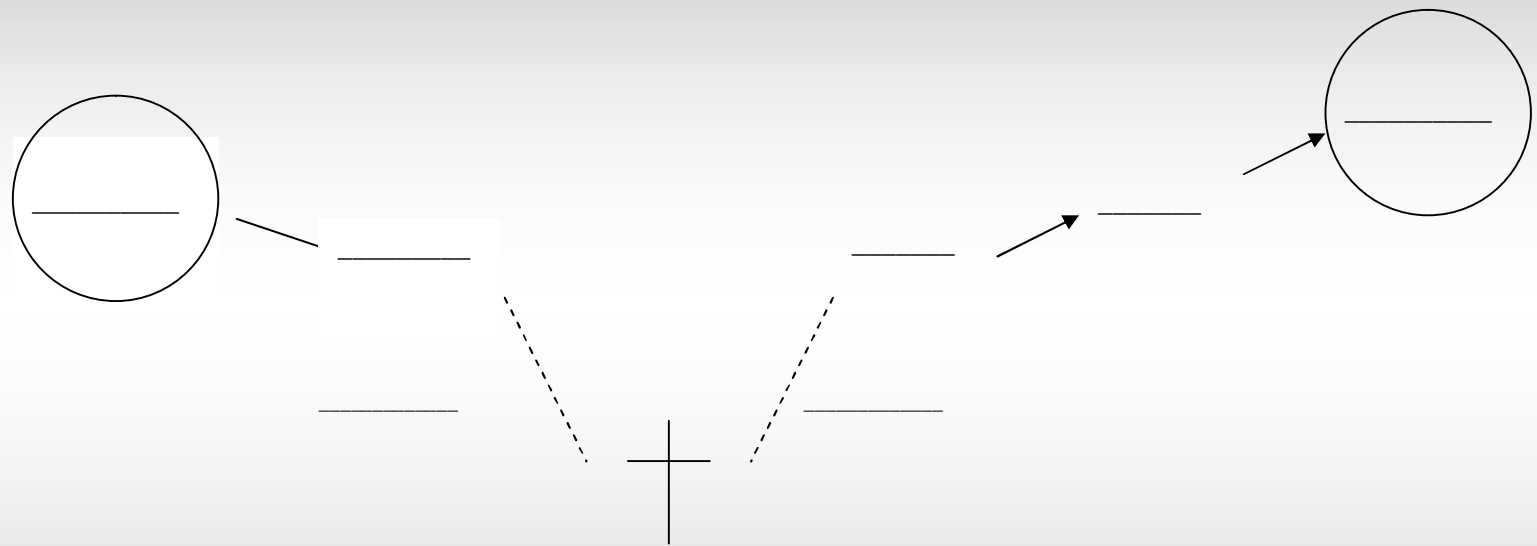


# THE BIG PICTURE



A Sermon Series  
by Phil Waldo

# The Big Picture

## Part One: An Eternal Perspective

May 21, 2006

Psalm 73

We can have an Earthly Perspective or an Eternal Perspective:

### 1. **An earthly perspective yields sinful attitudes.**

*A perspective is a point of view, a way of thinking about a matter. Having an eternal perspective means evaluating the beliefs, events, decisions and actions of life from God's point of view. It is using God's values as the measuring stick with which we evaluate life. It is recognizing that everything done in the present has an eternal consequence and should be evaluated in that light. Martin Luther once said that on his calendar there were but two days, "today and that day." He recognized that every day of this life is preparation for the day when we will stand before God in eternity. I can view the world through "spiritual eyes", with God's perspective or I can simply view the world through "physical eyes" and fail to grasp the eternal. My view of life will greatly affect my thinking and my actions.*

---Bob Krepps

Verse 3, 21... envy, grief, and bitterness

James 3:16

where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Psalms 37:1-2

Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.

1 Timothy 6:10

some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him

Hebrews 12:15

15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many

Ephesians 4:31

31 Get rid of all bitterness

Proverbs 27:7

7 He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

### 2. **An earthly perspective yields doubt.**

*'If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were precisely those who thought the most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.*

---CS Lewis

Ecclesiastes 3:11

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Verse 13, 22

Asaph admits how stupid he had been when he only looked at life from an earthly perspective. He was like an animal that doesn't have the ability to consider the future. He was senseless and ignorant because like an animal he was only thinking about the present situation. And it created doubt...

Doubt can limit our walk with God...

Matthew 14:31

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Matthew 21:21-22

21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

James 1:6-8

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

*What is a year or two or forty of waiting upon a matter here on earth when spiritually we are sitting in the lap of Jesus at the right hand of God? If we are freaking out over the issues of earth, it is because we are not exercising the faith to look at life from an eternal perspective, from which our entire lifetime is but a vapor (James 4:14) and a blip on the screen of eternity. (Psalm 39:5) Today, let us pray for the faith to see our trials as temporary as they truly are ... in light of God's bigger picture of glory.*

*---Pastor Bob Coy*

### 3. An eternal perspective from God yields understanding.

Verse 17

Ephesians 4:18

18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

*Think about a couple walking through a maze made of hedges. The husband and wife can see only the path ahead of them. They try one way, only to find a dead end. But imagine if the couple could have a bird's-eye view of the maze. They could see the beginning from the end, the dead ends from the fruitful paths. That's what God's eternal perspective is like. He sees and understands it all. Grasping and embracing God's eternal perspective will help us understand many things about our lives. To gain that perspective and understanding, we must read His Word, listen to Him in prayer, and be willing to follow His directions.*

*God will also help us understand what, from His perspective, is truly eternal. God is eternal, so our relationship to Him is very important. Scripture is eternal, so we commit ourselves to studying and memorizing it. People are eternal, so we invest ourselves in our marriages, our families, and our friendships. By contrast, material things are not eternal, so we should spend less time, energy, and money on grasping for them.*

Psalms 119:104

104 I gain understanding from your precepts

*While the Psalmist had focused on what the wicked had, he failed to notice the many blessings that the righteous enjoy now. Now that he sees from a heavenly perspective,*

he understands that he and other godly people have the riches of untold value. He had envied the glitter of the wicked while all along he had the real gold.

Every believer can say, "I have security that is greater than that of money or success." I can have peace even during troubled times because I am held by his strong right hand. I can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil because God is my protector. The wicked has a peace that is temporal and fickle. It has a habit of disappearing when trouble ultimately comes. As a believer I can have cancer and still have peace. As a believer I can be unemployed and still be at rest in my heart. As a believer, because I am protected by God's mighty hand, I can be surrounded by trouble and still sleep at night with a quiet heart. ---Commentary

#### 4. An eternal perspective yields confidence.

Verse 23-26

Psalms 27:1-3

The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

*The glory and joy of our eternal heavenly reward is so great that it is incomprehensible and indescribable. After considering the riches that the righteous have now and the reward that they experience later in heaven, Asaph stands in awe and in appreciation of the many blessings he has. In heaven, with God, the believer has the best that is available; and on all the Earth there is nothing greater or better than God himself. The believer is blessed on earth with God's*

*many riches, but unlike the wicked the believer will also be blessed in the future with a reward that cannot be comprehended. In verse 26 he is basically saying that even if he were to experience trouble and sickness all the days of his life, even if his heart and his flesh were to fail, he was still better off than the wicked because God was "the strength of his heart" and God would be to him "his portion forever." The word "portion" is another word for his reward or his inheritance. God is better than health, wealth, houses, success, earthly pleasures, or anything else.*

---Commentary

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal

2 Corinthians 5:7

We live by faith, not by sight

*Abraham – Was able to leave his home and follow God in faith because he was **'longing for a better country—a heavenly one.'** Heb 11:16*

*Moses – 'chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, **because he was looking ahead to his reward.**' Heb 11:25,26*

*Other Saints - were tortured and refused to be released, **so that they might gain a better resurrection.**' Heb 11:35*

*So we see from the 'hall of faith' in Hebrews chapter 11, that it was the sense of eternity and the longing for 'the things to come' that enabled the great saints of old to hold fast and walk in faith through their difficult times down here on earth.*

---I Gordon

## Conclusion

*One of the keys to living a triumphant life in Christ — to living a joyous and victorious life in the midst of a world wallowing in despair — is to live with a conscious eternal perspective.*

*I have personally found this to be so important that I carry a reminder of it in my shirt pocket at all times. It is a small card that was sent to me in 1988 by the great prophetic preacher, Leonard Ravenhill. The card says, "Lord, keep me eternity conscious."*

*What does that mean? In the words of Peter, that means living as "aliens and strangers" in this world (1 Peter 2:11). Similarly, in the words of the writer of Hebrews, it means living as "strangers and exiles" on this earth (Hebrews 11:13). Paul put it this way: "Do not set your minds on earthly things, for our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:19-20). The great Christian writer, C.S. Lewis, explained that to live with an eternal perspective means "living as commandos operating behind the enemy lines, preparing the way for the coming of the Commander-in-Chief."*

*---Dr. David R. Reagan*

If we look at life from an earthly perspective our lives will be filled with sorrow and our faith will be weak, but if we will look at life from an eternal perspective we will be filled with joy and hope and a strong faith in God. Even though we will have some difficult times and we will see some troubling things in our life, we will be able to say with Asaph "Surely God is Good!"

*Corrie ten Boom often showed a piece of embroidery to her audiences. She would hold up the piece of cloth, first showing the beauty of the embroidered side, with all the threads forming a beautiful picture, which she described as the plan God has for our lives. Then she would flip it over to*

*show the tangled, confused underside, illustrating how we view our lives from a human standpoint. --James S. Hewett*

Colossians 3:1-2

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things

Next week: Ultimate Intention

## The Big Picture

Hell to avoid and Heaven to gain

May 28, 2006

### HUMOR

*When Fred arrived at the Pearly Gates there was hardly any line and he didn't have to wait more than a minute before his interview. Naturally, he was a little nervous about getting through the gates and into the heavenly city. Very quickly he found himself standing before an impressive angelic being with a clipboard who started getting his entry data down. After name, address, and a few other particulars, the angelic being said, "Fred, it would help the process if you could share with me some experience from your life on earth when you did a purely unselfish, kindly deed." Well, Fred thought about it for a minute and then said, "Oh, yes. I think I have something you might be interested in. One day I was walking along and I came upon a little old lady who was being mercilessly beaten up by a huge motorcycle gang type of fellow. He was smacking her back and forth. Well, I just stepped right up and first I pushed over his motorcycle--just to distract his attention. And then I kicked him real hard in the shins and told the old lady to run for help. And then I hauled off and gave the guy a great shot right to the gut with my fist."*

*The being looked at Fred with a great deal of interest and said, "Wow, that's quite a story. I'm very impressed. Could you tell me just when this happened?" Fred looked at his watch and said, "Oh, about two or three minutes ago."*

*--James S. Hewett,*

### Last week: The Big Picture: An Eternal Perspective

1. An Earthly Perspective yields sinful attitudes
2. An Earthly Perspective yields doubts
3. An Eternal Perspective yields understanding
4. An Eternal Perspective yields confidence

("Ultimate Intention" proved to be too much for one message)

## 1. Life is short

James 4:14

You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Psalms 102:2-3

2 Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. 3 For my days vanish like smoke;

Job 9:25

25 "My days are swifter than a runner;

Psalms 39:5

5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath.

*Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth you will get neither.*

*C. S. Lewis*

## 2. Hell is a real place

*Is There A Hell? A recent USA Today (reported in the 10/31/97 issue) poll discovered 52% of adults are certain that there is a hell, and 27% think there might be. 48% think it will be a real place where people suffer eternal torment, with 46% thinking it will be an anguished state of existence rather than an actual place. 6% indicate they don't know.*

*Hell as a place of punishment translates Gehenna, the Greek form of the Hebrew word that means "the valley of Hinnom"-a valley just south of Jerusalem. In this valley the Canaanites worshiped Baal and the fire-god Molech by sacrificing their children in a fire that burned continuously.*

*In the time of Jesus the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were thrown all the filth and*

*garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, fires burned constantly. Maggots worked in the filth. When the wind blew from that direction over the city, its awfulness was quite evident. At night wild dogs howled and gnashed their teeth as they fought over the garbage.*

*Jesus used this awful scene as a symbol of hell. In effect he said, "Do you want to know what hell is like? Look at the valley of Gehenna." So hell may be described as God's "cosmic garbage dump." All that is unfit for heaven will be thrown into hell.*

*Hell is described as a place where "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." Repeatedly Jesus spoke of outer darkness and a furnace of fire, where there will be wailing, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Obviously this picture is drawn from the valley of Gehenna.*

*Because of the symbolic nature of the language, some people question whether hell consists of actual fire. Such reasoning should bring no comfort to the lost. The reality is greater than the symbol. The Bible exhausts human language in describing hell. Hell is more terrible than language can express.*

*(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)*

Matthew 25:30

30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Luke 16:19-26

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my

tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' 25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

2 Thessalonians 1:9

9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

*The essence of hell is complete separation from God, and that is the ultimate disaster.*

*W. R. Matthews*

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8

8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Here are a few characteristics of hell set forth in the N.T.:

- \* It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12).
- \* It is a place where people scream for mercy, have memories, are tormented, feel alone, cannot escape (Luke 16:23-31).
- \* It is a place of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:48).
- \* It is a place of darkness (Revelation 9:2).
- \* It is a place of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29 KJV).
- \* It is a place where God's wrath is poured out (Rev. 14:10).
- \* It is a place of everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

---Charles R. Swindoll,

God will never send anybody to hell. If man goes to hell, he goes by his own free choice. Hell was created for the devil and his angels, not for man. God never meant that man should go there.

---Billy Graham

The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

---Karl Marx

### 3. Heaven surpasses all

If I ever reach heaven, I expect to find three wonders there: first, to meet some I had not thought to see there; second, to miss some I had expected to see there; and third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there.

John Newton (1725-1807)

One morning at breakfast, I decided to teach my nearly four-year-old Caleb his first Bible verse--John 3:16. I slowly enunciated the words: "For God so loved the world he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

The second time I said the verse even slower, encouraging Caleb to fill in certain words. When I got to "... shall not perish but have everlasting [blank]," Caleb proudly answered, "fun!" I couldn't have said it better myself.

Doug Vogel

### • A New Body

Every day your heart beats 104,178 times. Your blood travels 171,000 miles. You breathe 23,172 times, inhaling 438 cubic feet of air. You move 752 major muscles and exercise 8,000,000 brain cells. You do this every day. No wonder I'm tired so much of the time!

The edition of this jalopy which I call my body is getting worse and worse, and my friends recognize it and make mental note, "He is slipping fast." This jalopy is getting into bad condition. The steering gear is so worn and wobbly that I have to use a cane to keep it from running off the road. The headlights are so dim that they show up only about a half or a third as much as they used to. The horn is a mere squawk. I only get about a tenth of the speed out of it that it gave a few years ago. And as for climbing hills, or even gentler slopes, the less said the better. It is clear that it is going to have to be junked one of these days. But the real person who lives inside this jalopy is a different story. God is much more real and his truth shines more brightly. The companionship of Christ is more constant through His Holy Spirit, and He holds out a hope for a new model, after this jalopy is junked.

--- Dr. Joseph Leroy Dodds

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (verse 54 says it will be immortal)

Luke 24:36-43 (Jesus, after his resurrection)

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in



your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Revelation 21:4

4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

- **Rewards**

*My five-year-old grandnephew was obviously worried as he looked down the long aisle of the church where his aunt was to be married the following day. His grandmother had an idea. "I think I'll give a prize to the person who does the best job tomorrow," she told him.*

*We were all holding our breath the next day, but when it was time, the ringbearer performed without a hitch.*

*When his grandmother told him he had won the prize, he was both excited and relieved. "I was pretty sure I had it," he admitted, "until Aunt Dana came in wearing that white dress and the horn was blowing. Then I started thinking--she might win!"*

Colossians 3:23-24

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

*Heaven is entered into by God's grace, but his rewards are based on our actions.*

Revelation 22:12-13

12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

2 Timothy 4:8 *(after finishing the race)*

8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

- **Great accommodations**

John 14:2

2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. *(KJV = mansions)*

*One Sunday morning the pastor read John 14:2 to the congregation using a modern translation. His version read, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." Immediately an elderly lady stood up and said sternly, "Young man, I want you to read that Scripture again--from my Bible. I've lived in old, run-down houses all my life and I am looking forward to that mansion!"*

*---Carol Reddekop*

Revelation 21:10-27

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring

rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. 18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

12,000 stadia = 1400 miles long, wide and high = surface of earth with 13 miles of depth. (a little over half the width of the US & the total height) (standard orbit is 200+miles)

This is just the capital city. I believe it will be connected to all of heaven.

*...Peter said, "Let me look inside your suitcase & see what's there." So the man dragged the suitcase over, & Peter opened it to see that it was filled with gold bars & gold bricks. Peter said, "Well, all right. If God said so, I suppose you can take that in if*

*you want. But why in the world did you go to all this trouble just to bring more pavement into heaven?"*

### The Value of Gold

1 ounce = \$640.00 (as of May 2006)

1 brick (at 400 oz.) = \$256,000.00

\$1 million = 4 bricks

1,478,400 bricks required to build a two-lane street 1 mile long (1 brick = 6" x 3" & 2" deep)  
Now multiply by \$256,000.00

That equals a cost of \$378,470,400,000.00 (378 billion+)

New Jerusalem is 1400 miles long. Cost of a street through the city is \$529,858,560,000,000.00 (529 trillion+) at today's gold price.

And that's only one street!

And it's only a street! We use dirt and water to make our roads!

- **Being with Jesus**

John 14:3

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (*dead in Christ rise first*)

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Revelation 21:3-4

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Revelation 22:4

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

*My family and I have lived in the same house for seventeen years. We've lived there more than twice as long as I have lived at any other address in my entire life. I'll sometimes refer to it as "our house," but more often I refer to it as "home." What makes it home isn't the address or the lot or the garage or the architecture. What makes it home is the people.*

*You may live in a bigger or newer or better house than we live in, but as nice as your house may be, I would never refer to your house as home because the people who are most important to me don't live there. So what makes home home is the people in the relationships.*

*And what makes heaven heaven is not streets made out of gold, great fountains, lots of fun, and no smog. That all may well be. Actually, I think that heaven is far greater than our wildest imagination. The same God who designed the best of everything in this world, also designed heaven, only he took it to a far greater extent than anything we've ever seen. Yet, that's still not what makes heaven heaven.*

*What makes heaven heaven is God. It is being there with him. With his presence comes peace and contentment, a fulfillment, a sense that all is well. That is also a contentment that bubbles over into the rest of life. We can anticipate this future in the presence of God, we can be with him in a place where everything he wants happens the way he wants it to happen. And that affects this life as well.*

*Leith Anderson*

## CONCLUSION

*If you ever get the opportunity to visit Egypt and the tombs and pyramids, study what was required to construct some of those monuments. Some studies revealed that it required the*

*efforts of one hundred thousand workers for forty years to build one of the great pyramids. As you tour the area there, you can't help but ask why. Why so much effort? Why would somebody put that amount of emphasis on a tomb, on the afterlife?*

*The answer is that the Egyptians understood full well that they would spend a lot more time in the afterlife than they would spend in this life. Granted, some of their conceptions of what would happen in the afterlife were a little skewed. But the point is, they understood to the core of their being that the afterlife was a whole lot more important than this life, and so they prepared for the afterlife during this life. God had placed eternity in their hearts.*

*---Bill Hybels*

*Sigmund Freud's favorite story was about the sailor shipwrecked on one of the South Sea islands. He was seized by the natives, hoisted to their shoulders, carried to the village, and set on a rude throne. Little by little, he learned that it was their custom once each year to make some man a king, king for a year. He liked it until he began to wonder what happened to all the former kings. Soon he discovered that every year when his kingship was ended, the king was banished to an island, where he starved to death. The sailor did not like that, but he was smart and he was king, king for a year. So he put his carpenters to work making boats, his farmers to work transplanting fruit trees to the island, farmers growing crops, masons building houses. So when his kingship was over, he was banished, not to a barren island, but to an island of abundance. It is a good parable of life: We're all kings here, kings for a little while, able to choose what we shall do with the stuff of life.*

Matthew 6:19-20

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal

## The Big Picture

Review - Part One: An Eternal Perspective

May 21, 2006

Psalms 73

We can have an Earthly Perspective or an Eternal Perspective:

1. **An earthly perspective yields sinful attitudes.**  
Envy, grief and bitterness
2. **An earthly perspective yields doubt.**  
Doubt can limit our walk with God
3. **An eternal perspective from God yields understanding.**  
When we focus on what the wicked have, we tend to miss seeing the blessings that the righteous enjoy. When we see from an eternal perspective, we understand the riches we have in Christ.
4. **An eternal perspective yields confidence.**  
Psalms 27:1  
The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?

If we look at life from an earthly perspective our lives will be filled with sorrow and our faith will be weak, but if we will look at life from an eternal perspective we will be filled with joy and hope and a strong faith in God.

*Corrie ten Boom often showed a piece of embroidery to her audiences. She would hold up the piece of cloth, first showing the beauty of the embroidered side, with all the threads forming a beautiful picture, which she described as the plan God has for our lives. Then she would flip it over to show the tangled, confused underside, illustrating how we view our lives from a human standpoint. --James S. Hewett*

Colossians 3:1-2

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things

Review - Part Two: Hell to avoid and Heaven to gain

May 28, 2006

1. **Life is short**  
James 4:14  
You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.
2. **Hell is a real place**  
*Here are a few characteristics of hell set forth in the N.T.:*
  - \* *It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12).*
  - \* *It is a place where people scream for mercy, have memories, are tormented, feel alone, cannot escape (Lk. 16).*
  - \* *It is a place of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:48).*
  - \* *It is a place of darkness (Revelation 9:2).*
  - \* *It is a place of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29 KJV).*
  - \* *It is a place where God's wrath is poured out (Rev. 14:10).*
  - \* *It is a place of everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9).*

---Charles R. Swindoll,
3. **Heaven surpasses all**  
A New Body; Rewards; Great accommodations; Being with Jesus

Matthew 6:19-20

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.  
20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal

# The Big Picture

## God's Ultimate Intention

June 25, 2006

This will be a three part message. Today, we will look at who God is and what his ultimate plan will be. Next week, we'll discover some important principles regarding Christ and how mankind is involved in God's ultimate plan. Then, in two weeks, we'll summarize the entire Ultimate Intention and make application for us to consider.

This entire study began with a series of philosophical questions:

- Why did God create mankind?
- What is the ultimate purpose of mankind?
- If God knew we would sin, why did he create us?
- If Adam never sinned, would Christ still be necessary?

These are things I've pondered off and on for years. And recent events, with several families suffering loss, have caused these questions to resurface. In the midst of my pondering my Dad gave me a book written by a pastor he knows, titled "Ultimate Intention." It helped me a great deal in understanding these things, and this short series will draw a lot from this book.

### **Imagine God in eternity past:**

#### **Why would He want to create man?**

This type of question has been asked for centuries:

Job 7:17

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

Psalms 8:4

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Scripture seems to indicate that creation is for man. The earth was created for man. Vegetation was created for man to live on. Animals were created for man to oversee. The sun, moon and stars were made to give light on the earth. So, according to Scripture, the earth is the focus of creation. The earth was created for man to live upon. And, man was given charge over it. So, man is incredibly significant in God's creation. Why?

#### **Some possible answers:**

##### **He was lonely and wanted friendship.**

- but he already had the angels

Job 38:4-7

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone- 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

##### **He wanted a "free agent" to love him, since angels didn't have a choice.**

- but angels did have a choice

2 Peter 2:4

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Jude 6

6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

### **He wanted worshipers.**

- but angels and other heavenly creatures already do that

Isaiah 6:1-4

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Revelation 5:11-12

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

### **To defeat Satan with a lesser being.**

This view sees Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 as the story of Lucifer's rebellion and then imagines God creating man in response as a sort of challenge to Satan. It goes on to say that what Adam failed to do, Jesus achieved, and Satan was defeated by a man.

- but this view makes man nothing more than a pawn in some sort of cosmic chess match between God and

Satan. It really doesn't take into account the opening verses of this message:

Job 7:17

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

Psalms 8:4

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

### **To demonstrate his love and forgiveness through salvation.**

- but this implies that God made mankind sin so that he could demonstrate his goodness. This is a slippery slope that ultimately makes God out to be evil and cruel.

The bible is plain that there's punishment for sin.

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death,

- But if God makes us sin, then he will punish us for something he caused! Plus, the Bible says that God doesn't cause us to sin anyway.

James 1:13

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

### **God is creative, therefore, He must create.**

Okay, but is there any particular reason for mankind or are we just another creature in his creative works? Again, the Scriptures indicate that there's something special about mankind:

Job 7:17

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

Psalms 8:4

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

### **Here are some verses that give some insight into why God might have made man:**

Isaiah 43:6-7

Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth — 7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Colossians 1:16

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him

Romans 11:36

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Hebrews 2:10

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Revelation 4:11

11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (KJV = for your pleasure they were created)

*Illustration: The Little Mermaid thinks a fork is for styling hair.  
Ariel: What? What is it?*

*Scuttle: It's a dinglehopper! Humans use these little babies . . . to straighten their hair out. See - just a little twirl here an' a yank there and - voiolay! You got an aesthetically pleasing configuration of hair that humans go nuts over!*

In order to get some idea about this, we must first understand who God is. Is there something about God that would compel him to make man?

Why does a violin maker make violins? It could be that he simply needs to make a living and he happened to get a job at a violin shop. It could be that he simply likes to play with wood. It could be that he senses the need of violin players to make music, so he assists them by providing the violins. To really understand why the violin maker makes violins, you would need to get to know the violin maker!

### **So, who is God?**

#### **1. The Personality of God**

Malachi 3:6

6 "I the LORD do not change.

James 1:17

17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God doesn't change. Who he is now, is who he has always been.

When studying God, the top 2 words that come up in Scripture are:

Lord = 778 times

Almighty = 345 times

These tell us something about God's power and authority, but don't reveal much about personality.

Creator = 10

Redeemer = 17

Savior = 52

**Father = 262**

Last week, for Father's day, I commented how important this "fatherhood" subject is. The word "father" is used over 1600 times in the bible; more than prayer, praise and worship all combined!

In the Gospels and Acts, Jesus preferred to call God "Father," using the name 171 times.

He taught us to pray, "Our Father..."

All of Paul's letters refer to God as "Father" in the greeting.

Ephesians 1:2

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The majority of other NT writers also use "Father" in their greetings.

### **Bible verses on God as father:**

Psalms 68:5

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

Jeremiah 3:19

19 "I myself said, "How gladly would I treat you like sons

and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.' I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.

1 John 3:1

3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

Ephesians 3:14-15

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

2 Corinthians 6:18

18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

1 Corinthians 8:6

for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live;

Romans 8:15

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

John 1:12-13

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

### **What does a father want?**

#### **Children, especially, sons...**

2 Corinthians 6:18

18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."



Ephesians 1:5

he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

Genesis 1:24-26, 27

God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

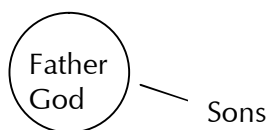
Genesis 5:1

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God

Acts 17:28

28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

This describes the beginning and gives some insight as to why God created man. God is a father, and as a father, he wanted sons.



Now, let's look to the future. What is God's ultimate plan for creation?

## 2. The Plan of God

So, God is a father who wants sons. What is his plan for his sons and all of creation?

**Some immediately think of "end-time" judgment.**

Revelation chapters 6 through 19 describe much of this:

War, famine, plagues, earthquakes, storms, meteor crash, drought, the mark of the beast, and the antichrist

Matthew 24 also covers some of this:

War, earthquakes, persecution of believers, increasing wickedness, unparalleled trouble, darkening of the sun, the return of Christ

**But, judgment is not the ultimate end of everything:**

2 Peter 3:3-13

3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

### **So, what is God's plan for eternity after all this?**

Ephesians 1:9-10

he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Ephesians 1:22-23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 4:10

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Philippians 2:9-11

10 and exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Colossians 1:15-18

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Matthew 28:18

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Daniel 7:14

He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Revelation 19:16

On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.



## **Conclusion**

So, today we've seen the beginning and the end. Everything begins with the Father-heart of God who desires sons in his image and likeness. Everything ends under the rule and reign of Christ, who is God's first-born son.

Next week we'll look at why everything is fulfilled in Christ when we talk about "the Principle of Christ." And, we'll discuss how all this affects us as we look at "the Participation of Man." Then, Lord willing, in two weeks we'll sum it all up by doing an overview of the book of Ephesians and making points of application regarding how we should respond to this "Big Picture."

## The Big Picture

Review - Part One: An Eternal Perspective

1. **An earthly perspective yields sinful attitudes.**
2. **An earthly perspective yields doubt.**
3. **An eternal perspective from God yields understanding.**
4. **An eternal perspective yields confidence.**

Review - Part Two: Hell to avoid and Heaven to gain

1. **Life is short**
2. **Hell is a real place**
3. **Heaven surpasses all** (*not "new" but glorified bodies*)

Review – Part Three: God’s Ultimate Intention

This entire study began with a series of philosophical questions:

- Why did God create mankind?
- What is the ultimate purpose of mankind?
- If God knew we would sin, why did he create us?
- If Adam never sinned, would Christ still be necessary?

*Little Mermaid Clip*

**Why would He want to create man?**

Job 7:17

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

Man is incredibly significant in God’s creation. Why?

**Some possible answers:**

**He was lonely and wanted friendship.**

- but he already had the angels

**He wanted a “free agent” to love him, since angels didn’t have a choice.**

- but angels did have a choice

**He wanted worshipers.**

- but angels and other heavenly creatures already do that

**To defeat Satan with a lesser being.**

- but this view makes man nothing more than a pawn in some sort of cosmic chess match between God and Satan. It really doesn’t take into account the opening verses of this message:

**To demonstrate his love and forgiveness through salvation.**

- but this implies that God made mankind sin so that he could demonstrate his goodness. This is a slippery slope that ultimately makes God out to be evil and cruel.
- if God makes us sin, then he will punish us for something he caused! Plus, the Bible says that God doesn’t cause us to sin anyway.

**God is creative, therefore, He must create.**

Okay, but is there any particular reason for mankind or are we just another creature in his creative works? Again, the Scriptures indicate that there’s something special about mankind:

**Here are some verses that give some insight into why God might have made man:**

From him; through; to him; for him

**So, who is God?**

**2. The Personality of God**

**Father = 262**

**Bible verses on God as father:**

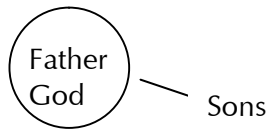
1 Corinthians 8:6

for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live;

## What does a father want? Children, especially, sons...

2 Corinthians 6:18

18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."



## 2. The Plan of God

### Some immediately think of "end-time" judgment.

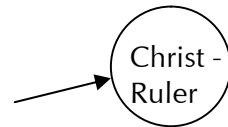
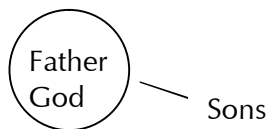
Revelation chapters 6 through 19 describe much of this:  
Matthew 24 also covers some of this:

### But, judgment is not the ultimate end of everything:

New heaven and new earth

### So, what is God's plan for eternity after all this?

All things under Christ!



## Part Four: God's Ultimate Intention

July 2, 2006

Why will everything be under Christ?

How is mankind involved in God's overall plan?

Did God send Christ as a reaction to man's sin?

If Adam never sinned, would Christ still have come?

### First, let's understand that Christ existed in eternity past.

John 1:1-2, 14

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 1:1-3

1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Genesis 1:26

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness

John 17:24

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

1 Peter 1:20

20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake

Revelation 13:8

8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

So, Christ was not an afterthought on God's part as some sort of reaction to man's sin! **Christ was included in God's plan before the universe was even created.** I believe Christ would have still come to earth even if Adam never sinned; and I believe that the plan to put all things under Christ was part of the original plan whether Adam sinned or not.

Why the necessity of Christ? Why put all things under Christ?

## 1. The Principle of Christ

John 8:28-30

Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

John 14:9-10

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

Romans 6:9-10

we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:  
6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself

nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross! 9 *Therefore* God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 1:8-9

8 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; *therefore* God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

**So, the principle of Christ is all about his character:**

- He always pleases God
- He only says what God is saying

- He lives completely to God
- He is humble and obedient
- He loves righteousness
- He hates wickedness
- He will hand over the kingdom to God

John 13:14-15

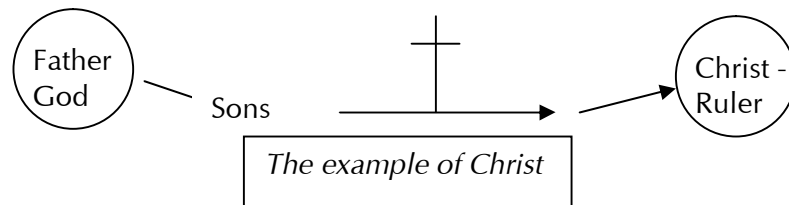
14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

1 Corinthians 11:1

11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

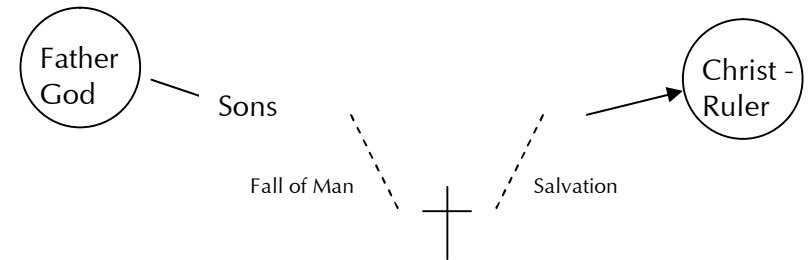
1 Peter 2:21-22

Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."



If Adam had never sinned, Christ would still be our example. He would show us how to live entirely for God. I don't think he would have had to literally die on the Cross, but the principle of death to self and life to God would still be shown to mankind through the example of Christ.

Now, we understand God's plan from our historical view of events and it looks something like this:



Historically, the cross is more than just an example. It is the way that God has made for man to recover his lost position. Remember, originally, God wanted sons. The status of sonship was lost when Adam sinned. Now, the work of Christ on the cross makes restoration to sonship available to all of mankind. However, we can see that this is only a portion of God's overall plan. The work of the cross simply allows us to be included in God's plan again. It gets us back to the status of sonship that was lost when Adam sinned.

So, since we can be sons and be included in God's plan, what exactly is our part?

## 2. The Participation of Man

### God's plan included mankind even before creation:

Psalms 139:16

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Ephesians 1:4

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Revelation 17:8

The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will

be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

Matthew 25:34

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

### Father God wants sons:

Romans 8:15

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Galatians 3:26

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 1:5

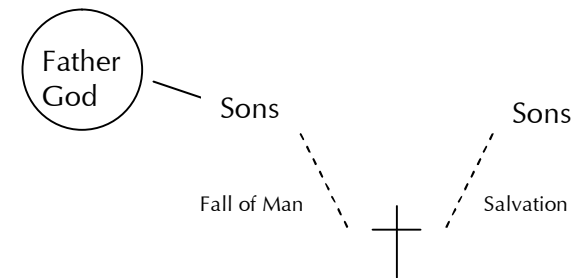
he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

*In Eastern lands it was the practice of a noble-father to submit his infant male child to the child-training and tutelage of a trusted household servant until he should come of age. Actually, then, the child, though heir apparent, was no different from the servant to whom he must submit. During the long period of child training, it was the tutor's task to bring the child into the ways, purposes and spirit of the father of the family. Finally when the child became fourteen or sixteen years of age, it was the custom to hold a formal celebration for his coming out. This ceremony, called adoption, meant the coming of a son to his full rights in the family.*

*At this present hour we who are born-ones are learning to walk after the Spirit. Thus the Spirit of adoption working within is leading us more and more into the reality of sonship.*  
---DeVern Fromke

*To be a son is infinitely more than to be a child. Every born again child of God has in him the nature of his Father, and is a beloved member of his Father's family. Adoption cannot make the child any nearer or dearer, yet it gives the child a status he did not enjoy before, a position he did not occupy. A child is one born of God; a son is one taught of God. A child has God's nature; a son has God's character.*

R.B. Jones



1 John 3:2

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

### Sons become heirs:

Romans 8:16-17

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 3:29

29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.



Ephesians 3:6

through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Titus 3:7

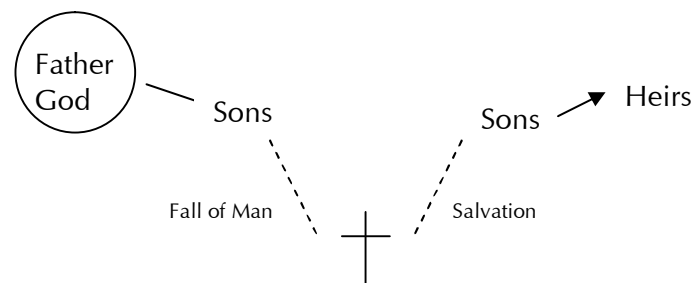
having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

James 2:5

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

*Birth relationship gives one the right to heirship, but participation in all that heirship involves comes only to those who live unto the Father's intention. We must choose whether we will allow our heavenly Father to impart to us his mind, purpose, vision and ultimate intention. While we are potential heirs by birth, there is much the Father cannot share until we are mature enough to appropriate.*

---DeVern Fromke



### Heirs become rulers with Him:

Romans 8:17

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

2 Timothy 2:12

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him.

Revelation 3:20-21

ith him, and he with me.

21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Revelation 5:10

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Revelation 20:5-6

6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 22:4-5

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

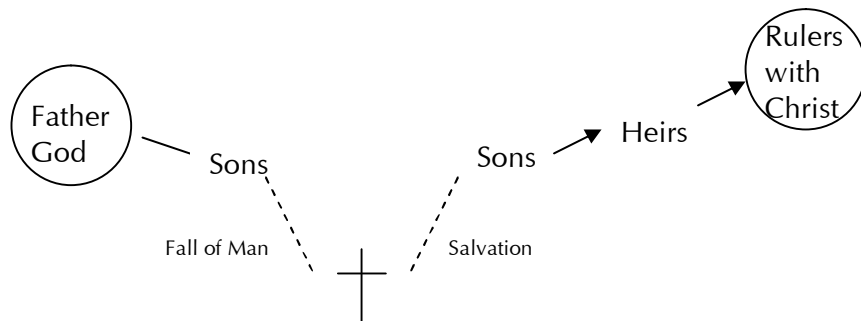
Daniel 7:26-27

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

*God's first call to man was to rulership over the earth, and his last call to him is throneship with Him above the highest heaven. To enter into such a joint throneship with the Lord Jesus is almost beyond our comprehension, but this is the intention of our Father for those who qualify.*

DeVern Fromke

Many think that the ultimate plan must be for us to go back to a Garden of Eden type of living. However, Adam was not all that God intended him to be. He was a son with some inheritance and some ruling authority, but it wasn't on the universal scale that God intended.



*What will there be to do in Heaven on Saturday nights? If this question bothers you, you need to seriously rethink the purpose of your life. God has good reasons for your existence. And big plans. Part of that, of course, is what you do here on earth. You're not just marking time, waiting for your promotion to the Great Upstairs. You're learning to be a powerful, loving person; you're learning to defeat evil; and you're becoming a living, walking vessel who contains the very Spirit of God. Yet there is far more. You're being prepared for a long future that can be more challenging than Mt. Everest and more exciting than catching a 50-yard pass in the final seconds to win the Super Bowl. What you're being prepared for is, ideally, to take your place at the right hand of Christ and help him run the entire universe – plus perhaps a few more universes that haven't been invented yet. You must admit it doesn't get any more head-spinning than that. For sure, you won't need to bring a magazine.*

*James Rutz, The Endgame of God*

Some may wonder, "Well, what will we rule over? The unrighteous will be gone and all that will be left is believers,

who are all supposed to be rulers." Remember that creation is for man? Even in Eden, Adam had work to do. He was to tend to the garden. Even in eternity we will have work to do. I believe our work will be to tend to the universe. We will rule with Christ; and Christ will fill the whole universe (Ephesians 4:10). How big is our universe? Here's some concepts to help us grasp this:

*If the distance from the Sun to Pluto were represented by a one-foot ruler, the nearest star would be over a mile away. If our galaxy were represented as the size of North America, our entire solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Astronomers estimate that there are as many galaxies outside our Milky Way as there are stars in it. That would mean there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the visible universe, many with more than 100 billion stars each.*

*David Coppedge, ICR*

### **Conclusion:**

*Envision what the Garden of Eden was originally like: A perfect life on a higher plane, where we were doing splendid work and didn't have to spend half our time on damage control for our own stupidities. Yet now, in this heart-stopping endgame, God is raising us to an even higher level.*

*Don't just slide into heaven under the wire; become the kind of person who keeps defeating the evil in this world, and when you get to Heaven, you won't just barely qualify for a condo, you'll "own the joint!" Now, there's a goal worth shooting for!*

*James Rutz, The Endgame of God*

God is building a kingdom for his sons to oversee. As believers we will be part of his ultimate kingdom, ruling over the entire universe! We can be part of this kingdom even now.

*Video clip: The Kingdom*

We need to enlarge our vision and see the Big Picture. We tend to focus on our own little issues in our own little time frame, when all along God is focused on the entire universe and all of eternity! We must not be satisfied to simply receive salvation and then settle down. We must not be satisfied to grow a little and then settle. We must always be growing and moving toward God's ultimate intention. Even Christ, though the ultimate Son of God had to learn obedience and be made perfect:

Hebrews 5:8-9

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

Our assignment now is to follow Christ and surrender to his leadership. He will develop his character in us so that we will be prepared to rule with him when, in the end, all things will be summed up in God.

Next week we'll summarize the entire Big Picture as we look at an overview of Ephesians. And, we'll see how to apply all this information with a proper response. For now, we need to see that God is thinking far larger than we, so we should increase our vision.

# The Big Picture

## Review – Part Three: God’s Ultimate Intention

This entire study began with a series of philosophical questions:

- Why did God create mankind?
- What is the ultimate purpose of mankind?
- If God knew we would sin, why did he create us?
- If Adam never sinned, would Christ still be necessary?

Job 7:17

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

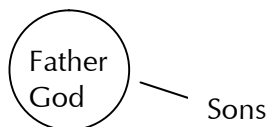
Earth is the focal point of the Genesis creation and it was made for man. Therefore, man is incredibly significant in God’s creation. Why?

The Bible teaches that man is from him; through; to him; for him. Therefore, to know why God created man, we must begin with an understanding of God.

### 1. The Personality of God

**Father = 262**

**What does a father want? Children, especially, sons...**



### 2. The Plan of God

**Some immediately think of “end-time” judgment.**

**But, judgment is not the ultimate end of everything:**

New heaven and new earth

**So, what is God’s plan for eternity after all this?**

All things under Christ!



## Review - Part Four: God’s Ultimate Intention

Why will everything be under Christ?

How is mankind involved in God’s overall plan?

**First, let’s understand that Christ existed in eternity past.**

John 1:1

1:1 In the beginning was the Word...

Hebrews 1:2

... through whom he made the universe.

**Christ was included in God’s plan before the universe was even created.**

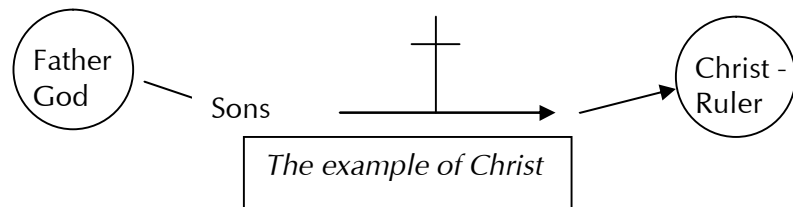
### 1. The Principle of Christ

**The principle of Christ is all about his character:**

- He always pleases God
- He only says what God is saying
- He lives completely to God
- He is humble and obedient
- He loves righteousness
- He hates wickedness
- He will hand over the kingdom to God

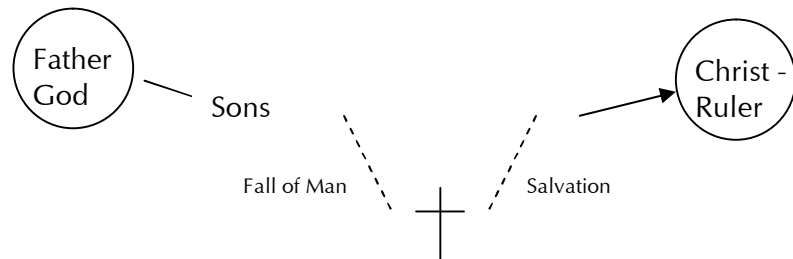
1 Corinthians 11:1

11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.



If Adam had never sinned, Christ would still be our example, to become all that God intended. He would show us how to live entirely for God. I don't think he would have had to literally die on the Cross, but the principle of death to self and life to God would still be shown to mankind through the example of Christ.

Now, we understand God's plan from our historical view of events and it looks something like this:



Historically, the cross is more than just an example. It is the way that God has made for man to recover his lost position. Remember, originally, God wanted sons. The status of sonship was lost when Adam sinned. Now, the work of Christ on the cross makes restoration to sonship available to all of mankind. However, we can see that this is only a portion of God's overall plan. The work of the cross simply

allows us to be included in God's plan again. It gets us back to the status of sonship that was lost when Adam sinned.

## 2. The Participation of Man

**God's plan included mankind even before creation:**

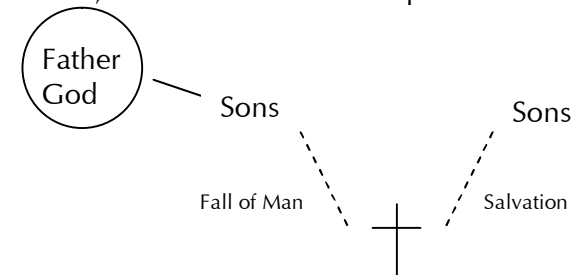
Ephesians 1:4

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world...

**Father God wants sons:**

Ephesians 1:5

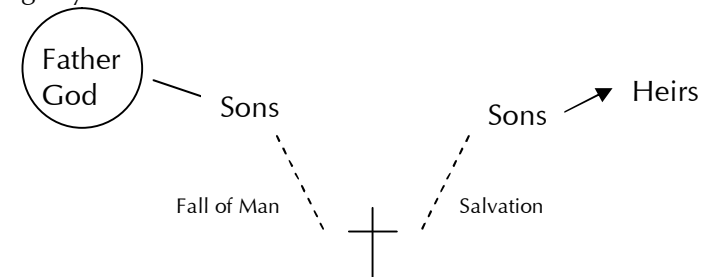
he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will



**Sons become heirs:**

Romans 8:16-17

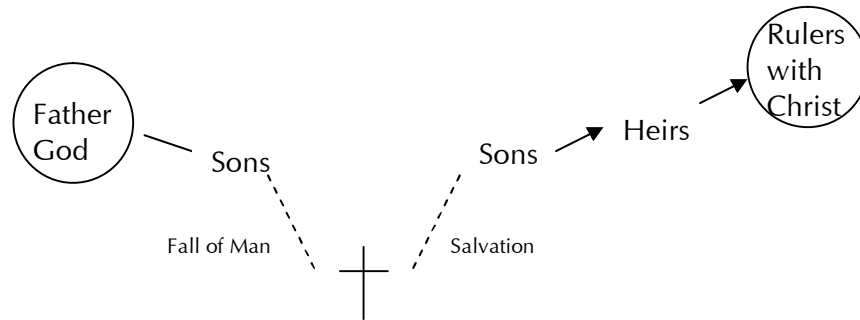
16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.



## Heirs become rulers with Him:

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27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'



Some may wonder, "Well, what will we rule over? The unrighteous will be gone and all that will be left is believers, who are all supposed to be rulers." Remember that creation is for man? Even in Eden, Adam had work to do. He was to tend to the garden. Even in eternity we will have work to do. I believe our work will be to tend to the universe. We will rule with Christ; and Christ will fill the whole universe (Ephesians 4:10). How big is our universe? Here are some concepts to help us grasp this:

*If the distance from the Sun to Pluto were represented by a one-foot ruler, the nearest star would be over a mile away. If our galaxy were represented as the size of North America, our entire solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Astronomers estimate that there are as many galaxies outside our Milky Way as there are stars in it. That would mean there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the visible universe, many with more than 100 billion stars each.*

*David Coppedge, ICR*

## Conclusion:

God is building a kingdom for his sons to oversee. As believers we will be part of his ultimate kingdom, ruling over the entire universe! We can be part of this kingdom even now.

We need to enlarge our vision and see the Big Picture. We tend to focus on our own little issues in our own little time frame, when all along God is focused on the entire universe and all of eternity! We must not be satisfied to simply receive salvation and then settle down. We must not be satisfied to grow a little and then settle. We must always be growing and moving toward God's ultimate intention

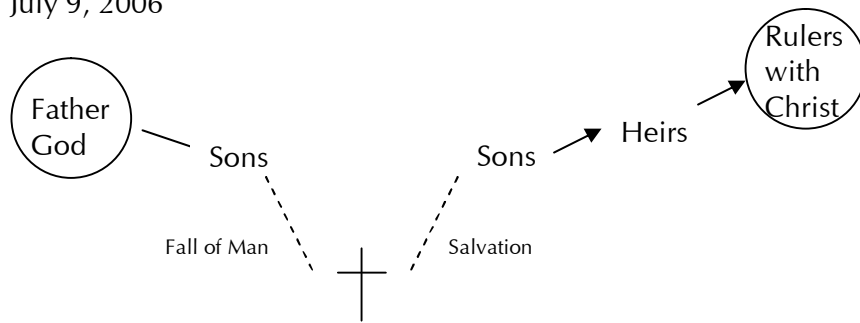
Our assignment now is to follow Christ and surrender to his leadership. He will develop his character in us so that we will be prepared to rule with him when, in the end, all things will be summed up in God.

# The Big Picture

## God's Ultimate Intention

### Summary and Application

July 9, 2006



*One morning I went to the back door to call our three-year-old son. I planned for him to go with me to town on an errand. As I opened the back door to call, I saw him – but what a predicament he was in. The little fellow had been playing in the garden and had fallen in the mud. So as I called him it was now with a two-fold purpose: There was the overshadowing purpose – taking him to town with me, but there was also the incidental need of “washing up” which must be incorporated into the purpose. I must first minister some “grace” so that my purpose could be fulfilled.*

*After I had cleaned him up and changed his clothes, the little fellow attached himself to a new toy which he had just received. Immediately he became so engrossed in playing with it that he was completely lost to the real purpose for which I had called him in. He enjoyed being delivered from his muddy predicament and dressed in clean clothes, but seemed wholly unconcerned about my original purpose. “Daddy,” he insisted, “let me stay home and play.”*

*Suddenly I realized how easily God's children can partake of His “grace” and receive His good gifts only to become wholly distracted from His original purpose.*

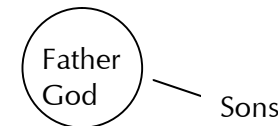
---DeVern Fromke

## 1. A summary of God's Ultimate Intention

When I was preaching a series on Ephesians earlier this year I commented: “In this letter, Paul didn't deal with specific problems like many of his other letters did. He wrote about God's overall plan for His church and the world.”

Ephesians is one of the most developed writings on Christianity and church life. As I was studying for this series, “God's Ultimate Intention,” I noticed how many of the verses I was using were found in Ephesians. So, I decided to scan through the book to see if this overall picture can be found here. Sure enough it is...

I found that Ephesians 1:1 through 4:16 covers the Big Picture we've been talking about. Then, Ephesians 4:17 through 6:24 deals with our response to this Big Picture. Let's take a look at the first part to confirm God's Ultimate Intention...

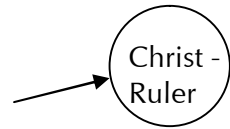


Ephesians 1:2-3

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

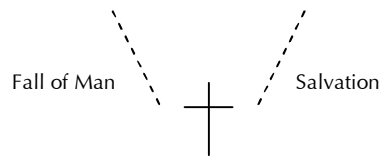
Ephesians 1:4-5

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will



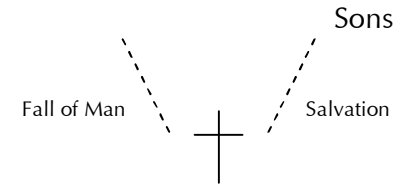
Ephesians 1:9-10

he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.



Ephesians 2:1-10

2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.



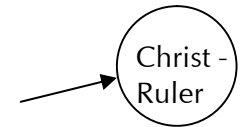
Ephesians 2:19

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household



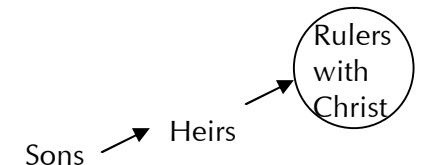
Ephesians 3:6

through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.



Ephesians 4:10

10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.



Ephesians 4:13

3 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



*Some things you won't see in heaven:*

- *People bored out of their skulls*
- *People with angel wings*
- *Disembodied spirits floating around like Halloween ghosts*
- *People sitting on fluffy white clouds playing harps*
- *Long, tedious church services*

*Our enthusiasm for Heaven is dampened by the gnawing fear that the archangel Gabriel might stand up next to the Throne and announce, "Welcome to Eternity! Let's get started with 12,836 hymns, followed by a few centuries of praise, then each of the 86 million pastors here will get to reprise his five favorite sermons." Here's the good news: Heaven will be far more than this. We won't have better things to do than worship God, but we'll certainly have some other things to do. When Isaiah 9:7 says that "the increase of his government will never end," it means this shared governing with Christ will be "ever-expanding." And because the acreage on any planet is limited, I would personally infer that this points to whole new worlds for us to develop and govern together. It couldn't get any more staggering than that. And it forcefully raises the question: Are you living as one who will soon be ready for that level of responsibility?*

*--- James Rutz, The Endgame of God*

## **2. An application of God's Ultimate Intention**

Ephesians 4:17

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do

Ephesians 4:22-24

with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:10-12

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

### **Put off the Old:**

Ephesians 4:25

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood

Ephesians 4:27

do not give the devil a foothold.

Ephesians 4:29

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths,

Ephesians 4:31

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Ephesians 5:3

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

*Many people deceive themselves because they seek to be alive in God before they are dead to their own natures – something as impossible as a grain of wheat being alive before it dies. This total dying to self lies at the root of all true piety. Spiritual life must grow out of death.*

*--- Andrew Murray*

*One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake.*

*--Billy Sunday (1862-1935)*

*To forsake sin is to leave it without any thought of returning to it again.*

*William Gurnall (1617-1679)*

*Lord of the Rings – the ring corrupts; get rid of the ring!*

*Where the flesh is allowed in any measure to have its way the Spirit of Christ cannot exert his power.*

*--- Andrew Murray*

### **Put on the New:**

Ephesians 5:10

find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5:15

15 Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise

Ephesians 5:17

understand what the Lord's will is.

Ephesians 5:18

be filled with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:21

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

*The Christian way is different: harder, and easier. Christ says "Give me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think*

*wicked -- the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours."*

*-- C. S. Lewis*

### **Resist the enemy with Godly character:**

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

### **Evangelize!!**

Ephesians 6:19-20

19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

*"As long as there is one person in driving distance of our church who doesn't know the Lord, we want to grow. Nothing is more important than reaching people for the Lord,*

*yet it is easy to be distracted from our purpose. We need to stay focused on reaching one more for Jesus. "*

*---Rick Warren*

Genesis 12:2-3

2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Galatians 3:29

29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We are to be a blessing to the world! Revealing God's glory; sharing God's goodness; bringing others to Christ! That's the best blessing we can offer!

*I've seen some pretty lousy gospel presentations that people respond to. I've done it myself. There have been times when I've presented the gospel so poorly that I was boring myself, but the person responded in faith. There have been other times when I've answered every objection with pinpoint accuracy like a stealth bomber over Baghdad, and the person looks at me like I'm from Mars. Kingdom expansion really is a God thing, not a human thing. Just be faithful to tell people about Jesus and His Kingdom, then rest in the fact that God will take it from there....*

*---Mark Connelly*

## Conclusion

Father God wants sons who will become heirs and ultimately share in ruling the universe. This is God's ultimate intention. Therefore, we need to enlarge our vision and see the Big Picture: Let's recognize that God is our Father, and as believers, we are His sons. Let's enlarge our vision to see God's Plan, which is to put all things under Christ. We need to follow the Principle of Christ and be completely surrendered to God's leadership. And, we need to realize our Participation in God's plan includes ruling over the entire universe with Him. So, let's go along with His plan and allow Him to shape us into the kind of people who will be worthy of ruling with Him! Let's live as sons in complete unity! Let's live as heirs with spiritual maturity! Let's become rulers with Him as His life so influences ours that we are full of Christ! Then we can say with the Apostle Paul, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Galatians 2:20.

1 Corinthians 2:9

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"

The Big Picture that I've described for the past few weeks is only a glimpse of what God has planned. His full plan will actually surpass everything I've described. So, if you're thinking, "Pastor Phil sure has a vivid imagination," you are being very shortsighted. My imagination and yours combined cannot fathom the immensity of God's Ultimate Intention!

## Remember the Big Picture

July 30, 2006

Just for fun...

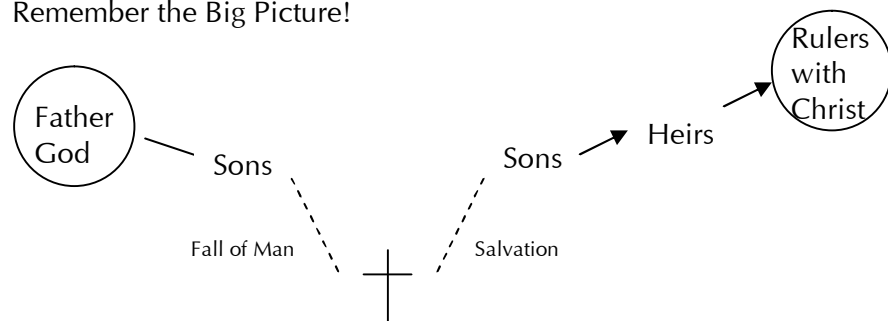
A nursery school teacher was delivering a station wagon full of kids home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties. "They use him to keep crowds back," said one youngster. "No," said another, "he's just for good luck." A third child brought the argument to a close...."They use the dogs", she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrant."

Psalms 37:1-11

**1 Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.**

Is this Christian life really worth it? Things of the world seem so appealing.

Remember the Big Picture!



Verses 12-17

12 The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; 13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming. 14 The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy to slay

those whose ways are upright. 15 But their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken. 16 Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; 17 for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous.

Verses 20-22

20 But the wicked will perish: The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields; they will vanish — vanish like smoke. 21 The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously; 22 those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be cut off.

*An Atheist farmer often ridiculed people who believed in God. He wrote the following letter to the editor of a local newspaper: "I plowed on Sunday, planted on Sunday, cultivated on Sunday, and hauled in my crops on Sunday; but I never went to church on Sunday. Yet I harvested more bushels per acre than anyone else, even those who are God-fearing and never miss a service." The editor printed the man's letter and then added this remark: "God doesn't always settle His accounts in October." That editor was right!*

*Sometimes even dedicated Christians are tempted to complain because of what they see in the world around them. Perplexed by the success and prosperity of the wicked, oftentimes at the expense of the righteous, they ask, why doesn't the Lord do something about it? Why doesn't He reward those who fear Him, and judge those who disregard Him? Be patient. He will! True, He doesn't always "settle His accounts in October," but He does settle His accounts!*

**3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.**

Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

*The more we depend on God, the more dependable we find he is.*  
--Cliff Richards

*Trustfulness is based on confidence in God, whose ways I do not understand. If I did, there would be no need for trust.*  
Oswald Chambers

I remember when Naomi and I moved to Oregon because OBC merged with EBC. We didn't know where we'd live or what our jobs would be, but we went.

#### Do good...

Galatians 6:9-10

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

#### Dwell in the land...

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

*Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of. An apparently trivial indulgence in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge or railway line or bridgehead from which the enemy may launch an attack otherwise impossible.*

C. S. Lewis

**4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

*In the midst of this great coldness toward God there are some, I rejoice to acknowledge, who will not be content with shallow logic... They want to taste, to touch with their hearts, to see with their inner eyes the wonder that is God.*

*I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted.*

-- A. W. Tozer.

How can I develop this "delight" for the Lord? "I know I should and I want to, but it's just not there yet."

Isaiah 58:13-14 (*set aside time for Him*)

13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the *Sabbath* and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by *not going your own way* and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

Job 22:21-26 (*follow Him*)

21 "Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. 22 *Accept instruction* from his mouth and *lay up his words* in your heart. 23 If you *return* to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you *remove wickedness* far from your tent ... 25 then the Almighty will be your gold, the choicest silver for you. 26 Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God.

For me, if I am feeling dry and the "delight" is not there... what works best is to set aside time for God, whether I feel like it or not. Sometimes I sit at the piano and worship; other

times I go to Ledges and hike. For me, these work to reconnect with God. Then, simply experiencing His presence or His voice will renew me and the delight returns.

He will give the desires...

John 15:7

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

### **5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:**

Way = one's whole life

Proverbs 16:3

3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

*One morning, a debate broke out in a farm. The debate was raised between a hen and a pig. The topic of the debate is "Involvement is equal to Commitment". The hen argued, "If someone is willing to get involved, that means he is ready to commit."*

*The pig said, "No, I don't think so. Getting involved is far from ready to commit."*

*As they were arguing and it seems no one could totally convince the others, they heard the voice of the farmer's wife. "Honey, what would you like for you breakfast? Ham or Egg?" The farmer replied, "I prefer ham."*

*Then the pig told the hen, "You see, when you lay an egg, you are involved in the breakfast. But we are committed to the breakfast when we are eaten as ham."*

*Are we just getting involved in Christianity? Or, are we ready to commit and sacrifice ourselves for the service of the Lord?*

*Right here let us make it plain, that each individual is either a sinner or a saint. It is impossible to be both; it is impossible to be neutral; there is no halfway business in God. Either you are the child of the Lord or you are serving the devil - there is no middle territory.*

*Aimee Semple McPherson*

### **6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.**

Verses 18-19

18 The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever. 19 In times of disaster they will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

Verses 23-26

23 If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; 24 though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. 25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. 26 They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.

Verses 30-31

30 The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip.

The secret to true holiness is in passion for God! Don't try harder; *love God* more! Just go after God! Delight yourself in the Lord; commit your way to Him!

**7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.**

How hard this is! But, essential!

*When you do not know what to do--wait.*

*I heard of a missionary who did not receive her monthly check. She was seriously ill and because of no money had to live on oatmeal and canned milk. She received her check thirty days later. After mentioning this incident while on furlough a doctor asked the nature of her illness. She described the intestinal digestive trouble she had been having and the doctor said, "If your check had arrived on time and you had been eating your current diet you would now be dead, because the best treatment for your illness was a thirty-day oatmeal diet." You know, our problem is that we do not wait upon the Lord. We forget that it's through faith and patience that we obtain God's promises.*

*God engineers our circumstances as he did those of his Son; all we have to do is to follow where he places us. The majority of us are busy trying to place ourselves. God alters things while we wait for him.*

*Oswald Chambers*

*Patient waiting is often the highest way of doing God's will.  
Jeremy Collier*

More than once, Naomi and I have had to wait for God's doors to open. We knew circumstances were changing and God was moving us, but we had to wait for the right time.

Isaiah 30:15

"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength...

Habakkuk 2:3

3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Think Isaiah 54, for Boone Open Bible Church

Verse 34

34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

**8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil.**

Anger comes so naturally, but many "natural" things are wrong!

*Control yourself! Anger is only one letter short of danger.*

*The emptier the pot, the quicker it boils.*

*Never wrestle with a pig, you both get all dirty -- and the pig likes it.*

*Don't fly into a rage unless you are prepared for a rough landing.*

*It is easier to swallow angry words than to have to eat them.*

*Never answer an angry word; it is the second one that starts a quarrel.*

*Hot heads and cold hearts never solved anything.  
Billy Graham*

*Your temper is one of your most valuable possessions. Don't lose it.*

*--James S. Hewett*

*When anger enters the mind, wisdom departs.  
Thomas A Kempis*

Ephesians 4:26-27, 31

26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice

James 1:19-20

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires

**9 For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.**

*Other men see only a hopeless end, but the Christian rejoices in an endless hope.  
-- Gilbert Beenken*

Remember the Big picture!

**10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.**

*God permits the wicked, but not forever.  
Sir Thomas Fuller*

1 Peter 4:7

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

Israel in the news = signs of the times!

**11 But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.**

*Meek-what does it mean? The answer lies in the word itself:  
M-Mighty,  
E-Emotionally stable,  
E-Educable,  
K-Kind.  
Robert Schuller*

*We like to think blessed are the strong, the shrewd, those who stand up for their rights, those who refuse to be taken advantage of, those who always look out for slights, those who strike it rich and make it a success. We have a tendency to put high value on self-assertion. The natural standpoint is that a strong person is one who not only does what he wills but also bends others to do his will. The Biblical concept of meekness, however, is different. Meekness in the Greek is used to describe an animal which has been trained by its master. Wild and unruly animals are worthless but when trained they become meek, that is teachable and quiet. If we remember this background of the term we will see that meekness is strength under the control of God and that gentleness is true power.*

Notice all the references to inheritance in Psalm 37:

Verse 9

those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

Verse 18

18 The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever.

Verse 22

22 those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,

Verse 27

then you will dwell in the land forever.



Verse 29

29 the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.

Verse 34

He will exalt you to inherit the land;

Verse 37

there is a future for the man of peace.

If you are meek, you are able to handle almost anything. Therefore, you will have peace. If you're proud, you can't handle an insult or criticism. If you're selfish, you can't handle it when things don't go your way. If you're envious, you can't handle it when others succeed. But when you're humble and meek, you are at perfect peace!

This life isn't fair. Things don't always go our way. Those who reject Christ and live in unrighteous ways may prosper and succeed. But, these things are only temporary. Remember the Big Picture!