

Lesson Sixteen

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:1-13.

Scripture To Memorize: "... to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-11).

18. Q. What is meant by God's eternal purpose?

A. By God's eternal purpose is meant the objective or end that He had in view when He created the universe and man.

19. Q. What did God's eternal purpose necessitate?

A. It necessitated His divine plan for the universe and its moral creatures.

"A purpose implies and demands a plan. Intelligent human minds formulate plans for the 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 no 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).

20. Q. When did God form His eternal purpose and plan?

A. Before He entered upon His work of creation.

(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." Tit. 1:2—"in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal." 1 Pet. 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."

21. Q. What is comprehended in God's eternal plan?
 A. All those divine acts essential to human redemption.

It was His 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. (For reference, see John 1:14, Matt. 1:21, Phil. 2:5-11, Heb. 2:14-17, Heb. 9:24-28, 1 Pet. 2:24, Eph. 3:1-12, Eph. 2:11-17, Eph. 1:20-23, Acts 2:29-36, Acts 10:35-43, Matt. 28:18-20, Matt. 24:14, etc.).

22. Q. How is God's eternal purpose and plan otherwise designated in scripture?
 A. It is called "the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things," Eph. 3:9.

Eph. 3:1-7, "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words,

whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel," etc. 1 Pet. 1:10-12, "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into." 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," etc.

23. Q. In whom does this eternal purpose and plan of God centralize?

A. In Jesus Christ.

Eph. 3:11—"according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. 2:7—"that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Gal. 4:4, 5—"but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son . . . that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the 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 unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth," etc.

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

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

Rev. 21:1-4: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more; the first things are passed away." Cf. 2 Pet. 3:8-13; also 1 Cor. 15:20-28.

- 25. Q. What do the scriptures teach about the consummation of God's eternal purpose and plan?**

- A. The scriptures teach that because God is unchangeable, His eternal purpose and plan will be triumphantly and gloriously consummated.**

Isa. 46:9-10, "I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Mal. 3:6—"I, Jehovah, change not." Rom. 11:29—"for the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of," i. e., not turneth away from, not abandoned or changed. Jas. 1:17—"Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." Tit. 1:2—"in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal." 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.

- 26. Q. In view of all these great truths what should we do?**

- A. 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 absolute-**

ly sure that no disappointments will follow a life of consecration and service.

Rev. 22:17—"he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." 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."

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON SIXTEEN

18. Q. What is meant by God's eternal purpose?
19. Q. What did God's eternal purpose necessitate?
20. Q. When did God form His eternal purpose and plan?
21. Q. What is comprehended in God's eternal plan?
22. Q. How is God's eternal purpose and plan otherwise designated in scripture?
23. Q. In whom does this eternal purpose and plan of God centralize?
24. Q. What is the ultimate objective, or end, of God's eternal purpose and plan?
25. Q. What do the scriptures teach about the consummation of God's eternal purpose and plan?
26. Q. In view of all these great truths what should we do?

Lesson Seventeen

GOD'S INVISIBLE CREATION

Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:1-14.

Scripture To Memorize: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

27. Q. Does God have any creation other than our visible world?
 - A. The scriptures teach that God has an invisible creation.