

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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WHICH HE PURPOSED IN HIM

God's purpose of the eons is to lead all mankind and all creation into His **all** so that He may be **all in all** in **all new** (1 Corinthians 15.28). This might seem to be too theological to some. After all, what does this mean to us who live in the year 2008 when it seems that the Lord's people are so focused on many things of this earth? Well, I believe it means everything, for this is the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and knowing this mission is having the very mind and heart of our Lord. It answers every question we might have and every argument we might have with God over His ways. Seeing and knowing God's purpose adds meaning and purpose to our lives, and, I might add, truly liberates us to love all of mankind, even our enemies, for even they are included in this **all**.

In a sense, God's purpose is a purpose within a purpose, or, perhaps, it could be described as a dual purpose. God the Father cannot become **all in all** unless and until His Son is **all in all**. It is God's purpose that His Son be **all in all**, and it is the Son's purpose that His Father be **all in all**. I hope you realize that I am not playing with words here. What I am trying to establish in your mind and in your heart is that this matter of **all in all** is the very heart of God for His entire creation—all of mankind, all of His created beings, and all that makes up creation or, if you prefer, the universe. Simply, God will be **all in all**, and He will do this through His Son whose mission is to bring all things into His subjection by heading up all things until He has brought it all together under His Headship; and when He has done this, He will subject it all to the God and Father, even subjecting Himself to His Father, as He hands over the kingdom to Him, so that God may be **all in all**.

We know that **all authority in heaven and on earth has been given** to our Lord (Matthew 28.18), that He is **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come** (Ephesians 1.21), and that He is **far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things** (Ephesians 4.10). Christ is in the place of ascendancy over all things, and He is in all things so that He might fill all things in the heavens and on the earth with His very life and, I might add, with the very love of God.

Oh, what a glorious Christ we have!

This is the glory of God's purpose that Scripture so clearly teaches us if we have a heart to learn and ears to hear. Consider what the spirit of truth has given us in Scripture.

And subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all. (Ephesians 1.22-23 CV)

And he has put everything under his feet and set him as head over everything for the church, the church which is his Body, filled by him who fills the entire universe. (Ephesians 1.22-23 JMT)

Two translations of Paul's words are presented because, together, they define the scope of God's **all**. Now, there is much in these verses regarding the ecclesia, which is Christ's body, but I will put this great truth aside for the moment, to be taken up in another issue. What we need to see is that Christ as the Head over all is the One who will complete the **all in all** for God the Father, and He will do this through His Headship and by filling the entire creation with His life. Can you think of anything more

glorious than this? The One in whom we believe, trust, and, most importantly, love is the very One who will head up, sum up, or gather up all things, things in the heavens and on the earth. His mission is to complete the plan of God to the last detail. Consider how Paul unveils this glory.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. (Ephesians 1.7-10 NASB)

Having disclosed to us the secret [or, mystery, and throughout book] of His will, according to His good pleasure which He Himself purposed [or, planned] in Him with respect to the administration of the fullness [or, completion] of the times, to gather together [or, to unify] all [things] in Christ, the [things] in the heavens and the things on the earth.... (Ephesians 1.9-10 ALT)

For the government of the world when the times are ripe for it--the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in Heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him. (Ephesians 1.10 WNT)

The last translation of verse 10 adds more meaning to this summing up. The whole creation, which has to include all created beings, especially all mankind who was created to be in the image of the Son of God, is to be restored so that all will discover Christ as their Head. In other words, all creation is destined to find Christ, our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, as their one Head. *In* Christ is the Head of the whole creation, all in the heavens and all on the earth. There is none other; all to the glory of God.

Finally, Paul brings this great truth to its climax in his epistle to the Corinthians, in which he defends the resurrection of Christ and, ultimately, of all mankind.

Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15.24-28 NASB)

Christ will continue to rule and reign over all creation until He has put every enemy under His feet, which is tantamount to stating under His Headship, until finally death, in all forms, will be abolished forever so that only His life, the very life of God, remains. Then, in the end, that is, at the consummation of the eons, He will hand over the kingdom to the God and Father, even subjecting Himself to the Father for one glorious purpose, so that God may be ***all in all***.

Dear beloved ones in Christ, this is the purpose of God. Why do we go forth making disciples of all the nations? Why do we desire to see a great harvest of people come into the kingdom of God? Why must the gospel of the kingdom be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations? Why do we long for revivals? The answer is simple: So that Christ may be ***all in all*** so that, ultimately, in the fullness of times, God may be ***all in all***. All things are driving toward the all of God.

Let us join hearts with God's purpose! Let us live according to His purpose!