

5.22.2024

Day Two

Chapter 1 (vs.6-8)

What a wonderful book, this book of Genesis, the beginnings of creation; clearly not of everything. We know that God has always existed, and there are eternal things. In fact, one of the interesting passages that we had touched upon last week, but I just want to reiterate is in Hebrews 12. He begins to convey that the time is coming when this earth and all these created things will go away.

(Hebrews 12:26) “And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, ‘YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.’”

(Hebrews 12:27) This expression, ‘Yet once more,’ denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

That's a pretty interesting passage, isn't it? Peter will talk about this in 2 Peter as he begins to convey that all of these things are someday going to be gone. The day of the Lord is going to come. Obviously, God is not slow about His promise.

2 Peter 3:11 reads this way, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way...”

Now, he described it in verse 10, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements...”

He uses the word *“stoicheion”* making reference to atoms or molecules. At that time, they believed that all things were made from these invisible particles that they couldn't even see.

“... the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

(2 Pe 3:11) Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

(2 Peter 3:12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

(2 Peter 3:13) But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

We are looking for eternal things.

When you come to Genesis, you begin to realize that there is a creation that is going on and God is creating things.

You go into the book of Isaiah, and you realize that none of this is without purpose. So, then you have to ask yourself, "So, why is He creating things?" The answer is that He might display His grace, mercy, and love to us. So, we're going to see the beginning of God's grace and His favor upon man by creating, by giving him things; for God so loved that He gave. So, God is the giver of all things. Every good and perfect gift comes from God, the Father of lights, with whom there is no variance or shifting shadow. We have a God that desires to give. He is a gracious God. It is the beginning of God's grace, as man takes the grace of God and rejects God, we'll see the message of reconciliation then be literally the rest of the Bible. As Paul will say in Corinthians, "We beg you as bond servants of God, be reconciled to God". So, what a wonderful book this is in which God not only displays His grace to us, but desires that we be reconciled to Him. What a wonderful ministry of reconciliation we have in the person of Jesus Christ.

So, as we come to Genesis at the very beginning, we see His grace, the way that He's creating, and Him telling a story of sorts. Not only is this a book of the beginning of grace and reconciliation, but you begin to see God's Spirit moving as the realization of emptiness and meaninglessness without God's spirit upon us. So, in the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the earth, we began to see His grace coming upon us, and the moving of God, because one's life may be full of emptiness and meaninglessness. It is the Spirit of God that begins to move. Then, light being called out of darkness is that wonderful picture in which we have and the promise.

Once again, the analogies are seen throughout Scripture, but if you look with me in 2 Corinthians 4, probably one of the best passages that deal with this is found in this particular passage.

(2 Corinthians 4:3) "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

(2 Corinthians 4:4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

(2 Corinthians 4:5) For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

(2 Corinthians 4:6) For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

So, what a great passage that is, which gives that wonderful picture. It's not an unusual thing for God to relate through His creation His message of salvation.

In fact, if you look in Psalm 19, as we'll be looking specifically at the firmament that God has ordained. In Psalm 19, it actually begins with the discussion of the firmament; the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament show forth His handiwork. So, if you look with me, you see that in this particular passage.

(Psalm 19:1) "The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."

We're going to go into that a little bit deeper as far as how He actually makes the firmament, but He's telling a story. In this particular passage, you not only see that the firmament is telling the story, but the sun rising up every day is telling a story.

(Psalm 19:2) "Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge."

(Psalm 19:3) There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.

(Psalm 19:4) Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world."

In other words, it speaks volumes, and yet you don't hear anything.

"... In them He has placed a tent for the sun."

Of course, the sun is now the point that he is giving reference to.

(Psalm 19:5) "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course."

So, what is the analogy? A bridegroom coming out. It's a picture of the Jewish wedding, in which the bridegroom starts walking down the street to go get the bride. The women lined the streets. They light the lamps, and it looks like a sunrise as you begin to see the lamps lighting as the bridegroom comes down the street. Well, that's the picture that is given every single day of the bridegroom coming to us and it's a wonderful picture.

(Psalm 19:6) "Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat."

Wonderful passage, of course, as it then begins to talk about the word of God in this context. The emphasis in using the analogy of the creation is to point to the salvation of Christ. In other words, everything was created so that it might display His saving power.

There's a passage in Malachi 4:2 that uses this phrase, "the sun of righteousness will rise."

So, what a great understanding as we go into this.

We're going to be coming back to Psalm 19 as we talk about firmament within the passage. But as we look at the text that we're going to be looking at, second day, we're going to be talking about Him spreading out the firmament; which is a pretty interesting word that is used. In fact, the King James will use the word "firmament"; NAS will put in the word "expanse". What exactly is He talking about? I'd probably use the word "atmosphere." However, there's a lot involved in it. So, we're going to be going into this and hopefully seeing the hand of God and the purpose of why He is going into the details. Think of all the things about creation that God doesn't go into detail about. There are just thousands of things. I mean, I don't really see Him explaining gravity to me, but that's a really big part of creation. So, there are specific things that He is conveying for a particular reason, and clearly it is His grace and reconciliation that He wants to convey.

So, as we come into this, we're going to start off with Genesis 1:6, "Then God said..."

Now, when it says that "God said," obviously we have the word of God. It says in Psalm 33 that by the word of God, by the word of His mouth, these things were created. We understand that. John 1 conveys that wonderful truth at the very beginning, "In the beginning was the word." The "word" is then understood according to John, as Christ Himself; through Him, all things were created.

Hebrews 1 and Colossians 1 reveals those same truths. So, who is the creator but Christ Jesus? Everything, therefore, is created out of love. Would that be a false conclusion? I mean, if God is love and Christ is the personification of His love for us, would it not be said that everything that is created was created out of His love? So, when you begin to see these things, it is the message and as Jesus will say in the gospel of Luke, "All these things were written of Me." So, we then see Christ in these pages. When it uses the phrase, "God said," we see Christ.

Then, He uses an interesting phrase, "Let there be," and it's where we get the word "Yahweh" because when Moses was asking, "Who do I say sent me?" He says, "Tell him *hāyâ* sent you." That is "the one to be." We would probably translate it "the self-existent one." So, He is causing things to be.

"Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters'..."

Now, once again, this word is sometimes translated "firmament," and in NAS, it's translated "expanse." So, what exactly is the word? Well, the word that is used in the Hebrew, "*rāqîa'*," is dealing with beating something out. You wouldn't naturally think of the firmament or the air as something that you are hammering out. It is a picture of literally hammering something out and then therefore causing it to spread. All the theologians are kind of, in some way, scratching their heads that "*rāqîa'*" is making reference to stamping out or beating out or spreading out by beating because it seems like it just doesn't seem to fit when you're dealing with air.

Some of these obscure passages kind of give insight into these kinds of things. So, if you look with me in Job 37, Elihu begins to convey the majesty of God to Job, and we realize that God has made great things in the sky.

(Job 37:1) “At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place.

(Job 37:2) “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth.

(Job 37:3) “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, And His lightning to the ends of the earth.”

He begins to talk about the skies, right?

(Job 37:4) “After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard.

(Job 37:5) “God thunders with His voice wondrously,
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.”

Now, it's very clear that the atmospheric things that are happening are attributed to God. Would you agree with that? Well, it doesn't matter if you agree anyway.

(Job 37:6) “For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’
And to the downpour and the rain, ‘Be strong.’

(Job 37:7) “He seals the hand of every man...”

(Job 37:9) “Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold.

(Job 37:10) “From the breath of God ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen.

(Job 37:11) “Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud;
He disperses the cloud of His lightning.

(Job 37:12) “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance...”

You're going, “What is He doing? Is He just experimenting?”

It's one of the reasons why I like this next phrase,

“... That it may do whatever He commands it
On the face of the inhabited earth.

(Job 37:13) “Whether for correction, or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.”

What is He doing in the skies? He's correcting how He's displaying His loving kindness.

He then goes on and says this in verse 14,

“Listen to this, O Job, Stand and consider the wonders of God.

(Job 37:15) “Do you know how God establishes them,
And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine?

(Job 37:16) “Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds,
The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,

(Job 37:17) You whose garments are hot,
When the land is still because of the south wind?

(Job 37:18) “Can you, with Him, spread out the skies,
Strong as a molten mirror?”

Do you feel the beating of it? That's an interesting picture.

(Job 37:19) “Teach us what we shall say to Him;
We cannot arrange our case because of darkness.

(Job 37:20) “Shall it be told Him that I would speak? ...”

He's conveying that God is doing a wondrous work. He is hammering out something in this expanse in this sky. We think of air as just kind of being nothing, but to get a little scientific with you, air has both mass and volume. If you were going to space, space has no mass. So, you actually have substance in air. You could probably ask any pilot that's been flying, when they come into turbulence; it begins to slam that plane around. There's something up there. When Scripture begins to describe these things, of course we have interesting pictures of lightning and thunder; which thunder basically is a sonic boom. They say there are literally millions of sonic booms in a lightning strike because everywhere that lightning goes it's causing the air to heat up almost immediately which then causes the sonic boom. God is actually breaking through the atmosphere with these kinds of things. There is a substance there that God has formed for a particular purpose to do specific things; obviously, things that He wants to convey to us. In some cases, it actually is referred to as something that is firm.

Proverbs 8:28 says, “When He made firm the skies above...”

Exodus 24 will describe the waters up above as a platform for God's feet. These things, to me, are pretty fascinating when you begin to realize that everything that God is making has its purpose. There's a great picture that is given in Exodus 24, when Moses goes up with Aaron and they come into the presence of God.

It reads this way in Exodus 24:9, “Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,

(Exodus 24:10) and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.”

You kind of read this in Ezekiel 1, as you have the chariot of God in the picture, and it talks about this arch over the cherubim, and God above that.

Scripture says in Isaiah 66, “Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.”

Where does God place His feet?

Revelation 4 gives this wonderful picture of God as it's like the camera has turned upward into heaven.

(Revelation 4:1) “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’

(Revelation 4:2) Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

(Revelation 4:3) And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”

One of the interesting things that we've been seeing is a lot of tornadoes, and one of the ways that you know a tornado might be coming is when the sky turns emerald, green.

The throne had 24 elders, and if you look at verse 5, “Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder...” You don't think God is actually showing us something here on earth that might be in the heavens?

(Revelation 4:6) “and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal...”

Scripture is giving us some interesting pictures as it begins to reveal to us the power of God. When you have the veil that was being constructed for the Holy of Holies, they made it interwoven with blue. So, it would be as if it were the skies coming together, and they would sometimes put gold in layer with that. It was as if the sun was shining through the blue. So, the picture of the veil was like the heavens being rent because this had been what God had placed as a separation, but someday that would be gone, which you read that in Matthew. All of these are pictures, and my point is that God has given us a picture of these things.

If we go back to Genesis 1, we see what God was doing as He begins to talk about this thing of expanse and day two is all about the expanse. So, we seemingly can't really talk about anything

else but the expanse. That's what He's talking about, and it seems to be important enough that He actually makes a day of it.

So, it reads in this way in verse 6,

"Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.'"

So, there's a separation of the waters. In fact, He's going to get into more detail about that.

(Genesis 1:7) "God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so."

That's kind of a reiteration, isn't it? But a clarification as well.

Now, verse 7 reads this way, "God made," or fashioned, "the expanse." It is the expanse that is the focus and there is a division between two waters. At one time the waters seemed not to have a distinction, but now there is a clear distinction between the two. When He uses the phrase "separated," He is actually talking about not only separating something, dividing something, but making a distinction between the two different kinds of waters that there are. So, He reveals this to us.

(Genesis 1:8) "God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

What does "second" mean? What does "two - the second day" mean? Well, in and of itself, it is an interesting word that refers to a duplication of something. So, we have this water, and this water, which is a duplication, but it also refers to in that duplication, a change that is made. That's one of the reasons why I had titled this particular day, "Change is in the Air." He wants to reveal that there's something about this day that reveals a change that is going to be taking place. God has given us a message. There's no reason for Him to describe anything about creation apart from that which affects us. The answer and the reason why I would state that would be Scripture is very clear,

(2 Timothy 3:16) "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

(2 Timothy 3:17) so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Scripture is very clear why it gives us what it gives us.

As we were looking at Psalm 19, we were seeing that one of the purposes of the firmament or the expanse is to declare the work of His hands. In fact, there's a clear distinction. If you look, the heavens are telling of His great glory, of how magnificent He is. I mean, you look at the stars

and the sun, the moon, and you go, "Wow, God is really big; He's really great!" But you look at the firmament and you realize that He has a hand in making something that is going to affect us. His hand is actually making something that will declare to us what He's doing.

The way that it's put is "their expanse is declaring..."

"Announcing" would be another way of putting it or informing us of the work, business or the pursuit of God. The Scripture is actually telling us that God is revealing to us in some way the things that He is doing: whether it be the example of the sun, as were talking about Malachi 4:2 or 2 Peter 1:19, that says that the day is going to come when the day will dawn in your hearts and begin to reveal those things. God has called light out of darkness, according to 2 Corinthians. God is revealing that He is doing something. The question that we have to ask ourselves is "What is God doing in all of these things?"

One of the great and encouraging passages dealing with this is found in Amos. In Amos, you begin to see that God uses the heavens; more specifically, I would say that heavy area that He beat out in the heavens for a purpose. In Amos 9:6, we begin to read of the one who builds his upper chambers in the heavens.

(Amos 9:6) "The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens
And has founded His vaulted dome over the earth,
He who calls for the waters of the sea
And pours them out on the face of the earth,
The LORD is His name."

Amos is basically a common-sense prophet, and he goes, "What, you didn't see what God was doing?" Man goes, "I don't know. God never speaks to me." Have you ever heard thunder?

Amos 4 reads this way as he goes, "So, why do you think you seem to have no food?" The way that he describes it is in verse 6,

"But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities
And lack of bread in all your places..."

That's another way of saying, "You didn't have any food."

"God just doesn't speak to me." Why don't you have any food?

"... Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD.

(Amos 4:7) 'Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you'..."

That would be God, wouldn't it?

“...I withheld the rain from you
While there were still three months until harvest.
Then I would send rain on one city
And on another city I would not send rain;
One part would be rained on,
While the part not rained on would dry up.”

That would be the day I realized that I'm probably doing something wrong. “It was raining in my neighbor's yard, but it wasn't raining in mine.”

It causes you to think “Who's in charge of that?” What's being said in this is that God is speaking to us; His handiwork is telling us what He's doing. Why is it that there was a famine in the land with Abraham? God was directing Abraham. Why was there a famine at the time in which the prodigal son decided to have all his money taken from his father? Why did God put a famine in the land at that particular time? God was controlling the weather. God speaks through the whirlwind. These are things that God is moving in, and God will do good, and He will discipline through these things. He has created them as such. He is making a division between waters, which once again, is a very interesting point.

If you look with me in Jeremiah 2, there is a description of the second day in this, or the word “second” or “two.” What caught my eye in particular is how many times it was used with Jeremiah in which the Lord would come to Jeremiah a second time. So, if you look with me in Jeremiah 1, the Lord begins to convey to Jeremiah that He's going to do a great work, and He comes to him and says in verse 11,

“The word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘What do you see, Jeremiah?’ And I said, ‘I see a rod of an almond tree.’

(Jeremiah 1:12) Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.’”

Of course, almond tree and almond branch was that which the Levitical priest used, but we won't go into the detail of that. The point is that He came to show him something.

Then the next verse reads this way,

(Jeremiah 1:13) “The word of the LORD came to me a second time...”

Do you see that? It's an interesting picture of God revealing a message again, but to a greater extent and displaying a sense of greater change.

So, the second time He comes, He says, “What do you see?” And he says, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.”

(Jeremiah 1:14) Then the LORD said to me, 'Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land.'

Something is happening a second time. It's the same people, but a greater change is going to be happening.

You'll see the same thing in chapter 13, and it was interesting how many times it happened to Jeremiah. We won't hit all of them, but just to get the point across.

(Jeremiah 13:1) "Thus the LORD said to me, 'Go and buy yourself a linen waistband and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water.'

(Jeremiah 13:2) So I bought the waistband in accordance with the word of the LORD and put it around my waist.

(Jeremiah 13:3) Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying..."

Then, what he begins to do is he takes the same waistband, and we see the waistband again, but now a change with the waistband that's going to happen as he puts it in the water. Once again, it brings those two points together.

He does the same thing again in Jeremiah 31, and He begins to reveal a second time to Jeremiah. In each case, a sense of saying something again, doing something again, coming to him again about the same incident; but a change coming out of that. So, you have both of these ingredients coming out of it, and you have water and it doubled. Now, a sense of change is happening, and He calls that firmament between the two the heavens, and there was the reason why He's designated as such. But He's wanting to show an interesting distinction between the two. In all these things we're seeing "God give us a message." When I think of the whole concept of science, the things that God has created; we look at these things on the earth and it's impossible for us not to see the hand of God in everything that He created. I know that man has a tendency to over-science-it to the point of losing the whole point, but God has good things in store. The same is true in every aspect of His creation. So, let's talk about it. What is God doing?

Well, we see the picture in Revelation of the waters on His feet; we see the picture of the storms in the Psalms and Job, and the wonderful pictures of Ezekiel in chapter 1. You see these things, you hear of lightning and thunder and all these things coming up into the throne of heaven. Is God telling us something in creation? The answer is yeah, He's molded creation to be a workmanship that would actually speak to us. So, what is He telling us? Well, when you look at the whole concept of "two waters," we understand that the waters in the heavens have been

separated. I've often thought, "Why doesn't all the water evaporate?" Did you ever ask yourself that? I think they say that if all the water from the sky were to pour down on the earth, it would equal to .001% of the oceans. That's a lot of water. If it were all come down, they say that it would actually cover the whole earth one inch. Why doesn't it all evaporate? I mean, water does evaporate, right? So, why doesn't it all evaporate? So, you actually have an interesting distinction that there's a waters in the heavens and there's the water on the earth. Now, I've also noticed that one of the problems of water on the earth is it has a tendency to get polluted; not only because of man, but because of dirt, and all the things that are a part of it. However, the water in the heaven is always clean. It's like God somehow cleaned it, it got cleaned. It is not strange to understand that as the psalmist says in Psalm 103, that God knows that "we are but," how does describe us, "dust"? That we're but dust. Do you know that dust has a real part in forming the clouds? In fact, it is impossible for a cloud to form without dust. There would be no cloud without a particle of dust. A magnificent thing is that in the process of water evaporating, it attaches to a dust particle, and it goes up. Isn't that an interesting picture? I mean, don't you hear God talking through that? Is it all the water that goes up? It is some, and the water that does go up forms a cloud.

Now, Scripture will talk about the saints in a very interesting way. In fact, if you look there with me in Hebrews, we'll just give one of these passages, and I know that there's kind of a metaphor play of words in this particular text. However, if it were just this one passage, I would just say, "Cloud is just some nebulous thing that He's talking about in an accumulation of people." But I believe that the clouds that we look at are actually a picture. The atmosphere is made in such a way that God has given a distinction.

(Hebrews 12:1) "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance..."

Scripture has given us an interesting picture, and he describes the saints, more specifically, the saints that he was referring to in Hebrews 11 of those of faith that are really giving testimony, as a cloud. Now, you could have maybe described him in some other way, but "cloud" sounds pretty cool.

We touched upon this in the passage, but when you read in Revelation 4, you have this great picture of the throne of God.

(Revelation 4:5) "Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder..."

Well, as you go on in Revelation, you read about what are called the "seven peals of thunder." Actually, I think it's in Revelation 10 where the question is "What are these 7 peals of thunder?"

And the answer is “It’s sealed up. I’m not going to tell you right now.” So, you’re kind of left hanging in chapter 10.

However, in chapter 19, if you turn there with me, you’re not hanging anymore. The day comes when victory over the world has happened, and wow, it’s bizarre. How does it start off in verse 3? “A second time”? Yeah, it starts off “a second time.” Do you feel change in the air?

(Revelation 19:3) “And a second time they said, ‘Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.’

(Revelation 19:4) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen. Hallelujah!’

(Revelation 19:5) And a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.’”

I bet that was a great noise, don't you?

(Revelation 19:6) “Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.’”

What was that “thunder”? That was the saints. What were those “clouds”? If I read it right, according to verse 14,

“And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.”

Would that be a mass of clouds following Him?

Scripture tells us in 1 Thessalonians, and I know these are familiar passages to you, but it's just good to review them.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13) “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

(1 Thessalonians 4:14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 4:15) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

(1 Thessalonians 4:16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

It almost sounds like evaporation going on.

(1 Thessalonians 4:17) “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...”

In the clouds with those who have gone before us. It's a great picture.

You see the same thing as you come to the end of Matthew, and he begins to describe the day that is coming in which the Lord and His great power is going to be seen. The description is in Matthew 24.

(Matthew 24:29) “But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

(Matthew 24:30) And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

(Matthew 24:31) And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds...”

When it talks about putting up the veil and the Holy of Holies, it says that it's going to be woven with that blue and that sun coming through, but then it also has the four corners, and actually four poles that are part of it. Each of these is really displaying the four corners of the world; God calling His people. He is bringing them together; the clouds in the air. I oftentimes look and see the beautiful clouds, and I go, “Every day, like the sun rising, He's given us a picture of the saints coming in all their glory and about us going up with Him.” What was He doing on that day? He was making a distinction between the waters. He separated the waters. He wanted this to be said twice. There's going to be a separation of the waters. There's going to be the waters of the earth and there's going to be the waters of the heaven.

Question: “What does it mean when it says, ‘THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect’ (Matthew 24:31)?”

Those chosen of God. It's very general. So, it's clearly the chosen of God, and just wanting to be all inclusive of those that are His. I would say more specifically, those that are in Christ because the resurrection of those who are in Christ, as seen in 1 Thessalonians 4. It's very different than the day of resurrection for the Old Testament saints that we read about in Daniel 12.

1 Corinthians 15 gives a wonderful picture as well. You know what the chapter is about. It's about resurrection. I mean, really the whole chapter is about resurrection. I mean, if there is no

resurrection, we're the most to be pitied, but the way that it ends is a very comforting text and we'll just pick up in verse 50,

"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

(1 Corinthians 15:51) Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed."

Do you feel change in the wind? I do.

(1 Corinthians 15:52) "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

(1 Corinthians 15:53) For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

(1 Corinthians 15:54) But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

(1 Corinthians 15:55) 'O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?'"

The wonderful point is that the day is coming when we will all be changed. There has to be a separation from the things of this world to the things that are in heaven. There's a water in heaven and there's a water on earth. He's making the distinction, and He calls the separation "heaven." When Jesus says in John 14, "I go to prepare a place for you," we don't normally think of it in terms of Him hammering out a place for us, but that's what this firmament seems to be; that interesting picture of division that has to be between the two. God is revealing to us in the heavens, He's speaking to us. Oftentimes, He will warn us and direct us, but He will ultimately display the separation between the ones on the earth and the ones in the heaven, and what a great day this day two is to me. God is bringing a change.

When John 1 talks about Christ coming to earth, it says that light shone on the earth and men didn't perceive it. They resisted it, but He continued to shine, and Jesus will say, "I am the Light of world." The point of the text is that everywhere Jesus went He began to separate light from darkness, and that's what truth does. Truth comes in, and that's the reason why truth is hated and why truth is so polarizing. It's one of the reasons why we as believers shouldn't try to get everybody together because the only thing that does is muddies the water; the peace at all cost type thing. However, truth actually separates. You're seeing that distinction at the very beginning when it says, "and God called the light good." His point was, "Do you understand the distinction?" The same thing is true that He was wanting to make a distinction, and a separation

between the waters. “Do you understand that there’s a water of the heavens, and there's the water of the earth? All these are the pictures that will someday go. We won't need the pictures. We won't need the billboards. We won't need these signs, but today, as we still live on the earth, God has given us these for a purpose. I'm just so thankful that the creation, even the process of creation, is telling us this story of God's work.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your loving kindness, and Your hand in all these things. You are the Creator. You're the sustainer. You have purpose in everything that You've made. You're molding; You're forming them, and You're even molding us into the workmanship of Christ Jesus. We realize that You sometimes have to beat us into being the kind of person that we need to be. We realize that it's the difficulties that actually mold us into the person of Christ; that as Christ suffered, we too, as Peter would say, are called for this very purpose. That, as Christ learned obedience, we too are learning obedience. As You begin to mold us and as You begin to beat us, we find something wonderful. We begin to spread out, and things of value begin to happen. Blessings upon others begin to happen, and You allow us to be a part of those blessings that shower upon even those on the earth. I give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.