

2 Timothy 1:9-10, "Who hath saved us, **AND** called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, **But is now** made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

When God created man He had an ultimate purpose. However, Adam disobeyed God and fell from God's original intention for man. And, because man fell from the place of God's creation, he had to be "lifted up" from his "fallen condition" and brought back to the place that Adam lost.

Man's calling then is twofold:

- (1) To enter in the gateway that brings him back to God's original holy calling. The first issue between man and God is that man is in a "fallen condition"
- (2) Man's second calling is God's original desire for a family, back to God's eternal purpose "before the world began"
(This phrase, "before the world began" is found 10 times in New Testament)

God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, but Adam was not all that God intended him to be! Adam was Created "perfect!" He was innocent, but he was not righteous! He was immature and totally untried. Love demands a choice! God desired a family that could, and would, return His love and have fellowship with Him.

Adam was not developed spiritually into "Full Stature!" God created him to grow and develop into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ by partaking of the "Tree of Life."

Our understanding of this Biblical concept will reveal how much we understand of our God's larger perspective, His ultimate intention for us! If we believe that Adam was the zenith of the full stature God intended for man, then we see God's program as only "the restoration of all things" to its Adamic perfection. However, this is a very narrow view of God's purpose for man. Adam did not receive all the "Divine Image" that God intended him to achieve by God creative hand. There was much more to God's ultimate purpose for man than that.

God's "Eternal Purpose" was more than creative touch could accomplish, but rather, it required a vital union with the Source of Life, as well as man's cooperation.

Adam was created perfect, as an innocent baby is perfect, but he was wholly untried, undeveloped in his moral nature. We need to distinguish between what Adam was by creation and what he was to become union and cooperation with the Divine Life that God made available. Adam received the endowment of "created life." He was to be a container that could receive the "Divine Life of God," when, and if, he choose it.

In God's "Eternal Purpose," that is, His Master Plan for man, Adam was to become a Son, in full stature, through inner spiritual development. Like a flower bud moving to full blossom, God designed Adam for development. God help us to see His "Eternal Purpose" of developing us into the "Full Stature" of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Man's problem is that Adam did sin and brought the whole human race into the bondage of sin. Romans 5:12 states, "By one man sin entered into the world," verse 15 says, "by the offence of one many be dead (separated) and, verse 17 says, "By one many offence death reigned."

In this first chapter of Ephesians Paul points out that it was because man *did* sin, he needed redemption, so this provision is available in Christ Jesus. Verse. 7 states, "In whom (in Christ Jesus) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

But, that is not what Paul starts with, but rather he begins in verse 1 with the "Eternal purpose of the Father," not with the "fall of man." God's purpose, "before the foundation of the world" was to be realized through (center in) His Son, Christ Jesus. What Paul presents is determined in God's "Father-heart," before the world was made" and not as a result of the fall of man.

Look at verses 1-6 again, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: [2] Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. and gives thanks for spiritual blessings.[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath **blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.** [4] According as He (God, the Father) hath chosen us in Him (Christ Jesus) before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before Him** in love: [5] Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, [6] To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved."

This is what was in the Father's heart "before the foundation of the world." The fellowship between God, the Father and God, the Son was so sweet and precious in eternity past that God desired "many sons" conformed to His image. "Before the foundation of the world," God, the Father, with exciting anticipation, planned that His "eternal Son" would become the "Incarnate Son," robbed 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 had sinned, but rather, that Jesus might become the very life of man.

If we could only understand what God's ultimate purpose is for us our outlook on life, our commitment to God's service, would take on a whole new dimension

Look at verses 8-10, *"Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; [9] Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: [10] That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him."*

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 is looking at God's purpose of man while *"seated with Him in heavenly places."* Things look a lot different 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. From the very beginning, *"before the foundation of the world,"* our Father planned to share His life and express Himself throughout the universe during all ages to come.

Weymouth's translation of Eph 3:10-11, *"That the Church might now be used to display to the powers and authorities in the heavenly realms the innumerable aspects of God's wisdom, according to the eternal purpose that God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

We have placed the emphasis on what God is accomplishing on the *"crisis act of believing."* True, *"Christ died for our sins"* However, many have neglected to understand the **CONTINUOUS WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR LIFE!**

"Salvation" is a crisis act, necessary because man sinned. However, God's Eternal Purpose is *"a progress of growth!"* When God created man and placed him upon earth, man was created *innocent.* God's purpose was to share His life with man, bringing him to perfection, or spiritual maturity.

It was not man's sin, or defection, that determined God's purpose of *"Sharing His Life"* It was in the Father's original planning, *"Before man was ever created."* Before man ever sinned God determined to share His life through His Son. And, this in no way necessitated sin for its accomplishment.

In addition to a beautiful garden, full of beautiful shrubbery, hedges and trees man was given two trees in the Garden of Eden representing two ways. He could choose *God's way* or *his way!*

Man had opportunity for development along two mutually exclusive lines
(1.) He could go his own way, Eat of the Tree of *"Knowledge of good and evil."* He could choose the development of his soul powers - independent of God - or - **(2.)** He could choose God's highway, *live in union* - a living, constant, continuous, union by eating of the *"Tree of Life,"* developing *"spiritually."*

Man choose the expansion and development of his "soul" powers (his mind, will and emotions) became the *animating* power of man. Before there can be a true "spiritual" development unto full stature there must be a radical deliverance. However, this "deliverance" is **ONLY** the "Doorway" to Spiritual development. We must not get so interested in, "Just being free from sin," or, "Just make it to Heaven," that we forget God's *ultimate purpose* of conforming, developing, us into the image of His Son. This concept will warp and blight us into lethargy. Don't let "escape from sin" and its penalty become our only goal.

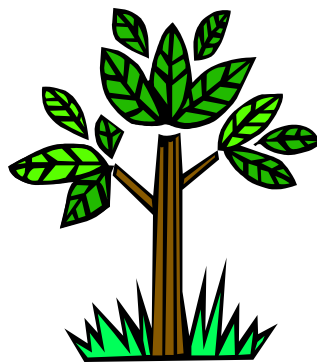
Man *did* sin and *turned to his own way*, but this did not cause God to suddenly change His plan. God would still share His Life with man through His Son, only *now* He would provide "a redemption" by way of the Cross. When God redeems man out of his lost predicament it is by a *crisis act*. Man "believes" and "receives" - he "believes" in the finished work of the Cross and, "receives" the Divine Life that God intended for man all along.

The problem is many reckon the "*finished work of the Cross*" as a finality. God designed a "*continuous*" work of the Spirit beginning at salvation, making possible a daily receiving, or sharing, of the Life of God.

Of course, God could not ignore man's awful defection into sin. There must be a crisis of regeneration - "Man **believes** unto righteousness" and "**receives** the Divine Life of Jesus Christ." Having "believed" and "received," he is now ready to share "Life in the Son" It is a continuous participation!

Are you weary of defeat, or frustrated in trying to "live the Christian life?" The first thing you must do is to determine you will make a daily acknowledging of Christ's Lordship.

Imagine you are looking at the picture a tree that doesn't have any background. It is, of course, impossible to tell how tall the tree is. With the background missing, or blocked out, there is nothing to relate the tree too, to compare it with. You can only make a wild guess as to how large it is. Is it a seedling or a large oak?





With the background in the picture and seeing the full landscape of woods, houses, you can begin to realize that it must be 35 to 40 feet high.

What am I saying? I am saying that without the background of God's *Eternal Purpose*,

how can we know the true meaning of any part? God deliver us from a limited view of His purpose and enable us to see He desires to exalt, magnify Himself through us.

In Ephesians the Apostle Paul reveals this "*Eternal Vantage Point*." As a result, we can keep all the parts of God's working in our life related to the background of the Father's purpose. The more clearly we see the necessity of God's *Eternal Purpose*, the more significant becomes the reason for the Apostle Paul's starting place, "*before the foundation of the world*" there was an "*Ultimate Purpose*" that started in the heart of the Father. We begin to fully appreciate how the Father *originally* purpose for everything to be accomplished through, and center in, His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, God's Son was to become man's very life, even if man had never sinned. God, of course, foreknew man would sin, so He prepared for that emergency of man's fall. However, this did not determine, nor alter, His "*Eternal Purpose*" – that all things find their summation in Jesus Christ.

Many have such a low conception of what God intends for them. The tragedy of focusing on just "*Redemption*" – salvation from sin – that they make sin and redemption a necessity in God's plan, as if God's primary purpose for us was is just to redeem us. This thinking reaches only to man in his "*fallen condition*," showing only Christ's incarnation in light of God's redemptive plan.

How narrow is this horizon. God's purpose is much higher than to just save man from his sin, as imperative at that is. Everything God has planned for us becomes colored by the "*fall*" of man instead of "*God's Eternal Purpose!*" Everything takes its meaning from the fact that man sinned. This is a perverse, man-centered, perspective. The danger is that this "*redemptive focus*" has become a concept that has shattered man's maturity.

It is not my intention to minimize the importance of redemption. However, this is only God's *recovery* program. Only as we see "*redemption*," as it is rightly related to God's *Eternal Purpose*, can we fully appreciate it. We need to see our salvation against the background of God's *Eternal Purpose*. How much more important and imperative, then, does redemption become. It is the initial step in realizing God's ultimate intention.

My prayer is that God will enable us to see His original purpose and dedicate our self to this calling. Jesus has made a way of escaping and conquering every sin and weakness of our life. He desires to set us free from SIN – SELF – WORLD – THE DEVIL. Too long many are held in bondage by these monarchs. Jesus has broken the hold of these tyrannies. Jesus died and rose again for our escape from these powers. However, His death and resurrection was for far more than just that. We must not stop at “*a way of escape,*” but see the Cross and Resurrection as “*A Way of Fulfillment!*”

What God offered Adam in the Garden of Eden, and that Adam dodged, God once again presents to us.

2 Timothy 1:8-9 teaches, “Accept, as I do, all the hardship that faithfulness to the Gospel entails in the strength that God gives you. For He has rescued us – [but do we live only for escape?] – from all that is really evil and called us – [here is our joy in fulfillment] – to a life of holiness, not because of any of our achievement, but for His own purpose. [How characteristic of Paul – He goes back to God's Eternal Purpose] Paul does not start with man's fallen condition, but with the Father's original purpose, “*before time began!*”

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

It is possible to be saved from destruction and yet lose the ultimate intention of God. God help us that this does not happen in our life!