

Christ Before and After Creation

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- [0 : 00] The message this morning is Christ before and after creation, and we will be in the Old Testament at the very beginning, and then we will be in the New Testament also.
- So, please turn to the first chapter of Genesis, and there in chapter 1, we'll be looking at verses 1 through 5.
- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.
- Then God said, Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.
- God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening, and there was morning, one day.
- [1 : 34] Okay. Then, please turn to the Gospel of John. And there we will be in chapter 1, verses 1 through 18.
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him. And apart from him, nothing came into being that has come into being.
- In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.
- [3 : 01] He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. There was the true light, which coming into the world, enlightens every man.
- He was in the world, and the world was made through him. And the world did not know him. He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him.
- But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.
- Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we saw his glory, his glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- [4 : 24] John testified about him, and cried out, saying, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me.
- For of his fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.
- No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained him.
- Remarkable, remarkable statement.

One of the more difficult doctrines of biblical Christianity for everyone to grasp, including Christians, is also the very most strategic in the carrying out of the plan and program of God.

[6 : 09] And I speak of the Trinitarian nature of the being of God. While the scriptures never do use the word Trinity, it is linguistically a definitive term.

Actually, the word Trinity is a combination of the word tri, which means three, and unity, which means one. And they marry the two words together, dropping the U, and it simply comes out Trinity.

Trinitarianism is frequently confused with tritheism, the concept of three gods. And this is forever what Muslims accuse Christians of believing.

And to them, it is an incomprehensible idea that there could be more than one God, to which we readily reply, there is but one God.

There are not three gods. There is but one God subsisting in three persons. And while we would be the first to admit that that boggles our minds as well, nonetheless, we believe what we believe on the basis of revelation and what God has been pleased to disclose in Scripture, not on the basis of what seems reasonable to us in our human logic.

[7 : 35] So Christians emphatically deny the assertion of multiple gods. We embrace the age-old concept of the Hebrews, which was clearly monotheism, the idea of there being but one God.

Monotheism, in particular, was the thing that most described the Jew from all the pagans that surrounded them, who were given over to idolatry.

And eventually, the Jews themselves lapsed into worshipping the gods of their neighbors, Baal, Ashtaroth, Dagon, Molech, and so on.

So those who were known throughout that whole region of the world for their monotheism, eventually slipped into polytheism, the worship of many gods.

After repeatedly warning his people Israel, through the many prophets he sent unto them, that they were on a path of spiritual and national suicide, unless they renounced their idols and returned as repentant worshippers of Jehovah, that God would literally give them over to their pagan neighbors who would enslave them and lead them into captivity.

[8 : 57] In the 9th century, or the 8th century rather, in the 8th century BC, God allowed the Assyrians to invade the northern ten tribes, destroy many of them, carry them off into captivity.

Then later, in the 6th century BC, the same fate befell the two remaining tribes in the south, Judah and Benjamin, who were carried into Babylonian captivity, a captivity which lasted for 70 years.

And all of this divine judgment was brought upon God's chosen people for one specific reason, and that was their forsaking him and going after other idols.

Now, perhaps just a little bit needs to be said about the appeal to idolatry, and why was it so popular, and why did so many people fall into it? Not only pagans who surrounded the Israelites, but the Israelites themselves.

And you must understand that the whole basis, the whole concept of idolatry is bound up in two things, two areas. One of them has to do with the enrichment of the personal self in some way, shape, or form, usually material riches.

[10 : 12] And secondly, was the ability to gain power over other people. And these two things, of course, tie right in with witchcraft.

This is why witchcraft and idolatry are so closely connected. The whole idea being that you can get from these foreign gods, these idols, this statuary, that having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, and all the rest of it, you can get from them things that you can't get from God.

So you go to whoever's offering the best deal. They had the Baal worshipers, and you'll find this frequently in your Bible. Elijah did battle with these people on Mount Carmel, and the Baal worshipers were tied up with the fertility cult.

And the fertility cult simply said that if you worship Baal and bring your offerings and sacrifices to Baal, he will bless the womb of your animals, and you'll have animals overflowing, and he'll bless the womb of your wife or your wives if you have multiple wives.

So you will have many children because the more children you had, then the more servants you had to work the land and care for livestock and all the rest of it. So the whole concept of idolatry was a very practical thing.

[11 : 28] And the idea was you serve these particular gods, and each god represented a different facet of creation, just like the Romans and the Greeks later are going to have their gods, only these predate them, the Philistines, etc.

and the idea being that you kowtow to the god and you offer your sacrifices to the god who is in charge of whatever, whether it's the god of the sea or the god of the crops or the god of the hunt, or whether it's Eros or Cupid, the god or goddess of love, and then you make the right sacrifice and then you would have power over people because you could use the gods to influence people in your favor.

And of course the whole thing is just shot through and through with paganism, superstition, and everything that went with it. And every expression to one of the false gods literally constituted a slap in the face to the true god.

And one might understand the rationale for these pagans who surrounded the Israelites lapsing into that kind of thing. And by the way, Paul makes it very clear when he writes to the Corinthians that there is power and mystery behind these false gods.

And it's all demonic. It's all connected with the demonic. So the Old Testament especially is just saturated with this stuff.

[13 : 02] Paul accompanies it in the New Testament as well on his missionary journeys. But in the Old Testament it is so rampant. The Egyptians were completely given over to this. The Egyptians had the god or the goddess of Isis and Osiris and they had a crocodile god and all of these little Hebrew baby boys that they were supposed to be throwing into the Nile River they were offering as sacrifices to the crocodile god.

And if you've ever seen any of the bas-reliefs from Egypt and I remember seeing these in grade school in the history books they are now housed in the British Museum in London and you can go there and see the bas-reliefs that they have carved out with the body of a human and the head of a crocodile or a bird.

This is what these people were into. And when God brought the ten plagues upon Pharaoh in Egypt every one of those ten plagues was directed to a god that the Egyptians worshipped.

And he was simply demonstrating of course his superiority over them. So this paganism thing is just rampant all throughout the Old Testament. The Canaanites were especially steeped in it and the Israelites often fell into it.

However, following the return of the Jews to Israel and the rebuilding of the city and the wall Israel never again fell into idolatry but returned to their original roots of monotheism.

[14 : 39] And Deuteronomy 6.4 which if you want to think of the nation of Israel as having a motto a national motto that would be it.

Deuteronomy 6.4 Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord. Every little Jewish baby would memorize that just as soon as he memorized mama and dada.

That would be next and that's called the Shema. It is the saying of Judaism throughout the world. Islam has something that is similar to that.

It is a saying that goes there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. And if you say that with meaning and intent that makes you a Muslim.

That's your conversion to Islam is simply expressing what they call the Shahada. That's in the Islamic religion as opposed to Judaism and 6.4.

[15 : 44] So the captivity of Israel served its purpose of Israel forever falling into idolatry again. Ironically Jews today find the concept of more find the concept of more than one God to be abhorrent.

And with this assessment Christians would agree we find that concept to be abhorrent too. The Bible does not teach that there are multiple gods it teaches that there is but one true God.

Of course there are many false gods many false idols etc. but only one true God. Yet with the Christian insistence upon the Trinitarian concept of God they can only conclude along with Muslims that Christians worship three gods.

I don't know of a Christian anywhere who would admit to that. I've never talked to anyone I've never heard of anyone say anything like that.

It's just a concept that is just so foreign I can't entertain it at all. I can't imagine a Christian thinking that there are three gods. We need to be firmly fully committed to the idea that there is but one God yet this one God subsists in three persons.

[17 : 06] If you limit yourself to human rationale then three gods will have to be your only conclusion. And Christians are no different than that.

If you limit yourself to purely human rationale you cannot conjure up a concept whereby there can be one God subsisting in three distinct persons each of whom is fully God not one third God and still come out of it with just one God how do you do that?

I haven't any idea. Humanly speaking I do not believe it can be done. and all we are saying as Christians is that God operates and God's person and character and nature is on a plane that is elevated beyond ours.

One theologian put it this way does it really trouble you that there are aspects about the infinite eternal God that you can't grasp?

is that a problem to you? Ought not that be the case? Or do you want a God who is whittled down to no bigger than what you are with no greater mind than what you have one that you can fully figure out and comprehend and understand you want a God like that?

[18 : 56] Well some apparently insist on that. Deuteronomy 6 4 that says hear O Israel the Lord our God is one makes it quite clear.

However when you look into the Hebrew language and you look at the word one in Hebrew it is clearly expressed as a compound word and it conveys the same meaning and the same idea as for this cause shall a man leave his mother and father and be joined unto his wife and they too shall become one flesh same word as used in Deuteronomy 6 4 well what does this mean how do a husband and wife how do the two become one well they become one in many ways emotionally psychologically and physically they become one but there are still two neither has lost their real identity neither has forfeited their personhood but being married to someone brings both of them into a different kind of relationship on a different kind of level than anything else and all we are saying is that something similar to that only more mysterious and more wonderful is what has happened in the

Godhead in the nature and character of God nobody has any problem with the concept that God is love scripture makes that very clear and first John even has a verse that spells that out exactly God is love love do do you not understand that in order to love you have to have a recipient who did God love if there are not multiple persons in the Godhead who did he love we are suggesting that the father the son and the holy spirit have existed throughout all eternity and there is perfect cooperation and perfect love and perfect relationship and no jealousy and no superiority and no inferiority there is only a rank in so far as responsibilities and roles are concerned the father and the son are equal the spirit is equal to both nobody in my trinity pulls rank nobody is the boss nobody orders anybody around can you really conceive of a situation like that

I can't and the reason I can't is because I tend to think that would work because I know people so do you but these aren't people this is God this is different there is no scripture in the Old or New Testament that says there is one God subsisting in three persons now it would simplify things greatly if there were 1st John 5:7 seems to allude to that but it is really without good textual authority and you ought not to try to use it as a proof text because I don't think it will hold up so there is no verse that says there is the Father Son and the Holy Spirit and God yet they are not each one third God but each is fully God how that can be just escapes me but it's okay if there are a lot of things that escape me because we serve and worship a transcendent

God one who is above and beyond so while there is no specific scripture like that and we would be the first to admit it Christians have no alternative but to conclude this is true because while the Bible insists there is but one God it also insists the Father is God the Son is God the Holy Spirit is God while all the time it also insists that there is but one God and you know I just take such enormous comfort in that because to me that really points heavily toward the idea that the scriptures are really and truly a revelation from God himself and not the word of man I'll tell you one reason among many why I believe that I would have never written it that way if

[23 : 56] I wanted anybody to believe it I would have avoided that I would not have given this content about there being one God subsisting in three persons and throughout scripture make it clear that the father is God the son is God and the holy I'd say who's going to buy that I'm not going I'd leave that out yes I would edit that out and I think any scribe trying to compile a scripture that he wanted people things come across in such a way as to be as believable as possible well the trinity doesn't fit that it is not as believable as possible it is not easy to believe then why do you believe it because the scriptures reveal it quite clearly the revelation is clear the how of it is not but that's also true with many things about God is it not so what I would like you to do

I hope you have your Bibles because we're going to be all over this book first place I want you to go to is Micah chapter 5 I know some of you are in trouble already Micah Micah chapter 5 and verse 2 Micah the prophet writing under inspiration 500 years before Jesus was born one of my favorite texts but as for you Bethlehem Ephratha too little to be among the clans of Judah from you from you Bethlehem one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel now there are two members there are two members of the Godhead here at least in verse two for from you

Bethlehem one will go forth that one is Jesus the Messiah incarnated in human flesh one will go forth for me who is the me the me is either the father or very possibly the spirit of God because it is the Holy Spirit who has given us the word it is inspired of God and he is the one who sustained men as they were born along by the spirit of God to write the things that they wrote to be ruler in Israel his goings forth whose goings forth the his refers back to one in the verse before this one his goings forth are from long ago from the days of eternity now very often what happens is people just zero in on

Bethlehem being the place where Christ is to be born being announced 500 years in advance fulfilled prophecy and wow that's pretty expressive pretty significant well it really is very dramatic but don't forget the rest of the earth whose goings forth this one who is going to be born in Bethlehem 500 years in the future is also the same one whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting what does that mean where was he going forth what was he doing going forth simply means traversing traveling covering territory moving his goings forth have been from of old from everlasting here let's go to

Genesis 1 1 and we'll see the plot thicken Genesis 1 1 and those of you who You are long-time attendees of Grace.

[28 : 25] We'll not find this to be new material, but it is rewarding nonetheless. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

You are perhaps familiar with the word God is Elohim in Hebrew. It is plural. It literally means gods.

With an S on it. Plural. But created is singular.

So the verb is singular and the noun is plural. How does that work? That's not acceptable grammar.

They're supposed to agree. The noun and the verb are supposed to agree in number. But they don't. And the word here in the Greek or in the Hebrew for God is Elohim.

[29 : 28] In Hebrew, to gain a plural to a singular word, you add I-M.

In English, you add S. And that makes it plural. But in Hebrew, if you're talking about cherub and you want to talk about multiple cherubs, you don't say cherubs.

You say cherubim. And a seraph in plural is seraphim. And God in the singular is Eloah.

E-L-O-A-H. Eloah is God singular. From which the E-L beginning forms many other words that we are familiar with, like El Shaddai and so on.

So, when you make this word a plural, you ought to translate it a plural because it's plural in Hebrew.

[30 : 36] But it's translated in the singular. God created the heavens and the earth. Am I suggesting that tucked away here in this English expression of G-O-D is really a plurality?

Absolutely. And it is undisputable. It is one of few things over which scholars are agreed. And not only that, but if memory serves me correctly, this Elohim that is used as a singular, G-O-D, but is plural in Hebrew.

2,570 times in Scripture. Surpassed only by Yahweh or Jehovah, which in the English is translated L-O-R-D, all caps.

And then I think is used some 6,823 times, something like that. So, we've got a real situation here.

In the beginning, God, plurality, God's created the heavens and the earth. And I suspect that the Hebrews just could not bring themselves to render this in the plural.

[31 : 54] But they couldn't deny the fact that it is there. And yet, when they translate it, they translate it as well as in the English. It's singular. And in a way, that solves a lot of problems.

But in a way, it's hiding and covering up something that ought not to be hidden and covered up. So, let's examine a few other things, if we may. I want you to think about eternity, which I know you're not able to do any more than I am.

And we're not going to go back to eternity, because when you talk about going back, you're thinking of time. But we're not going back in time. We're going into eternity.

Because eternity is not governed by time. Eternity is not governed by millennia or by centuries or hours or minutes.

It has no connection with time at all. Eternity is not millions and millions of years stacked on top of another. That's not eternity. Eternity is without time.

[32 : 58] Timeless. And it's without space. There's no space for anything to be in, because there isn't anything. And the only place where this word is used in Scripture is Isaiah 57, in verse 15.

And Isaiah says, Thus saith the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity.

God lives in eternity. So, if you can, try to think. I'm not going to say think of a time, because that wouldn't be right. Think of a concept where there is no heavens, no earth, no planets, no stars, no universe, no anything.

No angels, no people, no anything. There is just this being of God.

In eternity. In eternity. And in this relationship, in eternity, it was decreed among the three of them what was going to transpire.

[34 : 17] And they entered into a kind of a contract, an agreement. And the agreement was that the Father would send the Son into a world that they three have created.

And that it would be populated with human beings and the whole nine yards. Now, how did these beings exist in eternity?

When there was no matter. When there was no matter. No substance. No elements. No anything. If you can picture that, please talk to me afterwards.

Because I want to know. I can't fathom that. And we're not through yet. In their being and existence, all three of these persons were spirit beings.

They had no materiality. No physicality. No substance. They were immaterial.

[35 : 31] This is partly what Jesus meant when he said, God is spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. And it just absolutely boggles my mind.

But it's undeniable. That that which is spirit that has no physicality to it at all. Which you cannot see. You cannot weigh. You cannot evaluate. That which is spiritual is not subject to the scientific method.

And this leads a lot of scientists to deny that it even exists. Because if you can't weigh it, measure it, test it. See it. You know.

It doesn't have any existence. But that which is spirit has very real, objective existence. It's just that the spiritual does not respond to our five senses.

You can't smell it, see it, touch it. Jesus said, when he was resurrected and appeared to the disciples, they were scared witless because they knew he was dead.

[36 : 42] And now here before them is one standing who looks like but couldn't be Jesus. Jesus said, they thought they had seen a ghost, a spirit.

Can't be him because we know he died. He's dead. And Jesus said, handle me and see for a spirit has not flesh and bone as you see me have.

But there was a time. There I use that word again. There was an existence where the son was.

Before the incarnation. What did he look like? What was his form? How did he appear? And what about the Holy Spirit?

Now we don't have that much difficulty believing that the Holy Spirit is spirit. It even goes with his name. But what about the Father and the Son? Jesus said, God is spirit. And they that worship him in spirit must worship him in spirit and in truth.

- [37 : 57] So let me lay this on you. The whole Trinitarian nature of God is spirit. All of it.
- And in this spirit form, one of these spirit beings took upon him the form of a human being via incarnation.
- And the impregnation of Mary's womb. And he was born a fully human being. But what was he before that? He was spirit.
- Did he ever visit earth before Bethlehem? Indeed he did. When Micah said, whose goings forth have been from of old.
- From everlasting? From everlasting? When was the Son ever here before Bethlehem?
- [39 : 08] Okay. Let's start with Genesis chapter 3. We're right next door.
- Genesis chapter 3. Verse 8. And they, Adam and Eve, heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.
- Who was that? What? Well, it says it was the Lord God. Walking? What was he walking with?
- How about two legs? They heard him. In order for them to hear him, he had to have physicality about him.
- Because he no doubt rustled the leaves or the shrubs or the bushes or whatever. They heard him coming. And they were hidden. Hiding behind some shrubs.
- [40 : 23] If you can imagine the silliness of this whole scene. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
- And the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? Do you think this was some mysterious booming voice from heaven communicating with Adam and Eve down here?
- There's no reason to believe that. But we do have difficulty putting feet and legs on this Lord God, don't we? That doesn't seem to be kosher, does it?
- And verse 10, And he said, I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid myself. And he said, Who told you that you were naked?
- Have you? You know, this is a regular conversation that's taking place between these parties. This is a face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball situation. And I don't think the text will allow for anything else.
- [41 : 28] There's no reason to believe that God is somehow speaking to Adam and Eve by remote control. He's there. They're seeing him. And not only that, but I think he looks much like them.
- Can I prove that? Nope. But I do think that when the scripture says that God created Adam in his own image and likeness.
- Now, I'm already almost out of time. And I hate to leave you dangling in the middle of this, but I have no other choice. But I just want you to think in terms of this one thing, because this is, to me, this is an incredible concept.
- What I am saying is that in this spirit form existence of these three beings who constitute the Godhead, and I take it, and I take it that it is the person of the Son, but I do not know that for sure.
- I just know it was deity. And when he came down here and created Adam out of the dust of the ground.
- [42 : 48] You know how I insist on literalizing much of scripture, and I think it is to be taken literally. And when the scriptures say that God fashioned, formed Adam from the dust of the ground, I think that's exactly what it means.

I know God could have stood back and said, let it be. And Adam just comes right up out of the ground, fully formed and ready to go.

But I think he fashioned him. I think he molded him. I think he shaped him into an actual physical body. If you will, a big clay man.

What's wrong with this to most theologians? Oh, it's much too literal. It's crass literalism.

Yeah, but I think a lot of things are really literal. It is we who refuse to accept things on the basis of their simplicity, and we insist on complicating them.

[43 : 49] Now, when the creator fashioned and formed Adam, what did he use for a model?

How did he decide to make Adam with two legs and two arms and a head? How did he decide that? Well, it's true. He didn't tell us how he decided it, but that's what he came up with.

And I would go so far as to say that this is one of his goings forth that have been from of old, from everlasting, that there was a physical representation of deity there.

Now, I suspect that our Mormon friends would really love this because they like to think of God as being physical anyway. But I am not embracing the Mormon concept of the physicality of God, so dismiss that idea from your mind.

I think that they are entirely wrong. And also the idea that you too can be a God one day is part of their erroneous theology.

[44 : 51] So I'm not embracing Mormonism or any of their concepts of the deity. I am saying that when God created man, he both created him and he made him.

And the words in the Hebrew are bara and yatsar. And one word means to make, and it means to fashion out of pre-existing material. What was the pre-existing material?

It was the soil containing all of the chemical components that are found in your body. They are in the dust of the earth. And he formed him and fashioned him.

That's using pre-existing material. But the scriptures also say in addition to God making Adam out of pre-existing material, he also created Adam. And the word for create means to bring into existence something that had no existence in any way, shape, or form before.

In other words, it was creation out of nothing. So man is both made out of something and made out of nothing. And that which is made out of nothing is your spirit.

[46 : 02] Because your spirit is immaterial. It is not physical. Your spirit indwells your body. And it animates the body. And it controls the body.

And once your spirit is gone, you are dead. Lord Jesus said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And he dismissed his spirit.

He breathed his last. And he died. His physical body remained behind. His spirit went to be with his father. And so does yours if you are in Christ.

It is the human spirit that is regenerated at salvation. Your body is not changed one whit. It's just your real person. Your spirit.

So when the scriptures say that Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, I think the image means Adam was created to look like the one who fashioned him, created him.

[47 : 05] And that was a physical representation of the son of God before Bethlehem. And there are numerous other instances where he also appears in an undeniable fashion.

And then when it also says that God created Adam in addition to making him, we're told, I think it's Genesis 2-4, that God breathed into Adam the breath of life.

And Adam became a living soul. Now he's complete. He's got a body and a spirit. And the two of them together comprise the soul.

So we are a soul who has a body and a spirit. And I think it is so neat because in this way, we in some small way reflect the nature and character of God, the deity.

You have a physical body. You have a non-physical spirit. And the two go together to comprise your soul. So we are a kind of a trinity and a reflection of the character and nature of God.

[48 : 18] So when we are made in his image, we are physically fashioned after the model that he used, which I think was himself. And we are also created in that we are given a capacity, a spiritual capacity to relate to God.

And along with that, and I haven't time to develop this, but it's just fascinating. I've been writing about it later. Along with that, God has instilled in us an intuition.

And this intuition corresponds to knowledge whereby you know something intuitively. You don't know it because you logically reason it out.

You just know it. I mean, you just know it. And you know that you know it. And you don't have to stop to think about it. You know if you touch the stove, you're going to get burned.

You don't do that. That's an intuitive knowledge. And we get that from God. And you know, none of other God's creatures have intuition.

[49 : 26] They have instinct. They don't have intuition. Instinct means you are programmed to do certain things instinctively.

And instinctiveness has no moral accountability with it. Can you imagine a lion being remorseful and sorrowful over having killed and eaten a gazelle?

Can you imagine a gazelle feeling guilt because he has deprived the lion of a meal? Why do these animals behave the way they do? Well, they have no volition.

They just have instinct. They don't have intuition. But you have intuition. And with intuition comes moral accountability and responsibility. God has made us moral beings. And that, too, is part of this image.

Because it is contained. Our morality is contained in our spirit. And our spirit corresponds to the likeness of God. So we are made in the image of God physically and in the likeness of God spiritually.

[50 : 37] We have an ability to connect with him that animals do not have. And yet, and this is another subject. I'm just opening things here to just prime the pump a little bit for what's coming later.

Animals have a soul. Did you know that? Scripture refers to it many, many times that animals have souls. And they also have spirits. Can you believe that?

Why in the world would an animal need a spirit? And the answer is programming. That's how God programs animals. That's how God teaches a polar bear how to be a polar bear.

A polar bear is born with the DNA knowledge and the spirit information communicated to him in information how he is to act and conduct his life as a polar bear.

What he's supposed to eat. What he's not supposed to eat. How he's supposed to kill. How she's supposed to nurse her young. All of that. That's all information. And it comes through the animal spirit. And the difference between human spirits and animal spirits in Ecclesiastes says the animal dies.

[51 : 49] The animal dies and his spirit goes down. The animal spirit is buried with the body of the spirit. But when a man dies, his spirit goes up.

Hey, we are into something here. And it is fascinating stuff. I can't wait to kick off a new year with this. We're going to have to put the Sermon on the Mount on hold.

And we probably won't get to it until February. But this stuff is just fermenting in my brain. And I've got to get it out. And it is fascinating. I tell you, the more I do this and the more I look at this, the bigger God gets.

And it is just wonderful. Well, that's the introduction. Not the whole message, but that's the introduction.

And we'll continue it next week. Would you pray with me, please? Father, we are just absolutely awed at your character and nature and who you are and what you are about and what you have done.

[52 : 57] And we just want to thank you for giving us the capacity and ability to appreciate some of these things about you, even though it's on a very low level and doesn't begin to touch the depths of where and who you really are.

But we want to know more. And we want to know more so we can be more intelligently and worshipfully obedient.

We believe that you have great truths in store for us. And we want to be eager to dig them out and revel and rejoice in them because we believe this delights your heart as well.

Thank you for what you've been pleased to reveal. And we trust that each of us will be stimulated and stirred in our inner man to continually search the scriptures and see whether these things are so.

We bless you for it all in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. And Happy New Year.