

EXCUSES ARE UNACCEPTABLE

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 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.” (Romans 1:18-20)

Man from the beginning of time has attempted to offer excuses for his guiltiness of wrongdoing. When the finger of God is pointed at us, what is often our first reaction? Defend ourselves. Adam is a prime example, who attempted to shift the blame and even suggested that God had a hand in Adam’s rebellion and sin (Genesis 3:12). Have not all sinners done similarly at one time or another? We begin to plead for ourselves by offering what we think are reasonable explanations why we chose to disobey, to lust, to sin. The Greek word for excuse in Romans 1 literally means “to speak oneself off.” Thus, it is a self-defense that attempts to remove any accountable blame directed toward oneself. Ultimately, the bottom line is that men seek ways to free themselves of being fully responsible for their every action before the one true God, who has appointed a day He will judge all of humanity.

“I didn’t know” is now inexcusable. Man can know God is; he can know God’s will, too, because it has been revealed, preached and preserved. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.” (Acts 17:30-31) The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels “taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

“But I did all for you, Lord” is also an unacceptable excuse. To be a disciple of Christ a believer must abide in Christ’s word (John 8:31). We must prove ourselves doers of the word (James 1:22). Does that actually mean that men must do all that the Lord commanded? In matters of faith, is it not O.K. to do good things according to man’s discernment? To change worship to make it more pleasing to worshippers? Take note of what Jesus the Judge said. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name?’ And I then will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 4:22-23)

“If I had a little more time” won’t cut either. Life is a vapor for everyone (James 4:14). The gospel reminds Christians to walk carefully while “redeeming the time” because anyone can become caught up in the cares and concerns of this world to the point of neglecting the weightier matters (Ephesians 5:16). Covetousness consumed the rich farmer so that he was not ready to meet his Maker (Luke 12:15, 20). The five foolish virgins procrastinated what they knew they should have done to keep their lamps burning. The moment came, but then it was too late, and the door was shut (Matthew 25:10). The answer to their cries was, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” (25:12) The day and the hour is coming when an accounting of all men will be made, and no excuses will be accepted.