

Romans Series

Lesson #18

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Epistle to the ROMANS



Conclusions from Rom 1:18ff

- 1. All men are inherently religious, that is they worship something, but what they worship is something in the creation: animals, idols, or intellectual systems.**
- 2. All men are in rebellion against the Creator God by virtue of sin and thus will generate some substitute god. All men know that they are in violation of God's standard.**
- 3. That God created all men with an internal knowledge of His existence and His external witness within creation was sufficient for humanity to know God exists.**

Conclusions from Rom 1:18ff

- 4. That the ultimate issue in life was neither intellectual nor education, nor IQ, nor experience, but a moral decision to reject the knowledge of God.**
- 5. There are some people who have already understood the Creator God, so the issue in communication with them is different.**

Common Ground

Reason

Experience

Intuition



SCRIPTURE



The Great Chain of Being

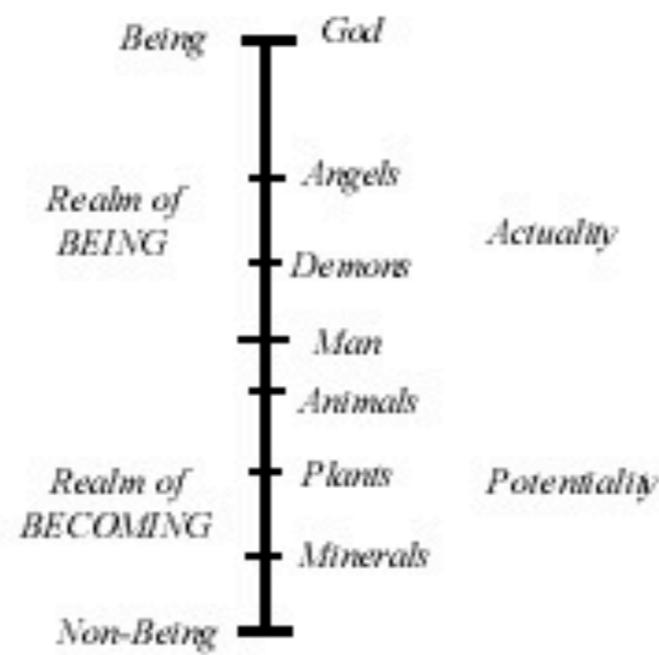


Fig. 1

The Great Chain of Being

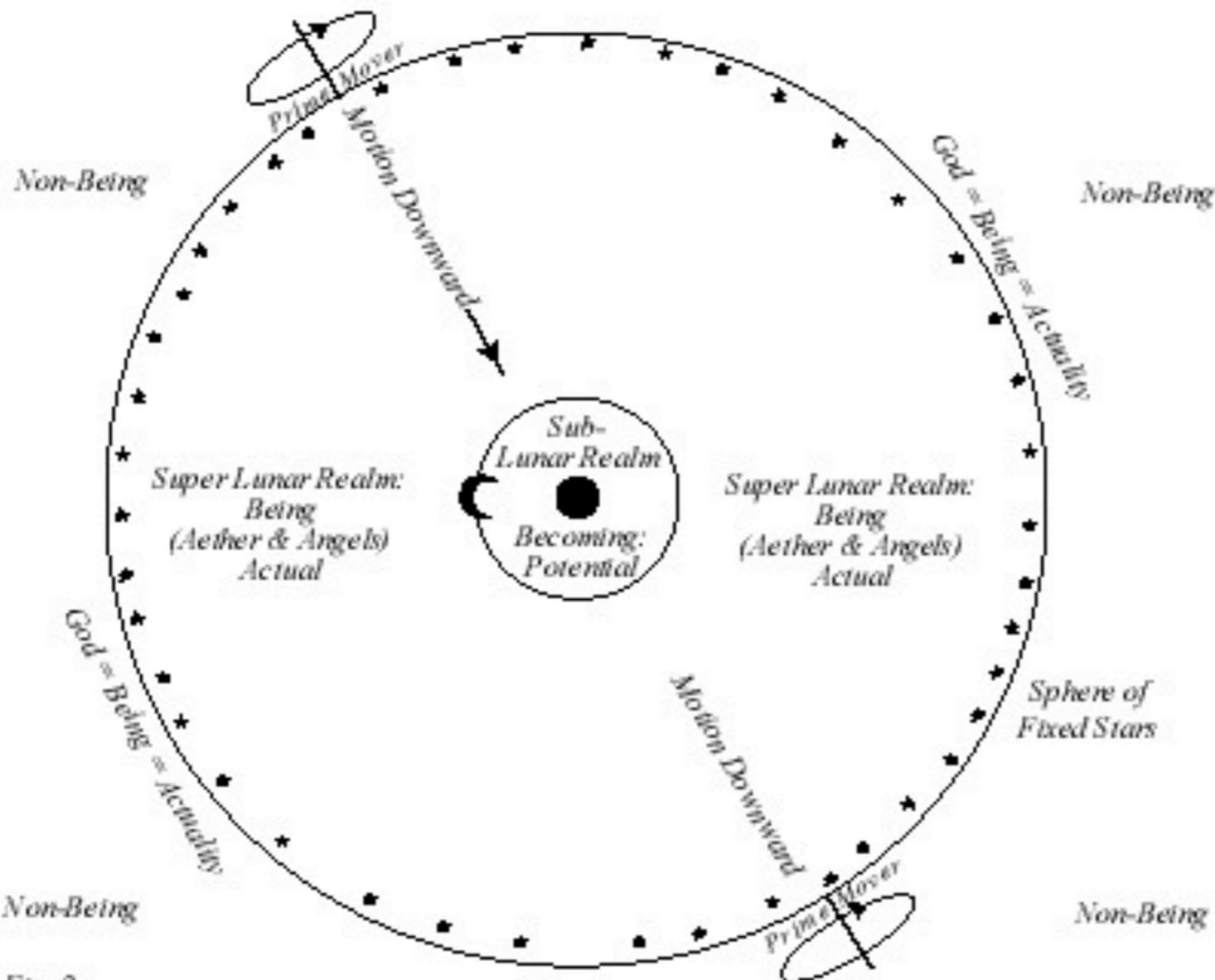


Fig. 2

Aristotle's Hierarchically ordered Cosmos

**Chain of Being
emanating
from “god”**

“god”

Angelic beings

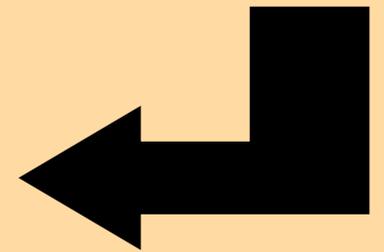
Human beings

Animals

Vegetation

Rocks, dirt, water

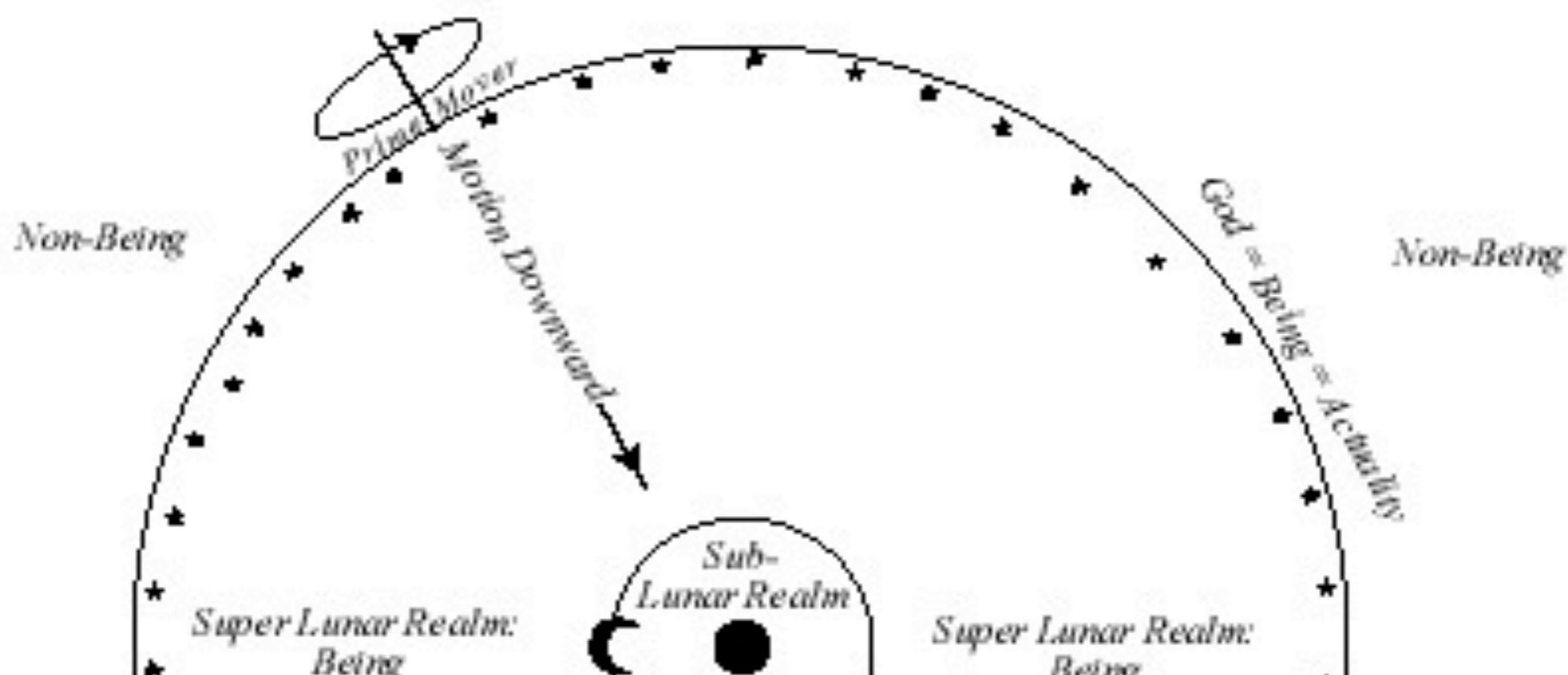
**Being or
raw
existence
itself**



The Great Chain of Being



Fig. 1



Acts 17:16, “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.”



Acts 17:17, “So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”



Acts 17:18, “And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,’ – because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”



Stoicism

Pantheist, monists

All things come from the one element of fire and will return into one cosmic conflagration

Cyclical view of cosmic history: one universe follows the destruction of the previous

Epicurus (342–270 BC)

The athiest materialists of the time

Acts 17:18, “And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,’ – because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”



Acts 17:19, “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?’ ”



Acts 17:20, “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.”



Acts 17:21, “(Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)”



Acts 17:22, “So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.’ ”

Acts 17:23, “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.”

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 17:25, “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;”

Isa. 42:5, “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it:”

Psa. 50:9, “I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds.

Psa. 50:10, “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.

Psa. 50:11, “I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

Psa. 50:12, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.”

1 Kings 8:27, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”

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,”

Deut. 32:8, “When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.”

Acts 17:29, “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.

Acts 17:30, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”

Deut. 4:19, “And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.”

Acts 17:27, “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

**Psa. 74:7, “They have set fire to Your sanctuary;
they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name
to the ground.”**

Acts 17:30, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”

Acts 17:28, “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ ”

**“They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—
The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies!—
But thou art not dead; thou livest and abidest for ever,
For in thee we live and move and have our being.”**

~Epimenides the Cretan (c. 600 B.C.)

“Let us begin with Zeus. Never, O men, let us leave him unmentioned. All the ways are full of Zeus, and all the market-places of human beings. The sea is full of him; so are the harbors. In every way we have all to do with Zeus, for we are truly his offspring.”

~Aratus

Acts 17:29, “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.

Acts 17:30, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”

Acts 17:31, “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in [by means of] righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

Acts 17:32, “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’ ”

Acts 17:33, “So Paul departed from among them.

Acts 17:34, “However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”