



About the Cover

God has a blueprint upon which He has presented His entire Plan for mankind. It is yet a work in progress that began long ago in obscure darkness and will culminate in man being thrust forth as brilliant spirit beings into the eternal family of God. Every feature of man from his marvelous mind and stature – directed by God’s Spirit and Law – were designed to ultimately constitute God’s glorious Temple in which He resides (Ephesians 2:21, 1Corinthians 3:16). God’s Plan for His spiritual house is coming to fruition, being constructed of living stones – the saints of His Church (1Peter 2:5). God says of His people:

“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a purchased people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you **out of darkness** and into **His marvelous light.**” (1Peter 2:9)

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Plan of God
Darkness to Light

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More chapters coming soon!

Plan of God

Dedication

To all the people of God – this is for you!

Remembering W.K. "Zeke" Zehrung (1916-1997) without whose moral character and example this book would not have been possible. His principled honesty and uninhibited kindness toward all set him apart. This work is dedicated to his memory.

Warren M. Zehrung

Preface

As far as the people in the world at large are concerned Christianity is a murky and obscure concept. They believe that they understand it all, but they do not. However, for a particular group that God calls His saints, the truth is not elusive at all. Those saints, the people of the Church of God, have been given the unique privilege of knowing more about Christianity and Godliness than the people in the world because God has given them an overview of what He is doing. For a long time what God is doing was a mystery. It is no longer hidden in secrecy. This book contains much of what God has revealed to His saints up to now. For students of the Bible this information should come as no surprise.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

God has a Plan that will eventually impact everyone—some sooner and others later. This book is the story of how God's Plan unfolds. That Plan is in God's word the Bible, but it is a long and difficult task to figure out because of the many erroneous notions that are prevalent in society. To begin to know God, a chronological view of the Plan of God is needed. What is His Plan, how did it begin, how will it come to fruition, and what is God's intent? What is the purpose for which all things were created?

During the last century there was a large outpouring of God's Spirit around the world. Today, however, true Christians find themselves a "vanishing breed." The zeal which characterized the spread of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ during the last century is seriously diminishing. In the same way that the Church of the first century left a record of its acts and beliefs for us, it is fitting that this generation set down a legacy to those who follow after us. A time is coming soon when this precious truth will not be widely available.

Amos 8:11 Behold, the days come, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Because of ever increasing religious persecution on the people of God, and restrictions upon God's word, it is necessary that the vital understandings that the Church of God brethren – the saints of God – once knew be set forth in a book in order that this discernment and comprehension of the Holy Scriptures not be lost.

At this point in time less than one percent of the earth's population knows that God has a Plan let alone what the Plan of God is. And sadly, except for here and there, this valuable information is not being passed along to the next generation so that those who want to know it will have it available to them. It is most important that this vital knowledge of the Plan of God be preserved for those with whom God is working.

God in His perfect wisdom has not revealed the entirety of godly truth to man all at once. He imparts certain wisdom that He wants His Church brethren to profit by according to His own schedule and purposes—that's what the Bible calls, "the present truth," when it's received and understood. It should come as no surprise that biblical wisdom is unique to those in a right relationship with God, and not to everyone. In Matthew 24:5 Jesus said that *many would be deceived* by those who preach Christ – and a sure sign of the fulfillment of that prophecy is how many "Christians" today believe they cannot be deceived. The first century Church of God had biblical truth and understanding that was subsequently lost to the confused world, but not to the true saints of God. The apostle Peter wrote:

2Peter 1:12 I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in *the present truth*.

It is this "present truth" which the Church of God possesses today that must be preserved as much as possible for those who will come later. We are living in an increasingly hostile environment which is not conducive to the truth of God. Schools, institutions of higher learning, even the so-called religious leaders of our day do not possess this priceless information. They do not know how to properly weigh the biblical meanings of the Feasts of the Lord, ceremonies, symbols, figures and patterns that are so plentiful in the Scriptures. Little by little, God revealed parts of His Plan to the prophets of old leading up to Jesus Christ who gave the greater meaning to His disciples (Mathew 13:11). Thankfully, there have been those in the Church of God community who have compiled a great deal of this biblical knowledge for the benefit of others. God gives His spiritually deep core truth only to His faithful saints.

1Corinthians 2:14 The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Jesus told His disciples to go and teach all nations. Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, charged the Church brethren to earnestly contend for the Christian teachings which were once delivered unto them.

Jude :3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Paul also urged Timothy to teach Christianity as he had been taught.

2Timothy 3:14-15 Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

This book contains much information that was subsequently lost to secular history beginning during the lives of the apostles themselves. The apostles fought against the false information that was polluting the true Gospel message of Jesus Christ, and causing some to break faith with God the Father. Paul wrote:

Galatians 1:6-7 I am astonished that ye are so soon removed from [God the Father] who called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another [but a false gospel].

Only a very few people are chosen to have this wonderful good news at their fingertips. When asked if there were very few that were saved, Jesus responded:

Luke 13:23-24 Do your utmost to enter in at the narrow gate: For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able.

The Bible is the source and basis of all doctrine put forth in this book. The Bible is the ultimate authority. It alone establishes the course to that true **Light**—Jesus Christ. All people living in this evil world have been deceived and led into spiritual darkness by false religion, by their own human reason, by the intelligentsia, by the politicians in government, but most of all by Satan himself (Revelation 12:9). Even the Pope has joined into the common refrain today that, "One religion is as good as another—just different paths to the same God." Jesus taught the opposite: "... difficult is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). Within the pages of this book you will find the answer to the mystery of God's Plan which was kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25). God is bringing mankind – according to His Plan – out of abysmal *darkness* into His glorious *light*.

1Corinthians 2:7 We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Mainstream religion, college campuses, and political think-tanks lack knowledge of the Plan of God. If they had it, they would want to bottle it up and sell it to you for a profit (Proverbs 23:23). But God has revealed it to His saints by His Spirit: For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (1Corinthians 2:10). This book is provided free of charge to all those who are searching for answers in the hope that it will help those who are endeavoring to attain to the Kingdom of God. You need to know God's Plan for you. It is far superior to anything you can possibly imagine. You will find the answers that you are seeking in the pages of, *Plan of God—Darkness to Light*.

Warren M. Zehrung

Introduction

Who is God and what is He doing? Those are good questions to consider. It is not possible to have faith in God without knowing about Him and what is important to Him. No wise man would begin to build a project without a good plan in mind. Why are people so surprised to find out that God, Himself, has a Plan? The great majority of the people in the world have not heard that God has a plan, or what the Plan of God is. It is a mystery to them. The discovery of this knowledge of a hidden mystery is a stunning eye-opener to those who have been living in the dark. Surprisingly, a full understanding of God's intentions was not made known to the prophets of old who foretold them, but it was revealed to the New Testament apostles and subsequently to the Church brethren. The apostle Paul explained in Ephesians 3 how God Himself had revealed His mysterious Plan to him.

Ephesians 3:2-5 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me for you: How that by revelation **He made known unto me the mystery**; (as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

And so it became obvious that God has shown His Plan to many in order to ascertain if they will either live their lives in accordance to the will of God, or follow their own whims. Paul tells us that God's Plan is being made known to the Church brethren—the true saints:

Colossians 1:26 Even **the mystery which has been hidden** from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.

When Jesus was carrying out His three and a half year public ministry He began to reveal His Father—God the Father—and this mystery that had been so long hidden.

Mark 4:11 [Jesus] said unto His disciples, unto you it is given **to know the mystery** of the Kingdom of God:

The Plan of God Revealed

The purpose of this book is to illustrate from the Holy Scriptures the timeline and a chronological outline of the most important events and themes, past present and future, in order for the saints of the Church of God to have a framework in which to study God's Word and properly interpret prophecy.

In this writing, the Plan of God is outlined from beginning to end as revealed in Scripture. This framework is designed as a format in which the Bible story can be represented in an orderly fashion. Precious truth that is much too wonderful for the human mind to conceive of is made known in the pages of the Bible: The origin of life; the spirit world; creation of the earth and the heavens; the nature of God Himself; eternal salvation and the Plan of God. The question is, "How do they all fit together?"

God planned and is implementing each step of the way, not only to bring us to this very point in time, but to establish His sovereign rule over the entire earth. At this point in time, the process is by no means complete. In fact, God continues to generously divulge more and more of His Plan to us as we approach the return of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 12:4 Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and **seal the book**, even to the time of the end.

This book contains some of the knowledge of God's Plan that He has opened up to the saints in this last century. God has painted a picture throughout the Bible of His wonderful Plan. Point by point He is showing His called out ones exactly how He is working out His Plan of salvation, not only for the Church of God brethren today, but eventually for all of mankind.

Extremely few people realize that God has a Plan—but God's saints are sanctified (set-apart for a special purpose) to know His Plan by the many points of truth revealed in the Bible. The holy Scriptures contain all the information necessary for salvation because it is the living Word of God—the absolute Truth. The saving of mankind is necessary because everyone has sinned and come short of the glory of God and is deserving of death (Romans 3:23, 6:23). Jesus Christ Himself makes it possible to overturn a sinner's guilty verdict and subsequent death penalty and grant him salvation. There is no other Book that contains the means by which man can be saved, and that is because the Bible is inspired—that is, God breathed. God spoke it. That means God dictated His words as they were being written down (2Peter 1:21). The Bible is a gift from God.

Godly Character

It is God's desire that His people strive to have complete moral character as Jesus is perfect:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

2Timothy 3:15-17 ...The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may *be perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Bible is actually the word of God originally written on parchment. Today it is in print and available to everyone – at our fingertips. God has conveyed details of His Plan to those men of old who were inspired by Him "a little here and a little there" (Isaiah 28:10). When they wrote Scripture down, most of it was not understandable to them. The meaning of God's words that they originally inscribed on the dried skins of animals was not revealed to them and they were unable to see the entire perspective that God is now revealing to His saints. Over time, and especially in this era of the Church, God is making known that which He had previously hidden in plain sight.

Daniel 12:4 But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.

In this book, *Plan of God Darkness to Light*, the pieces of the puzzle are laid out from beginning to end in a timely format. A lot of people think that they know what the Bible says. You now have the opportunity to know what the ancient men of God longed to glimpse into.

1Peter 1:10-11 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the **glory that should follow**.

That term, "glory" has to do with the future brilliant glorified state of those resurrected spirit beings who will have attained to everlasting life. The very Plan of God from before the foundation of the world was and is for the Children of God to obtain glorious eternal life in the Family of God. But, in order to do so each individual's character and image must be dramatically made over and greatly enhanced to conform to the image of God. God is sharpening and perfecting His character in those who believe Him and humbly yield to His will. Notice the description of the glorious resurrected Jesus Christ:

Godly Glory

Hebrews 1:3 The Son [Jesus Christ] is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His image.

In Jesus' prayer to His Father the night before He died, He requested that His **former glory** be restored to Him:

John 17:3-5 This is life eternal, that [the saints] might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent... And now, O Father, glorify me with your own self, with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Everyone who seeks the Kingdom of God in righteousness will inherit everlasting life. Jesus told Peter and the other disciples:

Matthew 19:29 Everyone that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

From the beginning it was God's Plan, not to only provide man with a temporary physical life, but to create man in a way that he might obtain **glorious eternal life**.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

Matthew 25:34 [Jesus said,] ...Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Paul told the Ephesian Church how he had been appointed by the Creator through a personal revelation, to shed light on **God's Plan** for all mankind, and also for the angelic realm, **enlightening** them about this mysterious Plan that God had kept secret from the very beginning. It was God's purpose in making His Plan known that, through the Church brethren, all the unseen rulers and powers in heavenly places would at last realize God's plentiful wisdom in its rich variety. All of this is in accordance with His eternal Plan, which He is carrying out through Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul explained it this way:

Ephesians 3:3, 9-11 It was by a revelation that the secret mystery was made known to me ... To make all men see what is the **Plan of [God]**, the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through (because of) the Church brethren the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose which He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.

With the institution of God's Church, and with the guidance and intervention of God's Spirit, His Plan was revealed to the New Testament Church brethren. In this book we explore many of the incredible facets of God's Plan as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The Original Faith

This book is written for the Church of God brethren living near the very end-time. It contains an understanding of the revealed chronology of events as supported by Scripture. It is most important that the biblical knowledge that has been learned in this last generation of God's Church be preserved and protected for those who follow. As we saw in Jude 3, the knowledge of the principles and values of the true faith must be sought, conserved and safeguarded. Jude was paraphrasing the Prophet Jeremiah who had written:

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your lives.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

This profession of our faith which was widely known halfway through the twentieth century has been rapidly eroded to the point that it has become woefully missing in this last era of God's Church. It does not have to be that way – but sadly it is. Jesus rhetorically asked the question, "Will the Son of man find faith on the earth when He returns?" (Luke 18:8) It should come as no surprise to us that many would depart the true faith as we saw happened in Paul's day when many left off believing the true Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-7).

The time has come when the knowledge of the sequence of God's planned events up to and including the return of Jesus Christ are sorely needed by the Church brethren. Except for the true saints, the entire world will be caught hopelessly off guard:

1Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Darkness or Light

Yes, the all consuming day of the Lord's wrath will come suddenly and unexpectedly on all those who are not a part of God's true people (Matthew 24:22). But there is a way to come out of the **spiritual darkness** that encompasses the world—and only God's people have been shown that **glorious light**. We can know—we will know—if our relationship with God is as it should be.

1Thessalonians 5:4 But you, brethren, are **not in darkness**, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

The purpose of this book is to set forth a fair record of the biblical narrative of God's workings with regard to creation and mankind. God has revealed these things to all who have the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the faith to believe Him. Those who say, "These things are too wonderful, and just cannot be," are yet lacking the faith of Jesus Christ who, even as a fleshly man on earth, knew these things to be true.

The entire cosmic universe exists for the sole purpose of bringing many men and women to the glorious state of God Himself (Hebrews 2:10). The stars would not exist at all in the night sky except for the fact that God decided in His great expansive love to create man in His image. The phrase, "in our image," describing man's ultimate destiny to be in the image of God, must not be taken lightly, or underestimated.

Genesis 1:26-27 God said, Let us make man *in our image*, after our likeness: So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.

And yet, man in the flesh comes far short of resembling anything like the supreme spiritual God. That is because man was created to be like God, but the process is ongoing. This book is about how God is going about making man in His image. Where the verse reads, "Let *us*," it refers to both God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. They are, in fact, two separate beings sharing one Spirit. They are a duality of beings because "God" is a family name—not limited to two. Here is the incredible truth revealed in the Bible: God has destined to replicate man into a multitude of Divine Family beings.

The world is bogged down with the myth of man possessing an immortal soul which is destined to go to heaven or hell for the rest of eternity. That is an utter falsehood not to be found in the Bible. What is revealed in the Bible is that man was created to be a member of the family of God.

Ephesians 3:15 Of whom the **whole family** in heaven and earth is named.

When the Scripture reads, "God created man in His own image," we are to realize that God speaks of future events with certainty as though they were already accomplished.

Romans 4:17 ...God calls those things which are not yet as though they are.

The Plan of God calls for a divine Family of beings to be just like God is—in His very image. And do not listen to the cynical critics who will carry that thought to the ridiculous point of saying that we will equally possess every Godly characteristic of God the Father. God the Father is the only all powerful and eternal sovereign God, and we will always be His children.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is.

Indeed, those who think that these words simply mean that God looks like us grossly underestimate and fail to appreciate the things God has in store for the faithful. If we believe in Jesus Christ, and in His words, we will take on His glorious image at the resurrection.

Philippians 3:20-21 The Lord Jesus Christ... shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

The ultimate goal of God's Plan is a veritable host of spiritually created beings in His exact glorious image with flawless Godly character. This is the touchstone belief—the standard by which the True Church of God is recognized. Mankind's ultimate future is to become eternal glorious God beings as only God the Father and Jesus Christ possess spiritual glory. This hallmark conviction of our faith sets the true Church of God apart from all other belief systems.

John 17:1, 5 These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee... And now, O Father, glorify thou me with your own self with the glory which I had with thee **before the world existed**.

Jesus was a glorious being before He came to this earth, and He is glorious once again after setting aside His glory to die an ignominious death on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). God the Father and Jesus Christ are steadfast in conducting their Plan – they do not deviate from their ultimate objective.

Malachi 3:6 I am the Eternal, I change not.

In writing this book the author has followed that rule of constancy. It is an undeniable trait of God. God's constancy is the quality of being enduring and unchanging – never capricious, volatile or temperamental. This consistency in God allows us to view His words, not only with uniformity, but possessing a firmness of resolve. This constancy includes the knowledge that not only does God not change; He has also revealed His sure Plan to His prophets of old and the apostles – as a witness (Amos 3:7).

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Jesus Christ believed every word of the Old Testament Scriptures. He quoted them often and lived by them. After all, as the God of the Old Testament, Jesus was the author of every word – having inspired the writers of old to not only speak His words, but to write them down as well.

God Rested on the Sabbath

2Peter 1:20-21 ...No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, for the inspired writings came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God uttered them as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to us that God rested on the Sabbath? Was God too tired to go on – or did the Sabbath foretell of some greater rest in the Plan of God? Why did God make the Sabbath one of His Ten Commandments?

Genesis 2:2 On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and **He rested** on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Exodus 16:23 ...This is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord.

The notion must be categorically rejected that unless an issue or law of God is restated in the New Testament it is not to be accepted as doctrine. Quite the contrary! Jesus often quoted the Old Testament—demonstrating its veracity. The Old Testament and the New Testament writings are never in conflict with one another (John 10:35). For example, when we find that God has made the observance of the Sabbath one of His Ten Commandments, and He tells us that it is a sign between Him and His people (Exodus 31:13), and we find Jesus Christ keeping the Sabbath holy as a regular practice – we readily accept Him at His word – and follow in His steps. Many years after Jesus died and was raised to life again, Paul explained to the Christians:

Hebrews 4:9 There remains therefore a **rest** [Greek *Sabbatismos* - keeping of the **Sabbath**] for the people of God.

Luke 4:16 And [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

So, we take for granted, even if a particular Sabbath or Holy Day is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts of His life (most are), that Jesus obediently lived His life in accordance with the Law of God. Believing this concept and rule of constancy in the study of the Bible opens a plethora of revelation to those converted saints who believe and act upon what God says in His word. Constancy allows us to confidently “read between the lines.” We see an example of this in:

Luke 24:45 Then opened [Jesus] their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

This book is only the slightest working sketch of those magnificent things God reveals in His word—the Bible. The Plan of God is much too vast for the entirety of it to be written in a book (John 21:25). The Bible is the living Word of God containing timeless spiritual lessons for all who **believe and act** on what is written there.

Psalms 111:10 Reverence for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and a good understanding have all those who obey His Commandments.

Feast Days of the Lord

Only a very few people recognize that the apostle John's Gospel account follows an outline of the Feast Days of the Lord during the years of Christ's public ministry. The fact that John wrote very late – nearly 100 AD – well after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, attests to the fact that the Sabbath and Holy Days had not been eliminated by Jesus Christ. If you, the reader, are not familiar with *the Feasts of the Lord* (Leviticus 23:4), or you have been taught that those are Jewish days of no consequence for Christians – take another look. Jesus observed every one of *the Feasts of the Lord* and He taught His disciples (and us) to do likewise. Jesus said:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... to **observe all things** whatsoever I have commanded you.

The beloved apostle John kept a precise record of the activities and teachings of Jesus Christ during His public ministry. Writing very late, John was moved by God's Holy Spirit to fill in the important details of Christ's pursuits not specifically mentioned by the other Gospel writers – Matthew Mark and Luke. Please notice a small portion of John's Gospel outline of Jesus' public ministry and His observance of annual Holy Days, *the Feasts of the Lord*, and ask yourself this question, "Why would God include this record, and more, in the New Testament, if it were not for the fact of its essential significance to the members of the Church?"

In keeping with Daniel's 70-week prophecy, Jesus was baptized and began

His public ministry on the Day of Atonement, 26 AD. The first Passover of Jesus' public ministry is written about in John 2:13, 23. Luke had already written of the second Passover and Unleavened Bread (Luke 6:1). In Chapter four John writes of Pentecost which is another name for the Old Testament Holy Day called the Feast of Weeks. John refers to Jesus' activities during a fall Feast of the Jews (actually the Lord's Feast) in John 5:1. Then there was Jesus' third Passover (John 6:4). A most important lesson about the "Bread of Life" was taught by Jesus during the Feast of Unleavened Bread in John 6:33, 35. At that point John moves quickly to the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2) and the Last Great Day of the Feast John (John 7:37 to 10:21). Then John writes extensively of Jesus' last Passover and the death of Jesus Christ on that final Passover (John 11:55—John 19:30). And, not coincidentally, our Savior's work of salvation was not complete until the resurrection—fully three days and three nights after He lay dead in the grave beginning on the High Day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (John 19:31).

More than anything else, the meaning of these Holy Days that Jesus so staunchly proclaimed, reveals the Plan of God coming to fruition – step by step. Isaiah often wrote about the Plan of God saying, "You have done wonderful things, Your Plan was formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness" (Isaiah 25:1) Make no mistake about it, God's Plan is being worked out here and now as He said it would:

Isaiah 14:24 The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.

God declares that His Plan was written – set in stone – so to speak, before He ever began to initiate step number one.

Isaiah 46:9-10 ...I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

At this point in time, God's Plan is well along in its path to fruition...

Chapter 1

Darkness to Light

It is a very simple concept to understand. It is as easy as flipping on a light switch in a dark room. The idea is easy to grasp. What takes a little digging to comprehend is what God means when He begins to expand on this clear-cut notion of *darkness to light* to arrive the deeper spiritual terms that He uses, like 'marvelous light' and 'unapproachable light.'

The entirety of the Scripture is salted with so many phrases that build on this stunning theme. Ultimately they all point to Jesus Christ. It is wise to establish – without a doubt in our minds – that Jesus and His way of life is the true **enlightenment**. Then, it goes without saying that we must know why He came to this earth and what He stood for. And since knowing is not enough, we must also follow in His steps, without exception, throughout life, until death.

Have you ever wondered what God was thinking before He ever started His vast creation that we see all around us? What is He doing right now? Is God a hands-on creator, always tweaking the direction we are headed, or is He a hands-off God, just waiting to see what happens to everything? And, where is all of this headed? Will the sun and all the stars finally fizzle out as the result of eons of entropy, or is there somehow something wonderful to look forward to. Believe it or not, the Bible contains all the answers to these questions and much, much more. God is constantly interfacing with His people so that His positive expectations for us are met. Jesus said, "I am working and my Father is also working." (John 5:17) It would certainly do us well to know what God is working at so that we can be a part of it. Why are so many people unaware of the answers to the most important matters?

How will man ever emerge from his abysmal ignorance into the dazzling wisdom of God? Some will maintain that man has arrived at the epitome of his intelligence and reasoning acumen. We are so sure of our genius as *homo sapiens* – that we've named our species, "wise man." If we are so smart, how is it that man has written such a long and terrible history of devastation and destruction for his legacy? If we could be honest with ourselves for a moment, we would realize how utterly helpless man has been in establishing an enduring and orderly planet for himself and his children. Every king and president promises change for the better throughout his tenure. So, how is it that inevitably, hostilities, invasion or epidemics always dash the hopes for a utopian world? Few realize that the Bible promises a future that will emerge from dark obscurity—into a forthcoming brilliant and more than idealistic existence of life forever more—and we can be a part of it! God's Kingdom and rule will continue to grow, and there will be peace without end for the children of God (Isaiah 9:7).

Brilliant Glory

Before creation there was nothing. We might think of it as outer space with no stars or anything at all in that vast emptiness. But the truth of the matter is that there was not even any outer space – there was absolutely **nothing**. God called it **Darkness**. Now what happened is this: God came up with His Plan. God exists in a brilliant state the Bible calls 'glory.' The night before He died Jesus petitioned His Father to restore His **glory** that had been set aside so that He could join us humans in the flesh.

John 17:1, 5 These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; **glorify** thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee... And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world existed.

That glory of God is something that is not only too intense to look upon – its brightness exceeds that of the sun – it is so intensely brilliant it is impossible to comprehend with our finite minds. That brilliance, God calls **Light**.

In that same prayer, the night before His crucifixion, Jesus revealed that His life and resurrection had made it possible that we mere men be able to join Him and the Father in **their glory**—and that would be everything—the fulfillment of God's Plan.

John 17:21-22 That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me. And the **glory** which you gave to me I have given **to them**; that they may be one, even as we are one.

Darkness to light then is the story God has given to us of how the *nothing of darkness* will ultimately be develop into *everything in Christ Jesus*.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the splendorous **glory of the Lord**, as the waters cover the sea.

Nothing to Everything

Revelation 21:7 He that overcomes shall inherit **Everything**; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

It is too incredible to grasp! Can you imagine that as Sons of God absolutely everything will be at our disposal to do with as we see fit? We will understand God's Plan perfectly – and be an integral part of it. Nothing will be withheld from us because we will be on the same page that He is on.

Psalms 84:11 The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and **glory**: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

God uses the *darkness* and *light* symbolism for the purpose of making known His much deeper Plan—His spiritual Kingdom that we need to comprehend more fully. There are more than fifty verses in the Bible that specifically utilize both 'darkness' and 'light.' As

we read how God utilizes *darkness* and *light* we will see that it is a most important theme throughout the pages of the Scriptures.

Men readily comprehend the disparity between phrases such as, “works of darkness” and “let one's light shine.” Almost instinctively, we perceive that one is evil, while the other is proper and beneficial. **Darkness** is associated with things that are evil, like ignorance, sin, death and the Devil. In the same way that we cannot remember our own first steps, we cannot remember the first time we heard the words, “works of darkness” or, “let your light shine.” Our very existence is centered in light. And yet, we too often take it for granted.

Let there be Light

Light in the Bible is often a metaphor for life, happiness, righteousness, and understanding – especially spiritual understanding and spiritual wisdom which reflect God's character, will and attributes. Light is a symbol for righteousness and goodness. God is life-giving spiritual enlightenment – and Jesus Christ is the epitome of that Light.

We are given the concepts of physical *darkness* and *light* to express the death and despair of godlessness as compared to the life and truth that come with Godliness. Light is one of the most common allegories utilized in the Bible to reveal a higher spiritual concept. The light of God has far-reaching connotations. This light is the **wisdom of God**, it is His truth and His law; it represents His perfect way that leads to life everlasting.

Romans 11:33-34 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is **no light** in them.

In the same way that physical light allows us to see our way, spiritual light reveals the way and truth of God. The spiritual light found in the Scriptures is necessary for spiritual life. The light of God's way of life dissipates the darkness of ignorance and falsehood.

When God said, “**Let there be light**,” in Genesis 1:3, He was speaking physically of the sun—seemingly the source of all energy and growth—because it dissipates the darkness (verse 4). Let us understand how the Bible is written. God is speaking of light. But He is speaking of the illumination of sunlight shinning forth which is only a type of the much greater spiritual meaning in God's scheme of things which is the pure enlightenment of God Himself. When God said, “Let there be light,” He was more importantly alluding to a much more profound eventuality wherein He would inaugurate spiritual wisdom and life—even life everlasting. The beloved apostle John makes that clear:

John 1:4-5 In [Jesus] was **life**; and that life was the **light of men**. And the light shone in **darkness**; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Jesus is that soon coming light that will finally and entirely **enlighten** the world. We must ask ourselves how we can come out of darkness and enter into His glorious light—there is no more important subject than that. Jesus is the Light that is the ultimate goal of man. We need to understand what this means.

Paul explained to Timothy that Jesus Christ resided in the light which was all too intense and dazzling for mere mortal man to endure. It is the habitation of Jesus and the Father right now! Unapproachable light is off-limits to mere mortal man.

1Timothy 6:16 [Jesus Christ] only has immortality, **dwelling in the light** which **no man can approach unto**; whom no man has seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting.

Why does Paul say that the dwelling light of God is unapproachable? The answer is that Paul was harkening back to God at Mount Sinai where Moses ascended the mount and God revealed the Ten Commandments. No one was able to approach the mountain except Moses who was given a divine safeguard. We know how Moses could not look directly on the intense **glory** of Jesus Christ's brightness and yet live (Exodus 33:18-23). That light is associated with the radiance of God's glory and when that glory appeared, humans and animals had to keep their distance.

That is how **unapproachable** God was to ancient Israel. But as spirit-born beings in the coming resurrection, this light will become our reality.

Analogy of Light

God chose the analogy of natural light to help us visualize a much more splendid and obscure characteristic of Himself. This comparison of natural light to God's unapproachable spiritual light is appreciated by only a small number of converted people at this time. That is true, because everyone thinks he knows what light is; that is, until you ask them to explain what it is. Light is both beautiful and mysterious to us. Our finite minds cannot begin to grasp what physical light is – let alone the spiritual light in which God dwells. Scientists tell us that natural light is that cause or driving force that stimulates sight and makes things visible to us. But, they cannot explain what it is. They only have theories. In some conditions light can be measured as a stream of mass-less photons, but acting like particulate matter. Light also behaves as an electromagnetic wave that is able to oscillate in the vacuum of deep space and be measured with regard to its wavelength (color), its intensity, and its frequency, etc. With all that, scientists still cannot really explain why or how light works. It is indeed a spectacular and inexplicable thing that God created **life sustaining light** that is able to carry energy and heat across the **darkness** of space. It travels fast. The speed of light is one hundred eighty six thousand miles per second. But God in His omnipotence is not limited by time or space. In the Bible we are being shown that there is so much more in store for man than meets the eye. We must rely on the many ways God expresses light in Scripture to begin to glimpse the complexities of spiritual light and what it foreshadows for mankind.

Make no mistake, this world is in darkness, and men love it so. The reason that men prefer darkness is because truth and light expose their wrong ways. God says that the foolish will have misfortune because they put **darkness for light** (Isaiah 5:20).

That is why paganism is idolatry. It usurps the worship of the True God with the worship of the bright sun. Sun-Day worship violates God's Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). And, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"

(Exodus 20:8). However, it is fitting and right that God draw an analogy between His utmost righteousness and the intensifying light of the rising morning sun:

Malachi 1:11 [The Lord of hosts says,] From the *rising of the sun* even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great...

Malachi 4:2 [The Lord of hosts says,] But unto you that revere my name shall the *Sun of Righteousness* arise..."

As physical flesh and blood individuals we should feel the warmth of the sun on our face and realize that He who made the sun is so much greater than that which He has created.

Light and darkness are very different from one another; they are not only opposites. **Light dispels darkness.** "It is better to light one candle than to stumble in the dark." But, darkness cannot dispel light. Think about this: You have two rooms side by side – one is lit and the other is dark. When you open the door between the rooms light flows into the dark room. Darkness does not flow out into the lighted room. You can project light, but you cannot project darkness. We would be wise to ask ourselves if our light shines in this darkened world.

Philippians 2:15 Become blameless and harmless children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Kingdom of Darkness

When Jesus came, He brought the truth of God to a dark world void of spiritual understanding. The light He ushered in is the wisdom of God that represents His perfect way that leads to life eternal. Jesus Christ, the light of the world, came to dispel darkness. Those are beautiful words, but unless we can understand what they mean they are without profit to us as Christians. We must allow the Holy Scriptures to define what God means by these words that are much more than merely pious sounding sentiments. The importance of these words cannot be overestimated in that they represent the way to eternal life—the **light of life**. Jesus gave us a most stern warning with regard to the path a Christian must walk when He said,

Matthew 6:23 If therefore the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Jesus was telling us of the importance of knowing **who** the source of true light is. We live in a world of darkness and godliness because, for the time being, Satan remains as the god (little g) of this world. This world is Satan's kingdom—the **kingdom of darkness** (Matthew 12:26). As saints, God's people have separated themselves from this evil world (2Corinthians 6:14-17). And we give thanks to God because of what we will inherit:

Colossians 1:12-13 We have qualified to partake in the inheritance of the saints in the **Kingdom of light**. [God the Father] has delivered us from the dominion of **darkness** and transferred us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son.

What an incredible thing to be told that as saints we have qualified for the Kingdom of Light – which is the very purpose of God's Plan in the first place. On the other hand, the

god of this dark world has deceived and blinded the minds of those who do not believe, with the intent of preventing them from having the **light** of the glorious gospel of Christ shine unto them. Satan is the god (small g, 2Corinthians 4:4) of this present evil world, but Jesus has qualified to replace him forever.

How can anyone know whether he is truly walking in the light rather than darkness? That's the most important question a person will ever answer for himself. John tells us that it's all about Godly relationships. God does not allow Christians to opt out of their Christian duty to others by simply watching while other brethren persist in the darkness of sin, knowing that those in darkness will be excluded from the Kingdom of God (Leviticus 5:1, James 5:20, Galatians 6:1). Christians cannot sit idly by and watch others continue in darkness, knowing that those in the darkness of sin are destined for death.

Jesus Christ, the **light** of the world expels the **darkness** and imparts His wisdom everywhere—we are to do the same. If we are walking in the **light** of Jesus, then we will be showing love toward the saints – wherever they are. If we are unwilling to lay our lives down for the sake of the brethren, we walk in **darkness**, and are not cleansed from all sin.

1John 1:5-7 This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in Him is no **darkness** at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in **darkness**, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we **walk in the light**, as He is in the **light**, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Who is Your Father

We are seriously warned not to make the mistake of putting darkness for light, and vice versa. Jesus says that the answer to walking in light lies in who it is that you have for your father. Jesus spelled it out so that there could be no doubt. The world has Satan for its *father* – while the saints have the true God for their *Father*. That is a most important distinction. Jesus made that distinction perfectly clear when He said:

John 8:42-44 If God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me... You are of **your father the devil**, and the lusts of your father you will do.

Many who think they are saints – are still walking in darkness. Only God's people are able to understand the difference between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of Light. When Jesus came, He brought the truth of God to a dark world void of spiritual understanding. The *light* He ushered in is the wisdom of God that represents His perfect way that leads to life eternal.

Fountain of Life

It is only the word of God that contains the way of truth (John 17:17). Man, without God's truth, will always stumble in the dark because of his ignorance of God's perfect way. Man must drink of the fountain of life—Jesus Christ.

Psalm 36:8-9 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; and thou shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures. For with you is the *fountain of life*: in your **light** we shall see **light**.

Jesus informed the Samaritan woman that He was the Messiah and the true *fountain of life*:

John 4:14 Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the [living] water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

We use the phrase "I'm in the dark" to indicate when we do not know something, or we are confused, or we do not understand, or things are unclear to us. There is a way to come out of the darkness and into the light of God.

The Bible abounds in symbols, metaphors, types and antitypes to help us understand the deeper meaning of God's rich spiritual truth. God reveals His truth to us in this manner because there are no human words to adequately express His profound spiritual concepts. Often a figure of speech is incorporated in order to establish a basic concept such as when Jesus spoke of a "rock" to give us the certainty of a sure spiritual foundation. He spoke of water and air to help us comprehend the unseen and inestimable workings of His Holy Spirit. Are we sure that we know what God means to convey to us when He speaks mysteriously to us of darkness and light?

The prophet Isaiah helped develop the biblical concept that light is associated with *goodness*, while darkness is synonymous with *wickedness*. Isaiah introduces the contrasting dichotomy of walking in light as opposed to walking in darkness in:

Isaiah 5:20-21 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put **darkness for light**, and **light for darkness**; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

As the analogy develops in Scripture, we begin to see how 'light' represents the perfect characteristics of God - while 'darkness' signifies the absence of Godliness. 'Light' begins to be used to symbolize God, His wisdom, and holiness, as well as many other of His attributes.

As the concept of *light* expands in Scripture, we begin to see how *light* represents the upright characteristics of God - while *darkness* epitomizes the vile and contemptible aspects associated with the absence of Godliness. Light is used to symbolize God, His holiness, and goodness, among His many other attributes. God is spiritual radiant light. God's essence is of light.

Matthew 17:2, Habakkuk 3:4 His face did shine like the sun..., His radiance is as the sunlight.

The Bible definition of darkness has to do with sin, ungodliness and even Satan. Whereas the definition of Light is—Jesus Christ. John tells us, "He is the Light." The world does not know that it lies in spiritual darkness. From cover to cover, the Bible gives us the answer for combating that deficit with its pervasive theme of *Darkness* to *Light*.

From Genesis to Revelation

The theme of *Darkness to Light* opens with **darkness** in Genesis 1:2 and runs through the entirety of the Bible to the very last chapter of the Book of Revelation where we read in 22:5, "The Lord God gives them **light**." This topic's importance is shown by the emphasis it receives by being cited time and again throughout the pages of the Scriptures. Immediately, in Genesis, God began developing the contrasting concepts of **light** and **darkness**.

Genesis 1:1-4 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth became without form, and void; and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be **light**: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was **good**: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Everything had become **darkness** [Hebrew *'coshek'*]. In verse 4, God in **dividing** the light from the darkness gave meaning to the *darkness* and *light* metaphor of His Plan to eradicate all evil and establish His ultimate righteousness. Spiritually speaking, all the wickedness of darkness will be eliminated and replaced by the light of decency and uprightness. God's Plan will usher in the time when none will hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the **enlightenment** of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Dividing light from darkness—that is the story of the Bible. We do not have to live in the **dark ages**. Darkness was upon the face of the deep. God did not create that darkness. That darkness prevailed over all creation as a result of Satan's rebellion. The fallen angels' rebellion reduced them to hatred and bitterness toward God and His Plan for all humanity.

Right away in the very first four verses of Genesis we find the *specific purpose statement* of the entire Bible which shows that it is for us to escape spiritual darkness by the hand of God—into His glorious light:

1Peter 2:9-10 You [Church brethren] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people purchased and possessed by God; that you should show forth the praises of Him who hath **called you out of darkness** into His marvelous **light**. Who in time past were not a people, but are now the **people of God**.

God's Law is Light

There can be no greater quest for us than to be able to come out of darkness and become the people of God. Yes! True Christians have been plucked up out of Satan's kingdom of darkness, and relocated into Christ's Kingdom of Light (Colossians 1:13). Without a doubt, God shows that it is He alone who calls us out of darkness, and the one who separates light from darkness. For us to escape spiritual darkness requires intervention on our Creator's part. And so we find this persistent theme throughout the Bible establishing the premise that God **illuminates** the journey from darkness to light. The Bible, God's word, shows the way.

Psalm 119:105 [O Lord] Your word [the Bible] is a lamp unto my feet, and a **light unto my path**.

Proverbs 6:23 For the Commandment is a lamp; and the **law is light**; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

It is God's word that is able to lead those in this dark world to light. Since Jesus Christ has come to this world, man no longer has to live in the darkness of ignorance where mankind has rejected the knowledge of God.

Romans 1:21 When they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were they thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was **darkened**.

1Thessalonians 5:5 You are all **Children of the Light** and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Abide in the Light

As **Children of the Light**, we are to reflect His light onto a world darkened by sin. Over and over God distinguishes between light and darkness, and the choice we have to make.

2Corinthians 6:14 Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what participation has **light** with **darkness**?

The great majority of mankind remains to this day **in the dark** because they have not learned how to live true faith. They remain in the dark because they do not know the love of God. God is love (1John 4:8). The love of God has to do with dealing with others in compliance with the Ten Commandments. In other words, we do not fight, steal, lie, cheat, or in any way hurt or mistreat others. How can a person know whether or not he is availing himself of the **light of Jesus Christ**?

1John 2:8-11 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the **true light** now shines. He that says he is in the **light**, and hates his brother, is in **darkness** even until now. He that loves his brother **abides in the light**, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hates his brother is in **darkness**, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes.

John insists in almost every chapter of his writings that the true test of Christianity has to do with loving our fellowman. True Christianity has nothing to do with locating the exact right corporate organization with which to associate. No! He that loves his brother **abides in the light**. For example:

1John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His Commandments.

What does the phrase, "abide in the light," mean? "Light," is all about remaining in right relationships with God and with our fellowman. Without that simple, straight forward **light**, there is reserved for us the **blackness of darkness** forever (Jude :13). There is no in-between – there is only life or death:

1John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that does not his brother abides in death.

John could just as easily have written, "We know that we have passed from **darkness unto light**, because we love the brethren. He that does not love his brother abides in darkness.

As part of God's Plan, Jesus came among men. God came into the fleshly realm of man in order for man to be able to attain unto the **spiritual realm** that is God's. This is the great mystery of the ages. The most amazing thing is that it is so plainly hidden in open sight right there in the pages of the Bible. The Scriptures speak of Jesus' existence long before He came to the earth as Emmanuel—God with us—in the flesh:

John 1:2-4 [Jesus] was in the beginning with God. All things [the universe] were made by Him [Jesus Christ]; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the **light of men**.

Then, John begins to interface with the Genesis account showing that **Jesus is that Light** and life giver.

John 1:5 And the **light** [God's Truth, God's Word, God's Way] shone in **darkness**; and the darkness [Satan's way] comprehended it not.

This dark world is still unable to see what God has in store for all. Only those who are specifically selected and converted by the Father are able to grasp the things of the Spirit of God. To the worldly man, the things of the Spirit are foolishness: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1Corinthians 2:14). Jesus is the summation of all wisdom, truth, understanding, honesty, knowledge, enlightenment, life, and salvation.

Jesus is the True Light

John 1:7-10 [John the Baptist] came for a witness, to bear witness of the **Light** [Jesus Christ], that all men through Him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That [Jesus Christ] was the **true Light**, which lights every man that comes into the world. He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.

The beloved apostle John explained that without the **true light**, Jesus Christ, men did not stand a chance – but were doomed to condemnation.

John 3:19-21 And this is the condemnation, that **Light** is come into the world, and men loved **darkness** rather than light, because their deeds were **evil**. For every one that does evil **hates the light** neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that does truth **comes to the light**, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

New Heaven and a New Earth

Light is uncomfortable to those who are accustomed to the dark. The world loves its own. The vast expanse of this great gulf between the two, darkness and light, make obvious to us the consequence of the backwardness of ignorance and sin, as distinguished from the **ultimate spiritual enlightenment** of God's truth. God makes it possible for us to come out of darkness and into His light. A great deal of man's history on earth has been lived in spiritual darkness—not knowing the purpose for his existence, and not knowing how to escape death's dark door.

By establishing this powerful theme of *darkness to light*, God shows that it is He alone who separates light from darkness. The narrative of the Bible is clear: Mankind must be brought entirely out of darkness in order to **walk in the light**. The time is coming when Jesus Christ will by His brilliant glory illuminate the new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:23):

Isaiah 60:19-20 The sun shall be no more your light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto you: but the Lord shall be **your light** forever, and your God your glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for **the Lord shall be your everlasting light**, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Our eventual destiny is to have darkness far behind us and to dwell, not just in enlightenment, but to exist in the ultimate spiritual light of God. John repeats the definitive goal of God's theme of *Darkness to Light* in the last chapter of the Bible, while describing man's everlasting reign within God's Kingdom.

Revelation 22:1-5 He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb... And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him... And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the **Lord God gives them light**: and *they shall reign for all eternity*.

Through His Prophet Daniel, God foretold how there would be a people who believed and submitted to His sovereign rule over their lives to overcome this world's darkness. He spoke of a future resurrection to everlasting life in which the obedient, converted saints, who had triumphed over this world's darkness, would radiate as beams of light like the stars of heaven:

Daniel 12:3 They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to *righteousness* shall *shine as the stars* forever and ever.

A Light Shines in a Dark Place

The question we must ask ourselves is, "Do we turn others to Christ? In Proverbs 4:18 we see *righteousness* symbolized as the "morning sun."

Proverbs 4:18 The path of the righteous is like the *morning sun*, *shining* ever brighter till the full light of day.

Jesus chose a title for Himself which reflects His purpose for coming into the realm of mankind. He said of Himself, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and **the bright and morning star.**" (Revelation 22:16) This Bright Morning Star reference is given in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy about Christ.

Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel.

The significance of that title, "The Bright and Morning Star," designates Christ's role as our Savior. Jesus also said unto the Churches, "He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations... And I will give him **the morning star**" (Revelation 2:26-28).

It is abundantly clear that Jesus Christ came to bring **light** to the world. It may be translated various ways, but, "The Dawning Sun," "The Morning Sun," and, "The Day Star," all properly refer to the Messiah. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, used the expressive title, "The Dayspring" in describing the Messiah. Zacharias, was moved by the Holy Spirit to prophecy of his son and of Jesus Christ:

Luke 1:78-79 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby **The Dayspring** [the manifestation of Christ the Messiah as the morning sun] from on high hath visited us, to give **light** to them that sit in **darkness** and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Jesus often drew the analogy of Himself as the rising morning sun that gives light and life to the earth—after all; He is the Light that gives **eternal life**, just as without sunshine there would be no life possible on this earth. The apostle Peter was explaining how we might be partakers of God's divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world (2Peter 1:4) when he said of Jesus Christ:

2Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a **light that shines in a dark place**, until the day [of our Lord] dawns, and the **day star** [morning sun] arise in your hearts.

The picture that Peter painted for us is of the pitch-black darkness of a moonless night, punctuated by the early dawning of the brilliant morning sun as it springs up over the eastern horizon. When that happens, a new day has fully arrived, bringing with it everything that was hidden in the dark of night. We see that Jesus is described just that way—as the **dayspring**, or **morning star** bringing understanding and wisdom to a dark world steeped in ignorance and iniquity.

Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

God's intent is that we not walk in darkness. In Christ Jesus is bound up in all the meaning and fulfillment of all the prophecies of how this world, void of Godly love and understanding, would find redemption in the True Light:

John 8:12 Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the **light of the world** [light to the nations, Isaiah 42:9, 49:6]: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the **light of life** [That is eternal life through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23)].

The Light of the World

We find here that it is Jesus who is the ultimate **light**. Those are extremely powerful words. The reason that the Bible has so much to say about 'light' is for the crucial reason it is a most important subject. For emphasis, John declares Christ's definitive role again in the next chapter where Jesus says:

John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the **light of the world**.

Matthew reiterated the prophecy that Isaiah was inspired to write by God's Holy Spirit about Jesus Christ coming as the "**Great Light**."

Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 4:16 The people that walked in darkness have seen a **great light** [Jesus Christ]: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the **light** shined.

Paul witnessed this **great light**, this worthy light, and he tells us that it was none other than the **resurrected Jesus Christ**.

Acts 22:7, 9:3-5 ...Suddenly there shined round about [Paul] a **great light** from heaven... And he said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus...

Light brings vision and understanding. When we understand a matter we say, "I see." The Messiah's light will bring spiritual understanding to a darkened world.

Isaiah also describes the attributes which the Messiah, Jesus Christ would possess. He would usher in everlasting order and peace with righteousness and justice. The **eyes of the blind would be opened**, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. There will be the highway of holiness bringing all men unto Him. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 35:5-8, 9:6-7).

Isaiah 2:5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us **walk in the light** of the Lord.

Daniel foretold how Jesus would establish the Kingdom of God over all the earth:

Daniel 7:27 The Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

Spiritual Light

Isn't it interesting how well the concepts of light and darkness have developed? Light exposes that which is hidden in darkness; it shows things as they really are. Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, came to dispel the darkness and impart His wisdom to all. The use of the terms "light and darkness" are widely used and accepted language referring to wisdom and understanding – or the lack thereof.

We need to understand God's self-revelation—and that is the fact that **God is brilliant spiritual radiant light**. As a perfect Savior, Jesus **died** a most ignominious death so that we do not have to die for our own sins and transgressions, and He was raised to life

by His Father that we too may **live**. He did that in order to elevate us out of darkness into the light of life. Jesus' 'light' illuminates the path of life that we are to walk – if we are to be like Him. King David realized that:

Psalm 18:28 For thou [O Lord] will light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

David is saying that an awareness of God's word and way of life brings enlightenment to us in how we are to live.

Children of Light

All throughout the Scriptures, Jesus tells us that this world is operating in the dark without a road map – and that what He brings to the table is that much needed illuminating guidance.

John 9:39 Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they who cannot see **will be given sight**.

1John 5:20 ...the Son of God has come, and given us deep **understanding**.

Jesus is that Light and He fully intends that we become **children of light**, and not remain in the darkness of worldly ignorance like the religious leaders of His day (John 9:39-41). We find Jesus correlating physical light with spiritual vision:

John 12:35-36 Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes. While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the **children of light**.

Walk in the Light

Jesus clearly demonstrates here that He alone is the source of spiritual light and truth for mankind. The revealed allegory He used speaks to the light of His life, the light of His truth, and the light of His word. Perhaps Paul best captured the significance of Jesus Christ as 'light' when he said,

2Corinthians 4:5-6 We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded **the light to shine out of darkness**, has shined in our hearts, so that we can enlighten men with the knowledge of the glory of God as we see it in the face of Jesus Christ.

Isn't that beautifully phrased? We would all like to live in a perfect world, and be able to assemble with perfect people every Sabbath. However, Jesus knows that we must be making every strenuous effort to put the forces of darkness behind us, and be building Godly character in His light which guides us in growing in grace and in knowledge. It is like a weight lifter "pumping iron." Without the weight to exert his strength against, he cannot build bulky muscles. Describing the constant struggle of a Christian against forces of darkness, Jesus put it this way:

Matthew 11:12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven is attained only with an utmost struggle on your part, it is acquired only with a maximum effort, and with all your being and strength; and it is only the most serious and dedicated ones who will obtain the Kingdom.

It may often seem that our Christian struggle is with people—but it is not. God ascribes all the **works of darkness** to Satan. We must understand that our battle is not with people because darkness does not originate with them. Speaking of Satan and his demons, we read:

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the **rulers of the darkness of this world**, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

It is Satan who plunges us into darkness. Our Christian battle is against Satan and his agents. Our clash is with the author of darkness, but we have the Light for our strength. King David knew it well:

Psalms 27:1 The Lord is my **light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

We never join forces with the dark enemy – the devil and his demons. As we saw, only God's law is to be the lamp unto our feet, and the light to our path. If we turn tail and run away from the Light, we are deserters, and not loyal forces of the King who has called us and recruited us (John 6:44, 65). God is calling a people out of this dark world to be a separate and holy people of light.

Ephesians 5:8-11, 14 You were sometimes darkness, but now **you are light** in the Lord: **walk as children of light**... And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them... Consequently, the Scriptures say: Awake you that sleep, and **arise** from the dead, and **Christ shall give you light**.

Paul is generally quoting Isaiah 60 here. To **walk in the light** means to repent of sin, examine our hearts' motivation, know God, understand the truth, and live in righteousness. We must come out of darkness entirely and **walk in the light**. Unless our righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, and if our life's motivation is not singularly on God's perfect way, we are doomed. Isaiah prophesied of the **glorious** millennial day of which God prophesied:

Rise and Shine

Isaiah 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for your **light** [the rising daybreak] is come, and the **glorious splendor** of the Lord is risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall shine upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

The millennium will usher in Godly light to this dark world – when Jesus Christ will have established His Father's Kingdom over this entire earth.

We cannot go outside of the law of God and hope to achieve His will by doing so. The Bible makes it plain that only those who keep the Commandments have a clear view of God's will (Psalm 111:10). Purity and singleness of mind are the result of keeping God's law.

Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-36 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore your eye be single [a pure heart set on God], your whole body shall be **full of light**. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! If your whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give you light.

Satan attempts to cloak himself in a camouflage of light – but to no avail. He has a voracious appetite for hatred, destruction and deception. He even attempts to co-opt Christ's own personal title of "the morning sun" to himself. Lucifer was used mightily by God in the original formation of the physical universe. "Lucifer" literally means light-bringer. Imagine how involved he was in the development of the material cosmos until iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). Satan expropriated the title, "the morning sun," that rightly belongs only to Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, *son of the morning!*

Paul clarified how Satan wanted to seize for himself the title of being the bright morning sun that enlightens the world. Warning: The works of darkness abound in the world today. It is more than prudent to ask whether faith is founded in Christ or not. Paul demonstrates how Satan is that **false light** who is deceiving mankind (Revelation 12:9).

2Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an **angel of light**.

Solomon was astute enough to realize that darkness and wrongdoing are sometimes more attractive than the truth of light:

Ecclesiastes 2:13-14 I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as **light excels darkness**. The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walks in darkness.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the **works of darkness**, and let us put on the **armor of light**.

We wouldn't know it if it were not for the word of God. Satan has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). Sadly, for so many, they actually love their deceived state of mind – worshiping on Sun-Day and Easter morning Sun-Rise services – which God calls an abomination (Ezekiel 8:13-17).

We will see more about Satan later, but suffice it to say here that he fell from his original role as the greatest and most enlightened spirit-being ever created by God.

Remember when Jesus said to Nicodemus, "This is the condemnation, that light [Jesus Christ] is come into the world, and **men loved darkness** rather than **light**, because their deeds were evil." Both Paul and John wrote of those who are in darkness—deceived—through works of darkness.

John 1:9-10 [Jesus] was the true Light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not.

James, the half-brother of Jesus described this '**darkness**' that is foisted on man. To the unconverted mind this conduct appears to be smart and wise, and the way to get ahead, but it does not originate with God, but from Satan.

James 3:14-18 If you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This kind of wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

2Peter 2:4 God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell ['*tartaroo*'] and delivered them into **chains of darkness**, to be reserved unto judgment...

God's Nature

John says that God's very nature is light. Jesus imparts His light to the world. The important lesson for us to gather from this is that we are invited, as the Children of God, not only to exist in the same dazzling light that is God—but to actually become that Godly light as eternal spirit beings in the Kingdom of God.

It is God's Plan that eventually – not yet – all men will come out of this darkened world into His splendid spiritual light. We are invited as the Children of God, to actually become that **godly light** as eternal spirit beings in the Kingdom of God. That is part and parcel with the Plan of God.

Jesus – Savior of the Church

Before Jesus Christ came to this earth, it was impossible for men to **draw near** to God. But, because of Christ's redemptive act of paying for our sins with His death on the cross, He made reconciliation with God the Father possible.

Colossians 1:19-22 It pleased the Father that in [Jesus] should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He **reconciled in the body of His flesh through death**, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.

Prior to those two perfect acts of love: First, by God the Father in the giving of His Son (John 3:16), and Secondly, by Jesus Christ on the cross in the giving of His life – mankind could not approach unto God because of their sin.

Isaiah 59:2 Your iniquities [sins] have **separated** between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear you.

However, because of repentance, faith and conversion, Church brethren are able to avail themselves of God's reconciliation. The greatest part of this evil world is not ready to believe and do what Jesus says.

Revelation 21:23-25 The [Holy City Jerusalem (21:10)] has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the **glory of God illuminates it**, and the **Lamb** [of God, Jesus the Messiah] **is the light** thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall **walk in the light** of it: And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be **no night** there.

Mt. Sinai was the physical type of the spiritual Mt. Zion. Now, Jesus has given His Church brethren access to the throne of God. God is no longer unapproachable. God the Father, through Jesus Christ, has made Himself open to them, and will share His immortality with believers. John describes Jesus as being as **brilliant as the sun** itself in Revelation 1:13-16. But what about the resurrected saints?

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the Children of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is.

Even now, as His begotten children we are able to have a unique relationship with God. Now we are able to approach unto God – not as men but as Children of God. We have been reconciled to God the Father by Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us **draw near** [to God] with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

The Bible is the Word of God

From the time before the fall of man until the fruition of God's Plan, only the Bible reveals knowledge of God's direct involvement in man's quest to come out of the darkness of ignorance and sin, and into the **glorious light** and liberty of God's radiant life.

2Corinthians 4:6 God, who commanded the **light to shine out of darkness**, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ [Jesus' face shone like the sun].

Matthew 17:2 [Jesus] was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

On the wrong side of the scale is the eternal darkness of death, while the ultimate goal of the Plan of God is for mankind to attain to its vital and glorious destiny of becoming sons and daughters of God in His eternal Kingdom. That is the purpose for which man was created. It is God's Plan and desire that every human being that has ever lived be a child of God – each in his own order. God can and does intervene in our lives at all times to keep us headed toward His Kingdom.

Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart devises his way: but the Lord directs his steps.

God's first offspring to be added to His family will come from His Church. They will be the first to become God beings. Evidence of this is found in God's instructions to the Philadelphians in the Book of Revelation. Keep in mind that only God is to be worshipped—not angels or men. Jesus is referring to those who are persecuting the saints:

Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and **worship** before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

The resurrected saints will be worshipped, as God is worshipped, by those men who once reviled them. This is only one of many verses that shows that those who constitute the Church will be a part of God's divine family of beings. The goal and purpose for mankind is that we might be made the righteousness of God:

2Corinthians 5:21 For [God the Father] hath made [Jesus] to be sin for us [on the cross], who knew no sin; that **we might be made the righteousness of God** in Him.

King David said it this way in Psalm 119:105: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a **light unto my path**.

The narrative of the Bible is clear: Mankind must come entirely out of darkness and **walk in the light**. 'Walking in the light' means living according to the principles that Jesus taught. Unless man's righteousness becomes the righteousness of Christ, he is doomed to death and to be cast into the hopeless outer darkness reserved unto the blackness of darkness forever (Matthew 8:12, Jude 13). As Paul expounds on Daniel's words, "the righteous saints shall shine as the stars forever" (Daniel 12:3), he notes that some resurrected saints will shine more brightly than others:

1Corinthians 15:40-41 There are also celestial bodies [stars in the heaven], and bodies terrestrial [men on earth]: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is a brilliance of the sun, and a lesser intensity of the moon, and another glow of the stars: for one star differs from another star in [brightness].

Paul is saying that just like on earth there are those who are recognized as being important people, and there are others who are not as notable, in the Kingdom, the resurrected saints will have been raised to various states of majesty and grandeur, having differing responsibilities as Jesus said in Luke 19; some over five cities, and others over ten cities. Paul is speaking of the resurrected saints being given greater or less prominence with significant positions of distinction and leadership in the Kingdom of God.

Let Your Light so Shine

Yes! The righteous saints shall shine as the stars forever. This incredible actuality is contingent on our letting our lights shine now as Jesus has directed us to do.

Matthew 5:16 **Let your light so shine** before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Godly enlightenment is bestowed on those who are being led by God's Holy Spirit. God's way must be lived however, in order to emanate it to others. The truth of God must be acted on – we must live it before we are able to let our light shine for others to see (Matthew 5:14). The light of which the Bible speaks must be acquired before it can shine forth to another.

James 1:22 Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

This could easily be paraphrased this way, "Talk is cheap, you are only fooling yourself if you are not living it." Someone once said it more astutely, "Salvation lies not in belief of a concept, but in literally following the narrow path to enlightenment."

However, Christians, like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, have no light of their own right now. It is incumbent upon us that we mirror that true Light. In our daily lives, we must be reflecting the light of Christ, seeing and doing things as He does them, for all to see. We must exhibit His mercy, graciousness, compassion, and righteousness.

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, is the "true light" (John 1:9). As children of God, we are to reflect His light onto a world darkened by sin. One of our duties is to witness to others who have not heard the Gospel message.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes and turn them from **darkness to light** and from the power of Satan to God.

And what is that Light? That Light is God Himself. The message is that God is completely perfect, absolutely holy, with no taint of sin, nor hint of iniquity, and no trace of injustice.

John 4:24 **God is Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Jesus tells us that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that He is the exclusive source of **spiritual light** for man. In him was life; and the life was the **light** of men.

John 14:6 Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

We find then that **light** is God's essence, as is life, law, and love. John says it so well:

1John 4:8, 16 He that has no love does not know God; for **God is love**...

And we have come to know for certain that God loves us. **God is love**; and he that abides in Godly love dwells in God and God in him.

John 11:25 Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and **the life**:

1John 5:3 This is Godly love that we keep His Commandments.

1John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in Him is no darkness at all.

True Light

It is God's Plan that eventually – not yet – all men will come out of this darkened world into His splendid spiritual light. It was Paul who explained how the Father relegated the implementation of the Plan of God to His Son, Jesus Christ. We are told that God the Father brings forth the ages or periods of time in which the steps of His Plan are implemented.

Hebrews 1:2 [God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He **made the worlds** (brings forth the ages).

The remaining seven chapters of this book describe the steps that God is following in order to make us His eternal children. He started long ago and He has a way to go yet, but we are all being called in His order to have an incredible part in His Plan (1Corinthians 15:23). As we saw, many of these verses are speaking metaphorically and figuratively about **light** to suggest a resemblance to God's greater fulfillment of spiritual wisdom, freedom, deliverance, righteousness and even eternal life.

The ultimate fulfillment to all these references to light is the way of life represented by the life of Jesus Christ. We must discern the figurative from the spiritual and begin to understand, with Godly wisdom, what it means to go from *darkness to light*. The rest of this book describes how God, over the past millennia, perhaps eons of time, has been bringing about His Plan—and is bringing about His Plan - darkness to light. The time to act for us is now.

The entire story is in the Bible which is God's word that He has reserved for us. Being a Christian is not easy. It was not easy for Jesus Christ. He died in performance of God's will. The good news is that He was raised so that we might have life. He set us an example so that we can follow in His steps.

1Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.

The important thing to do is make sure that it is His steps in which we are following. Jesus warned us that there would be many false teachers in these last days.

Jesus Christ is coming again soon to establish His Father's Kingdom over all the earth. It will be a bright and new day—the dawning of a new era. But let us understand that it is always darkest just before the morning light. There is a coming time of unprecedented darkness on the people of North America and the British Commonwealth. This horrendous tribulation descending upon us is defined in the Holy Scriptures as the time of "Jacob's Trouble." The good news is that God's people will be saved out of it.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be **saved out of it**.

May Darkness Become Light

This book is able to help in that anticipation that some be saved out of the coming tribulation. It will begin with the modern Israelites and then sweep the earth—Jacob's trouble.

This book is the story of how God's Plan began, where it is today, and where it is going. The account, from beginning to end, is right here in our Bible—a little here and a little there (Isaiah 28:10-13).

Psalms 36:9 With you [O Lord] is the fountain of life: **in your light shall we see Light**.

Jesus came to turn things around – and for those of us in God's Church, He has. He has shed His light on us. But what about the rest of this fouled up world – will they ever come out of darkness? God prophesied through Isaiah that the time is coming when this blinded world will also be enlightened by Him.

Isaiah 42:16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make **darkness light** before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

This present evil world has rejected God's word as it is given to man in the Holy Bible. They fear to read what it says. They are unable to understand Scripture because they have formed an adverse impression that is opposed to everything it contains. Jesus says that He will turn their minds and set them straight.

Isaiah 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of **darkness**.

Pure religion has to do with serving others – especially those who are in dire need. To those who are blind and in darkness it is a non sequitur that providing for the needy would be able to change one's way of thinking. For them, it is illogical that their minds could be opened to see clearly what they have been missing. And for now, they go their own way seemingly secure in their dark ignorance. But this is a sure promise that God makes to us:

Isaiah 58:10 If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall **your light rise** in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

It is in the practice of true Christianity that one becomes truly enlightened.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

At the fulfillment of the Plan of God there will be no further need for the sun in the heavens because the Light of God will shine for all. **Darkness** will be eradicated when the Plan of God comes to fruition.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them **light**.

This book is all about how man is able to come out of darkness and enter into that glorious light. Now, we will begin to look at how it is that God is making it possible for us to implement His way into our lives so that we begin to resemble His Son Jesus Christ – the Light of life.

Everyone who is wise should want to know – for himself and his loved ones – the way from *darkness* to *light*. There is only one way to get from *darkness* to *light*, and that is the way shown by the Plan of God. That Plan is set forth in the pages of this book. Be mindful of this one thing – God's Plan is sure. Every person should take to heart the prophet Daniel's admonition for the end-time:

Daniel 12:10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but **the wise shall understand**.

Chapter 2

Before the Beginning

In our quest to follow the trek of coming out of abject darkness into the brilliant light we go where John the beloved apostle began when there were only Jesus and His Father – and nothing else existed. We will look into what the Bible reveals about what they were thinking and what they were doing before the earth was created.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The first workings of God of which we are aware took place in the pre-Adamic age **before the beginning** of time and space. This period lasted until the destruction of the earth prior to the creation of the first man—Adam. We certainly do not presume to know all the workings in the Plan of God. Even King David was not given the knowledge of the mystery of the Plan of God as we are privileged to have so much of it revealed to us today.

The Book of Genesis speaks of a later beginning—the beginning of physical matter, energy, light and time. God's Plan began long before that. Time, matter and space are a part of God's physical creation for the purpose of bringing about His Plan through man. Without a physical universe there is no such thing as time.

Anyone who has ever been a part of a construction project has learned that a great amount of detailed work had been done prior to the groundbreaking ceremony where the dignitaries come out to the building location with shovels to turn the first spade of dirt. We understand that engineers and surveyors had previously designed and mapped out the area long before. Feasibility studies and cost analyses had been done to determine the profitability of the venture. Artist's concepts had been presented to the stockholders. Licenses, regulations, permits, rights-of-way, agreements, schedules and a whole host of other considerations had been secured before the public beginning of the undertaking. In short, there had been a great deal of collaboration between the involved parties. In the same way, God the Father and Jesus Christ designed every facet of their entire **Plan before the beginning**.

The First Beginning

The beloved apostle John adds greatly to our narrative by expounding on how Jesus Christ and God the Father were together in a previous all spiritual 'beginning' even before they began to put their creative Plan into action. Putting the Biblical pieces together we find how God's Plan for us began spiritually before creation, then transitioned into its present temporary material phase, and will then see its ultimate spiritual manifestation. Jesus Christ is God and has always been God and always will be God. John is writing of their status much earlier – before 'the beginning' we read of in the Genesis narrative of creation:

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.

God the Father and Jesus were the only two beings that existed. Even when Jesus came to this earth in a temporary fleshly body, He was the same one who was the 'hands-on' Creator God – Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us** (Matthew 1:23).

The Scriptures reveal that even infinity is not a limiting factor for the incredible Plan of God because, after all, infinity is only limitless time, and God supersedes time and space.

Psalms 102:27 You O my God are the same, and your years shall have no end.

God the Father is the eternal, glorious, supreme Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Bible reveals that God the Father created all things **by and through** Jesus Christ. Through His eternal creative power, Jesus sustains the entire universe. When Paul says in Hebrews 1:3 that God upholds all things [the universe] by the word of His power, it means that Jesus Christ is guiding, powering and sustaining everything through the might of His Spirit. Without His ever vigilant support everything would vanish in a split-second just like when matter and anti-matter annihilate one another.

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

As temporal, physical beings we like to say things like, "God has existed forever and ever," and "God has existed for all past eternity." And we think of it as being a long, long time. Actually, time, matter and space did not exist in the very beginning—only God existed. There were only two, God the Father and Jesus Christ the Word. Time as we know and experience it had not yet begun. Yes, time had a starting point! Time, matter and space are a part of God's physical creation for the purpose of bringing about His Plan. The Book of Genesis speaks of a later beginning—the beginning of physical matter, energy, light and time. God's Plan began prior to that Genesis account.

The Book of Genesis begins with a **physical** re-creation of the earth. God does not reveal how He brought about such a vast and magnificent handiwork—He simply states that He did so. Man, with all his brilliance, is unable to understand even the basic building blocks of that wonderful work. It is important that we understand that God the Father created everything by Jesus Christ—long before He became Mary's flesh and blood son at Bethlehem. That is why John straightforwardly says of Jesus: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Luke 1:31-32, 35 Behold Mary, you shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest...the **Son of God**.

God Exists

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, **you are God**.

1Timothy 1:17 God is eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, to Him be honor and glory forever and ever.

God is the Lawmaker

Before God began His act of creation He established and set in motion many laws that would govern everything in the universe. He created all law – physical and spiritual. And, when God began, He started big! The vast physical universe is only a token of His Planned spiritual expanse. Why would God create so vast a universe with so much power and so much potential? It was created for a transcendent purpose. God does nothing without purpose; no more than we would go out and build a barn for which we have no use. So, for what purpose was the universe created? The vastness of the heavens not only points to His unlimited power to create, but it is also an indication of God's extensive Plan to expand His **God Family**. Yes, the Bible reveals that God in deed has a family!

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the **entire Family** in heaven and earth is named.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the **increase** of His empire and peace **there shall be no end**.

Scientists speak of the distance across our observable universe being 14 billion light-years – and expanding at a rate that would preclude our ever seeing it all. Why did God create so vast a universe with so much power and so much potential? This vast universe demonstrates the inestimable scope of the Plan of God. A universe worthy of such a noble project as the Plan of God requires order and regulation of its forces. Everywhere in the universe all things are ordered and governed by a distinct **set of laws**. Laws of physics, nuclear energy, special relativity, thermo dynamics, electro-magnetism, gravity, and all the sciences are found to be uniform and unalterable across an almost limitless sea of stars. Whether Newtonian physics, astrophysics or nuclear physics, all nature obeys laws—many laws. That multiplicity of law requires a commanding **Lawgiver**. Even the best scientists are at a loss when it comes to answering the question, "Where do the laws of physics originate?"

Proof of God

Most do not believe it, but it is possible to prove that God exists. However, each man must prove that God exists for himself – he cannot rely on another. First, he must believe what God says in His word:

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near:

2Chronicles 15:2 The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.

The very fact of the existence of 'law' demands that a Lawgiver exists. A universe without the stability provided by uniform law cannot exist. It would soon disintegrate as a result of its chaotic and haphazard condition. Chaos is not a law – it is a fact! The entire universe follows the laws of physics, gravity, light, heat (thermodynamics – all across the universe it is the same – no matter how far astronomers see...) The intelligent design of the universe is in itself evidence of a lawgiving Creator. **Law is a proof of God**. Speaking of God, James wrote:

James 4:12 There is one **Lawgiver**, who is able to save and to destroy.

On the earth alone (not including the angelic realm), the tremendous number of life forms up to and including man necessitate a **Life-giver**. Life comes from life. God is the only source of life. Man has never created life. Man is foolishly genetically modifying life-forms to 'improve' them, but life from scratch is God's prerogative alone. Not only is God the only fountain and source of life, in His incredible Plan He is making it possible for us to attain to everlasting life—to drink in of His Life. David poetically wrote of this wonderful certainty in this manner:

Psalms 36:8-9 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; and thou shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures. For with you is the **fountain of life**: In your **light** shall we see **light**.

Scientists in their efforts to substantiate a Godless universe are always searching for the "missing link" that would prove their theory that life evolved from inorganic elements. While supporting their "life from non-life" conjecture, evolutionists would never admit that any species came into existence by creation—because that would be tantamount to admitting that there is a God. Creation is categorically dismissed by them because it does not fit their postulated development of events. Let's understand this: Missing links stay missing because they do not exist. The discovery of older and older specimens (using questionable dating methods) does not support evolution at all. In fact, when the historic record of the Bible is understood, the older specimens lend support to the Scriptural narrative.

This present evil world has been hoodwinked into believing the false narrative of 'evolution.' Today's informed biologists categorically dismiss Darwin's theory of evolution, though atheists continue to push it in the schools. Evolution has become the litmus test of orthodoxy of education – like the Trinity is the orthodox test of false religion. Evolution teaches that there is no God, and that life spontaneously developed in some warm primordial ooze. "Evolution" remains the default position of almost all education systems. It is not our purpose here to disprove evolution as there are many good writings on the subject.

For the God-less men among us, the desire to be free from the consequence of all law, whether moral, religious or physical, is seen as the ultimate. On the other hand, the Creator God has given mankind an operating manual that is designed to offer happiness and prosperity. The Ten Commandments comprise the supreme points of God's Law – which is spiritual in nature. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1John 3:4). In the same way that a bird does not fly half as well with only one of two wings, any single sin is the transgression of the entire Law of God. Breaking any single point of God's Law invalidates the integrity of all.

James 2:10 Who so ever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Kind after Kind

Kind after kind is a God given law, and **a proof of God**. Dogs never have kittens. There is absolutely no evidence on record of one species or creature ever turning into something else which is able to reproduce - becoming a new viable line. Mallard ducks do not hatch Robin Red Breast songbirds. There are entirely too many symbiotic species that mutually depend entirely upon one another to function and survive. For example: Bees could not have waited for flowers to evolve for their food source, and cherry trees could not have waited eons for bees to learn to fly from blossom to blossom in order to reproduce and propagate. Symbiotic relationships are essential to many life-forms and they provide the balance that can only be achieved by working together in harmony. They had to be created simultaneously.

Genesis 1:25 God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps upon the earth **after its kind**: and God saw that it **was good**.

Not only that, but when the objective of God's Plan (mankind) was set in motion—*male and female on their way to being made in God's own image and likeness*—everything was declared by God to be, not only good, but **very good!** (Genesis 1:27, 31) 'Very good,' means that absolutely everything worked in perfect accord, and would continue to do so generation after generation until the Plan of God came to its full realization.

John 16:21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish of childbirth, for joy that a man is born into the world.

There is nothing more intricate, perfect and possessed of an incredible potential than a newborn baby. Growth to maturity is a part of its promise. Thousands, if not millions, of complex connections form an involved composition of organs, glands, controls, and sensory perceptions. The five senses: sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell are only the most obvious. The infant's digestive, respiratory and excretory systems are interlaced into its muscle and skeletal structures. The child's immune, circulatory, hormone and nervous systems function together perfectly. Imbedded deep within the child are his intellectual and reproductive systems waiting to blossom at the proper time.

The human brain will develop into brilliance unmeasured. There are an estimated one hundred-trillion synapses in the human brain - the junction across which a nerve impulse links. There is no design more perfect in all of the physical creation. This design proves a designer, and **design** is another **proof of God**.

Psalms 139:13-14 Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast **knit me together** in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knows right well.

Step by Step

No man can predict the future. Only God can foresee centuries and millennia into the future because He is in control of it and brings it about. Man can only speculate ahead of time. When prophecy comes to pass – and it always does – then we know it was of God. **Fulfilled prophecy is a proof of God.** God says:

Isaiah 46:10-11 I Declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, **My Plan shall be accomplished**, and I will bring to pass all my pleasure... yes, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

When God intervenes in the natural course of life, it is necessary that He momentarily suspend the every physical laws of nature. The Bible has a word for it – miracles. The unconverted mind will not give God the credit for His miracles, but will instead attribute them to time, chance and coincidence. God the Father, according to His Plan, and to achieve His Plan, often works miracles, as He did at the hands of Jesus Christ. **Miracles are a proof of God.**

Acts 2:22-23 You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by **miracles** and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the predetermined **Plan of God**, and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Have you ever cried out to God in prayer, “Oh God, help me?” “Oh God, heal my child?” How many times have our prayers been answered? **Answered Prayer is a proof of God.**

2Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, **and pray**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

To prove that God exists and to know God in a personal way can only take place through the intervention of Jesus Christ. It is only by the involvement of Jesus Christ that we can have faith in God.

1Peter 1:21 Who by Jesus Christ **do believe** in God the Father, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Once we believe – the Bible will reveal all we must know about God. There can be nothing more important to us than knowing what God has revealed about Himself, and understanding how intimately involved He is in our lives. How well do we know God? That is an important question. Is He near? Is He in our minds and hearts? Is He with us continually, or is He far away? For many people, especially for too many of those in God’s Church, God is too remote in their lives and thinking. How can we know more about God in order to draw nearer to Him? How can we know more about God so that He becomes real to us?

God's Characteristics

The Holy Spirit is the Life of God the Father and Jesus Christ. It is the Power, Wisdom, Mind, Holiness, Love, Mercy, and a multitude of divine characteristics of God. The Holy Spirit is not a person or a separate third member of the Godhead. The Bible reveals that God is not a trinity of beings.

John 4:23-24 The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. **God is Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit** and in **truth**.

When we say, "God is Spirit," we understand that God is not a part of the fundamental nature of the universe – but higher in essence, form and substance than the physical state in which we were created.

In fact, not only is God Spirit, God is set apart above all others. "Holy" means to be set apart. God is Holy. Do not be confused by the trinity heresy that declares God to be three persons because that is not what the Bible reveals. The word "trinity" is not in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is not a third person. God the Father and Jesus Christ are personal Spirit beings. Scriptural references to "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God" show God's incomprehensible might in dealing with His creation. God gets things done by way of His Spirit as we see in Genesis and Psalms:

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God moved** upon the face of the waters.

Psalms 33:8-9 Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

We humans are temporal flesh and blood – we perish after a while. On the other hand, God is Spirit – eternal Spirit. In the same way that oxygen is the life of our blood, Spirit is the Life of God. At baptism we are given a token of God's Spirit which is necessary if we too are to have eternal life. We must become like He is. We strive as Christians to acquire the splendid and holy characteristics of God.

Spirit is not visible to us mere mortals – but that should not surprise us because so much of our physical realm is invisible. We cannot see gravity, electricity, heat, air, magnetism, sound, radio waves. We cannot even see light until it reflects or bounces off an object. The characteristics of God's Spirit are invisible to our eyes:

Colossians 3:12-16 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [*'agape'* – Godly love], which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

Those are Godly characteristics and attributes that man must put on before he is given eternal life. God's character must become man's character. That takes place when God's characteristics are emulated by men – and they begin to resemble their Father in heaven.

“Good fruit” has been produced in them. There is another set of Godly characteristics listed that when anyone has made them a part of themselves, they have begun to put on the mind of God:

Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

God’s character, epitomized by His Holy Spirit, is perfect and unchangeable. He determined that His Godly relationship with others would always be ideal and unspoiled in every way; always directed by His flawless, righteous character.

Plan of God

The mystery of the Plan of God is revealed in the pages of the Bible. Sadly this wonderful mystery is understood by so few people. The reason that few know what the Plan of God entails is because people do not **do or believe** what God says. They say things like, “You only have to have faith in Jesus,” and in doing so they reject so much of what He came to reveal – and subsequently they remain in the dark. God’s Plan remains a mystery to them. What was God doing before the beginning? In order for anyone to have all the riches of a plethora of confidence in the greater knowledge of the mystery of God (Colossians 2:2), they must *do* the things Jesus taught because all the answers are hidden in the things Jesus revealed:

Colossians 2:3 In Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The first act of God, of which we are aware, is this: In their brilliant Godly wisdom and love, God the Father and Jesus Christ came up with a magnificent Plan – a perfect Plan. They did this prior to the Genesis creation in what we might call the pre-Adamic and pre-angelic ages. God the Father and Jesus Christ decided that they would invest themselves in the greatest venture imaginable. Before launching into their Plan, they made absolutely certain that it was perfect and infallible in every way. They took into account every possibility, and covered every contingency so that nothing what so ever would ever destroy their perfect Plan to bring mankind into their Family—the **Family of God** (Ephesians 3:14-15). They would create a mortal being with the ability of replicating itself; that would be capable of putting on Godly characteristics; that would ascend out of darkness; that would shine like the light of the stars of heaven (Daniel 12:3); and become spiritual relatives of the Father and His Son.

Their Plan was to open their close-knit God-Family to **others!** It was the most splendidly designed Plan conceivable! In what will remain forever the ultimate decision of God, they elected to include **humankind** in their **God-Family**.

Because, God the Father and Jesus Christ loved one another before the foundation of the world (John 17:24), they did not see it as an intrusion to **invite us** into their Family. Their Plan is an expansion of their perfect love. For them, opening the God-Family to others was an act of sharing and giving of their Spiritual substance and very essence. They wished to share their Eternal God Life with an extended Family.

This mind-boggling concept—that we have been created to be like God, as His sons and daughters, was not an afterthought or a fallback notion—it was the **very objective** for all creation—that we might be filled with all the fullness of God!

Ephesians 3:19 To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge so that you might be filled with **all the fullness** of God.

That is an enormous statement, “That you might be filled with **all the fullness** of God!” Our little minds are completely incapable of being filled with all the fullness of God. We have to be **changed** a lot before that can happen!

Everything in this book about the Plan of God is based on the fact that God’s word (the Bible) is true, and that it is able to set His people apart from those who do not believe it (John 17:17). God’s people fully rely on Scripture to direct their course in life because the Bible is the foundation of Truth – and until a person believes it – he will be second-guessing God at every turn. But we are told by God that we do not need to guess.

Jeremiah 33:3 Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

God with Us

With the Bible as our guide, the Plan of God comes alive in a way that is astounding. So much so, we find ourselves saying, “Why doesn’t everyone see it?” The apostle John added greatly to the Plan of God narrative by explaining that before the physical creation of the universe there was a previous “beginning” (John 1:1-2). That beginning took place in the spiritual realm only.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. He is God—always was—and always will be. His name is Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us** (Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14).

Let’s look at some of the “behind the scenes” workings of God the Father and Jesus Christ before they launched into the masterpiece of creation that shows their handiwork. That masterwork is mankind – created with the promise of eventually taking on the very nature and image of God Himself.

Genesis 1:26 God said, Let us make man **in our image**, after our **likeness**.

God put together His Plan before the creation of spirit beings (angels), and prior to the earth’s first destruction, and prior to the creation of the first man—Adam. God never intended for the angels to become His glorified children. They were created for the sole purpose of being ministering spirits.

Hebrews 1:14 Are the angels not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Before Time Began

Mankind was not an afterthought in the creation process, but the very means and basis by which God's Plan of reproducing Himself would be carried out. Man was designed with the capacity to be born of God – and for the very purpose of God bringing about the replication of Himself. God's Plan was completely refined and perfected before time ever began in the pre-creation period. In His wisdom, God considered every possibility so that nothing would ever destroy His perfect Plan of bringing us into the God-Family. David reflects on the unwavering flawlessness and purity of God's excellent Plan before He ever began to set things in motion:

Psalms 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

In this verse, purified seven times, is a phrase signifying God's Plan to be finished, and completely purified. Over and over silver goes through the purification process to get pure sterling silver. That is what God did with His Plan of creation before He ever began to enact it. While it was still on the "drawing table," God's Plan was perfected—before being inaugurated. Before He began His creation He had to be positive that all things would work together in perfect harmony until His Plan was complete. Writing to the spiritually mature Church of God, Paul contrasts the inferior intelligence of this world's rulers with the excellent manifold **wisdom** of God, and tells how superior God's wisdom has always been:

1Corinthians 2:6-8 Howbeit we speak **wisdom** among them that are morally and spiritually advanced: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the leaders of this world, that comes to nothing: But we speak the **wisdom of God** in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained **before the world** unto our glory.

Works of Old

Paul was inspired to share the fact with us that perfect Godly wisdom was utilized in His Plan before the world existed. The quintessential achievement of God was in conceiving and designing a being (man), and an enduring environment for him that would always be conducive to the development of good and righteous spiritual growth.

Psalms 104:24, 30 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In **wisdom** you have made them all. The earth is full of your riches... You send forth your spirit, they are created.

God refined His Plan from start to finish so that it would be absolutely perfect in every way—before He began! God's Plan is sure—it is coming to fruition. We see this process playing out so clearly in the Book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 8:22-23 The Lord possessed *me* [Godly wisdom personified] in the beginning of His way, before His **works of old**. I, wisdom, was fully implemented from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth existed.

Amazingly, God reveals that in His perfect wisdom, He Planned every move and eventuality – step by step – before He created the earth!

Proverbs 8:23-29 **Before the earth existed.** When there were no depths, I [Godly wisdom personified] was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills came forth, I, Godly Wisdom, brought forth: While as yet He had **not made** the **earth** nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I, Godly wisdom, was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: When He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth.

God did not begin His magnificent creation unprepared, but He tested, devised and purified every last detail before He ever started. Only then did God prepare the face of the earth for man to develop in the character, image and likeness of Himself. We cannot begin to imagine the incredible detail that God considered before He ever began the work of creation. Paul told Timothy that before creation, God's Plan specifically included man's salvation:

2Timothy 1:9 [God] Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began.**

God Inhabits Eternity

The first workings of God took place in the period before the beginning of time and space. God has existed eternally. He was around before *anything* else was around. By definition, that is our starting point, but we have to work our way back to comprehend it correctly. That is what we are doing in this chapter.

Isaiah 57:15 Thus says God, the high and lofty One that **inhabits eternity**, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

In this chapter, we begin long before man walked the earth. In fact we begin long before there was an earth, or even a universe. Everything we are able to detect, or know of, or perceive of had a beginning. But "something" had to come **before** every object, concept, design or idea we can possibly conceive of. Those who choose not to believe in an absolute First Source Originator (Creator God) are not thinking the progression of our existence through clearly. It seems counterintuitive to our thinking that we must begin with *something*, but without a Primary Force or entity (God) *nothing* could exist. Those who disingenuously assert and accept that we do have *something*, like the universe, without a First Cause have presented an implausible hypothesis based in denial. For them it seems better to obstinately and foolishly deny the existence of a Creator God than to admit the obvious, which would consequently make them beholding to Him (Psalms 14:1).

As we have shown, there are bona fide ways for finite man to prove that an infinite **God exists**. Not only is the proof of God possible, it is imperative that we individually prove for ourselves that there is a God. We can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is real. Life is not spontaneous. Life does not come from non-life. All living things are the result of the reproduction of other living things – there are no exceptions. The very first life required a Life-giver. **Life is a proof of God.** It is wise that we individually prove 'God' for ourselves.

Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that comes to God must believe that **He exists**, and that He rewards them that diligently seek Him.

Even though God is spiritual He has shown Himself in His works of creation. All that is required is an honest and objective mind looking at His meticulous creation to know that our **Creator God exists**. Again, take the vast universe as an example. Where did it come from? It has not always existed because it would have burned up by now. The universe had a beginning. Before that *space* was empty. When there is nothing in space – it stays nothing. The nothingness of space was not explosive. It was not apt to become a Big Bang. Nothingness does not blow up into a universe with billions of billions of star filled galaxies and planets. Modern physicists want to surmise that you can tear apart the fabric of “nothingness” into matter and anti-matter. It is a well known fact that Energy is equal to Mass times the speed of light squared. That means that energy and matter are interchangeable. Modern scientists have formulated how energy, mass, radiant light and time are functions of physical laws. That means that there is an incredibly enormous amount of energy stored up in every bit of matter. And when you consider the mass of the entire universe, it goes without saying there was an unfathomable amount of energy involved in creation. To leave God out of the equation scientists must construe that nothingness must somehow be interchangeable with that which now exists. There is an unwritten law that states, when you have nothing – it stays nothing. **Creation demands a Creator** – so **creation is a proof of God**. Paul wrote:

Romans 1:19-20 God has shown Himself...in that the invisible things of Him from the **creation of the world** are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity so that they are without excuse.

Even the Godless evolutionists, who believe that life came about spontaneously, realize that the universe is subject to entropy—ever slowing downward in gradual decline. And yet, they persist, and take childish comfort, in believing that the universe evolved from a primordial and primeval nothingness. Cynics say that man created God in his mind, rather than the other way around, and that when man dies God ceases to exist.

Psalms 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is not one that does good.

A Temporary Universe

Modern scientists have formulated how time, energy, mass, and radiant light are functions of physical laws. Energy as a component of matter is equal to the speed of light times the mass of materials, times the speed of light again! That means that there is an incredibly enormous amount of energy stored up in every bit of matter that Jesus created.

Everything in the universe is moving from its present order toward eventual collapse. Orbits of heavenly bodies, as well as the elemental primary constituents of matter, are degrading and will finally give way. For example, over time, uranium atoms decay slowly turning into lead. Yes, there is the constant conversion of energy to matter, and vice versa, but there is no new source of energy and matter. And, yes, there are new stars forming in space, but they are materializing out of greater galactic debris from other deteriorating remnants. Even theories concerning black holes and vast amounts of dark matter cannot violate the first principle of thermodynamics which establishes that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. The total sum of energy plus mass of the universe remains the same. As sure as rivers flow to the ocean, and stones finally become the sands of the sea – the universe will erode away.

Under the inspiration of God (2Timothy 3:16), and looking forward to a new creation, the apostle Paul wrote of how this physical world in which we live would one day perish, giving way to something much more superb—which is the earnest expectation of all creation.

Romans 8:19 With anticipation the creation eagerly awaits the revealing of the Children of God.

Paul explains that our transitory and provisional universe was designed to yield to the hope of the resurrection into the eternal Plan of God:

Romans 8:20-21 The creation was made **subject to decay** and futility, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same **in hope**, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of decay into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

It was necessary that a temporary physical dwelling be established wherein the Plan of God would be worked out to the full. In the same way that a child's spinning top begins to slow down, wobble and then topple over, everything in the universe is winding down. But, how did it come 'up to speed' in the first place? Remember, there was 'nothing' to come up to speed. By excluding a Creator God, scientists must theorize about things like, 'what' blew up in a Big Bang, and 'where' matter goes that gets sucked into black holes? Is it captured forever, becoming a part of an even more powerful black hole? Does it go out the other side of the black hole into an alternate universe? Where did the substance of our universe come from? The universe is not eternally old – there was a point where there was no space and no matter at all. When you start with 'nothing,' it stays nothing. At creation God put a spin on every galaxy – indeed the entire universe. The physical universe is also going to topple over, but not until it has fulfilled its transcendent role leading to a spiritual future! Isaiah and Peter spoke of this eventuality:

2Peter 3:10-13 ...The heavens shall **pass away** with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conduct and Godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens** and a **new earth**.

Isaiah 34:4 All the host of heaven shall **be dissolved**, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

This present world in which we live is not going to last forever. That is why we are told not to base our hopes on the things of this earth, but to look on the things above (Colossians 3:2). This present earth is going to vanish.

Psalms 102:25-26 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of your hands. **They shall perish**, but you shall endure: yea, all of them shall **wax old** like a garment; as a vesture shall you change them, and they shall be changed.

New Heavens and a New Earth

The children of God and the coming new universe have an incredible everlasting spiritual future! Isaiah prophesied about the same new creation that will be forthcoming:

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens** and a **new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22 For as the **new heavens** and the **new earth**, which I will make, shall endure forever before me, says the Lord, so shall your children and your name remain.

What was God Thinking

God is real, and He does real things. What was God **thinking** before He began the creation— **before the beginning**? Let me add some perspective to this:

When I was a kid, I loved the funny papers. I would read them every Sunday morning. I liked the comic strip "Peanuts" created by Charles M. Schulz. Imagine for a moment that cartoonist Charlie Schulz is the god of his little comic world - a miniature society of young children featuring the characters Charlie Brown, Peppermint Patty, Lucy and Linus, a beagle named, Snoopy, among others. As he sat in his art studio at his drawing table He was able to determine the **beginning** of the story and the **end** of the story in each strip. Charlie Schulz created and drew the characters in, and gave them their individual characteristics.

In the same way, God looks down at His vast creation just as Charlie Schulz looked down on his comic strip. From a single perspective God sees the beginning and the end. He even determines what the beginning and the end are. God is gracious enough to tell us a lot about the end. That is what the biblical glimpses on prophecy are all about. God says:

Isaiah 14:24 Surely, as I have **thought**, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed **so it shall stand**.

No one, or no incident, is going to prevent God's will that has been set in motion.

Isaiah 46:10-11 Declaring the end **from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel **shall stand**, and I will do all my pleasure... I have spoken it, I will also **bring it to pass**; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

But dear reader please understand this: **Physical** things and **spiritual** things are as **different** from each other as a flat two-dimensional comic strip on paper is from living and breathing three-dimensional real life. Speaking of Himself, God reveals this about His creative acts, and the transient nature of the physical universe. The creation that we see about us has a transcendent future that will endure forever after this physical universe will have passed away. The very name of God, "I Am," denotes **His constancy**; God is what He has always been, and what He is, is what He will always be.

Malachi 3:6 For I am the Lord, **I change not**.

Time and space were created by God together. Because space consists of more than two dimensions, we tend to think of a three-dimensional existence – but actually time is also a dimension. Space-time joins four-dimensional space into a single continuum. In the space-time continuity of General Relativity strange things begin to happen. For example, at extremely fast speeds the mass of an object increases incredibly. The point is this: Even when one considers many more dimensions (as mathematicians are want to do), God is not affected. Spirit is dimensionless – and God is Spirit (John 4:24). God, who created all things, is perfectly capable of intervening at any point and working His will— and His will is being done!

God's ultimate creation comes about in **dual stages**. Because we are flesh and blood it seems to us that physical comes first – and then ultimately, the spiritual. Scripture reveals, however, that the spiritual creation actually pre-dates everything physical. The physical is temporal, whereas the spiritual is eternal. God is interested in the **end product** of His creation, and that end product is spiritually created beings in the exact image of His Spiritual character.

Angelic Creation

One of the first orders of business on God's agenda was the creation of legions of advantageous angels. We find that angels have not existed or lived forever in the past. Unlike God, the angels had a beginning. Speaking of the angels we read in:

Psalms 148:5-6 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and the **angels were created**. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away.

Unlike God, the created angels had a beginning. Paul confirmed this when he referred to the angels in this way:

Colossians 1:16 By God all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, **visible and invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

A great deal of God's creation is invisible – even in the physical realm. Air is invisible, as are the sun's light and radiation, gravity, the earth's magnetic field, and so on... It should come as no surprise to us that invisible things are very real. This verse, however, is primarily referring to the invisible spiritual creation. The dominions, principalities, and powers are angels. We know that they were created **before** the earth and universe (Job 38:4, 7).

Angels were created before God began the physical creation of this earth, the other planets, and the stars in the sky. Not being a part of our physical realm, angels do not die as men do – they are ageless (Luke 20:36). However, like with men, the character of angels was not fixed when they were created, but able to change, subject to their free will. Until the angels came to the point of recognizing and accepting Godliness as their way of being, they were fully capable of rejecting God's way and doing their own. So, in God's perfect Plan, He factored in the possibility of an angelic insurrection. God even had an alternative course of action in place to allow for interruptions, such as Satan's iniquity and the sin of Adam and Eve.

God the Father and Jesus Christ had done an immense amount of planning, preparation and application of Godly wisdom but they had not yet put their Plan into operation. The very first **act of creation** that God has revealed to us is that of the angelic heavenly host of spirit beings.

Psalms 148:2, 5 Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created.

The invisible spiritual realm of the angels was created by Jesus before the physical creation was begun. Jesus made them and He sustains them. We are not told much about how God brought the angelic host into existence. We do not know if their creation was individually – one at a time as men come into being – or if God **suddenly** brought them all into existence in an instant.

Serving Spirits

Hebrews 1:7 God brought forth His angels as spirits, and His ministering spirits [serving spirits] as a flash of lightning.

Man would know nothing of the invisible spirit world were it not for the fact that the angels are revealed by God in the Holy Scriptures. Angels cannot normally be perceived with the five senses. In a few instances and for His purposes, God has allowed angels to make a temporary changeover into our physical realm (Hebrews 13:2). When angels appear, they usually do so looking just like men (Daniel 10:16). However, God desires that mankind know of the myriad of angelic helpers He has created (Psalms 91:11). From the twenty-four spirit beings that surround the throne of God to all the host of heaven standing by God on His right hand and on His left (1Kings 22:19, Revelation 4:4), they are ready to perform their special services in worshipping God and declaring His supreme holiness. Angels were created by God to serve Him and man. For the time being angels are superior man.

Hebrews 2:7 God has placed man for a little while lower than the angels.

Jesus too, assumed that lowly position while on earth. However, it is revealed that the resurrected saints will be superior to the angels just as the resurrected Jesus Christ, who is crowned with glory and honor, is superior to the angels today (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus created a vast array of spirit beings. Individually, they specialize in a host of specialties. Thrones, archangels dominions, Seraphim, Cherubim, principalities, and powers are angelic designations of which we know very little. We do know they were all created by Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:16-17 By Jesus Christ were **all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

Jesus Christ Creator

Scripture shows clearly how God the Father is the Creator God, and how He created all things through the Word – His Son, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:2-3 God the Father has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Jesus whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also **He made** the worlds. Jesus being the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We see here that it was through Jesus that God the Father made the worlds. Because it is so important to know, and for emphasis, there are many places in the Bible that reveal that God the Father created all things, including the vast universe, by and through Jesus. It is imperative that we understand what preceded the actual creation of the heavens and earth? Obviously, there was a great deal of Planning, forethought and interaction that went on between Jesus and His Father prior to His first creative actions.

A better translation of "worlds" is "ages." The Father created the ages through Jesus. The Bible speaks of "ages," and refers to the divisions of time, history, and culture from eternity past to eternity future. Without a physical universe, there would be no such thing as "time." We see that it was through Jesus that the Father "made the worlds." It is Jesus who created the pre-flood age, this present age, and He will also bring about the ages to come.

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

It is Jesus Christ who is in command of, and restrains, the phenomenal forces of nature by supporting and sustaining everything by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). Physical laws, whether Copernican or Quantum-Mechanics, operate well below and outside of the threshold of God's spiritual realm. All of the physical laws in the universe are subject to God and they are there to do His bidding. They were set in motion for a purpose – and one purpose alone – and that is in order to aid in the development and completion of mankind as the eternal and glorious Children of God according to His Plan. From the very beginning God's intention was to bring many sons and daughters to share in His brilliant glory.

Hebrews 2:10 It became God the Father, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory...**

That verse tells us that God has made it our destiny to be **glorified** spirit beings, just as they, God the Father and Jesus Christ are glorious spirit beings. His Plan is that we enter the Family of God forever more. The phrase "bringing many sons unto glory," means that it is God's Plan to make men into glorified spirit beings just as He is. And His children will be a part of His Family forever more. God's Plan is to create full-fledged sons and daughters in His image as God-beings. As such, we will be born as spirit-life beings endowed with the same spiritual qualities of holy righteous character as our glorious brother, Jesus Christ, who has attained to glory through His resurrection.

Hebrews 2:11-12 For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified **are all of one:** for which cause Jesus is not ashamed to call them **brothers and sisters**, saying, I will declare your name Father unto my brethren.

God's Plan is to create mankind into fully matured sons and daughters in His image as God-beings with everlasting life. The resurrected saints will enter the Kingdom of God in the same way that Jesus did, by being glorified after death (John 17:5).

Godly Character

Godly character must be built of free choice, developed over time, and shaped by pressure, until man comes to see the true ways of God, and to know that there is a penalty for sin (1John 3:4). God created man for the supreme purpose of reproducing Himself. Noticed how we are lumped into the same family relationship with Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2:11-12 Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are **all of one:** For which cause Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, I will declare your name Father unto my **brothers and sisters**.

To be able to come out of **darkness** and into God's glorious **light** it is necessary that the distinction be understood of how God the Father created all things by His Son. The relationship and bond between God the Father and Jesus Christ represents ideal Godly love and complete harmony. The **spiritual concept** of the Plan of God was committed to Jesus to be turned into the present reality. Please notice the wealth of Scriptural evidence that positively testifies to the fact that Jesus is the hands-on Creator God:

Psalms 102:25 You laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work **of your hands**.

Everything that exists does so because Jesus made it so for His Father.

1Corinthians 8:6 To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom are all things**, and we by Him.

Near and far, physical and spiritual – Jesus created them all.

John 1:3 **All things** were made by Jesus; and without Him was not anything made that was made.

For salvation's sake Jesus set aside His spiritual glory to become a part of this physical world which He had created (Philippians 2:6-7).

John 1:10 Jesus was in the world, and the **world was made by Him**, and the world knew Him not.

Colossians 1:16 For by Jesus Christ were **all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.

All that Jesus creates; He does so at the behest of God the Father.

Ephesians 3:9 God the Father **created** all things by Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 1:2 God the Father has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son... by whom also **He made the worlds**.

Jesus is the *Logos*, the Word, and all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.

Psalms 33:6, 9 By the **word of the Lord** were the heavens **made**; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth... For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

The entire creation is subject to, and directed by Jesus who made it. There is a principle to consider: Just as an artist is to be more highly valued than his paintings, Jesus' life and existence is of greater worth than that which He has created. We will see later how Jesus was able to lay down His life in exchange for our salvation.

Hebrews 2:10 For it became Jesus, **for whom** are all things, and **by whom are all things**...

Acts 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Master of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.

Psalms 146:6 The Lord made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that is therein.

The earth and the heavens above were created by Jesus specifically as a **home for mankind**.

Isaiah 45:12, 18 The Lord said, I have made the earth, and **created man** upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded... For thus says the Lord that **created the heavens**; God Himself that **formed the earth** and **made it**; He has established it, He created it not in a disorderly ruin, He formed it **to be inhabited**: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

When Paul wrote in Hebrews 1:3 that God upholds the universe by the word of His power, it means that Jesus Christ is guiding, supporting, powering and sustaining everything through the power and mightiness of His Spirit. Without His ever vigilant support everything would vanish in a split-second just like when matter and anti-matter come together and annihilate one another. Jesus is the ruler and the one who preserves all that exists. Not only did Jesus create absolutely everything – He upholds it and keeps it running.

Eternal Life

The relationship and bond between God the Father and Jesus Christ represents ideal Godly love and complete harmony. They determined that their Godly relationship with others would always be perfect and unspoiled in every way; always directed by flawless, righteous character. Therefore it was necessary that creation consist of finite rather than eternal substance. God is eternal, and He is eternal Spirit. His character is perfect, fixed and good. Mankind, on the other hand, has not yet developed perfect righteous character, and is therefore subject to coming short of God's perfection.

God is not going to give His gift of **eternal life** to any who have not unequivocally chosen His way of righteousness; and with the help of His Holy Spirit rejected lawlessness altogether. It is God's Plan, that only with our willingness and submission to His sovereignty, will He infuse His holy righteous perfect spiritual character in us. While the gift of salvation is within our grasp, it is not determined until we have finished the race by enduring unto the end (Mark 13:13). How we run and finish that spiritual race has everything to do with how we exercise the true faith and the doing of it. That means that we are to be living that belief system that God has shown to us and called us to. That is why we are told to be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only (James 1:22). We must be living it with every fiber of our existence! Those who refuse to walk the strait and narrow path will be allowed to perish (Matthew 7:13). That is why mankind is created with a temporal existence, because all men will not enter the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 7:14, 21 Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto Life, and **few there be** that find it... Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.

At one point or another, each in his own order (1Corinthians 15:23), God is sorting out those who will be like Him. First He makes us His conceived children, and if we are faithful to maturity, spiritual parturition, then we are invited into the eternal Family of God. God's children will hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

John 1:12 But as many as received Jesus, to them gave He power to become the **children of God**, even to them that believe on His name:

The universe, including mankind, was created with a Plan, and for a purpose. That purpose is to provide a suitable setting in which man is able to dwell and develop Godly character.

Isaiah 42:5 Thus says God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it; He that gives breath unto the **people upon it**, and spirit to them that walk thereon:

The meaning of this verse shows that the purpose for which God created this earth was so that there would be a place for mankind to **live and flourish**. The ultimate goal of God's Plan is seen in the beauty and perfection that will be revealed in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Pre-history – Pre-time – Pre-everything

Acts 15:18 Known unto God are **all His works from the beginning** of the world.

God knew absolutely where He was going and what He was going to do even before He began to enact His Plan. That is another really big statement! Before there were any stars, sky, sun or earth below, God established His quintessential spiritual Temple in heaven. The holy places and things of God that we have seen on the earth are only replicas of the heavenly. God's Spirit is compared to a river flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb that brings life. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells (Psalms 46:4, Revelation 22:1).

Genesis 2:10 A river went **out of Eden** to water the garden.

God has revealed to us that there is a perfect spiritual **Eden** in heaven, and the Garden of Eden replica on earth for Adam and Eve was only a physical facsimile of the real heavenly paradise (Ezekiel 28:13). God has many other patterns which also reflect the reality of His Plan. For instance Moses constructed the Tabernacle in the wilderness using the blueprints of heavenly Temple itself.

Acts 7:44 Our fathers had the **Tabernacle** of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the **pattern** [blueprints] that he had seen on Mount Sinai.

And there is the perfect spiritual **Temple** of God in heaven which is the master prototype or pattern from which Solomon's Jerusalem Temple was also built. The heavenly realities of the Tabernacle, the Temple and the Garden of God **pre-existed** even before the creation of the physical earth and universe.

Hebrews 8:5 There are priests... who serve unto the example and shadow of **heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, says he, that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you on Mount Sinai.

Notice that Paul is telling us about the heavenly objectives, which pre-existed this earth's creation, which are the ultimate goal of the temporary earthly renditions we have known of.

Patterns in Heaven

Hebrews 9:23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns on earth of the things in the heavens should be purified with these Old Testament animal sacrifices; but the **heavenly things** themselves with better sacrifices than these.

When Paul speaks of 'heavenly things' there is an interesting Greek word used, *Epo-Uranious*, meaning **above the sky**. Known to the ancients before the time of Jesus Christ was the object we know as Uranus. It is the seventh planet from the Sun, and at magnitude +5.7 Uranus is barely visible to the naked eye on very dark nights. Uranus is named after the Greek mythological deity of the sky *Ouranos*. Uranus is the Latinized version. The element uranium derives its name from the same source. In short, Paul was referring to the true heavenly things which are able to reveal the Plan of God.

What we see in Hebrews 9:23 is that Jesus Christ, of necessity, was fulfilling the heavenly Plan of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). That is reality in the making! Jesus was completing and perfecting the Holy of Holies in heaven! The earthly Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple and the re-constructed Temple of Herod are all gone. They are not what Jesus entered.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures [Greek *antitupon*, antitype in English] of the true, [the real]; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Exodus 25:8-9 God said, Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the **pattern of the tabernacle**, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye fashion it.

The Holy Place in heaven is not manmade with hands as the Tabernacle and the Temple were. Jesus Christ has entered the Holy Place in heaven itself in the presence of God the Father. Antitypes are merely the representations of the genuine article. An original type is the *real thing* – usually in heaven or the Old Testament that foreshadows something that follows. Types are often prophetic in nature. Often, types in the Old Testament prefigure their greater fulfillment antitypes found in the New Testament. For example, the Passover lamb was a type of Jesus Christ.

We can understand how and why God's very real spiritual Temple in heaven is off-limits to sinful mankind. The patterns which are in heaven are indestructible, while the things on earth are simply physical examples of that which exists in heaven. God gave His prophets the plan or pattern from which to construct the Tabernacle and the Temple (1Chronicles 28:19, Exodus 25:40). The patterns in heaven were in place **before the beginning**, prior to the creation of the physical world. God showed the blueprints to Moses for the construction of the Tabernacle and all its furnishings while he was on Mount Sinai.

Numbers 8:4 This work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the **pattern** [blueprints] which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the candlestick.

When it was nearly time for Solomon to build the Temple, God gave David a roll of drawings showing every detail to be intricately and precisely followed. God gave David the **blueprints** of the heavenly temple and all its accoutrements so that David could pass them on to Solomon to build a stone and metal temple at Jerusalem.

1Chronocils 28:19 David said, the Lord made me understand **in writing** by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern [blueprints].

God had previously given Moses the same detailed **blueprints** for the Tabernacle:

Exodus 25:8-9, 40 Let them make me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the **pattern** [blueprints] of the Tabernacle, and the **pattern** of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it ...And be sure that you build them after their **pattern** [blueprint], which was shown to you in the mount.

Please understand that all the holy things we have seen on earth are only **replicas** of the **spiritual reality** previously established in God's heaven.

Seven Main Steps in the Plan of God

Specific successive steps in the Plan of God, over the span of time, are clearly referred to again and again in the Scriptures.

Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the **ages**, periods of time and steps in God's Plan were thoroughly prepared by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

There are **stages** in the continuing progression throughout history of God's development of His Plan. These are the seven key stages used in this book for the purpose of portraying the overall Plan of God. Each phase is described in-depth according to God's divine Plan of Salvation for mankind:

Before the Beginning - the pre-Adamic period

Re-Creation – Adam made in God's image

Fall of Man – man sins and therefore must die

Fullness of Time – the Savior is sent to redeem man

Millennium – God's Kingdom established on earth

Judgment – men's hearts revealed

All in All – Everything turned over to God the Father

The ascent of God's Plan continues in leaps and bounds toward its completion. Worldly theologians have come up with their own varying lists to describe and limit the development of stages according to the Biblical narrative – but they always miss the mark because they have rejected God's Holy Day Plan as revealed in Leviticus 23. They refer to themselves as dispensationalists. These dispensationalists have been taught that the Jew's feast days have been done away with, or nailed to the cross, or some such dismissal. However, they go off course because the Holy Days are the Feasts of the Lord – not the feasts of the Jews. When properly observed, God's Feast Days **hold the key** to understanding the consecutive stages in the Plan of God.

Leviticus 23:2 The Lord said, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them concerning **the Feasts of the Lord**, which ye shall proclaim to be **Holy Convocations**, even these are my Feasts.

A Holy Convocation is a commanded assembly of God's people for His special purposes. Since it is God who commands that His Holy Convocations be observed – perhaps the dispensationalists should reconsider their bias against the Feasts of the Lord, and follow God's lead to find out what they are all about.

Secret Mystery

The Plan of God was a mystery from before the beginning, but when He came, Jesus declared that it was no longer to be hidden in secrecy, but shown to His spiritual brothers and sisters. However, Jesus deliberately concealed the meaning of the **mystery** of the Kingdom from those not being called to Christianity at that time. Jesus and His apostles revealed the mystery of the Kingdom of God unto the Church brethren. Paul said that the mystery of the hidden wisdom of God – which God ordained before the world unto our glory – was now available to the Church (1Corinthians 2:7). God revealed Himself and worked with men in diverse ways during the early phases of His Plan, but He never revealed the mystery of His entire Plan until the era of the New Testament Church.

Matthew 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been **kept secret** from the foundation of the world.

This Godless world has contrived its own inexplicable and nonsensical mystery about the nature of God consisting of three persons, which is found nowhere in the Holy Scriptures. It is totally made-up and its origin is in paganism. The strange thing is that most Western religions have made this artificial trinity mystery the test of orthodoxy and accepted doctrine for their faith. The sad thing is that this unintelligible fabrication blinds the minds of those who would know the truth of God. Most people have never heard of, much less understood the **mystery kept secret from the foundation of the world**. Paul tells us what the Biblical mystery actually is and to whom it is being revealed.

Colossians 1:26-27 The **mystery** which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but **now** is made manifest to His saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Christ in You the Hope of Glory

The glory of God is the brilliance, the magnificence, the power, the majesty, the greatness, and an unlimited host of indefinable attributes of almighty God. Our human language comes far short of being able to define the wonderful glory of God. And yet it is God's Plan that His people take on every characteristic that He possesses—even God-life ever more! Few people know Jesus and what He taught, and even fewer are willing to submit to His way of living. Therefore the people of this world do not know God, and they do not know Jesus Christ. Paul writes of how Satan, the present god of this world, has blinded the minds of men:

2Corinthians 4:3-4 If our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

As a result, most people in the world are blinded as to what God is doing. The world is oblivious to these wonderful revelations, and cannot comprehend them because their eyes have been closed for now. The mystery is revealed only to those whom God is calling to be His divine sons and daughters.

Few people consider that God is a personal God who is touched with the feeling of our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). Few people ask themselves questions like: What is God doing? What makes God happy? When will God be finished with His present project? What is His Plan? Does He even have a fixed Plan in place?

Only God's people are able to know the answers to these questions because they have been revealed to God's apostles and prophets – and are recorded in the sacred Scriptures for those who have the eyes to see (Ephesians 3:5).

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets.

Intellectually, those men in the world believe that they are able to discern as much as true Christians, but without God's calling and granting them repentance, the faith of Jesus Christ, and the motivating influence of God's Holy Spirit – they are not be able to live their lives according to the principles Jesus has laid before us.

Dispensations in God's Timeline

A general definition of a Biblical dispensation is God's administration of a period of time in an appointed age. The word dispensation comes from the Greek *'oikonomia'* – which literally means "household management." As used in the Scriptures, *'oikonomia'* refers to the individual periods in the administration of the **household of God** (Ephesians 2:19). God worked in certain ways and revealed specific things at various times according to His Plan. We follow the Scriptures to observe some of the dispensations or **steps** in the Plan of God which are revealed through the meaning of the Sabbath_s (pl) – weekly Sabbaths and also God's Holy Days – the Feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23). It goes without saying that if you are invited to an event and you show up a day late – you miss the entire affair. In the same way, God is deadly serious about the way in which He is worshipped and the lessons to be learned on His Holy Convocations. God regards the Sabbath Day to be the link – **the sign** – between Him and His people. The Lord spoke unto Moses, saying:

Exodus 31:13-14 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Truly my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is **a sign between me and you** throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you (set you apart from others). You shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defiles it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

In the Span of Time

We find an example of God's self-revelation in the Book to the Ephesians. The Scriptures speak of past ages [*aion*], the present age, and the age to come.

God's Plan is to replicate Himself by developing **man-kind** into **God-kind**, placing us into the eternal Family of God. Paul describes the mystery of the Plan of God:

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the *sonship* of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will...

We find here that God the Father decided in advance to make us His sons, sons of God, [Greek *uihothesia*, sonship in English] in His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He Planned to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.

Paul alludes to the yet future final time period when everything in the Plan of God will come to fruition. The entire work of God will be complete when that final step will have come to fulfillment. God will have brought many sons and daughters into His glory at the realization of the dispensation of the repletion and culmination of all the steps in God's Plan.

Ephesians 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the **mystery** of His Will – the Plan of God – according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: That in the **dispensation** of the **Fullness of Times** (pl.) He might accomplish all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.

Again, Paul is saying that God will have completed His Plan by and through Jesus Christ – in the "Fullness of Times." When all things have been achieved in man, in heaven and on earth Jesus will return *everything* to His Father, so that God may be **all in all** (1Corinthians 15:28).

God's blueprint Plan was fully devised before He began to initiate its implementation by His creation.

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose [Greek *prosthesis*, a setting forth beforehand] of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

Here in the Book of Ephesians the word "dispensation" is a reference to God's Plan – His active involvement and administration over time in bringing about His will. Dispensations (in the span of time) are the duration of specific periods of time. For example, some dispensations are periods of time in which man is tested with respect to his obedience to certain revelations of the will of God. Each dispensation is accomplished in order. The things that God brings about are not the same in every age, but are progressive, happening or developing gradually or in stages – proceeding step by step. They are interconnected major interventions to bring about His Plan of adding God-beings to His Family. But one thing that remains constant is God's Plan to bring us into a glorious eternal relationship with Him.

Titus 1:2 In **hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

God's Plan is sure. Step by step, God is resolutely moving forward in His Plan to bring many of His sons and daughters to glory in His eternal Family of God. From the beginning of beginnings, God's intent has always been to dwell with those who are His children.

Exodus 25:8 Let them make me a sanctuary; that **I may dwell** among them.

Leviticus 26:12 I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Mankind is Ignorant and Blind to God's Plan

The Plan of God remains a mystery to all of mankind—except those who have been called by God into His Church—because God's Plan for mankind is only revealed to those who have been privileged to receive His Spirit.

1Corinthians 2:9-10 As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which **God has prepared** for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Jesus made the distinction clear to His disciples of how He was revealing the mysteries of God to them and not to the people of the world just yet.

Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto the disciples, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. [The Kingdom of heaven is the Kingdom of God]

Even the prophets of old were not privy to the Plan of God and the mysteries of the kingdom, because Jesus brought that revelation when He came.

Matthew 13:17 Truly I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have **desired to see** those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.

Key Steps of God's Intervention

There are distinct steps in time of God's intervention in setting His Plan in motion. Always keep in mind that He is actively bringing His Plan to fruition. There are distinct periods or ages for establishing and overseeing the Plan of God as defined in the Bible. Jesus knew the end from the beginning because He is the Alpha and the Omega. He said:

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

The very reason that the Church of God is able to set the events of God's Plan in chronological order in this book is because so much of this knowledge has been imparted to us (Ephesians 3:3-5). When a person is keeping God's Sabbath Day holy, the Feast Days of the Lord, and His Ten Commandments, God begins to open their mind to His Plan for mankind (Leviticus 23, Psalms 111:10).

Creator God

In the beginning, there was only God the Father and the Word, who is Jesus Christ.

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

They were the only two beings that existed. God the Father is the eternal, glorious, supreme Creator of the heavens and the earth, the source of all life. God is a personal Spirit being, the epitome of love, wisdom, justice, power, goodness, and mercy. God is the Sovereign Ruler and sustainer of all that exists.

The relationship and bond between God the Father and Jesus Christ represents supreme Godly love and complete harmony. Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior, the divine Son of God, begotten of Holy Spirit. Born in the flesh of the virgin Mary, Jesus became fully human, and died for all. Jesus is the Messiah who will soon come again to establish His Father's Kingdom over all the earth.

Angels Interface between God and His Creation

Before there was a physical universe, God created and began using a countless number of angelic spirit beings to regulate, oversee and communicate many of the variables in the physical world. Because the spirit realm surpasses our physical realm, angels are able to monitor and intervene wherever necessary in accordance to God's will. The angels of God even rejoice when one sinner repents (Luke 15:10). God called them messengers or angles, and they were designed to be beneficial serving agents or, "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14).

How Many Angels

How many angels did Jesus create? When angels were created time had still not begun. There were so many design characteristics that needed to be calculated prior to creation in order to work perfectly the first time. Angels were the number crunchers that would oversee their myriads of individual calculations and projects for more than 10 million species. For example, even after it was decided that flying squirrels would eat pinion nuts, the air density had to be taken into consideration for their projected trajectories and right wing loading on the membrane between the front and back legs.

As an architect 'sees' his project before he starts the actual design and construction – angels had to 'see their projects' before God was ready to go ahead with His creation. Imagine the magnitude of vision and forethought required to bring God's creation into existence!

One more telling example: Angels programmed the butterfly's navigation system – their airborne control centers – giving them their "instinct" to return to the same bush their now deceased parents visited the year before on another continent. Those same butterflies also required a nectar gathering apparatus **before** the flowering plants were ever in the earth!

Genesis 2:5 Every plant of the field **before it was in the earth**, and every herb of the field before it grew...in the ground.

Interestingly, angels which cannot reproduce, are given responsibilities to interact with beings that can reproduce. Jesus tells us that the angels were not created with the ability to reproduce:

Matthew 22:30 In the resurrection men neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are **as the angels** of God in heaven.

The angelic spirit world is vast and varied just like the physical creation of seemingly limitless varieties of animals, plants, insects, and microbes. Just consider the immense number of species of birds, fish, warm and cold blooded creatures, trees, grass, ferns and lichens – the list would be staggering. God's "ministering spirits" are also untold and manifold in number and variety. They were created for the purpose of carrying out God's directions especially for those who would eventually be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:14) Jesus said that He was able to call on more than 72,000 angels at a moment's notice (Matthew 26:53).

Sons of God

Angels are sometimes referred to as "sons of God," because they are beings created by God, but **nowhere** in Scripture is there any indication or suggestion that their purpose and destiny was to be glorified beings in the Kingdom of God as man is destined to become. And yet, the angels celebrated to witness God's handiwork. The very moment that Jesus finally set in motion all of the intricate designing and planning of this physical masterpiece of the universe, all the angels **rejoiced greatly!** Speaking of the angels as the morning stars and the offspring of God:

Job 38:7 The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Satan and his demons were referred to as sons of God:

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them (Job 2:1).

Man's destiny includes eventually judging and ruling over angels. The eternal Jesus Christ, Son of God, is above and superior to all the creation He made. And yet He humbled Himself to be mankind's Savior (Philippians 2:7-8).

Hebrews 2:9 We see Jesus, who was made a little while **lower than the angels** for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Even while in the flesh, God gave man dominion over His creation.

Hebrews 2:7 You made man temporarily lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and didst set him **over the works** of your hands:

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and **subdue it: and have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Because of their spiritual state, angels are superior to fleshly mankind – but that will change for Church brethren at the time of the first resurrection.

1Corinthians 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?

So God started by creating the vast angelic realm and then the immeasurable, physical universe – this earth, the sun, the moon and the billions of stars (Colossians 1:16). It is so expansively enormous that it is impossible to measure or comprehend its size.

The mission or responsibility of the angelic host was to employ all of the elements and forces that existed in order to establish a protected home for mankind to dwell in. The earth was the province of the angels to be developed and perfected by the angelic host in order to provide an advantageous environment in which mankind would flourish and prosper. Satan's task was the development of the earth and everything that pertained to it. He was put on earth to tend it with the help of myriads of lesser angels. Before he was sent to earth, Satan had been trained in heaven before the very throne of God, and he had angels under his command. Jesus said:

Matthew 18:10 Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven **their angels** do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Drawn by God

Why did God create so vast a universe with so much power and so much potential? It was certainly created with a Plan, and for a purpose. Those men and women who have been **drawn by God**, and **called** into His Church, have been given the ability to believe in God's sovereignty, providence, protection, and goodness (John 6:44, 65).

Our calling is to walk through life with the Father and the Son, because through our relationship with them, their fundamental attributes and qualities will always be before us, which is how we will take on the character and image of God.

God created man for the supreme purpose of reproducing Himself. Carnal sinful man is not yet made in God's image because God has perfect divine character. Development of righteous spiritual character in man is a must for man to be in the likeness of God. It is God's Plan, that with our willingness, He will infuse His holy righteous perfect spiritual character in us.

As individuals, we have our part in developing Godly character. Righteous character is the capacity to discern what is right from what is sin, and to choose correctly by resisting the wrong and taking a stand for what is true. We cannot have Godly character without the motivation and power of God's Holy Spirit. And after that, to realize that spiritual character is a gift of God. Each and everyone must overcome sin and cultivate Godly spiritual character during this lifetime in order to be born into the Kingdom of God!

Creation of Stars and Universe

The creation of the vast physical universe was billions of years ago.

Isaiah 45:11-12 Thus says the Lord, the holy One of Israel, and his Maker... I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I, even my hands have **stretched out the heavens**, and all their host [the angels, stars, planets] I have commanded.

Clearly, God had a Plan and purpose in creating the earth with its wonderful climates, vegetation, rivers and lakes—and that objective was to create a habitat for mankind:

The Angelic Rebellion

The archangel Satan was created perfect, beautiful and very powerful (Ezekiel 28:15). He was positioned at the very throne of God as one of the **covering angels**. There was no more important position than that held by Satan at God's throne in heaven. Jesus created him and placed him in that high place.

Ezekiel 28:14 [Satan], you are the **anointed cherub** that **covers** [the throne of God]; and **I have set you so**: you were upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire [in the heavenly Temple].

War in Heaven

Because of the devil's rebellion against God there was **war in heaven**. The archangel Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels.

Revelation 12:7-9 There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The devil became the Adversary of God and man, and was cast down to the earth. Only two covering angels remained covering the throne of God – most likely Michael and Gabriel – the only two archangels named in the Bible (2Chronicles 5:7). The Ark of the Covenant was fabricated by gifted artisans according to the pattern and blueprint of God's throne in heaven with only **two covering angels**.

Exodus 25:19-20 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

Two cherubims of gold covered the Ark of the Covenant – one at each end of the mercy seat. Facing one another, they stretched forth their wings on high over the mercy seat.

Satan's Names

"Satan" was not the original name of the evil being we know as the devil (Greek *daimonion*, lying false accuser). "Satan" means "Adversary." "Lucifer" is not a good translation of the Hebrew *heylel* – a Pagan diety (Isaiah 14:12). The Soncino Chumash, a set of Hebrew Bible commentaries, has for *heylel*, "The morning-star (son of the morning) under the name of Istar was worshipped by the Babylonians..." We are not told what Satan's name was when he was created by Jesus Christ, but it was a beautiful name like the names of Gabriel and Michael. Satan forfeited the use of his right name by his dissent against God – and God never mentions it again! Jesus calls him the devil. He is the very powerful spiritual being that led the revolt against God.

Jesus has qualified to replace and subdue Satan's rule over the earth but has not yet done so because Satan retains his power and authority over mankind (Matthew 28:18, Luke 4:5-6).

Colossians 2:15 Having spoiled principalities and powers, the fallen angels, Jesus made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Through His crucifixion Jesus stripped Satan and the demons of their power and authority, and openly exposed the demons making an example of them. Jesus gained victory over them all. When Jesus returns to this earth to establish His Father's Kingdom, He will have bound Satan for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2).

Within God's word Satan is referred to in many different ways: In Genesis 3:1 we find the great dragon, that old serpent, who deceived mother Eve (Revelation 12:9). Satan remains "the god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4); "The prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2); or "the prince of this world" (John 14:30, 16:11). Paul calls the devil "the power of darkness." Jesus calls the devil "the wicked one" (Matthew 13:19). Paul calls Satan "the tempter" (1Thessalonians 3:5). In Revelation 12:10 he is called "the accuser of our brethren." Paul refers to Satan as "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (2Corinthians 4:4). He is "an angel of light" (2Corinthians 11:14). Jesus identifies the devil in John 12:31 as "the prince of this world." Jesus says that Satan is a wolf that seeks to destroy the sheep of God (John 10:12). Peter says, "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8). Satan has **covered our world in darkness**, but Jesus will see him bound at His coming:

Isaiah 25:7 He will destroy in this mountain the face of **the covering cast over all people**, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Luke 10:18 Jesus said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Ezekiel 28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God.

We also know that Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on earth. They sinned, and that sin separated mankind from God (Isaiah 59:2). It was necessary that God reconcile the world to Himself through Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:19-22 It pleased the Father that in Him [Jesus Christ] should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.

All our days we must strive to maintain and build on that reconciled state with the Father.

Satan was a magnificent being of the angelic creation... the most beautiful and brilliant of them all in fact – the highest in prominence. Satan was perfect at the time of his creation, but he was created with free moral agency; that is, he had free will and could choose for himself. God said that Satan was perfect and full of wisdom (Ezekiel 28:12):

Ezekiel 28:15 **You [Satan] were perfect** in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.

The Adversary

God started out in the spiritual realm by creating the vast angelic host to be His servants, and eventually the servants of man. And then God created the immeasurable, physical universe – this earth, the sun, the moon and the billions of stars (Colossians 1:16). It is so enormous that it is virtually impossible to comprehend its size.

Why did God create so vast a universe with so much power and so much potential? It was certainly created for a purpose.

As you and I would measure progress, God's Plan was moving along very well. Then something horrific happened! Iniquity, imperfection, sin, jealousy and rebellion were found within the angelic realm – horrible sin! It was a dreadful thing, but it happened before the character of those in the angelic realm was firmly established.

Satan, an archangel, sinned; thereby becoming **the Adversary**. He proved to be unfaithful to the Plan of God. He revolted and led one third of the angels into rebellion. Satan and the angels who followed him were originally created as holy beings capable of making their own decisions and choices. They could choose to stand for God's way, or they could reject it. They rebelled against God's way of love that is outgoing concern for the good of others.

Those angels rejected the way of humility, of love for their Maker, of giving, serving, cooperating, and sharing. They turned instead to Satan's way of lust and greed, of competition, bitterness and destruction. As a result, God has reserved for them darkness forever.

2Peter 2:4 God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [*tartaroo*] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...

Jesus subjugated the demonic powers, and will ultimately put them in their right place—to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude :13).

Our earth was well on the way to completion when it was annihilated in the demonic battle that took place at the time that Satan attempted to seize God's throne. Satan forgot the principle of **light** that states: **Darkness** cannot encroach on light, while **light** dissipates darkness. That is truer in the spiritual world. Darkness could never win in a battle to dethrone God who is Light (1John 1:5). Light shines in darkness; and the darkness **comprehended** it not (John 1:5). Satan could not understand how he could lose his battle against God.

Because of the restraints placed upon them, Satan and his demons can only go so far in taunting man. God has placed a **protective hedge** about His saints. Satan and his demons were referred to as sons of God when Satan presented himself before the throne of God in order to get permission to vex the ancient patriarch Job.

Job 2:1-2 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, where do you come from? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro **in the earth**, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 1:10 Have you not made an **hedge about him**, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Persecutions will come as God allows His people to build character, but God always make a way to escape, that His people may be able to bear it (1Corinthians 10:13). Satan desired to take Job's life.

Job 2:6 The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in your hand; but save his life.

God's Plan Not Obstructed

Satan's rebellion and the ensuing war were unable to put a stop to the inevitable Plan of God. That is because God had an alternative course of action in place to allow for interruptions, such as Satan's rebellion and the sin of Adam and Eve.

God the Father and Jesus Christ had determined that their Godly relationship with others would always be perfect and unspoiled in every way; always directed by flawless, righteous character.

Though God did not directly reveal the entirety of His Plan of the expansion of the God-Family to him, Satan was brilliant enough to figure out a good part of the Plan of God. Could it be that Satan – who was the most brilliant of all within the angelic realm – determined that he was not going to be relegated to being subservient to human beings? Perhaps in his pride he thought it too demeaning for someone of his stature. Satan rebelled against God, becoming the Adversary. Satan was not alone when he rebelled against God. One-third of his angels accompanied him and became demons in the process – which means that the other two-thirds of the angels remain loyal to God until this day. Even the good angels would not understand the full nature of God's Plan until Christ's work of redemption (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Iniquity Found in Satan

Satan rebelled because of pride and jealousy. He could not accept God's goal to reproduce Himself through mankind. Satan figured out God's intention that once those human beings, who are made out of the dust of the earth, enter into the Kingdom of God and are transformed to spirit beings in the very Family of God – they would be above him. Satan was furious and incensed because it was he who wanted to be like God, or even 'God' himself.

Isaiah 14:13-14 For you Satan have said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the Most High.**

Satan wanted to be just like God – or better yet, he wanted to be God – in place of God!

Satan's demise

Long before mankind existed, the planet earth was the location for the angels to provide a good home in which mankind could grow and develop. Satan was created by God to be a ministering spirit. He was an angel of the highest responsibility. Satan rejected what God had given him to do. We are shown Satan's demise:

Jude: 6 The angels which kept not their **first estate** [administering God's Plan on the earth], but left their own habitation [for the purpose of going to heaven to dethrone God], He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Those fallen angels are now reserved in everlasting chains under darkness – that is, they are the demons of darkness, still ruling on this earth, who are "chained" or held captive. There is no humility in Satan – only pridefulness.

The fall of Satan and the Demons

We find that Satan falls from his station at the throne of God to the earth because iniquity is found in him.

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Isaiah's implication here is that Satan is a false God - O shining star, son of the morning!

When Satan was a covering cherub in heaven with Michael and Gabriel, adorned with every precious gem, he was in the heavenly Eden—the Garden of God in heaven. The Eden of Adam and Eve was only a replica of the heavenly Eden. Satan was no longer adorned with precious jewels, but appeared as a serpent (Genesis 3:1-2).

Through the prophet Ezekiel, Jesus said to Satan:

Ezekiel 28:13 You hast been in Eden the Garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that you were created.

So we see that Satan was brilliantly endowed with, not only unmatched intellect, but with incomparable talent, limitless expertise, every resource, including the capacity and the means to accomplish the task God set before him. But, Satan's pride overcame him and he sinned. He thought himself to be on a par with God the Father and Jesus Christ—or even superior to them.

Satan Cast from the Kingdom of Heaven

Ezekiel 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezekiel 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will **cast thee to the ground**, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

It was Satan's plan to rival God Himself—but it was God's Plan to glorify His children in the Family of God (Hebrews 2:10). Satan was prevented from achieving his takeover of the throne of God and cast to earth. In His hate Satan reasoned that if he could not be God—nobody else was going to be God either. He set about destroying the preparatory work on earth that had already been done in creating a habitat for mankind.

The Father of Lies

Beyond that planetary destruction, Satan introduced sin into the world of humans (John 8:44; Genesis 3:4) —knowing that sin would result in death to mankind (Romans 6:23). Satan hates the Plan of God. Jesus said of Satan:

John 8:44 ...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and **the father of lies**.

Bent on Destruction and Ruin

When Satan rebelled against God the earth was well on its way to becoming a habitation fit for mankind (Isaiah 45:12-18). However, Satan, in his hatred of God's Plan began to populate the earth with dinosaurs and mighty sharks – making the land and the sea unfit for man's survival. Pterodactyls with fifty foot wingspans ruled the skies. After all, Satan himself is described as a great dragon (Revelation 12:7). Finally, in a gigantic battle, asteroids from outer space wreaked havoc on the earth and its environment. Comets and meteorites bombarded the earth's surface until no life remained. Thick dust and gas covered the entire globe blotting out the sun. The ruined earth became a bizarre and isolated world of death and destruction. Everything was, destroyed, and in total darkness.

Genesis 1:2 The earth became without form, and void; and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep.

We end this chapter with the physical earth having become *tohu, bohu* and *choshek*. *Tohu* and *bohu* mean without form, and empty. But take notice that the Hebrew **choshek** means **ink-black darkness**. Satan's obliteration left the earth pulverized and trashed, and with his unique signature—**darkness**—covering the planet.

In Chapter 3 we will see the face of the earth **renewed**. An interesting Scripture describing the **re-creation** or the renewal of the surface of the earth can be found Psalms:

Psalms 104:30, You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You **renew** the face of the earth.

More chapters coming soon!