The purpose of this article is to suggest that Paul’s comments in Romans 1:18-32 contain worrisome similarities to our present day society. In order to clarify these contentions, it is necessary to put in place some preliminary information about the context of this portion of scripture.

The first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are largely a proof of Paul’s theme in Romans 1:16-17. This theme focuses on the gospel, which Paul defines in 1Corinthians 15:1-11 as a fourfold truth—(1) Jesus died. (2) Jesus was buried. (3) Jesus rose from that death. (4) There were verifying witnesses. Back in Romans 1:16-17, Paul states that the gospel is God’s instrument by which He intends to save humanity. This system of faith, the gospel or good news about Christ, stands opposed to the system of works contained in the Law of Moses, which, after the Day of Pentecost, ceased to govern God’s people. (Romans 7:1-7.)

In order to prove universal need for this gospel with its system of faith, Paul uses the first three chapters of Romans to show that the whole world is lost in sin and that the only solution to man’s need for salvation is response by faith to the gospel of Christ. In Chapter One Paul shows that the Gentiles are in sin, and after a few comments about principles of divine judgment, 2:1-16, he reminds the Jews that they, too, are in sin because they failed to live up to the Law of Moses. Paul’s conclusion follows in 3:9-31, and he summarize it in 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” This, then, is the context in which we find our text, Romans 1:18-32.

Romans 1:18-20 reveals to us the fact that early Gentiles were condemned because they had knowledge of God at their fingertips and chose to disregard that evidence of God’s existence. Paul states that God’s existence (His power and divinity) has always been ascertainable by proper consideration of the creation in which we all live. Those who ignored these testimonies to God’s presence were without excuse because such ignorance amounted to a deliberate desire to avoid knowledge of God.

Those who disregarded evidence of God’s existence, sought to create idol gods to replace the One, True and Living God. In turning to idol worship these people of the past set themselves up for a tremendous fall because they not only gave up on God, but in turning their backs on God, they also threw away the divine standard of right and wrong. Idol worship amounted to trading God’s moral standards for those of men because idols do not dictate standards except through mortal priests who invent rules and regulations and ascribe them to lifeless, unthinking, amoral idols.

Western society in the present age is busily throwing God under the bus in favor of a materialistic worldview that has no room for a Creator with His universal and timeless set of moral standards. When we kick God out, we must invent a way to avoid chaos in society—a set of standards to take the place of God’s will. Today, that standard seems to be Political Correctness. Political Correctness or any other moral invention of man is constantly subject to change because these standards of men reflect the thinking of whatever group happens to be in power at the time. In this way, minority or powerless people always reap persecution in the moral realm since they lack the influence to make their views the formula for current standards of right and wrong. Most man-made rules and regulations end up becoming some kind of double standard under which the less powerful suffer hardship.

When man makes the rules, society wastes away. Beginning in Romans 1:24 Paul discloses the horrible results of a godless society. He begins with a scathing rebuke of homosexuality (to which he devotes the largest number of verses) and proceeds to catalog practically every sin known to man. The outcome of trading God’s standards for a standard set up by men is a complete destruction of every decent aspect of man’s character. If all men were as Paul describes in verses 24-32, society would be total chaos and anarchy. Please read these verses. Every evil Paul listed is becoming more prevalent in today’s society.

That our founding fathers were concerned with these issues is evident from their statements about the importance of morals in our nation. (Please read some of these statements under “FOUNDING FATHERS” elsewhere on this site.) Although not inspired in the biblical sense, the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America were men of superb intellect and blessed with a sense of God’s activities in the affairs of nations. Please consider Jeremiah 18:6-10:

“ O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.”

Guided by the principles of their Christian religion, they wrote the Constitution for a religious, Christian nation. Our nation’s adherence to the principles of the Constitution is no less important to the nation than is a Christian’s adherence to the Bible as his standard of behavior. Our nation’s present day conduct reveals a disdain for the letter and the spirit of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights and other Amendments. No doubt, the deterioration of our society is a reflection of our disdain for God, the Bible, and the Constitution of the United States of America. The solution to our problems, everyone, seems as simple as Paul’s solution to the sinfulness of mankind; in fact, it is the very same solution that Paul revealed in Romans 1:16-32.