***"What Is Man That Thou Art Mindful of Him?"***

I'd like to begin this lesson by asking a few questions (You don't have to answer out loud - just think about these things for a minute): When was the last time you walked outside on a clear starry night and gazed up into the heavens in wonder and awe at all of the heavenly bodies floating above? Or when is the last time you stopped for a moment on a sunny day and looked at the brightness of the sun and the lovely blue sky above? When is the last time you stopped to listen to the birds sing? When is the last time you considered the fact that all of these wonderful blessings that are a part of this vast universe are the works of Almighty God? And, when is the last time that you thought to yourself in relationship to God and said, **"What Is Man That Thou Art Mindful of Him?"** That is the question we're going to be asking this morning. You know, as we observe the things that exist in nature it becomes evident very quickly that there is a God and that God has taken a peculiar interest of man. As the basis for our study I'd like to read from Psalm 8 verses 3 and 4. Notice what it says: **"3When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; 4What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?"** In that passage, the Psalmist thought it rather odd or strange that an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Being such as the Lord who fills heaven and earth should or would waste a single thought on a creature as pitiful is man. Maybe you've asked yourself that same question. You know, we all question our existence from time to time but have you ever stopped to consider just how much more wonderful it would have seemed to the Psamist if he had known some of the facts revealed by modern science? For example, what if he had been told that this earth on which we live was 24,000 miles in circumference and that it was rotating on its axis at the rate of a 1,000 miles per hour while at the same time hurtling through interstellar space at the rate of 45,000 miles per hour (Even when compared to the swiftest rifle bullet is like standing still!) And what if he had been told that the sun was 92 million miles away and that the light it generates (which moves at an inconceivably fast 186,000 miles per second) still takes over 8 minutes to reach us. Suppose also that David had looked through a modern telescope that brings millions of stars into focus had discovered that our solar system is only one of billions that exist within our own galaxy and that our galaxy is just one of billions of galaxies in the observable universe. If David had known all these revelations of modern science, how much more would have been his amazement at the fact that God still condescends to notice man. In our study today I want for us to consider the question **"What Is Man That Thou Art Mindful of Him?"** Why exactly is it that God has taken such a special interest in man? Please consider the following points:

**PART 1: What Is Man?**

**(1) Man Is Composed of Three Main Parts:** Man is made up of physical material, the body, that can be seen and touched but he is also made up of immaterial aspects which are intangible. This includes the soul, spirit, intellect, will, emotions, conscience, and so forth. These immaterial characteristics exist beyond the physical lifespan of the human body and are therefore eternal. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, **"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."** These immaterial aspects -- the spirit, soul, and body -- make up the whole personality. The Bible makes it clear that the soul and spirit are the primary immaterial aspects of humanity while the body is the physical container that holds them on this earth.

**(2) Man's Days Are Few:** Your life on this earth is temporary. You’re not going to live forever! Several years ago the Jehovah’s Witnesses put out a little pamphlet that said something to effect that people are going to live forever. Well, I hate to disappoint you, but that’s not true! Psalm 89:47-48 the psalmist said, **“47Remember** (Remember what?) **how short my time is** (Our time on this earth is short. How short? Well, that depends. Job 14:1 says, **“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.”** When you compare eternity to earth life it’s just a few days.)**: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? 48What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”** You’re not going to live very long on this earth even if you live to be a 100 years old and most of us won’t live that long. In 2 Corinthians 4:17 Paul refers to this earth life as being just a moment – just a moment and then it’s all over. When you compare your earth life with eternity it’s just a moment – it’s not going to last very long. In Psalm 90 the psalmist talked about how long life is. Remember how he put that? He said, **“9For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told** (It doesn’t take very long to tell a tale, does it?)**. 10The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”** That tells us that this life is not going to be forever – it’s only temporary. Now what we do sometimes is to act like we’re going to live forever but that’s not the case. You’re not going to be here forever because earth life is temporary. James says in James 4:13-14, **“13Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”**

**(3) Man Is a Sinner:** You know, there are a lot of ways that you and I can learn about this and when you and I partake of the Lord’s Supper it tells us that we are sinners in need of a savior. In Matthew 26:28 it says, **“For this is my blood of the new testament,** (now watch this next phrase) **which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”** Let me ask you why was it that the Lord shed His blood in the first place? What does the passage say? It’s very simple, for the remission of sins. That’s the reason He shed His blood! In fact, the apostle Paul said in Romans 3:23, **“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”** and in verse 10 he said,*“there is none righteous, no not one.”* To sin means to "miss the mark" with respect to God's law and that's something all of us are guilty of.

**(4) Man's Soul Is Eternal:** In Ecclesiastes 12:7 the wise man indicated that the spirit of man never dies when he said, **“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”** We sometimes sing the song **Where The Soul of Man Never Dies**. In Acts 7:59 as Steven was being stoned to death do you remember what he said? He said, *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,”*which means it is eternal. You spirit will never, ever, ever die – it never goes out of existence. In 1 Peter 3:4 Peter mentioned that eternal spirit – he said it’s not corruptible like this body is. Your body will eventually get sick and die and return to the dust of the ground but the spirit that makes you tick will live on thru all eternity! The soul of man is eternal in the sight of God. But there’s another thing about man I want you to consider…

**(5) Man Is Incapable of Directing His Own Steps:** You know, a lot of people when you talk to them about the Bible they say, “I thought.” My friend, it doesn’t make any difference what you think or what I think. By the way, the first thing Saul of Tarsus saw when he was blind was that it did not matter what he thought. In Acts 26:9 this man who was blind said, **“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”** You see, it didn’t make any difference what he thought! Likewise in the book of Isaiah 55:8-9 when the prophet said, **“8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways** (those are some pretty good ways, aren’t they)**, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”** The next time you get to thinking “I thought” remember that God’s thoughts and man’s thoughts are not always the same. Do you remember what the weeping prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 10:23? He said, **“O Lord, I know** (Jeremiah, what is it that you know?) **that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”** The next time you get to thinking I’ll just direct my steps remember that it’s not in man that walketh to do that! The wise man said, **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”**

**PART 2: God's Mindfulness of Man**

**(1) He Created Us In His Own Image:** The Bible says in Genesis 1:26-27: **“26And 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. 27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”** According to these verses man is the very pinnacle of God’s creation! Here we are informed of how God created man in such a way as to dignify him by setting him apart from all other creatures. These passages teach us about the special and particular nature of mankind. The psalmist writes of the excellence of Almighty God and the honor due him for having created such a universe with such limitless and fathomless boundaries and then to be so thoughtful and perceptive as to remember to create such a minute creature as man. Psalms 8:4, *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* David then refers to Genesis 1:28-30 and tells how God elevated man by crowning him with glory and honor and placed him in a position of power and dominion over all other created things: **"5For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: 7All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."** (Psa. 8:5-8)

**(2) He Provides For Our Physical Needs:** It's no secret God has been mindful of each and every one of us. He sustains us as the apostle told the Athenians in Acts 17:28 that in God **“we live and move and have our very being.”** In Acts 14:17 the apostle had this to say: **“Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”** He provides us with all of the essentials of life. Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 6:27-33, **“27Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** God supplies us with all the essentials, the basics. He may not have provided us with everything we want, but He has certainly provided us with everything we need and that's one way that God has been mindful of man.

**(3) He Gave Us His Son:** John 3:16 says, **“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.”** This is perhaps the most significant thing that He has ever done for us. It’s difficult sometimes to fathom the great love that God had in sending us His only beloved Son. But, as Paul said in Romans 5:7-8, **“7For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”** The atoning sacrifice of Christ is the most precious gift ever given to mankind. Everything else pales in comparison. Without it we would be lost and without hope - doomed to eternal misery in hell unless it had been for the tremendous love that God had for all mankind. You see, all men everywhere have sinned according to Romans 3:23 and are in need of a Savior. Jesus Christ is our Savior and His sacrifice provides the atonement for our sins! 1 Timothy 1:15 says, **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”** The Bible points out in 1 John 2:2 that **“he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”** And that's another thing God has been mindful about.

**(4) He Gave Us His Word:** God gave to the world both His Son, Jesus Christ, and His written word, the Holy Scriptures. After Jesus Christ returned to heaven, the Bible, God's written word, remained on earth as God's eternal guide for mankind. But have you ever stopped to think about just how great a gift the Bible really is? Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: **“16All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”** He gave us this revelation according to 1 Corinthians 2:9 that **“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”** He gave us the Scriptures, the revelation, *“all things that pertain to life and godliness.”* (2 Pet. 1:3) In fact, Paul had this to say regarding these matters: **“3How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”** (Eph. 3:3-5) So it’s through reading and studying the Bible that we come to understand God’s will for our lives. Without the Bible we would be lost! The word of God gives us a clear path to follow in this world that is so full of darkness, despair, and uncertainty. As the Psalmist said, **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”** (Psa. 119:105) So we need to let the Bible be our only guide.

**(5) He Established The Church:**  Contrary to the thinking of some the church wasn’t an accident, an after-thought, or a last minute stop gap measure put into place. In fact, the Scriptures teach that Christ came for the express purpose of establishing His church! Did you know that? Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** And we know that the church was established in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. The Scriptures also point out that the church represents the very fullness of Christ! Paul penned in Ephesians 1:22-23, **“22And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”** God planned the church from all eternity according to 3:10-11: **“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** And it’s a glorious church (Eph. 5:27)! The church is important because it’s only place where you and I be reconciled to God.

**(7) He Gave Us A Plan By Which We Can Be Saved:** Not only did give us His Son, His word, and His church, He also gave us a way to be saved! In giving the Great Commission to His disciples Jesus said in Mark 16:15-16, **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”** Whenever you think about what man must do in order to be saved you need to realize that man – in, and of, and by himself – is simply incapable of making his own way. And the Steps of Salvation as revealed to us on the pages of inspiration, the Bible, are God’s plan for making men righteous. The Plan of Salvation is really a very simple process and involves the following steps: Hear (Rom. 10:17); Believe (Heb. 11:6); Repent (Acts 17:30); Confess (Rom. 10:10); Baptism (Acts 2:38). Baptism is what gives us the remission of sins. Its puts us in Christ (Gal. 3:27). It puts us in the church (1 Cor. 12:13). And it saves, Peter said (1 Pet. 3:21). Now that God’s Plan of Salvation from beginning to end. It’s not my plan, it’s not your plan, nor is it the church of Christ’s plan, it’s God’s plan!

**(8) He Give Us The Hope of Eternal Life:** The final thing that the Bible teaches God has been mindful about with respect to man is that He has given us all hope and a goal to shoot for and that is eternal life itself. Now you have to be careful with this subject because it’s easily misunderstood and greatly misused. Here’s the text I want you to think about – 1 John 5:11. It says, **“And this is the record** (John, we want to know this morning what does the record say! Watch it…)**, that God hath given to us** (That’s the key word ‘us’. Not everybody but us – those of us in the Lord’s family.) **eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”** Now this is where you have to be careful – you don’t have eternal life now but if you’re in His Son you have the hope and the promise of eternal life. Titus 3:7 says, **“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”** Also, in 1 John 2:25 the Bible states, **“And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”** Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:12, **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”** You see, you can only lay hold on eternal life if you’ve fought the good fight of faith and are in His Son Jesus Christ. Eternal life is out there, it’s available, but you’ve got to lay hold on it. If we’re in Him then we have the hope and the promise of eternal life.