

Romans 1:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Analysis

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Paul now details God's judicial response to idolatry: *dio paredōken autous ho theos en tais epithumiais tōn kardiōn autōn eis akatharsia* (διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, 'therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness'). The threefold repetition of *paredōken* (παρέδωκεν, gave over—vv. 24, 26, 28) structures this section. *Paredōken* is judicial language—God handed them over to the consequences of their rebellion. This is not active causation but divine withdrawal, allowing sin to run its course.

En tais epithumiais tōn kardiōn autōn (ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν, 'in the lusts of their hearts') indicates the internal source—desires, not external coercion. *Eis akatharsia* (εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, unto uncleanness) refers to sexual immorality and impurity, violating God's design for sexuality. The result: *tou atimazesthai ta sōmata autōn en autois* (τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, 'to dishonor their bodies among themselves'). *Atimazesthai* (ἀτιμάζω, to dishonor/degrade) contrasts with the honor due to bodies made in God's image. Sexual sin dehumanizes and degrades, contrary to modern claims of liberation. The pattern: idolatry (v. 23) leads to immorality (v. 24)—rejecting God's authority over worship leads to rejecting His authority over sexuality.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman sexual ethics were vastly different from biblical standards. Prostitution was legal and common. Pederasty (older men with boys) was accepted in Greek culture. Temple prostitution existed in various cults. Adultery was widespread. Roman sexual license was notorious—orgies, concubinage, sexual exploitation of slaves. Jewish Christians and Gentile converts were called to radical purity (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). Paul's teaching on sexuality was countercultural and remains so today amid the sexual revolution's aftermath.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God 'gave them over' (παράδιδωμι) as judicial judgment (not arbitrary abandonment) inform your view of cultural moral decline?
2. What is the connection between idolatry (worshiping self/pleasure) and sexual immorality in contemporary culture?
3. How does biblical sexual ethics honor the body (σῶμα) contrary to both asceticism (despising the body) and hedonism (exploiting the body)?

Interlinear Text

Διὸ	καὶ	παρέδωκεν	αὐτῶν	ὁ	θεὸς	ἐν	ταῖς
Wherefore	also	gave	of their own	G3588	God	between	G3588
G1352	G2532	G3860	G846		G2316	G1722	
ἐπιθυμίαις	τῶν	καρδιῶν	αὐτῶν	εἰς	ἀκαθαρσίαν	τοῦ	
the lusts	G3588	hearts	of their own	to	uncleanness	G3588	
G1939		G2588	G846	G1519	G167		
ἀτιμάζεσθαι	τὰ	σώματα	αὐτῶν	ἐν	ἑαυτοῖς		
to dishonour	G3588	bodies	of their own	between	themselves		
G818		G4983	G846	G1722	G1438		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:42 (References God): Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

Acts 14:16 (Parallel theme): Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

Matthew 15:14 (Parallel theme): Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Leviticus 18:22 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

1 Corinthians 6:18 (Parallel theme): Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

1 Thessalonians 4:4 (Parallel theme): That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

1 Corinthians 6:13 (References God): Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

Romans 6:12 (Parallel theme): Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

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