

"The Second Missionary Journey"**Part 14****Acts 15:41-18:22**

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we started to look at Paul's sermon that he preached in Athens on Mars Hill. He had come to Athens to escape the persecution that had come at Berea. When he looked around Athens, he was struck by the idols which the Athenians had. The entire city was given over to idolatry. Paul found the synagogue and he went there to preach unto the Jews. He then made his way into the market where he encountered two groups of philosophers and when he preached to them of Jesus and the resurrection. When they heard Paul's doctrine, they brought him to Areopagus/Mars Hill, to hear more of what Paul was teaching. This then led to his sermon that he preached.

Notice Acts 17:18-21**➤ Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill**

Keep in mind that as Paul preaches this sermon that he is speaking to people who have no knowledge of the Old Testament. Therefore, Paul will not quote any Old Testament passages but he will simply state the facts of the Old Testament to them. He begins by referring to an altar they had that was built to THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Notice Acts 17:23

They had this altar so that they did not offend a god which they may have missed. They had many gods and many altars but just in case they forgot one they erected this altar. Paul stated that he would declare to them this UNKNOWN GOD.

Notice Acts 17:24

Paul starts by making three declarations about God.

1. He is the Creator.
2. He is sovereign over all of creation.
3. He does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Paul borrowed from the words of Stephen in this sermon. Stephen spoke much of the same words.

Acts 7:48-50

⁴⁸ Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

⁴⁹ *Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?*

⁵⁰ *Hath not my hand made all these things?*

Last week we looked at this for encouragement for our lives. There may be times we share the Truth with people and they mock us or they seem to ignore us. But we have no idea how the Truth will impact them at that time or even at a later date.

Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:*

¹¹ *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Notice Acts 17:25

Here in this verse Paul reveals that God is self-sufficient. He needs nothing from man. He is the Great Provider. Last week we considered how God does not need us but He does choose to allow us to be co-laborers with Him as He builds His church. Then God goes to another level and promises to reward us for our service that He does not even need us to do.

1 Corinthians 3:7-14

⁷ *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

⁸ *Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

⁹ *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

¹¹ *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Notice Acts 17:26a

All people of the world have come from one source. That would be Adam and Eve. There are not several races as the world declares but there is one race and it is the human race. There is one blood and it is human blood. Notice the words of Whitcomb on this verse.

"The Greeks did not believe that all men came from one source, namely Adam. They believed that they were specially created by their gods right in the Greek peninsula where they lived. They thought of themselves as a superior race. They believed that other people, such as barbarians, were created by some other gods wherever they lived. They did not know about one unified human race created by the one true and living God. In their pride, the Greeks saw themselves as superior to other people and to other races. 31 Paul's teaching that we all descended from the same man should have been helpful in countering any ideas of racial superiority. We are all children of fallen Adam, in great need of God's mercy and grace."

Notice Acts 17:26

Here in the second part of this verses is a very interesting thought. Every nation has been appointed by God and He has determined the limits of that very nation. He has determined who will live where and for how long they will live. That means that it was God who determined that we would live here in this part of the United States for this time period. Let us also remember we are in this time period for a purpose.

Esther 4:13-14

¹³ Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

¹⁴ For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Let us remember what God said to Abram.

Genesis 15:13-16

¹³ *And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;*

¹⁴ *And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*

¹⁵ *And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.*

¹⁶ *But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

God had determined that Abram's descendants would go into Egypt for 400 years and then come out with the spoils of the Egyptians. God determined how long they would be there and He determined how long the Amorites would survive. It all happened as He said. God sets the limits on every nation and on every nation's leaders.

Daniel 2:20-21

²⁰ *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

²¹ *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

God had determined the times of the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, Grecians, and the Roman Empire. He has also determined when our nation would begin and He has determined how long it will last and how it will all come to an end one day.

Notice Acts 17:27

God desires every person no matter where they are born to seek Him. But there is a verse that seems to contradict this.

Romans 3:10-11

¹⁰ *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

How are we to harmonize Acts 17:27 with Romans 3:11? We must understand that God is the one who initiates the reconciliation. We seek after Him because He first sought after us.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

We see this picture way back in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:8-9

⁸ *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

⁹ *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

It was God who sought after Adam and Eve in the Garden after they had sinned. It was God who sought after you and me while we were His enemies living as sinners to serve Satan's purpose.

Before I loved Him, He loved me.

Before I found Him, He found me.

Before I sought Him, He sought for me. Yes,

Jesus cares for me. -

Ron Hamilton

1 John 4:19

¹⁹ *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Notice Acts 17:28

Here in this verse Paul quotes two of the pagan Greek poets. He first quoted from Epimenides of Crete who lived 600 years earlier. Epimenides had written, "For in thee we live and move and have our being." The quote Paul shared with the Athenians was this: "In Him [in God] we live and move and have our being." Paul also quoted from Aratus of Cilicia. Three hundred years earlier, Aratus said, "For we are also His offspring." Paul was very wise in quoting these poets because he knew it would keep the attention of his unsaved audience. Let us notice again the first quote Paul made.

For in him we live, and move, and have our being;

There are three points to consider here.

1. Because of God we have life.
2. Because of God we can function in this life.
3. Because of God we exist.

We are who we are because of God. Each one of us is a miracle. Notice the words of Whitcomb in closing.

Conclusion:

Against All Odds, You Won the Race!

"Every person has been brought into this world by the living God, according to His sovereign purposes. You are exactly the person God wanted you to be. He put you in the right location, in just the right period of history. God was in charge of all your inherited genes, your appearance, your hair and eye color, your parents, your gender, and your birthplace. You had no choice in any of these things; praise God, He made no mistakes! Here is an amazing biology lesson which involves our reproductive system, showing how fearfully and wonderfully we are made by our Creator. It is common knowledge that the wife provides the egg, usually just one egg, and the husband provides the sperm (seed) which are innumerable. On average there are 100 million sperm competing for one egg; but it can even be as high as one billion or more. It is a great race to the egg and when the first sperm gets there and enters the egg, the "gate" instantly closes, and no others are allowed in. That is, the surface of the egg changes so that no other sperm can enter. Consider your genetic makeup. If another sperm had entered that egg, you would have been a totally different person genetically, perhaps even a different gender. You would not be the person you now are. (It could be likened to running in a race against 100 million or more other runners.) If you had not won the race, then you would not be the person you now are. The odds of ending up as the person you are could be compared to winning a lottery, that is, winning this "race" against insurmountable odds. Yet God is sovereign in it all, and you are exactly the person God intended you to be. It was not LUCK; it was the LORD! He does all things perfectly well! In Him, you live and move and have your being!"