

## God's Eternal Purpose For Mankind

To have a clear understanding of what *God's Purpose* is for us would certainly change our whole outlook on life and our commitment to God's service. Our life would take on a whole new dimension!

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, starts, not with the fall of man, but with the “*Eternal Father*.” And, he states that God's purpose began “*before the foundation of the world*.” Paul goes on to teach that God's purpose for the entire universe is to be realized through, and centering in, His Son, Jesus Christ!

To get a grasp of God's eternal purpose, spoken of by Paul, we must realize that it was determined in God's “*Father-heart*” – not because man sinned, but before the world was made. Let's read it in Ephesians 1:1-10 in the New International Version:

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [speaking to born-again saints] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ!** For He [God, the Father] chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the creation of the world **to be holy and blameless in his sight**. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He [Father] has freely given us in the One He loves” (verses 1-6).*

Let's pause for a moment in our reading and consider this purpose that was in the Father's heart ***before the foundation of the world!*** The fellowship between God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, in the eternities past was so prized, so amazing, that God desired to have many sons conformed to the image of His Son.

With great anticipation, God planned that His “*eternal Son*” would become the *incarnate* Son, robed in flesh, and share His vital life with the human family, yet to be created! God planned to visit planet Earth, by the *incarnation* of His Son, not because man sinned, but that Jesus became the very life of man.

Paul does point out in verse 7 that, because man would sin, he needed redemption and this provision was also ***in*** Christ Jesus. He writes, “*In Him [in Christ Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*”

Verses 8-10 continue, “*He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, {10} to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*”

Don't miss this all-important fact, God, the Father, determined that His Son should become

incarnate as the means of bringing a vast family of sons into the glorious measure of full stature. Paul, looking at God's eternal purpose for man, while he was “*seated with Him in heavenly places.*” Things certainly look different when viewing the *whole* picture from the veranda of the universe. Paul sees the eternal Father yearning for a vast family of sons conformed to the image of the eternal Son, in whom He found such delight.

Just think of it, from very beginning, “*before the foundation of the world,*” the Father planned to share His life, through His Son, and express Himself throughout the universe during all ages to come!

Looking at Ephesians 3:10-11, we read, “*His intent [God's intent] was that now [in this day and age] through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus or Lord.*” Phillips Translation renders verse 11, “*To the powers and authorities in the heavenly realm God, by the Church, display the innumerable aspects of God's wisdom.*”

God's eternal purpose and intent is to display to the entire universe, for all of eternity, His matchless wisdom by conforming “many sons” into the image of His Own dear Son, Jesus Christ.

**“What difference does it make?”**

The problem is that we have placed the emphasis on the “*crisis act*” of believing that, “*Christ died for our sins,*” and have neglected to understand the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

“*Salvation*” is a crisis act and necessary because of man's sin. However, a “*process of growth,*” is God's eternal purpose!

When God created man and placed him on earth, man was created in *innocence*. God's plan and eternal purpose was to share His life with man and to bring him to perfection, spiritual maturity. It was *not* man's sin (or, defection) that determined this purpose of God sharing His life, but rather, it was in the Father's original planning. “*Before man was ever created, before he ever sinned,*” God determined to share His life through His Son.

When man “*turned to his own way,*” God did not suddenly change His plan. He still would share Himself through His Son, only now He would provide “*redemption*” by way of the Cross. When God redeems man out of his lost predicament, it is a crisis act.

Man “**believers**” and “**receives**”

1. Man believes in the finished work of the Cross, and
2. Receives the **DIVINE LIFE**, God intended for man!

The Problem is that many are convinced that the Cross is the finished work, a finality. However, God designed a *continuous* work of the Holy Spirit, making possible a daily, receiving, or “*sharing,*” of God's life.

Of course, God could not ignore man's awful defect into sin. There had to be a crisis of

regeneration – a “*believing unto righteousness, receive divine life of Christ*” – before man could share of God’s divine life. Man, having believed and received, then is ready to “*share Life in the Son*” – having a continuous present participation of God’s life!

Let me ask, “*Are you weary of defeat? Do you feel frustrated trying to live the Christian life?*” The answer is to determine to daily acknowledge Christ’s Lordship within your life.

In the 40’s, while attending Bible School, I supplemented income by working at one the world’s largest Aircraft Factories in America, Consolidated Aircraft. The first day someone took me through entire plant to get a “*feeling*” of whole operation. The reason this was done was so that I would have an understanding of entire picture.

Without background of God’s eternal purpose for you, how can you find true meaning of any part? God deliver us from a “*limited view*” of His purpose. As unbelievable as it is for the natural mind, Scripture teaches that God desires to exalt, magnify Himself through you!

Here, in Ephesians, the Apostle Paul gives us an eternal vantage point. We must keep all the parts related to the background of the Father’s purpose. The more clearly we see the absolutely necessity of God’s *eternal purpose*, the more significant becomes the reason for Paul to start, “*before the foundation of the world.*” It started in the heart of God!

We can begin to more fully appreciate how the Father originally purposed for everything to be accomplished through, and to center in, His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was to become man’s very life, even if he had never sinned. God, of course, foreknew man would sin and so prepared for that emergency of man’s fall, but, this did not determine, or alter, His eternal purpose – that all things find their summation in Jesus Christ.

Many believers have a low conception of what God intends. The tragedy of being “*redemptive conscious*” is that redemption becomes God’s primary purpose and everything takes its meaning from the fact that man sinned. This perverse, *man-centered*, perspective has blighted man’s spiritual growth.

Don’t misunderstand me, I am not minimizing the importance of redemption in God’s recovery program. What I am saying is that it is only as we see redemption as it is rightly related to God’s eternal purpose, can we appreciate it.

Only as we see redemption against the background of God’s eternal purpose, can we see how much more important, and imperative, redemption becomes. But, it is only the initial step in realizing God’s ultimate intention for mankind.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 teaches, “*Who [God, the Father] has . . . [Note two things God has done for us] . . . (1) saved us AND (2) called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, {10} but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*”

When God created man, He had an ultimate purpose in mind, which did not necessitate man’s fall into sin. However, man did sin and, therefore, must be lifted from “*fallen condition*” and

brought back to place Adam lost.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 tells us that God's called is twofold:

- (1) The first issue to be dealt with was a gateway to bring him back to God's *original holy calling*. God must deal with man's *fallen* condition!
- (2) The second issue, is God's original desire for a family, His eternal purpose "*before the world began,*" to impart the life of His Son, conforming man into His image.

Think about this, "*When God created man and placed him in Garden of Eden, was Adam, freshly created, all God intended for man? Was Adam the Full Stature*" that God wanted man to become?" The answer one gives to that question will decide how he interprets God's divine purpose for mankind. One's answer to this question will reveal how much he understands of his Father's larger perspective and ultimate intention.

If one thinks that Adam was the zenith of full stature that God intended, then he sees God's purpose as only "*the restoration of all things to its Adamic perfection.*" This is a narrow view of God's eternal purpose for mankind. Adam did *not* receive Christ's divine image by God's "*creative hand,*" must more fulfill the eternal purpose God had in mind.

God's eternal purpose was far more than a "*creative touch*" could accomplish, but required a vital union with the source of life – and man's *co-operation* with this purpose!

Adam was created "*perfect,*" in the same way that an innocent baby is perfect. While a new born baby may be "*perfect*" in body, however, it is wholly untried, undeveloped, in its moral nature.

One must distinguish between, what Adam was by creation, and what He was to *become* by union and co-operation with Live. At creation man received, by endowment, "created life, however, he was only to **BE** a container which could receive the "*Divine Life*" of God, as he choose it.

God's Eternal purpose, His design for man, was that Adam become a son in full stature, through inner spiritual development. Like a flower bud moving to full blossom, God designed Adam for development. This, in no way, necessitated sin for its accomplishment.

Man was given the choice between two trees in Garden of Eden, representing two ways. He could choose God's way or he could go his own way. Opportunity for development was along two mutually exclusive lines. He could go his own way by *eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*, choosing the development of his *soul powers*, independent of God or, He could choose God's way by being in union with the tree of life, and thus, develop *spiritually*.

### SOULISH or SPIRITUALLY

By " <i>Soulish,</i> " I am referring to man living only by the powers of his soul – his mind, will and emotions.
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While, it is true that before there can be true spiritual development, there must be a radical deliverance [this is salvation], however, this deliverance is only the doorway to spiritual development. Don't get so interested in the fact of being "*free from sin*" or, "*just making it to heaven*," that it warps you into lethargy. Don't let *escape from sin* and its penalty become your only goal. God help us to see His eternal purpose is to develop us into **Full Stature**.

What is your controlling philosophy? Many merely want God to *deliver them from all troubles*, to *grant them an easier life*. They are controlled by a philosophy of "*escapism*." Scripture teaches that we are to be "*dead indeed unto our old selfish nature*," however, that is not enough, we are also told that we "***must be alive to God***."

Paul, with all his problems, did not once write with *self-pity*. Never once did he speak of "*escapism*." He never pleaded with the Church to pray on his behalf that God make his life easier, but, rather, he was gripped with one concept, stated in Philippians 1:12, "***that all things that happen to me might work for the furtherance of the Gospel***."

If you have had a narrow perspective of "*escapism*," may God enable you to see His original plan and dedicate yourself to God's purpose. Jesus made a way of escaping and conquering. He set us free from sin, self, the world and Satan. Too long many have been held in bondage by these monarchs, not realizing that their tyranny has been broken. Jesus died and rose for our escape, but, God's purpose is far more than that. Don't stop at just a "*way of escape*." The cross and resurrection is the "***Way of fulfillment***." What God offered Adam in the Garden of Eden, Adam dodged, now God presents the same offer to you.

2 Timothy 1:8 (Phillips Translation), states, "***Accept. as I do, all the hardships that faithfulness the Gospel entails, in the strength that God gives you. For He has rescued us from all that is really evil, AND called us to a life of holiness, not because of any of our achievement, but for HIS OWN PURPOSE.***"

How characteristic of Paul to go back to God's eternal viewpoint. He does not start with man's fallen condition, but, rather he starts with the Father's original purpose ***before time began***.

Verses 9-10 continues, "*Before time began God planned to give us in Christ the grace to achieve this purpose but it is only since our Savior Jesus Christ has been revealed that the method has become apparent.*"

It is possible to be saved from destruction and yet lost to the ultimate intention which God has in mind.

***It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!***