

2018 WCCC
Brother Stephen Kaung
To the Praise of His Glory (1)

God's Purpose for Man

Job 38:4-7—Where wast thou when I founded the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who set the measures thereof—if thou knowest? or who stretched a line upon it? Whereupon were the foundations thereof sunken? or who laid its corner-stone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

May we pray,

Dear Lord, with grateful hearts we come together before Thee. In this troubrous world we thank Thee for gathering us together here in peace. We believe that Thou dost gather us for a purpose. We pray that Thy purpose shall be fully realized in our midst. We pray that Thou wilt use this opportunity to prepare every one of us for Thy imminent return that we may see Thee face to face and glorify Thy name. We commit this time into Thy hand and pray that Thou wilt speak to each and every one of us and bring us closer to Thyself. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

The Consultation in the Godhead

“In the beginning God ...” In the beginning there was nothing but God Himself, and God is a God of Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May I use a human imagination? We may imagine that in the beginning there was a consultation among the Godhead. The Father loved His Son and wanted to give everything to Him, and for this reason He had the idea of creation. However, God being God knew the end from the beginning. He knew that if He created there would be problems because He knew that one of His created beings would rebel against Him. Then the Son stepped forward: “Father, if it is Your will to create, go ahead. I am willing to offer Myself as a Lamb that Thy will may be done.” And it is because of this we have creation.

The Angels Were Alone in the First Creation

When God created the world, man was not the first whom He created. In the first creation the angels were the highest, and among the angels the highest was an archangel called Lucifer, the brilliant star. He was created with such perfection, and he was gifted with many gifts. He was the anointed archangel over the throne of God who led the rest of the angels to worship God. But unfortunately, because of the abundance of his traffics he began to look into himself (see Ezekiel 28:11-18).

Now it is always dangerous to look into yourself. The Bible continuously tells us: "Look off unto Jesus." If we look off unto Jesus we are safe, but whenever we look into ourselves we will fall just as the archangel fell. So unfortunately, because of his beauty, because of his gifts, because of his position, he began to look into himself.

Now we should never look into ourselves because if we do there will be one of two results. Either you will begin to feel proud of yourself or you will begin to despair of yourself. Therefore, the Bible tells us, "Look off unto Jesus; not into yourself.

The Earth Enters into Ruin

However, because of his many gifts and traffics, because of his beauty and his position, Lucifer began to look into himself. And when he looked into himself you know what happened. The more he looked into himself, the more he began to be proud of himself. And in Isaiah 14:12-14 he spoke of himself five times. He said, "I will ascend into the heavens, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit upon the mount of assembly, in the recesses of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."

In other words, Lucifer was not satisfied with what God had given him. God had given him the highest position among the angels, but he was not satisfied with that. He looked into himself, and he felt he was greater than he should have been. He wanted to be equal with God.

Now what does that mean? Who is equal with God? Only the Son of God is equal with God. Lucifer desired the position of our Lord Jesus, and because of this, God dismissed him from the throne and all the angels that had been under him entered into judgment. That is the reason why the Bible begins with, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth became void and empty" (see Genesis 1:1-2a). How did the earth become void and empty? How was the earth ruined? It was because of the rebellion of the archangel Lucifer.

Evidently, in the beginning the earth was given to him to govern, and therefore when he was dismissed from the throne, everything that was under him entered into ruin. So the earth became void and empty. It had lost its purpose and it entered into such a state of ruin, and this we call the ice age.

God Restores the Ruined Earth

We do not know how long the ice age remained, but thank God, He is a God of mercy and a God of purpose. Even after so many, many years of ruin, God began to repair the ruined earth, and that is what we find in Genesis 1. In six days God restored the ruined earth. We know that the six days are re-creation and not creation. God used six days to re-create the ruined earth because He has a glorious purpose. Even though Lucifer became Satan, the adversary of God, it would have been easy for God to destroy him. If God had spoken a word with the breath of His mouth, He could easily have destroyed him, but that would not have given Him glory. It would be just like a big man beating a small boy, he would have no glory in it. However, God is a God of glory and because of His glory God had another plan. And this other plan was to restore the earth to be habitable in six days in order for Him to create man. So we are not the first creation, but we are the creation of the second earth.

God Created Man to Destroy the Enemy

Why did God create us? On the one hand, man was created in God's image. And the word image means the inward character. Man has the character of God built into him, but man was made a little lower than the angels. Now why did God make man? It was because He had a plan; He wanted to use man to defeat His enemy. As I have already said, for God to destroy Lucifer would have been the easiest thing in the world. His very breath could have finished Lucifer, but that would not give God glory, and God is a God of glory. Therefore, He began to make man a little lower than the angels.

Just remember this: we are not angels; we are even made a little lower than the angels. That is what man is, but God made us with a purpose. God had never made anything in His own image. Even the angels were not made in God's image, but God made man in His own image. Even though he is lower than the angels, yet God's purpose in man is higher. God wants to use one who is a little lower than the angels to defeat Satan, and that is for the glory of God.

Man is Made with the Inward Quality of God

So let us know who we are. We are human beings, but we are made according to God's image. The word image, *icon* does not mean outward form but the inward quality. So man was made with the inward quality of God. He was made according to God's nature, and that is the reason why man can be reunited with God. Thus, man was made with a purpose; we are not to exist for ourselves but for God's purpose. Let us remember this: We are not here for ourselves; we are here for God's purpose. God has a definite purpose in every one of us as small as we are and even being made lower than the angels. The angels can be everywhere and we are so limited upon this earth. We are not as powerful as the angels, nor as wise as the angels, and yet we are made in God's image. And the word image speaks of inward character. Man has the character of God, and that is the reason why of all created beings only man can be reunited with God because we have the same character.

Man was to Till and Guard the Garden

When God created man, He put him in the garden of Eden. We know the word Eden means pleasure. He put man in the garden of pleasure and filled that garden with fruit trees. All the fruit trees were good for food; God had made plenty for man's need. But in the midst of the garden God planted the tree of life which is symbolic of the life of God. He put His life in the tree that is edible. But by the side of the tree of life God planted another tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Do not think that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a bad tree. It is bad in our thoughts because through that tree man fell into sin. But so far as the tree itself is concerned, it is the second-best tree. All the trees in the garden of Eden were good for food, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would give man intellect. Only the tree of life will give us life, so it is not a bad tree at all. It is the second to the best, but God's purpose is for our best. Therefore, He wants us to have His own life that we may be united with Him. He does not want man to fall into intellect, but unfortunately, that is exactly what he did.

From the day of Eve and Adam until today, man has made intellect the highest pursuit of human beings. Now that does not mean God wants us all to be foolish. Surely God wants us to be wise, but if you are wise without the right life it is most dangerous. That is the reason God said, "You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In other words, God was suggesting that the man should eat the tree of life, and Satan knew about it. So you remember when God put Adam in the garden, He commanded him to do two things—to till and to guard.

To till means that God did not want man to be lazy. Instead, He wanted him to make improvements upon what He had made. Now that is a tremendous thing! God had already made the earth, but He wanted man to improve upon it. Then there was a second work He wanted man to do, and that was to guard.

What does that mean? Eden was a garden, and it did not have a wall. God wanted man to be the wall of the garden because Satan, God's enemy, was outside of the garden. Because the garden had no wall, He wanted man to be the wall to guard it from the enemy entering in. But unfortunately, man failed in his work.

Today we often put the blame on Eve because she was the one who listened to the enemy. She was also the one who first took the forbidden fruit and then gave it to her husband. Eve was deceived, but Adam was not. Eve fell for the trick of the enemy, but Adam knew perfectly God's command. But because he loved his wife so much, he was afraid of losing her, and he capitulated to his wife's demand. That is how sin entered into this world.

So in the beginning God had a glorious purpose for the man that He created to improve what God had made and to guard against the enemy. He wanted to use man who was a little lower than the angels to defeat His enemy, and His purpose has not changed. Even today, God's purpose is for man to defeat the enemy. We are not to yield to temptation, but we must overcome the enemy and do the will of God. That is God's purpose for man, but unfortunately, we know what happened. From the day man was driven out of the garden of Eden, his spirit was dead. But thank God, God did not give up because of that.

God's Plan of Redemption

God already had a plan of redemption; He was going to send His Son into this world. So about two thousand years ago, God's Son came into this world to be a Man, and His name was called Jesus. He lived thirty-three and a half years upon this earth obeying His Father in everything. He denied Himself, even losing His own liberty. He put Himself completely under His Father's control and said, "I can do nothing by Myself. I cannot say anything by Myself. I cannot go anywhere by Myself. I do because I see My Father has done it." He lived a life of complete, absolute obedience to the Father. He is the only one who has defeated God's enemy even though Satan tempted the Lord Jesus again and again.

Do you think your temptations are great? None can be compared with the temptations our Lord Jesus suffered. He was tempted in all ways but without sin. Thank God for that! And if He could do that, you can do that, and I can do that by His grace.

This is the salvation of God who sent His only Son into this world to save us. Therefore, how should we live? Can we live by ourselves? No, we can only live by the life of Christ in us. If we live by the life of Christ in us we can overcome. We can overcome the enemy no matter how great the temptations may be. But if we look into ourselves like Adam and Eve, we will fail because we will be deceived by the enemy's schemes.

The Secret of Victory

Thus, the secret of victory is in obedience to Christ. We who are the Lord's should give ourselves completely to the Lord. In big things and small things, in everything in our daily lives, we need to learn to obey the Lord. In obedience to Christ Jesus we will find the secret of our Christian life. We do not live for ourselves; we live for Christ. He is our life, and we need to learn to obey Him in all things. Do not have this idea that we are to seek the Lord in the big things, but in small things we can be free to do them ourselves. Not at all! In all things learn to listen to the still small voice, for this is the way of Christian life. So thank God, even though our forefathers failed, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can and should succeed. By the grace of God let us go forward in the light of our Lord Jesus. May the Lord have mercy upon each and every one of us.

Shall we pray:

Dear God, we want to thank Thee that even if we as human beings have failed, Thou never faileth. We thank Thee for Thy great salvation. We thank Thee for sending Thy Son, Thy beloved Son into this world. We thank Thee for the salvation that He has brought to us. He that believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. We thank Thee that we have believed in Him, and we have eternal life. Lord, teach us how to live by Thy eternal life that we may obey Thee in all things. Oh dear Lord, we thank Thee for the so great salvation and enable us to live accordingly. May Thy name be exalted in our midst. In Thy precious name we pray. Amen.