

## From Dust To Glory

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I am going to begin by quoting Psalm chapter nineteen where it says:

**Psalm 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the heavens] shows [proclaims] His handiwork.

Is it possible to gaze into the story heavens and fail to see the glory of God that reveals that He exists? For such a glorious creation demands a Creator. They reveal His power. They reveal His wisdom, and they reveal His infinity. But the heavens are only the beginning; the earth likewise reveals His glory, quoting from Isaiah chapter six:

**Isaiah 6:3** And the Seraphim cried out to Isaiah in his vision of God saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

Is it really possible to contemplate the beauty of a flower; the perfection of a snowflake? It is a known fact that no two snowflakes are alike. What about the loveliness and the beauty of a tree? How about the strength of mountains? I remember to this very day the first time I ever saw mountains. I was twenty years old. My cousin, his wife, and my wife and I went out to see those mountains, and when I arrived and finally saw them, I was overwhelmed. Wow! This is awesome! Mountains are truly magnificent.

What about the vastness of the oceans? I remember when we took my oldest granddaughter, who was around three years old, to see the Myrtle Beach “big waters!” I wondered, what was she thinking in her little mind ‘big water’ would be like? When we got there and she finally saw the ocean, her eyes got so big; she smiled and looked at us and pointed, and I think that those ‘big waters’ really came out in her mind then.

What about the amazing instincts of the animal kingdom? Is it possible to contemplate all these things and fail to see the glory of God? But the highest of God's creation is man. We are going to start here with Genesis chapter one: This is the account of God's preparation of the earth for mankind.

On the first five days, God set in motion day and night. He then created the firmament above the earth. He established the waters below. He made the dry land and all the vegetation. Then God set the sun and the moon in their proper positions for their appointed times. Next, He created all the birds and sea life, the beasts, crawling things and the insects. God did it all by the power of His word. He brought them all into existence. God said, and they came into being! Some other times God said, "Let it be" and it was so. God said and it was so.

But on the other hand, when God created man and woman, He did not command them into existence. Rather, He personally formed them with His own hands in His own image, giving them the abilities and qualities after His own life. In Genesis 1:26 God gives us a summary of His creation of man and woman:

**Genesis 1:26** And God said, let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness.

We understand the plural form of the Hebrew word *Elohim*: We also understand that there is more than one Being, this particular Being referred to as *The Word* in the book of John chapter one.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God, and it was the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

This was the One Being that was to become Jesus Christ, our Lord, the One Who created man. As we will learn later from other passages of the Bible, the special creation of man and woman formed the very foundation for the fulfillment of God's plan and purpose for the entire human family. The fact

that God created mankind in His own image is just most profound in itself. For emphasis God even repeats Himself in Genesis chapter one verse twenty seven.

**Genesis 1:27** And God created man in His own image in the image of God. He created him. It created them male and female . . .

Then, God reveals that He put the entire world, including everything He created, into man's hands and rulership and finishing up in verse twenty six. God says,

**Genesis 1:26** "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl [birds] of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

In Genesis chapter two, God provides us with the details of how He created the first man and woman Adam and Eve:

**Genesis 2:7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground...

Have you ever scooped down and picked up a pile of dust and tried to pack it together? It will not hold will it? It will just go right back to the ground. Look at verse six where it says,

**Genesis 2:6** But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Now you take this dust and you mix a little water with it and you have mud. That is why kids love to play in mud. I guess that is what they are made of! Picture God, this awesome Being we are talking about here, scooping down and forming this mud-man who looks just like Him.

**Genesis 2:6** And [God] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Let us try to picture this! Both words *breathe* and *breath* are not the same in Hebrew. The word *breathe* means *puff* like a *puff of air*. God took that little mud-man and he became a man. God breathed into his nostrils and that word *breath* can also be translated as *spirit*. The spirit of life came directly from God Himself into man. That is awesome! Let us turn over to a Psalm of David chapter eight and verse one.

**Psalm 8:1** O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

**Psalm 8:3** When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained.

David here was considering God's splendor above the heavens. He sat back and looked at all the stars. David, of course, did not have a telescope. He did not own a Hubble [telescope] to show him just how big this universe is. What would David had thought if he had known what we know? The sheer vastness of outer space and the coordination of it all are absolutely astounding.

We would need to reach 186,000 mi/s to travel at the speed of light. That is fast! As a matter of fact, it is so fast that the human eye cannot even perceive it. As a young boy, I once remember asking my cousin I was playing with, "Did you see that?" He answered. "What?" I replied, "Do you want to see it again?" I then told him that I was so fast that he could not even see it. But I can assure you, I am not that fast any longer.

It would only take eight minutes to reach the Sun if we were traveling at the speed of light at 186,000 mi/s. To go from the Sun to the center of the Milky Way galaxy, it would take us about 33,000 years traveling at 186,000 mi/s. The Milky Way galaxy belongs to a group of some twenty galaxies known as the *Local Group* and across that group we would have to travel for two million years at the speed of light 186,000 mi/s.

The *Local Group* belongs to the *Virgo Cluster*, part of an even larger local supercluster, which is a half billion light years from one end to the other! Crossing the entire universe, as we know it, at an average speed of 186,000

mi/s, would approximately take us twenty billion light years. Let us think about this because this is what our God created.

**Psalm 8:3** When I consider Your heavens [What David saw], and the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man [What is this little mud-man that God blew breath into his life?] that You are mindful of him, and the Son of Man that You care for Him?

I want to quote from Psalm 139:14 where David says:

**Psalm 193:14** I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

Did you know that the human brain has ten billion nerve cells interacting in coordination and allowing us to function as we do? Ten billion! Our eyes have about 100 million receptor cells in each retina which also contained four other layers of nerve cells. The system makes billions of calculations per second. Do we ever think about that?

There are more than a dozen separate vision centers between the optic nerve and our brain that process what we see. Our skin has more than two million tiny sweat glands or about 3000/in<sup>2</sup>, which helps regulate our temperature.

Our heart beats on an average of 75 bpm (beats per minute), or 4 million times per year, or 2.5 billion times in 70 years. There are a lot of people in this room right here who have had their heart beating over two and a half billion times and I am getting close. Our heart pumps about 3,000 gallons of blood per day.

Our bodies also supported by more than 200 finely designed bones connected to more than 500 muscles and many tendons and ligaments to go with them. Some muscles respond to our conscious will such as our fingers while some just react automatically. When I open my mouth, my hands move. I am not telling them to, they just do!

Our digestive system contains about 35 million glands secreting juices that digest our food and sustain our life. I can almost hear them working out there after breakfast! And I have not even mentioned our lungs, our other senses like hearing, taste, smell, touch, our immune system, and there is so much more all working together perfectly. I do not understand how somebody could just contemplate on the human body and fail to see the glory of God.

**Psalm 8:5-9** For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned Him with glory and honor. You have made Him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet, all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

This is absolutely astounding when we start thinking seriously about these things, brethren. So why is God so mindful of man? We know that God created us in His image, and we are now being created in His likeness. Just as all life was made to reproduce after its own kind, God made man after the God kind. It is God's plan to bring many sons to glory, as it says in Hebrews 2:10.

This is why God is so mindful of man. It is our awesome destiny, and those whom God has called and chosen are being made in His likeness, you and I today. Is not that awesome? And what is then God like? So if we are going to be made in His likeness, what does God look like?

If we turned back to any of the books of John, we would find that God is love and God is creating in us His Holy righteous nature; that is the very essence of love. Love has the characteristics of joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. We can read all about that in Paul's writings in Galatians 5:22-23.

Paul also describes these character traits in little more details in I Corinthians 13. I just love this chapter, and over the years I have mentioned it many times in my sermonettes. I gave a sermonette once on this very topic: the character traits mentioned in Galatians 5:22 and how Paul explains them in

detail in I Corinthians 13. I reminded us that if we wanted to become like God, we needed first to be created in His own image. As I was going through I Corinthians 13, I asked everyone to replace the word *love* with their *own name*: not the name of their spouse! Every time the word *love* comes up throughout the chapter to replace it with their *own name* and think about how they measured up to it.

**I Corinthians 13:4-7** Love [is patient] suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave [disgracefully] rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This is what God is like; this is His very nature that He is putting in us. We have that Divine Nature in us. But in order for God to produce His likeness in us, we have to yield to the Holy Spirit and that Divine Nature that He puts in us and stop yielding to our carnal nature. And we know how Human nature has already been stressed during this feast.

Since our carnal nature is not always kind and patient, it will stir up envy and jealousy. Human nature likes to boast about itself, to be puffed up with pride and behaving rudely. It seeks to please oneself because it is selfish and is very easily provoked because it usually has a hot temper. Human nature always keeps a record of what people do to it, and it is very hard for it to forgive. And this is not what we want to be. We want to be the very opposite of that, and God's Divine Nature is the very opposite of our carnal nature.

So we must make every effort to overcome this carnal nature and allow God's nature, the very heart and mind of our Savior Jesus Christ, to be created in us. That is the work that God is doing in us.

Let us go to another familiar set of scriptures in Romans the eighth chapter. I had no clue what Richard Ritenbaugh's sermon was going to be all about, but he pretty much mentioned all the scriptures that I wanted to read out. So, I am not going to read them again since you can go back to them yourself.

**Romans 8:6** 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 is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Have you ever noticed that when the church started out, our opposition was too far right? The Jews who kept God's law added to it . . . and added to it and made it so strict that Jesus Himself called them a bunch of hypocrites who could not even keep it themselves! They went to the far right extreme.

Today, at the end of this age, the church's position is to the far left. We got a whole group of professing Christians who believes the law does not have to be kept at all. We just *love each other*. Those professing Christians will not keep any of God's laws. They do not keep anything. They do not want to keep any of God's laws because they went from way over here to way over there.

And we should be right here in the middle; that is where we should be: obeying God's laws, not adding to it nor taking away from it, just following what God says.

**Romans 8:10-11** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**Romans 8:14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons [The Children] of God.

That is you and I today.

**Romans 8:16-17** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children [which we are], then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together [with Him.]

We are going to be just like Him, and we are going to inherit everything that Christ has inherited which is everything. Is not this mind blowing?

**Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

This is our destiny; let us drop down to verse twenty eight:

**Romans 8:28-30** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. [That is why we are here.] For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

It is written as though it is a done deal and it is as long as we stay in Christ. It is a done deal!

When God will have finished His creative work in us, we will be like Jesus Christ. Do we fully grasp this and how awesome and privileged we are to be called and chosen by our Creator? Let us turn to I John chapter three.

**I John 3:1-3** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

We shall see Jesus Christ in His glorified state. At the resurrection, we will see Jesus exactly as He is. What does Jesus look like in His glorified body? Is there somewhere in the Bible we can turn to? In Revelation 1:10, the apostle John was transfigured and thus could see spiritual things.

**Revelation 1:10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet.

**Revelation 1:12-16** 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 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. And His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength [full power.]

This was such an awesome vision that when John saw that he fell down dead at his feet. It was just that awesome. That is what we are going to look like and what we are going to be if we are in that first resurrection. There is another place in Revelation where God is speaking to the churches and says:

**Revelation 3:9** Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet.

We do not worship anyone except for God. Let us think about that for a moment! In Matthew chapter thirteen Jesus says the following regarding the resurrection.

**Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

We hear it, brethren, because we have ears to hear. This is our destiny. God took us from that little mud-man, and He is now going to take those mud-people, and He is going to create in some of us, and we are going to be glorified just like Him made after the God kind: from dust to glory.

I am just going to leave you with one word: Wow!