

- 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though he needed anything,
since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;
26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face
of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the
boundaries of their habitation,
27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and
find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;
28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own
poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'
29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine
Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and
thought of man.
30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now
declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,
31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in
righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having
furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.'

Commentary:

This passage finds Paul standing on Mars Hill (the Areopagus), surrounded by temples, and reasoning with his curious hearers. To establish a point of contact and to help apply his message, Paul quotes from the Greek poets Aratus and Cleanthes (both Stoics). Aratus wrote, "Ever and in all ways we all enjoy Jupiter, for we are also his offspring"; and Cleanthes, in a hymn to Zeus, wrote "for from you we are offspring." Since some of his hearers were Stoics (verses 18-19), presumably they would not deny what their own poets had said! Paul then moves quickly from the quotation (which was only formally true, since it was spoken of Zeus or Jupiter) to an argument.

In verse 29 Paul presents a deductive argument. Since human beings are offspring of God, they should not think that God is like a humanly carved statue made of gold or silver or stone by man's creative thought and skill. But this raises another question: If men should not think of God that way, how should they think of Him? And what does being the "offspring of God" have to do with the way we think of God?

Incidentally, Paul is not speaking of being the offspring of God in the redemptive sense of being born-again children of God. Rather, he is speaking of being the offspring of God in the creative sense of being children of God via creation in His image and likeness.