

~ The Three Worlds! ~

Wonders of the Universe

Who has not looked up at night and wondered about the stars and planets slowly moving across the sky? We observe a cyclic precision in the heaven's motion. Yet we do not see the hand commanding the stars.

Looking at life on our planet Earth, man has questioned as to who is controlling our world. Ourselves? A higher being? Or even natural causes? Added to the mystery is what is the meaning and purpose of life and of death which has occurred for over 6000 years?

In search of these elusive answers, man has used science and technology to satisfy his curiosity. For example, Galileo built a telescope to find clues. Today's Hubble telescope, which Galileo and others could only dream of, provides a view into deep space with the promise of many answers. Yet even with the information gained from space probes and lunar trips, mankind is not any closer to answering "Who is in command?" or "What is the true purpose of man's existence?"

Bible Tells of Heavens and Earth

Can searching the Bible provide a hint? The first two chapters of Genesis describe the creative process for the heavens and the Earth. In the Book of Job, God tells us who sets and orders the sky with "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." Job 9:8-10. See Job 38:31-33.

Some answers to "What is man...?" are provided in Job 7:17-21; 15:14-16; Psa. 8:4-8; 144:3,4. With this information we find man has fallen short of perfection, but one day his sins will not be remembered. (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17) When will be that future day? Will it be for some or all?

To help us begin to understand "that day", Apostle Peter tells of three worlds. The first is *The World That Was* – "And spared not the old world..." (2 Peter 2:5) The second is *The Present Evil World* – "But the heavens and the earth, which are now..." (2 Peter 3:7) And the third is

The World to Come – "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth..." (2 Peter 3:13) These three worlds represent God's timeline of mankind's history and the purpose of man's life lessons.

The World That Was

The first world began, as shown on the enclosed chart, with the creation of Adam in God's image as a perfect human being. (Gen.1:31; Deut. 32:4) Then sin entered into Adam's world. Pride and ambition were conceived in the thoughts of Lucifer (Ezek. 28: 11-17); his lie, "Ye shall not surely die" led to Eve being deceived and Adam's willful sin. The curse, death, followed. (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:14) With God's permission of evil, the downhill trend of sinful man continued for 1656 years until there was nearly a total corruption of mankind except for Noah and his family. Gen. 6:9

Was mankind's rapid fall the result only of his own actions? Consider, as Lucifer became disobedient to God, so other angels chose to interfere with man's death sentence in an attempt to save him. These "Sons of God", not trusting in God's plan for mankind's redemption, materialized as men and married daughters of the human race. The offspring were not like those born of the seed of Adam, but were instilled with the vitality of the angels. They were mighty men of great mental and physical abilities. Born as the result of pride, they exhibited pride also against Adam's weaker sons. Then in God's due time He judged all those creatures with the breath of life including the sons of the fallen angels. Judgment also came on the angels who did not keep their first estate. They lost many powers; their disobedience resulted in imprisonment to Earth's atmosphere. Gen. 6:5-7; Jude 6

The exception of Noah and his family, and the animals in the ark, was due to his uncorrupted faith in God's promise of a redeeming seed for Adam and his offspring. This same faith was taught to Noah by his faithful forefathers.

The Present Evil World

This age began with eight souls untouched by the physical corruption of the angels, but still under the same curse of Adam – death. In addition, the minds of

men were still susceptible to the influence of the Prince of this world, Lucifer, and his minions. (Eph. 2:2) For the next 5000+ years, God referred to disobedient mankind of this age as those on the broad road to destruction. Matt. 7:13

Within the age are three distinct periods of history, preserved for our information and lessons. The first period deals with a special group noted by their faith and is referred to as the Patriarchal Age. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance..." (Heb. 11:8) Apostle Paul continues to note the faith of Abraham's son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. They demonstrated great faith in a future promised land and in becoming the father(s) of a great nation. However, they did not see the fulfillment of God's promise in their life times.

The next period of this age begins with the death of Jacob after blessings to his twelve sons. The Jewish Age begins with the faith of Joseph and the development of a growing nation in Egypt. Two hundred and fifteen years later it was by faith that Moses led 600,000 sons of Jacob and their families out of Egypt. This event was a birth of a nation and a start of God fulfilling His promise to Abraham.

God wanted the sons of Jacob to have a special relationship with Him. First, He gave them a mediator, Moses, and perfect laws by which to live. Next, He gave them a sanctified priesthood to make an atoning sacrifice for their sins. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [of sins]." (Heb. 9:22) As a nation having been sanctified by God, He said "...Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn:" Ex. 4:22

Of Israel, Amos 3:2 tells us, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Truly there has been only one nation in a covenant relationship with both blessings and curses. If the people did God's Will, then Israel would be blessed and live. If not, the consequence was disfavor and death. (Deut. 30:15-20) For 1845 years Israel received God's favor with periods of punishment. The period of favor ended 1) when Jesus pronounced his woes and 2) as part of the Jewish Harvest which end-

ed in 70 A.D. with the Temple's destruction.

What came out of this harvest? During Jesus' ministry, he told his disciples to preach the kingdom message only to the house of Israel who had God's law. (Matt. 10:6) "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master." (Gal. 3:24-25) The Jewish Law prepared those "Israelites indeed" to accept Jesus' message and follow him as a disciple. Thus this harvest was the transition to the third period referred to as the Gospel Age.

During the Gospel Age, there are three major groups of mankind; those traveling the broad road, the Jews under disfavor, and those in the churches. Those in the churches are described by Jesus as the field sown by the owner with good seed and at night sown with other seeds by his enemy. (Matthew 13) The good seed were first those Jewish followers of Jesus. Three and a half years later, Cornelius and other Gentiles were grafted in as disciples. Under the delusion of Satan, the church drew half-hearted or even illusory worshippers. And for nearly 2000 years, the latter were wolves in sheep's clothing to draw many away from true discipleship, to wage war within the church community and with the other world religions by sowing light for darkness and darkness for light. Isa. 5:20

Gospel Age Harvest

As the flood separated righteous Noah from the corrupted world, and as the Jewish Age Harvest separated the wheat, Jesus' disciples, from the chaff, Jews who disowned their promised Messiah (Luke 3:17), the ending of this period of time will have a separating harvest too.

The scriptures tell us that with the Lord's presence, His field is ready to harvest. The tares are being bundled for burning and the wheat is being gathered into His barn. What have we seen of the harvest with our Lord's presence?

Any student of Daniel has seen an increase in knowledge and in travel. (Dan. 12:4) Now more than 1845 years later, any student of God's promises to the Jews has seen their time of disfavor ending. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. ... her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." (Isa.40:1-2) (See Jer.16:18 and Zech. 9:12.) Israel

has returned to her promised land and the land has yielded its increase in agriculture and technology to support a great nation by Jehovah's hand.

How are the tares being bound? Jesus spoke of a time to come "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. (Luke 12:2) The tares will be revealed by Jesus for their true intention of worldly ambition by their deceptive association with the good seed. The misdirected tares will say, "... Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? ... and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I [Jesus] profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23) God's Will of true discipleship and sacrifice were never the tares' intention. And the returned Lord is guiding his flock out of Babylon leaving only the tares. (Rev. 18:4) What have you seen happening in the churches today?

The World to Come

In the age to come, God's promise to Abraham will be realized. "...multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; ... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..." (Gen. 22:17-18) The blessing to the nations will be in a resurrection of Adam and all the generations of his children that have ever lived. Those who bless will be the stars of heaven – Jesus and the true Church on the throne with a great multitude before them. (Rev. 7:4-9) AND the sands of the sea will be men of faith (Heb. 11) and the returned Nation of Israel. (Zech 8:23) We are told " '...he may teach us his ways...' For out of Zion [the New Heavens] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:3)

Those who were ever on the broad road as well as the tares will be given an earthly resurrection with a true opportunity for real life. "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa.35:8-10) With the old order of sin and Adamic death removed, a

"New Earth", a righteous order will be forevermore.

For those failing to grow in righteousness, the final harvest will be a separating of the sheep and goats followed by the little season to test all men's heart condition. Matt. 25:31,32; Rev. 20:7-9

Purpose of Mankind's Life

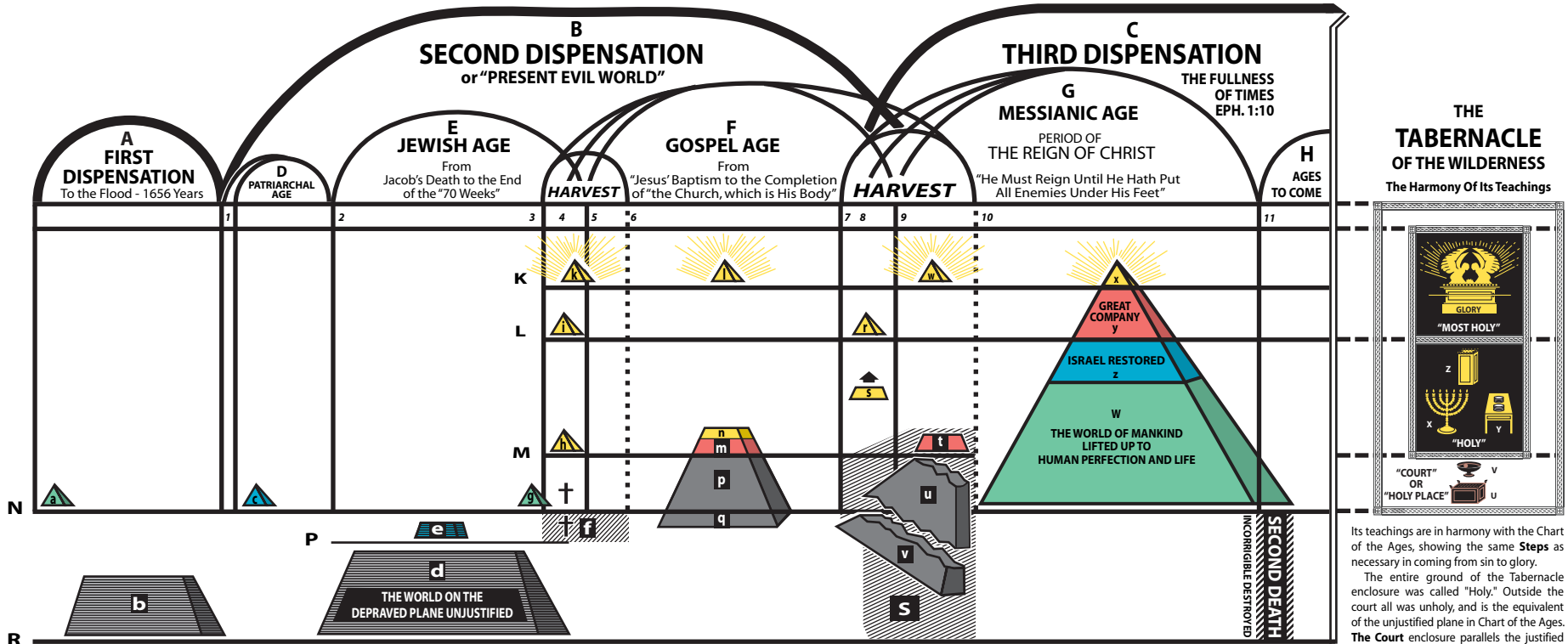
Seeing God's plan for fallen mankind, what was the purpose of God in having humans live, die, and then be raised to a newness of life? Adam was created physically, mentally, and morally perfect. He lacked the experience of understanding the effects of sin and God's mercy. All of his children were held captive to sin and death, and learned the consequences of sin. Then, God's mercy is revealed through Jesus' ransoming sacrifice. (1 Tim. 2:6) No longer under an Adamic curse, the result of the experience will be a perfect creation that can truly love and worship God and His son. Thus we begin to see that the hand of God is in command of the heavens and the affairs of Earth.

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Chart of the Ages

From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored



"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2

Its teachings are in harmony with the Chart of the Ages, showing the same **Steps** as necessary in coming from sin to glory.

The entire ground of the Tabernacle enclosure was called "Holy." Outside the court all was unholy, and is the equivalent of the unjustified plane in Chart of the Ages. The **Court** enclosure parallels the justified or **Perfect Human** plane. The **"Holy"** represents the condition of consecrated Christians, **Begotten of the Spirit**. The **Most Holy**, beyond the second veil, represents the **Perfect Spiritual** condition when "we shall be like Him." The glory plane is still further along the grand climax of hope — "Glory, Honor and Immortality."

