

Romans: The Integrity of God
When the Clock Strikes Midnight
Signs of a Reprobate Heart
Romans 1:22-28

In 1947, the cover of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* featured a clock with its hands seven minutes from midnight. This clock, known as the Doomsday Clock, was supposed to illustrate how close the world was to final destruction. The world still stands, but since scientists introduced the famous clock, billions of people have died. The world's death rate has remained constant. Death is a 100% reality for the living. It is a tragedy of eternal proportions for the clock to strike midnight and you to die a reprobate.

I. The definition of a reprobate

The word comes from Latin and means *"to disapprove."* Probate in English means *"to prove."* The Bible uses the term reprobate at least ten times (8 in the New Testament), and it translates the Greek word *adokimos* (Romans 1:28) which means *"not to stand the test."* This word was used in the marketplace for the results of the testing of precious metals. It carries the idea that God *"disapproves and then condemns as unworthy."* This seems to be what Jesus describes in Matthew 7:23 when the Lord says, *"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* By nature, we all are reprobates. **But God**, by grace, has chosen to make approvable the disapproved. This is the essence of our salvation. "To be approved" is also why Paul instructed Christians to *"examine . . . prove . . . and know (you're approved) lest ye be reprobates"* (II Cor. 13:5). What are the signs?

II. The description of a reprobate

The person *"disapproved by God"* is easily identified by the writings of the Apostle Paul.

(A). A short description ---- a reprobate is one who *"senselessly loves darkness."*

V. 21 gives us this description by saying, *"their foolish (senseless) heart was darkened."*

The word *darkness* comes from a word that means "to cover, like a tent." It is the nature of a reprobate to love darkness! God's gospel is universally rejected (John 3:16-21).

(B). A specific description --- found for us in Romans 1:18-32. In our text we see three things:

(1). Foolish wisdom that leads to false worship . . . (vs.22-23)

(2). Sinful idolatry that leads to sexual immorality (vs. 23-24; 25-26).

The Jews always associated idolatry with immorality. In their Wisdom of Solomon *"the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life"* (14:12). Paul carries this same theme.

(3). Unnatural passions that lead to universal punishment (vs. 26-27).

Paul uses lesbianism and homosexuality as illustrations of reprobation. These things illustrate how reprobates turn natural, God-given desires into unnatural acts of man.

(C). A summary description --- *a reprobate is one who never turns from sin* (I Cor. 6:9-11).

III. The destruction of a reprobate

For those who are deliberate in their theological thinking, an objection arises. How can God punish the person who sins against Him when the sinner does what he does because it is his nature to do it? We are *"born in iniquity,"* and yet Jesus says, *"depart from me ye that work iniquity."* How is that fair? *"We are sure that the judgment of God is according to the truth"* (Romans 2:2). We must never forget that God is righteous in condemning sinners who love their darkness! He sets the standard of what is right. You are without excuse and escape. The only hope that a reprobate heart has is that God will melt the soul. *"Unless there is a change in the atmosphere, what thaws in the sun will once again freeze in the shade."* May He do it.