

Why People Don't Believe

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Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 0 0] Behold our God. Amen? Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1. This morning my goal is to answer two very specific questions that most people have in life. The debate I have is whether I'm going to be able to do this in the allotted time. So this might turn into a two sermon in one Sunday or two different sermons over two different Sundays. We'll see how we go. All right. So starting, beginning in Romans 1.18.

Please read along in your Bibles with me. One, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. But they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore, God gave them up in their lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.

[1 : 5 0] Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who was blessed forever. Amen.

If you were with us two weeks ago, the last time we were in Romans, you would know that court is in session. The way Paul is presenting the context of this scenario that he's explaining to us in Romans 1 is a court-like setting.

Think of it as law and order, first century Rome edition. The judge is none other than God. Identified in the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament as Elohim, the God creator over everything.

The one who has dominion and sovereignty over all. James identifies God as the lawgiver and only, the one and only judge.

And this judge is the one who is able to both save and destroy. That is the judge who is over this court in first century Rome.

[3 : 0 1] The judge has now pronounced a judgment on all of mankind in verse 18. Just see it right there. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Notice it says against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. That means all men, all mankind, all women, everybody. Buddy, this is the verdict that has been read out against in this court.

If you've been with us in this series, you know that the wrath of God is identified as three different types of wrath. There is the wrath that comes at the end of time when every man, woman, soul who lives on this earth, who is going to have to testify before God.

They will all appear before the great white throne of judgment. That's not the wrath he's talking about. The other type of wrath is the judicial wrath. And we've talked about that.

That's the regular wrath that the courts, God has designed government to do. You steal, you get caught, you go to jail, right? That's not the wrath he's talking about here.

[4 : 19] The wrath that he's talking about, it's called the present disclosure of wrath. And we've seen this in three different ways. When we read our Bible, we see that God has injected himself into mankind.

Noah, the sin was so great on the earth that God judged the earth. So that's one of the examples. Two, there is a moral order to this life.

Just as if there is laws of gravity, there's laws to morality, right? There's certain sins that if we commit in our communities, will destroy communities.

Adultery would be one of them. Gossip would be another one. There are those that destroy the community, Christian community as it comes together. And there's another type of wrath, which I believe we are being, which is being lived out right now.

That is the day when God removes his favor from the culture. God just says, you know what? You want your stuff?

[5 : 25] Have it. This leads to a godlessness that Paul states leads to all sorts of immorality. Just think of a world where there was no policeman.

If there was no laws, there was no judges. What a horrible society it is. There are societies that exist on this planet today where I can't even think of the official term.

I should have looked it up. But they're ungovernable. There's nobody rules over it right now. It's just complete chaos. They're marked by death. Rape.

The weak are taking advantage of. Slavery. That happens today during this time. Even evil governments are better than no governments, if you can believe it.

So when God removes himself, it leaves a complete disaster behind. So in this courtroom, not only do we have Judge, the lawgiver who presides over this court, but we have a prosecuting attorney named Paul.

[6 : 41] And all mankind is present. But there's an objection. The sentence, the judgment has been read, and there's an objection.

You see, the accused of all mankind, the Roman, the Greek, the Gentile, the non-Jew, object to being under this judgment.

They claim they're innocent by virtue of not being Jewish. And what they mean by not being Jewish is that we didn't have the law. We didn't have Moses to teach us God's ways.

We didn't have kings. We didn't have prophets that came to our governments and warned us that we were doing ill. We were doing evil against God. So to say that we suppress the truth, we did not know the truth.

We did not know your law, Your Honor. We call it the it's not fair defense, right? We are not the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[7 : 57] Now, I think if you're all honest with yourselves, we've all asked this question in one way or another. Whether out loud to your Sunday school teacher or to your spouse or your friends, it's the question is, what happens to the poor, innocent native in the jungle, desert, or some other island in the Pacific when they die?

You know the one, the one that has never heard about Jesus. Does anybody ask that question? It's a struggle. That's a question I have struggled with. It is a great question many missionaries struggle with one time or another.

This is the text that answers that question for us. This is the text that tells us about what happens when God pulls himself out of a society.

If I could be blunt or dare I say prophetic, this is the text that explains how crazy the world we live in is today. Do you guys want me to give you a story about how crazy the world is?

Do you want me to give you a story about how crazy the world is? Do you want me to give you a story about how crazy the world is? It's a new one. All right? This week, I don't know if you've read this notice, the Supreme Court Justice of Canada, and it's in Canada, so it's not like it's a crazy thing in the States.

[9 : 21] It's happening right here, right? So this Supreme Court Justice of Canada was responding on another court case, and she made a comment that, she was commenting on what another woman judge had said, and she said it's unfortunate or problematic about what the other judge said because she referred to a female victim as a woman.

This is problematic to refer to a female victim as a woman. It said the victim should be identified.

I'm not going to say what she said, but should be identified by her female genitalia. That's how she should be identified in court. Let's just say, I won't say what it is, but if you were to call them birthing person, it might be even less offensive a little bit, right?

Now, what even makes us even more crazier, if you remember, you women, it was International Women's Day this week, right? March 8th, yay! Well, this justice, along with other women justices, posed for a nice big picture for Women's Day, but apparently she didn't have a problem with calling them women when she could have called these are birthing people justices, or they should be known for their female reproductive genitalia.

That's how crazy this world is. And this is a person who sits on our Supreme Court. So if you were with us last time, Paul counters the it's not fair argument by saying false.

[11 : 14] That mankind is inexcusably ignorant. Verse 19. Your honor, for what can be known about you is plain to them, because you have shown it to them.

For your invisible attributes, namely your eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world. And the things that have been made, so these accused are without excuse.

You see, we realize that mankind cannot plead ignorance. Because God has made it clear, God has made it evident to them, God is not hidden.

The truth about God is clear, because God made it that way. To know there's a God, you do not need to be a professor of theology, you do not need to be a world-class scientist, you do not need to be a federal investigator.

You don't have to be even a master at puzzles. Everyone can know, because God has purposely made himself clear. Last week, we read that God does it, and there's four ways, and I didn't say it in four ways yesterday.

[12 : 34] So this is a little bit of an add-on to last week's sermon, but the first way was through creation, right? If you didn't get a chance to listen to that sermon, I would encourage you to do so, because it outlines just how God has marvelously created himself in creation.

The second way that God has demonstrated himself in this world is through providence, and by providence is kind of a subset of creation. creation. It's how God created this earth, like the fact that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.

The fact that this earth has four seasons. How flowers function, and how God created all of nature to work in this world. It happens every place in every country.

It may not be the same animals, but it's the same type of animals doing the same type of thing. Birds migrate all over the place, right? There's all this thing, so that's through providence.

He's created this majestic working order. The third point, and just as I was doing some study, one guy wrote, he said God even demonstrates himself through history. God answers problems, like even when we read Genesis.

[13 : 45] Yes, reading the Bible is called special revelations, but what he's talking about does answer the question is where do different races come from? Where do languages? How did sin get here? Like the core questions that describe who we are on this planet are answered for us.

Even as we study history, we know that God is a part of it. There's a flow to everyone's culture. There's a reason to it.

And the last one is through our conscience. Through our conscience. What anthropologists tell us over and over and over again, that man has always known what is right and what is wrong.

Take a look at verse 32 with me for a moment. Notice it says, though they know God's righteous decree.

What he's saying there is that mankind has always known God, ordinance of God, God's righteous judgment. They have known the law. There has always been an innate understanding that there is a God and he rules and he is a God who has laws.

[14 : 57] That's why man has always experienced guilt. People from all time know there's a difference from killing a deer than killing another human being. That is all over the world.

Over all time. I could preach a whole sermon on just the conscience but I'm not. But just in it, you know, those are the four areas. We've got creation.

We have providence. We have history. And we have our conscience. All those things scream God exists. Amen? We really are without excuse.

But not only that. there's a beauty of being a part of this world that we worship, right? When we're in, we can worship God.

Whether it be through sitting by the ocean or just taking to the mountains and knowing that there is a God but it's an understanding.

[15 : 58] And it was back, man, I'm going back, I'm dating myself. I think it was back early 90s. It was the first time I'd ever been out to Whistler and I was with a friend of mine who was going through a horrible time through a divorce and we just sat out on a rocky ridge.

I didn't even know what mountain it was. And we talked about this isn't a God that has to be, that should be worshipped. This is a God that has to be worshipped. Because he wondered, the question was, does God exist anymore?

anymore? Yeah, his marriage was falling apart but God has clearly put himself display for us. He is self-evidence.

He has always been evidence. So to answer the question, what happens to the poor innocent native in the jungle desert or on some island in the Pacific when they die?

You know, the one who has never heard about Jesus? Well, the fact is they don't need Jesus because they're innocent. Right? When people ask that question, well, what does that innocent person do?

[17 : 07] But Paul has just proven that there are no innocent people. Everyone deserves to be under the wrath of God.

And God has taken tremendous steps to make himself known, to make himself clear so that man is without excuse. God is clear in nature, providence, history, in our conscience that he does exist.

So that's my introduction. Now I'm going to present to you the first question that I'm going to answer today. This is the question that I have for you and it's a long one so bear with me.

Questioning, why is it that if God is so clear in nature, in providence, in history, in our consciences, in which the Bible tells us quite clearly, verse 19, what can be known about God is plain.

Verse 19 says, God has shown it to them. Verse 21, it says, they knew God. Verse 25 says, they exchanged the truth about God. So there was a truth that they knew.

[18 : 21] Verse 18 says, they suppress the truth. You don't suppress nothing. You have to suppress something, right? So if you're suppressing something, that means you must know something to be true in order to suppress it.

That this truth is so absolute. The question is, why don't the Romans believe? Why don't the Greeks believe?

Why don't the Gentiles believe? Why don't you believe? You've been there before.

You've had a friend, maybe a family member, a child, who's grown up with you your entire life. who has walked with you through some of the deepest valleys, the deepest challenges.

They have witnessed the beauty of God. They have witnessed the grace of God. They understand and admit that this world is no cosmic accident. They have seen the blessings God has been to you.

[19 : 30] Brings us to the question, why don't they believe? That's the first question I want to answer this morning. And if we have time, the second question that I want to answer for you is, what is it about God that they reject?

What is it about God that they reject? Let's be honest. When we present God, our Savior, Yahweh, the personal God, to our loved ones, how do we present Him?

He's loving. He is forgiving. He is long-suffering. Look at my life, the chaos that existed before God got a hold of me, and to see that change.

What is it about people that would resist the love of a powerful, gracious, long-suffering, perfect, forgiving God?

So that's the second question. If we have time, I am going to answer. First question, why do people not believe in God that is clearly revealed?

[20 : 46] There's two reasons. The first one is pride. The first one is pride. Take a look at verse 22. Notice it says, claiming to be wise, they became fools.

fools. The reason they don't believe is the reality is they are fools. They are confronted with the reality that they know is good, but yet reject it. They see all the evidence.

They have it right in front of their eyes, their ears, their nose, the sensations. Let's be honest. Our tongues are incredible. All the different tastes of food that God has created within mankind for us to enjoy the flavors of this world.

Isn't that amazing? If you thought about evolution, it would just be a protein bar or something that we would interject in ourselves, right? But God in his beauty and his kindness creates this tongue, this, this, these, these, these, I can't even say the scientific name, I'm trying to, the aura factories or whatever, right?

Of, of flowers in the spring, just yesterday Danielle and I going for a walk and just seeing the flowers start to bud and how we cannot wait just to smell that fragrance.

[21 : 59] That's a gift from God. It's gorgeous. They refused to believe. And can we blame them?

Sometimes, yes. But you know who the first fools were? It was Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve, they had a fatal desire to be God and what's interesting is they had no sin in them.

But they wanted more. They were without sin yet turned their back on God. And if we look at the discourse, we see that Satan played on their pride.

See, it is known that people of intellect, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, religion, faith, is considered a simple-minded, primitive, weak, and something for the uneducated.

We now have a W-E-F quote-unquote atheist religious guru stating that AI can now be people's gods.

[23 : 03] The fact is man is always proud of himself. Man is always proud of his accomplishments. Hey, look at me. I'm educated. I'm enlightened. As y'all know, in the pre-modern age, they thought science was going to save the world from religion.

We're getting better and better. Man, there was this great article I read this week, and it talked about, man, I'm going to try to explain it as best I could.

They believe that we started off with animism and worshipping all these things, and we finally worked our way down to monotheism. But the biblical truth is we started with monotheism, and our sin led us, opened us up, and spread us to other gods.

The world had this idea that all the other gods were there because we are uneducated, stupid, primitive people and couldn't figure it out. But it's the exact opposite.

And intellectualism leads us further away from God than to God. So man has this pride.

[24 : 15] God. So what else helps us understand the question, why does man not believe and why does man reject God, who he clearly sees?

Let's take a look at verse 21. And the reason is first, he's prideful. The second is man is wicked. Man is wicked.

Notice what it says, verses 21. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. And I want you to pay attention to this. For they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

When we read that text, futile in their thinking, it's like they're spinning their wheels, their thoughts are useless or nonsense, right?

It's not doing a math equation by, I don't know, playing baseball or something. It's nonsensical, right?

[25 : 22] But the King James version actually gives what I believe is a, it helps us understand, it says they became vain in their imaginations.

And what that word vanity means, it's built off that word pride, and you guys are going to get this in a second here, is that there is an evilness in the futility.

You with me on this one? There is a, it's not futile in thinking, it is vain and it's not even thinking, it's actually in their imaginations.

Why? Notice what it says at the very beginning verse 21, they knew God. Right? It doesn't say they were ignorant of God. It said they knew God and they chose not to honor him or give thanks to him.

You with me on this one? It's going to get deeper in a second. So their futile thinking, their vain imaginations are motivated to reject the God that is clearly seen.

[26 : 34] why? So they can avoid worship and honor of the one true God. That's what this verse is stating. This is the greatest wickedness that man can do.

Right here, to know that God is God and refuse to honor and worship him. that is why the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.

People are not ignorant. They have chosen not to give honor and worship to God. Look at that last song we sang, the passage that Dave read.

No criticism on Dave. Dave's a gentle reader. That's dripping with sarcasm. Right? Like you fool.

Where were you when I created this world? Do you not see the storehouses of hell that I have that I will bring upon at judgment time?

[27 : 52] That's why in verse 18 when it says, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all godliness and unrighteousness, all ungodliness always starts with a rejection of God.

It's not immorality that leads to godlessness. And if you're familiar, I'm dating myself, for you guys who grew up in the 80s, who paid attention to what was going on in the states politically, remember the moral majority?

It was a group of Christians trying to get this political party, kind of a subset of the Republicans and it was these Christians. If we could just get America to be moral, it would somehow bring about some sort of godly blessings.

And don't get me wrong, I do believe God is happy when we're moral, moral people are just as far from God as immoral people.

Because they do not give honor and worship to God. In fact, when we evangelize, we think it's going to be easier with moral people. The problem is, moral people have a hard time believing that they've done something wrong that actually deserves the wrath of God.

[29 : 19] However, that's why even when we see Jesus Christ, right, we see contrast, the Pharisees who've been keeping the law, pretty good guys, can't accept the fact that they need Jesus.

But who does? The tax collectors and prostitutes. You guys sinful? Oh yeah, yeah, I'm sinful. Right, I get it, I'm so dirty, it's all over me. I can't hide it.

I can't hide it. This, my friends, is the greatest sin. And I think it even affects us as Christians.

I was just reading one of the commentaries and he says, you know, are we even in the church giving the glory to God that he deserves in all areas of our life?

do we give him the honor in our careers, our families, anything that we're good at it, or is that the things that we did? Here's a quote, it says, to reject God is to reject the greatest reality in the universe, the reality which gives the only true meaning, purpose, and understanding to everything else.

[30 : 38] refusing to recognize God and to have his truth guide your minds, sinful man is doomed to futile quest for wisdom through various human speculations that lead only to falsehood and therefore to still greater unbelief and wickedness.

The term speculation embraces all man's godless reasonings. let's be honest, the best of man's reasonings is evolution.

Right? Can you imagine that day when they're thinking about that in their office? Like, how did this earth even get here? It had to have a beginning, right?

This is Thomas Aquinas called it the unmoved mover. It had to come from somewhere. We'll call it the Big Bang, but there's no explanation to what caused the Big Bang.

Right? But then how did life, you know, did two certain meteorites come collide and they drip their alien-ish ashes on the earth that landed on the wonderful swamp, which all of a sudden created a one-celled, one-celled, whatever a one-celled is.

[31 : 55] I only took grade nine science. And that being split to two beings, right? Right? And then eventually lightning hit it like superheroes are created and all of a sudden that split and all of a sudden you got a fish.

And then that fish really wanted to get on the beach because that's where you had the sun. So over that million years of really wanting to get out there, the fish finally figured out how to flop and tan, right?

And then you throw in another million, millions, years, and you could just like see these guys figuring it out and one guy goes, well, actually my Bible, you know, I went to Sunday school like we all did and God kind of tells us how it all happened.

Oh, that's craziness. Let's get back to how did that fish become a monkey again, right? Like, they're vain imaginations. That's what it is.

It's not even thinking. that is the depravity of man on display.

[33 : 02] How depraved is man? Look at verse 23. And they exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

One guy wrote, he goes, man's rejection of God and embracing of idols can be compared to a son who murders his father and then makes a dummy figure of his father and then he introduces all his friends to the dummy as his father.

Isn't that crazy? But that's exactly it. The images, the statues, the images made and of mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

See, the foolishness and wickedness of man is seen when man rejects God's revelation and substitutes it with his own thoughts, reasonings, and imagination.

evolution. That's why they can't explain the B or the I. The I is so wonderfully complex and delicate, yet how could that simply come through evolution, time, and chance?

[34 : 29] The seasons, they're not by accident. They're the handiwork of a great God that is rational and purposeful in all that he does.

But man, because he is prideful and wicked, chooses chaos, confusion, and uncertainty. So that is why we understand when we present someone like Jesus Christ, they only see him as a carpenter, or a moral teacher, or a philosopher.

Even though history, the four gospels, plus more attest to his deity, their pride and wickedness do not allow them to see Jesus Christ for how he has presented himself.

Now I'm going to give you two warnings with all of this. And it involves the idea of apologetics. Apologetics is, there's many different streams, but there's a stream of apologetics that if you present these proofs before man, that somehow they can take the data of the evidence that you've shown them, and that through their own reasoning, can come to the right conclusion.

You with me on this? It's a big way, it's called evidentiary apologetics. So it could be, I'm going to present the I to you, I'm going to talk to you about the B, or if you were with me last week, the black robin, and how all those things are so amazing.

[36 : 18] And you give it to them, and you're actually depending that in their natural state they can come to that conclusion. conclusion. They can't, because they're still spiritually blind.

The first thing you need to do is you need to be able to present the gospel to them. And how you do that, there's different ways, but they need to understand that they're spiritually undiscerned.

And if you've read Lee Strobel's is a famous journalist, and he wrote this book, Reasons for Faith and Reasons for Christ. And if you notice, he began with a question, I believe that was God working in his heart drawing Lee to him.

So that's why he went looking for those. And there's a lot of apologetics books are written from that way, like someone's got this idea, and they want to prove it. I believe that's God working in there.

But this is one of the biggest problems that has happened. I'm going to read this quote, it's by James Montgomery Boyce. He was, this guy was a heavy hitter preacher in America back in the late 70s and 80s, and he, Third Street Presbyterian, we still know the church at what he was at, and he made this quote, he said, and this is the problem, we started to get into apologetics and we're trying to convince people to have faith, we start to accommodate wrong belief.

[37 : 47] And I'm just going to read his quote and leave it at that. It says, when we entertain dominating worldly speculations that often infects the church, because for example, gifted and articulate unbelievers, as they converse with believers, have so long and loudly touted evolution as scientific fact rather than philosophical theory.

Many Christians have been intimidated into accommodating their theology accordingly. in the name of theistic evolution or progressive creationism, they not only compromise scientific integrity, but also, and infinitely more disastrously, compromise God's revelation.

They accept the unfounded foolishness of unregenerate men above the flawless truth of God's word. So in man's yearning to create bridges, to have people see the truth of Jesus Christ, they believe they're coming at them with a bow to like a neutral.

If we just present these ideas, they're going to be able to figure it out. But sadly, these thoughts have infected the church and sadly not enough of the world because we've given up.

This is being authoritative. This is being clear. This is being inerrant in what it says. So if I can for the moment take you back to court.

[39 : 15] Paul has charged man, as we know, with being inexcusable ignorance. Inexcusable ignorance. The second charge he brings against God, which we've just proven today, is that man is guilty of ingratitude.

We are guilty of ingratitude. We are guilty of being thankless, refusing to worship what we know to be true. And here's the third charge.

He brings a charge of insolence. Insolence. We claimed to be wise. But are fools instead.

It's when we try to answer for God. So that's why people don't believe. Do you guys want the second answer to the, want me to answer the second question? We got time? We're going for it.

All right. The second question I want to answer for you today is, what is about God that they reject? What is it about God that they reject? Have you guys ever thought about this?

[40 : 28] Have you ever wondered, perhaps it was a sibling, someone who grew up in your home, a child who you presented all the love and wonderful things about Jesus, you've taught on justice, you've shown how God is full of mercy, mercy, he is all loving, all long suffering, he knows all, sees all.

Let's be honest, God forgives, amen? Not only does he forgive, he promises he will never bring it back against us. He takes our sin and throws it in the deepest part of the ocean, as far as the east from the west.

What God does that? When we come to God, what God can you come to in prayer, not in shame, right, but as a child of his?

No other religion can you do that. Because you're always trying to work yourself and show yourself that there's some goodness, but you know you're not.

But God gives us, you know, as Colossians 3 explains, like it's like the robe of Jesus around us.

[41 : 43] So we come before the father, he sees us as he sees his own son. And we can come boldly before the throne to know that our sins have been forgiven.

Not only that, he's the God that promises to take away our burdens. To bring him anything and everything. He's not just Elohim, the God creator.

He also identifies himself as Yahweh, the personal God, who we call Abba Father. What's not to like?

Why don't they understand? Why don't they understand? Let's take a look at verse 20.

It says, for his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived in ever since the creation of the world God.

[42 : 53] And the things that have been made. So not only do they reject the physical, but they reject the God that stands here. I'm grateful because this has been on my mind the last couple of weeks.

What are the divine attributes? If you were with us a couple of years ago, we covered the divine attributes of God. Which ones are they specifically referring to? And I'm thankful for the writings of R.C.

Sproul on this. Back in the 70s, he wrote a book on the psychology of atheism. And he talks about four specific attributes that atheists reject about God.

And I'm going to share with you right now what those four are. Atheists reject the sovereignty of God. Atheists reject the holiness of God.

Atheists reject the omniscience of God. That means God is all knowing. And the last one, which I found most profound, is that atheists reject the what's called the immutability of God.

[44 : 04] And that theological word means that God does not change. So they reject that God does not change. The reality is men and women reject God because they do not like God.

They prefer a God of their own design because that is a God much more like themselves. So let me explain each of those points. First one, the sovereignty of God.

The argument is if God is not sovereign, God is not God. The idea of sovereignty means God has a right to rule over all his creation. So if they see God in creation, they understand that there is a God who has a right to rule over it.

Not only that, God has created the laws of gravity, thermodynamics, and a host of other laws that guide us in science, in everything. But here's the problem.

Man in his pride, man in his wickedness, want to rule. They want to rule. My case study for you?

[45 : 15] Adam and Eve. Adam, when he was created, was as free as any creature who could have ever existed.

He could go where he wished. He could do what he wished. But Adam had one and only one condition. As a symbol of the fact that he was not autonomous, that he was still God's creature and owed his life, health, and ultimate allegiance to God, Adam was forbidden to eat of the tree that stood in the midst of the garden.

Adam could have eaten from all the trees to the east of the tree. He could have eaten from all the trees to the north, to the south, and to the west. It was just that one tree. Any other tree.

Not only was he told not to eat of that tree, if you eat of that tree, you die. The fact that Adam took that fruit and ate it is the most irrational action that a man could ever do.

There was no need. God had never lied to him. It's not like God had ever been unclear with him.

[46 : 43] He had no reason not to believe God. The question is, what did Adam have to gain from eating the tree? Nothing.

Guess what? Adam is in each and every one of us. How many of you can truly say you've given every aspect of your life to Jesus?

I'm not just talking about your spiritual life. Hey, I give my life to Jesus when I come to church. He's got it all. What about your anxiety?

What about your shame? What about your family? Your time, your finances, your relationships? Does God have complete sovereignty over all those things as well?

Or do you insist on holding a few of those back yourself and say, I know better. I've got a better plan, God. If you do, it's a demonstration of your pride and wicked heart.

[47 : 57] Because the fact of the matter is, God rules everything. So that's the first aspect why people hate the sovereign God. Second reason, the first, then there's the holy God.

Not only do we hate that God rules over everything, we oppose God for his holiness. holiness. And here's the reason. We hate holiness because we're not holy.

Right? God's holiness exposes our sin. It exposes our shame. It exposes who we are. And the fact of the matter is, we do not like that being exposed.

God's holiness in itself, and you guys all know, holiness is not a matter of divine perfection. If God's desire was for us to be perfect, we might as well kill us now and make it so in heaven.

Right? Because it's not going to happen on this side of earth. There's this whole theology of holiness that you can attain it today. They're nuts. It's not biblical at all. And if I've offended someone, I'll take you to the scriptures to show you why.

[49 : 06] The first thing I'm going to do is going to stamp on your foot and see how you feel. But when they talk about God's holiness, it expresses God's majesty. It expresses God's will.

Holiness expresses God's wrath. And holiness expresses God's righteousness. Sproul writes, here's our problem. Precisely because holiness is not an abstract or passive concept, but is instead the active, dynamic character of God at work to punish rebellion and establish righteousness, the experience of confronting the holy God is profoundly threatening.

A lot of people say they want to come before God. All's you got to do is take him to before Isaiah 6 to see what happens.

The fact of the matter is we all struggle with this. But if ever, at any time, if you ever think you are doing some work or having some thought that somehow advances your position with God, that you can somehow make some God like you better or make up for your sins, you're toast.

You see, God's holiness exposes us. God's holiness is meant to make us more dependent upon him.

[50 : 37] Amen? Amen? Even your best works with the best of intentions has enough sin to condemn the whole world.

You've heard this analogy before. It's like using a greasy rag to clean yourself off before dinner. It just spreads the grease, the mire, and the tar.

We need Jesus Christ to clean us. So that's why they hate the holy God. The all-knowing God. The fact is God knows everything, including ourselves and everything about us.

Let's be honest. We kind of like being known, right? But we really don't like being known that much. Right? I remember there was a time when I was unmarried when you'd go on a date with a girl and you'd kind of look at a girl, right?

And then you kind of looked at her for a little while. You didn't want to stare. You know there was a social order. Then you'd start staring and she's starting to stare back at you. And you're like, okay, yes, she notices me.

[51 : 45] But she's still staring. Is there a piece of broccoli in my teeth? My hair, oh my gosh, I forgot to cut it this week.

Oh, she's so, look at Presley. She's like zooming on me. She can now see that my eyebrows are crooked. Right? Like all of a sudden, there's too much, right? Imagine if I preach like that, just one. Hey, how are you?

You know, just all of a sudden you like it. Hey, Pastor BK notices me, but now I don't really like being noticed. That's the whole principle of God being omniscient and all-knowing.

There is no hiding. He notices. Like I said, when someone stares at us, we get a little bit embarrassed.

We start to feel shame. On the one hand, we want people to look at us, to notice us, but if they ignore us, it hurts us. Like I said, if they look too long or too intently, we are embarrassed and upset because we are ashamed of who we are.

[52 : 50] We do not want others to know us very well. In fact, the matter is, man does not like to be exposed. We only want a God that sees us when we want to be seen.

Hey, I'm at church right now, God. See me, see me. Don't see me at work, man, when I'm cussing. When I'm getting angry, I'm not depending on you.

When I'm with my non-Christian friends, God's not going to see me here. It's interesting, this article, and this is from the crazy United States, don't worry.

But it was an apartment building that had made a rule that you had to leave all your shades and curtains open during the day so everyone could see what was going on so nothing illegal was going in there.

I don't know about you. Even, like I can't say I was running any meth empire in my house. I still don't want people looking in, right? Just the insanity of it all.

[53 : 51] We just don't. And the last one, the immutable God, the God who never changes. The question is, by why should human beings dislike this about God?

Jonathan Edwards, great American theologian from the late 1700s, it says, because by this he never will be otherwise than he is, an infinitely unholy God.

When we hate the fact that God doesn't change, it means that he will never be other than he is of all his other attributes. That's impossible to wait out God.

Maybe we think God will forget. Maybe we believe that there will come a time when God is not sovereign. Maybe there will be a time when God is not holy. Maybe there will be a time when God does not know.

Never. I'm going to conclude this sermon with a quote. It says, we may suppress the truth about God out of a wicked rejection of his sovereignty, saying, we will not have this God rule over us.

[54 : 59] But whether we appreciate this rule or not, God's sovereignty is precisely what we need. We need a God who is able to rule over our unruly passions, control our destructive instincts, and we need a God who saves us.

We may hate God for this holiness, but hate him or not, we need a holy God. Amen? We need an upright standard. We need one who will not cease from working with us until we attain it.

We may hate God for his omniscience, but we need a God who knows us thoroughly from top to bottom and who loves us anyway. Amen? We need a God who knows what we need.

We may hate God for his immutability, since he does not change in any of his other attributes, but simply put, we need a God we can count on.

Let's pray. Dear holy, heavenly God, we just thank you for the greatness of your word and how it answers some of these deepest questions.

[56 : 10] I pray just through these instructions and understanding what Romans is saying through the words of Paul, that it would help us in even how to deal with our loved ones and to understand them, to love them, to serve them, how to bring the truth to bear in their life.

May we be careful with our apologetics. May we not compromise the truth of the written word just to be accepted in this world.

Father, we give you thanks that you are indeed sovereign, you are indeed holy, that you are omniscient, and you are immutable, that you do not change.

And just as the author wrote, you are a God that we can count on. Father, let our lives be a testimony to how foolish the world really is.

Let us not give away or give in to that madness that surrounds us. Father, there is a purpose in your wrath. Even when we see your ultimate wrath being poured out in the book of Revelations, that whole purpose is for worship of you and to bring those who you've called to you.

[57 : 28] To break man of his pride and his wickedness. I pray that you would open up the eyes of those here who do not yet call you Lord and Father and Sovereign and Holy One.

Pray that they would consider upon these things. Because there will come a time when hearts are hardened and judgment will come and your wrath will destroy.

When you come here next, you're not coming to have a wonderful conversation with the woman at the well, but you're bringing a legion of angels to bring destruction on this earth against those who hate you.

And all who do not believe are those who hate you. There is no ignorance. There is no neutral territory. There is either children of God or children of wrath.

We thank you for your word, the special revelation which teaches us these things. And I pray that we can go in peace as we do. In your name we pray. Amen.