

## GIVE ME THE BAD NEWS FIRST

Romans 1:18-3:20 | Sept 7, 2025 | David Geldart | Tru Community Church

### 1. Start with Vintage21 Jesus video #3: YOU ARE ALL SINFUL THERE IS NO HOPE – funny video

a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCTAgxsLE3Q>

- b. Isn't that video great! Made by a church in Raleigh, overdubbing an old Jesus film....
- c. To illustrate our common misconceptions about what God's like and what he thinks.
- d. So many people think this is how God is! Especially toward sin.

### 2. [2] BUT NO – Romans contains the fullest and most systematic presentation of God's good news in the Bible.

- a. It's not a call to grovel in the dirt, but to walk in Victory through Jesus Christ the Gospel
  - i. **All Christians should know this material thoroughly and be able to share and explain it to others.**
- b. Yet, SO MANY PEOPLE, including many church folks, don't really understand the truth of the Gospel and God's heart.

### 3. But although the gospel is literally God's good news, it begins with his bad news:

- a. That humanity is profoundly sinful and deserves God's judgment.

### 4. Needed a little humor as we jump into a serious and heavy topic of Sin and Judgement.

### 5. The Gospel can only be GOOD NEWS if it stands in contrast to BAD NEWS

### 6. [3] We're starting out today saying: "GIVE ME THE BAD NEWS FIRST"

### 7. [3] Our full passage in view today is Romans 1:18-3:20. And it covers a lot of ground.

- a. But it does lay out a clear message about the bad news that we'll look at today.
- b. So rather than reading the whole thing, I'll be highlighting some representative chunks to help us digest it this morning.
- c. Again, we're starting with the bad news first:

### 8. PRAY

### 9. [4] Read Romans 1:18 – <sup>18</sup>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

### 10. And who are those who are ungodly and wicked?

#### d. [5] Romans 3:10-12 (quoting from Psalm 14:)

- i. "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> here is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

<sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

### 11. There is none righteous --- good enough. Not one.

- e. None able to justify themselves, or even redeem themselves.
- f. **In a court – we're guilty.** All of humanity. And each of us humans. Rightly judged guilty and deserving death (physical and spiritual)!

#### i. [6] Rom 6:23 – The wages of sin is death...

- g. The just consequences of our sin is judgement, wrath, and death.
  - i. It began in the garden with our ancestors A&E, and ever since things have gone sideways.
  - ii. **Not only do we each personally rebel and sin against God, but we inherit from them a broken and fallen human nature that is already under the bondage to sin and death.**
  - iii. We're also infected with a fatal disease. A spiritual condition inherited from Adam and Eve that is 100% fatal. 100% deformative. And one we're utterly unable to cure.
- h. **We're hopelessly and mortally sick, and utterly guilty.**

**12.If you tend to think that you're doing pretty well on your own, that you're a pretty good person, you're not going to like this part of the scripture today.**

- i. In this section about sin, Paul essentially says there are **naturally 2 types of people**:
  - i. **Irreligious** evil-doing sinners
  - ii. **Religious**, self-righteous sinners
  - iii. **And both tend to look down on the other!**
  - iv. **And he goes on to show how BOTH KINDS are in utter need for the Gospel.**
  - v. Not just the God-denying pagans, but also the do-gooder religious folks!
  - vi. We're all equal in need at the feet of our Creator God of the Universe.
- j. **The bible is an equal opportunity offender.**
  - i. Indeed this passage today contains some teaching that is extremely offensive to our modern social sensibilities!
  - ii. Offense all over the place.
  - iii. But thankfully as we'll see next week, God's word and Romans in particular offers us an equal opportunity Redeemer! Jesus Christ.
- k. **Bad news first, good news next!**

**13.In this passage, Paul systematically rebuts the major objections to our need for salvation that each of these 2 groups gives:**

- l. ...objections that are just as common and relevant today as they were in the day and culture Paul writes to in Romans.

#### **14.[7] Irreligious People:**

**15.What about ppl who don't have the Bible, certainly they're exempt from God's judgement since they don't know any better?**

- m. **[8] READ ROMANS 1:19-20: <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> 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 people are without excuse.**
- n. NOPE – Actually all ppl should know the basics about God from 2 main sources of:
- o. **[8] GENERAL REVELATION**
  - i. External=God's Creation

ii. Internal=Human Conscience

**p. Start with External = Looking at God's Creation**

i. Both the Macro and Micro structures of creation testify to the rational intuition of people to an eternal, external, and powerful creator

**1. I did my seminary thesis project on this very thing. Connecting with God through Natural revelation through the cosmos.**

2. All the marvels of the universe

ii. Let's just talk about a couple of the MANY that exist:

**1. Macro scale, consider the universe the vastness of space:**

**a. [9] HUDF**

i. Patch of empty sky

ii. Hubble Stared at it for total of 12 days

iii. Each of these is a galaxy!

b. Don't need a telescope:

**i. Looking up at the stars from the Hill by Pillsbury crossing**

2. Micro level too:

**a. [10] especially how the cell works**

i. DNA, Protein structures

b. All point to an intelligent designer as the most rational and intuitive explanation to the **mind bogglingly complex machines** at the heart of all life.

c. Ones that pure naturalism cannot possibly explain

**q. [11] Internal=Human Conscience**

i. Our consciences – internal moral sense – is universal to humans, even though affected by the fall

1. Though we don't all agree on where the lines exactly lie, nevertheless testify to a universal moral standard

2. And we instinctively know when we or others violate this universal standard.

**a. <sup>2:14</sup> (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)**

3. We have a moral sense -- Our creator must be moral

4. **I remember stealing a lego piece from a friend's house as a kid—it was unique**, I didn't have it! And I wanted it. So I took it. But I didn't need my mom or the Bible to tell me it was wrong. My conscience screamed at me. And I still see it in my lego pile from time to time to remind me. And wouldn't you know, it's a piece that in all my decades of lego building, I've never actually ended up using.

ii. **Pointers from General Rev: God's Creation and our internal consciences show that:**

1. Even if ppl have never seen a bible, they are nevertheless accountable to the basic sense that a personal, intelligent, eternal, powerful, moral God made everything, including us,
  2. and that we should worship and thank Him for our existence.
- iii. **But ppl don't do that– but resist that notion actively. And are thus guilty.**

**16.[12] God also says that he's made this judgement clear for all to see, if they're willing to see.**

- r. The evidence of our sinful rebellion and God's judgment can be seen in how human lives play out
- s. **Read Romans 1:21**
  - i. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- t. **Without putting the true creator God in the God-shaped hole in each of our hearts, instead** we have a vacuum in the core of our souls that we REFLEXIVELY try to fill with other things to make our life work – things that only degrade and debase us.
  - i. **Paul goes on to point out sexual sin as a visible example of how rejecting God's design not only reveals our sinfulness, but also leads to damaging consequences**
    1. **whether homosexuality, adultery, pornography, or any form of immorality.**
  - ii. **And none of them satisfy the human heart.**
    1. But instead erode our souls, creating even greater cravings that enslave us
  - iii. These and other addictions only increase our emptiness and isolation, that harm and devour others
  - iv. **When people turn away from God's truth and his way, it always creates damage, and ultimately death.**
- u. **So, irreligious, blatantly sinful folks are condemned for their sin and deserving of God's judgement.**

**17.[13] But what about the religious folks?**

- a. The "good guys"
- b. What about the folks who have received God's SPECIAL revelation
  - a. The folks who believe God exists – who know the Bible and what it says.
  - b. Who go to church
  - c. Who follow the rules
  - d. Don't drink cuss or chew, or go with girls who do
- c. Paul turns to this group next (switches from THEM to YOU language)
  - i. **[14] READ ROMANS 2:1-4**

**2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. <sup>2</sup> Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. <sup>3</sup> So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? <sup>4</sup> Or do you show contempt for the riches of his**

**kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?**

**d. The bad news part 2 is that RELIGIOUS PEOPLE AREN'T ANY LESS NEEDY!**

ii. Blows up all our attempts to justify ourselves before God

**e. Some think: I'm a good person, at least better than THOSE PEOPLE (the irreligious pagans)**

iii. Assuming God grades on a curve!

1. Yah, I know I'm not perfect, but I try. I'm not a murderer

a. that's the standard???

**iv. But God says we're all judged not relative to other ppl, but against THE TRUTH**

v. Not are you better than other bad people

1. But are you living like you were designed? Are you walking the path I've laid out for you?

a. **The standard isn't your neighbor**

i. It's God Himself

ii. Who we were made to image

**vi. Are we good enough?**

1. JC says GOOD is measured by GOD – Mk 10:17-18

a. **[15]<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone.**

**vii. Paul says if you judge others you actually condemn yourself**

1. Not are you BETTER than them

a. **But do you agree that judgement for sins is deserved**

2. If so, then you're right there with them

**viii. Things that deserve judgement God lists (v29-31)**

1. Sexual immorality (prev verses)

2. **[16]<sup>29</sup> They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,<sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;<sup>31</sup> they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.**

**3. Have you EVER done any of those things even a little?**

a. If so, then you deserve his judgement too

b. AND even more since you judged others as deserving God's wrath  
BUT NOT YOURSELF

**4. [17] READ ROMANS 2:6-11**

a. <sup>6</sup> God "will repay each person according to what they have done."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>7</sup> To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. <sup>8</sup> But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be

**wrath and anger. <sup>9</sup> There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; <sup>10</sup> but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>11</sup> For God does not show favoritism.**

**ix. None of us are good enough**

**x. You may say: I've never done any really bad things**

1. It's true some ppl can live their whole lives w/o murdering, committing adultery, stealing from a business, lying to a jury.

**xi. But the big external things are only PART of the sin picture.**

1. The scope also encompasses the secret stuff
  - a. The violations of conscience
  - b. Lying
  - c. Gossiping
  - d. Sins against others (even if they never found out)
  - e. Sinful fantasies (anger, hatred, sexual lust)
2. **Many of yall know I grew up a pastor's kid, and even through grade school and college I looked pretty good from the outside.**
  - a. Got good grades.
  - b. Served and lead in youth group.
  - c. Didn't cuss or sneak out to drink
  - d. But what no one would know, and what I swore I'd take to my grave, was that I was secretly engaged in sexual sins.
  - e. And it would take many years for God's grace to help me heal from the damage that caused.

**xii. Even good deeds done with mixed motives**

1. Donating to charity to get ahead
2. Volunteering in the nursery to earn points with God and others

**xiii. Even sins of OMISSIONS**

1. FAILURE to love ppl perfectly well
2. FAILURE to serve God and Others faithfully and sacrificially

**f. What about you?**

- i. Have you ever done any of these bad things?
- ii. Or ever failed to do these good things?
- iii. We're just not righteous enough - Not by a mile!

**3. [18] Read Romans 3:9-10**

**a. <sup>9</sup> What shall we [religious folks] conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;**

**4. None of us are righteous – good enough**

**5. It's like we're on the roof of this building. And we're trying to JUMP to the McDonalds in Wamego.**

- a. Is it REALLY helpful to think comparatively and declare, I'M A BETTER JUMPER THAN JAMES!
- b. But you ALL ARE FALLING HOPELESSLY SHORT of that delicious big mac with extra sauce and salty fresh fries right out of the frier!

#### 18.[19] THE POINT OF THE BAD NEWS:

- g. Paul does NOT share this stuff with the Romans, and now with us, to make us feel terrible or worthless.
    - iv. Maybe that's what YOU NEED TO HEAR THIS MORNING!
  - h. **His point IS NOT to make us feel hopeless and despair of having God's acceptance.**
  - i. In fact, God gives us the Bad News first to drive us to despair **of our own ability to earn God's acceptance based on our effort.**
    - v. **[20] <sup>3:19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.**
    - j. **You'd never call it uncaring for a doctor to show you the results of your Body scan showing the tumors.**
      - vi. In fact, it's the most loving and caring thing in the world to do, if it's the truth.
19. That's what Paul, and ultimately God is doing when he tells us about our sin and its accompanying judgement of death.

- a. About our utter inability to save ourselves by our own efforts

#### 20. NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY, YOU JUST CANT JUMP from here to Wamego!

- k. So PLEASE STOP TRYING TO JUMP OFF THE ROOF

#### 21. Instead, come to me, and let me carry you there.

- l. **He wants us to see our dire sin condition And our inability save ourselves SO THAT WE CAN FINALLY SEEK HELP WHERE IT'S TO BE FOUND!**
  - a. And that's the Good News of the Gospel.
  - vii. **<sup>20</sup> Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.**
  - viii. **[22] Next verse 21: BUT A RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD APART FROM THE LAW HAS BEEN REVEALED.....!!!!**
    - 6. Through the person and work of Jesus Christ for us!
    - 7. GREAT NEWS!!!!!!!!!!
- m. More on that next week!

#### 22.[22] But for today (Reflections & Applications)

- n. **Are you ready to let God be right about you?**
  - i. Right about the state of your soul
  - ii. The prognosis of your condition
    - 8. Those terminally ill patients in critical need of a miracle cure
    - 9. Are you ready to admit that you're just like those people, those bad people who deserve punishment and death – eternal separation from God in



consequence for your rebellion and rejection of Him and his rule over your life.

iii. Whether you've been religious or irreligious

10. Good or bad

iv. Are you ready to let God be right about you?

o. **[23] And are you ready to let him be right about salvation -the only way for you to be saved.**

i. Healed. Forgiven. FREED. Fully redeemed.

ii. Fully accepted and adopted into God's own family as beloved sons and daughters

p. The Good News that what we could never do for ourselves,

iii. JESUS CHRIST DID FOR US.

i. Took the full penalty of our sins (past, present, and future), submitted to death on our behalf

11. So that we could be forgiven.

ii. And rose again from the dead so that we could likewise move from death to eternal life.

q. **[24] If so, I invite you to respond to His free offer of salvation through repentance**

i. Stop trying to do it on your own

ii. Give up your self improvement project

iii. And humble yourself before him

iv. Admit you're a sinner.

v. Believe that Jesus alone can save you

vi. And commit yourself to him from now on

12. Then immediately you move from death to life

13. And his spirit comes to live with you and in you forever

r. **If you're a Christian,**

i. **[25] Remember afresh your great need for the Gospel**

14. Let yourself be humbled again – healthily

15. Return to reality

16. You don't have to work it to be good with God

a. Even as a Christian

17. Submit yourself afresh to Christ

a. Repent of the ways you've subtly turned again to idolatrous ways of living

b. Trying to be good enough

c. Trying to make God happy with you

d. Trying to appease him by your production, your perfect family, your good works, your church work!

ii. Embrace again the Good News for you

18. And CELEBRATE that it's still good news for you

19. That you're in Christ even still



### iii. [26] Be reinvigorated for Mission

20. Many of your neighbors are lost and unable to save themselves.

- a. Look fine on the outside. Good job. Nice lawn. Helps with kids sports team.

21. But inside they're DEAD spiritually in their sins

22. On a treadmill of addiction and self-improvement, and delusion

23. Let the reminder of the way things really are blow on the embers of your love and compassion for others

24. To go and share the good news with them

**25. And us TOGETHER,**

- a. Let's be the kind of church that even more is invigorated for mission together.
  - i. That isn't content to come and consume on Sunday morning
  - ii. But takes seriously God's take on sin and judgement.
  - iii. And the great need of our world for salvation through the Gospel
- b. We'd be humble and engaged with our neighbors and community
- c. Fervent and compassionate.
- d. Shining together like a beacon of light in a dark world.

### 23. [27] COMMUNION

- a. This morning, we come to the table remembering and admitting we cannot justify ourselves.
  - i. Only Jesus Christ can.
- b. Your sober reminder of your great need for Jesus and his Gospel should quickly move you toward great celebratory gratitude!
  - ii. God doesn't want us to gravel on the ground and think ourselves vile worms
  - iii. Worthless in the sight of God, unloved and ashamed
- c. He wants us to accept and live in the free gift of his Redemption!
- d. And that's what we celebrate this morning as we take communion
  - iv. We are COMMUNING with God as we remember his sacrificial death on the cross, his body with the bread and his blood given for us with the cup
  - v. And we're communing with one another in remembering we're ALL EQUAL and united at the foot of the cross
- e. Come!

*Influenced heavily by Gary DeLashmutt's sermons:*

*"<https://www.dwellcc.org/teaching/1732/bible/romans/2/gary-delashmutt/1999/gods-bad-news-part-1>"*

*"<https://www.dwellcc.org/teaching/1732/bible/romans/2/gary-delashmutt/1999/gods-bad-news-part-2>"*





WALKING IN **V**ICTORY  
THROUGH ROMANS

ROMANS 1:18-3:20

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6:23 For the wages of sin is death





# IRRELIGIOUS PEOPLE

1:19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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 people are without excuse.



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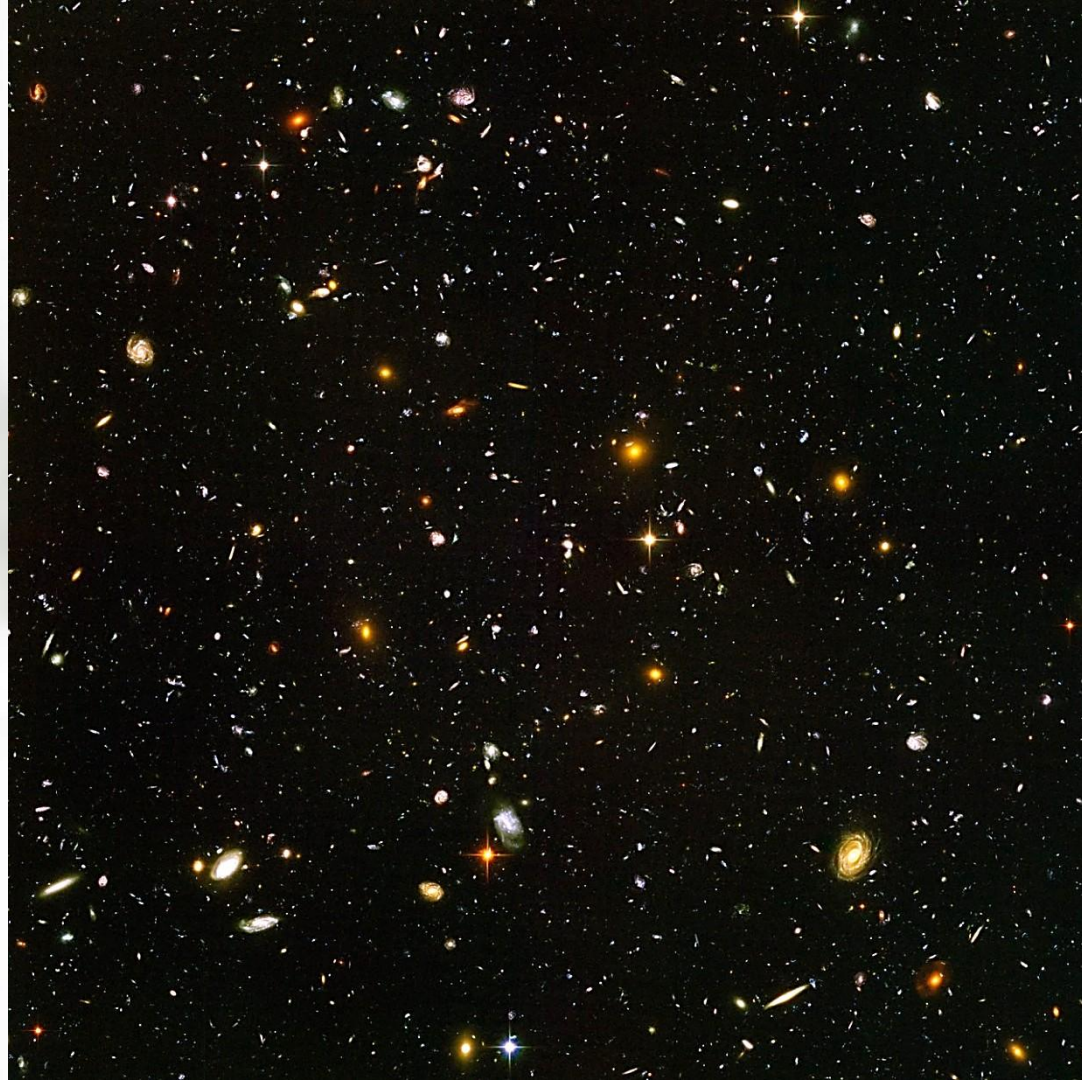
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## GENERAL REVELATION:

EXTERNAL: The Created Universe

INTERNAL: Human Conscience

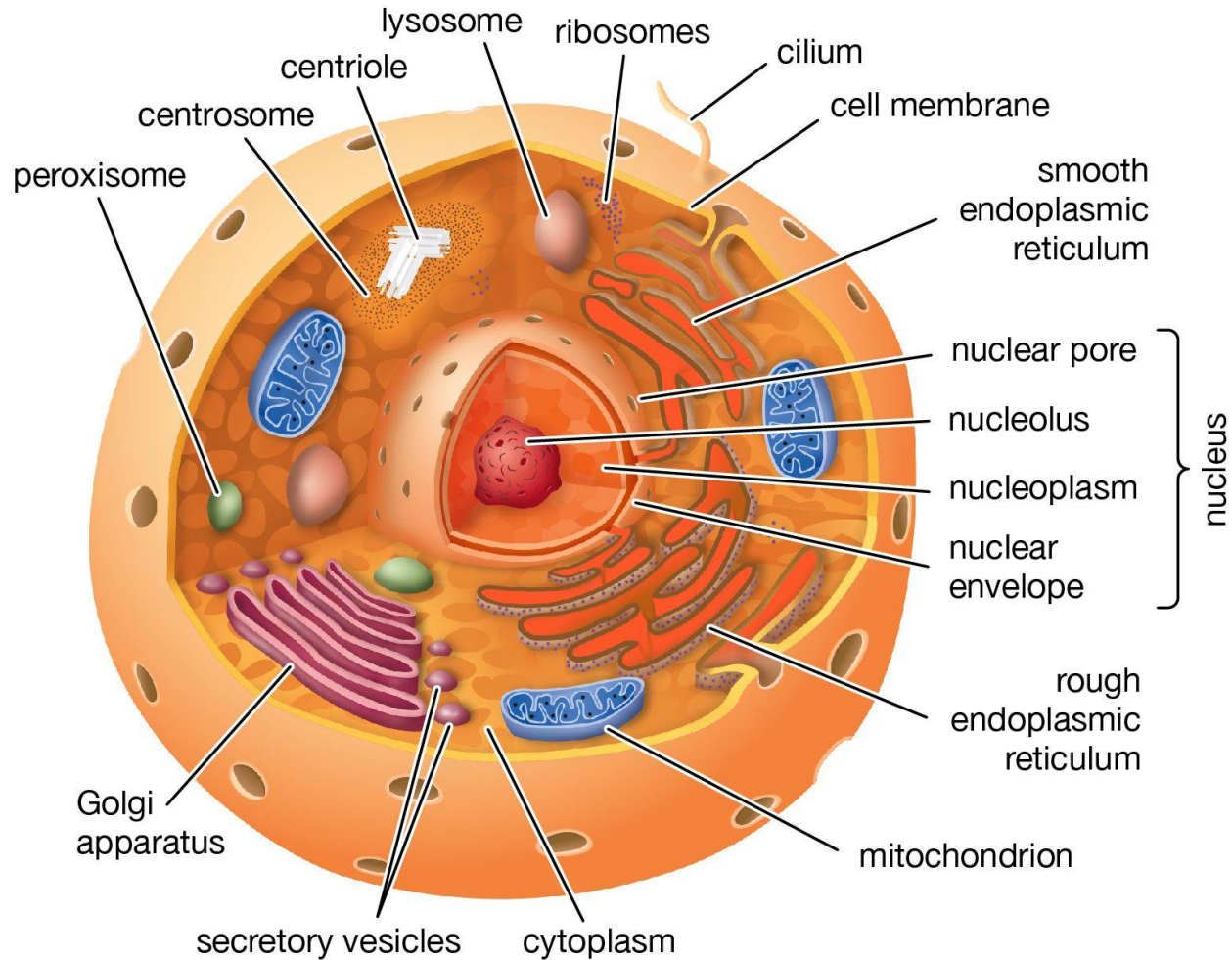




# HUBBLE ULTRA DEEP FIELD



# Animal cell





# IRRELIGIOUS PEOPLE

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EVIDENCE OF JUDGEMENT IS CLEAR TO SEE



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# RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

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  - D. Celebrate Communion.







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