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Series 1. The eternal Purpose

E5. The Eternal Purpose of God: The Son

Man often looks at salvation through a very narrow window, where all he can see is heaven and eternal life—which falls infinitesimally short of God’s plan and purpose in His Son Jesus Christ. In this age Jesus is the Head of His Church, the Body of Christ; and in the age to come this Church will become His bride to sit with Him on His throne.

We have been considering the Eternal Purposes of God and specifically how our inheritance, the inheritance of the believer born of the Spirit of God, is essentially and integrally a component of God’s own heritage. That, which the Godhead designed as the object and eternal goal for creation for themselves, is being fulfilled in us, now the church, so that the Father may have His family of many sons and daughters, the Son may have a bride as an eternal companion, and the Holy Spirit may have an eternal dwelling place. We have previously discussed the co-inheritance of the Father and His many sons and daughters; we will now consider the co-inheritance of the Son with the saints.

For The Son – A companion

The Larger Picture

An individual's salvation is paramount to all things in life. It is certainly foremost to whatever else may happen in his or her lifetime. To be redeemed from sin, spared from spiritual death, taken out of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God is a miracle, and could only happen by the grace and power of God; it is eternal, and it gives us a hope of glory to come. However, our individual inheritance pales in light of God's eternal purposes. Man commonly sees things in light of himself and what are his benefits. We are but a small part of God's purposes in the earth. His overarching purpose is to take back the earth from Satan and His demonic cohorts, bring him and his kingdom to full and total destruction, and to establish a new heaven and earth; something eternal, formed in His own righteousness and holiness; a place for His fellowship between God and man. Of this spiritual warfare in the heavens and on earth, take reference to the following scriptures:

1 Jn. 5.19 – *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”*

1 Jn.3.8 -- *“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this **purpose** the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*

Jn. 12.31 – *“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”*

So do you see, the redemption of man in Christ is part and parcel with God's larger plan for the destruction of evil and the establishment for His eternal Kingdom—eventually to come in a new heaven and new earth. The inheritance of man and the inheritance of God cannot be separated or differentiated, for the goal of each is the prevailing of God's righteousness and holiness in all His creation. Take for example the following warfare analogy,

An Analogy: A comparison between Hitler and Nazi Germany and Satan and the Kingdom of Darkness. World War 2 began In 1939 when Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler launched an attack on Poland with 1.5 million soldiers, 2000 tanks, and 1300 war planes. The goal was not to stop with Poland but to conquer all of Europe—perhaps even looking east to Russia. Two days later Britain and France declared war on Germany. Much of Europe fell to Germany, but the offensive stalled temporarily at Britain. America entered the war, and in 1942, Five Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower was chosen to be the Supreme Commander of all the Allied forces. His overarching objective was not only to save a man, or a family or village, or a country, but to overcome a wicked enemy; in doing so all of Europe will be saved. He set into place key people in all the branches of the military from various countries and set forth a plan for the defeat and destruction of Nazi Germany. His plan was to invade Europe from the beaches of Normandy, France and to defeat the enemy in the air, on the land and in the sea, until their objective of the fall of Berlin, Germany is reached, the Nazi government, and Hitler is destroyed. May 8, 1945 is known as VE Day, Victory in Europe Day, when Germany unconditionally surrendered and Adolf Hitler was dead by suicide. Peace was restored to Europe. The evil empire was destroyed.

Spiritual Warfare. The lives of many individuals were involved in this war, but the scope of warfare was much larger and more threatening. This is an extremely brief analogy for the great spiritual warfare upon the whole of the earth today. Satan, and his kingdom of sin, death, and darkness reigns upon all the earth. The souls of all mankind were taken captive by this common enemy as sin and death ruled their lives. God the Father, in collusion with His Son and the Holy Spirit, chose as Christ, the Son of God, to enter the earth environment, become incarnate as the man Jesus, and be anointed as the Messiah. He was to be the supreme authority and execute God's plan for the defeat of the Kingdom of Darkness and destruction of Satan and his evil empire, and to fully establish peace, light, and life under the reign of the Kingdom of God. This plan was initiated in a tiny stable with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christ could not use His disciples that gathered to Him to fight this warfare, for, as He made it clear to Pontius Pilate when He said, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* Jn. 18:36 This was not to be a physical warfare involving governments, nations, and armed combatants, but to be a spiritual warfare, as it is written in 2 Cor. 10:3-6,

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

This is a spiritual warfare, and to accomplish this Jesus had to establish a spiritual force in the earth. This could only be accomplished in a mighty four-step operation. First came His gathering together a core of believers, His apostles and disciples. Second was His crucifixion and death on the cross, the shedding of His blood as the perfect sacrifice for sin, thereby overcoming the power of sin. Next, He had to rise again in resurrection from the grave, thereby overcoming death. Finally, He sent forth the Holy Spirit from Heaven to indwell His disciples, both then and now, thereby overcoming darkness and the power of Satan. This mighty force is to be known as "the Church," otherwise to be known as the "Body of Christ;" with Jesus Christ the supreme Head and authority over the Church. This Body is to act as a single living organism to function under the sole authority and directions of Jesus Christ.

The planned invasion of planet earth began in a small upper room in Jerusalem where some 120 of His disciples received the Holy Spirit into their lives; this is where the preparation for the defeat and destruction of the Kingdom of Darkness and Satan began. This equipping of the saints, the believers, is recorded in Acts 2:1-4,

*"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

It is from there, that small beginning, that the Church was to grow, mature, and become that force for the defeat of the enemy of God and be victorious in all of *Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8) This victory comes without physical weapons of warfare, as it is written in 2 Cor. 10:4, *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."* This is not a physical war, not a political battle,

not a cultural revolution; it was, and is, a spiritual warfare invoking the Gospel of Christ and equipping with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Church, the Body of Christ

Today, this age in which we now live, is known as the “age of His Church.” When Christ declared, *“I will build My Church,”* (Mt. 16.18) He certainly did not have in mind a majestic temple greater than that of Solomon’s, or an organization of believers such as a religious denomination, Catholicism or Pentecostalism, or whatever other “ism” there may be. Rather, His Church is spiritual; it is invisible and intangible to the natural man, but it is alive as a body of believers joined together as one, being of one Spirit, in union with Christ, and Christ as the supreme Head of this Body. It is written in Eph. 1.22-23,

“He (the Father) put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Eph. 1.22-23

The fellowship we now have with Christ is that He is the Head of every man (1 Cor. 11.3) and that He is the Head of the whole Church, all its members being joined together as one, each serving a purpose and function in contributing to its growth and development. Think for a moment of our own bodies. All of its individual members, eyes, heart, teeth, fingers, ears, lungs, etc., work together to sustain us, give us growth, enable us to function, do things, achieve goals, and to interact with others. The Body of Christ must function in like capacity in response to its Head, Jesus Christ. This function is intended to be many, many times above and beyond the functioning seen in the average church today. Biblically, it is described in Eph. 4.15-16,

“speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

If this army of God is to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth, seeing the destruction of Satan, sin, darkness and death, this Body of believers must begin to have *every joint supplying, according to the effective working by which every part does its share*. How different this is than classic religion in which a minister or priest is the central spiritual person, standing as the “clergy,” while the rest of the church is considered the static “congregation.” Christ never intended His church to function in this manner.

The Body of Christ is not an organization, as a corporation with a CEO at its head, and a Board of Directors under Him, and department heads under them, then regional managers, down to foremen, and staff workers, or to function religiously like the Catholic Church with a hierarchical structure of a Pope as its head, then the archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons,—the congregation is not a part of this clergy but is considered as “laity.” The Church, as a whole, must be considered dynamic, as a living organism and must function as such if it is ever going to be used by Christ to achieve His eternal purposes in the Church and in the earth today. The members of the Body do not choose for themselves their function, but are set into place by the Head.

Setting into Place. Today, most churches have pastors, elders, choir directors, Sunday school teachers, etc. Most often these are appointed or elected by church leadership, sometimes with contracts or pledges of service. Oftentimes churches ask for their members to make a pledge of commitment as well. Of course talents or expertise play a big role in assigning specific tasks; for example, bankers are often appointed as a church treasurer; a vocalist as the choir director, and a devoted lay person may be authorized to serve as a non-ordained lay minister. But from the beginning of the Church this was not so. The following from 1 Cor. 12 reveals important concepts for the Church. Firstly,

1 Cor. 12.12-14 -- “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

The Church is not an organization that operates like a club or business, one with offices for specific duties, with elections, and certificates of appointments; no, not at all. The Church is first and always a spiritual entity composed of members each having their own special ministries. Note I called the Church an “entity,” it is singular, something that is to function as a living organism. Schisms, favoritism, individualism, unforgiveness, and the like saps the Body of its strength, disabling it to function as it should. The fact must be noted that the commandment to love is NOT an emotional feeling of attraction, but is, in real practice, just the exact opposite of schisms, favoritism, individualism, unforgiveness, and those attitudes that rise up because of selfish pursuits. Love is simply the desire for the welfare of others in the Church. Secondly, reading on to...

1 Cor. 12.18 -- “*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*”

This is so important to understand. In our previous analogy, it was the Supreme Commander that set into place specific individuals for specific responsibilities and functions, each one being unique in purpose. There may have been many generals, captains, lieutenants, etc., all set into place to do a specific task. So is the Body of Christ. The scripture reads, “*God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*” Appointment to a position or service does not come from personal aspirations, or by certificates of accomplishments, or by a majority vote. It is God who calls, God who anoints, and it is God who sets into place. We cannot circumvent God’s authority by neglecting prayer and patience and begin doing our own thing independently of the Head because we feel to do so. Man is always so impatient wanting to quickly get involved, to begin doing something, even out of an immature state. We learn by our mistakes, but sometimes moving too quickly into something can be costly—to yourself or to another.

The all-important attitude is that of prayer and patience. Pursuing Christ in prayer establishes the format of submission and humility, two qualities of character most useful and acceptable to our Lord. Patience is abiding under the shadow of the Most High, waiting for His opening of doors or opportunities to minister, or to serve in whatever capacity of calling. We must always remember that the Church, functioning as the Body of Christ, is spiritual, operating under spiritual laws which may be illogical, even irrational, to the natural mind. The ways of our Lord on this earth were not logical to the Jewish authorities...and they sought to kill Him.

A Companion in the Age to come

All of that is for today, the functioning of the Body of Christ, to build up the Church and to mature believers. However, in the age to come, the Church will become something altogether new; it will become the *Bride of Christ*. This is glorious for the believer, and it fulfills the desires and purpose of the resurrected Christ; and that is to receive to Himself a perfect complement, a bride to sit with Him and to reign with Him in His kingdom. This seen in Rev. 19 of John's vision of things to come,

Rev. 19.6-8 —“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

So this day, this present age, is the hour of preparation, the hour to learn to overcome spiritual adversities and develop Godly character, engaging in spiritual service, advancing the Kingdom of God, pulling down strongholds and destroying the works of the Devil. The ministry of the apostle Paul was only partially evangelistic. Once souls were saved and added as members to the Body of Christ, the entire focus of His ministry was for the preparation of the bride, as he wrote in 2 Cor. 11.2

“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2 Cor. 11.2 (Note also Rev. 19.7-9)

Many souls may be added to the Body of Christ in the single message of an evangelist, but it takes a lifetime of service as an apostle, a pastor, and teacher to prepare the Church to become the eternal Bride of Christ. This is the power of God working in us, to transform us as He sees fit. This is knowing the *fellowship* of the inward Spirit. Thus, in the age to come, the Church will become Jesus' inheritance as His holy bride. Our inheritance is to be honored to sit and reign with Him in His Kingdom, as it is written in 2 Tim. 2.12, *“If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”* Do you see now how our inheritance is dependent upon and intertwined with fulfilling God's inheritance?

Christ and the Lord's Table

As the essence of the vine flows into every branch, the life of Christ now flows into each and every brother and sister in Him. (Please refer to Jn. 15.1-8) Imagine in your mind in a solemn moment disciples sitting with Jesus at a meal holding hands around the table. Jesus sits as the vine allowing His essence to flow from Him into the disciples. I am not saying that they actually physically held hands, but spiritually the flow of life from Christ does enter into them, and they are bonded together as a true family of God. For us today, the sole ground for fellowship is sharing in the life of Christ; the common eating of one bread declares we are one, and the drink that we drink declares it is the same divine blood flowing in the veins of each of the children of God.

We can never live independently of Christ, no matter how much energy, enthusiasm, and inspiration one feels to move forth on his own. For as soon as one does, it is as the branch

being pruned from the vine, and it will soon shrivel and die on its own. The consistency of our fellowship with Christ is life, life that flows from Him into our hearts.

There is another important “spiritual” aspect in communion I wish to speak, which is the Lord’s table in heaven and the Lord’s table on the earth. At the last supper Jesus sat with His disciples and said, Lk. 22.15-16,

“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before My suffering. For I tell you that I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

It is by this declaration, *until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God*, that Christ appointed unto the disciples a kingdom, that they might eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom. All things were fulfilled at the cross when Jesus bowing His head in death and sighed, *“It is finished.”* (Jn. 19.30) Thus, the Kingdom has come; it is witnessed in the Church. And so the Kingdom is in Heaven, and it is on the earth in the Church.

Upon His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, He led captivity captive, the souls of the redeemed were no longer bound in death. Note particularly in Heb. 12.22-24, that it is written we have come, spiritually into the heavenly environment, and are among those who have gathered around the throne of God,

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”

“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven.” The glorious thing that is brought to mind is that these are the “righteous” men and woman, Old Testament and New Testament alike, who have, by “faith,” run their course (Phil. 3.12); they have obtained the promises (Heb. 6.15). It may thus be said that the Lord’s table has an upper spiritual level, where the *general assembly and church of the firstborn* gather, and a lower level where the physical Body of Christ gathers to break bread. Being yet without a body because their resurrection has yet to occur, they enjoy the same communion with us in the more glorious setting of heaven and the presence of God and our Lord. Though there is a physical/spiritual separation between them and us, the feast of communion is “one,” and the family is “one,” and the Body is “one”—whether physical in this place or simultaneously with saints at another place across planet earth, or spiritually in the heavenlies as noted above; the oneness of mind and heart must prevail; thus is the fruition and realization of the Lord’s prayer recorded in Jn. 17.22-23,

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

One day we will all share our lives about the throne of God and sit at the Lord’s table, Himself breaking the bread and pouring the cup. And so, we shall ever be with the Lord, as our inheritance in Christ is consummated in His presence, and our Lord’s inheritance will be consummated with communion with His eternal bride. It is beyond mere comprehension this

gathering together with all the heavenly hosts, but the consummation of all things will come, for sure, as it is written in 1 Cor. 15.54,

“when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” 1 cor. 15.54

We will conclude next time with Episode 6: The Eternal Purpose of God: The Holy Spirit.

S1.E5. The Eternal Purpose: The Son Questions for Discussion

1. What are the overarching purposes of God in the earth?
2. How would you explain *spiritual warfare*?
3. How best can you explain “the Church.” How does Eph. 1.22-23 and Eph. 4.15-16 add to the understanding of what is the Church?
4. Differentiate the Church as being an organization to it being a living organism.
5. Explain 1 Cor. 12.18 and how it may pertain to Church leadership and to you personally.
6. What is the relationship between the Church and the Bride of Christ? How do they differ functionally?