

51-01-09.wpd —God's Purpose for Creating Humanity  
creation, redemption, humanness, Incarnation, resurrection, hope  
Col 1:15-23  
We were designed to serve as ruling mediators of the entire universe.

### INTRODUCTION:

–[CFO follows a pattern of intermingling the physical and spiritual. We see this in *prayer* as quiet *contemplation* or as well as creative *artwork*, or *praise* as *spiritual song* as well as *physical dance*. We find *recreation* both in *Biblical nurture* and in *bodily activities*. This balance is about wholeness and integration, rather than division and compartmentalization.] This mix of the physical and spiritual delights us because it resonates with ...title.

–(read text) [After preaching on this passage, I dreamed God showed me things in it I'd missed, and they all pointed to one thing: *why we humans were created*.]

–*God's purpose for humanity* is directly related to the *spiritual* and *physical* realms of creation. We belong to them both: the heavenly world of spirit and to the cosmic world of matter. Humans are *unique* in all creation! We are not just an total amalgamation of both realms, but we are divine self-portraits, handmade in Gods image. This is extremely *strategic* in God's mind and plan, because **HOM.idea**.

## **I. Humanity Is Uniquely Connected with the Destiny of Creation**

A. Our *original job description* pointed to a destiny never fulfilled:

1. Under God's **direct supervision**, Adam and Eve were assigned tasks related only to this planet, almost as if in *preschool*:
  - a. leadership and government– **Gen 1:26**, Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, **over all the earth**, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (*humans* [in God's "likeness"] were created to represent God and His authority "over" creation)
  - b. creativity and ecology– **Gen 2:15**, The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work it** and **take care** of it. (*humans* were to preserve creation, while developing it through "work")
  - c. communication and science– **Gen 2:19**, Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (*humans* were to organize parts of the creation by "name" [science] so that knowledge and concepts could be shared [communication])

2. We find the ultimate purpose God had for humanity in **Col 1:15**, *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation*.
  - a. God became one of Adam's race by being born as a real human, but He was the "firstborn" of a new humanity, and as a perfect human, He restored to creation the perfect "image" of Himself.
  - b. As Creator & Sustainer of "*all things*" (v.16,17), Jesus was already "over creation," but God planned that humanity be "over creation."
- B. The **Incarnation** is the key to understanding God's purpose for us (read **Phil 2:5-11**)–
  1. When God's human project got sidetracked in Adam, He did not scrap the plan, but stepped into it personally as Jesus Christ. (The plan is still for humanity to reign, **BUT something new has been added: God Himself**, and this time the plan will not fail!)
  2. In His identity as Deity, Jesus is already "Lord" and already has "the name above every name," **but now** the authority of the "name," **LORD (Jehovah)** is given to a real Human, because God's lost plan for humanity was won back by a real Human, so that before a real Human "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth"

**TRANS:** The *Incarnation* forever changed the Trinity. Since **humans were designed to serve as ruling mediators of the entire universe**, Christ left heaven to get a human body and a human Bride. Today a Human lives within the Triune Godhead. Soon, a multitude of human beings will join Christ by marriage and become a corporate *in-law* of the Trinitarian Family. Our human destiny is almost unimaginable! [Charlie & Willy Wonka: Charlie just was glad to get into the factory, but Willy Wonka's plan was to have him run it] Christians often look at God's salvation plan through a microscope instead of a telescope. We get pre-occupied with getting into heaven, when God has a plan for us rule with Christ over everything, heaven included. **WE ARE TOO NEAR-SIGHTED!**

## **II. The Cross Purchased More Than Human Redemption**

- A. In v.19-22, two needs for reconciliation are described as fulfilled by the Cross, and the order they are given in is significant:
1. The 1<sup>st</sup> is about the need of creation– **v.19-20**, *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross*. (Since "*all things*" in physical and

spiritual creation were to come under a unifying reign of body-spirit beings called humans, when humanity fell in the Garden, the destiny of the whole created world of existence was affected:

- a. Why did Jesus come? He tells us clearly in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save **what** [singular & neuter] was lost." (More was lost in the Fall than human souls: all that humanity was meant to rule over and take care of was lost, and "what" was lost Jesus found and paid for by "*his blood, shed on the cross.*")
- b. God's priority is humanity because His objective is creation—John 3:16 (NASB), "For **God so loved the world** [cosmos], that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." ("God is love."—He loves everything He created, especially those He made in His image to serve His creation)
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> need for reconciliation is our own and the place where we focus most of our attention— v.21-22, *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*
  - a. Praise God for redeeming our body-spirit human destiny with His own body! But if we fail to see God's larger purpose for our redemption in the context of the whole creation's destiny, we preach a selfish, near-sighted, narrow view of salvation.
  - b. We must abandon a near-sightedness focus ["I just want to get into Willy Wonka's chocolate factory." or "I just want to go to heaven to enjoy its blessings."], and start living out now what will continue as our eternal calling— Rev 22:3b, ...and **his servants will serve him.**

**TRANS:** Selfishness has a shrinking effect. It shrinks the Gospel into a story about us, when it's about the whole universe. It throws spirituality out of balance with physical embodiment. [In Colossians, Paul was fighting a false doctrine, Gnosticism, which exalted the spiritual and despised the physical. The church did not escape Gnostic influence and still has it today.] The Incarnation and the Resurrection totally defeat any lingering Gnostic thinking!

### III. Physical Resurrection is the Focal Point of our Gospel Hope

- A. By listening to Satan, Adam and Eve got disqualified from being the body-spirit mediators to bring unity and leadership to creation.
  1. Satan got them to feed on a "knowledge" that made their decisions about "good and evil" self-directed and independent from God. (It

- altered their ability to function under God's direct supervision.)
2. Satan got them psychologically alienated from their body-spirit nature. (Their 1<sup>st</sup> self-directed act was making fig-leaf outfits to hide in, and God's reaction was, "Who told you that you were naked?")
3. Banished from Eden and from "the tree of life," they would die. (Humans, by returning to dust, lose our body-spirit integration.)
- B. Sins could be covered (atoned for) through sacrifice ("animal skins") and ultimately removed by Christ's blood ("*the cross*"), but one need still remain: the **re-integration** of body-spirit humanity— v.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.*
  1. Why is Christ's "supremacy" dependent on resurrection? He could not reign as a Human King over both the spiritual and physical realms without being reintegrated forever as body-spirit Being— a mixture of both worlds— and neither can we....
  2. This passage concludes in v. 23 with an exhortation to "*...continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature* [lit. "created thing"] *under heaven...*"
    - a. We don't know when *all creation* heard this "gospel," but it did, it knows it, and it is anticipating the "hope" behind it— (read **Rom 8:19-24a**)
    - b. Creation wants to see the fulfillment of God's original plan of bringing everything together under Human rule, so it "waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed." Creation wants to be "liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God," when they are eternally restored as body-spirit beings. As part of that creation, we ourselves "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the **redemption of our bodies**. For in this hope we were saved." Our "hope" and the "hope" of all creation is Resurrection Day!

### CONCLUSION:

—[Calvin Seerveld said that "*world-flight salvation, promulgated by the church for centuries, has been letting the world-culture go to hell.*"] If we begin to preach a creationally true Gospel, and live it out in down-to-earth ways, we may gain an audience in areas where the church has been known to neglect the integration of our body-spirit humanity. Let's find that balance of the physical and spiritual in Christ, and pray to learn ways to show it.