

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

Volume 15, Issue 4

April 2017

The Goal of God's Work

Introduction

The Western Church culture has become very immersed in what God has done *for me*, the individual. It seems that the focus of all of the preaching that I am hearing is on how to get all that God has given or done *for me*. Many of the conferences and other programs present a positive, success oriented agenda that would rival any of the sales motivation meetings that I attended as the head of a national sales force back in the 80's. In these conferences Jesus is presented as the key to health, wealth and prosperity and we all need to get our share because we are king's kids and it all belongs to us. Is this what the Lord intended? Did Jesus come so that I could live the American Dream? Is it all about *me and my need* or about *God and His purpose*?

Maybe we should be concerned about what God intended to begin with when He made Adam. We have gotten so self-centered that we can't see the forest for the trees. It is time for us to change our perspective and quit looking at things with the focus of how they relate to us. We need to re-focus on how things relate to God and His intention.

Time and Eternity

The dimension of spiritual reality is Eternity. It is the habitat of God and His angels and is invisible to our dimension of physical or natural reality, which we call our space-time continuum. Our physical reality is like a soap bubble floating in Eternity. It has its own self-contained structure and operates by its own God established physical laws. Time is part of the structure of our universe. Einstein illustrated this with the Theory of Relativity—space, time, mass, and speed are all related to each other mathematically. Time is not a constant but is affected by mass and speed, proving that it is a construct of God for our universe and has no application to Eternity. It is not that Eternity is just a long, long time; it is that there is no relation between time and Eternity.

In Eternity, before time or our universe existed, God purposed something within Himself that He intended to accomplish. The fullness of this intention is something that God has kept hidden in Himself [*I Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:9*]. It is a mystery to the rulers and authorities of Heaven [*I Corinthians 2:8; Romans 16:25*]. While there are a number of books in Heaven, including the Book of Life, where various things are recorded, [*Revelation 20:12*] God did not record this mystery in any of the books of Heaven.

This mystery has to do with what God had purposed in Himself in Eternity before our space-time continuum even existed. Now, this mystery is unfolding in time and, as this occurs, it is being revealed to all in Heaven and earth.

This is something that we need to understand. God has intended to accomplish something that He purposed before He made man. All that God is doing in the earth is working toward the fulfillment or completion of His intention. There are no extraneous or hap-hazard moves of God. No emergency add-ons or changes to God's plan. He will accomplish that which He intended from the very beginning.

God's Ultimate Intention

God is not just God; He is Father. The heart of God is Father—Eternal Father. As with any father, the desire of the heart is to have sons; sons that look like him. This is true of our Heavenly Father, also. The scriptures reveal that it is the Father's desire to bring many sons to glory [*Hebrews 2:10*]. That is the part of God's ultimate intention that relates to us personally, individually. We are to be sons

Galatians 4:7-8 NASB

(7) Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

As sons we become heirs of God. That is part of being brought to glory. God shares all that He is with us; we receive the inheritance of who He is.

So, we have in this an individual work of God in us of bringing many sons to glory to be the heirs of God and the joint-heirs of Christ; but, there is also a corporate intention in God's purpose—the “one new man”, the Body of Christ in which all things will be summed up.

Ephesians 1:9-10 NASB

(9) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

(10) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

When Jesus walked the earth in His physical body, the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. But, this was in miniature, only one human body revealing the glory of the Father. But, it is God's intention that His glory will be displayed in magnitude, one new man composed of many individual members manifesting the glory of the Father through out all creation.

To begin to see God's intention we need to look at why God created man and chose him for His own purpose. The Scriptures tell us that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world [*Revelation 13:8*]. Why was it necessary for the Lamb to be slain before man was created? Think about the context in which such a statement would be made. This says that God, in His foreknowledge, knew that man would sin, that he would need a savior; therefore, God made provision to correct the sin problem before there was even a man to commit sin. Jesus offering His blood as an atonement was a part of the purpose of God before creation, before He made man. It was a necessary part of God accomplishing His intention. The blood of Jesus was not an emergency add-on to fix a problem, but, instead, was a part of the original plan of God.

When God made Adam, he had the *potential* to fulfill God's ultimate intention, the reason or

purpose for which man had been created. The obedience of Adam's heart was tested by a single, simple command of God. Adam failed by his disobedience, which resulted in him being cut off from God and losing the potential to fulfill God's intention for man. Therefore, God sent forth the Last Adam, the second man, to atone for the first Adam's sin (and our sin in him) and restore man to the *potential* of fulfilling God's intention. Unlike the first, the Last Adam had a heart of obedience, which He learned by the things that He suffered [*Hebrews 5:8*].

While salvation is necessary and blood atonement is necessary, this is not the ultimate intention of God, but, steps to restore man to a place where he can move into the fulfillment of God's intention. We must look beyond the trees in order to see the forest. While salvation and all of the things that accompany it are wonderful and necessary, they are means to an end, not the end itself. We must see that if we are to mature.

Why Man?

Now comes the real question. God knew that after He created man, he would sin and it would be necessary for those sins to be dealt with. Therefore, the Son would come and offer Himself as the sacrificial Lamb—the atoning life given for us to restore us to a place where we could fulfill God's purpose. The question is—why go to the trouble? Why bother? Either make man where he would not sin or not bother to make him at all. Why create an inferior creature that would be so much trouble?

In Ephesians, Paul is explaining his calling in Christ and what the Lord had entrusted to him as it relates to the Gentiles. Paul calls it a mystery that had been hidden to previous generations but had now been revealed to the apostles and prophets. This makes it a uniquely New Testament revelation of mystery as it relates to the purpose of the Church (the *ekklesia*, the Body of Christ) and its becoming the “one new man”.

Ephesians 3:9-11 NASB

- (9) and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;
- (10) so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.
- (11) This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

This mystery involves the revealing of the manifold wisdom of God, which, in accordance with His eternal purpose, was carried out in Christ Jesus. According to the scripture above, this is all being done to make the wisdom of God known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavens. God's instrument to do this is the “one new man”—the Church, the Body of Christ.

Now, the question becomes, why does the manifold wisdom of God *need* to be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavens? Don't the angels already know God's wisdom? Isn't this a given? Is it possible that something occurred or God did something that caused the heavenly rulers and authorities to question or possibly even doubt God's wisdom?

I think that the answer to these questions have to do with God's decision to create man and make him a son and an heir of God, which would include the idea of the Son of God laying aside His divinity and taking on the form of a man in order to redeem man and fulfill the purpose of God. What God is doing with man is not clear to the angels.

1 Peter 1:12 NASB

- (12) It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.

Peter makes it plain that the whole purpose of the gospel and the sending of the Holy Spirit is not fully comprehended by the angels. That is why they desire to look into it. Could it be that this is one of the areas in which the wisdom of God is not fully known or understood by the angels?

The Scriptures tell us that man was made as an inferior creature.

Hebrews 2:5-7 NASB

- (5) For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.
(6) But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?
(7) "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

[NOTE: *The NASB puts Old Testament quotes in all capitals, which is why the bulk of the verses above are in caps.*]

The writer of Hebrews is quoting from Psalm 8 concerning man and the son of man (Jesus). Man was made lower than the angels; that is, inferior to them. The Son of God humbled Himself, emptying Himself of His divinity and assumed the form of a man, a servant, a creature inferior to the angels [*Philippians 2:5-8*].

The phrase “for a little while” means for a period of time. Man has been made temporarily lower than the angels. Jesus humbled himself in the form of a man and was, temporarily, lower than the angels. It is God's intention that those who become like the Lord, conformed to His image, will rule with Him in the coming ages. Man will then be greater than the angels instead of lower. It appears that this has become an issue with the angels and reflects upon the wisdom of God.

The book of Hebrews mention several things about the Son and the angels.

Hebrews 1:3-4 NASB

- (3) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
(4) having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

When Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty, He was in His resurrected body and that body is the body, the physical likeness, of a man. We don't know what form the Son had prior to His incarnation, but afterward, He has the body of a man—a natural body that was planted as a seed and was raised a spiritual body of the same type and nature that we will have in the resurrection. Even though He was made a little lower than the angels by His incarnation, in His resurrection, He was made much better than the angels inheriting a more excellent name. And now the angels must worship the Son, who is in the glorified likeness of a man, an inferior creature [*Hebrews 1:6*].

All of the heavenly host are watching Lucifer's rebellion and God's answer to it. God chooses to prove His wisdom and His character to all who reside in the heavens. He doesn't deal with the situation with simple power; but, instead, begins a process that involves His hidden counsel, a mystery that has always been hidden within Himself.

So, God made man, an inferior creature, with the intention that through the work of the Son, incarnate as a man, He would sum up all things in Christ—one new man, manifesting the glory of God and revealing the wisdom of the mystery that He had hidden in Himself.

The very wisdom of God hangs in the balance as the intention of God is unfolded in time. Yes, God has chosen an inferior creature; but, God created man in such a way that He, Himself, as the Holy Spirit can dwell in man and *make him capable* of fulfilling the purpose of God so that the excellency may be of God and not of ourselves. We stand on the stage of time with all eternity watching the outcome, the resolution, the completion of God's ultimate intention.

The Process of Achieving

The Lord has provided all that is needed to complete the intention of the Father. We have received the Holy Spirit so that we can mature as sons of God. We have received the gifts of Jesus to His people so that we can mature as the corporate Body.

Maturing is a process both individually and corporately. All processes require a triggering event that starts the process and time for the process to come to completion. Being born again and filled with the Spirit triggers the individual maturing process. Coming into relationships and being baptized into the Body [*1 Corinthians 12:13*] triggers the corporate maturing process, which includes each of us finding our place and function within the expression of the Body of Christ.

As the end times accelerate, we are moving into a new season of the Spirit—a new focus, a new emphasis. We are moving from concentrating on the individual to concentrating on the corporate—from individual maturity to corporate maturity. This season requires a new perspective on the purpose of God and the application of new understanding of what God is doing in the earth.

You have permission to copy and distribute these materials provided:

1) no changes are made to the content, and, 2) they are not sold.

© 2003-2017 by Art Nelson and Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com