

Ephesians 3:1-13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and **to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things**, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

“A purpose implies and demands a plan. Intelligent human minds formulate plans for execution of their purposes, and these plans are formed before the attempt is made to accomplish the purpose. If this is true of the human mind, how much more is it true of the divine mind...The priority of purpose to creation is not more essential than the priority of plan to creation; for the necessity, which originated the purpose, originated the plan”

- Boswell, God's Purpose Toward Us, pp. 20-21

When we contemplate God's eternal purpose - we are asking for the answer to “why”. What is the reason, the objective, or end that He had in view when He created the universe and man?

And we recognize that this eternal purpose, whatever is revealed about it, nonetheless necessitated a divine plan - for the universe and its moral creatures. Creation is not an experiment, but a PLANNED OBJECTIVE for which God prepared for and executed by His divine will.

The Tesla car company has been getting a lot of press lately for its electric cars and they are revolutionary. There have been pre-orders for their new model 3 electric car and the company has been trying to meet a production goal. But what we know about the forthcoming car is that before any land was bought, any warehouse was built, any fabrication machines built, any assembly lines, any workers were hired and trained...the car was completely designed and planned.

It would be highly unlikely anyone would risk to build all the infrastructure for a business and procure materials before an objective or goal had been formulated. We can see that with man, so how much more with God!

Before God entered upon His work of creation, His eternal purpose and plan was in mind. As we studied last week, Christ was FOREKNOWN before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20) - thus the PLAN to save man - in face all plans were FOREKNOWN.

1. The very nature of God makes it essential that he should have formed His purpose concerning the universe and its creatures before He created them. God, who is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful, surely would not have inaugurated a scheme of things without having first formed a purpose and plan with regard to it. If this is not true, then the world and life and man are all without rational explanation or reason for existence!

2. The scriptures teach that God's purpose is eternal.

2 Tim. 1:9 - "God who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal."

Titus 1:2 - "in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal."

1 Peter 1:20 - "Christ who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world."

Eph. 3:11 - "according to **the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord**"

We can then know from Eph. 3:11 that **God's eternal purpose** was purposed in Christ Jesus - Christ IS the plan.

Jesus Christ - our savior and redeemer. Thus God's eternal purpose, his eternal plan comprehended all divine acts essential to human redemption. Human redemption was the goal and the plan!

It was God's eternal plan that the Word should become flesh and dwell among us as our Savior, that the Savior, Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, should make atonement for sin by the sacrifice of Himself; that He should die and be buried and be raised up from the dead, and be made head over all things to the church; that salvation should be proffered all accountable human beings through Him and in His name, on the terms of the new covenant; that both Jews and Gentiles should be united in the one body of Christ, the church; and that through the instrumentality of the church, the gospel with its calls and gifts and promises should be proclaimed unto all nations for the obedience of faith. All this is comprehended in what we know as the Scheme of Redemption.

God's eternal purpose is also designated in v. 9 of Eph. 3 as **“the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things”**

Eph. 3:1-7 - “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is[a] that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.”

1 Pet. 1:10-12 - “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time[a] the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

1 Cor. 4:1 - “stewards of the mysteries of God”

1 Cor. 2:7 - “but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory”

The mystery revealed is that Jesus Christ is the CENTER, the ESSENCE of this eternal purpose and plan of God!

Eph. 3:11 - “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”

Eph. 2:7 - “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Gal. 4:4-5 - “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

1 Pet. 1:20 - “Christ who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake”

Eph. 1:9-10 - “making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

What is the ultimate objective, or end, of God's eternal purpose and plan?

A holy race, to inhabit "the new heavens and the new earth" 2 Pet. 3:13

Rev. 21:1-4 - "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,[b] and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

What do the scriptures teach about the consummation of God's eternal purpose and plan?

Isa. 46:9-10 - "remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
10 declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

Mal. 3:6 - "I, Jehovah, change not."

Rom. 11:29 - "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." i.e. not abandoned or changed

Jas. 1:17 - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

Titus 1:2 - "in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began"

Men may reject, neglect and even oppose God's eternal purpose and plan, but they will never be able to hinder its ultimate and glorious consummation.

In view of these great truths, what should we do??

We should give earnest heed to the calls of God, accept His matchless gifts of salvation and eternal life, and live in harmony with His eternal purpose and plan for us, for we may be absolutely sure that no disappointments will follow a life of consecration and service to him.

Rev. 22:17 - "The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."

Matt. 11:28 - "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Rom. 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"

Rev. 2:7 - "to him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God"