Acts 102

Revelation of God

Acts 17:22-27

April 15, 2026

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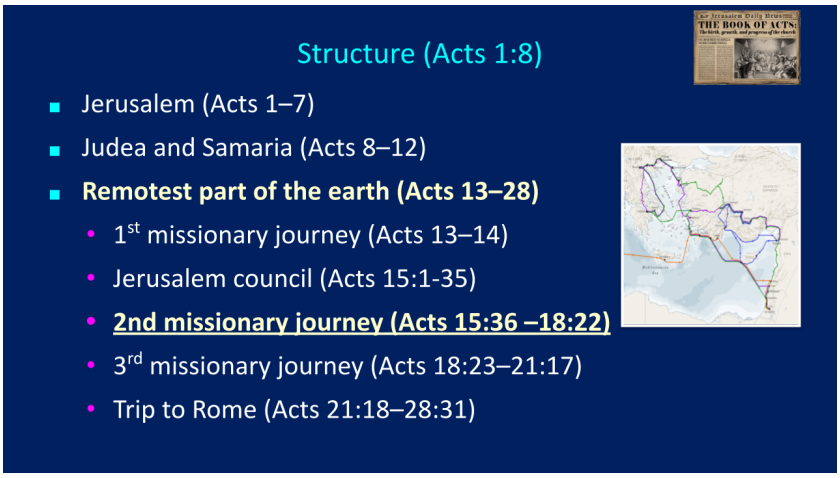
Let us take our Bibles this evening and open them to Acts 17. Jesus, speaking to the disciples in Acts 1:8, says,

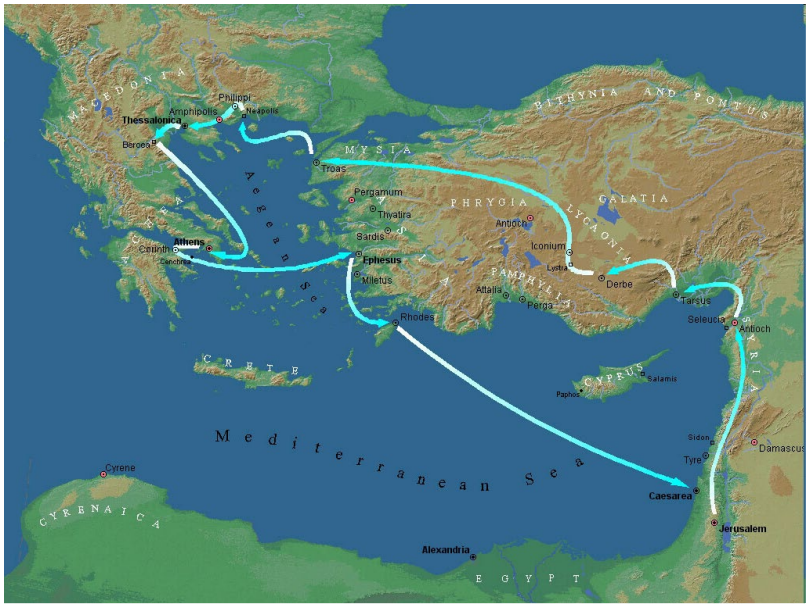
> *"'...and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem [Acts 1-7], and in all Judea and Samaria [Acts 8-12], and even to the remotest part of the earth [Acts 13-28]'" (Acts 1:8).*



That larger third part of the book is the part that we are in, which consists of Paul's first missionary journey into southern Galatia (Acts 13-14). We read about that. Then there is the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). "What do we do with all these saved Gentiles? Do they have to go under the Law to join the church?" The answer is no. That is what was dealt with in Acts 15. Then Paul launches on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22). There is the second missionary journey. That is what it looks like.

That is what we are in the midst of studying. It begins with a good old-fashioned argument between Paul and Barnabas leading to a split. Paul and Silas, and then later Timothy, move into southern Galatia, while Barnabas and John Mark head to the island of Cyprus. They kind of fall off the radar screen because Luke is tracing Paul.

Next he moves into Syria and Cilicia (Acts 16). Then there is the Macedonian call: "Come over to Europe and help us," which he does. The missionary team at this point is Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke. There is the Philippian ministry. Luke is left behind in Philippi and the team moves into Thessalonica. There is the Thessalonian ministry (Acts 17:1-9) and the Berean ministry (Acts 17:10-15). All of this we have studied, and now we are in the Athens ministry.



The Athens ministry has three parts to it. First, Paul's witness in Athens, which we studied last time (Acts 17:16-21). This is where they accuse Paul of being a babbler; he is teaching some strange doctrines (Acts 17:18, 20). They take him to the place called the Areopagus (Acts 17:19). I have actually been there and stood there. It is a place where itinerant speakers could come and get a hearing. It was not really a pulpit as much as it was a classroom where people would advance their ideas and people could refute, respond, etc.. This leads to an amazing speech that Paul gives on Mars Hill in what is known as the Areopagus in Athens, Greece (Acts 17:22-31).

VII. Athens Ministry (17:16-34)
- A. Paul's witness (16-21)
  1. Paul's provocation (16a)
  2. Athens' idolatry (16b)
  3. Athenian ministry (17)
  4. Philosophical opposition (18-21)
- B. Paul's speech (22-31)
- C. Athenians' response (32-34)

Then the third part of the Athens ministry is the Athenians' response to Paul's message, as we will see (Acts 17:32-34). Tonight we are going to start his speech on Mars Hill. What did he say? First of all, notice the location (Acts 17:22): *"So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus—"*

This is a different evangelistic strategy from what Paul used in Thessalonica and Berea. When he was in Thessalonica and Berea he went to the synagogue first. When he was in the synagogue he opened what we call Old Testament, better known as Hebrew Bible, sometimes called Tanakh. He was with people in the synagogue both in Berea

(Acts 17:10) and then Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-2), who were either Jewish or what you would call proselytes that had converted to Judaism.

These were people that respected the Old Testament; they respected its authority, so he would try to show them that their own Bible, Hebrew Bible, the Scriptures, which were really the only Scriptures that existed up to this point in time, predicted Jesus. You have to understand, you do not have a New Testament yet. The only New Testament books that have been written thus far are Galatians, probably James, and maybe Matthew, but other than that, you do not have a completed, nice and neat 27 books in the New Testament canon that we know.

If he is going to preach from the Bible and preach from the Scriptures, he has to preach from what we call the Old Testament. He would use the Old Testament to show them that Jesus is predicted in Hebrew Bible.

> *"Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom—" (Acts 17:1-2).*

Meaning, this is how he normally operated. This was standard operating procedure.

So according to Paul's custom, he would try to use Hebrew Bible to show Jesus. If you look at Acts 17:2, he is doing that. Then in Berea in Acts 17:10, he is doing that.

Here it is different. He does not use Hebrew Bible to evangelize, which he will do in this speech he gives on Mars Hill. Why does he not use Hebrew Bible here like he used it the prior two times in Acts 17? Answer: he is dealing with a different audience; he is dealing with people that are Gentile, pagan. If you opened Hebrew Bible to them, you might as well open the comic book section of the newspaper. "So what? It proves nothing."

He does not start with Hebrew Bible. He has a different evangelistic strategy depending on who he is talking to. That is really important. How do you evangelize? The message is the same, obviously, but your starting point comes from who it is that you are talking to and what kind of authority base they accept.

Instead of starting with Hebrew Bible, he starts with, as we will see, something called general revelation. There is a big difference between general revelation and special revelation. God has spoken in two ways: one is special revelation, meaning His word. What if people do not accept the Word of God? There is another way He has spoken. It is what we see all around us. It is the creation itself. There is an obvious design in creation, so there must be a Designer. This is what we call general revelation. That is why Paul's starting point at the Areopagus is general revelation, not special revelation.

This chart here shows you the difference between the two: general revelation has examples like nature (Romans 1) and conscience (Romans 2:14-15). Everybody knows the Ten Commandments, whether they have ever read them on a wall or in a book or in a Bible or not, because they are written on the hearts. That is called conscience. Everybody knows God exists because there is an obvious design in our universe. You cannot have a hurricane going through a junkyard and assembling a Boeing 747, right? If you have a Boeing 747, somebody obviously put it together. We are living in this world that is fine-tuned and intricately designed.

David said, in Psalm 139,

> *"...I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" (Psalm 139:14).*

No two snowflakes are the same. No two people's fingerprints are identical of the eight plus billion people on planet Earth. In fact, we are traveling around the sun at a huge velocity, and we are not so close to the sun that we burn to death, and we are not so far from the sun that we freeze to death. We orbit around the sun at exactly the right distance to sustain life. Anybody that thinks this through can see that somebody bigger than us put all of this together. That is called general revelation.

Special revelation is something more specific, like the incarnation of Jesus (God becoming man), the 66 books of the Bible that we have called the Scripture, or a specific miracle that God might do. General revelation is available to everybody; special revelation is available to some people.

What does general revelation do? It cannot save you. What it can do is give you the information necessary to search for God, because it shows you that you are accountable to something bigger than you. If a person's heart is open, God will send him the special revelation that he needs to be saved, but general revelation by itself cannot save anybody.

You cannot get saved by looking at rocks and trees and things like that, because it does not have the specific information in there that we need for gospel salvation. It can make you accountable to search for truth, like Cornelius was searching for truth and God sent him Peter (Acts 10). The Ethiopian eunuch was searching for truth, and God sent him Philip (Acts 8). It makes you accountable.

The problem with the natural man is that, many times, he takes the obvious revelation of God in creation and he suppresses it. Once you start doing that then you have problems because God is not going to send you any more revelation. If you cannot accept the general revelation, what are you going to do with the message of the gospel? You would reject that as well.

I will show you the verse in Romans 1 that says that man's natural ambition is to suppress what God has created. However, if he does not suppress it, but searches for

truth, God sends him what he needs to be saved. Special revelation, on the other hand, gives you the specific information that you need to be saved. It is the gospel.

Paul, writing to Timothy, says that the Scriptures are capable of making us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15). General revelation is typically a non-written or non-verbal form; special revelation is in written form, like the Scripture. Even Jesus was in written form, if you think about it, because He is called the 'logos' or the 'Word' (John 1:1-3). His humanity described to human beings what God is like.

The quality of general revelation is natural, everyday occurrences. Special revelation, whether it is a miracle, the incarnation, or the inspiration of the Scriptures, is something that is miraculous, a miracle—a non-ordinary thing has to happen for it to come into existence. Very sadly, what people do with general revelation is they end up suppressing it.

Romans 1 says: *"For the wrath of God is revealed—" (Romans 1:18).* Now the word 'revealed' there is the Greek word 'apokalypsis' ('apokalypto' [ἀποκαλύπτω]), which is the same word used to describe the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:1 says: *"The Revelation ['apokalypsis' (ἀποκάλυψις), the unveiling] of Jesus Christ,..."*

General revelation is the unveiling of God. It openly discloses God's existence.

> *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," (Romans 1:18).*

You walk into a house and there is a card house erected in your living room, and you say to yourself, "That just came about through random chance events. Someone left the door open, and the wind obviously put all this together." If I said something like that, you would think I am certifiable, right? But people do that with general revelation all of the time.

The reason is that they do not want to be accountable to something bigger than themselves. They buy into something very intellectually sloppy, like the evolution revolution, for example, and they call it science and all of this stuff. What it really is is an attempt by the natural man to escape accountability, because the moment you believe there is something bigger than you out there, is the moment you believe you are not God and you are accountable to something higher than yourself. You are accountable to search for truth.

The natural man does not want to do that. He wants to be on the throne of his own life. He has this incredible Herculean task of explaining away creation without the Creator. Every generation has tried to do this. It is just that in our time period the theory of evolution is the escape valve. It is not science, It is a suppression of truth.

> *"...who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what is known about God is evident within them;..." (Romans 1:18-19).*

That is conscience. That is Romans 2:14-15. There is a barometer inside everybody, a standard of right and wrong, because God has taken His law and written it on people's hearts (Romans 2:15). That is why you listen to these psychologists and they say, "There is a big problem with people. People feel guilty." I am thinking, "Do you know why they feel guilty? It is because they are guilty."

The reason they are guilty is that God put His law in their hearts. They either honor His law and their conscience excuses, or they violate God's law and conscience accuses (Romans 2:14-15). What is scary about conscience is that you can go so far in rejecting it, rebelling against it, that it loses its power after a while. Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:2, talks about people having their consciences seared as with a hot iron. You do not feel guilty about stuff anymore.

We had a situation in California where a guy (his name was Robert Alton Harris), who strangled two kids to death, and then he sat down after he strangled them to death, and finished their lunches, their McDonald's hamburgers. That was a big deal in the 90s, because California was bringing back the death penalty in order to put this guy to death, which I supported because I think the institution of capital punishment is Biblical. What do you do with a guy like that? He is so depraved and has violated his conscience so many times, that the concept of guilt is not there anymore. There is nothing. You do not blush anymore.

It is like pain. You are walking on the beach and you feel pain in your foot. That is a good thing because the pain tells you that there is glass under the sand. If you keep walking on the beach, you are going to destroy your feet. The pain says, "Put some shoes on or get off the sand." It is like having your hand on a hot stove and all of a sudden it hurts and you yank it off. Your pain then is your best friend. If you did not have that pain, you would keep your hand there. You would not know the difference and your hand would be destroyed. That is how conscience functions. God has given humanity a conscience, and you can sear it, which is what is troubling (1 Timothy 4:2).

> *"...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).*

People have an obligation to search for God because whether they know anything about the Bible, or ever heard a preacher, or ever been to church, they instinctively know there is something higher than themselves out there. That is the function of general revelation.

When Paul is in front of a pagan audience, not in the synagogue, this is the Bible he appeals to: general revelation, which is a Bible. It is just a different method that God has used to speak. You might remember when Paul was in Lystra (Acts 14:15-17), he tipped his hand as to what his strategy would be with unregenerate Gentiles. He would appeal to general revelation as a starting point.

> *"and saying, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God,* WHO MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM. *In generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without a witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness'" (Acts 14:15-17).*

See how he is appealing to weather and creation and things like that? He uses that as a springboard to preach Jesus. It is very different from when he is in the synagogue where he uses Hebrew Bible to preach Jesus. That is why Paul is doing what he is at the Areopagus on Mars Hill.

As he starts to give his speech, he gives the introduction (Acts 17:22-23). He starts describing his audience (Acts 17:22):

> *"...and said, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects'" (Acts 17:22).*

'Very religious' means, "Maybe you guys know nothing about Christianity, and maybe you do not want anything to do with the synagogue, but you guys are very religious people. You are pious, you are religious, and you are superstitious." That is his starting point; that is his springboard into truth. He gives an evidence of why he described the audience this way in Acts 17:23:

> *"'For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar to this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD'..." (Acts 17:23).*

"I was just passing through Athens before they brought me here to the Areopagus and I saw a pagan altar, and it was addressed to the unknown god."

The Greek there is where we get the word 'agnostic' ('agnostos' [ἄγνωστος]). The alpha prefix is a negation, so an 'agnostic'—'gnosis' (γνῶσις) meaning 'knowledge'—is someone who says without knowledge. It is where we get the word 'agnostic' from.

Paul says, "I was traveling through. I saw this pagan altar. You are worshiping some kind of god, but you have no idea who this god is." That is what the inscription *"'TO AN*

UNKNOWN GOD'" on this pagan altar means. From that Paul says, "I am going to describe from unknown to known. I am going to make you aware of who God actually is, whom you apparently are interested in, or you would not have this pagan altar dedicated to this unknown god."

He gives an introduction to this in Acts 17:23: *"'...Therefore what you worship in ignorance,...'"* which is really what the inscription on their pagan altar was—*"'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."* They are admitting their ignorance.

Ignorance is different from stupidity. Ignorance means that you do not have the information. Stupidity is that you cannot understand the information even if you have it. Paul is not insulting these people at all. He is not questioning their intellect. He is just saying, "You do not know what you do not know, and you are searching for this God that you apparently think exists. You are admitting that you really do not know much about Him." That becomes his springboard to saying, "Let me tell you about Him."

> *"'...Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you'" (Acts 17:23).*

From there he starts giving the characteristics of the true God. He gives a wonderful theology lesson here. He describes five things about God. Number one, God is the Creator (Acts 17:24):

> *"'The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;'" (Acts 17:24).*

"You are searching for a God that you are admitting you do not know much about. Let me tell you about the true God."

The first thing Paul mentions is the doctrine of creation. When he mentions the doctrine of creation, he is aiming his theology at the misguided belief of the Stoics. If you go back to Acts 17:18 it talks about how the Epicureans and the Stoics were conversing with him. We described who those groups were last time.

You will notice that Paul is bringing up things that their particular philosophers were wrestling with. Paul, as he is sharing, is very sensitive to what his audience thinks and believes philosophically.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

> "The first characteristic is that God is the Creator and the source of life (v. 24). When Paul stated, *The God that made the world and all things therein*, he used Stoic language because this argument was aimed toward the Stoics. He challenged certain Greek ideas, such as that the *demiurge*

> created the universe. Furthermore, the fact that the Creator brought all things into being proved that matter did not exist eternally, as they believed."[1]

This is something that makes the Christian worldview different. We do not believe that matter has always been. What we believe is the 'ex nihilo' (Latin) understanding of creation—'ex nihilo,' which means 'something out of nothing.' There was nothing. Then God spoke and something came into existence (Genesis 1:1-3).

This is very different from what you get in other belief systems where there is always some kind of preexisting matter or preexisting system that was shaped and molded. That is not what the Christian worldview says. The Christian worldview is 'ex nihilo'—there was nothing, then God spoke it into existence. You cannot worship matter. You cannot be a materialist, because there was a time in which matter did not even exist.

> "Furthermore, the fact that the Creator brought all things into being proved that matter did not exist eternally, as they believed. Paul declared that one God made everything, which contradicted the idea of a pantheon with a god for this and a god for that."[2]

A God for the sun. A God for the stars. A God for the moon. A God for the grass. A God for the animals. Paul is contradicting all of that and saying, "One God brought everything into existence."

> Then Paul said that this God is not only the Creator of the universe, but also *Lord of heaven and earth.* God is the Owner and the absolute Possessor of both heaven and earth, not just parts of them. He does not dwell *in temples made with hands*, like the *Parthenon* in Athens."[3]

Right next door, when you go to Athens, Greece (and we have been there, I think three or four times), there is the Athenian Parthenon, which is a giant temple that you can go and visit and walk around in. What he is saying here is, "God is not living in that temple that you guys built over there, which is right next door. He does not dwell in temples. He supersedes these things. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth."

Stephen was the first deacon and he was stoned to death. Those of you that want to be deacons, you might want to think twice about that. This is what Steven says as they are getting ready to throw rocks at him to the point of death:

> *"'However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says:*

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[1] Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 371.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

"HEAVEN IS MY THRONE,
AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET;
WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?" says the Lord,
"OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE?
"WAS IT NOT MY HANDS WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?"" (Acts 7:48-50).

The first thing to understand about God as Paul is speaking to these pagans is that God is the Creator. The second thing to understand about God is that He is sufficient. That is in Acts 17:25. What does that mean? He does not need man for His own happiness.

It is not as if He created us because He was lonely, as I have heard some preachers say. "Poor God just wanted a pal. He was all by Himself for all those billions of eons of eternity, and He just needed someone to hug. He needed a pal and needed a friend." They portray it as if somehow God needs man. But that is not who God is. He is sufficient in the sense that He does not need anything. He does not need man at all.

In Acts 17:25, Paul takes that out (the idea that God needs anyone or anything and is not self-sufficient). He says:

"'nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;'" (Acts 17:25).

It is not as if God needs us, but we surely need Him. In fact, we are dependent upon Him, Paul seems to be indicating here, for our very next breath. The reason you woke up this morning and your heart was palpitating and your respiratory system was working was because God allowed it. At any point in time, God can say, "That is enough," and shut the whole thing down.

This is the whole issue of Daniel confronting the last king of Neo-Babylonia, a guy named Belshazzar. It is in the handwriting on the wall chapter (Daniel 5). Belshazzar was the guy who took the vessels from the temple, you remember, and had a big alcoholic bash there in Babylonia when Daniel, around age 80, confronted him. Daniel says this in Daniel 5:23:

"'...But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified'" (Daniel 5:23).

"Here you are, partying on as if there is no tomorrow, doing sacrilegious things with the vessels of God, thinking you are invincible, and your very life and your very breath and your very ways are in His hands, and that God you will not glorify." That is why the handwriting appeared on the wall: "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," which was a prophecy that "tonight your kingdom is going to be divided and you will be killed" (Daniel 5:25-28).

That is exactly what happened to this descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, this ruler Belshazzar, who should have known better. He had the record of Nebuchadnezzar, who was either his father or grandfather, of how he was humbled and turned into an animal for seven years, and how he humbled himself. Belshazzar knew all that, but he would not humble himself before God, even though his life, his breath, and his ways were in God's hands. That is what Paul is getting at here. God is totally sufficient. He does not need us.

Then he communicates not only that God is the Creator, but He is the Creator of the human race. You see that in Acts 17:26:

> *'"and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,'" (Acts 17:26).*

There are two things here in Acts 17:26: "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth," meaning that all humanity owes its origin to the first man, Adam—the first couple (Mom and Dad, so to speak) Adam and Eve. All of humanity, regardless of where they are living on planet Earth, can trace their lineage back to Adam and Eve.

Later in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, Paul says:

> *"For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).*

Our heritage all goes back to the first man, by way of creation and also by way of original sin. As our head, Adam's sin affected all of us.

> *"Therefore, just as one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12).*

We are all one in Adam by way of creation; we are all one in Adam, the first Adam, by way of original sin. That means what? Biblically there is no concept of race or races. People use that expression all the time: "this race," or "that race." There is no such thing as different races. There is one race: the human race.

We are all equal in the sense that we are all made in God's image as human beings, regardless of skin pigmentation, or what part of the world we happen to live in. We are all equal in that sense. We are all equal in the sense that we owe our heritage to Adam. We are all equal in the sense that we are all guilty under original sin. So the whole human race is connected to Adam in that sense.

When you understand that, it gets rid of the concept of racism. You cannot be a racist as a Biblicist. It is impossible. You cannot look at another ethnicity as inferior and deserving to be subjugated because they are from the same Adam that I am from. Racism is dead.

Charles Darwin wrote his book "The Origin of Species" in 1859. This is the reprint. It says in third edition at the top: "Charles Darwin, On the Origin of the Species, By Means of Natural Selection." Everybody reads that and says, "What a beautiful scientific tome," when the truth of the matter is that what this guy said and did was racist to its core.

How do I know that? Because here is the original edition of what was published in 1859. What I just read to you there was the third edition. Here is what the original edition said, from 1859. Here is the full title, which was conveniently clipped out of the subsequent editions. Here is what the whole title says: "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection." That is where the other one, the revised or subsequent edition, stops. But there is more. You keep reading: "Or the Preservation of the Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life."

Well, what do you mean, 'favored races'? Does that not seem mildly racist to you? You cannot use expressions like, 'favored races.' Why is he saying 'favored races'? Because according to evolution we came from the goo to you by way of the zoo over billions of years. You can actually go to the Houston Zoo and visit your ancestors there in the orangutan cage. Some people are further evolved than others. The white race is more sophisticated than the black race, because the black race is not as highly evolved and is closer to the monkey than is the white race.

If you want to attack racism, which we should, that is where you attack it. Biblically, you cannot be a racist. It is impossible, but boy, you certainly can be if you are an evolutionist. Get the Ben Stein movie called "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed." It is a documentation of what happens to creationists in secular academia when everybody else gets wind that they are a creationist. Their grants disappear; their careers are destroyed; they do not get tenure; they do not get published. It is like professional suicide.

There is a section at the end where they are talking about the Nazis and exposing what the Nazis did in the Holocaust. At the core of Nazi ideology was Darwinism, because the Nazis told everyone that the Jewish race needed to be subjugated and exterminated because they are lower on the evolutionary scale than the Aryan race.

Henry Morris, the progenitor of the young earth creationist movement, has a book out on this. It is not a science book, although he wrote a ton of science books. It is dealing with these kinds of sociological issues. It is called "The Long War Against God." If you are looking for something to read it is a great reading project to invest yourself in. "The Long War Against God" by Henry Morris will document this and show you how evolution is behind racism; evolution is behind Nazism; evolution is behind slavery in America;

evolution is behind the Jim Crow South; and it is behind a host of other things that you may have not even thought about.

Karl Marx is the founder of communism, which has killed hundreds of millions of people. If you do not think communism killed hundreds of millions of people, there is another book you need to read called the "The Black Book of Communism." I think it is sometimes called the little black book, but it is not little, it is big. It documents all of the total atrocities that were committed in the 20th century under the doctrine of communism.

The communists killed many more people than the Nazis, but we know about the Nazis because we had the Nuremberg trials where the Nazis were put under a spotlight and were tried by international law. We never did that with the communists. The communists kind of slip under the radar.

People do not think communism is that bad. The youth of today are brainwashed to accept socialism and communism. A lot of them think it is cool and they have no understanding of the history of this in the 20th century because we never had a Nuremberg trial exposing communism.

Evolution is behind communism. What I mean by that is that it is the philosophical basis for communism. It is the philosophical basis for Nazism, and it is the philosophical basis for racism, as is evidenced by the full title of Charles Darwin's book "The Origin of the Species," where the subtitle is clipped and no one even knows it is there anymore, but it is there in the original.

This guy was racist absolutely to the core. It is funny listening to people trying to blame racism on Christianity. What? In Christianity you cannot be a racist because we are all equal—we all owe our heritage to Adam. But if you are tracing the origin of people back to animals, you could easily say, "That group is closer to the animals than other groups. They are under-evolved. What is the problem of putting them in chains? It is no different than putting an orangutan in a cage at the zoo."

Acts 17:26 is huge. What Paul is saying here is that God is the Creator of the human race. Our lineage all goes back to one man, Adam. It is totally, diametrically opposed to what the philosophies of the day are.

You, as a parent and a grandparent, need to start talking to your kids and your grandkids about things like this, because they are not going to hear it anywhere else unless they go to a church like this, where we talk about stuff like that. They are around all these cable specials and university professors that never talk to them about things like this. That means Mom and Dad and Grandma and Grandpa need to get off the couch, get equipped, get into the game, and get involved in the worldview wars.

Paul makes a radical statement here:

> *'"and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,'" (Acts 17:26).*

Does that not sound like borders to you? Borders. Boundaries. Nations. You mean God created all of that? Of course He did. It goes back to the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), where they were trying to build a stairway to heaven under Nimrod.

> *"They said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth'" (Genesis 11:4).*

Now, when you look at Josephus, the first-century historian, and his commentary on this, what he says is that they were trying to build a tower so high into heaven that if God were to ever dare send a flood again, they would be impervious to the flood. What they were trying to do (if Josephus is right), was to build a new world order, which is a one-world system of government, religion, and politics, which excludes God. "We do not want anything to do with God."

You know the story. I do not want to call it a story. It is a historical account. When we say 'story,' we make it sound like it is "Jack and the Beanstalk" or something. This is real history that happened. The Lord said, "If they keep doing what they are doing now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:6).

If there is only one government on the face of the earth and it falls into the wrong hands, think of the evil that could be done. It was already in the wrong person's hands, the hands of a guy named Nimrod, whose name is mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 10:8-10). By the way, his name in Hebrew means 'revolt' or 'rebellion.' If there is one government on the face of the earth and it is controlled by somebody that hates God, think of the evil that could be done. Think of the totalitarianism that could be imposed. Think of the enslavement that could be imposed.

God confused the language.

> *"So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel,—" (Genesis 11:8-9).*

Now 'bab' means 'gate' in Hebrew. You know what 'el' means, right? It means 'God.'[4] They were trying to build a gateway to God; they were trying to build a stairway to heaven; they were trying to become a god themselves. Heaven's gate. It is a play on words. They could not cooperate with each other anymore because they were all

[4] https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h894/nasb95/wlc/0-1/

speaking different languages. As they were trying to build it sounded like their co-laborers were babbling.

This is where the doctrine of individual nations came from. Each similar-speaking people group settled in their own region. There were different ethnicities and different nations, but not different races. Do not say there were different races because there is one race, the human race. But there were different ethnicities? Yes. Different nationalities? Yes. Different nations? Sure.

God wanted it this way because it decentralizes power. As long as they could not cooperate with each other, they could not build their new world order. If they could not build their new world order, they could not bring in totalitarianism under Nimrod.

By the way, America's founding fathers did the exact same thing with the three branches of government that we have: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branch. These are the only three ways political power can be exercised. If you want to know where those came from, you will see them mentioned in Isaiah 33:22: the Lord God is our king, executive power; the Lord God is our lawgiver, legislative power; and the Lord God is our judge, judicial power. Legislative, make the law; executive, enforce the law; judicial, interpret the law.

Our founding fathers said, "Separate them, because if one person who happens to have a sin nature gets control of all three, then that person will lead the country into tyranny." Hamilton, Madison, and Jay wrote "The Federalist Papers," which are explanations of the original intent of our Constitution. They were trying to get the citizens of New York to ratify the Constitution. They said that the moment you intermingle two of the three branches in any way is the moment you have tyranny.

Our founding fathers set up everything so that it would be inefficient and not one person could get control. When I am watching cable and I hear some announcer say, "Nothing is getting done in Washington," I say, "Praise God. It is the way it is supposed to be." If you want to live in a country where everything gets done fast, I would recommend Iran or somewhere like that. They get stuff done really fast there.

That is where nations came from:

> *"These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32).*
>
> *"'When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,*
> *When He separated the sons of man,*
> *He set the boundaries of the peoples*
> *According to the number of the sons of Israel'" (Deuteronomy 32:8).*

God is the author of the individual nation. What do you need for a nation? If you are going to say, "We are going to have a nation," then what do you need to have? You need to have four things. This is what is called in Latin the 'sine qua non' ('without which there is not'). You take away one of those things and you do not have a nation anymore. You need to have a common currency, a common language, a common culture, and what else? It is being debated in our country all of the time. You need enforceable national borders. If you do not, or if you take away one of those four, you do not have a country anymore.

People who are saying, "Let's keep the border open," are denying America as being an independent nation. That is what Paul is talking about when he says *"the boundaries of their habitation," (Acts 17:26).* God created borders and nations.

Megan Basham says:

> "Scripture does not require us to sacrifice national sovereignty. In fact, Acts 17:26 tells us that God 'marked out [our] appointed times in history and the boundaries of [our] lands.' The Lord is not opposed to borders; He invented them. Nor does this command require us to abandon good sense and prudence when setting limits for how many immigrants we admit and what qualifications we use for doing so."[5]

If you take that away, then you are saying that we are not a country. God created countries. God created nations. Everybody is trying to make borders sound evil. They are not evil at all; God originated them. What was His purpose in this? I will cover this one and we will call it a day. Why did God create the borders of their habitation?

> *"'that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us;'" (Acts 17:27).*

God gave all of the nations the general revelation that people would need to seek God—God created these different nationalities and nations; He did not want the human race to be sucked into totalitarianism, which is what they were trying to do at Babel—that people would have the freedom to seek God, to follow the light of general revelation, and thus be open to special revelation.

You notice that people have the ability to seek God. Do you see that in the Bible? Does it say that? It says, *"that they would seek God'" (Acts 17:27).* That means people can seek God.

What do you do with this one?

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[5] Megan Basham, *Shepherds for Sale*, 50.

> *"'THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,*
> *THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;'" (Romans 3:11).*

It is the Calvinists' favorite verse.

John MacArthur says,

> "Because we were dead to God, we were dead to truth, righteousness, peace, happiness, and every other good thing, no more capable to respond to God than a cadaver [that is a corpse]" and are "spiritual zombies, death-walkers, unable even to understand the gravity of their situation. They are lifeless."[6]

That is how the Calvinist looks at people. It is not just depraved, it is inability. They say that God regenerates the elect first and gives them the gift of faith; everyone who is not of the elect is left in a lifeless state. You are just like a rock; you cannot respond to God—just like this desk right here is lifeless and has no ability to respond to God—unless God does a miracle on the front end.

They get this by quoting Romans 3:11 over and over again: *"'THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.'"* Yet I just read you a verse in the Bible which says that God set up nations that they would seek God. Why would Paul say that, and then later in Romans say that no one seeks God? If we are left to our own devices, we would not seek God, but we are not left to our own devices. God has given us light.

He has given us the Holy Spirit's conviction, which goes out into the whole world (John 16:7-11). He has given us His word. He has given us the gospel. He has given us the light of creation (Romans 1). He has given us the light of conscience (Romans 2). People have the ability now, with these graces built into our universe, to seek God. That is what Paul means in Acts 17:27. When he says in Romans 3:11 that no one seeks God, it is speaking of man in his natural state without all this stuff I have mentioned here.

We do have people in the Bible that are seeking God. One of them is named Cornelius (Acts 10:2). We have already studied him.

> *"Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually" (Acts 10:1-2).*

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[6] John F. MacArthur Jr., *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 64-65.

That guy looks like a believer to me, but he was not. You know how I know he was not? Because the next chapter gives us the chronology of his salvation. He did not become a believer until Peter was sent to him with the gospel (Acts 11:14):

> *""and he [Peter] will speak words to you by which you [Cornelius] will be saved,..."" (Acts 11:14).*

This means that when Cornelius was doing all this other stuff—devout, feared God, giving alms, praying to God—he was unsaved. What was he doing? He was seeking God to the best knowledge he had, which is general revelation. Because he was not suppressing the obvious, God sent him special revelation through Peter. That is why Peter in his Epistle says that God does not want anyone to perish "but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9): because he was on the ground floor. He saw this God-seeker, Cornelius—a Gentile, unsaved—seeking God.

That is why God set up these borders, boundaries, and nations. Who is God? He is the Creator. He is sufficient. He is humanity's Creator. We owe all of our parentage back to Adam. God is the One that created the different nations. God had a purpose in it that people might seek Him in their own nation, under the non-tyrannical Tower of Babel atmosphere.