

A Thumbnail Sketch of God's Plan

Fred R. Coulter—April 10, 2010

Let's pick it up here in Isaiah 40:12, so we can see how God declares His greatness. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand... [And then we have the videos like the earth, all of those showing all the magnificent things of the earth.] ...and meted out the heavens with a span? And who has comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, and who was His counselor that he might instruct Him? With whom did He take counsel, and *who* instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and made known the way of understanding to Him?... [So, as God looks down here on the earth, here's what He says:] ...Behold, the nations *are* like a drop in a bucket... [Try that sometime. Take an absolutely dry bucket, take an eye-dropper, put a drop of water in it, then see what you can see.] ...and are counted as the small dust of the scales; behold, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts of it sufficient *for* a burnt offering" (vs 12-16).

"All nations before Him *are* as nothing; and they are counted by Him as less than nothing, and vanity.... [And you can see why, after you see that. I really think that God has placed the earth in the part of the universe where we can look out and we can understand the heavens, because many places in the universe [you] can't do that.] ...To whom then will you compare God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?... [Think about this next time you look at a church or a cathedral or temple.] ...The workman melts a graven image, and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and casts silver chains. He who is too poor for *that* offering chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks for a skillful workman for himself to prepare a graven image that will not totter" (vs 17-20). So men make gods to themselves. They won't worship the true God. 'Oh, but let's make one for ourselves.' I remember growing up in Washington there were the native Indians around there and they always had these totem poles. This is what it's talking about.

So he asked the question: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood *from* the foundations of the earth? *It is* He Who sits above the circle of the earth... [So they knew the earth was round back then.] ...and its people are like grasshoppers; *it is* He Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in" (vs 21-22). Now that's something—isn't it? You think about what God has done to create the vastness of the universe there. Since God is eternal,

we don't know how long ago that that occurred. And billions of years, if you live for eternity, is really nothing.

"Who brings the rulers to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth as vanity. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, then He shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away like stubble" (vs 23-24). Now the next time you watch one of these historical accounts on the History Channel, like the empires of Greece and Babylon and Egypt, and all these things, just remember—God blew on them and they're nothing! here are they today? Unfortunately, we're living in a time where we're seeing that our judgment is coming upon us like it did all of them and for the same things, same reasons, same sins.

So when all of that is done, he says, v 25: "To whom then will you compare Me, or who is My equal?" says the Holy One.... [this is how you receive humility] ...Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, Who has created these *things*, Who brings out their host by number? He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might..." (vs 25-26). Every one of those is named, every one of them is numbered. God is so particular in what He does, that even a sparrow doesn't fall to the ground that it's not accounted for. So that's something! This is not only to humble us, but this is also to give us faith and encouragement toward God, because being that great and doing these things that He has done, and trying to understand His plan—which we'll cover a little bit out of the Bible today—because of all the others creatures on the earth, only mankind has been made in the image of God. There's a great purpose in that. So we'll cover part of that.

"Why do you say, O Jacob, and O Israel you speak, 'My way is hidden from the LORD and my cause is disregarded by my God?'" (v 27). They're the ones who don't believe in God. What's one of the famous things that agnostics and atheists say for anyone who believes in the Bible? 'Oh, well, it was written by men.' Where did you get the ideas there's no God? Who wrote that? *Men!* Are there men that God trusted, inspired to do what He said? *Yes.* Has the Bible stood the test of time through centuries, millennia? *Yes!* What have the atheists produced? They have one major point. They hate religion, because most religion really is awful. But you can't hide from God.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow weak nor

weariness? And His understanding no one can fathom" (v 28). And after you see those beautiful pictures of the universe, you just sit there and say, 'That's something.' You take the best painting that a man can do—I think Rembrandt was one of the best—what is that compared to the universe? What is the tallest building compared to the earth? What are spaceships compared to God's cherubim? *Nothing!*

"...And His understanding no one can fathom.... [So he tells us here]: ...*He* gives power to the weary; and to him with no might, He increases strength. Even the young shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up *with* wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (vs 28-31).

Now you look at all those pictures of the universe and just think of all the things that you've seen on the earth, through whatever video program you have seen. Think of all the things that are in the ocean and there are a lot of things that they just recently discovered. There are over seven thousand new species that live seven miles down in the ocean and even deeper than that where those methane vents are and the smokestacks. All those who believe in the green movement, I have a question for you if you want to stop methane gas: How are you going to stop those five miles down at the bottom of the ocean?

Let's see that man is important to God. Let's come to Genesis, the first chapter, and right in the beginning God tells us—not in detail, but in a hint. Now let me just mention here, there's plenty of evidence to show that the earth was created long before six thousand years ago and that the angels inhabited the earth until Lucifer and a third of the angels rebelled and there was war in heaven. Then there was chaos and confusion on the earth, and God covered the earth with water. So there's evidence of two floods. That's why you have that in the paleontology record.

There is the first great dying, which is basically all reptilian. Then you have the second great dying, which then is mostly mammalian and those are from the flood of Noah. Man is confronted with a problem in trying to measure time and how long things have existed. Because if the earth is several billion years old, which is possible, that means that the soil was here before anything else. And all fossils are found where? *In soil*, much of it has become hardened into rock. When something is buried and covered with earth, there is a chemical transfer of minerals from the earth to the bones, and from the bones to the earth. So you dig up the bones and you measure the bones, but you can never really tell how old it is, because what you're measuring is a

good portion of the earth that had the mineral exchange. You can understand this with petrified wood, petrified bones, and most of the dinosaur bones are petrified bones. They say, 'Oh, it's hundreds of billions of years old.' It may not be, but the earth may be older than that. So that is a problem they're never, ever, ever going to solve.

What we have goes back a little more than six thousand years ago and this then is when God re-created the earth for man. I'm not going to go through all the days of creation, but I'm going to come here to the sixth day. Genesis 1:26: "And God said... [Now here's something very interesting about the Hebrew word for *God*. The Hebrew is pronounced 'Elohim.' The 'im' at the end of the Hebrew word means plural, more than one. So this is a plural noun speaking of more than one.] ...And God said, 'Let Us... [The Jews because they reject the New Testament have never been able to figure out who *Us* really are. Who are *Us*? So they say, 'It was the majestic counsel of angels.' We'll answer that in just a little bit, because there's an answer in the New Testament. So sometimes to get the definitive answer, you have to wait for another period of time in which God gives the answer. But He answers it.] ...'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.'" Quite a thing—is that not true? Do not men rule the world? *Yes!* There're also angels and demons there, too, as well. Let's answer the *Us*.

Let's go back to the Gospel of John in the New Testament. In the beginning of the first chapter of the Gospel of John, we have some understanding about God and about Christ, Who is this case is called the Word. Verse 1 is talking about the same place where we were in Gen. 1. John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God... [Now it's very interesting here, because the Greek means *face-to-face*. The Greek word *with* is 'pros'—*toward*. Now the Greek for *face-to-face* is 'prosopon'—being *face*—*face-to-face*; so He was there with God.] ...and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (vs 1-4).

So all human beings have light from God as reflected in this 'the light of man.' This tells us there are at least two Who are in the Godhead of Elohim—doesn't it? It doesn't say anything about the Holy Spirit as being God. The Holy Spirit is the power of God. God uses the Holy Spirit. That's how He creates everything. That's how He deals with us. So we're dealing with two.

Since we're in the Gospel of John, let's come to John 17 and let's see where we get the definitive answer as to Who the *Us* are. Now this is Jesus' last prayer before He's arrested and led off to be tried and crucified. This is basic understanding because the Bible is not like an ordinary book in the world that you can read and if you can read you can understand. The Bible is like this: ***You understand as you believe and obey.*** If you don't obey and if you don't believe, you're never going to understand it. Just like if you go to the refrigerator and open the door and never take any food out, you're not going to eat—same situation.

John 17:17: “Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth.... [And it's stood the test of time. It is Truth.] ...Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* Truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word.... [v 21 gives us a hint of the purpose of God]: ...That they all may be one... [And that means:

- one in kind
- one in mind
- one in Spirit
- one in purpose

...they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me... [by the Spirit of God] ...**and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**... [That answers the question: Who are the *Us*. The one God Who became the Father and the other God Who became Christ—*Us*. But we're dealing with about 3500 years later for the final proof.] ...in order that the world may believe that You did send Me” (vs 17-21). Right here in v 21 is the sum of the whole plan of God. “That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us.”

Let's see how God is going to do that. Let's come back to Genesis 1:26 and let's finish this. So we see that God said, “Let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness...” [Then He gave them the whole earth. God is not One to constrain. Think about how men run things. They get their property and build walls and fences and forts around it and no one can come in. God created the earth, everything there is, and said to Adam and Eve, ‘Rule it. Live in it. I created everything here for you.’] ...And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female” (vs 26-27).

Genesis 5:2—we'll answer a question. Here we find something very interesting referring to Adam and Eve. Genesis 5:1: “This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created

man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them, and He called their name Adam... [So what do we have? *Mr. and Mrs. Adam!*] ...in the day when they were created” (vs 1-2). There we go, male and female. He created us for the very purpose of receiving love from God, receiving and giving love to each other. That was the whole plan of God.

Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth... [Now that's a very interesting word there—isn't it?—*replenish*. What does that tell you? He didn't say, ‘And plenish the earth.’ He didn't say, ‘And fill the earth.’ He said, ‘Replenish,’ meaning that before it was re-created for man, there was life on the earth in the form of the angels.] ...replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” And after He created everything that there was, God saw everything He made, and indeed it was exceedingly good (v 31).

Then we have the purpose of the Sabbath right here, to keep us in contact with God, He created the time, so that we can come before God. Always remember:

1. He's Creator
2. This is the day He made Holy
3. This is the day that we are to assemble together on

Genesis 2:1: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it... [That means, He made it Holy. Now it's only Holy as you use it Holy. And as you do, you come to understand about God. People in the world, living their lives the way that they do, they don't know about God, don't where He is. Some may believe in God, some may believe in a religion, whatever. But God made the seventh day which He carried on down in time to today, so this day is the seventh day.] ...and sanctified it because on it He rested... [God wasn't tired and worn out. He didn't need to take a nap, but He rested or ceased from His creative activities.] ...from all His work which God had created and made” (vs 1-3).

Let's briefly answer the question: What happened to Adam and Eve after He created them? *This is where everything went wrong.* Before we get into that, we need to understand. God has made all human beings free moral agents. He made us so that we could choose. He wants us to choose what is right, so that He can bless us, that He can work with us, that our lives will be fulfilled according to His

purpose. But we have to make that choice. So God created Adam first and Adam was a full mature adult. He created him with a language so he could communicate. As a matter of fact, Adam named all the animals. God had them all come by Adam and he named all the animals and then there was an object lesson for him there, which was this: There was no one for Adam. So that's when He took a rib and created Eve.

Now He put Adam in the garden, Genesis 2:15: "And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of *the* tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die'" (vs 15-17). That doesn't mean he would die instantly, but he would surely die.

So then after God created Eve, brought her to him, we have the first wedding ceremony, right here in v 22: "Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, 'This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.' For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife—and they shall become one flesh.... [That's the way God intended.] ...And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed" (vs 22-25).

What happened in the garden? How long they were there, we're not told, but they had sufficient knowledge so that they knew that they should not eat of the tree. How long did they live in there without eating of it? *We don't know*. God appeared to them on a daily basis and in appearing He probably appeared to them as a man. So He probably instructed them in His plan that they would become like Him, but He didn't give them all the details of it. So in order to know whether man would love God and keep His commandments, and look to Him always, then He had the serpent, symbolizing Satan, come into the garden. The story there is very interesting, so let's read it.

Genesis 3:1: "Now the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Is it true that God has said, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"' And the woman said to the serpent... [Of course, that's a wrong statement. She's got to correct him.] ...'We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, "You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.".... [Now that shows probably

further instruction that God gave them.] ...And the serpent said to the woman, 'In dying, you shall not surely die!.... [In other words, 'if you do die, you're really not going to be dead.' That still is the basis of all of the religions of the world that believe in the immortal soul. You die! The body's dead, but your soul goes off to heaven somewhere. *But nowhere does it say the soul is immortal in the Bible*. There's a lot of religious confusion that is attached to religion that is called Christianity.] ...For God knows... [he's accusing God] ...that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil'" (vs 1-5). Not knowing good and evil as God knows good and evil, but to *decide* good and evil for yourself.

Rather than listening to God, they said, 'Okay, we're going to do it our self.' Of course, that's the way it is today. Human beings decide what's good, what's evil, rather than follow the Word of God.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (vs 6-7). They didn't die instantly—did they? So they probably looked at one another when they first ate it and said, 'I'm still alive.'

Of course, they didn't know what death was. I don't think they had seen death. 'I'm still here. This tastes good.' Adam was right there with her. He saw her pick it, he saw her do it, he was with her. I suppose he figured in his mind, I don't know we just suppose, that 'if she eats it and nothing happens, then I'll eat it.' That was very kind of you, Adam. So they both ate, they both sinned and then they brought something upon mankind because of their actions and from the judgment of God. What happened was their nature became basically evil.

This is a problem for God—right? How is He going to carry out His plan for human beings if now all human beings are born with a nature that is a mixture of good and evil and basically evil? So what happened? I'll just summarize it rather than reading all the verses.

- The nature of what we call nature was changed to bring forth thorns and thistles. Didn't have them before then.
- The nature of man was changed, because now they had to decide good and evil and they were basically evil.

- The nature of woman was changed in the same way and also she had to learn that her husband would rule over her.

The next thing that happened was they were removed from the Garden of Eden—exiled, *put outside the blessing of God*. Before in the garden, they were living with God, could see and talk with God everyday. After that now, at the east end of the Garden of Eden, God put a couple of cherubim to guard it and that's where they would come and meet God. They probably met Him every Sabbath at that particular place.

Now then, you have the problem with Cain and Abel, and that resulted in the whole society becoming evil in 1500 years, requiring a flood. So how is God going to solve the problem? That's the question because God has a purpose for human beings. So how is God going to redeem mankind? Because we bring children into the world and when they're young and sweet, they're really nice and everything is fine. And you think, 'Oh, boy, here's a brand new child. We're going to start nice and new and teach them right and everything will be fine.' But they have human nature, too, don't they? They grow up and make their choices, too, don't they? So that's why it was said of Eve she would have sorrow in child bearing.

God provided the plan that one of them, that was Christ, the One Who created everything as we read, would come and be a human being and die for all the sins of mankind—past, present and future—because He created them and then gave them a nature that was a mixture of good and evil. Meaning then, that man could not save himself from death. And no one has been able to do it.

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After the murder of Abel by Cain, he was exiled to the land of wandering, the land of Nod, yet, he went and built a city. Then there were two parallel lines for man:

1. The line coming from Adam through Seth.
2. The line from Cain down through to the time of the Flood.

Now at the time of the Flood we have a very interesting situation, because men are basically so evil that you cannot have lots and lots of men and women on the earth at the same time without evil taking over and destroying man. That's just the nature of how human beings are.

So Genesis 8:20: "And Noah built an altar to the LORD, and he took of every clean animal, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in His heart, 'I will not again curse the ground for man's sake—although the imagination of

man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will not again smite every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease'" (vs 20-22). So that tells you how chaotic it was before the flood.

Then from there God gave a covenant to all mankind, symbolized by the rainbow. He would never bring a flood again as He had. Then the earth again became very wicked and evil. As an aside, I have a DVD that's very interesting. It's called the *Serpent's Side of Eden*. It's all recorded in Greek art, what happened after the Flood. It's quite interesting indeed, and it all goes back like all the histories do to Nimrod and Semiramis.

The earth then became evil again and there was only one man who would obey God. That was Abraham. So we're dealing quite a few hundred years later. Then God called Abram who changed his name to Abraham later on, meaning *father of many nations*. So Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed'" (vs 1-3). Now let's understand something here with this. This is not referring to the Jews. It's referring to the eventual twelve tribes of Israel. Abraham was not a Jew. Isaac was not a Jew. Jacob was not a Jew. As a matter of fact, Jews were not called Jews until way down into the time of the wars between Israel and Judah. That's when they were called Jews. So what is known as Judaism today is not encompassing all of the relationship between God and mankind from the beginning.

So Abraham left. Now we come to Genesis 15, and this becomes a very important part here. This is when he was 85-years-old. From Gen. 15 comes the promise of how God's going to solve the problem of the evil of mankind, and how He's going to send a Savior and would come from the seed of Abraham.

Genesis 15:1: "After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abram, I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.' And Abram said, 'Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?'.... [It was a legal thing to adopt a servant and make him your heir.] ...And Abram said, 'Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir.' And behold the Word of the LORD came to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of

your own loins shall be your heir'.... [So God gave the promise to him that he would have his own son. Now we know that did not take place until he was a hundred years old. So this promise was given fifteen years before it took place. Now something else happened here] ...And He [God] brought him [Abram.] outside and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.'.... [we know it's impossible] ...And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be'" (vs 1-5). What does that mean? We have two promises:

1. A physical seed.

That was Isaac. From him came Jacob and from him came the twelve sons of Jacob, which then became the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Then we have this: 'your seed is going to be as the stars of heaven.' That's a second promise of a spiritual seed.

You have first the physical seed, then you have the spiritual seed. And there are two things contained in both of them:

1. Of the *physical seed* would come the line down to Christ. That's why the genealogies in the Old Testament and in the New Testament are important because it shows that God kept His promise of the physical seed—Christ.
2. Then there is also the promise of *spiritual seed*, the spiritual sons who then would receive eternal life.

Let's look at two Scriptures. Let's come first of all to the book of Daniel. This is talking about the end-time. Daniel 12:1: "And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even until that time.... [That's what we are about to enter into now, getting close to that time.] ...And at that time your people shall be delivered—every one who shall be found written in the book.... [Now that we know is the book of life.] ...And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament... [Remember, God told Abram, 'Look to the heavens and number the stars if you're able to count them.] ...and they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever" (vs 1-3). So there's a prophecy of the destiny of those who would love God and keep His commandments and accept, as we'll see a little later in the New Testament, the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

Let's come to the Gospel of Matthew 13. This is just an overview to show that the 'stars of heaven' are the *spiritual seed* and when we are resurrected from the dead we will have a glorious

body like Christ's glorious body. Notice what Jesus said:

Matthew 13:43: "Then... [That is at the resurrection when the Kingdom of God is brought here by Christ.] ...shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." So we have the prophecy of God to Abram that his seed would be like the stars of heaven, that is a spiritual seed. We have the prophecy by Daniel showing that those who turn many to righteousness will shine as the stars of heaven in the firmament of heaven. Now Jesus says here v 43: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Now that's going to take place when the resurrection occurs, not until then. No immortal soul's going to heaven, otherwise how would you have a resurrection?

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 15, because this is the resurrection chapter. And the hope of all Christians—as a matter of fact, the hope of all mankind—is the resurrection from the dead. We will have to save the question: What's going to happen to those who are not called now? because God has a plan for them, too.

1-Corinthians 15:12: "But if Christ is being preached, that He rose from *the* dead, how *is it that* some among you are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead?... [Right in the Church of God. That's amazing— isn't it? *Yes!*] ...For if there is no resurrection from *the* dead, neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching *is* in vain, and your faith *is* also in vain. And we are also found *to be* false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise, if indeed *the* dead are not raised. For if *the* dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* vain; you are still in your sins. And those who have fallen asleep in Christ have then perished... [Then he says the only hope in this life is Christ.] ...If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable. But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order... [So ***there's an order to the resurrection.*** Now we don't have time to go into that today. He states the first two orders of it.] ...[#1] Christ *the* firstfruit... [The first one to be raised from the dead.] ...[#2] those who are Christ's at His coming" (vs 12-23). And, of course, that's yet in the future.

Then he talks about the resurrection. Let's come over here to v 40, since it talks about heavenly bodies and that's what we're referring to in the first

resurrection. "And *there are* heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly *is* different, and the *glory* of the earthly *is* different. *There is* one glory of *the* sun, and another glory of *the* moon, and another glory of *the* stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory. **So also is the resurrection of the dead.** It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.... [see the comparison there] ...It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.... [That means we're going to have a spiritual body, spiritual mind, and so forth, at the resurrection.] ...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (vs 40-44).

"Accordingly, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam... [Who was Christ.] ...became an every-living Spirit.' However... [this is very important doctrine] ...the spiritual *was* not first... [Because there are some people who say, 'Well, we're spirit beings in a physical body.' *Can't be so.*] ...but the natural—then the spiritual. The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust... [All human beings, same flesh, same blood, and so forth.] ...and as *is* the heavenly *one*, so also are all those who are heavenly" (vs 45-48). And that is when Christ returns.

Now here's a promise, v 49: "And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *one*. Now this I say, brethren... [And here's another very important doctrine.] ...that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God**... [So no one is in the kingdom of God now.] ...nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, In an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [We'll see other Scriptures to back this up. [This is a very comforting Scripture here, v 53]: ...For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility... [I'm waiting for that day. The older you get, the more that means.] ...and this mortal must put on immortality.... [That's a plan of God.] ...Now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (vs 49-54). So there is life beyond death.

Now let's see the verification that we are going to be like Christ. He was raised from the dead and is glorious. Let's come to the Epistle of 1-John. Now there are some people who don't believe the Bible and say that anyone who says that we are going to be like God at the resurrection, or like Jesus

at the resurrection, we are going to be in the family of God, they say, 'That's heresy.' *Not so.* Let's read what it says right here.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the **children of God!**.... [Very interesting. The Greek there comes from the word *teknon*, which means His very own offspring.] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God... [That is if we have the Spirit of God in us.] ...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested... [When will that be? *At His return and the resurrection takes place.*] ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [as Christ is! That's something! This is to give us the hope. That's the hope! That's the goal!] And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Now let's see another verification of this. Let's come to Philippians 3:20 and here it makes it very, very clear: "But for us, the commonwealth *of God* exists in *the* heavens... [It's coming to the earth when Christ returns.] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ... [What's going to happen?]: ...**Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body**, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (vs 20-21). Question: How does Jesus look in His glorified form?

Let's come to Revelation 1:1, because there's some very interesting things that are taught as we come down through this verse and it ends up showing how Christ looks like in His glorified form. Revelation 1:1: "*The* revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that are ordained to come to pass shortly... [*shortly* in God's mind is a *long time* in man's mind; nevertheless, it's going to happen.] ...and He made *it* know, having sent *it* by His angel to His servant John; who gave witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things he saw. Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand. John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia... [That's a prophetic type of all the Churches of God.] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from the seven spirits that are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 1-6).

That also shows the purpose. We're going to reign as kings and priests under Christ to bring the kingdom of God to this earth—get rid of all war, bring the peace of God, fulfill the plan of God in the lives of the people who come through the Tribulation and everything. Then for a thousand years, there's going to be the rule of God. After that, will be the resurrection of the rest of the dead. That's getting into another subject.

Verse 7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him... [That's also another quite detailed sermon.] ...and those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.... [Now He declares Who He is]: ...'I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending,*' says the Lord, 'Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.' I, John, who *am* also your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that *is* called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (vs 7-9).

Very interesting! You even can see some of that on the History Channel where it talks about John, who wrote the book of Revelation, was on the isle of Patmos and the historical story is that he was cast into a boiling cauldron of oil and it didn't burn him. He came out and remained unscathed from that, so he was exiled to the isle of Patmos where then God gave him this vision.

So he says: "I was in *the Spirit* on the day of the Lord... [spiritually projected forward] ...and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me, 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 churches that *are* in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.' And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me... [That's interesting. How do you turn to see the voice? *Turned to see where the voice was coming from.*] ...and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands; And in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like *the* Son of man... [It was Christ. Remember, we're going to have our bodies be conformed to His glorious body. So here it describes Him.] ...clothed in *a garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice was like *the* sound of many waters. And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword went out of His mouth, and His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full power*" (vs 10-16). Very interesting!

That confirms exactly what we read back in Gen. 15, be like the stars; Dan. 12, shine like the stars, have our bodies conform to His glorious body. This is what His body looked like. So we'll be spirit beings. The thousand years are finished and so there we have the glory of Christ and His countenance, and everything there. We'll be like Him. We'll rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years, the rest of the dead will be raised. They'll be given an opportunity for salvation.

After everything is all done with that, then the whole earth is consumed with fire in preparation for the new heavens and the new earth. And all of those in the first resurrection will dwell in New Jerusalem, live with God the Father and Jesus Christ. The rest of who are saved are the nations and they will live on the new earth, whatever the distribution will be at that particular time.

So that's about as quick a summary as we can give on the plan of God, why did He make the universe the way that He did. After that, then we're going to expand to the whole universe. That'll be something. God did not create that for nothing, but a purpose. Through Christ, we're part of that purpose.

I know that was kind of a very quick summary, but I hope it gives you a thumbnail sketch, some of the basic plan of God, that He has worked it out His way to do it this way. And all the rest of the Bible fills in the details with it.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 40:12-31
- 2) Genesis 1:26
- 3) John 1:1-4
- 4) John 17:17-21
- 5) Genesis 1:26-27
- 6) Genesis 5:1-2
- 7) Genesis 1:28
- 8) Genesis 2:1-3, 15-17, 22-25
- 9) Genesis 3:1-7
- 10) Genesis 8:20-22
- 11) Genesis 12:1-3
- 12) Genesis 15:1-5
- 13) Daniel 12:1-3
- 14) Matthew 13:43
- 15) 1-Corinthians 15:12-23, 40-54
- 16) 1-John 3:1-3
- 17) Philippians 3:20-21
- 18) Revelation 1:1-16

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Genesis 1:31

Also referenced: DVD—*Serpents Side of Eden*

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