

Session 19 Pictures of the Bride: Eve, Part 1

INTRODUCTION

We're starting off with a brief introduction. We'll look at this more in the next session: introducing the great mystery of God from Ephesians 5:31-32. What's happening is that Paul the apostle is speaking about God's order of marriage here in Ephesians 5, and he's quoting Genesis 2:24.

In verse 31, he says, "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:31).

Suddenly he changes course and goes in a totally unpredictable direction. He interprets Genesis 2, which we will be looking at in a moment, as relating to Jesus Christ and the Church. That was an unforeseeable turn of direction if you had been listening to Paul developing his theme, because up until this time, till the time of the apostles, exactly what Genesis 2 was about hadn't been fully revealed.

Again, we'll look at this in a bit more detail in about an hour, in Session 20.

The word *mystery* is used maybe twelve or thirteen times in the New Testament. Here it speaks of the hidden plan in the heart of God. It speaks of a secret plan in the eternal counsels of the Godhead. Paul is giving insight into this divine blueprint that God was working from the very beginning of time. Before ever the heavens and the earth were created, God had a plan. It's called the great mystery. He was operating out of the knowledge of a predetermined blueprint from eternity. It's this blueprint that Jesus Christ had when He went into Jerusalem for the last Passover, when He gave the marriage parable in Matthew 22. This is when He calls the nation of Israel to Himself. He understood this eternal plan. He knew that natural history was going to end in Revelation 19:7 at a marriage supper.

Here's the point I'm making: Paul says that God has this plan, this secret plan, this hidden plan. It's been in His heart from the beginning; He's always operated out of it. As a matter of fact, when God was speaking and creating back in Genesis 2, He had this mind. He had Jesus and the Church in mind, even then; He was operating out of clear understanding of His long-term, eternal blueprint.

Ephesians 5:31. When he says, "A man should leave his father and his mother," he's directly quoting the creation story in Genesis 2. In that immediate context, God was speaking about marriage, human marriage. That's all the angels would have understood. That's all Adam would have understood at the time. Paul the apostle came along 4,000 years later and fully interpreted Genesis 2:24 through the lens of apostolic revelation. As a matter of fact, one of the privileges of the apostles was to be able to reveal the secret plans of God. It's called the mysteries of God, His secret plans.

Let's look at the three purposes of Genesis 2:24. Until Paul the apostle came along, there were only two purposes that had been made known to the people of God. The first purpose was giving them an historical record of creation. Because of Genesis 2, we know the events that took place back at the beginning, 4,000 years before Christ.

The second purpose for Genesis 2:24 was to provide insight for God's order for marriage, but the surprising purpose is that God was giving a picture of His eternal plan with Jesus. I want you to catch the weight of this. Four thousand years later, Paul the apostle was saying, "Do you know what God was really doing? He was setting us up to understand something; that's the blueprint He has been operating out of since the eternal counsels, since before the earth was created."

What a fantastic insight into the plan of God. Revelation 19 was already ordained before Genesis 1 ever took place. God knew He was going in that direction.

THE HIGHEST DIMENSION OF GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

Proclaiming the Mystery of God. Again, I want to be very brief, because we will look at more in the next session.

Turn to Ephesians 3:3. Paul says:

"How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets . . . To me . . . this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God . . . 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" (Eph. 3:3, 8-11).

There's a volume of information here, but we're just going to look at it ever so briefly. The eternal purpose. I just want to be clear again that the mystery was an eternal purpose. It was a blueprint from eternity. We know it now, but back in Genesis 1 and 2 we didn't know it. The people of God didn't understand when they read this account through the writing of Moses that this thing was about a plan that would reach out throughout the end of eternity. God has an eternal purpose. That eternal purpose has a number of dimensions to it. It's called "the mystery of God," but the highest dimension of the eternal purpose is to provide a companion for His Son. This purpose was strategically hidden in God's heart from all the rest of His creation. He wouldn't show the angels. He would tell Adam what He was up to. He didn't even tell Moses, to whom He told so many of His secrets. This purpose was sacred to God. It was hidden in God. No angel could break the code, so to speak, to understand this. This was the most sacred, the most important, the most precious purpose that God ever came up with—to provide a companion from the human race that would be exalted to the likeness of His Son, to rule over His empire.

It's very sacred to God. He wanted to unfold it in such a way that the drama would capture the hearts of all of history. All the prophets in the past and all the angels and the principalities and powers have been watching this thing without any full understanding of where it was going, but this was the plan of God.

It was hidden in God in the sense that it was sacred. God Himself was protecting it. It was hidden in His heart. No one was going to disrupt this plan or to cause it to go astray, because it was protected or hidden in the very heart of God Himself.

The manifest wisdom of God's purpose is made known by the Church. Number one: it's by the Church. It's through us walking it out, is what that means—through us preaching it and praying it and walking it out; that's how the principalities discover what God is up to.

Number two: the angels desire to look into the secrets of the gospel (1 Pet. 1:12). That's a very interesting thing. The angels don't understand it, but they are looking into it. They're studying the Church to figure out the mystery that was hidden in God's heart, because the angels couldn't get it out of God's heart either. It was the plan concerning His Son. God gave prophetic hints. It was hidden, but all along He gave prophetic hints of hidden blueprints throughout the Old Testament.

Number one: He gave types—Rebecca, Ruth, Eve, Esther. There's no way that they could have understood it at the time. Not even the angels understood what was going on.

Number two: He gave little "seed prophecies." The one that's my favorite is in Hosea 2:16: "At the very end, the people of God shall call their Lord, 'My Husband'" (Hos. 2:16, paraphrased). The angels knew that, but they were probably not exactly certain what it meant. It means exactly what it says, but they couldn't have known that at that time.

Number three: the New Testament parables before Jesus' death and resurrection. It wasn't clear exactly where it was going until Jesus paid the price, the debt of sin. It was only a hint; it wasn't to be made known clearly until after Jesus paid the price. Then it was revealed to the apostles. Even in Jesus' own ministry, He only gave mere hints, only two parables in the last week of His ministry when He unveiled the thing that He was really about.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S CREATION OF ADAM AND EVE

Now let's look at the overview of God's creation of Adam and Eve. This is a brief overview. The point of this is to make you familiar with the historical facts concerning the historical person Adam and his historical wife, Eve. I'm just giving you a quick snapshot, and then we'll look at these and apply them to what it really spoke about. It was a picture of Jesus Christ and His Church.

The human race was originally designed in God's likeness. God commissioned Adam to rule with God. Incidentally, when He gives this commission to Adam, it's a corporate Adam. It includes Adam and Eve. It's the human race. *Adam* means *mankind*, or, "The human race." The literal name *Adam* means *humanity*. We'll look at this more in a few moments, but we find in Genesis that He was referring to both aspects of the nature of God, not just the male aspect. When God created Adam, He called him male and female because it was going to take both male and female to reflect the fullness of God's glory. God commissioned Adam, the whole human race, to glorify God. Angels were a little perplexed by this; they didn't understand where this was going.

Next, He placed Adam in the garden of Eden, in paradise. It's kind of easy from this point of view to know where this thing is going. Here we have Adam ruling in paradise with the full authority of God. In Revelation 21 and 22 we see the last Adam and His bride ruling in paradise. The whole thing is a picture of where God's blueprints are going.

God commissioned Adam to enjoy and rule God's garden or paradise. Adam is given the opportunity for disobedience or voluntary love. He's given a choice. That choice was very strategic. That choice was important to the blueprint.

“I WILL MAKE HIM A COMPANION SUITABLE TO HM”

God observed, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). God is the One who understands that being alone isn’t good. That was God’s idea; it wasn’t Adam’s observation, it was God’s. God spoke it to him and Adam said, “Boy, isn’t that the truth!”

God promised him this: “I will make you a partner suitable for you, Adam” (Gen. 2:18b, paraphrased). God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Then God pierced Adam’s side to take one of his ribs. Out of his side came forth a companion. Adam saw the companion and delighted in that companion. God’s purpose was fulfilled as Adam cleaved, or joined, to Eve. In the NKJV it says, “A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife” (v. 24, NKJV).

Adam is cleaving to Eve. This is the verse Paul picks up 4,000 years later and says, “You know what’s going on. It’s true that historically that Adam did cleave to Eve. It’s true that God wants a man to cleave to his wife in marriage, but that’s not really what God is revealing in the Word of God.”

Jesus is going to be cleaving to the bride that comes out of His side in a garden forever. That’s what this thing is all about. It’s a picture of holy marriage union without any shame or guilt whatsoever; that’s where this thing is going: a marriage union with the Son of God in a garden with no shame whatsoever; completely open, nothing hidden, a total absence of shame, forever in the embrace of Son of God. That’s what you were created for. That’s where you’ll go. This is your story. This isn’t just good doctrine; this is your story. It’s good doctrine, but it’s more than that: it’s your story.

This is good news! Just hang on! Hang on! Tell the devil, “No!”

Like the preacher said, “For a believer this is as bad as it will ever get. For an unbeliever, this as good as it ever gets.”

The mystery was hidden in the heart of God. God made that clear to Paul. He said, “No one has cracked the code yet. I haven’t revealed to anyone where it’s going, until Paul the apostle, in terms of permission to reveal it to the Church.”

Now John the Baptist knew where this thing was going, but he wasn’t given permission to make it known. He gave a hint at it. He said, “I hear the voice of the Bridegroom. I’m a friend of the Bridegroom” (Jn. 3:29, paraphrased). That was the only mention of it in Scripture before Jesus.

I like to play around with this, because John the Baptist starts the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry with this proclamation. In fact, Jesus says, “Hey, Father, if he gets to say it, let Me say it.”

The Father says, “OK, You can tell Your apostles who they are.”

In Matthew 9:15, He says, “You guys are friends of the Bridegroom, too” (Mt. 9:15, paraphrased). Then the Father says, “That’s it; You can’t say anymore until it’s time for the death and resurrection, in the very last week before the Cross.” That’s just my little rendition.

“LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR OWN IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS”

The first prophetic hint of the Bride. This prophetic hint is very easy to see after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and through apostolic revelation. It's really easy. We're all looking and saying, "That's easy. Angels, open your eyes. Hello, the phone is for you. Wake up! See the picture. It's very easy."

Back then, until God allowed "the code" to be broken and revealed, no one could understand what was taking place.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our own image according to our own likeness; let them have dominion over the fish, the birds, the cattle, and everything on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26, paraphrased). Now look at verse 27: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (v. 27, NKJV).

He's talking about the corporate Adam here. The human race has two dimensions to it that reflect the glory of God. God's glory can't be reflected without the male and female dimensions of the likeness of God coming forth.

"Then God blessed them, and said to them. . ." (Gen. 1:28). He created *him* and said to *them*, because the *him* is a corporate Adam here. This is God's proclamation here in Genesis 1. Genesis 2 retells the story in more detail. Genesis 1:26-28 explains what's going on; then the Lord says, "We'll back up and try to give you a little more, detail by detail, of how this thing actually took place." Genesis 1 is the overview, and Genesis 2 is more of the details. He goes back and retells the story. That's what's going on here.

"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth, subdue it; have dominion over everything on the earth" (Gen. 1:28, paraphrased). That's the essence of what God is saying. This is the first prophetic hint of the bride. It's a very strong hint after we understand where it's going, but it was only a hint back then.

GENESIS 1: GENERATING LIFE OUT OF UNION TOGETHER

Genesis 1: the principle of creation. Nine times it makes the statement, "After its own kind." Every time God created something, He created its own counterpart. The divine pattern is clearly being established. Nine times in one chapter, God made a type of animal or a type of plant and then made a counterpart so that it could generate life.

Number two: the purpose of making it after this Genesis 1 principle is so that it could generate life out of union together. The divine pattern is clearly being established, first with the plants, then second with the animals; it says it nine times in a row. Suddenly, there's this giant step in creation: a new species, a new order called "the human race." It's a whole new species. The angels have never seen anything like this.

Number one: this is marvelous and stunning. This was stunning when it was first declared. God says, "They will be made according to God's likeness and God's image." This is totally unique to the angels. They don't know where this thing is going. They don't know anything about Revelation 19. Nine times in a row, they watched as God created an original, and then created a counterpart to go with the original.

A COUNTERPART OF GOD, WHO HAS DOMINION OVER ALL LIFE

That's what happens, nine times in a row. That's clearly a divine pattern, and He wants that pattern to be discerned. You can read it once and catch the pattern. It just shouts at you when you read Genesis 1. All of a sudden there's a counterpart made for an original, but the original is the uncreated God. This one is made like God. They say, "Wait a minute: first You created an original and then created a counterpart. Here You didn't create an original, because the original is the uncreated God."

Suddenly there's a counterpart. The angels are looking at each other and saying, "Wow!" Because this counterpart was according to the original that was uncreated. This is a very precedent-setting move. This is stunning; it's very dramatic. This counterpart has dominion over everything. That sounds like God! They're saying, "This didn't exist, because God is uncreated; this new species is created. We have no idea what's going on down there and where this thing is going."

They have no idea that human history is going to unfold and there are going to be billions of them and that there will be thousands of years of human history. They don't know any of this yet. They're looking and wondering. They're looking at the redeemed all throughout human history, trying to figure out what the good news is. Peter tells us that the angels desire to look into the gospel and understand it (1 Pet. 1:12).

Then suddenly, as God is creating, He takes the "giant step" in God's created order. He passes all the ranks of the angelic hosts. He goes from plants to animals, and then He bypasses the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, and He takes a giant step past the seraphim and the cherubim, past everything that's created, and makes this counterpart according to the very image of God Himself.

The angels are stunned. It's stunning. There's a great drama that has been created in heaven. It's created great emotion. I can just imagine the buzz around the angelic host, because there are billions of angels. There are hundreds of millions of them—who knows how many? I believe they're asking the question, "Why so exalted? Why so noble?" This was an unprecedented move. It was sudden; it was out of nowhere. The counterpart is made according to the Original who is uncreated, the Trinity Himself. It seems indescribable to the angels. The angels are watching with great interest.

Number two: why are they created in Jesus' likeness? Because remember, nine times in a row the counterpart was created in a certain likeness to create a union to generate life. Nine times in a row the likeness was created so that there could be a union that would generate life. A seed after its own kind could generate life. Now, this new creation, this new species, this brand-new idea, as far as the angels are concerned, is made like Jesus. It follows the pattern nine times in Genesis 1. "Don't tell me that this species is going to have union with Jesus to generate life. No, because nine times in a row it happened that way, but the tenth one is a union with the Godhead to generate life? No, God must be violating the pattern He has established. Or is He doing the unthinkable, is He keeping the pattern He has established?"

There are implications to such a union. Where's it going? Paul helps us to interpret in Romans 5:14, 4,000 years later. Paul tells us that the individual Adam is a picture of Jesus Christ who was to come. In God's economy, according to God's blueprint, the blueprint from which He was working, when He made Adam, Paul tells us that He always knew he would be a picture of Jesus. Adam was a picture of Jesus, and Adam in his union with Eve was going to be a picture of a man and a woman together in full marital bliss.

God always knew that the individual man Adam was a picture of Jesus. Eve was a picture of the Body of Christ. In Genesis 3:20, the Scripture says that Eve was “the mother of all the living” (Gen. 3:20). We find in Galatians 4:19-26 that the New Jerusalem is called the mother of all living. Eve is called the mother of all the living here in Genesis 3:20, but in Galatians 4 the New Jerusalem, which is the Bride of Christ, the paradise of God, the eternal city—all of those are synonymous—is called the mother of all. It’s the exact same terminology, lifted right out of Genesis 3:20.

Adam is a picture of Jesus, and Eve is a picture of the Bride of Christ, Adam the individual. There’s a second message, though. The first message is that individual Adam with individual Eve is a picture of Eve with His bride. The second message is that Adam and Eve together forming the human race with the component of male and female would be the counterpart to being in union with the eternal God to generate life forever. The first message is about individual Adam with individual Eve, giving a picture of Jesus and the Church. The second message is the corporate Adam; the human race is collectively the counterpart to the Original, the uncreated God, to be in union to generate life.

ETERNALLY BEARING THE IMAGE OF WHAT JESUS CHRIST IS LIKE

Here’s the overall point: God was acting from a predetermined plan. God was acting in the human arena to reveal eternal truth. Even back then the predetermined plan was clearly in place and God was acting out of that to reveal truth.

We were created in God’s image and in God’s likeness. God said, “Let Us make man” (Gen. 1:26). Again, this is the corporate man, the human race, all of humanity: “Let Us make man in Our own image, according to Our likeness” (ibid).

Theologically, the word *image* speaks of that which resembles or represents God. We’re made in the image of God; we resemble God. We look like Him to others. We represent Him to others. When the angels see us fully anointed, we act like Jesus; we image Jesus to them. We act just as He does. We resemble Him so closely that ideally we represent God in our actions, and we will in eternity. The angels and the demons and the rest of God’s continued creation will give the image, the resemblance of what Jesus Christ is like.

The word *likeness* doesn’t mean we just act like God acts, but we’re built according to God’s design. We’re a counterpart designed to fit Him—designed to fit in union with God; to be like Him in terms of our hearts connecting, because they are made like each other; they fit together. We resemble Him to the onlookers, and we’re made and designed to have union with Him in terms of our eternal design and makeup.

“HE WHO JOINS HIMSELF TO THE LORD IS ONE SPIRIT WITH HIM”

Under B, C, and D, I have the three ways in which we’re like God; three ways in which we’re built in His likeness. Our spirit connects its design to connect in union with God’s Spirit. The angel’s spirit doesn’t connect with God’s Spirit in this way. “He who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with the Godhead” (1 Cor. 6:17, paraphrased). This is indescribable. The angels aren’t one spirit with God in this sense. Our heart and God’s heart fit like a puzzle piece perfectly connected together.

THE CAPACITIES OF OUR PERSONALITY ARE DESIGNED TO FIT GOD

The soul is our mind, will, and emotions. God built the human personality with many little sub-units and categories, but our personality capacities fit God’s personality capacities in a way that’s unique from the rest of

creation. We're so accustomed to this idea that we've lost the sense of the uniqueness and beauty and splendor that we've been designed with, where we connect and fit perfectly with God. The capacities of our personality are designed to fit God.

Our mind has the capacity for revelation. We have the mind of Christ which is imparted through time. When I think of the mind of Christ, I don't just think of wisdom; I think of God's creative genius. Every now and then, just a little here and there, we find in the arts and in the music and in scientific development and architectural wisdom and insight that the human mind has those little fragments of inspiration that come from God's creative genius. God designed the galaxies and He designed the human body and the eyeball and all the cells; God's design is so fantastic in the way that it holds together. Think of the way that the atom holds together; it's quite an amazing thing. The creative genius of God is in us in seed form. I don't believe that the angels will create in this way. They don't have a mind like God's mind. I believe that the angels are servants, and they serve the saints (Heb. 1:14). We have a capacity that's very different; our mind is like God's.

A CAPACITY TO LOVE WITH THE INTENSITY OF GOD

Our emotions: we have the capacity for intense affection. There's no other part of creation that has intense affection. The dog brushes up against your leg and whines, but we have the capacity for affection that's like God's affection, for the intensity of love that burns with such a fire that we would give our life. When the love is burning in intensity, we wouldn't even consider what it would cost us. That's what God is like. We got that from God. God is the first One who had burning fire and gave everything for love. That's what we would do. Of course there are so many secondary manifestations of it in the human arena, and there are perverse manifestations of it, but the rightness of it, the initial wiring, is that our emotions are built in the same design that God's are for intense affection.

A CAPACITY IN OUR DESIGN FOR INTIMACY WITH GOD

Why? Because He wants an equally-yoked bride; that's why. The ultimate verse is John 17:26, that we'll love Jesus as only the Father loves Him. We'll have the same intensity of passion that the Lord has. The angels don't have this. When the angels worship God, when they worship Him and bow down in respect and reverence in the fear of the Lord, you never hear them say, "I love You, I love You, I love You." You always see an angel addressing God with titles of utmost respect. We imitate them in this way, but we go beyond that. They say things like, "Holy, Holy, Holy, He who was and is and who is to come; He who rules and sits upon the throne." That's how the angels address God in the book of Revelation.

Jesus said, "When you address God, say, 'My Father'" (Mt. 6:9, paraphrased). As the bride, you'll say, "Come" (Rev. 22:17, NKJV). We speak much more intimate language.

Angels worship, but they worship with a basis of deep reverence and respect. We worship with an Abba cry in our spirit. We cry out, "I love You, please help me." That's how we worship when we worship in fullness. We have a capacity in our original design for intimacy with God. There's a brighter heart that was put in the human race in the original design.

See, God was creating a bride. He was creating a species that Jesus could cleave to after He slept the deep sleep of death; so that He could cleave to her and be one flesh with her throughout eternity. This means we would have the same kind of body and we would be in the new humanity with Him in the age to come. As we have the

same flesh of the first Adam, we will have the same construction of the body of the last Adam in eternity. The new humanity will be one in body with Him, as we are with the first Adam now.

THE PURPOSE OF PLANET EARTH IS TO GROW IN VOLUNTARY LOVE

Will: you could put the words *work* or *action* there. We're responsible to work with Him. So in our mind we can have revelation. In our emotions we can have passion, but in our will we can do work. We can take action.

Here's the great thing: it's dignified action; meaning, these are decisions that effect eternal issues for real. We make decisions, we take action, we do work that impacts eternity for real. People's lives in eternity are really different because of the actions of human beings in this age. It's absolutely staggering that God has so dignified human life that He would value even the giving of a cup of cold water given by a saint. Our action is so dignified that it has eternal consequences.

This isn't a practice game. Planet earth is not a practice game. It's not an exhibition game; we're not doing it for practice. We're learning things, but this is real. It will really, really live in eternity out of the fruit of a number of things that we do on this earth. This is the real game. This is the real thing, because the purpose of planet earth is to grow in voluntary love, of course.

The capacity for love in action. Not just dignified in terms of what impacts eternity, but it's relevant. It's rewarded by God; even the most insignificant activities are remembered by God. They are remembered and they are rewarded. Not only is it dignified in the sense that it changes the course of other people's lives, but it's relevant in the sense that it's remembered, valued, and rewarded by God forever. Even a cup of cold water does this.

We can work for God's good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). God puts it in our heart and releases activity that brings pleasure to God.

OUR BODIES WILL BE OF THE SAME SUBSTANCE AS THE BODY OF JESUS

The body. "They shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). We shall be a new humanity in the last hour. Our body will be exactly like His body (Phil. 3:20-21). Our body will be made of the same substance His is, just as our bodies are made out of the same substance of the first Adam now. We will be one flesh in the sense of one body—not in the sense that if you cut it, it bleeds, but we will have a body like that of Jesus, a body you can touch. His hands were pierced; they touched His side. He ate fish, so it's clearly a real body, so our bodies will be of the same substance as the body of Jesus, and we will be one with Him just as we are with the first Adam.

I think you know that your life is hugely important. Maybe you're not getting the job that you want or the relationship didn't work out, but your life has so much dignity and so much value and there's so much inherent beauty in who you are, designed in your human spirit. Really, it's impossible for us to grasp; we don't really understand who we are. The angels were rocked; they were shaken when they saw God go past, take this giant step past all the ranks of the angels—the seraphim, the cherubim, the four living creatures, the archangels—He went past them all and made a companion, a counterpart according to the Original, the eternal God.

They said, "Wait, this isn't right; they can't be like God. He could be like Adam, but he can't be like God because that means that if the pattern is clear, there's going to be a union that generates life, and they're going to rule. Where is this going?"

The angels long to look into the truths of the gospel, the good news of Jesus.

QUESTION:

What do you mean, “Generate life”?

MIKE BICKLE:

I don’t mean making babies born, but the flow of life to all of God’s creation, the release of the Holy Spirit. What we do will release life to God’s creation, by releasing the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We’re so valuable. We get into a little negative season of life—financially we’re in a bad position, and our health gets disrupted, and key relationships are broken—and we start to believe the devil’s lie that it’s not really worth it, that God isn’t here and there’s no point.

The angels are thinking, “Do you have any concept of the indescribable beauty built into your human spirit, that God wants to be joined with you to release life through you to the rest of creation in His great empire?”

Adam is commissioned to rule. God said, “Subdue the earth and have dominion” (Gen. 1:28). That’s the point: the human race was built and designed to reign. The angels were built with a design to serve, but the saints are equipped on the inside, according to our internal makeup, to reign with God forever. It starts in the garden with a mandate to reign.

The Bride of Christ is created with the capacity to reign. We’re co-heirs. We will reign over everything with Jesus. We will reign and rule with Him (Rev. 3:21).

Why was God’s mind filled with the human race? I’m quoting Psalm 8. David understood this. He captured this. David asked God, “What is man”—he means the human race—“that You are mindful of him? What is the son of man that You would visit him in such an honorable way? You have made him a little lower than angels” (Ps. 8:4-5, paraphrased).

The word *angels* here is the Hebrew word *elohim*. One version translates it, “a little lower than the angels”; another translates it, “A little lower than God.” The commentaries are different, but it doesn’t really make any difference, because we’re lower than the angels for only a season. Then we’re higher than the angels. We’re only lower than the angels on the earth, and we’re higher than the angels in eternity.

Here’s the point: David says, “You have crowned the human race with glory and honor. You have given them dominion. You have put everything under their feet” (Ps. 8:5-6).

Adam was to enjoy the garden. It was pleasant to look at, pleasant to eat, and we’re commanded to eat (Gen. 2:9). Eat freely. There are so many sub-themes in this that talk about what God designs when God has His whole way. He’s going to be a really good husband to live with. He really lays this thing out right. That’s how He’s going to bring her to glory. This is a little snapshot of Him nourishing and cherishing Adam and Eve, which is a picture of the corporate bride, the human race. He wants her to be filled with pleasure and enjoyment.

Adams' rule was to begin in God's paradise. In other words, the very best environment of human history is a dim picture of the eternal environment. It begins in God's paradise. Fantastic! I'm preaching myself right into happy land.

ONLY WITH THE OPTION OF DISOBEDIENCE IS LOVE REALLY VOLUNTARY

Adam's opportunity to express voluntary love. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat, you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

God deliberately gave the opportunity for disobedience. He had to do it, because only with the option of disobedience is voluntary love real. God put the snake in the garden. He put the tree in the garden with the warning against it. Only in the option for disobedience is there really voluntary love. If there's no choice for disobedience, there's no growth in love.

I remember when our children were young, and the big crisis in this life was touching the telephone. One of my sons was about fourteen or eighteen months old and he kept having fun knocking the phone over, and he had to learn obedience. We went through this big thing, and one of the friends came along and said to move the phone, and I said, "No. The point is not about the phone; the point is that he has to learn obedience. He has to know that in this home, when mom and dad say no, it's no."

So we kept the phone there and even closer to him, because I wanted him to look at the phone and say no. We had the most heartbreaking day. He never touched the phone again. Now the phone rings and he says, "Dad, you can get it."

The whole issue of the human race is for voluntary love. That's the only reason Jesus wants the bride to say yes, because she wanted to. It has to be voluntary love. There has to be a snake and a tree in the garden in order for them to say yes or no.

WE HAVE BEEN DESIGNED ACCORDING TO THE DESIRE OF GOD

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him'" (Gen. 2:18). The NIV says, "I will make a helper suitable for him" (ibid, NIV), and that's the phrase I always use.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, NKJV). The point is this: God the Father is speaking to Adam in the natural, really simply, but He's giving a message to His Son: it's not good that Jesus should rule alone. God wants to make Him a suitable companion for Him. I like the word *suitable*, "suitable companion." It's a helper that's comparable.

Number one: we have been designed according to God's desire. We're beautiful to God. We're designed according to God's personality type. We're especially what God likes. We're like Him. You know how they say that people like people who have their same values and their same way of thinking. There are dozens of personality types in the human race, but compared to all of creation the human heart, the impulse of the human heart is what God really likes. He likes the way the human spirit is made. We're especially what God likes. We're made suitable to Jesus Christ.

Number two: we're internally beautiful to God by original design. Number three: we're beautiful without any regard to externals. In 1 Samuel 16:7, when Samuel the prophet is looking at the sons of Jesse, trying to figure out which one is meant to be king, he goes through the first seven sons, and the eighth one is David, and he wasn't even invited to the dinner they were having for the prophet.

Samuel is perplexed, and God says, "Let Me give you a new paradigm of beauty. I look through an entirely different grid than man does. He evaluates a person's beauty and value through external things. I look at the internal design that I made, and that's what I call beautiful."

He evaluates us without any regard to physical features, age, color, height, weight, deformities. You can have the most beautifully chiseled-out body according to the paradigms of fitness; that makes no difference to God. God's paradigm, His view, the grid through which He evaluates, is entirely different from external understandings. It has nothing to do with our circumstances—whether our ministry made it, whether our families are all that we wanted them to be, whether our businesses are what we wanted, whether all of our dreams come true, whether all the circumstances fall in line with our abilities. It has nothing to do with being really gifted, really intelligent, really skilled musically or athletically; it has nothing whatsoever to do with that. The design of the human spirit is indescribably lovely to God Himself. It's like His Son. It was made suitable. It was made according to what Jesus really likes.

NO HUMAN EXPERIENCE CAN SILENCE THE DESIGN OF GOD IN THE HEART

When God made the human spirit, He said, "Well Son?"

Jesus said, "Wow! I like it. I really like it."

The Father said, "I knew it was suitable for You. It's according to what You like."

If this one truth could connect with the human race, we could be so much more at peace on the inside. It's designed for intimacy with Jesus. It's designed not only beautifully, but for a marriage partner. We're designed for marriage with God. The human spirit was designed to work in marriage with the eternal God. The angels weren't created that way. The human race was created, in terms of the heart, in the design of a bride. We have the capacity for intense affection, for wholehearted love. We're restless and we're lonely without this bridal love for the Son of God. No matter what we get in the human arena, there's no man or woman who can silence the original design of the human spirit to be the Bride of Jesus Christ. No human love, no human experience can silence that original design of the human spirit. We were simply made that way. We were made with the capacity to cleave to the Son of God—to cleave to Him, and have Him cleave to us. We were made with the capacity for bridal relationship with a bride's heart.

By design we can't be fully satisfied only with human love. That's by design. We can't be fully satisfied with the most intense human love. It's a blessing, but it can't answer the full design of the human spirit. We were made to be a marriage partner to the Son of God.

WE WILL POSSESS THE CAPACITY TO REIGN WITHOUT STUMBLING

We're designed to reign. We have the capacity to be of one mind with Jesus. We have the capacity through this whole process of redemption to be exalted to the noblest position without the pride that Satan had. It's not enough to reign and have the mind of Christ; we have to have that way of looking at things so that we can

possess the noblest position in creation, the highest position God could create—God couldn't create a position higher; He gives it to us freely—and we don't trip and fall like Satan did. That's fantastic. We were created with that capacity, and it's ours through the experience of redemption that came on the earth.

God knew what He was doing. He didn't want any more exalted members falling under judgment because they wanted to be like God. He said, "I'll put the snake in the garden. I'll put the tree in the garden. I know they'll sin. I'll redeem them and so change their chemistry through redemption that they can still have voluntary love with an exalted position and not sin." God's goal was to give us the exalted position with voluntary love, and to know for certain, because He knows the end from the beginning, that there would be no stumbling, ever, under the power of it. That's why there had to be the choice for sin and there had to be all the pain and suffering and the wages of sin and the redemption of it—because it will give us the capacity to reign without stumbling.

It's not just that; we have the capacity to be redeemed. God was planning ahead. Jesus was the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. Our names are in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). God knows the very end from the beginning.

Here's the point: He designed us in such a way that we could be redeemed, because if we weren't originally made like God, then God couldn't become a man. God couldn't become an angel, because the angels aren't made in the likeness and image of God. God had to have already designed us rightly if He wanted to become one of us. God had already thought through the plan of redemption when He made this exalted creature called *humanity*. When this exalted creature fell, we were in position for the Son of God to become like us because we were first made like Him. Therefore, redemption could take place.

The whole thing was planned with the expectation of a bride at the end of history. We're designed to live forever with one flesh, and to have the same body and the same makeup that God has. We're at the one-hour mark, so we'll stop right here.