

ROMANS 1:18-23 & 28-32 & JOHN 1:1-5, 9-14 & 18

EXTRA DISCUSSION POINTS

You'll need a few Bibles out on the tables too...because at some point we'll look at a verse or two beyond what's printed in the service order.

There are a few recurring themes throughout the entire book of Romans that we see in the first chapters & especially Chapter 1 today...

- The profound equality of guilt before God all of humankind shares
- God's righteous judgment on all who worship creation over Creator
- The sharp contrast between righteousness and unrighteousness

ROMANS 1:18FF - According to verse 18, what is the common denominator among all people that leave us broken by sin, ungodliness & unrighteousness? Somehow we suppress the truth about God & deny God the right to rule his Creation...we think we can do better. **Examples?**

Verse 20 claims that creation is enough to bear witness to God's glory. Do you think this is true? How would someone argue against this claim?

If Romans 1:20 is true, it means that every person – deep down – knows that God is true. How should that knowledge change our conversations when we talk about the God?

Verse 22 says human sin makes us think we are wise, but are instead foolish. Can you think of an example that the world considers "wise", but is really "foolish"?

Few Australians worship idols in the form of metal statues. (although that is still common in religions of the 3rd world) What modern idols do people serve or worship? Idolatry is an exchange of glory (v. 23) and truth (v. 25).

Note the common language of how God responds to human sin, rebellion, idolatry in verses 24, 26, & 28. What is the result of how God treats us? How would you describe God's reaction to human "idolatry"?

Bottomline...God doesn't have to necessarily punish sinners. We get more of what we pursue & it destroys us. (Pr 14:12 - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death.*) Two kinds of people in the world. Those who say to God, "Thy will be done." And those to whom God says, "Ok...have it your way." - CS Lewis

John does not have a "Christmas story" of Christ's birth like Matthew & Luke. **How does this part of John 1 serve John's purpose in the way the birth stories do in the other two gospels?**

Where else do we read "in the beginning"? Genesis 1 Is John 1:1 referring to the same "beginning"? Yes Consider verse 1 & 2...Why is that important? Jesus was in the beginning with God therefore, Father & Son are distinct from one another but both are equally God, yet they are separate persons. They have differing roles yet they are the same. Jesus existed from the beginning, He was with God in the beginning, & He was God.

What characteristics & work is attributed to Jesus in the passage?

Creation, Giver of Life & Light both in Creation but also in relationship to the Father & the way God designs & desires our lives to be led.

The Jews had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah to come. Why did they not recognize Jesus? Basic sin-induced blindness & hardness of heart. After years of God's "silence" in exile they had retreated into the Law as the final revelation & built their lives around strict legal obedience. In many ways they never came home from exile.

To respond to the question, "Does God exist?" or the challenge, "I don't really believe in God." Christians can approach the question or the challenge with confidence...

1. **What are you looking for?** Someone to simply make life go well for you or Some One who promises to take the messes we make & weave them by his suffering love into abundant life & joy forever?
2. **There are 4 places to look:**
 - a. General Revelation – Created order in its majesty, beauty, complexity & design
 - b. Personal Revelation – Jesus (Heb 1:1-3, John 1:18)
 - c. Evangelical Revelation – The Bible throughout Old & New Testaments points to Jesus as God's fullest self-revelation
 - d. Living Revelation – YOU...as a faithful follower of Christ being conformed into his image...a visible & verbal witness to him.