

Made in God's image -

**Why and what
does it mean?**

With a look into the unseen realm

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Introduction

We cannot know and understand all the workings of the mind of God - that is far beyond us. However we can see in scripture certain patterns of events that give us clues and some scriptures that give us precise statements which together uncover some of the answer to our questions.

In this booklet we seek to try to get some idea of the big picture - however that will entail also looking at elements of detail - such as the Nephilim of Genesis 6 and how they survived the flood.

On the way we will define some Hebrew and Greek words where there is more to understand than commonly seen, and take a look into the vast unseen realm.

The whole concept of what happens in heaven will also receive some illumination.

Enjoy.

It is likely that from the start there will be things that you have not met before - please don't be put off. It all becomes clear as we go along

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Chapter 1

Because

There was this empty space – covered in water, without form and void and covered in darkness.

Later God had this discussion with Job (38:4, 6-7) –
*'where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
To what were its foundations (Hebrew - eden) fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars
sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?'*

So we know when this Eden of God was formed and fastened it was a joyous occasion with great celebration. Job wasn't there nor was any human.

Immediately we see a bit of a contradiction – why would the host of heaven be in joyous celebration of a seemingly ruinous place?

Some academic work by Bullinger, in his study of figures of speech, will help us get clarity. Here is his rendering of Genesis 1 *'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth **became** without form and void.'*

He goes on

'The first statement refers to two things the heaven and the earth but the following statement only to the earth. Both were created in the beginning. But the earth, at some time, and by some means, and from some cause became *'tohoo'* and *'bohoo'* that is without form and void.' (The use of rhyming words in Hebrew gives emphasis.)

So now we see clearly that something had gone wrong and that restoration was needed. This also accounts for why the foundations of the earth are not said to have been created on day 1- they already existed. Day 1 sees the creation of light, and then day by day the earth is restored ready for man.

How had it gone so wrong then?

Again the book of Job comes to our aid. Satan appears before the Lord who says to him, *'From where do you come?'*

Satan answers with an idiom, *'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.'* His statement carrying the meaning *'it is mine I own it.'*

So now we know that satan thought he owned the earth we can turn to Isaiah and Ezekiel and see what went wrong.

Lets start with Isaiah, in a few verses sandwiched between his prophecy over the king of Babylon. Here in chapter 14 verses 12 to 15 we see that Lucifer (satan's name before he fell) had got way above himself. His statement of his 5 'I wills' culminates with *'I will be like the Most High.'*

God's response - no you won't, you will be brought down to Sheol. In Luke 10:18 Jesus testifies that He saw satan fall from heaven like lightening.

Ezekiel chapter 28 fills in some detail. The first 10 verses are addressed to the prince of Tyre - a reference to the earthly ruler. We are interested in the next part addressed to the King of Tyre - a reference to satan.

We find satan in Eden, the garden of God, also described as the holy mountain of God. At that time the garden consisted of 'fiery stones,' and satan was adorned in every precious stone. He was the anointed cherub, he was perfect from the day of his creation until ... iniquity was found in him - his freewill making the wrong choice.

In his willful rebellion against the Most High God satan had gathered a lot of followers - angels who followed him rather than the Lord God. We read that when satan was cast down he took one third of the angelic host with him. (Revelation 12:4)

So now we have it, satan's name before he fell was Lucifer - meaning light bearer. As Lucifer he thought he had been given Eden as his, where he 'walked back and forth' amongst the fiery stones. Idiom for ownership (Ezekiel 28:14.)

When he was cast down, and his name Lucifer removed, his light was extinguished so his realm fell into darkness as we find it in Genesis 1.

Chapter 2

In God's image with freewill

God is a spiritual being. When he breathed into the dust of the ground to create man He imparted to man his human spirit. This is the part of us made in the image of God.

God created man with the objective of dwelling with him in love and light.

We have to understand that there are two realms - the realm of life and the realm of death. God's intention for man was to live in the realm of life.

When God made man in His image one feature man received is freewill. That means freedom to make choices. Because our Lord has foreknowledge He knows what we will choose - that does not mean He is dictating our choices, not at all, that would not be freewill and was not His purpose in creating man. God wanted to fellowship with man in love and in light. Freewill is essential.

The biblical proof for freewill is found back in Deuteronomy. *'I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore **choose** life, that both you and your descendants may live.'* (30:19)

Today, in the New Covenant, the position is the same. *'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.'* John 3:16

Everyone has the opportunity to choose life; *'for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.'* Romans 1:20

Why is freewill important?

Because of God's purpose in creating man. His objective – to be able to dwell (tabernacle) with man in love and in light.

Love requires freewill – the ability to choose the Lord God above everything else, above our own desires. God is love. God desires to dwell with man in love and light.

Without the freedom of choice there is no love. *'Agape'* love is *'love by choice'* – choosing the one loved above oneself.

Jesus shows us *'agape'* love in His life and death. He put us before His earthly life and suffered crucifixion which demonstrated it.

From the beginning the Lord wanted to fellowship with man. The Lord planted a garden in Eden, furnished it with plant and animal life and put man in it to tend it. Man was given *'paradise.'*

The Lord God would walk in the garden in the cool of the day. It was meant for blessing.

Back to Deuteronomy: *'that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days.'* (30:20)

To receive eternal life it is essential to exercise one's freewill to believe in Jesus and in what was achieved by His death and resurrection.

Chapter 3

Risk

Of course giving His created beings freewill involved risk. Even the occupants of heaven, angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, have freewill as demonstrated by the fact that one third chose to follow the rebellious Lucifer.

Lucifer, himself, as we saw in Isaiah 14, had freewill which he used purely for his own evil purposes. Now as satan, he still has freewill. (Though there is evidence that before the New Covenant the Lord put restrictions on it -satan was not permitted to take Job's life. (Job 1:12.)

Adam and Eve exercised their freewill by taking the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil even though the Lord God had warned them, that if they did so, then dying they would surely die. (literal translation) And so death entered and was passed from generation to generation - '*as in Adam all die.*' (1 Corinthians 15:22)

What does this mean? Clearly our bodies and our souls are very alive before we become believers. It means the human spirit fell into the realm of death and Adam could only pass this on to the next generation.

The human spirit died. Jesus made this clear when talking to Nicodemus. The flesh can only bring forth flesh. You must be born again - *'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'* (John 3)

So when one is born again by placing one's trust in Jesus' completed sacrifice for sin on the cross - then God's promise comes to pass - *'for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3:16)

Born again!. Passed from death to life.

'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement but has passed from death into life.' (John 5:24)

In our thinking, and because we know from scripture that judgement is the alternative to eternal life, we may wonder at what God has done. It may seem to us difficult to accept the creation of millions of people who will end up never choosing eternal life, and, so be condemned to eternal damnation because they fail to come to the Lord, who is clearly seen in creation. There is no excuse. (Romans 1:20)

For our Lord, who wants no one to perish, it must have been a difficult thing - but freewill is so vitally important there was no other way. It was worth the risk for Him to have the people He wants to dwell with.

We cannot judge what God does – it is not in our remit as created humans to question the wisdom of our maker. The definition of wisdom is ‘that which God thinks is right.’

The Lord considered it right to create man and to give him every opportunity to believe and to love Him even though many, the majority, would not.

In the next chapters we are going to look at the population of heaven.

Chapter 4

The meaning of 'Elohim.'

To understand more about the population of heaven we are going to examine the Hebrew word '*elohim*' which is translated as 'God' or as 'gods.'

Back in Genesis 1 - '*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*'

God is translated from '*elohim.*'

'Elohim' is a plural noun which has led us to think that when He later said '*let us make man in our image, according to our likeness*' (verse 26) it refers to the trinity. However, as the trinity is not clearly mentioned in the Old Testament there may be another meaning. It could refer to the Lord God speaking whilst surrounded by the heavenly host, the '*elohim*' - let us make man in our image, that is make him a spiritual being.

When we look more closely at the meaning of '*elohim*' we find that it has more application:

Psalm 82:2

'God [elohim] stands in the congregation of the mighty [divine assembly];

He judges [administers justice] in the midst of the gods [elohim].'

So now we '*Elohim*' as God and '*elohim*' as gods.

Here we are having a look into the unseen realm. God, our Father, sits in judgement over the '*elohim*.' We will explore this more fully in the next chapter.

Before we do so we now need to understand that the meaning of '*elohim*' is broader than God, though of course God is '*elohim*.' We could say it like this - God is '*elohim*' but not all '*elohim*' are God. So when God said let us make man in our image He could have been speaking amongst the *elohim*, though of course, He did the creating through Jesus.

God was not in isolation in the throne room of heaven. One view the scripture gives us is in Revelation 4 and 5. In the throne room on this occasion there are 4 living creatures and many angels as well as 24 elders. (The elders, being human, would be later additions.) (5:11)

Conclusion

'*Elohim*' means God.

'*elohim*' also means gods, spiritual beings, angels etc.

'*Elohim*' is the term used for spiritual beings. When God made man in His image He gave him a human spirit - to that extent we became spiritual beings - although on probation, as it were. When we make the right choice to believe in Jesus then we look forward to the time when our earthly 'tent' is changed in the twinkling of an eye and we become fully fledged spiritual beings with Christ.

Chapter 5

The population of heaven - the '*elohim*.'

Before we go too far we need to remind ourselves that there are countless spiritual beings – both good and bad.

On the good side. A scripture that demonstrates this tells of what happened at the birth of Jesus. In the fields shepherds were minding their flocks: *'And behold an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid After the angel delivers the good news of Jesus birth and suddenly there was with the angel a **multitude of the heavenly host** praising god and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men.'* Luke 2:9,13.

One of many examples.

On the bad side. The apostle Paul warns about evil spiritual powers.

'Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' Ephesians 6:10-12

There are many references in scripture to the worship of idols and other gods. Satan sought worship, unsuccessfully, from Jesus in John 4. Now he receives worship from mankind under other names such as Baal or Allah for example.

So we know there are hosts of good and of evil spiritual powers. Paul is also showing levels of authority amongst the evil forces.

It is no wonder then that we saw God administering justice in the midst of the '*elohim*.' (Psalm 82:2) And now we are able to get a clearer understanding of the Hebrew word '*elohim*.' It has the meaning of 'gods' in the sense of spiritual beings. God is '*Elohim*' but not all *elohim* are God.

Whilst the scripture does use '*elohim*' to refer to our Lord God it also uses other words such as '*Yahweh*' or adds more description such as 'The Most High *Elohim*.'

Hierarchy in the spiritual realm

From scripture we know that in the spiritual realm there are levels of authority. The passage quoted above, in Ephesians, Paul lists 4 levels in satan's realm.

We see hierarchy in action in Daniel 10. An angel was sent to Daniel with a message. But the angel was delayed for 21 days by an adversary - the 'bad' spiritual prince of the kingdom of Persia. Michael one of the chief princes came to help and the message got through.

The message also gave the warning that the 'bad' spiritual prince of Greece would come. Principalities just as mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 6

There is an interesting reference in Daniel chapter 7. The Lord God is seen working together with His heavenly court.

The scene is set during the 'rulership' of antichrist in the Great Tribulation. In heaven, the court shall be seated (to pass judgement) and they, the court, shall take away his, antichrist's, dominion. (26-7)

Another interesting example of the workings in the heaven is found in 1 Kings 22. Ahab is King of Israel, but he has greatly displeased the Lord God. It is time for Ahab to be removed:

'I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said, "Who will persuade Ahab to go up that he might fall at Ramoth Gilead." So one spoke in this manner and another in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, "I will persuade him." Then the Lord said to him, "In what way." So he said, "I will go out and be a lying (false) spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'" Read the whole account in 1 Kings 22.*

* *ruwach* in Hebrew - wind, like breath.

Now we have seen the Lord God working with His heavenly host and we can remind ourselves that Paul in the scripture tells us that we shall judge angels in due course, (1 Corinthians 6:3) when we form part of the heavenly host as Christs' bride.

We have established that the '*elohim,*' both good and bad have a structure with different levels.

There is no need to be fearful.

It's good to remind ourselves of the truth. When the King of Syria sent his army and Elisha was surrounded by enemies, his servant was afraid. But Elisha said to his servant *'Do not fear,'* and prayed, *'Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'* The mountains around Elisha were full of heavenly horses and chariots and fire. Read the full account in 2 Kings 6:8-23.

John tells us, *'He that is in you is greater than he who is in the world.'* 1 John 4:4
We have no reason to fear.

Chapter 6

Fallen angels

Have we become too 'sophisticated?' In these days we hear little about fallen angels - demons. Yet in the days of the New Testament they were commonplace.

A great deal of Jesus practical ministry dealt with demons as well as with healing. When Jesus sent out the twelve to preach, the scripture carries this report: *'So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.'* Mark 6:12-13

Although Jesus came for the lost sheep of Israel His ministry also touched others. Luke carries the account of the Greek woman, Syro-Phoenician by birth. This persistent lady kept asking Jesus to cast a demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said, *'let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.'* But the lady did not give up! *'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs. Then He said to her, " For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter,"'* Luke 7:27-29

Why did Jesus respond to the woman - because she demonstrated faith by her reply. Faith is counted as righteousness. Romans 4:3

It was 'normal' in those days to recognize that demons affected people and had to be cast out. Now we give other reasons for the problems people suffer - we give the problem a name and call it 'medical,' but frequently the problem is never cured.

As we read the scripture we see that sometimes people were the host to more than one demon - Jesus cast 7 demons out of Mary Magdalene and a legion of demons from the possessed man in Mark 5.

Fallen angels, demons, are the 'foot soldiers' of our adversary and are part of the bad side of the unseen world, and are still around today causing trouble.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12 that God has given us spiritual gifts. These are meant to be for our use! One of the gifts is the discerning of spirits. It should be in constant use today as it was in New Testament times.

More on the actions of the bad 'elohim' in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Nephilim

Everyone knows the account of David and Goliath, the 10 foot (3 metre) giant. Goliath had brothers, also giants. These were 'nephilim.'

We first meet the Nephilim in Genesis 6. Here is the account:

'Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God (idiom for angels) saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. (See appendix)

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God (angels again) came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.' (verses 1-4)

We shouldn't be surprised that angels were appearing like men – there are a number of accounts of this happening. For example in Genesis 19 we have the account of two angels coming to Sodom, they met Lot and went to his house and had a feast. About ready to retire for the night ...

*'now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "where are the **men** who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."* (verses 4-5 – read on to get the whole story)

The point is the angels appeared as men.

The angels that took the daughters of men as wives were fallen angels who disobeyed their high calling in God.

We have to look to the New Testament for more understanding:

Jude tells us of them in verse 6 – 'the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day.'

And Peter, second letter, 'For God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to tartarus and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgement.' (2:4)

Both Jude and Peter immediately write of Sodom and Gomorrah.

So in Genesis 6 angels appeared as men

And took wives, who bore children who were of exceptional size - the Nephilim. Of course they were wiped out in the flood that followed, along with all mankind except Noah and his family.

So, how come we find David dealing with Goliath? The answer is in Genesis 6 verse 4.

'There were giants (Nephilim) on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God (idiom - fallen angels) came into the daughters of men and they bore children.'

After the flood more angels left their proper domain and again took wives from the daughters of men.

God's desire to fellowship with man had not met with His desired response. Man has become only evil in all his ways and the Nephilim brought spiritual pollution. Only Noah and his family survived the flood of Genesis 7.

After the flood there were more fallen angels leaving their abode, fathering giants, as we see in the verse above. (The Nephilim did not survive the flood - no one, only Noah and his family survived it.) There was a second infiltration.

The Nephilim were an anathema to the Lord - the fruit of the disobedience of fallen angels. In the conquest of the promised land they were wiped out by the children of Israel.

'For only Og king of Bashan remained of the giants (Nephilim). Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead – 9 cubits (4 metres - 13 feet) is its length and four cubits its width (2 metres - 6 feet), according to the standard cubit.'* Deuteronomy 3:11.

* At that point of the journey into the promised land. Later it seems there were a few Nephilim in the lands Israel did not conquer – hence the existence of Goliath and his brothers.

Chapter 8

The Lord's portion on the earth

After the flood that wiped out the Nephilim and all of mankind except Noah and his family it was not long before mankind, now multiplied again, was in rebellion again. Now they are seen building a high waterproof tower. Their concept was that their tower would be high enough to survive if the Lord God sent another flood. In one word - defiance!

'And the Lord (Jehovah) said. 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose will be withheld from them. "Come let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord (Jehovah) scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.' Genesis 11:6-8

Again we see the use of the plural, 'let us,' but this time the speaker is singular, 'Jehovah.' Is this the Lord speaking in the heavenly throne room to those around Him?

Now from what becomes the nations of the earth God chooses one nation to be his special people. Abraham is called by God and from him comes Isaac followed by Jacob - renamed Israel.

Like all people, the Israelites were made in the image of God and now chosen to especially represent Him on the earth. The people of the other nations, it seems, although equally made in the image of God, were left to make their own choices – which we read resulted in the worship of many other ‘gods.’ – the bad ‘*elohim!*’

The Lord God’s desire to dwell with man was expressed in the ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ given to Israel as a type or shadow of what is to come.

Regardless of their special status as God’s chosen nation Israel swung back and forth between worshipping the Lord and worshipping other gods. Their freewill choice was frequently made in the wrong direction.

Chapter 9

Failure

The lord God has remained faithful to His original intention – to dwell with mankind in love and light. What we see is a process whereby the ‘wheat is separated from the chaff.’

Because freewill is essential, the process of separation inevitably results in the failure of many of mankind who prefer to follow their own desires.

Man’s failure is not God’s first choice - He wants none to be lost.

We see a consistent picture:

Adam failed by exercising his freewill to disobey the Lord – the consequence was the fall of mankind and creation, dismissal from the Garden of Eden, and the entry of death into the human race.

Years later the whole population except for Noah and family had become such that, *‘the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’*

Genesis 6:5 Leading to the consequence of the flood. God’s grace saved Noah and his family.

Years later again mankind defy God by building the Tower of Babel. Freewill choice! Consequence – the confusion of language and the scattering of the people.

Israel are chosen by God to be His image on earth but their freewill choice again leads to failure.

One might have expected the Lord God to call it a day and give up on mankind. However, we know from Paul's second letter to Timothy that even if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. (2:13)

As God cannot deny Himself, His plan for mankind must come to pass.

Chapter 10

The Son

The Lord God cannot remove freewill - the gift and calling of God are irrevocable. So another way to fulfil His objective must be found.

The answer is in undeserved, unmerited, grace that fundamentally deals with man's sin, opens the way to right standing with God and demonstrates His immense love.

The Messiah - God's Son

Long promised to Israel, Jesus comes first for the Jews. True to previous form the leaders of the Jews reject Him.

However, John recounts Jesus talking to His followers, *'I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep, and other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.'* (10:14-16) Other sheep? - the gentiles.

After the resurrection of Jesus the body of those who exercise their freewill to choose to believe in Jesus grows quickly - many Jews become believers.

The Apostle Peter is used to take the gospel to the gentiles, the other sheep not of this fold. Now the gospel goes to the whole world and the believers become known as followers of The Way. Groups are formed in every place.

This is the *'ekklesia.'* Greek from *'ek'* – out of and *'klesis'* – a calling. This is the gathering, the assembly, now called the church.

God's plan of dwelling with man takes a huge step forward – to understand we look at God's promise: *'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'* John 3:16

Bearing in mind God's statement to Adam that the result of his disobedience, dying he would surely die, how then is this to be accomplished? 'Jesus to Nicodemus – *'you must be born again.'*

Made in the image of *elohim.*

When we started on this journey we read that man was created in the image of God - translated from *'elohim.'* We have also understood that the word *'elohim'* includes all the created host of heaven. So what does it mean?

It means man was created as a spiritual being. When God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostril the breath of life. So man became a living being – spirit, soul and body.

God warned Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - but Adam disobeyed. The warning 'dying you will die.' (literal translation.) Immediately Adam's spirit died - that is instead of dwelling in eternal life he now dwelt in the kingdom of death. Death is eternal, its final destiny is the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14)

Jesus is the answer - those who put their trust in Him are born again, this time by the Spirit, who now dwells in man's human spirit. And so now the born again man has a lifetime ahead in which the Spirit continually changes him from one degree of glory to another. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

All along the way the man is faced with choices. His soul and body are still exercising great influence over his actions whilst his spirit, which is eternal, is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is thus dwelling in righteousness.

In God's foreknowledge we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus. (Romans 8:29) In 2 Corinthians 3:18 above, the Spirit is at work bringing this about.

Now God's objective can move forward. When all who are to believe do so, and come into the redeemed body of Christ, the final completion will take place.

At last we will become fully like the '*elohim*' as our mortal bodies are changed in an instant and we put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-3) We were created a little lower than the angels, but now we are in Christ far above any other name.

Now, in Christ - '*do you not know we shall judge angels.*' (1 Corinthians 6:3 (presumably particularly the fallen angels)

Judgement cannot be avoided

We freely speak of God as a God of love and light and so He is. Light and darkness cannot dwell together - switch on the light and the darkness goes.

In righteousness, sin and disobedience, which are the fruit of darkness, must be removed. The process of their removal we call judgement.

For believers we have been judged, found guilty and completely pardoned by the grace of Jesus' blood sacrifice. Now only our works will be judged - see I Corinthians 3:10-17.

For unbelievers, those who have not placed their trust in Jesus, death awaits, and then the final judgement at God's white throne. See Revelation 20:11-15.

Chapter 11

The Bride

From the beginning we see that the Lord wants to dwell with mankind. It started in the Garden of Eden.

But man's failure resulted in a different tack from the Lord's point of view.

The issue revolves around the use of freewill. For love to exist it requires freewill choice.

Adam failed.

The world population except Noah and family failed

Israel failed

Now, in the current age, the Lord brings in a master stroke. He comes as a man and bears the penalty of all our failure – for fail we all most certainly have done.

Penalty paid, the way is clear for right standing with God because we have been made righteous as a gift.

How does that work? Our human spirit is born again and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell. At the spiritual level we have become like the good '*elohim*' – that is we are eternal spiritual beings, albeit for the moment housed in a flesh and blood body.

Those who have come to believe make up the bride of Christ. Paul writes, *'I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'* 2 Corinthians 11:2

Now the Lord has partial fulfilment of His desire. He is dwelling with man in his born again human spirit. But this is not enough! We are still not fully in His image.

To complete the plan each born again man and woman is to be changed into the likeness of Christ. This is a process the Holy Spirit within us is undertaking for each one of us.

'But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Corinthians 3:18

Our freewill plays an important part - we are still flesh and blood and still have to choose the righteous path on a daily basis. Our eternal position is not at stake - abject failure on earth results in death of the flesh and a meeting with the Lord - we are sorted out in heaven. Better by far to be refined on earth and so to have good works to survive the judgement by fire and to bring rewards. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

All our refinement by the Holy Spirit on earth is a part of the bride being made ready. The process is completed in heaven after the rapture - whilst the Great Tribulation takes place on earth.

In Revelation 19:7 we read - *'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.'*

Chapter 12

The objective realized

Paul tells us what happens to our mortal bodies:

'Behold I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

For those of us alive when the trumpet sounds, at the rapture of the church, this is our great hope and our expectation.

At the rapture we take on eternal bodies and we rise to sit with Christ. We, as humans, were created a little lower than the angels just as was Jesus in His flesh. But now resurrected – *'Do you not know that we shall judge angels?'* 1 Corinthians 6:3 (Angels being part of the *elohim*.)

Now the Lord God dwells with us. *'I will never leave you nor forsake you'* is Jesus promise. (Hebrews 13:5)

Now transformed fully into His image we will fully sit together in the heavenly places – *'and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ.'* Ephesians 2:6

The masterplan has finally come to completion at the beginning of the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on earth. The Lord God now dwells with man forever in love and light.

Another of God's objectives is completed. Freewill choice has been essential all the way through. Lucifer made the wrong choice and fell and became satan. One third of the *elohim* made the wrong choice also.

The Lord God wanted to demonstrate to them and so created this mystery – the bride, the church.

'To make all to see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.'
Ephesians 3:9-11

1 Corinthians 2:9

But as it is written:

*"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The two objectives of the Lord God are complete.
First - now that we are fully in His image He can dwell with man in love and light.
Second - His wisdom has been demonstrated to the now defeated satan and the fallen *elohim*.

The millennium and then eternity now beckon.

Appendix - the meaning of 120 years in Genesis 6.

'And the Lord said, "My Spirit will not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' (verse 3)

The timescale of 120 years has given rise to speculation as to its meaning. It doesn't agree with other scriptures regarding the life expectancy of man, nor does it seem to refer to the length of time God waited whilst the ark was constructed.

The Hebrew for 'years' is '*shaneth*.' Strong's number 8141. His description of the meaning is 'year (as a revolution of time.)'

Taking the meaning of a 'revolution of time' could be the clue to the meaning. The Lord has, throughout scripture, measured time in 50 year jubilee cycles. 120 jubilee cycles is 6,000 years.

6,000 years matches perfectly with known chronology and with the expectation of the early church. For full details please see 'Ostrich Christianity' in this booklet series.

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