

Our Origin and Destiny

Sermon #0590

Study by W. D. Frazee

Suppose you should wake up one morning and find yourself on a great ship out on the ocean. You don't know how you got there. I suppose there would be at least two questions in your mind. How did I get here? Where did this ship start from and where is it going?

You and I are passengers on the ship earth. Somewhere as we go we awake to the consciousness that we must have come from somewhere, and we hope we are headed for somewhere.

I am so glad that there is a book that has that information in it. And the first page in this book starts us off with the answer to the first question.

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

This world is not here by chance. Someone made it. I wonder why?

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" Psalms 8:3-6.

Man was made to have dominion. He was made to run this planet. So we have not only our origin but the purpose of our creation. Let's see how clear the record is on this point:

"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" Genesis 1:26.

This true story of how this world started, and man's place in it, is peculiar to the religion of the world. All false religions have either utter ignorance on this subject, or else a perversion. Let's see the contrast between the religion of the Bible and all others.

In Jeremiah chapter ten the picture is given us of the heathen chopping down a tree, cutting and shaping it in the form of an image, decking it with silver and gold, and then kneeling down and worshipping it.

"But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion. Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of His inheritance: The LORD of hosts is His name" Jeremiah 10:10-12, 14, 16.

That which distinguishes the God of the Scriptures is the fact that we are dealing with the Creator. He made the world, and He made us.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" Revelation 4:11.

This is the basis of our worship of God. He created all things, so He is worthy to receive glory and honor and power. We are not here just by chance. We are not here by evolution. We are not here by accident. We are here because of the creative act of the God of the universe. Therefore we are here not to carry out our plans. We are here to carry out the assignment that was given to man as the steward of this world. We were made to have dominion. We are to act in the place of God in carrying out His plans and purposes.

So the answer to where we came from is God made the world and us. He made us in His image to carry out His plans and purposes.

Where are we going? What is going to happen to this world? Is the sun going to burn out one of these days, and the earth becomes so cold that all life on it becomes extinct? Or is this earth destined to collide with some other celestial body and end in a great explosion?

If there were no Bible, you and I would not know anything to those questions. Some professor might give us his educated guesses, but it wouldn't mean very much. Without this lamp of prophecy we would be in darkness concerning the future. But the One who loved us enough to make this planet for our home, and loved us enough to make us in His image and turn this planet over to us, loves us enough that He wants to share with us His knowledge of His plans for the future.

The book of Daniel is a wonderful example of this desire on God's part. We have repeated great lines of prophecy, reaching from ancient times down to the last generation. Notice the grand sweep of prophecy, and notice that in every case these lines of prophecy focus upon the future of this planet. We have God's answer to the question where we are going?

In Daniel chapter two a vision was given by God to the king of the world, Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about the very question that millions think

about, Where are we going? What is going to happen to me? Daniel told the king that was in his mind.

"As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter" Daniel 2:29.

That was a natural thing for a king to think about. It was a good thing for him to think about. What we do today is determined by what we think may happen or will happen tomorrow. An automobile driver who looks only a few feet in front of the car is a poor driver. The good driver is looking up the road as far as he can see, taking in the whole sweep of things ahead. So this king, lying on his bed thought, What is going to happen to my kingdom? What is going to happen to this world? What is the future?

God came near and gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream. Daniel came in later and interpreted it. Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image. The head was gold. The breast and arms were silver. The belly and thighs were brass. The legs were iron, and the feet and toes were mixed with iron and clay. And as we come down in history through Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, and the divided kingdoms of Europe which have stood there for over a thousand years, we find the focal point of the dream. That happened to that image? A stone was hurled at the feet of the image, and broke it all to pieces, and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. What is this?

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" Daniel 2:44.

We have the answer to the question, Where are we going? This great ship is headed for the end of earthly kingdoms, and the ushering in of the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is the end goal of life on this planet.

In Daniel chapter seven the kingdoms of man are represented under the cartoon figures of great beasts. The lion and bear and a beast with ten horns. Again the interpretation is clear. It is four great kingdoms. And the angel sums it up.

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" Daniel 7:17,18.

In this vision these four beasts need God's answer to man's rebellion in the judgment presented. The judgment, coming in the last generation, brings an end to all human governments, and the blessed kingdom of Christ is ushered in.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an

everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" Daniel 7:13-14.

Human history finds its goal in the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the people of God are to share that kingdom, thus carrying out the original commission that man should have dominion over the earth.

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Hitherto is the end of the matter" Daniel 7:26-28.

This is the grand event toward which all creation moves—the coming of Jesus, the judgment, and putting an end to the pride and sin of man, and bringing us to the everlasting reign of righteousness.

In Daniel chapter eight we have another prophecy. This time Babylon has gone off the stage of action, so Medo-Persia is introduced under the figure of a ram, Greece under the figure of a goat. The prophet sees a great battle between them, and Greece wins the victory. Finally that power is divided into four, and another kingdom rises from one of them which is recognized as Rome. We come over the same panorama of history, and again we find earthly governments and religions in conflict with God and His people. And finally the question is asked:

"How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" Daniel 8:13,14.

The cleansing of the sanctuary is the climax of the eight chapter as the judgment is the climax in the seventh chapter. They both relate to the same experience—the developing of God's people where sin can be blotted out of the books of record, and God can take the kingdom and purge the desecrator of His law.

In the tenth and eleventh and twelfth chapters we have the final chain of prophecy. After relating various events of history between Daniel's time and the end we come to chapter twelve.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the

firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" Daniel 12:1-3.

I suppose we are all like children who love stories with a happy ending. God made us that way. Thank God, the wonderful story of this world has a happy ending. It is so in all these great visions of Daniel down through history to the time when Michael stands up. Then the children of God are delivered, and this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we come to the book of Revelation. We see again over and over that the climax is the coming of Jesus and the setting up of His kingdom. The first three chapters deal with the messages to the seven churches. The last, Laodicea, means the judging of God's people, linking the last judgment hour of Daniel 7. To that church is given the promise of the lost dominion.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" Revelation 3:21.

In chapters four, five, six, and seven we have the prophecy of the seven seals. Notice the climax:

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" Revelation 6:12-15.

The great earthquake was the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Then follows in quick succession the darkening of the sun and the moon becoming blood, and then the stars of heaven falling. This happened in 1833. Then the heaven departed, and John sees the Lord coming. The climax of these seals is the coming of Jesus.

In chapters eight, nine, ten, and eleven we have the prophecy of the seven trumpet, revealing certain events of history. But I want you to notice the climax of it:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" Revelation 11:15.

Beginning with the chapter twelve we have another great line of prophecy. The kingdoms and governments of this world who unite in persecuting the people of God are represented under the figures of the dragon, the beast, and the two-horned beast. As you

follow this prophecy you see these earthly governments living by false religious inspiration, seeking to blot out God's people. But they are not blotted out.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints" Revelation 15:2-3.

Chapters sixteen and seventeen and eighteen and nineteen deal with the great plagues and the final judgments on Babylon. Notice the climax:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war" Revelation 19:11.

The rest of the chapter pictures His advent surrounded by the armies of heaven as He rides forth to conquer as King of kings and Lord of Lords. Again, the coming Christ is the great climatic event.

In the twentieth chapter we have the millennium introduced, and the final destruction of sin and sinners. Then the grandest of all pictures:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" Revelation 21:1-3.

Where we are going is abundantly answered in these great lines of prophecy. There is no question about the future of this planet. We don't have to wonder about whether some hydrogen bomb is going to blow this earth to bits. We don't have to worry about whether some star is going to collide with us, or some other disaster. There are going to be troubles in this world. But the future of this planet is, without any question, to be the home of the people of God, and God dwelling with man.

Where did we come from? God made us. Where are we going? We are going to the setting up of the kingdom of God by the personal appearing of Jesus Christ.

Did you ever stop to think that in the providence of God we are given a name which should always remind us of these two great answers to man's questions. We are Seventh-day Adventist. What does seventh-day bring to our mind? The Sabbath. And what does the Sabbath bring to our mind? Creation. Let's repeat the Fourth Commandment:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" Exodus 20:8-11.

A true Sabbath keeper always has in his heart the answer to the question, Where did we come from? It is all clear. In six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and the Sabbath reminds us of that.

The wonderful climatic event is the coming of Jesus. Adventist means one who is looking for the advent of Christ. As Paul says:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus 2:13-14.

In the name, Seventh-day Adventist, given us by God, we have the two great questions answered of origin and destiny, the past and the future, the beginning and the end. And that end is the real beginning of that which will never end—the everlasting kingdom of our Lord.

Between that day when the world was made by the almighty word of Jesus Christ, and that other day so soon to be ushered in, when we shall see the King coming and welcome Him with joy, stretches the six thousand years of human history where the great controversy between Christ and Satan is always in progress. And in between that great event of creation and that great event of the setting up of the kingdom, we see standing the cross where the One who created us gave His life to redeem us that we might be subjects of that kingdom which He is setting up. Without the cross all this would be impossible.

But the cross makes possible the redemption of the lost dominion. The cross also tells us of the value that God placed upon man in the original creation. The cross did not make that value. It revealed that value.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16.

God gave His only begotten Son because that which was lost was of such infinite value—man made in the image of his Creator.

I am thankful for creation. I am thankful for the cross. I am thankful for the coming King and kingdom.

Are you? Would you like to express in your own words your thanksgiving to the One who made you and died for you, and is coming for you? It will cheer His heart. It is a very personal thing between you and Him.

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W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org