

How Good is God to Us?

(Go To Meeting)

Lindsay Stephens—January 27, 2023

It's a blessing to be together on the Sabbath Day where we can focus on:

- God's way of life
- God's Word
- God's Truth

and tune out from all the problems of the world!.

A question was asked recently: Is God fair? *God looks at things differently from the way human beings do in the flesh.*

In Isa. 55 God says 'My ways are not your ways, and your ways are not My ways.'

I'm going to focus on something different to that on how good is God to us? We can take this personally:

- How good is God to you?
- How good is God to me?

When we think about our lives, from our calling right to now, and what God has in store for us. To begin with, God is eternal; He has no beginning and no ending.

Genesis 1:1: "In *the* beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

People will say, 'Where did God come from? If God is in the beginning, where did He come from? *That is something that God knows Himself! He has no beginning and no end!*

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him" (vs 1-3).

So, the One Who became Jesus Christ was there right from the beginning.

What I want to do in the message is to present things from three categories: *the past, present and future!*

In the past we think in terms of how great was the universe the God had created? We're seeing pictures of the universe, parts of the universe, and the latest information we have is from the James Webb telescope where it estimates that there are:

- 150 billion galaxies in the known universe
- the average galaxy has 100-million stars

How many stars does that make? *1+24 zeros! That's very hard to imagine!*

Psalms 147:4: "**He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names.**"

Isaiah 40:26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, Who has created these *things*, Who brings out their host by number? **He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for He is strong in power; not one fails.**"

Just think how great the universe is, and since He created the universe, ***how great God is!***

David made an observation, Psalm 8:1: "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have ordained strength because of Your adversaries, to silence the enemy and the avenger.... [Satan and his demons] ...When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers... [David thought about this] ...the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? For You have made him a little lower than God and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet" (vs 1-6).

- all the animals
- all the plants

Man has dominion over all that!

When we think of where Earth is in the galaxy, the Milky Way, where the Earth is located in a spiral between the center and the outer rim, the location of it is vital for it to be able to have life.

I'm not very well versed in this sort of thing, but God obviously had consideration as to where the Earth in this solar system was going to be located in the galaxy in order to sustain life.

What does that have to do with us? There was a time when we were called. So, God created this universe for a reason. But the creation of the universe—as vast as it is, as expansive as it is—was not the main focus. Not the main thing.

God had more in mind, He created mankind—Adam and Eve—and from them we're all descended. We were meant to be called, in addition to the spirit in man, we were meant to have God's Holy Spirit. So, we're all called.

In my case, and I can assure you it was nothing like the Apostle Paul's calling. With me it was something very slow and gradual over a period of time. I remember once when I was listening to Garner Ted Armstrong, and I was with my brother at the time. He was the one who tuned it on and he said, 'That's Garner Ted Armstrong.' It didn't mean anything to me.

Then about a year later I had a radio on and listened to the same voice. I decided to listen to it, instead of looking for some music. I listened to what he was saying, and as time went on I listened more and more, and finally wrote in for the *Plain Truth* magazine, for the booklet: *The Wonderful World Tomorrow*.

After about a year when I read the book: *US and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, at that time I knew where I should be going. At that time the focus was on 1975, and I thought I better do something quickly because I didn't want to get caught out while everyone is going to flea.

Soon after I learned that, I was called up for national service and I thought that maybe that's a way of escape from the world at the time, so I can think about it more being in the Army. But it didn't work out that way. I thought maybe I should go the commanding officer and say to him, 'Sir, I can't keep the Sabbath, I can't go drill on the Sabbath or go to the rifle range. It's the Sabbath Day, after all God has called me.'

I didn't do that, I kept everything as low-key and as incognito as I could. I didn't anyone else to know. As it was, a few people did find out seeing me reading the Bible. 'What are you doing?' I got into a few conversations that I shouldn't have gotten into at the time.

As time went on, after I was discharged from the army, I thought that maybe I should go over to Bricketwood and turn up and say, 'Here I am.' But by the time I was out of the army Bricketwood had closed. Another couple of years went by, and I decided there and then—after I finished completing school—this is it! I'm going to services and that's where it all started with me.

Everybody has there own journey, and everyone is different. I look forward to hearing about it on the Sea of Glass and beyond. But we're in age of man and Adam and Eve were given all the instruction by God that they needed at the time.

But sooner or later sin entered and because we're able to make choices, the ability to make choice, we were given choices to make—we weren't robots—sin invariably entered. How does God look at that?

Exodus 34:6: And the LORD passed by before him [Moses] ...and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation'" (vs 6-7).

This was said after the 'golden calf' sin, which made Moses angry and he broke the tablets that were written by the finger of God, the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 33:19: "And He said, '**I will make all My goodness pass before you**... [with all the sin that man does, He made a promise] ...and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.'"

Sidebar: I was in the medical field for a few years, and one of the courses I did—having no clinical background—one of these courses on the human body, the systems of the human body. I did have God in mind, because I knew that God was the Creator of mankind.

I learned a little bit about the nine systems of the human body:

1. the skeletal systems—the bones and joints
2. the muscular system—Involving muscles
3. the circulatory system—the heart and blood flow
4. the respiratory system—lungs
5. the digestive system—stomach, liver
6. the urinary system—kidneys
7. the nervous system—all aspects of the brain
8. the endocrine system—various glands, thyroid
9. the reproductive system—both male and female

I found the course fascinating!

Every cell and chemical in our bodies has been carefully and purposefully assembled by God the Creator.

Sometimes I look up things on the Internet that I think might be useful, and apparently there are something to the tune of 100-trillion cells in the human body. God knows each one of them, just like He knows and numbers each star, He knows each cell that's in the human body. That's fantastic.

Yet, at the end of this course, the

presenter—who is quite an expert in his field—came up with some vague thing about the ‘glory of evolution’ as being the originator from some vague slime in the earth. It made me flabbergasted! How could he think this when all this was presented in the human body and all the systems? It reminded me of Rom. 1 where the intelligencia of the world, *the wise became fool!*

Psa. 139 indicates how David felt this part of the human body:

Psalms 139:1: “O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off. You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways, for there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether” (vs 1-4).

David understands it from the spirit of man from the time of life.

Verse 5: “You have enclosed me behind and in front, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I go up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there” (vs 5-8).

God knows the intimate parts of mankind!

Verse 9: “If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the farthest parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me shall be night’; even the darkness does not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; as is the darkness, so is the light to You... [Jesus Christ is the Light of the world (John 8:12)...for You have possessed my reins... [the spirit in man; God knows where we are] ... You have knit me together in my mother’s womb” (vs 9-13).

Verse 14: “I will praise You, for I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Your works are marvelous and my soul knows it very well. My substance was not hidden from You when I was made in secret... [it’s called a substance from the time of conception] ...and intricately formed in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes did see my substance, yet, being unformed... [God knew how it was going to be formed] ...and in Your book... [the *Book of Life* of genes and chromosomes] ...all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet, there were none of them” (vs 14-16).

Verse 17: “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more than the

sand; when I awake, I am still with You” (vs 17-18).

Australia has 16,000 miles of coastline, 25,000 kilometers. It’s estimated that the number of grains of sand is 7.5-billion, and every one of those grains of sand is different. Different in size, shape, color, and it reminds all of us who are called into God’s Church are different. We all have different personalities. *God is going to use us in the way that He sees fit!*

Psalms 36:5: “Your loving kindness, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are like the great deep; O LORD, You preserve man and beast” (vs 5-6).

I find it incredible that in the deepest part of the ocean, which is about 7 miles deep, there is still life.

Verse 7: How precious is Your loving kindness, O God! Therefore, the children of men take refuge under the shadow of Your wings.”

Several times in the Psalms, “the shadow of Your wings” is referred to as God’s protection! (Psa. 91; 57).

Verse 8: “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the richness of Your house; and You shall make them drink of the river of Your pleasures, for with You is the fountain of life; **in Your Light we shall see Light**” (vs 8-9)—*Jesus Christ, the Light of the world!*

Verse 10: “O continue Your loving kindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.”

Psalms 121:1: “I will lift up my eyes to the hills: from where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He Who keeps you will not slumber” (vs 1-3).

God is not going to go off to sleep! He’s not going to go off to some other part of the universe that He created, some far off galaxy and let us deal with our trials.

Verse 4: “Behold, He Who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; **the LORD is your shade** on your right hand” (vs 4-5)—*signifying strength!*

Shade can be another interpretation of the shadow of His wings, protection!

Verse 7: “The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your life. The LORD shall guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore” (vs 7-8).

God is so good to us! David has indicted that multiple times through the Psalms. We need to view who we are in order to view God.

In Psa. 136 David made this view of how to view God; the whole Psalm had a theme to it.

Psalm 136:1: “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, **for His mercy endures forever**. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, **for His mercy endures forever**. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords, **for His mercy endures forever**; to Him Who alone does great wonders, **for His mercy endures forever**; to Him Who by understanding made the heavens... [all the magnificence that the heavens has, all the stars and galaxies] **...for His mercy endures forever**” (vs 1-5).

The whole theme of this Psalm looks to God Whose mercy endures forever! How we are to look to God.

Verse 26: “Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven, **for His mercy endures forever**”—*which sums it up!*

I want to try and focus on the future a bit, where we are, and God’s goodness.

John 1:14_[transcriber’s correction]: “And the Word became flesh...”

Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant” (vs 5-7).

This is where it ties in with John 1:14 where the Word became flesh. He emptied Himself of all the powers that He had being Co-Creator of the universe to become flesh. Him was subject to all the trials that we as physical beings encounter.

He did the reverse of what God is doing to us. He became flesh. What God is doing to us is focusing on us becoming spirit beings by overcoming in character by the grace of God, and all that Jesus Christ has done for us. He did to Christ the reverse of what He is doing to us. How great is that?

I want to go to the true Lord’s Prayer in:

John 17:7: “Now, they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send Me. I am praying for them... [those of us who have been called] ...I am not praying for the world,

but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them” (vs 7-10).

Verse 17: “Sanctify... [make Holy] ...them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth.” *We know that Jesus Christ is the Word!*

Verse 18: “Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* Truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word” (vs 18-20).

That’s looking into the future! The future generations who are going to be called into the Body of Christ.

Verse 21: “That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us... [God the Father and the One Who became Jesus Christ] ...in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that* We are one” (vs 21-22).

This is the same way that *God the Father thinks of us*—as He thinks of Jesus Christ—*as being potential spirit beings!*

Psalm 40:5: “O LORD my God, many things You have done...”

Think about what God has done for each one of us from the time that we’ve been called into the Church. How He has opened up our mind. There are probably many things He has done in our lives, intervened in certain areas. Think about how we have been growing through God’s Word!

“...Your wonderful works and Your thoughts which are toward us; there is none to compare unto You...” (v 5)

Even the creation, all the universe and galaxies that’s God has created is not to compare with how we are growing through God’s Spirit, by choice!

“...if I could declare and speak of them, they would be more than can be told” (v 5).

Psalm 100:4: “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise... [we enter into God’s courts by giving praises] ...give thanks unto Him and bless His name, for the LORD is good; His steadfast love is everlasting; and His faithfulness endures to **all generations**” (vs 4-5)—*going way off into the future!*

Palm 145:1: “I will extol You, my God, O

King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works..." (v 1-6).

All of this is done in the Millennium. Physical people are going to know about God! They will know about Jesus Christ as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

"...and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness" (vs 6-7). *God's greatness is infinite!*

Verse 13: "Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD upholds all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and loving in all His works. The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in Truth" (vs 13-18).

This is a fantastic promise. *When we call upon God in Truth, He is near to us!* How good is that?

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him."

They weren't called and didn't have God's Holy Spirit, so they don't understand Him!

Verse 2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is."

We'll be in the spirit realm as spirit beings. How fantastic is that? I've been focusing on how good God is to us. I've been speaking of the three dimensions of the *past, present and future*, and how it applies to each one of us. We all have a part in this, this is fantastic!

Revelation 21:3: "And I heard a great voice from heaven say, 'Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God.'"

We're all going to be spirit beings. There

won't be any flesh, physical beings with a mind of flesh and carnality.

Verse 4: "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away."

There will be nothing of the flesh there. This is New Jerusalem!

Verse 7: "**The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.**"

This is a promise, and in New Jerusalem there won't be any question whether God is there, just look at what we just read.

Verse 8: "But *the* cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is *the* second death."

Verse 7: "**The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.**"

In other words be part owners of the universe. All the galaxies that God has created, we'll be part owners of that *if we overcome as indicated here in this verse!*

With all this that I've presented, we do come back to the beginning of this message where we asked a question to each one of us: **How good is God to us?**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 1:1
- 2) John 1:1-3
- 3) Psalm 147:4
- 4) Isaiah 40:26
- 5) Psalm 8:1-6
- 6) Exodus 34:6-7
- 7) Exodus 33:19
- 8) Psalm 139:1-18
- 9) Psalm 36:5-10
- 10) Psalm 121:1-5, 7-8
- 11) Psalm 136:1-5, 26
- 12) John 1:14
- 13) Philippians 2:5-8
- 14) John 17:7-10, 17-22
- 15) Psalm 40:5
- 16) Psalm 100:4-5
- 17) Psalm 145:1-7, 13-18
- 18) 1 John 3:1-2

19) Revelation 21:3-4, 7-8, 7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 55
- Romans 1
- John 8:12
- Psalm 91; 57

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Transcribed:

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