himself. What may be known about God is plain, because God has made it plain. Since creation, up to this very day, God’s invisible qualities *“have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.”*

The only way to claim that there is no God is to work actively to ignore that truth. This isn’t a passive act; this is a deliberate suppression of the truth. And this suppression of the truth is done because of wickedness. Man’s guilt is not due to his ignorance of the facts. If that were true, the problem would be an intellectual one. But the fact is this: no one is ignorant of the facts! The problem is a problem of the heart and will – it’s a spiritual problem. Men fight against the knowledge of God because of the wickedness of their hearts.

Think about the evidence that is available to us. We can’t even begin to comprehend the infinity of the universe with our finite minds. Just think about the amazing power that exists within the sun, the sheer size of it, the amount of energy that it produces – and then think that there are millions of suns in the universe. Think about DNA, about human chromosomes, and about genetics. Think about your eye, and the fact that you can see. Think about your ear, and the fact that you can hear. Think about how these things work together with your brain so that you can understand, and think, and reason. Through all of these things God cries out to his creation, *“I am here! I made this! I am God!”*

So when non-Christians say that God is unfair for condemning a person who hasn’t heard about Him, we can respond by saying that such a person doesn’t exist. There is no one who hasn’t heard of God, or who doesn’t know that God exists. And that’s why there is no excuse. That’s why no one can appear before God’s judgment seat and say, *“I never knew you!”*

As believers, it would be easy to think that we are the wise ones because we have acknowledged that God exists and because we worship Him. But we need to remember that if it wasn’t for God’s loving kindness, we would be in exactly the same place as so many others. If God hadn’t revealed Himself to us and opened our eyes, we’d be railing against Him along with every atheist and

agnostic in the world. If God's Holy Spirit hadn't worked in our hearts through his Word, we'd be just as lost and foolish as anyone else.

We have no cause to boast in ourselves. We believe, but not because we're any smarter or more perceptive than anyone else. It's because of one thing, and one thing only: God's amazing grace. We've had the scales taken from our eyes. We've been given a glimpse of the glory of God. We've been given an amazing gift and we need to see the glory in being able to share that gift with others.

And if those who have never heard the gospel are without excuse, where does that leave us? If those who've never heard of Jesus Christ have no excuse for not knowing God, what excuse do we have, who do know Jesus Christ? If everyone is without excuse, how much more inexcusable are we if we don't worship the Lord! We know God. We have seen his glory. Let us then glorify Him as God. Let us give thanks to Him. He, and He alone, is forever praised!

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