

GOD'S PLAN AND GOD'S REST

God's Purpose In Creating Man

Why did God create man? What was His purpose in creating man? God has given us the answer to these questions in Genesis 1:26 and 27. They reveal to us that God's creation of man was indeed an exceedingly special one. Before God created man, He said, *"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."* This was God's plan in creating man. *"God said, Let us..."* This speaks of the kind of man God wanted. In other words, God was designing a "model" for the man He was to create. Verse 27 reveals God's creation of man: *"And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* Verse 28 says, *"And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."*

We notice here something quite remarkable. Verse 26 says, *"Let us make man in **our** image, after our likeness..."*; but verse 27 says, *"And God created man in **His** own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* In verse 26 the pronoun "our" is plural, but in verse 27 "his" is singular... How can we explain this? It is because there are three in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, yet only one has the image in the Godhead—the Son. When the Godhead was designing man's creation, the Bible indicates that man would be made in "our" image (since They are one, "our image" was mentioned); but when the Godhead was in the actual process of making man, the Bible says that man was made in "his" image. "His" denotes **the Son**... When God created Adam, He created him in the image of the Lord Jesus... The desire of God's heart is expressed in creation. God's goal, God's plan, and God's predetermined will are all made known in His creation. Creation reveals God's eternal purpose; it shows us what God is truly after.

Creation and Redemption

The place of redemption cannot be higher than that of creation. What is redemption? Redemption recovers what God did not obtain through creation. Redemption does not bring anything new to us; it only restores to us what is already ours. God through redemption achieves His purpose in creation. To redeem means to **restore** and **recover**; to create means to **determine** and **initiate**. Redemption is something afterward, so that God's purpose in creation may be fulfilled. Oh, that the Lord's children would not despise creation, thinking that redemption is everything. Redemption is related to us; it benefits us by saving us and bringing us eternal life. **But creation is related to God and God's work.** Our relationship with redemption is for the benefit of man, while our relationship with creation is for the economy of God. Once we have become Christians, we should not only receive the benefit of redemption but also achieve God's purpose in creation. Without redemption we could never be related to God. But once we have been saved, we need to offer ourselves to God to attain the goal for which He first made man... Hebrews 2 shows us that redemption is not only for the forgiveness of sins, that man may be saved, but also to restore man back to the purpose of creation.

We thank God that we have redemption. Apart from it we would plunge lower and lower; we would be suppressed by Satan more and more until there would be no way to rise. Praise God, redemption has caused us to return to God's eternal purpose. What God did not obtain in creation and what man lost in the fall are completely regained in redemption.

We must ask God to open our eyes to see what He has done so that our living and work may have a real turn. The commission of the church is twofold: to testify the **salvation** of Christ and to testify the **triumph** of Christ. On the one hand, the church is to bring benefit to man, and on the other hand, it is to cause Satan to suffer loss.

The Many Sons of God

We are God's many sons, which will ultimately result in God bringing us into glory. Redemption did not change God's purpose; on the contrary, **it fulfilled the purpose** that was not accomplished in creation. God's original purpose was that man should rule, especially over the earth, but man regrettably failed. This is why the Lord Jesus came to become a man. He did it purposely, and He became a true man. The first man did not accomplish God's purpose; rather, he sinned and fell. He not only failed to restore the earth, but he was captured by Satan. He not only failed to rule, but he was brought into subjection to Satan's power. Genesis 2 says that man was made of dust, and Genesis 3 points out that dust was the food of the serpent. This means that fallen man became the food of Satan. Man could no longer deal with Satan; he was finished. What could be done? Did this mean that God could never achieve His eternal purpose, that He could no longer obtain what He was after? Did it mean that God could never restore the earth? No! He sent His Son to become a man. **The Lord Jesus is truly God, but He is also truly man.**

In the whole world there is at least one man who chooses God, a person who can say, *"The ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing"* (John 14:30). In other words, in the Lord Jesus there is not a trace of the prince of this world. We must note carefully that the Lord Jesus came to this world not to be God but **to be man**. God required a man. If God Himself dealt with Satan, it would be very easy; Satan would fall in a moment. But God would not do it Himself. He wanted man to deal with Satan; He intended that the creature would deal with the creature. When the Lord Jesus became a man, He suffered temptation as a man and passed through all the experiences of man. This man conquered; this man was victorious. He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Jesus has been "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). He has been glorified.

He did not come to receive glory as God, but to obtain glory as man. We do not mean that He did not have the glory of God, but Hebrews 2 does not refer to the glory which He possessed as God. It refers to Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels because of the suffering of death; Jesus was crowned with glory and honor. Our Lord ascended as a man. Today He is in the heavens as man. A man is at God's right hand. In the future there will be many men who will be there. Today a man is sitting on the throne. One day there will be many men sitting on the throne.

When the Lord Jesus was resurrected, **He imparted His life into us**. When we believe in Him, we receive His life. We all become God's sons, and as such, we all belong to God. Because we have this life within us, as men we can be entrusted by God to fulfill His purpose. Therefore, it says that He will bring many sons into glory. To rule is to be glorified, and to be glorified is to rule. When the many sons have obtained authority and restored the earth, then they will be brought triumphantly into glory. We should never presume that God's purpose is merely to save us from hell that we may enjoy the blessings of heaven. We must remember that God intends for man to follow His Son in the exercise of His authority on the earth. God wants to accomplish something, but He will not do it Himself; **He wants us to do it**. When we have done it, then God will have attained His purpose. God desires to obtain a group of men who will do His work here on this earth, that God may rule on earth through man. (Excerpt from *The Glorious Church*, chapter 1)