

Making Futile Speculations

David DeWitt

When the Apostle Paul made the statement *futile in their speculations* in Romans 1, he did not mention Satan or demons. So, whatever their role might be, it is not the only explanation, nor is their involvement necessary, for people to believe nonsense. Here is Paul's explanation

*For even though they knew God, they did not honor [better, glorify] Him as God or give thanks, but they became **futile in their speculations**, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, 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. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 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. (Romans 1:21-25).*

Let's observe what Paul said in Romans 1 about people who made futile speculations:

- *They did not glorify [attribute innate value to] Him [God] as God.*
- They did not *give thanks* to God. That is, instead of being thankful for what God created, they believed some unfounded idea that someone imagined.
- *Their foolish heart was darkened.* The word for *foolish* here is "without understanding," and the *heart* metaphor in the Bible connects personality with spirituality. *Darkened* implies perversion by their sin nature. So, their sin nature polluted their intellect into creating a belief in something for which there was no observation in reality.
- They began *professing [themselves] to be wise*, which is why *they became fools*. **When a futile speculator begins proclaiming a foolish idea, then we can all examine it and see how ludicrous it is.** Of course, other non-discerning people may follow them, but when they profess themselves *to be wise*, rational discerning people can look at what they profess and determine them to be *fools*.
- *God gave them over in the lusts [or desires] of their hearts.* Some wrong (perverted) desire, caused by the sin nature, is the only motive Paul offers.
- They *exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for a lie*, i.e. some futile nonsense. Paul illustrates this with idolatry. Can you imagine anyone irrational enough to believe something they made out of wood, stone, feathers, clay or whatever, somehow has mystical power? Isaiah wrote that man cuts down a tree, *and half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast...he also warms himself...But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships...* (Isaiah 44:16-17). **Idolatry is as irrational as believing the earth is flat, or that we learn God's directives through mysticism, or that we evolved from a prehistoric soup of chemicals, or that truth is relative.**
- In 1 Timothy 1, Paul attributed *strange doctrines, myths and genealogies* to men making speculations. Instead of using speculations, Paul said we should be *furthering the administration of God which is by faith*. Biblically, faith is a decision to trust a rational, logical, intelligent understanding of the evidence God has presented. **Futile speculations ignore all that and see faith as a blind leap into ideas that have no basis in reality.** That would include blind faith in ideas like a flat-earth mysticism, evolution, cults, world religions, and relative truth.

Biblical Christianity is the only religion that defines faith as a rational, logical, intellectual decision to trust real observations. There is no room in Biblical Christianity for futile speculations. So, don't do that.