HUMANITY'S REJECTION OF GOD, THE CREATOR, ACCORDING TO ROMANS 1:18-32

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I declare that **HUMANITY'S REJECTION OF GOD, THE CREATOR, ACCORDING TO ROMANS 1:18-32** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Introduction

Dependence of behavior of people on their attitude toward God the Creator is perhaps the first and the most important topic that comes to mind during the study of the present passage of the most fundamental Paul’s epistle. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to suppose that the change in people’s behavior takes place in some sacral way. Thus, for example, among the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church that accepts as the authority works of Church Fathers, we not only see some unclear notions, especially in anthropological aspects, but the absence of concrete explanations of many Paul’s assertions. We read following words of the bishop Theophan Zatvornik (Theophane the Recluse), “When memory of God leaves the mind and knowledge of God is darkened by lie, the fear of God eases, and because of subsiding of God’s fear the conscience also eases. Because it, sensuality raises its voice and captures the man… it resulted in different kinds of improper ties. Finally even a great mind inclines to this and only makes up (false foundations) to excuse his unrighteous life”\(^1\). We consider this reasoning valuable (despite of this general character because of the Eastern mentality), but we believe it is necessary to explore these very “false foundations” as we see as Paul opposes to them his ideology – ideology of worship to God the Creator. Paul calls this worldview “the truth” and prompts us to follow an eternal rule: to release people from the “captivity of untruth” – the appeal that is present-day even in our time. If fact, it is enough to demonstrate the failure of “Darwinism” to direct the mind of an atheist to God. It is enough to show a homosexual the weakness and failure of the contemporary “scientific” theories about the reasons of this pernicious phenomenon to direct his look toward the Creator. We affirm that Paul sees the main reason of immoral behavior in such area of man’s activity as thinking that, in its turn, denies the Creator of every living thing of Earth and because of its incapability to rule over human passions is forced to look for an ideological basis for its acts.

This thesis, in our opinion, has also practical meaning because it demonstrates Paul’s methodology of disproval of false theories of that time revealing their illogicality and senselessness.

The author of this dissertation in his method of research used following scheme: Author – Document – Addressee (hearer). This is why before taking an exegetical exploration we present the chapter called “Epoch of Roman Empire” that would help us to understand these three elements. The following chapter demonstrates the sources of way of thinking of the author of the epistle. In the exegetical part we all the time considered concepts current at that time. This, in our opinion, to some extent reveals to us the way of thinking of the addressee let alone more precise understanding of the written by the apostle.
1. Epoch of the Roman Empire

Speaking about the Roman Empire at the time of our investigation, first of all it is necessary to note, that Paul connected first age with so-called “fulfillment of the time” (πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10). Certainly we cannot understand this term without messianic sense. This opinion has, for example, R. Schippers, “Rather, it means that in the divine economy of salvation human time has reached its full measure”\(^2\). However, it is essential to take into account entire system of the public, political, religious and philosophical relationships of that period. We pay more attention to this study and will do a special research. Our purpose is to examine the questions concerning the topic of rejection by the people of God as a Creator.

1.1. Political system of the world

The Romans’ political system of the world is closely connected to our topic. Externally it looked like machinery of State where most various religions easily get on. Actually it was not neutral. Characteristic feature of the Roman government is Aristotelian understanding of politics. For him a sentient being – man doesn’t perceive himself without it, “From mentioned above it appears, that the state … exists by nature, and that the man by nature is a political creature, and the one who by virtue of the owing nature instead of casual circumstances lives outside of the state is an underdeveloped in moral sense being, or superman;”\(^3\) Therefore statement of Archimandrite Cyprian is very just:

The religions recognized by authority were admissible, but the religions were obliged to submit to the common view of them by the state. The state measurably is to be founded on the religious basis, there was a state cult, and the state is a totalitarian force – and any state aspires to be totalitarian – and it interfered in exercise of this cult. Apotheosis of the emperors was both religious and state moment; sacrifices to gods were obligatory. Therefore refusal of participation in this nation-wide life was a crime of the state character. The religion was not private business but national obligation.\(^4\)

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The evidence to superadded is the recurrent conflicts between Jews and the empire. In one of them (In Alexandria: between Jews and Greeks) Josephus demonstrates unambiguously motive:

Now one of these ambassadors from the people of Alexandria was Apian, who uttered many blasphemies against the Jews; and, among other things that he said, he charged them with neglecting the honors that belonged to Caesar; for that while all who were subject to the Roman empire built altars and temples to Caius, and in other regards universally received him as they received gods, these Jews alone thought it a dishonorable thing for them to erect statues in honor of him, as well as to swear by his name.\(^5\)

It is significant to note that the principle of authority in Roman Empire of studied period gradually passed from republic to an absolute monarchy. It is possible to agree with those historians who think that the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.) laid the foundation for autocracy in the empire\(^6\). Suetonius speaks about this naval-hassle, which was a consequence of the conflict between Octavian and Mark Antony\(^7\). For the reason of Mark’s love to Cleopatra, he could not make independent decisions any more\(^8\). Augustus accused Mark in infringement of the civil duty\(^9\).

It is necessary also to note following detail. In *Aeneid*, Virgil shows the fight not only between people, but also between gods\(^10\) where Apollo (Octavian’s patron) has dominant power. Augustus is characterized by his trust in the Greek gods.

It is in a sense the gesture of reconciliation between Greeks and Romans. And in this world, senior partner always should be Italians, “Augustus absolutely knowingly passed by an opportunity of realization of original liberalization”.\(^11\) However, concentration of authority under one head of that level began with Julius. His desire to be only the first eventually resulted in declaration of life dictatorship.\(^12\) The republic became causes of emptiness for him, “Republic is nothing, an empty name without a body and shape”.\(^13\) Religion also seems to be useless for him. Anyway, it obviously looks as if he neglects it. Thus for example, on a prediction with use of

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\(^12\) Suetonius. 1999. *Life to twelve Caesars*. I-76.

\(^13\) Ibid. I-77
interiors of an animal (one of religions of Rome) about his unfortunate future, he stated, “Everything will be good if I desire it …”  

Estimating aspiration of Julius to individual authority, Grant doesn’t make a distinction between honoring and worshipping the person. But it is necessary to concentrate our attention on this clear-cut distinction because Augustus founded another way of possession of people. It is possible to call this method religious in a sense of this word. Hereto might add:

“Not only local languages, however, but many local customs persisted, especially in religion, where local deities continued to be worshipped, often superficially Hellenized or Romanized. The towns and cities, however, and the propertied classes in general for the most part embraced Roman rule, Roman law, Roman nomenclature, Roman architecture and a Roman style of life… The main exception was the Jews, whose fiercely monotheistic religion could not accommodate pagan worship, including the worship of the emperor, which rapidly became almost universal, and whose sense of national and cultural identity made Judea notoriously difficult for the Romans to understand or to govern effectively (Smallwood 1981).”

Hence the notorious “Pax Romana” was supported politically (including military means), and in its political foundation (most clearly it shown during the government of Augustus) it is obligated to idolatry, in which was Octavian’s apotheosis too, and this topic we are going to discuss more.

1.2. Philosophical perception of the world in Roman Empire

It is enough to mention about some currents in philosophy that influenced perception of the world. It is especially important to emphasize Plato and Aristotle. Despite of the different approaches in knowledge of the environmental world they have in common identical division of objects on real and ideal components.

In addition, philosophy was considered as a part of the special culture. It was not limited only by academic knowledge, “To become a philosopher is to accept new lifestyle, become stricter in morality, accept determined ascetic requirements that outwardly effected behavior, meal, clothes. The philosopher was recognized by a raincoat, short from a dark gray cloth, ψηφικοῦ.”

In this time (of the New Testament era) stoic philosophy gained popularity. Let's recollect the universities of Tarsus:

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14 Ibid.
Among the famous men who learned or taught at Tarsus, we hear of the Stoics Antipater, Archedemus, Nestor, Athenodorus named Cordylion, the friend and companion of the younger Marcus Cato, and his more famous namesake (called Canaanites after the village of his birth), who was the tutor and confidant of Augustus, and who subsequently reformed the Tarsian constitution.\(^\text{18}\)

Essence of Stoic knowledge is understood differently than one of Aristotle and Plato. They considered all knowledge as one got with help of sense organs. Until then while the soul does not receive experience about any subject or phenomenon, it is “a clean board”. Then appear prints of knowledge subsequently exposed to further processing by thinking. According to the doctrine of Stoics, everything submits to the strict necessity, destiny, and fate. Thus, everything occurring they explained by fatal inevitability. They didn’t consider the philosophy as the science, torn off from life. Zeno always searched for a basis of moral behavior and virtue in it. In addition in Zeno’s philosophy, one more purpose was pursued – purchase of morals through knowledge, “... But the true morals is impossible to gain without true knowledge; ‘Virtue’ and ‘wisdom’ are considered as equivalent concepts, and if the philosophy should coincide with exercise in virtue, at the same time it is determined as ‘knowledge of divine and human’”.\(^\text{19}\) What importance has Stoic’s philosophy to the subject of our research we will see later? Now we limit our study only to the description of the basic essence of this philosophy.

### 1.3 Religious climate of the epoch

The religious climate of the New Testament era was generated with Hellenistic influence. In the Roman Empire this impact was made in the result of Second Punic War (218-201 BC), “During it the further ways of development of the Roman religion, in particular rapprochement with the Greek gods, appeared. The number of sacrifices made according to the Greek ritual grew”.\(^\text{20}\) In this period is observed the general crisis of traditional Roman religions. Approximately at the same time was issued “the Roman myth”. A new legend (as against anthropological) was necessary for maintenance of ideology of Roman conquerors. “Such base could be only a myth about their primary election by gods”.\(^\text{21}\)

From that time to the middle of 2nd century occurs the tendency to appeal not to gods but to civil virtue. Thus Terence addresses his son Simon for the desire to marry against the will of his father Pamphilus following words, “... Does he think what he says? Is he ashamed of what he has done? Look, does his face show any trace of a blush? To think that he should be so weak as to want to keep this woman, against the law and the usage of citizens of Athens, and against his own father's wishes, to his own utter shame!” 22 Sometimes even the appeal sounds as trust to own forces, “…Fortune favors the brave, you know…” 23

Julius Caesar, as it was mentioned above, formally treated to gods. In his book “On the Gallic War” we notice his appeals to bravery, prowess, force of spirit (for example, I-40, II-21). 24 But Julius gives sufficiently general characteristic of pagan faith. Caesar allocates following gods: Mercury (inventor of arts), Apollo (healer), Mars (supervises the wars), Minerva, Jupiter (having the supreme authority). 25

Essential is his addition, “about these deities they have approximately same comprehensions, as other peoples.” 26

As to cults, which were announced immoral even in Roman society, among commons occur orgies in honor of Bacchus (Dionysus). The culmination moment of the ceremony was when the women attacked an animal (sometimes a man) and broke off a victim on pieces in memory of a partition of Dionysus. Then they were eating flesh and also drank blood. They hoped that they merge in a single unit with the deity. 27 In 186 B.C. the senate of Rome forbade the cult which customs demanded depravity of the women and young men. 28 However worship practiced during holidays had erotic character. 29 The author of 3 Maccabees believes that part of Alexandrian Jews obeyed the order of Ptolemai-IV and became Dionysus’s worshippers for the sake of reception of the civil rights (3 Maccabees 2:29-31). 30

The time of birth of Christ is characterized by burst of religious life of Ancient Rome. It is connected with activity of Augustus. 31 But his tolerance to other religions is not so faultless. Suetonius reminds that he greatly respected ancient outlandish ceremonies, and others despised. 32 And the peaceful cohabitation of other deities became possible because Augustus

25 Ibid. VI-17.
26 Ibid.
29 Ibid: 126.
30 Septuaginta (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures) edited by Alfred Rahilfs. BibleWorks, LLC
32 Ibid. II-93, 95.
“...ordered in each house, on each crossroad add one more Lare – genius of the emperor. Due to this combination, all local gods, all special gods became ‘gods of Augustus’ (dei Augusti). These god from that moment were honored much more”.33

It is necessary to note also two features of religious life of Rome. It is its immanent character in contrast to Greek understanding of divinity. On the other hand, wide circulation gets the cult of genius, “Romans believed that an individual deity abides in each man, they named as genius”.34 At the end, religious consciousness determined also the way of life of Romans, this we will discuss in more detail. But now is possible to note that in comparison to Greece “in Rome there were in many respects similar changes but with delay, they were slower and perhaps less radical”.35

It is impossible for us to look also at mythical cults, roots of that we find in Egypt and Asia. These cults were practiced among masses of middle class of Greece36. W. Durrant reckons also that mystical doctrine “about the hell, purgatory and heavens, about struggle of the body and soul, about crushed and revived son of the god ... have affected Christianity”.37

The basic features of this epoch are those. Some things require more detailed consideration. We intend to return to them in consideration of concrete problems of our work.

2. Paul in the Roman Empire and sources of his way of thinking

To understand the meaning expressed by Paul in his epistle to Romans, it is necessary to find more about the person of apostle of pagans, special source of his way of thought.

2.1. General information

On the one hand, “It is difficult to assess to what extent Paul's diverse background influenced his thought". On the other hand, any isolation of Pauline philosophy is equivalent to *creatio ex nihilo* – “to creation from anything”. We cannot consider the doctrine of the apostle in this way, because the way of thinking of Paul was formed under influence of the external factors that we will briefly mention.

First of all, he without any scruple tells us about his, “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless”. (Phil. 3:5,6). Secondly, as Paul again testifies about himself, he was begotten in Hellenistic world, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: (Act 22:3). Phrase “ἀνακτηραμενος... παρὰ τοῖς πόδας Γαμαλιῆλ” informs us also about the third source of his way of thinking which we can define as “liberal Judaism” because “... Gamaliel was one of those few rabbis who had the liberal and educated view that allowed ... “Greek’s wisdom”.

2.2. Pharisaism

We agree, that, “In order to understand the development of Paul’s theological system, it is necessary to begin with his beliefs as a Pharisee”\textsuperscript{40}. In addition, as mentions Burton, Pharisaism differs by variety of opinions\textsuperscript{41}. Concerning the reasons of negative attitude of Christ to this movement of Judaism, we will note one important detail:

Pharisees in most cases combined deep influence in national masses and high position in the society only because their intellectual development. As the wise men they frequently were elected as judges, and people could appreciate their tendency to lessening of punishment for any offences, and consequently always followed them.\textsuperscript{42}

Such behavior of Pharisees is caused not by their internal qualities but most likely by their religious belief concerning immutability of God’s Law. Because of this they realized that it was impossible to fulfill the law in their daily life. Therefore they found the excuse to themselves in interpretation of the Scripture so that not to contradict the fundamental of the legislation – to serve for the good of people. Thus Pharisees added to biblical, “So you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, by which a man may live if he does them…” (Lev. 18:5) also “We will live by them but should not die because of them.”\textsuperscript{43}

Because of this Jesus once told, “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering”. (Luke 11:52).

The interpretation of the law is one of the reasons of tension between Judaism and Christianity, which caused also ambiguous attitude to person Paul, “Paul is a disputable figure. Did he refuse in general Judaic faith?” – It’s a question for a Jew. Did he understand Jesus from Nazareth really correctly or did he distort his teaching beyond recognition? – It’s a question for Christians”\textsuperscript{44}.

Within the limits of the present work, it is impossible to discuss this problem. It is enough to tell that Paul as Pharisee was respectful toward the Law (“For a Pharisees, the Law was everything”).\textsuperscript{45} But he allocated to it the certain place, “Therefore the Law has become our tutor

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid: 260.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. p. 183.
to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." (Gal. 3:24,25). The main distinctive feature of Pharisees was monotheism and connected with it Jewish doctrine about God the Creator. But they understood this idea also about God the Creator only in light of the Law. Even Philo Alexandrine looks in this sense to be straight-out, “Genesis as I have told is extremely surprising because it contains (description) of creation of the world as the world is conformable to the law and the law to the world, the man being a citizen of this world executes in his acts commands of the nature that lay in the basis of arrangement of the entire world”.  

I am somewhat previous saying that Paul stands steadfastly on the principles of ethical life that also were determined by the Law.

The essential characteristic of Paul as Pharisee is the attitude of this movement to interaction of dispensation and freedom of will of the man. Josephus writes about this:

They (Pharisees – note of A.R.) also pay a respect to such as are in years; nor are they so bold as to contradict them in any thing which they have introduced; and when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God to make a temperament, whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of man can act virtuously or viciously.  

2.3. Gamaliel’s school

We rather have poor information about the person of the teacher of Paul. In addition to Paul’s appeal to his authority during his defense (Acts 22:3) also exists a mention about Gamaliel in Acts in the words that have determined, as a matter of fact, criterion of fidelity “to the new doctrine”, “So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.” (Acts 5:38,39).

At least, two features of Gamaliel help us to see how respected and important were rabbis in Jewish society (in particular, “Gamaliel had the most honorable title ‘Rabban’”, i.e. “teacher of ours” — note A.R.) and how they were important for the future apostle. Being inclined to

"We will not by any means make war with him, but still we will die before we see our laws transgressed.” — Josephus, 1999. Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII-8:3 Texas: Garland. Electronic edition by Galaxy Software: 1154.  
freethinking, "...Gamaliel himself did not have in this respect unreasonable and false tolerance, that does not distinguish between good and poor in the most useful subjects"\(^{49}\). First of all, the member of Sanhedrim Gamaliel wasn’t limited by national intolerance and extreme national self-consciousness. It was the basic reason of aversion of Pharisees to Christ. His versatility in many respects is connected with his grandfather Hillel who was the ancestor of the free school of Scripture interpretation (in contrast to Shammai). Hillel aspired in his interpretation to soften severity of the Law of Moses, especial concerning Saturday and ritual of cleanliness. Second, the wisdom and philanthropy of Gamaliel allows us not to do generalizations concerning whole Pharisee’s movement. At the same time we would not stress strongly emotional characteristics of Gamaliel and furthermore won’t name him “as a latent Christian”. Desire “not to be found fighting against God” is normal phenomenon not only for Gamaliel but also for example, for Simeon, Nicodemus and seemingly for some other Pharisees.

But still remains the problem in personality of Paul, “It has also been objected by Baur and the Tübingen school that the liberal, peace-loving Gamaliel could not have been the teacher of the fanatical Saul”\(^{50}\). Though it is necessary to notice, that it is not fanaticism. Desire to finish with the new doctrine is explained by fidelity to the Law. The opinion of G. Ladd is completely fair, “As a Jewish rabbi, zealous for the Law, Saul was equally zealous to root out this new religious movement which exalted the memory of Jesus of Nazareth... This persecuting zeal cannot be separated from his zeal for the Law.”\(^{51}\)

2.4. **Greek wisdom**

Several generations of rabbis interpreted the story of sin of Ham on the basis of Greek wisdom\(^{52}\), “Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness”. (Gen. 9:22,23). The essence of interpretation is that both sons Shem and Japheth were covered with one piece of clothing.

Thus Rabbi Ishan Ben Napuha said, “As two sons of Noah, Shem and Japheth, united in covering of one clothes of father's nakedness, Shem received a polonaise’s raincoat (tallif), and

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Japheth – philosophical raincoat (pallum) that should be united again". 53 Something similar say today’s rabbis, “The word Ἱππαῖον (Japheth- note A.R.) can also mean “beauty”. The wise man always saw in the beauty high spiritual power and tested desire that served to disclose the presence. Many from them dreamed of that beauty of Greece, that incorporated blessing of Japheth, would become the beauty of the Temple and power of Torah." 54

The brightest representative of the Judaic Greek philosophy certainly was Philo.

But it is erroneous to consider that this is the standard opinion, because:

The Talmud itself (Men. 99 b) furnishes a clever illustration of this, when, in reply to the question of a younger Rabbi, whether, since he knew the whole “Torah” (the law), he might be allowed to study “Greek wisdom,” his uncle reminded him of the words (Joshua 1:8), “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” “Go, then, and consider,” said the older Rabbi, “which is the hour that is neither of the day nor of the night, and in it thou mayest study Grecian wisdom.” 55

This question probably will be always urgent: to what extent the thought of Paul depends on philosophy of his time? Sometimes Paul considered as, “...a Christian missionary means that he must have received a good Hellenistic education”. 56 Rather radically looks also the following assertion, “He was a man of culture. He knew the Greek poets and he could quote them. He knew the writings of the Greek philosophers, and he could quote them. He had this amazing background of Greek culture at its best, in addition to his Roman citizenship and his birth, in a natural sense, as a Jew.” 57

This statement is a serious argument. But easier to agree with the other view, “The intellectual and moral endowment of Saul was of the highest order. The sharpest thinking was blended with more tender feeling, the deepest mind with the strongest will”. 58 These three passages that are quotations from Greek literature (“Paul read pagan poets. In his writings, he quotes Epimenides of Crete (Tit. 1:12), Aratus of Cilicia (Acts 17:28) and Menander, author of the Greek comedy Taxis (1 Cor.15:33)” 59 hardly serve the serious foundation to the assertion that

the apostle got high Hellenistic education. First of all, because reading of poetic works that were
the examples of high enlightenment in Greece never agrees with the system of education. The
knowledge by heart of some quotations from the Greek poetry shows once again that, “The
reading by heart was closely connected to actual reading: the plays from the anthology... It
seems, that the beginners muttered, sang syllable behind a syllable...”60. So any child could read
from Menander alongside with others classics of the Greek literature. And it is necessary to note,
that the age when a child began to study literacy that in its turn was always connected with study
of poetry could vary from four (according to the recommendation of Plato) up to ten or thirteen
years (that rather frequently occurs in the beginning of 3rd century).61 Further, in the epistle of
Paul we find an illustration of the servant – image of the Law (Gal. 3:24) – παιδαγωγός, its duties
include accompaniment of the child in his daily way to school and back.62

We don’t find in the epistles of Paul the officials of average and prestige Greek schools,
such as “ῥητωρ”, “σοφιστής”, “κριτικός”, “φιλολόγος” – those necessary attributes of second,
third levels and representatives “of scientific employment”, that would allow us to speak about
good or perfect pagan’s education of the apostle.

Consummate knowledge by the apostle of the Greek language is indisputable, “As Paul
was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, ‘May I say something to
you?’ And he said, ‘Do you know Greek?’” (Acts 21:37). On the basis aforesaid it is possible to
draw a conclusion, that in Tarsus Paul received initial Greek education and was at least as we
would say bilingual (he probably also new Latin and Aramaic languages besides Greek and
Hebrew). It is difficult to assert where he got his grammatical education: at a school, synagogue
or at his own house with help of individual tutors. Any theory can cause counter questions. If
Paul studied at school, hardly he attended γυμνάσιον (παλαιστρα) – the basic apple of discord of
the Greeks and Jews (though the Jews were not against sport in general, “Every parent was also
advised to have his child taught swimming”).63

Synagogue is not that place where it is possible to receive good knowledge of the Greek
(but we cannot exclude it and cannot admit that Paul didn’t visit services in synagogue). As to
individual education, “In seven-years age the school begins: already for a long time public

216.
61 Ibid: 221.
63 Edersheim, A. 1997. Home Education In Israel; Female Education. Elementary Schools, Schoolmasters, and
education was a rule, and really in Hellenistic epoch only imperial sons – as Alexander – could use of the individual tutors.\textsuperscript{64}

All these observations require constrained conclusions about sources of Paul’s thought. Yarbro W. R. categorically denies any pagan influence on works of Paul or his conscious imitation of Hellenistic culture.\textsuperscript{65}

Speaking about philosophical views of Paul, we also can’t assert that they are closely dependent on stoicism. Rather, Pharisees “… quite could use the Greek terminology and intellectual methods …”\textsuperscript{66}, especially we have the surprising testimony of Josephus, “I returned back to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them”.\textsuperscript{67}

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3. The Text and its interpretation

Any interpretation pursues the purpose to define of original meaning of the text, namely to understand the meaning of investigated message told by author. In our study of Paul’s way of thinking, we already have begun to interpret chosen passage. In the process of interpretation, we should take into account even such fundamental things as: dating of the document, prospective addressee of the epistle, historical and cultural background and, certainly, grammatical features.

All speeches of Aristotle (depending on the listeners and purposes) can be divided on three types: judicial, consultative and epidictic. Judicial speeches either accuse or justify. Consultative ones reject or decline. The goal of epidictic speech is to praise or to blame.

Though we deal with epistolary form, it is possible to tell with confidence, that the epistle to Romans has epidictic character. David Aune concretizes the style naming it diatribe, i.e. method (of Socrates) of accusation and condemnation to lead the schoolboys from ignorance to knowledge of true. And it imposes on us certain obligations in interpretation of the text, as some theologians make attempts of simplification of the problem and don’t see in the Paul’s letter obvious condemnation of vices of that time.

Content of the fragment has lasting importance for life of Church and for all people in general because it explains the basic reasons of this or that way of ability to live and behavior of the individuals.

The urgent character diminishes the role of natural revelation, and also simplifies the problem of knowledge of God by the guilty man. And certainly special sphere of interests of the author of the dissertation is the acquaintance with the cultural context of the studied period, customs and life of Greco-Roman society.

3.1. Delimitation of the text

Text is an independent unit as it opens one topic – unwillingness of the people to worship God as the Creator that is described in the Old Testament along with consequences of such

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behavior. Rejection of God as the Creator undoubtedly is one of the attributes of any cult or religio (devotion) because the Old Testament doesn't distinguish between the One God and the Creator. This passage of the New Testament most brightly demonstrates complete adherence of the author of the epistle to that part of Judaism that had two distinctive features: monotheism and recognition of God of the Creator.

The text is overfilled with negative qualities and characteristics of human life. The bright coloring is brought up by repetition (three times in this text) of “παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς” (“gave them”). This passage is similar to a mathematic formula where the style of life of a human being depends on his decision “to fish or cut bait”. It without doubt facilitates interpretation of entire passage and gives the desire to analyze how this “formula” “works”. One more characteristics of the text is brightly expressed relationship of the cause and effect. Such expressions as: διότι - (for the reason that, for, because;), διὰ τοῦτο – (therefore, as, etc.); γάρ (for, as, because, you see) prove the latter statement.

3.2. Lexicographic structure of the text

3.2.1. Substantiation of the choice of the researched text

Although we have rather long passage we don't find many variants of reading, but nevertheless they require us to consider and choose the most authentic version. We make reservation that in the present work it is not desirable to address to the ready “dishes” even if authoritative and universally recognized textual critics prepare them. We should be able not just choose an edition perhaps with serious textual criticism, but we have to compare the historical texts of a New Testament with their subsequent analysis and make the conclusion.

We have already considered various versions and came to the conclusion that it is not advisable to present the text in all authoritative variants. We have chosen the most typical ones, and present only those verses that have different variants of reading, namely verses 19, 24, 27, 29, 31.

These results we present in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 170</th>
<th>The comparative table of the versions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stephanus</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Robert Etienne's 1550)</td>
<td><strong>Westcott and Hort NT</strong>&lt;br&gt;19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερῶν ἦτοιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ο ἐγέρθη· ἔφανερωσεν&lt;br&gt;24 Διὸ καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς ο θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτμιμέσται τά σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς&lt;br&gt;27 ὡμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρεσις ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεξαίτησαν ἐν τῇ ὁρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλων ἄρεσις ἐν ἀπολύμασιν κατεργάζομεν καὶ τὴν ἀντιμιμήθην ἢ ἔδει τῆς πλανᾶς αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες&lt;br&gt;29 τελεφερμένοις παρὰ σεβασμὸς τορπίλλα, πτηρία, πλευρής κορίτσις μεσοῖς φθονίας φόνου ἦδος δόλου κακομηθίας ψυχριστάς&lt;br&gt;31 ἀσωτείας ἀσωθῆταις ἀτοργῷς ἀτάρανδους, ἀνελεμίσοις.&lt;br&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparative table of the versions shows that in the text\textsuperscript{71} there are not a lot of disputable moments – only six (in general). For convenience they are highlighted by different colors, and the conterminous texts are highlighted by the same color. The most probable readings in disputable places, the author of the given work marked with dark blue, and less authentic expressions and words in red. The Tischendorf’s version has unique reading and the reading of his edition in the table is highlighted by green color. In those versions where there is no red color are the most probable texts.\textsuperscript{72} Those are “Westcott and Hort NT” and “Nestle – Aland NT 27”.

The table visually shows, first of all, historical aspect of formation of the modern critical apparatus of the New Testament text. Despite of the difference in the age (more, than three centuries) texts “Stephanus (Robert Etienne’s 1550)” and “Scrivener 1894 NT” coincide. There are several reasons to it. First, Robert Etienne wasn’t a textual critic in strict sense of this meaning of the word. Therefore he printed four perfect editions actually from the standard text “Textus Receptus” of Erasmus.\textsuperscript{73} However others two first-rate scientists Westcott and Hort in their development of methods and principles of textual criticism created one of the most significant editions of the Greek New Testament (1881).\textsuperscript{74} As it is seen from the table this text differs from the Etienne’s text. At the same time, later reprint edition of Scrivener (1894) anyway in the studied passage completely coincides with “Textus Receptus” and hence shows affiliation of Scrivener to the Syrian type of text.\textsuperscript{75}

Regarding “Tischendorf NT 8 edition”, we shall notice that the text practically coincides with two most in our opinion authentic versions. This supervision shows high level of methodology of Westcott and Hort because the Tischendorf’s edition was actually revised Codex Sinaiticus (Tischendorf was not a British textual critic). But in two verses (the verse 27, 29) “Tischendorf NT 8 edition” differs from the texts chosen by us. It is explained by Tischendorf’s inclination to Codex Sinaiticus.

3.2.2. Problems in the text and defense of the chosen variant

From the superficial analysis at the level of the ready versions we have to proceed to the more detailed research.

\textsuperscript{71} Here are compared only some versions instead of manuscripts (Note – A.P).
\textsuperscript{72} Substantiation see below.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid: 126.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid: 133.
The reading of verse 29 creates the greatest problem. It is not enough to tell about inserted ποτηρία.\textsuperscript{76} Critical apparatus of, for instance, "Nestle-Aland. Greek-English New Testament 26 edition" shows, also, various order of words in this insert.\textsuperscript{77} Sequence of words given in the text, namely ποτηρία πλεονεξία κακία, is supported by such witnesses as: Codex Vaticanus, Uncia 0172 – by later (V century) than Codex Vaticanus. Texts of Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament 26 edition and Greek New Testament. Fourth Edition testifies in the given place of Uncial that such reading is more probable but it is impossible to prove this reading (see mark: \textsuperscript{vid})\textsuperscript{78}. Later manuscripts such as: 424\textsuperscript{c}, 1881 and others are dated much later, thus we shall not take them in consideration.

Completely other sequence of words (ποτηρία κακία πλεονεξία) of this verse we find in other manuscripts: A – Codex Alexandrinus and K – Codex Sinaïticus. In addition, we see the use of punctuation mark "\textquotesingle\textquotesingle" after the word κακία. If we examine the readings without external witnesses, the competition can be held only by two manuscripts of the same age: Codex Vaticanus – B and K – Codex Sinaïticus. In both Codices the word ποτηρία is omitted that makes us to refuse it and make the conclusion that it is later insert though it doesn’t contradict to the basic context of a fragment.\textsuperscript{79}

But the order of the remained words in these manuscripts is different. According to internal witnesses, the text of Codex Sinaïticus is more difficult and unclear for a copyist. The special confusion can cause that punctuation mark we already have mentioned. Today it is hardly possible to certainly tell about (up to the concrete copy) when the punctuation marks were placed.

Despite of complexity in making of the decision, we shall undertake the responsibility on the basis of two authoritative witnesses of the text (A и K) and accept the following sequence ἀδικία ποτηρία κακία in 29 verse, i.e. disagree with modern critical apparatus "Nestle-Aland".

The task is easier with readings in verse 31. Word collocation ἀστόργους ἀστόνδους is supported by correction of Codex Sinaïticus (K\textsuperscript{2}). That is why; such a reading is supported only by the adherents of “Textus Receptus” (see the table 1). In the other authoritative witnesses of


\textsuperscript{79} In Russian Bible (Synodal translation) this word is translated as “licentiousness" – comment. A.P.
the text (N*, A, B, D, G etc.) the word ἀσπόνδους is absent. Therefore we accept the reading of “Nestle-Aland – 27”.

The readings in verse 27 also deserve our attention. The spelling in the version of Tischendorf – ἐδόξασε – man. Veisman explains different spellings by two dialects of Greek language. As for other readings, they have rather “weak” witnesses and cannot scientifically affect the meaning of the text.

On the basis of our discussion, we accept the following reading:

18 Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὄργη θεοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἁμέρειαν καὶ ἄδικαν ἀνθρώποιν τῶν τὴν ἁλήθειαν ἐν ἄδικοις κατεχόμενοι,

19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φαινον ἔστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανέρωσεν.

20 τὰ γὰρ ἀφέτερα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορίστατα, ἢ τὸ ἀδίκιος αὐτοῦ δόξας καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῖς ἀνεπαλαγήτους.

21 διότι γνώντες τὸν θεοῦ σὺν ὡς θεοῦ ἐδόξασαν ή ἡσυχιότητα, ἀλλ’ ἐμπαιωθήσαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἔκαστος ἢ ἐκατότης αὐτῶν καρδία.

22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμπαιωθήσαν

23 καὶ ἠλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ αφθαρτοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμοιώματι εἰκόνος φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πεπειράν ἐν τῇ τραπεῖαν καὶ ἐρπετοὺς.

24 οἱ παρεδώκοι αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν τῶν αὐτῶν ἐclc ἄκαθαρσιαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζονται τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς;

25 οἰκίες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἁλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῇ πράξει καὶ ἐσκαίδησαν καὶ ἐλάττευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὡς ἔστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

26 Ἰδα τούτο παρεδώκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐς πάθη ἐταμίαι, αἷτε τὰ γὰρ θηλεία αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,

27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρεισκεν ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν τὴς θειείας ἐξεκαθάρθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλον, ἀφενές ἐν ὀρέξει τὴν ἀδεσποτοσύνην κατεργαζόμενον καὶ τὴν ἀντίμισθαι ἢν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν καισατο ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

28 Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἐθελοῦσαν τὸν θεὸν ἔδειξεν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρεδώκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,

29 πεσλημένους πάση ἄνδρα παροικής κακία πλεονεκία (underlined by me as the chosen reading that differs from the version of “Nestle-Aland – 27” – note of A.P.)

30 μεστοῖς φθούνοντο ἕριδος δόλου κακοθεντιά, ψυχικότατος κακόποιος, ἄρεισκε τότε ὑπερηφάνος ἀλαζόνες, ἔφευρε ἂν κακῶν, γνοεῖσαν ἐπιφέεις,

31 ἀνωτέρους ἀνωφόλους ἀστοργοὺς ἀνελεήμονας;

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32 οίτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνώστες ὧδε οἱ τὰ τοιαύτα πράσσοντες ἀξίοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὗ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἄλλα καὶ συνευδοκόσιν τοὺς πράσσοντος. \(^{81}\)

3.2.3. Translation of the text

When translating the text into Russian, we meet series of problems. Therefore the key moments we are going to consider with help of Greek text. Translation from Russian into English we consider as senseless work. We need only to choose a good English version\(^{82}\), and because the Greek grammatically is similar to Russian we will make a table where we place also Russian versions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible Works (NA) NT 27</th>
<th>The New American Standard Bible</th>
<th>Russian Synodal text</th>
<th>My translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 18 Ἀποκαλύπτεται γάρ ἄργη θεοῦ ἀπ᾿ οἴρωνον ἐνί πάσαν ἀδίκειαν καὶ ἄδικών ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἄδικες κατεχόντων, 19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερῶν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐφανερώσει. 20 τὰ γὰρ ἄφατα αὐτῶν ἀπὸ θείου κτίσματος κοίμησεν τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορέται, ἢ τε ἄλλοις αὐτῶν δύσμαιροι καὶ θεώτητες, εἰς τὸ εἶλα αὐτῶν ἀναπολογήτως, 21 διὸτι νῦντες τῶν θεῶν οὐκ ὡς θεῶν ἠδοξάσασθαι ἢ ἀναφορεῖται, ἀλλ’ ἐμπαιασμένοι ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς κατόνων καὶ ἐκκοστοθεὶ ἢ ἀσύνετος | 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their | 18 Ибо открывается гнев Божий с неба на всякое нечестие и неправду человеков, подавляющих истину неправдою. 19 Ибо, что можно знать о Боге, ясно для них, потому что Бог явил им. 20 Ибо невидимое Его, вечная сила Его и Божество, от создания мира через рассмотрение творений видимы, так что они безответны. 21 Но как они, познав Бога, не прославили Его, как Бога, и не воздавали ему благодарение, но осутились в умствованиях своих, и оскорбили несмысленное их сердце; | 18 Ибо открывается гнев Божий с неба на всякое нечестие и неправду человеков, истину в неправде держащих, 19 Поскольку, узнаваемое (что можно знать) Бога явлено в них, ибо Бог им явил. 20 Ибо невидимое Его, вечная сила Его и Божество, от сотворения мира, творениями будучи постигаемо, созерцается: да и вечная Его сила и Божественность, так что быть им без оправдания. 21 Потому что, познав Бога, как Бога не прославили, не воздавадали, но осутились в рассуждениях своих и оскорбили несмысленное их сердце.

\(^{81}\) Nestle-Aland 27. Bible Works 4 on CD, LLC.

\(^{82}\) NAS/NAU – The New American Standard Bible, and La Biblia de Las Americas, both by The Lockman Foundation. BibleWorks, LLC.
foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness,
| 28 | Кали кратко сокіл евдокимас тнвн θεόν έξεν εν επιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτῶς ὁ θεός εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιείν τά μη καθήκοντα. |
| 29 | τεπληρωμένοις πάση ἀδικία πονηρία κακία πλεονεκία μετοχίς φθόνον φόνον ἐρέσι δόλου κακοπείας, φαθυριστάς |
| 30 | καταλάλοις θεοστυγείς ἀνρειτός ἀπορηφάνοις αλαζόνας, ἐφευρέτας κακών, γνοέθους ἀπεθείς, |
| 31 | αἰσθέτοις ἀνωθέτους αὐτόργους ἀνελήμνοις |
| 32 | οὖν εἰς τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνώσεις ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιάδα πράσοσσετε ἄξιον θεόν εἰς αὐτῷ, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ τοιούτα ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦν τοῖς πράσοσσαν |

| 28 | wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death unrighteousness, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. |
| 28 | исполнены всякой неправды, блуда, лукавства, корыстолюбия, злобы, исполнены зависти, убийства, распри, обмана, злоравия, 30 злоречивы, клеветники, богохульники, обидчики, самохвалы, горды, изобретательны на зло, непослушны родителям, 31 безрассудны, вероломны, нелюбовны, непремудры, немилосерды. |
| 28 | превратному уму – делать недолжное: 29 исполнены они всякой неправедности, испорченности (лукавства), жадности, злобы; полны зависти, убийства, ссор, коварства, злоравия, клеветы (наушничества) 30 клеветы нравственного, богохульства, наглости, надменного, хвастовства, изобретательства злого, родителям непокорного, 31 неверного, бесстыдного, немилосердного. 32 Они заповедь Бога узнали, что такие поступки достойны смерти, но не только то (их) делают, но и одобряют делающих. |

Let's pay our attention to the fact that in the text we accepted in 29 verse\(^{83}\) (in contrast to “Texstus Receptus”) there is no word πορνεία, i.e. “sexual dissoluteness”. In verse 31 there is no connecting word ἀπόνοιας that can be translated as “are irreconcilable”.

Russian Synodal translation is attached to “Textus Receptus”. Therefore the words excluded by us remain there. However in the new translation under the editorship of Bezobrazov (this translation didn’t win popularity as well as other new translations\(^{84}\)) these named words that are absent in “Nestle-Aland – 27” also are omitted by the translators.\(^{85}\)

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\(^{83}\) Those words of in Russian Synodal translation that are absent in Nestle-Aland – 27 are highlighted in red.

\(^{84}\) Till now all denominations in Russia are dependent on Synodal Translation (and, as a rule, in its old edition). The paradox of “unsociability” of the new translations is quite obvious. The modern Russian reader doesn’t wish to listen to the clear equivalents instead of out-of-date euphemisms. Even the words from other spheres of activity of
3.3. Analysis of the text

3.3.1. Grammatical and syntactic analyses

The basic document of the grammatical-syntactic analysis is "The table of the grammatical information in the epistle to Romans 1:18-32". The table was made with the help of the literature listed in bibliography. First of all, verse 18 that we in a different way than Synodal translation draw our attention. In our translation last part of this verse looks as "holding truth in untruth" instead of – "suppressing the truth by untruth" (Synodal translation) or "holding true in captivity of untruth" (translation of Bezobrazov). This translation at is basis has two things. First, word κατεχόντων is adverbial participle in plural, and word order ἐν ἀδικίᾳ functionally is the dative of place.

This verse can be presented as a diagram (see Diagram 1) that shows interaction of the different syntactic forms and reveals the major meaning of the given sentence “wrath revealed from the sky against to man, who hold (by lie) true”. Logic here is obvious and unambiguous.

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the man in modern version, are perceived by the average man as the insult of religious feelings, the understating of style and encroachment in Russian mentality. In this way the doctor of philological sciences V. Kolesov characterizes creation of new translations (V. Kolesov 1998. Russian Speech – yesterday, today, tomorrow. S-Petersburg: Russky dvor). Bible frequently was considered not as a practical manual for daily life, and as a literary monument, some kind of the standard and sample of Russian way of thinking (and in church one more source of orthodox liturgy). But if we follow the way of preservation of original language, its literary, high style, sometimes we would need one more interpreter as an explanatory dictionary of archaisms. Today the Russian reader doesn’t have a source that would simultaneously satisfy both requirements: clearness and high style of the language. – comment. A.P. 

86 See the appendix I.
Syntactic scheme of Romans 1:18

Let's pay our attention to the difficulty in translation of verse 20. In our variant, the first part of the verse sounds as “For His invisible from the creation of the world being comprehended by creations is contemplated”. Word νοούμενον is a causal participle and, therefore the best possible translation would be “being comprehended”. At the first face, it conflicts to other translations, as that, “through examining... are seen” (Synodal Translation) or “contemplated through reflections” (Bezobrazov).

Point is that the word with the article τοῖς ποιήσισιν is in instrumental case (by creations). This function we can display only by Russian ablative. Here we have intricacy: whether creations contemplate “invisible of God”, whether they, as well as in the Greek text – instrument of human’s contemplation.

The interpreters had to deal with this difficulty inserting the preposition “through”. And secondly, they used nouns “reflection”, “examining”, etc.

Also we can note the discrepancy of authoritative Russian translations of verse 30 and the syntax of the Greek original. Thus in Synodal translation of the characteristics of the ungodly
men is the short forms of the adjectives, but in the translation of Bezobrazov all these characteristics become nominal predicates (they are slanderers, haters of God, etc.). Because all the qualities are direct objects of the participle πεπληρωμένων that is in accusative case (see 29 verses), we suppose that our translation is more correct: to translate them as adjectives that are in Russian genitive case (as direct objects): of slanderous, of hateful of God, etc. But some words are nouns. They remained in our translation in the same form: of insolence, of boasting etc.

Therefore we can make a grammatical table where is give description of the words and syntactic connections is specified.

### 3.3.2. Structural analysis

The fragment can be divided into following parts:

**Diagram 2**

1:18-20  --  Common revelation of God through His creation
1:21  --  Aberration because of not recognizing the Creator as God
1:22-23  --  Worship to the creation instead of the Creator
1:24  --  Impurity as a consequence
1:25  --  The service and worship the creature instead of the Creator is incorrect
1:26-27  --  Consequences expressed in homosexuality
1:28  --  Repetition of the formula: incorrect worship –
1:29-31  result
1:32  --  Moral behavior
       --  Conscious similar actions of people

From the formal point of view, the text can be presented as the scheme:

**Diagram 3**

**Premise**

Since the creation of the world is His invisible attribute, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen

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87 Ablative in Russian distinguish from instrumental case – Comment. A.P.
88 In the English translation the same problem – comment. A.R.
**Cause**

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

**Effect**

and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. God gave them over to degrading passions.

Therefore God gave them over to degrading passions.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.

**Conclusion**

“...they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them”

As it is seen from our discussion, the passage presents repeating formulas of the cause-and-effect relations concerning general revelation through examining of creations and
consequences of unwillingness to see their true initial chaos. The method of communication of the author of the epistle is interesting because he repeats practically the same four times using different observations and illustrations from modern for him life. As the result we have the effect of highlighting of the truth that brightly shows the way that one has to walk by. Such type of literature is one of the characteristics of Jewish literature.

3.3.3. Semantic analysis and interpretation

Let's consider consecutively meaning of some key expressions and words in the text.

The word 'Ἀποκαλύπτεται' is in this form in three places of the New Testament: Luke 17:30, Rom. 1:17, 1 Cor. 3:13. And in all these cases it's meaning is quite clear: “to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.” In other words, the New Testament does not give us literal understanding of meaning of this word (it is possible to mention and such verses as Rom. 16:25 – ἀποκάλυψις, Rom. 8:19 – ἀποκάλυψις, 2 Tim. 2:8 – ἀποκαλυφθήσεται), “to uncover, to take out of hiding”. The reason Paul used this word in figurative sense, to some extent explains W. Mundle, “…the noun apokalypsis, disclosure, revelation, is, however, only used from the 1st cent. B.C. onwards, and then predominantly in a religious sense”.

The word ἀδικία English interpreters have translated as unrighteousness or wickedness. Here it is appropriate to say that any translation already brings into the text an interpretation, “...The most correct and exact translation unavoidably distorts the text of the original. The certain meaning or certain shades of that meaning that author puts in a word or phrase is lost, and instead of it inevitably there is something new, peculiar to the personality of the interpreter instead of author”. The word ἀδικία seems to be more multivalent than “Luther's” unrighteousness and also is an antonym to the word ἀληθεία. And if the word ἀληθεία doesn’t cause doubts and is translated as true -, we prefer the Russian translation of the word ἀδικία (lie, falsehood). Let's remember however, that etymology of this word is very complex. H. Seebass for example makes an interesting conclusion that will help us more precisely to understand meaning of a word, “Hence, the righteous man ( dikaios) was originally one whose behavior fitted into the framework of his society and who fulfilled his rightful obligations.

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90 Ibid.
92 See table 2 (NASB).
93 NIV.
towards gods and his fellow-men..."95. At the same time another statement is also fair, "Paul thus makes the most frequent use of this whole word-group, and gives it its widest range of meanings. Of all NT writers, he it is who establishes the closest connection with the OT, when speaking of God’s righteousness and God’s justification of sinners".96

Thus δίκαιος is opposite to such quality of a man that characterizes external constant living according the law (according to rules, norms and traditions of a society) and internal feeling of correct behavior in relation to the community and laws of the heavenly world.

And though Russian translation of this word (lie, falsehood, untruth) looks rather foggy, nevertheless it is more correct than English (unrighteousness, wickedness) because of its multiple meanings and the context (as antonym to δικαιος).

Chrysostom specified multiple meanings of this word (but from another perspective):

For there be various kinds of unrighteousness (In Russian translation is untruth – comment. A.P.) also. One is in money affairs, as when any one deals unrighteous by his neighbor in these; and another in regard to women, when a man leaves his own wife, and breaks in upon the marriage of another. For St. Paul calls this also defrauding, saying thus, “That no man go beyond or defraud his brother in the matter.” (1Thessalonians 4:6.) Others again injure not the wife or property, but the reputation of their neighbor, and this too is unrighteousness. For “a good name is better than great riches.” (Proverbs 22:1.) But some say that this also is said of Paul about doctrines. Still there is nothing to prevent its having been said of both.97

The word, ὀργή has two meanings: 1. Anger as emotion 2. Anger as punishment.98

God’s wrath (ὀργή θεοῦ) is the expression that occurs in the Bible only 10 times (though in general about anger of God is written much more). 4 of them are in a New Testament. It is interesting that this combination is used where it is necessary to show a hopeless condition of the faithless men before God (Joh. 3:36; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6).

We would not have a long discussion on the relevance of use of the “shadow” that is one of characteristics of God in the times of the New Testament. About this is said a lot and well enough, for example, by R. Spraul99. M. Erickson reminds that the love of God and His judgment

96 Ibid.
always go together\textsuperscript{100}, and D. Stott says that in a moral conflict God cannot be neutral.\textsuperscript{101} Wuest speaks about anger of God as His personal attitude to the sin of man.\textsuperscript{102}

For Paul there were no problems with this characteristic of God. Concerning this, Lauw-Nida Lexicon notices, "Though the focal semantic element in ὀργή, is punishment, at the same time there is an implication of God's anger because of evil. Therefore, it is possible in some languages to translate this expression in Ro 3.5 as 'God does not do wrong when he is angry and punishes us, does he?"\textsuperscript{103}

Obviously the Fathers of the Church also connected the anger of God with punishment and justice, "And indeed even here this often takes place in famines and pestilences and wars: for each individually and all in common are punished. What will be the new thing then? That the chastisement will be greater and common to all, and not by the same rules. For now what takes place is for correction; but then for vengeance."\textsuperscript{104}

However we don't have the right not to take into account the context of this passage. In our opinion, here is especially shown devotion of the apostle to the Law of the Old Testament. Quite definite is implication: the anger of God is designated for such category of people who don't follow out his conditions, do everything against his plan. Behavior of such people is similar to flight without a parachute. The feel as they are flying but ahead of them is inevitable collision and destruction because of the gravity law.

In connection with stated above, we have very good interpretation, "anger of God actually is also righteousness of God but shown in a negative aspect. Sinfulness of man is caused by moral anomaly of the man, instead of insult of the Divine person."\textsuperscript{105} And certainly such wrath becomes more connected with anger that is described by Horace, "Ira furor brevis est, animum rege; qui nisi paret, imperat..."\textsuperscript{106}

Again we have to pay attention to the important phrase: ... ἀδικίαν καὶ ἄθρωπων τῶν τήν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἄδικοι κατεχόντων. It seems this passage, is excellently


interpreted by Chrysostom, “Here he showeth that the ways of ungodliness are many, and that of truth, one. For error is a thing various and multiform and compound, but the truth is one.”

Here key word is κατεχόντων (from a verb κατέχω). It can be translated as: to interfere, to prevent, to limit etc. In this context, it means that pagans have changed worship to true God on idolatry.

In Rom. 1:19 the word ἐν αὐτοῖς draws our attention. Paul reveals us the internal evidence of existence of God that cannot not to be “noticed” by a man.

Usually is said (for example, Wuest) that this evidence is the heart and conscience of the man.

But it would be more correct to address to such concept as προληπτικός (anticipatio). In other words, we would like to expand the assumption of D. Dunn, “The ambiguity probably reflects the common belief in a direct continuity between human rationality and the rationality evident in the cosmos.” Cicero admired with this concept of Epecurse, saying that every race of people knows about gods (and not only about gods; it is applied also to the ideas about other things, “concepts without that it is impossible neither to understand or to investigate, to judge”), anticipated by soul. In addition to this, “knowledge, continues Cicero, is incorporated in us or in other words are inherent”. It is still important that Cicero tries to enter a new concept of “pre-knowledge”.

In verse 19 Paul does not address to such concepts as “conscience” of Stoics or “heart” of Jews. He without reference to this or other philosophical categories proclaims, “because that which is known about God is evident within them”. In fact, he shows one more widespread concept of that time that allowed him to speak further about meaningless of the excuse for ignorance. Of course, in his further discussion, Cicero came to an erroneous conclusions, idealizing, for example both heavenly creations and the man. However, in our opinion, for this reason he could not solve the dilemma that he had put before himself: 1. Pre-knowledge about God there is in each man. 2. The concepts of people about gods are rather various, foggy and superficial. Thus “The knowledge of Himself God placed in men from the beginning. But this

112 Ibid.
knowledge they invested stocks and stones with, and so dealt unrighteously to the truth, as far at least as they might. For it abideth unchanged, having its own glory immutable”.

Beginning to research 20 verses, we shall pay attention to the following. Rare for the New Testament θεότης occurs in modified form only in Col. 2:9 – θεότητος – Divine nature, attributes of the Deity. And even in works of the classics, this word almost does not occur and can be defined only in works of Plutarch. Therefore, “The etymology of the Gk. word has not yet been clarified; the only thing that is certain is that it was originally a title”.

It is necessary to consider the word αὐτῷ in combination with ἀνθρωπός translated as “invisible him”. Paul speaks, that each man is capable to apply logic and conscience and understand omnipotence of God. In other words, “Man, reasoning upon the basis of the law of cause and effect, which law requires an adequate cause for every effect, is forced to the conclusion that such a tremendous effect as the universe, demands a Being of eternal power and of divine attributes. That Being must be the Deity who should be worshipped.” Paul basically repeated that was already known in the Jewish tradition (Ps. 18:2-7); the same idea is present also in Heb. 11:3.

Turning back to our discussion of the meaning of the word αὐτῷ, it is possible to assert with confidence, that here it addresses to the attributes of God who is capable to create the universe.

The word collocation τοῖς ποιήσασιν that is worthy of our discussion means creation, product. Here we quote Calvin’s words:

Since the perfection of blessedness consists in the knowledge of God, he has been pleased, in order that none might be excluded from the means of obtaining felicity, not only to deposit in our minds that seed of religion of which we have already spoken, but so to manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him. His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraved in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse.

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Cicero mentioning Cleanf lists the names natural phenomena (including act of God\textsuperscript{118}:

"Frightened by such phenomena people thought that there was a certain heavenly and divine force"\textsuperscript{119}), or for example movement of heavenly beings, "...all great movements in the nature possess a certain mind."\textsuperscript{120} Similarly speaks stoic Epictetus, when he sees in the creations reasonable expediency, "Looking at all that is occurring in the universe it is easy to eulogize Providence"\textsuperscript{121}

For this reason, Paul proclaims: εἰς τὸ ἐίναι αὐτῶν ἀναπολογήτους (so that they are without excuse). Here preposition εἰς expresses the purpose: for this purpose. To some extent we can admit that, "Paul thus is clearly and deliberately following Hellenistic Judaism in using this kind of language as an apologetic bridge to non-Jewish religious philosophy..."\textsuperscript{122}

The representatives of the Hellenistic Judaic philosophy, in their fidelity to the Old Testament criticized the philosophers for their desire to exalt the world. For example, "But you definitely see there is nothing better than the world, anything more excellent, nothing more perfect not only doesn’t exist but also nobody is able to imagine anything better"\textsuperscript{123} and that they considered the Creator to be inactive."\textsuperscript{124} But on the other hand, the knowledge of God through creation was rather general concept on what we already discussed in the concept of προληψις. Problem however was that the Hellenistic philosophy couldn’t precisely distinguish between the Creator and creations. Therefore Paul makes a stress on it.

Verse 21 has very important verbs for our topic: ἐματαιώσθησαν (became futile) and ἐκοστίθη (was darkened). Here it is necessary to pay attention to the grammar. The word ἐματαιώσθησαν is a verb indicative aorist passive 3rd person plural and ἐκοστίθη is verb indicative aorist passive 3rd person singular. The subject (they) in this sentence is implied. And the verb ἐματαιώσθησαν relates to it. The word ἐκοστίθη (singular) relates to αὐτῶν καρδία (also singular: noun nominative feminine singular common).

We got used to think of “heart” as Judaic concept of the center of man, “The Pauline usage is essentially the same as the Hebrew word זְרֵעַ and designates the inner life of a person from various points of view”\textsuperscript{125}. But first of all, heart not only exclusively Jewish concept. We

\textsuperscript{118} In Russian: spontaneous adversity – comment. A..R.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid: 82.
can see the concept of καρδία for example in the comedy of Aristophanes “Frogs”. On a question of the servant, “Where is your heart?” Dionysus (the god of theatre) answers, “Probably it missed a beat and come off in heels (in English – “my heart sank” – comment. A.P.) and got hidden”.126 From further it is obvious that in this way the poet describes the condition of fear. Deep experience of the heart we see also in the tragedy of Sophocles “Oedipus the king”:

“How strange a shadowy memory crossed my mind,  
Just now while you were speaking; it chilled my heart”.127

Interpretation of the concept of “heart” rather difficult work because it is used in Holy Scripture in several meanings. Even in the studied passage Ladd sees heart as a center of intellectual activity128 (though later he considers heart as the “organ of ethical judgment”129). Woltke notices that here it is said about people who are not capable to see “light of moral trues”.130 However the most, simple meaning (both in direct and in figurative sense) of heart consists in considering it as a source of maintenance of viability of the man (here it is possible to include such functions as: self-preservation, eating, reproduction and other functions without which the life is impossible). But the concept of viability among Jews was never examined in a separation from observance of norms of the Old Testament Law that has the concrete instructions. About this connection it is said also in the New Testament: Luke 21:34; 1Cor. 2:9; 7:37; 14:25. 2 Pet. 2:14, etc. Therefore the heart is that organ that requires constant direction and that can, figuratively speaking, be in rebalance. From these points of view, we would like to consider what speaks Paul in verse 21 about the heart – ἀνίκητος αὐτῶν καρδία. Obviously there is cause-effect relation: pagan doctrine resulted in that the desires, incorporated by the Creator, run out of the control and the man began to abuse the divine forces. The same opinion is very precisely communicated by D. Dunn, “Paul’s point is that man’s whole ability to respond and function not least as a rational being has been damaged; without the illumination and orientation which comes from the proper recognition of God his whole center is operating in the dark, lacking direction and dissipating itself in what are essentially trifles”.131 The character of foolish heart by means of illustration shows also Chrysostom:

129 Ibid.
For as in a night without a moon, if any one attempts to go by a strange road, or to sail over a strange sea, so far will he be from soon reaching his destination, that he will speedily be lost. Thus they, attempting to go the way leading to Heaven, and having destroyed the light from their own selves, and, in lieu of it, trusted themselves to the darkness of their own reasoning, and seeking in bodies for Him who is incorporeal, and in shapes for Him who hath no shape, underwent a most rueful shipwreck.\textsuperscript{132}

Thus the concept of the heart we should consider in its most simple initial meaning, namely as a source of viability of a human being, including all spectrum of human life expressed in every needs (not necessary in physical: Eccl. 7:4, 10:2) or on the contrary, hostility (fear, for example, that can have unconscious character and serve as self-preservation, protection of the child by mother, etc.). Heart can have any characteristics: rough (Is. 6:10), wise (Prov. 23:15), dark (2 Pet. 1:19), foolish (Rom. 1:21), severe (Ezek. 2:4), etc. And these characteristics, in our opinion, are flexible ("...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" – Mat. 6:21) and externally shown in behavior of the individual. Therefore the heart is an organ that requires a constant direction (Eccl. 10:2) (and the direction can be false) and that needs to be ordered with fiats of will. Therefore it is told, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life". (Prov. 4:23).

In verses 22 and 23 Paul doesn’t simply persists on the fact of folly but also shows what this foolishness consists in. Here it is necessary to consider contrasts that are used by the apostle as arguments: ἕφθαρτου (incorruptible) – φθαρτοῦ (corruptible). This difference in Greco-Roman culture is perceived precisely. Sophocles by the words of priest separates the king Oedipus from gods, “You are not of the immortal gods, we know;”\textsuperscript{133} Cicero notes, that the worthy people also become gods, “In addition it is common for people to believe that outstanding and glorified men via their good works are lifted to the heaven... Since their souls continue to live and enjoy the eternity they are properly considered to be gods...\textsuperscript{134}

However also Cicero is indignant, “But what can be more senseless than to give divine privilege to the dirty and ugly things or people already destroyed by death raise as gods, and all reverence to them consists in display of deep grief?"\textsuperscript{135}

It is obvious that Paul also knows about them when he doesn’t pay any attention to the well-known tendency of deification of the people (in particular emperors of Rome) and unites all creatures in one category: corruptible.


In verse 24 a little bit difficult is the word παρέδωκεν. Like οργή θεοῦ the word παρέδωκεν causes internal aversion, because the characteristic of God as "traitor" does not correspond the Christian consciousness.\textsuperscript{136}

Actually, the meaning can be determined very simply. This word in same form in the New Testament occurs 17 times and not only with negative meaning (betray), but with such, as, "give back" (Mat. 18:34), "charge" (Mat. 25:14), "release" (Mat. 27:26), "has transferred" (Acts. 6:14). Chrysostom again turns to the clear illustrations:

...But He "gave them up," here is, let them alone. For as he that hath the command in an army, if upon the battle lying heavy upon him he retreat and go away, gives up his soldiers to the enemies not by thrusting them himself, but by stripping them of his own assistance; thus too did God leave those that were not minded to receive what cometh from Him, but were the first to bound off from Him, though Himself having wholly fulfilled His own part.\textsuperscript{137}

What we mentioned above agrees with Josephus: Pharisees despite of their determinism "do not take away the freedom from men of acting". Therefore they assumed two variants of interaction between will of God and will of man. This idea we can be presented graphically as follows:

\textit{Diagram 4}

variant of concurrence of desires

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{diagram.png}
\end{center}

\begin{itemize}
\item Will of the God
\item Will of the man
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. I-XV(38). p. 57-58.
\textsuperscript{136} In Russian translation is "has betrayed" – A.R
Variant of disobedience or discrepancy of desires

Preservation of authority of God above the creation

Condition παρέδωκα – “release”, “betray”, “give back”.

Willfulness of the man

Verses 24 to 27 became the target of objections against traditional interpretation from the party of those who wants to justify homosexual relationships. Thus Schmidt in his article “Romans 1:26-27: The Main Text in the context from Straight and Narrow?” asks the following question, “First, is it forbidden to have sexual contact between persons of the same sex and, second, are applicable these interdictions to homosexuality of that type what we know it today?” Further he gives the translation of Countryman that obviously distorts the meaning such key words as ἐπιθυμίας, ἀτυμίας, παρέδωκα, φόβοι, etc. the purpose of incorrect translation of Countryman, according to the opinion of Schmidt, is to describe the homosexual acts not as sinful, but as “dirty”. The word ἐπιθυμίας (v. 24) has in the general two meanings: 1. “…to greatly desire to do or have something” 2. “…to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong”. In general, the words with root ἐπιθυμή occur in the New Testament about 50 times. Therefore we cannot assert that this word has unequivocal character (Thus puts issue Schmidt in his dispute with Countryman). It is unauthorized to do so, as the meaning of this word depends on connotation with in other words and on object of desire. If the subject wishes are kind (for example, 1 Thess. 2:17), it is possible to name action positive. And if it unguided desire – “dirtiness”, as in the investigated text (and

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139 Ibid: 53.
140 Ibid: 54.
142 Ibid. 25.20.
we with such shade more often meet in the texts of the New Testament), it is possible unequivocally to name similar behavior as a sin.

The reason of use of the word ἐπιθυμία in most cases is in negative sense explains H. Schönweiss, “The word is first found in literature in a neutral sense. But later it is ethically bad, because epithymia, like the other three passions, fear, pleasure and sorrow, results from a false evaluation of the possessions and evils of this life”.144 The word ἅτιμα – a state of dishonor or disrespect as negative of τιμή “honor, respect.”145 And though this word has a social shade, S. Aalen asserts that “A deepening ethical sense can be found in Rom. 1:26, where under the OT influence atimia means “shameful.”146

To word collocation παρὰ φύσιν (v. 26) also tries to give neutral character.147 But if we take into account that φύσις is “the nature of something as the result of its natural development or condition – “nature”,148 then there are things natural and unnatural. And the meaning that had Paul does not apply to probable and admitted things as, for example, Aristotle considered existence of the man outside of the state as unnatural situation, and this we have already discussed.

The apostle directly looks at the man from the point of view of creation by his Creator. And it was clear to Stoics. So Epictetus in his reasoning says:

...Is there something more useless than hair on the chin? So didn’t it (the nature – comment A.R.) resort also to them as properly as it could? Didn’t it point them on differences between male and female? Doesn’t the nature cries in everyone of us, “I am a man. Approach me properly, speak to me properly, don’t try to find something else in me, – this is the identification mark”? In her turn, as to the women, it also gave them in their voice something tender and didn’t give them this hair.149

And more, "By the structure of the products we declare that it is undoubtedly the creation of some master, and not randomly arranged... And male and female, their mutual inclination to coition and ability to use parts arranged for it, all this also does not demonstrate the master?"\textsuperscript{150}

Seneca also unambiguously declares:

All vices fight against the nature... or those, in your opinion, lives not in the contrary to the nature that changes with the women their clothes? Do not those live contrary to the nature that try that their adolescence would shin even after the due age? Is there something fiercer and more pitiable? He would never become a man to be longer a pleasure for a man! But if for the sake of this foulness he is taken away his sex, why is not to take away his age also?\textsuperscript{151}

All this shows that the topic of φόσιν was very seriously discussed among the contemporaries of Paul, and any action against the nature they considered as vicious action.

It is specified by the pronoun παρέκτησις. This part of speech shows the key of the turn to the incorrect worship of people. In accusative it means contrary to, instead of, etc. The word χρήσιν, probably, also has some ambiguous meaning because of its euphemistic use. However it has concrete meaning – sexual use, sexual function\textsuperscript{152}, that does not give us any right to suppose any of the latent meanings.

The word "passions" (παθήσεις) can be translated as "suffering"\textsuperscript{153}, similar is usage of the same word in 2 Cor. 1:5 (τὰ παθήματα). Here perhaps we already interfere in philosophy of ancient Greek language, and for native speakers of Greek words passion and the sufferings were indissolubly connected. One of the important words is δικαιώματα. It occurs three times in the New Testament, and all of them are in the epistle to Romans: 1:32, 5:16, and 8:14. The meaning is determined by the following shades: the justification, fair act. However here it is better to translate: commandment, requirement\textsuperscript{154}.

Paul, the disciple of Judaic culture, sharply expresses, "...and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error". (Rom. 1:27)

The word ἀπολαυσθάνοντες has interesting meaning and is translated as "receiving back", "allocating".

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid. 1-6: 49.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
The words ἀντιμοθίαν ἦν ἐδει – mean: punishment due (necessary, inevitable)... Paul does not explain here different kinds of punishments. But it would be possible to divide ἀντιμοθίαν on three types: 1. Condemnation of own conscience.\textsuperscript{155} 2. Punishment through illnesses is physical one\textsuperscript{156} 3. Final judgment: (Rev. 21:8).

In the final part of the passage, Paul describes the characteristics of behavior peculiar to idolatry. Some of them: πλεονέξιος – mercenaries, avidity, insatiability; ὑβριστάς – impudent, insolent, offender, man who does harm; ἀλαζόνας – boaster, self-praises, arrogant man who is exalted above others.

\textsuperscript{155} Dupui E. 1991. \textit{Prostitution in an antiquity}. Kishinov: 126. Dupui speaks about understanding of disgrace by the participants in dissolve orgy – comment A.R.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid: 101. Doctor Dupui E. speaks about attributes of syphilis. – comment A.R.
4. Analysis of the Historical Context

4.1. Historical characteristics of the epistle.

We don’t have serious grounds not to trust internal witnesses about authorship of the epistle: Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εἰκαγέλιον θεοῦ, (Rom. 1:1). Equally we don’t doubt about the addressee: πᾶσιν τοῖς αὐτῶν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐγκατατέθηκα (Rom. 1:7) and οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ἰμιν τοῖς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ εὐαγγελίσασθαι. (Rom. 1:15). Though, to be honest, not all the witnesses of the text support presence of the word Ἐφέσος.157 But we don’t take them seriously because, first, the witnesses of the text are week, and second, if we because of the divisiveness of the presence of chapter 16 in early manuscripts look at chapter 15, we find (Rom. 15:24): ὡς ἐν πορείας εἰς τὴν Ἐπιφανείαν ἐπίτις γὰρ διαπορευόμενος θησαυρεῖ ύμᾶς καὶ ἵππον προσεμφώνησε ἐκεῖ ἕκατον ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπληθῶν. In other words (speaking “geographically”), it was easier to get to Spain through Rome, because it was main transportation center.158

If the author is still Paul, then we don’t undertake to argue with an opinion of D. Dunn, “Paul was a Jew. He was born and brought up as a Jew. He never ceased to be a Jew”.159 This is a very important note (though radical) for the studied passage concerning our understanding of author’s attitude to various kinds of idolatry and moral codes.

As regards the issue of the date and the place where the epistle was composed, due to argumentation of D. Guthrie160 we can be fully sure about one fact: the letter was written approximately 5 years before of persecutions of Nero (64-68 A.D.), i.e. between 57 and 59 during the rule of Nero when Roman Empire was at the height of its fame of totalitarian state


system. Internal sources (15:22) again inform us about the place where it was written—Corinth, because it was the most likely place after collection of support for Jerusalem Church.

4.2. Roman Christians

Before we talk about real addressee of the epistle, it is necessary to mention the events that are described in the book of Josephus—general known and independent witness of origin of Christianity, “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ”161. After description of “…the circumstances which concerned the temple of Isis”162 Josephus told about the destiny of Roman Jews. Some “Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion…”163 was deceived by ungodly Jews who drew the wrath of emperor Tiberius who ordered to expel all the Jews from Rome164. However it is unlikely that all the Jews were expelled, because Suetonius tells about another expatriation during the rule of emperor Claudius: “He expelled from Rome the Jews who were constantly stirred by χριστός.” (Suetonius V-25-4). We don’t undertake without any reserve to ascribe the last testimony to Christ. But we can propose to some extent of probability at least following facts. First of all, the number of Jews lived in Rome was big enough.165. Second, proselytism existed also among nobility. This allows us to speak about proselytism as a phenomenon. Third, the emperor as an exponent of “Pax Romana” with his actions only stirred up the conflict between Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, this conflict could continue even in Christian community. Though, for example, Stott when speaking of compound Christian community sees the reason of this conflict only in theological discrepancies166.

4.3. Worship to created things rather than the Creator

One of the starting points and features of theology of Paul is fundamental antagonism concerning any worship except the worship to the Creator (or “founder” — κτίσαντα in Rom.

162 Ibid. XVIII-3:4: 1124.
163 Ibid. XVIII-3:5: 1124-1125.
164 Ibid.
165 Josephus tells that during the exile of Jew by Tiberius, about four thousand were sent as soldiers to the island Sardinia, but more than that were put to death - XVIII-3:5: 1124-1125.
1:25). This consequently calls us to consider following points: (1) the attitude of the contemporaries of Paul to the Creator of the world (including invisible one); (2) the reasons of origin of religious views that resulted in worshipping the creature instead of the Creator.

First point undoubtedly leads us to philosophical views of Greeks and Romans that were spread during hellenisation of Palestine. What is regarding Romans, “the nobility was strongly influenced by Greek philosophy that was the part of necessary education and was tightly bound with Greek political theories and interpretations of religions”\(^{167}\).

As regarding “the princess of Greek arts”, it was founded on presuppositions of radical dualism that was later adopted in Gnostic teachings. Whatever variety of classical philosophy we consider, all these types oppose “low” material to “unreachable higher”. Thus in philosophy of Plato, the latter represents the “ideas” of anything invisible that are eternal and perfect. Aristotle was not far from his master and divided the essence of subjects in two components: ideal and material. It was Plato who mentioned a quite acceptable characteristic of the Creator (Timaeus 29e): “Let us consider what was the reason of establishment and origin of the Universe by Him who established it. He was good, and he who is good would never and in none of occasions experience envy”\(^{168}\).

This concept was picked up by and interpreted in their way by Gnostics, because their Demiurge (sometimes First Archon) because of his envy decided to create the world\(^{169}\). Rather Gnosticism adopted some ideas of Judaism, Zoroastrianism and other Eastern cults. In addition, it didn’t escape Jewish Angelology. The use of New Testament authors of terminology of Gnostics (for example, “sons of the light” and “sons of the darkness”)\(^{170}\) gives reason to some theologians to draw a conclusion about the influence of Gnostic ideas on Christianity. But any division of Creative beings is harmful and false. Gnosticism detracts two persons of the Trinity: Jesus Christ and God the Father (i.e. Old Testament Creator) because if the former is given more of less honorary place for his ethics (and only for that), the Creator in their consideration is Demiurge that is Satan. And it is not peculiar to Gnostics to consider Christ as the Creator as John (John 1:1 ff) and Paul (Col. 1:16) did.

Philo Judaeus, the brightest representative of Hellenistic Judaism, also was characterized by the same problem. The understanding of God as one detached from the world led the philosopher to the thought about the existence of mediators between God and the world. Such

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\(^{170}\) Such terminology is used by Essenes.
creatures in his opinion could be angels, demons, Platonic Eidoses (Ideas) and God’s effusions. He calls them with common term: δυνάμεις (“powers”) and unifies them in one power – Logos. This power Philo formulated in the following way:

He is one common mediator between God and the world: wisdom and reason of God, idea, idea that encloses all ideas, and the power that encloses all powers; his is the deputy and ambassador of the Deity, the tool of creation of the world and rule over the world, God’s first born son, second god (δεινότερος θεός θεός in contrast to ὁ θεός). He is the image of the world and power that creates everything in the world, soul that endues in the body of the world like in cloth.

Thus we can be certain that religious philosophy of antiquity didn’t perceive God as the Creator who himself created the world (thus, for example, supreme Olympic god Zeus ruled over the world with the union with his brothers, the world that was created before their birth). This philosophy couldn’t combine in its worldview the Perfect Deity with vicious material world. Without understanding about the Fall that took place some time ago, the thinkers virtually rejected the very necessity of a Creator and saw in Jesus at best one of their idols.

As regarding the other aspect, namely worship to other creatures, it is enough to recall that Roman religion derived form various forms of land worship – such worship was the part of every primitive religion. One of significant features of the present period was the “revival” of folk religions in the time of Augustus who without any embarrassment made a merit from this. In our view, this condition is the integral part of principal of Octavian who was noted for his unusual tolerance to other, especially ancient172 religions. How could it be that common dejection in religious thought that is expressed in 29 B.C. by Horace (Odes, III, 6) in his words;

Oh, Roman, you shall pay for the sins of your fathers, until the temple of gods wouldn’t restore.173

Resulted in revival of belief in their native gods among that stood up the protector of Augustus – Apollo? How originated new religious understandings of geniusse and demons?174

No doubt that it was ably nourished by the state. The talent of Augustus in contrast to Caesar found a different way of seizure of consciousness of masses. If the first emperor supported his

politics by financial gifts to loyal subjects, his grand-nephew, Octavian took as a reliable foundation religious self-consciousness of Romans. Appeared first national heroes - emperors themselves. Augustus initiated this process referring to the will of the nation. In his speech, he declared, that, "people reckoned this comet as the sign that the soul of Caesar became one of the divine substances of immortal gods"\textsuperscript{175}. Then Octavian unobtrusively "inherited" his divine origin, and from that time such politics became a norm for the majority of Roman emperors.

Thus both tolerance and appearance of Augustus in the suit of Apollo (once - literary) motivated apostle Paul to clearly distinguish between worshipping the Creator and worshipping creature. In fact, by this he as a Roman citizen declared common cult of divine Caesars as completely vicious. For this particular heavy sin (see Ex. 20:3) God handed contemporary for apostle Paul Greek-Roman world over to vicious sodomy cult.

\textbf{4.4. Jewish and Greek concepts of homosexuality}

To interpret the consequences of unwillingness to worship the true God it is important to carefully examine sexual customs of antique world of 1\textsuperscript{st} century A.D.

Homosexuality that unambiguously was considered as a sin (Lev. 20:13; compare with 1 Cor. 6:9) likely was a peculiar "heritage" of nations of Canaan that God ordered to annihilate. Religions of nations of Canaan were various cults that used sexual orgies - that categorically was prohibited by Sinai laws (Lev. 20:2-5). Israelites who came from the desert saw a wild picture of worship to god with elements of sexual orgies. One of Canaanites god was Moloch:

Moloch is a male idol of Moabites, Syrian, Lydian, and Ammonites. His statue was picturing a man with head of a bull. This was a huge bronze statue with stretched hands that longed for sacrifices. His servants accepted gifts and put them in seven huge mouths that were hollowed up in his belly. Gifts for Moloch were domestic animals, sometimes children... When bronze became red-hot, worshippers of Moloch would have spin around him with wild cries and becoming mad. In a while the dance was stopped, and started the very licentious raging of Sodom sin.\textsuperscript{176}

If we decide to consider the reasons of manifestation of homosexuality, we can name several of them. First, as we mentioned it - was idolatry. Second, a contemporary historian M. Grant reckons that, "In the society where men are busy with politics, wars, sport competitions, booze and spend most of their time with people of the same sex, homosexual bonds become

stronger that the bonds with women – as it is in artistically emphasized in the naked sculptures of men and kouroi\textsuperscript{177} (see also pictures of vases: black-figure hydria and red-figure loving-cap – Appendix I, page 5, 6)\textsuperscript{178}. Slighting attitude to women is demonstrated by E. Vardimann who cites the words of a Roman censor in 30 B.C., “If we could live without a wife we would free ourselves from this burden...”\textsuperscript{179}. Plato doesn’t see anything unusual (if love is present – comment of A.R.) in unnatural relationships between males\textsuperscript{180}.

Anyway when we speak of the reasons of mass demonstrations of homosexuality we better yield to the words of Paul in Rom. 1:25-26, “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts”.

Views of Plato, is a typical illustration of that,

“For our original nature was by no means the same as it is now. In the first place, there were three kinds of human beings, not merely the two sexes, male and female, as at present: there was a third kind as well, which had equal shares of the other two, and whose name survives though the thing itself has vanished. For ’man-woman’\textsuperscript{1} was then a unity in form no less than name, composed of both sexes and sharing equally in male and female; whereas now it has come to be merely a name of reproach...”\textsuperscript{181}.

Then Plato explains with the words of Aristophanes the mechanism of sexual appetite. According to this explanation, all people long for integrity because, Zeus divided them in two parts. So supposedly divided men long to other men, women – to women, and former “androgyynes” – to their antipodes (that is men to women and the opposite)\textsuperscript{182}.

In can be presented in the following diagram:

\textsuperscript{178} St. Petersburg State Hermitage.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid: 100.
One can find Greek conception of androgyne beginning of life in writings of other popular people, contemporaries of Paul. Thus in *Metamorphoses* of Ovid\(^{183}\), he, in detail describes transformation of men in womanlike creatures. In addition, beginning from 4\(^{th}\) century B.C. sculpture of Hermaphrodite became usual not only in gymnasium and thermal, but in private houses. They that “reminded” about origin, so to say, of mankind from Greek point of view, “Especially beautiful are many extant sleeping hermaphrodites; comfortably rested in fascinating pose that boldly emphases all delights of man-woman body in half turned over on their sides, the hermaphrodite is slumbering with crossed under his head hands on a luxurious bed”\(^{184}\) (Sculpture at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – marble A374 – see in Appendix II, page 7 – note of A.R.).

As early as in 4\(^{th}\) century B.C. homosexuality and paedophilia in Greece spread so wide that a famous orator Aeschines (390-314 B.C.) demanded strict following the laws concerning to those who sell or buy boys, “for each of them, the law has established equal punishment”, and also to the teachers who in fact were responsible for preservation of virginity of young pupils, “daily bread of these people depend on their moral lifestyle”\(^{185}\).

Mentality of a citizen of Greek polis divided between responsibilities before the society (family) and leisure (boys).

After everything that was said, Jewish worldview looks just an idyll:

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...Alone man in spiritual sense is imperfect; ideal human nature always consists of two parts: man and woman, and though each of them has his or her functions in family, only together they can reach perfection. Thus it is natural that sex outside the marriage is impermissible... When sexuality goes out of control, it losses its sense and sex becomes lechery because it leads to abuse of Divine powers that every man has. 186

4.5. Amorality in Roman Society

First of all, it is necessary to understand the destructiveness of greatness of Rome at this time when apostle Paul wrote his epistle. It sounds paradoxically but facts testify about this. Some time earlier, the republic because of inner discrepancies became an empire. Deification of Roman emperors is very much concordant with Romans 1:23, “and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man”.

One of the most interesting sources of information is, coins. Contemporary numismatics informs us that after the rule of Augustus, deification of an emperor is the most common. It is obvious from the conclusion of M. Abramson:

The foundation of conservative policy of Augustus was, first of all, his pietas concerning Julian Caesar that was emphasized by mass issue of conservative coins dedicated to his apotheosis. Augustus identified himself with quite poor number of deities, as it demonstrate coins, but the repertory of these patrons of the emperor is well considered. This was one of most ancient and honored Roman gods that demonstrated the attempt of Augustus to rely on ancient religion and give to his regime a republican front. Augustus along with his enemies tried to stress his unity with a state religion, to demonstrate his respect of “customs of his fathers”. He continues to issue coins with pictures of attributes of Augustan and Pontific dynasties, or he sometimes stands in priest garment in order to show his appeal to conservative Roman religious feelings and ancient system of Roman virtues. Finally, Augustus laid the foundation for principles of using of coins as the propaganda means including religious sphere. A special role here had semantic of emperor’s portrait that was pictured sometimes as a hero like ancient heroes of Roman republic, sometimes as Apollo, or a young god, or a ideal sovereign – the Father of the homeland, and so on depending on the features of political moment. 187

For example, the triumph of Augustus is pictured in a bronze statue of a priest (B-1648) dressed in toga that is dated by 1st century and noted for similarity of traits of its face with other portraits of Octavian Augustus 188.

As a bearer of divine glory, Augustus appeared as the Father of the homeland, this why he was aiming to strengthen family life and limit freedom of singles.

188 See Appendix II, p. 3.
In his further fight against the tendency to singleness and childlessness, Augustus resorted to following emergency measures. Lex Julia et Papia Poppaea establishes direct responsibility for all men between 25 and 60 and all women between 20 and 50 to be married and have children. Lex Julia de adulteries, the law of 18 year B.C. that determines punishment for adultery (religatio) where are punished not only direct initiators but also those who tolerated this adultery...189

The termination of republican system coincided with common debauchery of the society. The words of apostle Paul in Rom. 1:28 fully correspond to the picture that is given by I. Pokrovsky: “Debauchery outside the family became very heavy; marriage relationships became often too ugly; spouses tried not to have children; freedom of divorces was abused with purely speculative goals190 (see appendix II, pages 4,7: red-figure psykter B. 1650; red-figure medallion B. 479)191

However paternal care of Augustus was entire hypocrisy, “When he was a young man he gained an evil reputation with many shameful acts”192. During his life, Augustus had acts with both sexes. “Even his friends don’t reject that he lived with others’ wives”193. “In the words of Dufour, these unlucky victims of emperor’s voluptuousness before their election and approval had to execute several caprices of Octavian. He with curiosity examined the most secret details of their beauty. In this sense, commentators interpreted the words ‘conditiones quaesitas’ which historian covered so to say with a transparent veil”194.

In our interpretation of Rom. 1:28-29, it is not permissible, in our opinion, not to mention the rule of Nero whom apostle Paul demanded to be his judge. Approximately at this very time when Paul wrote his epistle to Romans, Nero killed his own mother and aunt in order to get rid of his wife Octavia195. “After this he killed everybody for anything without distinction... In his pride and arrogance of his successes, he cried, that no one of his predecessors didn’t know what power he would have196. And what is more, he tried to marry the boy named Sporos whom he made a eunuch197.

190 Ibid.
191 St. Petersburg State Hermitage.
193 Ibid.
196 Ibid: 37.
5. Theological Meaning of the Text

5.1. Pauline Theology of God the Creator

In comparison to other religions, Judaism is unique in the fact that:

Ancient Jewish literature is based on a totally different worldview than in older or parallel in time cultures, absolutely special type of mythology that didn’t resemble any other mythology of Ancient world. At the center of this worldview was the idea of monotheism, conception of God as pure spirituality and moral absolute, at the same time God is not just an abstraction, cold Creator, but a living person that is perfect in all fullness.\(^{198}\)

All these characteristics for a philologist atheist correspond to the Old Testament תומיך, and we don’t have grounds to speak of Paul’s “treason”\(^{199}\), all the more contemporary for Paul “theologians” in fact couldn’t suggest anything like that. Thus the teacher of Greek theology, Lucius Cornutus who, according to testimony of Dio Cassius once was on a reception of Roman emperor Nero\(^{200}\), allegorizes on origin of names of gods of Greek pantheon and their functions with natural phenomena and elements. He actually makes them impersonal, e.g. “The Tradition say that the name of wife and sister of Zeus is Hera that is Air. She is constantly sticking and gluing to him, lifts from the ground when he approaches her. And both of them descend and form aspiration from one thing when soaring in the purest fine yarn substance joins and puts in order fire and air.”\(^{201}\)

Stoics also had impersonal understanding of God because they held almost pantheistic views, “He (Chrysippus – note of A.R.) says, that divine power is in reason (ratio) and also in soul (animus) and mind of all universe (universa natura). And the world (mundus)... is god and

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omnipresent overflow of the spirit... this is the fatal power and necessity of future events." The important to note is that this concept is often forgotten today, but with Cicero, "He (Epicure – note of A.R.), is not so stupid to imagine a god like a little man, not only by outward features, but without flesh, with all the parts of human body that he doesn’t use at all". Paul was not the only man who in his manifesto in Rom. 1:20 ("For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse") declared vanity of existed at that time beliefs of creation of the world by the creator-Demiurge. Actually he repeats the idea of an apocryphal book of Wisdom of Solomon (chapters 13 and 14, for example, "For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world"). Namely the concept of God the Creator was not perceived by Gnostic teachings because of their extreme dualism where matters were on the last place as the personification of the evil, "...Gnosticism viewed this world not as the creation of Good God, but as a work of evil demons, who, also held in their power human soul." Jewish understanding of the Creator by Paul anticipated any attempts to "divide" God on "Evil Old Testament One" and "Good New Testament One" as tried to do Marcion who in addition composed his false canon of the Holy Scriptures cutting off everything that was connected with the Old Testament.

And yet, let us ask ourselves a question, "Why people looking at the nature deified creatures instead of the Creator?" For example, in letter 41 Seneca demonstrates a part of his religious worldview in the following way, "We honor the sources of great rivers, set the altars in the places where suddenly from underground break out vast streams, worship hot sources, many lakes are sacred for us because of their dark waters or immeasurable depth." First reason of disrespect of the Creator is, in our opinion, in the religious concepts of people of the studied time that didn’t perceive existence of evil in the world. Namely the

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203 Ibid. I-XLIV-(123).
problem of theodicy didn’t let them to solve the problem of mutually exclusive ideas: why perfect God doesn’t care for his creation. This is why Cicero categorically states:

You say that the matter that all things consist of is so compliant and inconstant that it is possible in one moment to form anything out of it or transform. And the creator and ruler of this is divine Providence. So wherever it goes it can do anything it wants. But at this case, Providence either doesn’t know what it can do, or neglects of man’s business, or is not able to understand what it is the best for people.208

Nevertheless it is fair to say that new teachings (e.g. Neoplatonism) left the accusation of the Most High God and considered the matter as the container of good and evil209. But they also weren’t consistent and considered any beliefs and religion in general as “the source of peace of mind” and necessary element of any state210.

Second reason of not perceiving God the Creator was idolatry. Despite of the reasons of idolatry: external circumstances (education and culture), political situation (e.g. mentioned already example of Jews in Alexandria and their compulsion to worship Dionysus), sensible and attractive worship (e.g. cult of Baal), the Old Testament considers the worship to idols as the transgression against God with its illustration by pictures of debauch and adultery. When Paul says of impossibility of excuse of people who didn’t see the Creator in the creation, we automatically go to extant ancient concepts of creation. Thus in Sumerian legend “Enki and Ninhursag” there are some parallels with some passages to biblical text, and in particular with creation of Eve from Adam’s rib211. Famous “Poem of the creation of the world” demonstrates cosmological concepts of ancient Babylonians. It tells of rising of god Marduk as the creator of heaven and earth212. By the way, Marduk is pictured as the firstborn son of his father Ea. It is necessary to note the fact that all ancient legends as contrast to biblical narration are full of pictures of pantheons of gods, their wars, marriages, and rise, one of them who, creates the universe. Greek mythology also is full of such inventions as Zeus rises and chooses heaven as this place of living.

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210 Ibid.
212 Ibid: 117-118.
5.2. Epistemology and natural revelation (problems of knowing the truth)

The most common questions in the process of cognition are: is it possible to know the absolute truth? What are criteria of its perception? Is it possible to view God as an object of knowledge?

5.2.1. Epistemological problem

As an optimal result of solution of any process of cognition everybody would like to have the objective knowledge of studied subject or phenomena. It is the result of epistemologically unconditional influence of the very object on the process of cognition. Thus how a person views the subject is influenced by this person himself. The subject of cognition can be influenced even by the most unexpected sides of life of the present individual: his or her present mood, leave alone the worldview, level of education, intellect, influence of the culture, etc. It results in the problem of the third person that is defined by V. Karpunin in the following way:

To have the right to assert on a pure logical basis that the world can be known, that is more or less is reflected on our consciousness, we have to go out the limits of object-subject relationships, i.e. to take “third position” – outside the subject and object of cognition as it exists “in-itself”, and render a verdict concerning the degree of coincidence of the image with the original.\(^{213}\)

We can present this idea graphically\(^ {214}\):

![Diagram 7](image)

This diagram demonstrates that the subjects of cognition should evaluate adequacy of the reflection of features of the object by previous subject. This is the main difficulty because of it agnostics assert that the world cannot be known because the perception of it is not objective.


\(^{214}\) Ibid.
5.2.2. Relationships of the object and subject of cognition

Here we have to do not with some material object, but with Infinite God. There is common rule: subject S is capable to know object O with two conditions: 1) S has ability to know; 2) S is more perfect than O\textsuperscript{215}. Thus the author of this principle draws following conclusion: “Can God be known in the same way as objective (material) world? Apparently not: our position is higher, and we know lower, i.e. material world. Concerning God we are at lower position, and we try to know infinitely higher.”\textsuperscript{216}

Then the author draws a conclusion that cannot be disputed, “God is inconceivable for human cognitive initiative”\textsuperscript{217}. Only because of God’s initiative and His revelation we can know not only about Omnipotence and Power of God (see Rom. 1:20) but about other His Attributes and, what is the most important, the goal of Providence and the way of reaching this goal, “God’s initiative is the source of kataphatic that convinces us in reality of God and know ability of his will concerning us…”\textsuperscript{218}.

5.2.3. Criteria of Truth

There is not simple solution for the problem of truth according to Aristotle, “…because it is not permissible in our reasoning to bring the very things, instead of the things we use their symbols, names, so we suggest that what happens with names happens with things”\textsuperscript{219}.

To clarify this idea let’s present it in the following diagram:

![Diagram 8]

This classic concept would be perfect if it didn’t have serious problems. First, our speech doesn’t reflect diversity of this world in its fullness. Second, “Correspondence of our assertions to the rules and norms of logic or testimony of our feelings cannot be viewed as the absolute

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
criteria of truthfulness of our statements. Criteria that would reveal their truthfulness, needs itself to be attested, and so on. Third, "correspondence" doesn't mean full identity therefore partial gradation of truth can take place what is paradoxical (e.g. one third of truth, one half of truth, etc.) in its essence. There are some other problems. This is why concept of truth was developing further.

A great optimism in cognition of the world is Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Whatever is conceivable can be conceived clearly. Whatever can be expressed can be expressed clearly." For him the world is a collection of fact. So to describe the world is to collect the facts and define which of them are true, and which are false:

If an elementary proposition is true, corresponding event exists, if it is false - this event doesn't exist.
To set all true elementary propositions means to fully describe the world. The world can be fully described if all elementary propositions are set and it is said which of them are true, and which are not.

We cannot not to mention about skeptic frames of mind. It was skeptics of Antiquity who proposed an alternative to theories of approach to God. For them there is no God, and the truth is plural depending on solution of practical problems. The main postulate of such theories is recognition of the fact that no man can firmly guarantee that he has absolute impersonal objective truth.

The problem here is not process itself, but interaction of two factors that are defined in contemporary theory of knowledge. On the one part we have subject of knowledge, on the other - this "what is to be known" that can be either subject, or object of knowledge. From perspective of the "cognition", there is "presupposition" cycle (in literature can be used other terms: "horizon", "prejudices", "pre-understanding" and other) that should interact with a concrete (objective) understanding. Only in the case of successful "grasp" of the object by the subject, pre-understanding becomes understanding. Theory of knowledge doesn't propose "unpresuppositional" knowledge.

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222 Ibid. 4.25 – 4.26: 30.
Limited nature of human experience makes unpresuppositional knowledge and thinking impossible: a man comprehends his objective reality only when he is included in some tradition that makes up historical human experience. Knowledge begins with presuppositions that are preliminary understanding – set by historical tradition "prejudices" \[223\].

We can picture interaction of two horizons in following diagram:

![Diagram of interaction of two horizons](image)

Considering this condition, the model looks to be true. "Horizon of pre-understanding" in this case is founded on the theory of knowledge of objects.

In this case, appear to be true following assertion, "Negation of universal-impersonal criteria means that there are no formal procedures how we can determine either truthfulness or falseness of our knowledge… though a person can aspire to the truth and even understand it, but nevertheless he can never be absolutely sure if he really possesses it" \[224\].

Nevertheless understanding becomes different when the object that is to be known is some Absolute. "Lower" subject can never understand "higher" (by definition). In addition, relationships of different by their level subjects are difficult that can be demonstrated by the meeting of Adam with the animals. And only Divine initiative is capable to open God Himself. But He does it via "mediators" – conductors that not only make this fellowship closer but also gives to it a certain sense that for its turn gives knowledge about "Higher Subject". Let us note that the degree and quality of these "mediators" are diverse to such extent that we cannot speak of widening of horizons of understanding. Let us look at the scheme of the process of interaction of hermeneutical horizons in study by the explorer of some "Higher Subject".


\[224\] Ibid: 190.
In this case, horizon of concrete understanding, as it is shown on Diagram 10, forms both “Absolute Subject”, and “mediators” under influence of this Absolute. Entrance to this horizon depends fully on a researcher himself (but possibly not for entire horizon, and not exceeding of particular limits).

Mediators themselves are different: in their nature, in their way of expression, and in time. We consider as mediators first of all God’s revelations, because they are considered by Christian doctrine.

Nevertheless, one of the groups of mediators, according to Paul’s teaching, is universal. In theology this type of revelation is called natural (general), and it is demonstrated in Rom. 1:20, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made…”

There is something else that is worthy of our consideration and is characterized as a part of natural revelation based on Rom. 2:14-15:

Not only are people responsible to worship God, they are responsible to do the right because of conscience. God has implanted in all human beings a moral instinct that gives them a sense of right and wrong... Paul does not mean to say that conscience is an infallible guide in all questions or that conscience is a guide equal to the Law. He only means to say that all people have conscience, which gives them a sense of moral values, and that, God will hold pagans accountable for that knowledge. Because people have the light of creation and the guidance of conscience and yet persist in idolatry and wrongdoing, they are sinners.²²⁵
Thus we accent on the fact that “pre-knowledge” of every man is conditioned by at least two a priories: 1) Light of the creation; 2) Guide lines of conscience, but this conditionality can be cut off by people themselves, Paul testifies about this very fact.

Taking into consideration natural revelation, what we spoke about earlier, the full picture of formation of understanding will look in the following way:

Diagram 11 shows that according to the Bible (Paul’s teaching in particular (Rom. 1:20)), God provided two-way understanding (knowledge) of his Nature because of his Divine initiative through inner (implanted) action (natural revelation) via human conscience, and so called “light of creation”, and outward revelation that in its turn is mutually conditioned by two poles: Person of Jesus Christ and Holy Scriptures. But even if the man had only natural revelation it is sufficient, according to Paul, in order to have an idea of eternal power of God and his Divinity.

5.3. Anthropological aspects

First of all, it is interesting for us to study the structure of human nature in the limits of our passage. From the point of view of hardened beliefs (conception of a human consisting of spirit, soul and body), we don’t find “tracheotomy” or “dichotomy”. The apostle uses such terms

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as καρδία, σώμα, νοῦς. And with some extent of speculation we, of course, can identify these terms with pan church ones. Nevertheless, it is more correct to study the reason why Paul uses these very words. In exegetical part, we in purpose narrowed the notion of “heart” in order to understand the meaning of what the apostle said. Result of our reasoning was the conclusion that “the heart” is the source of life of human being and is quite capricious organ. It can run out of control, it can habituate, sometimes it impels to reckless behavior. This is why Paul uses a bright epithet “their foolish heart” (v. 21). From this we draw a conclusion that it needs a special constant guidance from the mind. This is why Paul calls to reasonableness as a function of mind when he says, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer” (v. 27).

Historical and cultural analysis shows that the reasons of immoral behavior were such ideological roots as: androgynous concept of the world, unwillingness to accept Old Testament concept of God the Creator and substitution of it by meaningless teachings of gods, theologies of those couldn’t be understood by philosophers of that time. “Those who kept the truth in untruth” -- this is that ideological captivity, fruit of mind of Greek-Roman world that didn’t let the mind of man to see the Creator through his creation.

Next point of Paul’s anthropology of the studied passage is his blunt antagonism of present in the world phenomena of homosexuals. In his consideration of this problem through the notion of παρά φύσιν, Paul chooses a strong argument against paganism using their terminology. In Epistle to Romans, we don’t see derogation of role of the woman. The author with equal intonation condemns action of both sexes. As says D. Stott, “φύσις means order created by God...”

It is not permissible not to pay attention to the concluding phrase of our passage, “and although they know the ordinance of God”. Here there is no direct instruction, but we would agree with D. Stott that we could ascribe it to that part of consciousness that is called conscience. Again we incline to the understanding that apostle Paul defined this term as a part of consciousness (Rom. 2:15). Nevertheless, for example, V. Yarho in his article Did Have Ancient Greeks Conscience writes, “Understanding is purely intellectual phenomena, conscience is largely emotional.” This is why it is no wonder that the author of the article draws following conclusion, “Conscience... was found unnecessary – both for heroes of Ancient Greek tragedy,

and for their creators” (Yarho shows that the heroes of studied by him tragedies supposedly used other categories: fear of death, responsibility, etc. – note of A.R.).229

5.4. Ethical argumentation of apostle Paul

When we speak of ethics of apostle Paul and again recall his expression “and although they know the ordinance of God… they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them” we would like to remind two things. First of all, we recall that according to the teaching of Stoics, the philosophy wasn’t considered as a science that was alienated form the life. In addition, philosophy of Zeno persuaded one more goal – to gain morality through the knowledge that “…true morality is impossible without moral knowledge; ‘virtue’ and ‘wisdom’ are considered as equipollent notions, and if philosophy coincides with exercise in righteousness, it is defined as ‘knowledge of the divine and human’”230. This note makes us to be inclined to the conviction that Paul couldn’t not to evaluate Stoics’ understanding of moral virtues. Let us remember, for example, “fight with yourself, and take yourself out for decency, conscience, and freedom”231. We can be sure also that Paul did know the rise of Seneca during the rule of Nero whose activity V. Durov, for example, comments in the following way, “In epoch of Nero, no one Roman writer was as popular among youth as Seneca”232. Ethic teachings of Seneca, on the first face, look godly. Thus in letter 91 Seneca writes, “Everything is chaste – private and social; destiny of cities like destiny of people revolves as a wheel233… every creation of the mortal doomed to death, and we live among temporality”234. In his 7th letter he condemns the cruelty of circus games, “there is nothing more disastrous for good tempers than the performance”235. Letter 47 is a diatribe-avocation for the slaves, “with joy I get to know from those who come from your area that you treat your slaves as your neighbors”236. He was not pleased with the life of that time,

229 Ibid: 305.
234 Ibid. 91:12: 203.
235 Ibid. 7:2: 41.
236 Ibid. 47:1: 97.
Look at the young men who are because of prodigality were pushed from the noble homes to the circus; look at those twice shameless who both indulge in debauchery, and serve other’s debauch, who don’t spend a day without drinking, no day without any great abomination – and it will become clear for you that you rather avoid it than have hope.

Nevertheless at the same time, Publius Suillus, an accuser who himself wasn’t known for high morality, condemns Seneca, “What wisdom, what exhortations had helped Seneca for some 4 years to become so close to the emperor and gain three hundred millions of santonies? He is like a sleuth in Rome, shadows the wills of childless citizens, he robs Italy and provinces with excessive interest rates…”

Thus it is understandable why Paul was indignant at the status of ethics in the society (as a bright example of this consciousness, we chose Seneca). On one hand, we have a marvelous “pre-knowledge” of the Universal Moral Law, on the other, – immoral lifestyle, connivance to the crimes and vices of his pupil Nero, “Humanism of creative heritage of Seneca caused and still causes multiple attempts to understand personality of this writer who is still the most contradictory person in Roman culture because the image of Seneca doesn’t correspond his moral lessons.”

It is necessary to note the second important feature. Stoics perhaps were the first who tried to solve the problem of correlation of determinism and freedom of will. It, in its turn, determined their ethical teaching. Stoics believed that reasonable behavior should correspond the nature of the man and all things, and for this reason it was necessary to get to know the laws of the universe and the human. Nevertheless it is obvious for us that because they didn’t find the answer about the correlation of these two complex categories their determinism allowed the excuses like the testimony of Plutarch, an adulterous young man, “God allows everything that is necessary.”

In our opinion, Paul in purpose gives the expression συνεδροδοσις in verse 32. It has the shadow of “approval”, “agreement”. Stoics clearly distinguished the concepts of “knowledge” and “approval”. Thus Cicero gives the illustration of Crisippus who compares the correlation of the destiny with free will of the man with a whirligig, “He who started up the whirligig... only

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put it in motion but didn’t spin it. Equally the object that we feel leaves its print in our soul, the
sign of its image, but we have the power to make a decision about the approval\textsuperscript{242}.

Thus the apostle gets into the very “ideological center” of Stoicism where there is no
room for the excuse of the adherents of this current for their immoral style of life and behavior. It
is like if Paul have said the following, “On the basis of understanding of your nature you know
what should be your style of life, and you have an opportunity to agree with the arguments of the
reason (to live in accordance with the reason is the foundation of moral behavior of Stoics), but
you cannot do it, you find an excuse for yourself and other people”.

Conclusion

Perhaps there is no greater tension on the border of the science and religion as in the issue of the origin of Earth and its inhabitants. The scholars who deny supernatural elements in creation of the world are in the captivity not only of their own concepts, but they have to plunge in the endless sequence of contradictions that don’t give, in our opinion, the answer on the main question – the question of origin of life. Ian T. Taylor is absolutely correct when he asserts that:

Though... naturalistic approach denies everything miraculous, supernatural explanation, a supernatural element should be there because it was affirmed that only by fortuitousness the disorder could become the order. Alternative explanation of the fact that the nature is highly ordered and complex directly results in the acknowledgement of a rational Creator and a miracle. 

We didn’t set the goal to glean scientific evidences in favor of the Rational Creator. It is well done by appropriate institutes and organizations. But we have to establish the fact that today people like our forefathers in antiquity argue about living creatures. The life the existence of that neither can be explained nor proved by the scientific methods, – is the stumbling rock that breaks the heads of many generations of the scientific society because they are unable to put the period in this issue.

This very issue nonplussed, for instance, Cicero who joined to epicurean concept of προλήψις (anticipatio) but was not able to solve the contradiction: pre-knowledge of God is in every man – but people’s concepts about God (gods) are false. Paul in his teaching of God the Creator narrows the conception of “pre-knowledge”. Cicero (on the basis of the opinion of Cleanth) gives four reasons as the arguments for existence of gods: 1. Ability to have premonition; 2. Great goods (fertile soil, good climate); 3. Natural phenomena (lightning, storms, etc.); 4. Beauty and the order of the planets. What is concerning animal world, the philosopher in his delight also acknowledges the existence of a creative beginning, but

characterizes it as something impersonal, "Thus, most probably, the world and everything in it is created for gods and for people"²⁴⁵.

During the human history, the creation was often given the wrong meaning. It especially influenced the teaching of Gnostics who humiliated the role of the Creator to that extent that they called Him the source of the evil. In other teachings happened just the opposite – the creatures were deified. Contemporary atheists created a "science" from it when they "allowed" the creatures to transform to each other under the effect of time and random processes. This resulted in some undesirable consequences. It is enough to remember the premises of Friedrich Engels about the origin of articulate speech in one of his works:

...The most important achievement of this period (the lowest stage of "wildness" – note of A.R.) – the origin of articulate speech. No one of the nations that were known in historical period was in this primitive state. Even though it lasted probably for several thousand years, we cannot prove its existence on the basis of direct evidences, but when we acknowledge the origin of the man from the animal kingdom it is necessary to admit the existence of such transition condition.²⁴⁶

In our analysis of the contemporary epistemology we came to the conclusion that it doesn't suppose a causeless approach in study of the objects. Nevertheless Paul by his teaching about the knowledge of God through the study of the creation actually releases every individual from the premises in definitions of at least two attributes of God: His divinity and eternal power, as the subject who reveals himself. More than that, Paul stresses impossibility of the excuse for people for their condition of "pre-faith" and "pre-knowledge" also because of two things: so called "light of the creation" and "light of conscience". This opens us a perspective for further study in such areas as hermeneutics, evangelism, and theological aspects of natural revelation. We hope to come to them in our other works and articles.

We can call premises of the ancient world that were used to excuse immoral lifestyle as "ideological" roots. We revealed these ideological roots that served as the excuse for homosexuals in particular. In addition to this, in the present work there were displayed the methods of apostle Paul who used the terminology and concepts of the contemporary to him world to demonstrate contradictory character and senselessness of different teachings that had harmful consequences for the entire humankind.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. II-LIII (133): 112.
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Appendix I
Archeological materials
Statue of Jupiter at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – marble A362
Statue of a priest at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – bronze B-1648
Banquet of prostitutes
Red-figure psykter at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – clay B. 1650
Preparation to competition
Black-figure hydria at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – clay B.170
Prostitute with phalluses
Red-figure pelike at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – clay B.475
Sleeping Hermaphrodite

Sculpture at the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg – marble A374
Summary

The author of dissertation considers that dependence of behavior of people on their attitude toward God the Creator is perhaps the first and the most important topic that comes to mind during the study of the present passage of the most fundamental Paul’s epistle. We believe it is necessary to explore “false foundations” as we see as Paul opposes to them his ideology – ideology of worship to God the Creator. We affirm that Paul sees the main reason of immoral behavior in such area of man’s activity as thinking that, in its turn, denies the Creator of every living thing of Earth and because of its incapability to rule over human passions is forced to look for an ideological basis for its acts.

This thesis has also practical meaning because it demonstrates Paul’s methodology of disproval of false theories of that time revealing their illogicality and senselessness.
Subject headings

1. apotheosis
2. Creator
3. knowledge of God
4. creations
5. anticipation (προληψίς)
6. anger of God
7. homosexuality
8. angrogyne
9. presuppositional
10. nature