

Our Divine Destiny

To Be God

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I did not realize until this morning that there is a direct connection between the subject of the sermonette I gave this morning and the subject of this sermon. Then, as I was listening to Richard's sermon, for a while that fits right in as well, so you are getting a 1-2-3 shot here right as we go along.

You may recall I mentioned to you during the present Bible Study which I have disrupted for awhile, and which we will get back to as soon as the time changes a bit, that we would be covering basic subjects. We are doing this primarily because our website is not devoted to such subjects. Its content is primarily for those who are more advanced in the faith. Now we believe there is a need for more basic subject material. It is not because there is no longer a need for what we have already done, but because there are people who are accessing our website who need the basic things. In addition, the subjects are a good review for all of us as well.

At the end of the sermon Richard gave in July, he covered the subject of our calling in a great deal of detail. In this sermon I am going to go into what we are called *for* in detail. I am doing this partly because the subject is so appropriate for this very day, and since it celebrates the resurrection of the very dead.

A couple of questions:

- What will we be after we are resurrected?
- What is the point of Christ's sacrifice?
- For what reason are we called upon to repent and to keep the commandments?
- Why are we called upon to study and to show ourselves approved unto God?

This study will give you a logical scripture-by-scripture account of our divine destiny.

I am going to define the word "destiny" for you, and I think you will find it quite interesting. It literally means "the place where one will stand fast."

The English word “destiny” is derived neither from the Hebrew nor the Greek. If you are old enough, you may recall a stage play that ran for several years on Broadway with the title “Kismet.” Now “Kismet” is the Arabic synonym of the English “destiny.” Kismet means “appointed lot; fate.” The Arabs believed in fate.

The English word “destiny” is derived from a Latin term that means “to stare.” There is a movie out now about the men who stare at goats, and that is what the word means—“to stare.” It means “the place from which one does not move.” This is what you do when you are staring. You get into a fixed position, and you keep looking, but do not move. One can look forwards or backwards. When one is in destiny, one does not move.

Let us begin to put this into the Bible. That is, after all the travels of one’s life, one finally reaches where one is meant to be. The biblical equivalent of destiny is God’s rest—“God’s rest” as it appears in Hebrews 4. The pilgrimage containing all of life’s travails, uncertainties, and fears in which one mentally and physically might be all over the place, running around trying to accomplish things, is ended when one has reached the place from which one does not move—the place in which one will stand fast: one’s appointed place in the Kingdom of God. To me that is very meaningful—“our divine destiny.”

Our destiny is our designated place in God’s purpose. I can only point that out generally because the apostle John clearly stated that we do not know that exactly, because God, except for Jesus, has not revealed anyone’s exact position at this time.

I hopefully have put each point into a clear and easily understandable order that guides one to reveal what the Scriptures plainly say without having to resort to any in-depth study of either the Hebrew, Greek, or English language. There will be a little bit of parsing, but not very much.

It is entirely possible that the one question virtually everybody on earth has eventually asked is—“Why was I born?” It is *the* universal mystery. Of all possible sources one might turn to for an answer, only the Bible accurately answers that question. But even so, it must be dug out, and believed. The Bible is the only *possible* source, because it is the only book available to mankind regardless of when one lived and *where* one lived, and it is authored by the One who created us.

I believe that it is necessary to begin this explanation by touching on the way the Bible is written. It is the way it is written that is partly—and I emphasize *partly*—responsible for it being difficult to understand. Individual verses are *not* difficult to understand, but to get a complete picture of the individual teaching or doctrine can be exceedingly difficult. This

is because complete teaching on any given subject is not focused in any one place in the Bible. The Author—God—has scattered the individual part of any given subject throughout the Book's contents. This makes a secondary requirement for good understanding absolutely necessary to accomplish this "perfectly," and requires a revelation from God Himself, personally and individually made available by Him. He has already provided this for us.

The following verses that I am going to give confirm what I have just said.

As we go through this study, it is going to be more like a Bible Study than a sermon. I do not apologize for that. I just want to give you a "heads-up." Make sure that you jot down the scriptures I give you, and you will have a very nice easily-understood scripture-by-scripture study that you can review often.

We are going to begin in John 8. In this chapter there was quite a confrontation between the people and Jesus, and in verse 43 Jesus says to them:

John 8:43 Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are not able to listen to my words. [He answers His own question.]

John 8:47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

It is that simple. I am going to read this to you as it is translated in the Philips Translation.

John 8:43 [Philips Translation] Why do you not understand My words? It is because you cannot hear what I am saying.

John 8:47 [Philips Translation] The reason you cannot hear the words of God is simply this, that you are not the sons of God.

That is pretty blunt. That is pretty plain. No wonder they picked up rocks to throw at Him because of their feelings about themselves, and where they stood within the purpose of God. They thought they understood everything perfectly, and were constantly accusing God Himself in the flesh of not giving right teaching. These Jews were the "uncalled."

This reveals to us, that in the biblical sense, “hear” infers more than merely having sound registering upon one’s ears. Secondly, “the sons of God” are in a separate spiritual category than those who are *not* “the sons of God.” I will give a little bit of explanation as we go along.

Turn with me to Matthew 13. We get a little bit more information on this particular principle.

Matthew 13:10-11 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

This is why the Jews were who they were. Now because God does not lie, these verses clearly confirm that only to those to whom it is given—those God has specifically chosen to reveal Himself and His purpose to—are able to grasp the fullness of His teaching. *The called* physically hear the same sound as the *uncalled*, but they understand. They understand because of what God has done to their mind.

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

Now here is my note: God has purposely done what He has done. He hides, and He also reveals. To the best of my knowledge, neither the KJV nor the NKJV ever uses the term “secret” in this subject-content, but they do use the term “mystery” often when they refer to our destiny within God’s purpose. However, modern translations *liberally* make use of the term “secret.” Now the term “mystery” as used in the Greek language indicates something outside the realm of natural apprehension that must be made known by divine revelation, and that is what God has done for those truly called by Him. It is what God does that places “the sons of God” into a different spiritual category than the uncalled.

From here we are going to go to Ephesians 1. We are going through this subject step by step in an orderly manner as I have been able to do. Incidentally, in preparation for this I at least skimmed through Herbert Armstrong’s “Why Were You Born?” I also read United’s book on it. I also read Living’s book on it, and I found in them a common thread, and that is, they went from the beginning to the end in sometimes one page.

They were so anxious to get to what we are going to be that they did not really give a step-by-step account of why we were born. Mr. Armstrong's was by far and the way best, and I can tell by that he had a very orderly mind, and he put things in a progression in such a way that presented it pretty well.

Now we are going to go to Ephesians 1. Paul is speaking, and we are breaking into a sentence. It says:

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.

Again, we have it in the NKJV, and we are breaking into the middle of Paul's thought. I am going to read that to you from the Philips translation. "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan." I think that is a good translation. The Revised English Bible translates that same verse as, "He has made known to us His secret purpose in accordance with the plan which He determined beforehand in Christ." That is a little bit more expansive, a little bit more direct, but nonetheless a very clear explanation.

While we are in that same area, turn to Colossians 1:26. Again, we are going into the middle of a thought here. Paul wrote very long sentences on occasion. He says:

Colossians 1:26 The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

Colossians 1:26 [The New Century Version] This message is the secret that was hidden from everyone since from the beginning of time.

We are going to look at three other verses now.

Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began.

Can you even begin to get some of the feel of what this means? How many people have lived since Adam and Eve, and yet God kept His purpose and His plan hidden purposely from billions of people. When you were born, He separated you away, and said to

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Himself, “I’m going to give that person what I have hidden from billions of people”—the revelation of the mystery kept secret, hidden by God since the world began.

I Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

That tells you how long ago it was. How much time has passed I have no way of accounting to you. Ages and ages and ages and ages ago He and the Son were putting this purpose together, and He kept it secret for you.

Psalms 25:14 The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

You see, there is a promise, that if He reveals His secret, He will also then add to that His covenant. Why? That we may keep it and become full part of what He is doing on this earth, and in this case for you and me specifically.

Why have I begun in this manner, stressing the terms “mystery” and “secret”? It is because I want all of those called of God to appreciate the gifts given them by God Himself **personally and individually**. I cannot stress that enough. I cannot get enough emotion into it. **Personally and individually** He has done that for each and every one of us. To merely understand the surface meaning of the words as they appear in the Book is something any educated person can do, but when the words impact on one’s mind so that they affect one’s life and turn that life’s direction toward God’s purpose, that brethren, is “being called.” There are many people who can understand individual verses in the Bible, and individual doctrines in the Bible, but they cannot put it together, and they cannot really put the purpose together into something that is really meaningful and life-offering for them.

You might recall Richard’s description in that sermon he gave of the apostle Paul’s calling as it is given in Acts 9. That dramatic a change is highly unusual, but that example gives a clear understanding of the reaction of a called person to what God personally does. Jesus Christ did that, and that is what the context shows. This is so we will clearly understand that even though He does not show us in our calling the way He did with the apostle Paul, what has taken place in our life is following the same pattern. He did it **personally** for you and for me. He opened the mind.

Evelyn and I experienced something similar to this when we heard Herbert Armstrong

on the World Tomorrow program on the first Sunday of January 1959. We normally would have been at the Methodist Church services with our children, but two of them were sick, and so we stayed home. We reacted *immediately* to the message we heard Herbert Armstrong give, and I would have to say delivered really confidently, and our minds turned just like that, and I think I am happy to say that we have never looked back.

It was not quite as dramatic as the apostle Paul's. There was no blaze of light. Jesus did not speak to us out of a blazing light, and He did not tell us, "Why do you kick against the goads?" But both of us had enough biblical knowledge by that time because we were serious in attending the church that we were attending, and Herbert Armstrong's words were truth in the message that he gave.

I know that not everyone's call will register so strongly, but a calling is something that will cause a person to react, and the reaction will almost invariably be positive.

Have you ever seen a place in the Scriptures where Jesus had to argue with any people that He personally called to follow Him?

Mark 1:16-20 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

"Hey! Where are you going, fellows? I still have nets to repair here!" Zebedee was with the hired servants, but James and John went after Jesus pretty quickly.

There is a place or two where Jesus spoke to some, and said, "Follow Me," and they dragged their feet, and it is interesting what Jesus' reaction was.

Matthew 8:21-22 Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

“Follow Me” is the kind of response that Jesus is looking for, and that is the kind of response He expects. I have to admit that these people knew a bit about Jesus before this calling actually occurred, even as Evelyn and I did. We knew a little bit. We did not know very much truth. We did know a little bit, and what we heard Herbert Armstrong say rang true, and he was preaching right out of God’s Word, and so that was the end of us going to the Methodist Church. It was just that quick.

Let us go back to Ephesians 1 again. Just to remind you, I showed you in that last part what a person who is called does. Sometimes the calling takes a little while to sink in because we have such a resistance built up, but in many cases it also happens pretty quick, but it always leads to a change of life.

Ephesians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

I am using this verse to help to continue the thought by establishing that God has had the same purpose He is accomplishing from before the creation of the world. He has not zigzagged His way anywhere. He is following a direct line, as it were. It is not always clear to us what that direct line is, and He knows very well what He is doing.

Colossians 1:3-6 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit [they were the fruit], as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; . . .

Paul is inferring that these Colossians changed their way of life pretty quickly. They heard the call. They saw that there was something there that really registered true, and they began to change almost immediately.

Colossians 1:7-16 . . .as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the

knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

That was rather a long section, but I want you to see there that God has been working at the same purpose from the beginning. As soon as that purpose was formed—and He has not deviated from it, He will not deviate from it—we can expect that He will fulfill everything that He has said, and that should give us the kind of confidence we need to keep going on.

This long section we just read here confirms what John 1 says. In a very brief form, it says virtually the same thing.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

This establishes that Jesus Christ was right at His side, and concurs completely with accomplishing the purpose that they have had from the very beginning.

Now we are going to go back to the beginning of the book, as they actively begin to carry forth that purpose in the lives of mankind. And so the stage is being set here in Genesis 1.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the

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birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Let us jump from there to Genesis 2:7. Creation is still underway.

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Linking these three verses together, it is here that God establishes His purpose, but that purpose is not fully clarified. It is given in a generality. He created man in His image. That is not clearly apparent at first. At first it appears as though it was a completed product that He made, so we are only looking at a beginning, but it is a very necessary beginning being worked out in two major stages. The first stage I call “the animated clay stage” or “the animated model stage” of the modeled finished product. Thus God created man in the same form and shape as Himself, but not of the same substance of which God consists.

Man, as these verses show us, is clearly made of the dust of the earth. He is created mortal, and is thus subject to decay and death, and upon death he will return to that of which he was originally made (Genesis 3:19). This is why he is the animated clay model. He looks like God. He is in the same form and shape as God, but he is not composed of the same substance as God, and therefore he is subject to death and to decay.

We have to add confirmation to this, and we do this all the way back in the book of John. Jesus very clearly stated the following:

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

So this clearly confirms that when man was created in the beginning, he was not made as a complete exact replica of the Father and the Son. Same form and shape, but not an exact replica.

Luke 24:39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

That confirms that we are not made of the same substance though we are of the same shape and form as Christ, who was the original model for us.

Back to Genesis 1 again. We are going to be jumping all over the Bible here because we have to pick this up step by step by step. I probably will miss some things here as we are going through, but hopefully you will get a study that you can keep by your side, and anytime you get down in the dumps, you can say, “Hey! This is what God is doing.”

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

I want you to listen to this as it is translated in *The New Living Translation*. “Then God said, Let us make human beings in our image to be like us.” I believe that translation is really better than what you see in the *King James* or in *The New King James*. Just one minor change, but it really is not so minor. “Let us make human beings in our image to be *like* us.” I believe that is a better translation, especially the “to be like us” part, because it infers, once we get more information, the possibility that refinement of the original clay model could follow.

Notice that I did not say “would,” which would give sort of an absolute sense, but “could.” There could be an alteration of the original animated clay model. In other words, being like Them was not completed in the Garden of Eden. It was only a beginning, and thus we need to understand what God, who is fashioning man in His image, is like.

The first major clue is found in the Hebrew word that is translated in the KJV and the NKJV as “God.” It is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a noun, indicating one or ones who are powerful. It indicates someone with power. It is translated into English as though it is a singular noun, because most contexts in which it appears indicate only one person, and thus we see the word “God,” not Gods. But if it were going to be

translated exactly in the plural state that the word *Elohim* is in, it would always say “Gods,” but the context in which it appears most of the time requires a singular translation, and so they translate it in a singular fashion—“God.”

What you have to understand is this: The use of this plural noun can easily indicate those encompassed within the term are in complete agreement. In other words, the plurality—“Gods”—whoever they might be—are in complete agreement. There is no division between them. They are in complete agreement.

All languages that we are familiar with have similar terms. For instance, in English the nouns team, group, corporation, company, class, and family show relationships within a unit, and the implication is always that they are in agreement. No matter how many are encompassed within the plurality of that term, they are in agreement with one another. So each of these terms indicates one unit consisting of more than one person. That is exactly what *Elohim* indicates. The Bible then clarifies that, because *Elohim* is shown in the Bible to indicate a family relationship.

Let us go again back to John 1. This makes the third time already that we referred to John 1:1-3. We will probably refer to it more, but it shows you what you have to do in order to really study. You have to parse these verses and pick the subject-materials that are in there, besides perhaps the one that you want.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

What do we see here that has to do with family? We see two parts of what might be contained within *Elohim*—part definitely called “The Father and the Son” or “The Father and the Word.” There was God and the Word, and so we clearly see distinguished a relationship with at least two.

Now we go to another verse in II John. Here the relationship is further enhanced.

II John 1:3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

“God” is mentioned in John 1:1-3. The Word is identified here in this verse as “the Lord Jesus Christ.” *Elohim* is revealing to us a family relationship that consists of God (who is

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Father) and God (who is Son). They are separate individual personalities with a family relationship between them. So just with these two verses it clearly confirms the relationship between the two is familial.

Let us go now to Hebrews 1. This is really significant.

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"?

Who is "He"? Well, the context clearly shows it is the Father. "He" is the Father.

Hebrews 1:8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

In this verse a family relationship is not only clearly shown, the Father is quoted, and He clearly calls His Son "God." Very significant, right in the New Testament.

In John 17:24 Jesus' final prayer is recorded here.

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they [meaning the disciples, and that of course includes us] also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Here Jesus addresses God as Father, and He declares that the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world. This definitely connects with John 1:1-3. He clearly establishes that their relationship is no passing fancy, and that their relationship as Father and Son has existed from the beginning.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Fulfillment of this request will restore their relationship to exactly what it was before the earth and all the other creations were created.

Let us take this development one step further. Knowing what we know so far—that both Jesus Christ the Son and God the Father are spirit-composed Beings who have been related to each other for time without end, dating back long before the universe was created—helps us to realize a very major aspect of what the term “God” indicates. With the term “Father and Son” as part of their identification, it becomes obvious that God is a family of spirit Beings, working together in harmony to complete a purpose and plan they designed together, and fully intend to complete. Paul clearly identifies this team as being a family.

Now let us define family. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* says this regarding family: (a) A fundamental social group typically consisting of parents and their offspring, and (b) Two or more people who share goals and values, have commitments to one another, and usually reside in the same place.

From here we are going to go to the book of Ephesians again. It is a great book. Paul was in the midst of a prayer here.

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

This verse clearly defines a family relationship between those in heaven (which are two), and those on earth (who are many more) and to which God the Father and the Son continually add as they expand the family.

There is an interesting thing here that a commentator pointed out, and I am going to bring it to you, and that is that verses 14 and 15, which we just read, are actually the beginning of a conclusion of thought that Paul began all the way back in verse one, where it says: “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles—“ My Bible has a big dash there, setting it apart from what follows.

This is a 12-verse long parenthetical statement. I said Paul writes long sentences. Paul’s overall thought for the entire epistle, beginning all the way back in chapter 1, is the unity of the structure of the church and then of what it consists.

What Paul is giving here are illustrations to get across to the Ephesians in this letter what it means to be joined with Christ, or joined with the Father, or part of His family. In each case Paul is leading up to an illustration that hopefully somebody in the group is going to be able to understand because of their experiences, and so at the end of chapter one he says:

Ephesians 1:20-23 Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

You get the point? We are united with Christ in that we, (which Paul is describing) are actually parts of His body—part of the liver, you might say; part of the kidneys, part of the digestive track, part of the arms, part of the muscles, part of the cartilage, part of the hair, part of the eyes, part of the ears. When you are part of the body, you are not separated from the body. You are totally united with that body, just as sure as all of your parts are part of you. Simple, huh?

Paul does the same thing in Ephesians 2, but he changes the metaphor, and here he changes it to a building, and so at the end of the chapter, as he is getting to his point, he says:

Ephesians 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

He might have had some men or women in the congregation who worked in construction. They would know buildings outside, downside, sideways, and everything, and they could understand that metaphor, that each part of the building was necessary for the whole, and carried out a function within the building.

Ephesians 3 is the same general form, only this time the metaphor becomes a family. Now you see we are getting something that everybody should be able to understand, that everybody is in a family that is functioning in some way, but in this case it is the family of God, and this is functioning with God as its Head, and so therefore Jesus Christ, in a sense you might say, is its heart and soul.

This is why, when we get to chapter 4, Paul is, in a sense, drawing this particular teaching to a close. He really wants to get this across, and so he saved his best

metaphor, as it were, to the last—a family in which there are emotions flowing back and forth, and experiences being had together, and what we have to do as a result of being part of this divine family. This is the way it ends:

Ephesians 4:1-2 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love. . .

Why? Because you want to keep the family going. You want the family to be peaceful, and if the peace is up to you, you are the one who makes peace.

We insult one another left and right sometimes, and offend one another when we are not supposed to do that, but it happens. So what do you do when it happens to you? You bear with it, and you forgive. Your problems might be exceedingly worse than the one who offended you whom you have hard feelings against.

Ephesians 4:3-7 . . . endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

That aspect of this destiny of ours is exceedingly important. It is our responsibility to make use of the information that is given to us, and we are to live life to the fullest, conducting our lives in the present, living life fully, but always with our eyes to the future, because everything matters to some degree.

Let us go back to Genesis 1 once again. We are still generally following the theme here.

Genesis 1:11-12 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Look now at verses 24 and 25. These verses all have a common theme.

Genesis 1:24-26 Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind”; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

This shows a common thought. First, there is the thought of creation—God made this, God made that. It is followed by the thought of reproduction. The reproduction is after the same kind that was just created. It is right here that the translation of Genesis 1:26 from *The New Living Testament* is helpful: “Let us make man to be like us.”

Man is not after the plant kind. He is not after the fish kind, the bird kind, or the land kind. Man would be completely out of his element, as he is created, attempting to live and operate in the environment that those beasts were created for. Now the inference then is clear. That since man was created in the image of God, man is clearly and dogmatically created after the God kind. That is the only answer that is correct, that man is after the God kind, because that is the image he was created in. All those other animals reproduce after *their* kind, but man is a reproduction of the God kind.

There is more. The next element we see is that after man was created, that he is *different* in another area of life from other forms of God’s creation. Verse 26 tells us: “Let them have dominion.” Man is given authority and some measure of rulership over other aspects of God’s physical creation. Please understand. You have to compare us with what God has already created. He gave no authority to the animals, no authority to any beast, fish, or whatever. Only man is after the God kind, and is given authority.

From here we are going to go to Genesis 2:15-17.

Genesis 2:15-17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Brethren, this shows us that man must make decisions. He must make choices between good and evil; therefore, unlike others of God's creation, he is created like God, with *mind*. Man, unlike the others, can think and reason, and this requires a conclusion that man can think spatially. Man can think in terms of time, both backwards and forward. He can think of possible consequences as to what results will be, whether he does things this way, that way, or not at all. Animals function by means of instinct created within them by God.

There is really a brilliant example that some scientists performed because maybe they were of an evolutionary bent. I do not know. But they thought, "Ah hah! This weaver bird out here really puts together an interesting nest, so what we're going to do is put these weaver birds into a cage, sort of like blindfold them, or whatever, so that they couldn't possibly watch mother weaver or father weaver build their nest," because the evolutionists said these birds just watch what their ancestors were doing, and they followed.

So these scientists waited a generation. They waited two generations of weaver birds. They waited five generations of weaver birds before they let these birds out of their captivity. None of them had ever seen another nest made. These birds went out and made nests exactly the way the weaver birds had been making nests for millennia. They did not learn. It was in their little pea brain—the way God created them.

Men are not like that. We have to watch. We have to learn. We have to practice. We have to use trial and error. We have to read books. We have to do things that lead us to be able to reason and reach places where we are sufficient to make good decisions. Our minds have to be developed. God has given us the equipment to work with. It is there. A human baby is about as helpless as a living being can get. Every single one of them would die if they did not have someone to take care of them. I mean it. Every single baby would simply die.

Now what is God showing us? If we are going to become what He wants us to become, we have to make full use of our mind. It *must* be developed. We are not automatically like God except in terms of what we look like. We are in His form and shape. We are not even the same substance, but we have the equipment to work with so that we can become like Him, if at this time anyway we are called, and we will use it.

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Again, unlike animals, man, like God, is capable of marrying to become one with another of his kind. Some animals may mate for life, but they do not become one with one another of their kind in the way God intends that we understand in this verse. We can become one with another human being, and brethren, as Jesus shows in John 17, we can even become one with God our Creator Himself. That is awesome! In a sense, how do we become one with Him? Finally, and ultimately, through a marriage. Let that rattle around in your brain!

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Here we come to another significant feature, that man, unlike animals, is fully capable of sin, thus knowing sin through experience, and bringing death upon himself. And though all of these are very important ways to distinguish man from animals, man is very obviously modeled after a different kind—the God kind—and there are more similarities. So we can die because of sin. It is impossible for an animal to sin, and the reason is that God did not make them to sin. He put instinct in them, and they always act the way they are supposed to act. Sometimes those actions are pretty violent.

Let us go to Revelation 1. John was given this vision.

Revelation 1:10-11 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.” [This is what John saw:] Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded

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about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

Here are obvious similarities between us and God. God has hair. God has a head. God has eyes. God has feet. God has a voice. God has hands. We can see in Exodus 31, He has fingers, and in Isaiah 40, we see He has a mouth.

Exodus 31:18 And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Isaiah 40:5 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

I want to go one little step more here. I want you to go to Acts 17:28-29, and we will close on this series of verses. I want you to carry with you the thought that we all very definitely are modeled after our Creator in terms of our shape and form, and we are equipped in the same way basically that He is. We are just composed of something different.

In Acts 17, Paul was speaking to these unconverted people. When he says, "we here," he is not speaking to the church. He is speaking to the general audience of people out there who were overwhelmingly unconverted.

Acts 17:28-29 For in Him [all of us] we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 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.

Paul made this statement to unconverted people. Now what can we get from this? Thus,

to some degree, all of mankind are the offspring of God simply by being born. So this verse establishes clearly, apart from the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2, that all of mankind is God's offspring, and all the word "offspring" really means is "descendant." Everybody is descended from God. All human beings are descended from God. Everybody was created. All human beings were created after the God kind.

In your thinking you must understand that some people are being developed further along the line to becoming like God than all the other offspring of God. Even though they are the offspring of God, and are descended from God, they are still in a different category than the ones we will talk about the next time we are on this subject. So we will stop right there, and I hope this will be helpful to you.