

F. LaGard Smith answers the question: Are we in Romans chapter 1?

Discussion and study guides / questions / topics for your consideration.

1. Perhaps to prepare for this discussion, the best first thing is to assign participants in this bible study the task of reading and praying over Romans 1 – in its entirety. The second best thing is to re-read Romans 1. 18-32. Then, prior to arriving for bible study, answer in your own mind:
 - a. How does Paul present God as God?
 - b. How does Paul present God in the minds of men (or the creation)?
 - c. How does Paul discuss truth, or, ‘the truth’?
 - d. How does Paul present God in His dealings with men?
 - e. How does Paul present men (the creation) in their dealings with men (creation)?
2. This discussion opens with the statement that yes, in one respect we are in Romans 1 – that being the current state homosexual behavior and its acceptance. What do you think?
3. That statement is expanded then into a larger observation: in the entire history of humankind, no culture; no religion; has officially recognized same-sex marriage. Never! What do you think?
 - a. Where does that put modern nations of today?
4. What does the phrase “wrong side of history” attempt to inform mankind?
 - a. How does culture, society, mankind, individuals, become ‘more enlightened’ than what has been previously experienced, believed, or thought in the history of mankind?
 - b. How does this compare to Psalm 33.1-22?
5. The second subject discussed is idolatry. This discussion leads us to a conclusion that we are in a different world (of ideas, beliefs, perspectives) than Romans 1. Why?

- a. In the 1st century, people / man / the creation, believed in God; in gods; in divinity; something above, higher, outside, supernatural. Those gods were recognized and worshipped.
- b. In Romans 1, 'gods' were elevated representations nature; of the creation (man; birds; fish, etc)
- c. Even an unknown God. Acts 17.
- d. What does this context inform us about man in this period? (in most periods of time for that matter).

6. But what appears to have changed in our time?

- a. Is it the notion that 'we' have given up on the idea of God; of the divine?
- b. According to the video, how does Charles Darwin and his 'origins' discussion fit into this?
- c. What is the outcome of God if Darwinian thought is correct?
- d. Instead of worshipping nature as god, now, nature is worshipped without a god.
- e. Does this create a vacuum or space to be filled in the human spirit? Who has filled that space? It is not an idol made of stone or wood, but an idol much more powerful and at the same time much more ephemeral. Ourselves. What do you think?

7. What do you think about these pointed observations:

- a. God (the creator) is out of the picture. Our culture, the nation, has remnants of God – of morals, divine judgment, an afterlife. But these things are basically given lip service. -- Fewer people are buying into this package --
- b. More and more younger people are simply believing there is no God.
- c. Ever since Darwin and the naturalistic focus of life, we've gotten rid of God.
- d. We are a godless nation. The nation is on its way being officially godless. (could this apply to the U.S. as a nation? Ps 1; Or the church? 1 Pet 2.9)?
- e. Militant atheism is replacing passive atheism and persecution will happen.

8. Thought and discussion topics.

- a. When man (the creation) no longer believes or accepts that the true God exists, what happens to the idea and reality of 'sin'?
- b. If God and sin no longer exist, what happens to the consequences of sin?
- c. If I no longer need to fear or acknowledge the consequences of sin, what concern is there of death and punishment (hell)?
- d. If the Darwinian theory is correct, and it is true that man came from nothing and ends in nothing or goes nowhere, and there is no God involved, what is the foundation for morality; for law; for crime & punishment, etc;
- e. If these ideas are true, then any argument about sinful behavior falls because it is without foundation and without morals. It is 'without sin'.
- f. If all these things are true, then Genesis 1 is a lie – all of it – particularly being made in His image.
- g. If that is true, there is no hope or expectation of reigning with Christ in heaven. (Eph 2.5; 1 John 3.2ff; Rev 3.21) What do you think?
- h. Is this where 'we' are; where the U.S. is or is going; where the world is or is going?
- i. What are we teaching our families and loved ones about these things?
- j. What are schools teaching our families about these things?
- k. Does righteousness matter anymore? (Romans 1; Prov 14.34; Tit 2.11ff)