

God Works In Mysterious Ways (Part Two)

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My purpose in this sermon is to present a line of thought that is both logical and true. It is that the reality of God and His purpose in this creation is neither mathematically nor scientifically difficult. The influence mankind struggles with is already within us, and our Creator has proposed for us to confront it on the basis of belief in Him, and love for Him, and the value of what He is offering to us.

He promises victory to those who follow the course that He lays out for them, but unlike the world, He nowhere shows nor says it is going to be easy; it will be difficult to the level of their spiritual strength. Everybody does not face the same things, everybody faces the same *sort of things* but not always to the same difficulties.

Romans 8:5-7 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

This is going to be our launching pad once again. But before I move any further I am going stay right on theses three verses, and read them from the Amplified version to you.

Romans 8:5-8 (AMP) For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit. [You can see a word picture here of people coming from opposite directions.] Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason,

without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that compromises all the misery arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and peace [both now and forever]. [That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law; indeed it cannot.

This is an interesting thought as to why we have so much trouble overcoming, why we have so much trouble continuing on in this way. The enemy is right in us and we carry it everywhere we go with every breath that we draw. It is right there all the time ready to trip us up, deceive us into doing what intellectually we do not want to do. We do not mean to do it but we go that way anyway because this influence is pushing us in that direction.

Our relationship with God is not based upon the intellectual genius that might be required for rocket science or electronics. Brethren, welcome to the nuts-and-bolts factory, because once converted our relationship with God is based upon things that are usually easily understood.

I Corinthians 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

It directly states there, in one sense, God avoids calling the great of this world, the great minds. So what He has to offer in the way He wants us to do in His purpose, is something that people of average intelligence can do. It is difficult for us even though God has scaled things down to where we should be able to accomplish everything that He requires of us in our life. He loves us that much that He does not give us a path that is too great. He does not give us one that too easy either, so that we are tested as we go along through life, and we show Him our colors by what we do.

I Corinthians 1:27-29 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Every one of us, by the time our path is over and done with, we know we did not do it very well. God mercifully gave it to us on the basis that He trusts us to carry on with the way we are after He has built us up.

So God specifically calls the weak. God's way is so easily understood that even we, the weak of the world, can grasp them. What is difficult is that we have a nature that, whether we like it or not, it is what it is, and it is ours to keep until we truly make efforts to do what we can to rid ourselves of it. This nature we all possess is akin to a personality within us attempting to subvert our thoughts back to what is more natural for it. Our problem with it arrived along with our calling, when God made us aware of Him to a degree that we had not had before. It perceives God as an enemy, seeking to enslave us to Him and His way of life more sharply than before His calling, and thus keeping us from its desires to make life enjoyable, pleasant, and fulfilling in the matter it perceives it should be achieved by.

So we can believe something intellectually but we have a nature working against us *undermining* what we believe intellectually, and motivating us to go in a way that God does not want us to go in because that is not His purpose for us to be strong in.

What this creates is this misery that we see and hear from all over the world, and what we see and hear of in these reports from all over the world is not solely an Israelitish problem. It is a problem every person ever born since Adam and Eve is going to have to confront and with the help of God's control.

Here is a question. What is it that is so bad about Babylon? It is this nature from birth. It does not believe God. It is that simple. That nature is hostile to God, it does not love Him by nature. It does not appreciate His beauty, strength, power, and purpose. It is hostile to Him and it is in us. That is what makes life so difficult. It is this hostility against the way God wants the world to go.

He created it in beauty, He created us for beauty, to be possessed by all of us. He created it so that we live beautiful lives. He also gave us an anchor to hold us down that we have to fight against in order to prove to Him that we will willingly submit to Him and go His way for eternity, not turning aside.

But, as Revelation 14 says, those who are in this group of 144,000, they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. That is what we have to do in our lifetime—show God that we will follow the Lamb wherever He goes. We have to do it well enough—I am not talking perfection here, because the weak of the world are not qualified to be perfect. But we can do what we can do to the very limit of our ability and God will be pleased because He knows that along the way He helped us make it that far.

This, brethren, is *the* factor that the called struggle with. But let us check in on something that we will see in the book of John. Here is what God is doing. It is brief and to the point, and Jesus said it.

John 10:30 “I and My Father are one.”

Let us add to this and draw ourselves into it, in John 17, the same Jesus, same book, just a little bit later in this wonderful prayer of Jesus.

John 17:20-26 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word [the apostles’ word]; that they all may be one [just like Jesus and the Father are one], as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they 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. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these

have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

I said as I began this that this is the very goal that God is drawing us toward. He wants us to be at one with Him. Romans 8:5-7 states, and thus encapsulates, what hinders us from permanently possessing a nature and character that is in the very image of our Creator. It is the root cause of what separates us from God. The oneness which our God desires be in us cannot be created by fiat, even God cannot merely command it into existence. It is created through a process, through the means of a continuing, living, experiential relationship with Him, and with His Son. Therefore, while we are still human we must begin living it.

In order to live it, we must believe it, and we must participate in its creation by deliberately choosing to obey His way of life. This is where we come into the picture. It is not just something *being done* to us, it is a process that *we voluntarily, lovingly believe in and do* it. We participate in the creation of this character, and it cannot be done without our part being done. That hostile nature is in us and this is what makes it so difficult. In order to live it we have to believe it, and we must participate in its creation by deliberately choosing to obey His way of life. These are the nuts and bolts of what we are involved in.

Regarding Romans 8:5-6, there is a conclusion that we can reach from that is inescapable. It is that what the mind is fixed on gets one's attention and thus one's time and energy. It must be controlled or it will dominate one's life and nullify God's intention in calling us and the sanctification that He gave to us. The problem, as those verses explain, is that those living according to flesh have their minds *set* (it even says that in the New King James) on, and therefore constantly thinking about, the things of this fallen world in disregard of God's will.

Romans 8:5 (AMP) For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.

This translation as it is done from the Amplified, is not a suggestion in its use of the words “controlled by,” that our free moral agency is removed from us by God’s calling, but rather, the spiritually minded person controls himself by deliberately choosing to use the gifts God provides along with His calling. God gives us the tools to work with. They are spiritual in nature, but they are vital to following, submitting to, His way of life.

Ultimately the overall reason the carnal mind cannot please God is because that mind is so self-centered it has neither time for Him and His purpose, and neither can they set their minds for very long on loving their fellow man either.

Here is the conclusion from those three verses: carnality is lived for the self, that is the problem between us and God. He wants us to live His way for His glorification, and for our glorification ultimately. That carnal mind is hostile to God and wants to do it its own way. We have to understand that this war is going on between the knowledge that God is giving us by means of His Spirit, and the carnal nature that is in us pulling us, trying to persuade us to go the other way.

In Romans 5, what Paul is doing here is showing these people how they came to be converted, and the problems that they are facing. In the first five verses here, he gives us a bundle of things that God gives us as gifts, aspects of His grace, to enable us to submit to Him in His purpose.

Romans 5:1-5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [That is a bombshell, those 5-6 words there.] And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulations produce perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

This series of verses are telling us that because of God’s mercy we have been justified. That indicates an acquittal. We are forgiven, we are cleared of

guilt, we are in right standing before God as the result of faith in Christ. Every one of us is familiar with computers and we wonder whether an edge is justified. Here is how you can remember what justified means: Even in a biblical sense, it means "to be aligned with."

A person who is justified before God by the blood of Jesus Christ is now aligned with God. He is in right standing before God, not on the basis of His own works but on the basis of the faith in Jesus Christ. Because we are aligned, then God begins giving us gifts—spiritual gifts—that come directly from Him by means of His Spirit. The first benefit accruing to us as a result of Christ's blood providing forgiveness is that we have peace with God. That hostile nature is subdued to some degree.

However, God gives a great deal more. God has added more grace that is to aid us in following what He wants us to do. He has added the very tools that we need to give us more than merely a fighting chance to successfully achieve what we need to overcome this nature. (All of these are listed in the first five verses here.) That is this:

1. He has added open and constant access to Him into His very throne room. He hears our prayers; we have access to Him.
2. He has added a measure of the vision of the goal that lays before us of actually possessing the very glory of a God being. That is what we look forward to. God is expanding His Family and this is our one opportunity to be given it. A person does not go anywhere unless they have that goal in mind. Everybody who is seeking to achieve something good has a goal that he is attempting to achieve. That is our goal—to actually be in possession of the glory of God.
3. In addition, He has added tests and trials for the very purpose of producing character qualities in us to help us overcome now and get prepared for life after Christ's return. We are being prepared for something. Perhaps most important of all is that the love of God upon which everything depends at this time, has been given to us to support everything else in the relationship. This is why Jesus Christ commanded us that if we love God, we keep the commandments, because we are empowered to do it.

We will look back at another scripture that is important in regard to my subject here. The way you want to look at this series of verses in Colossians chapter 3, at least in this particular sermon, is that they set the contrast and the countermeasure to Romans 8:5-7, following our calling and receiving of God's Holy Spirit.

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ [meaning raised from the waters of baptism, a symbol of death and burial], seek those things which are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

This is our responsibility after coming out of the waters of baptism. We are not to set our minds on things of this earth but set our minds on those things that have to do with glorifying God and being in His Family.

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind of things above, not on things on the earth.

Do you see that the way Paul was writing this, these are things over which we can exercise control and that is what we have to do in order to focus on these things because that nature that is within us is always going to be pulling us in the other direction. That is, to seek pleasure carnally.

Colossians 3:3-7 For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members [the members of our body that are capable of sinning with commands from the mind] which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

What Paul is doing in this paragraph here, is urging us that we not allow backsliding into carnality, and in many cases the outright paganism of even the attractiveness of this world's Christianity. Paul is urging consistent godly choices, following the pattern set by Jesus Christ during His life prior to His

crucifixion. He is urging us to exercise our faith in spiritual realities of Christ being in us and He has the powers to accompany us, and the willingness to do so as we go through the tests that God brings upon us to prepare us.

What I want to emphasize is that, unlike doing what comes naturally according to the enslaving carnal nature, once converted we are empowered by God to choose to focus on godly conduct and attitude, because that is the direction God is educating toward choosing, and we have to do it.

God is not seeking to lose us by testing us! Were it not for God being in the picture the choices and even the ability to choose His way would not be available, or it would be so weak in its influence it would be negligible and unpersuasive. One thing that we must understand is that *we are not choosing to set our mind on God's way to win salvation*, but rather to put it on display before all as the consequence, the effects, of our salvation through Jesus Christ. An entirely different purpose altogether. And that is something we need to carry with us. We are not working for salvation. We are showing that we are displaying our conduct.

The concept here being that Jesus Christ is in heaven. Paul says that in the first couple of verses of chapter 3, and he is saying that to remind us that we are going to live with Him at some future time and we must be preparing now to live with Him then. And if we are going to be in God's Family Kingdom these things *must* be done.

We do get a great deal of help from God to motivate us, but it seems that the carnal nature's grip on us is so seductive it sometimes very easily encourages backsliding into carnal habits.

Maybe this will be a helpful reminder. What we are involved in nobody else can do for us. There are no substitutes. We can get encouragement from people, we can get instruction from people, but God has willed that we have to be the one that does the work of overcoming and growing. He is willing to give us a lot of help along the way, both He and the Son do that, and They do it willingly, and even come to live in us in order to help us along the way.

With that in mind (that nobody can do it for us), we will look again at some scriptures we have gone over frequently lately and tie them into all the self-justifying lies that mankind uses to avoid the God issue in their lives.

Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God [People say they cannot find God. They say there is something wrong with this Book because it does not have any story flow to it, or it is too hard to understand, it does not address modern problems.] is manifest [it is not above the average level of a human being] in [to] them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse [People He has not even called yet are without excuse. They complain about God hiding Himself.], because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four footed beasts and creeping things.

These verses, when analyzed in the light of the strong influence of the self-centered carnality exposed in Romans 8:5-6, in addition to already clearly understood enmity against God appearing in Romans 8:7, makes it very clear that God's judgment of mankind's guilt leveled in Romans 1:18-22, of Him rejecting them is clearly justified.

My point in this regarding God's judgment, even unconverted mankind is without excuse. That is not an exaggeration. God judges *everybody* absolutely fairly! The reason they have trouble with God is that their minds are never on Him, or very rarely on Him. They just ignore Him as if He does not exist. I am talking about the bulk of mankind. There are some that sincerely are looking after God and they know a great deal about Him (the unconverted).

Romans 1:18-23 is not an exaggeration, we have got to get over that. We have to get over the falsehood that unconverted man is somehow merely sleepily unaware of God and His purpose. But they are guilty. It is as though in mankind's unconverted state, as if man has no solid knowledge available of God's existence and purpose, that if they do not have that then God gives that person a pass. No, He does not. They are suffering because they are rejecting God. I am not saying they are losing salvation, not at all. But they are suffering because they do not know God. God does not lie in giving this judgment.

I want you to think about this: When Adam and Eve sinned, that very first sin, did you ever stop to think, who judged that? God was right there. He saw everything unfolding. Do you understand that when they sinned the death penalty fell on them *immediately*. There was no trial, He pronounced the death penalty immediately. They were *unconverted*.

God looks upon the heart and the conclusion that He reaches despite looking at things on a godly level, is that mankind is actively resisting Him! They are not just floating along, they are resisting Him. That is what He is saying here in these four verses. The proof is out there if they will look for it and if they will believe it. That is the trouble, they will not believe it because that nature overpowers them.

Romans 8:7 states the truth. The carnal mind is enmity against God, hostile toward God, it is in opposition to God, it is actively self-centered against God.

That verse comes very close to suggesting that mankind must be forced to love God and express that love by obedience or he will never give it. The prophetic evidence seems clearly to support that evaluation.

This admonition given in Romans 8:5-7, directly from God, whose experience with man and practice of living began with Adam and Eve. As far as we know Satan was only the fourth communicating being they had active communication with. By that time their minds, especially Eve's, was actively set on the fruit, and Adam's mind was actively fixed on Eve, on pleasing her.

He knew it was wrong but he went ahead because his mind was on Eve and pleasing her, rather than on God. That shows you how quickly it acts, and God just as quickly pronounced the death penalty on them.

What is reasonably clear is that what motivated their conduct was not set on obedience to God, but already set on their desire to be pleased in their way. Adam wanted to be pleasing to Eve, and Eve wanted that fruit. Their mind was focused on the wrong things.

Romans 5:12-17 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

We will look back at Adam because this part of the chapter provides us with a series of contrasts between Jesus and Adam. The two could hardly be more contrasting than the results shown in this chapter. Take note that Jesus stated before He died, "I always do what the Father tells Me." Always! Did Adam do that? Right away he sinned. But Jesus said, "I always do what the Father tells Me." Why? Because He knows the Father, and He always submits to the Father.

Jesus did that when He became a man, so Jesus' righteousness provides forgiveness for those who live by faith and He paves the way toward salvation for them. By way of contrast, Adam and Eve actively ignored the only Teacher of truth available to them, and the instruction that He directly

gave to prepare them for life. And even when Satan reminded them what God had instructed them about not eating the fruit of that tree, *they ignored the reminder*. How about them apples? That is how powerful this nature is. They came from their Creator and they ignored what He said.

The sin that Adam committed unleashed sin on all of mankind, and it also got them kicked out of an abundantly producing and beautiful garden because of their lackadaisical efforts to operate apart from God's guidance. In addition, they earned the death penalty. By way of contrast, Adam and Eve sinned and in a metaphorical sense it may well have been that a hydrogen bomb exploded considering the death toll that has resulted from their sin.

I had an interesting experience with a man this past June that involved the active suppression of the reliability of one of God's truths. Our disagreement began with him challenging a comment in a Berean article touching on the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The man is Catholic. Purgatory is one of those theological myths that some people firmly believe in and it itself springs off or feeds off another myth, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. To the man I was writing back and forth to, purgatory is a place of further sanctification. That is what the Catholic Church believes. It is a place of further sanctification that one does not go to until they are dead. In other words, it is a place where they can attempt to do things right this time around.

In my reply I asked him, "How can there possibly be any continuing sanctification when the person was dead and no thinking and choice-making is possible?" So says God's word in the Bible. "In that very day his plans perish," they are no more. That is in Psalms 146:3. He replied quoting several human authorities regarding the supposed immortality of the soul, and some scriptures in the Bible where if one does not believe what God says about death it could be read into the context that life goes right on despite death. How can you be dead and alive at the same time?

I suggested to him that reading something from outside the Bible and into the Bible, is the only way that the suggestion about purgatory could appear within the Bible, and it would then not be truly a biblical truth because you are just reading it into it. It does not appear in the Bible. An example would be when Jesus stated that those who believe in Him would never see death. I

suggested that verse in my explanation to him. Do you know that was the very thing he responded with. I wrote back to him a scriptural answer to that. He responded again too. However, when he responded he simply gave me more human authorities as his sources and another misapplied scripture to explain.

None of this was an angry exchange, but I could clearly see that he was rejecting God's clearly revealed truth in favor of what supposed human authorities had said centuries ago. This man was well read but badly misinformed by the sources that he was reading. He perceived himself as studiously searching and accepting truth. He was not angry, we did not have one angry word between us, just explanations, but he could not bring himself to accept God's truth in the Bible regarding death and purgatory.

So after my third letter to him I sent one more, a final letter telling him that we not only were not on the same page, but we were not even in the same book, because God does not lie, and He does not contradict Himself. It is going to take a direct influence upon his thought processes by the Holy Spirit to reveal to him his error in taking man's word rather than God's.

That fits right into the explanation that God gives in Romans 1:18. They *willingly* reject, even though the truth is manifested to them. It is there in the Book. I have, since the e-mails passed back and forth between us, read an article written by a highly placed former Catholic personality, whose name we would probably recognize who resigned from that faith because of the religious antics of Pope Frances. The man who left the Catholic Church, in his listing of why he resigned, stated that purgatory is a non-biblical doctrine. The man was correct. He had a whole list of things of why he resigned, but this one registered with me because of the e-mails. That little episode helped me to see on a personal basis that unless God miraculously triggers a person's mind, and therefore one's faith, as he did with Nicodemus, mankind is not merely sleepily ignoring Him, but actively suppressing knowledge of Him as Romans 1 says.

In Romans 1:18 I want you to see the wording that God uses here. What God inspired Paul to write is not merely an impersonal deistic godly complaint. It is a controlled anger because mankind's rejection of God's reality and purpose is actively deliberate. Consider this testimony from Jesus as to why

first, that mankind rejects God. Before we go to Romans, please turn to John 15. On the last night of His life, He is in the Garden of Gethsemane with his apostles.

John 15:15-21 “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. [We are reading evidence of that hatred in Romans 1.] If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. [We are right at the doorstep of why the world rejects God. A major announcement by Jesus that is so clear.] But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.”

They do not know God and they really do not want to get to know Him, so they avoid Him. They really do not know anything about Him. He means know, not merely in the sense of knowing about, being somewhat familiar with. He is using know in the sense of somebody who really knows Jesus Christ and has Jesus Christ living in Him, and the Father in Him, and they know Him from contact with Him. There is a big difference there.

There is Jesus’ pronouncement. Jesus states that a major reason is that mankind does not know God. The great bulk of the population of the world are *deliberately* avoiding Him. But know this: God has clearly set the standard for us that we must know His personal power, His intelligence, His merciful, loving character by and through a relationship with Him in the abundant and beautiful creation that He has prepared for our benefit. In

addition, in Romans 2 God reveals that He has also given the unconverted a measure of insight into His laws, and over and above this He has given all of mankind a written record in the Bible.

This testimony from God, when combined with self-centered carnality exposed in Romans 8:5-7, makes us know very much of mankind's rejection of God's existence, and our responsibility to obey His sovereignty is deliberately committed and intentional.

Romans 1:18-20 [He is deliberately laying down to these people what they are doing to Him.] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness [they are not acting like God's Family] and unrighteousness [they are breaking the commandments] of men, who suppress [they are not just passing it, they are *suppressing* it] the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. [God makes a witness to all of mankind in some way, shape, or form. He reveals Himself.] For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen [God says, "I'm here!" And mankind is deliberately rejecting. God is holding mankind responsible for even seeing, understanding, grasping, knowing His invisible attributes.], being understood by the things that are made even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Do you think mankind is going to pull one over on God? Not on your life. He already holds them guilty, because they had some opportunity to get to know Him, but they will not make the effort.

Do you know what kept Adam and Eve from obeying God? Even though they could see Him with their eyes, they talked with Him, they knew He was the One who created and gave them life, they *did not believe Him* when He said, "Don't eat of the tree!" They did not have enough faith to obey Him.

The rest of my sermon I am just going to read something to you. It is actually the opening for my next sermon. I am just laying a little groundwork.

The claim that God has no plan or purpose is nothing but a lying evasion, since He made a Book available for mankind's edification. Here is a question. Did God merely haphazardly throw this awesome creation together in virtual disorder? Consider this illustration.

There is a small shopping center located within about a five minute walk from our home, because I have walked for about a half an hour virtually every day, rain or shine, since we moved into that neighbor in 1996. I am quite familiar with it. So when we moved there, the shopping center contained a very large daycare center, beauty salon, a fairly large, busy, and very popular restaurant that I would judge comes close to modeling an English pub, being somewhat of a community center. It also included a smaller but prosperous privately owned Italian restaurant featuring their homemade pizza. A few years after we moved in the owners of that center added a large modern exercise gymnasium, with a mass of shining machines alongside a supermarket-size Tuesday Morning outlet store that at one time indeed was a Food Lion supermarket.

However, things have changed radically following an announcement in 2016 that a fairly large electronics company was appealing to the Charlotte's City Council for rezoning, because as owners of the property they wanted to build an office building for themselves in that shopping center. The construction company also scattered a number of landscape drawings within the existing shops in the center, that clearly showed where the office building would be located, and its size relative to other buildings. Lo and behold, with a few adjustments to their plans in order that it conform to the residential environment the center was surrounded by, the office building that was going to be located in the rezoning was approved, and the owners received permission to build. Since my work background before becoming a minister touched on construction and maintenance for a large corporation, I observed the construction with a fairly keen interest from groundbreaking to move in occupation by the electronics corporation personal.

However, the first thing the crew had to do was tear down that large restaurant and the Tuesday Morning to make way for the much larger office building. The surveying was already completed before they even went to the City Council, so my observations began with the site work involved in the

foundation, trenching and placement of the drains, sewers, and all the underground utilities placements which were numerous, to say the least.

I approved of what they built. They built what I believe was a very attractive structure whose exterior is primarily glass and masonry, with much of the brightly painted internal structural steel frameworks still visible through the glass walls. Very nicely landscaped so it fits nicely into the residential neighbor without dominating it.

Inside the practically all-glass interior, I have never seen so many computers all in one building in my life! The amount of computer wiring was one reason why there was so much underground work. One of the items that truly impressed me were the work crews. My guess is that the work force was roughly about 100 men, from a wide variety of trades, and a few women too, when there was a continuous string of work that did not require heavy lifting.

It is a four-story building with one floor being underground. The building seemed to go up without a hitch, and it seemed to me that those crew of tradesmen that worked together frequently, and everybody seemed to know exactly what they were doing. There was no arguing, and each day those crews left with everything orderly and ready to go for the next day's work so they could hit the deck running at 7 a.m. It seemed to me there really was no unnecessary mess. If I could have spotted the general foreman, I would have congratulated him on how smoothly those crews did their jobs. Interestingly, the building is larger than presently needed. They are already planning on an employee explosion.

I use this illustration of something that I literally experienced during this past year, because it fits the overall theme of this sermon, which I will continue on, God willing. Nobody in their right mind would think that such a building as I saw being constructed would be built without a plan, and without a purpose for it being built.

Mankind is living in the midst of an awesome construction that goes far, far beyond the bounds of beauty and practical usefulness, inventiveness, and purpose of anything that man has ever built, and yet there seems to be so

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little concern about the One who built it. It is focused on by so few long enough for most to reach a logical and true understanding, and that is why I used the phrase, “nobody in their right mind” just a few moments ago.

People are in a state of mind but it is not the right state of mind regarding the building of Planet Earth. People are not in their right minds regarding God, because they are focused, they are set on the wrong areas of life experiences. I am going to show that the avoidance of the right area is far more deliberate than it first appears. So stay tuned!