

Cannot Stop the Eternal Purpose of God

When the apostle Paul addressed the Christians in Ephesus, he said, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and 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: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him” (Eph. 3:8-12).

Throughout the generations of man, there has been the question of God’s purpose in the creation. Why did God create the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is? Why was man created in the image of God? Why is it, that out of all things God created, it is man, and man alone, that has the cognate ability to work and worship, to build and plant, to appreciate the beauty of creation, and have a mental concept of something better beyond this life? The superiority of man, above all other living creatures, is so vast that only those who seek to live life in darkness would dare to attribute man’s place in the world to be no higher than the least of creation (whatever one might conclude that to be).

The apostle Paul informed the Ephesians that God’s plan went out, so that “unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). There was a purpose made known, not to man, but to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places and it was made known through the church.

It is often difficult (for me) to grasp the full impact of to whom the manifold wisdom of God was made known. Paul said, “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). The “wrestling” as Paul describes is “not against flesh and blood,” but the fact remains “even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). The warfare we fight is not earth bound. The purpose of this warfare can be seen in the results of victory, i.e., “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love:” (Eph. 1:3-4). Satan, who manifests himself as an angel of light, attempted to thwart the eternal purpose of God. What was that eternal purpose?

Before the foundation of the world God “purposed” something. What was that? What is embedded in the term “purpose”? When the three friends of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, withstood the edict of Nebuchadnezzar, the king said, “Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that ye serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?” (Dan. 3:14). Is it “of purpose?” i.e., “in the sense of intentness:” of intent, Webster says, “Some common synonyms of intent are aim, design, end, goal, intention, objective, object, and purpose. While all these words mean “what one intends to accomplish or attain,” intent suggests clearer formulation or greater deliberateness.” Solomon understood this principle, saying, “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov. 16:4, nasv).

Isaiah sums it up: “every one that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made” (Isa. 43:7). Satan attempted to thwart the eternal purpose of God, which was, Paul said, “unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). God’s “purpose” will not be thwarted. ret