

# The Life of Christ in Eternity Past

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the heavenly vision, the revelation of it, and the obedience required to possess it, using the life of Christ as an example.*

**Duration:** 59:39

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:2, Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:11-19, John 1:1-3, Acts 26:19, Ephesians 1:9-10

**Topics:** "Eternity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes God's plan for humanity and how it unfolded throughout history. Despite man's sin, God did not give up on his plan. He progressively sent better and higher beings to overcome the enemy. Ultimately, God sent his son Jesus to secure everything according to his eternal purpose. The heavenly vision is revealed through the apostle Paul, and it is important for believers to understand and embrace this vision.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Acts chapter 26 verse 19. Acts chapter 26 verse 19. Whereupon King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

May we have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, as we gathered here this morning, it is the cry of our heart. Nothing between Lord, nothing between.

Let us see the glory of Thy face. Let us hear Thy sweet voice. Give us a heart of obedience, that Thou mayst be glorified in and through us.

O Lord, Thou art our Lord, Thou art our all. Thou deserves all of us. Fill us, O Lord, with Thyself.

Open our eyes that we may see Thee. Open our ears that we may hear Thee. Open our hearts that we may receive Thee and enable us to walk following Thee.

We ask in Thy precious name. Amen. I believe that all who are here this morning know what is the theme of this time.

It is the declaration of the Apostle Paul. It is his testimony. He said, I'm not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

And it is the prayer of our hearts that every one of us here may be able to bear the same testimony. I am not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But as you will notice that this time, the emphasis is more on this matter of not disobedient to the heavenly vision than the heavenly vision itself.

But of course we know if we do not see the heavenly vision, how can we be obedient to it? So there is a prerequisite. We really need to see, not just to hear, but to see with our inner eyes that heavenly vision. And with the revelation of that heavenly vision, we will be captured.

As our brothers say last night, we will be devastated, but at the same time be transformed. So dear brothers and sisters, I think first of all, we need to be sure in our heart, not just in our mind, not just knowing the doctrine, the teaching, but really we see with our inner eyes. We understand with our heart the heavenly vision, what it is.

The heavenly vision, to put it simply, is in relationship to the eternal purpose of God. God has a purpose. He conceives it in eternity past, and it is that purpose that controls all his doings throughout time, until in eternity to come, his purpose is fully fulfilled.

So dear brothers and sisters, you see the importance of that heavenly vision, because it is the eternal purpose of God. It is the heart of God. It is the desire of God.

It is the counsel of God. It is the working of God. It tells us what God really desires, what he really is after.

It is none other than what the apostle Paul saw on the road to Damascus. Dear brothers and sisters, we believe that this heavenly vision is given to the apostle Paul, not just for his own sake. It is given to him for our sake, because he is to proclaim it.

He is to pass it on to us. So we, every one of us, need to have that heavenly vision. It comes from revelation, from the light from above, from the voice from above.

It pleased God to reveal his son in us. That's what we need. We need the heavenly father to reveal his son, not only to us, but in us.

Deep down in our heart, there is the son, and all that the son is. He is the son of God, the heir of all things, the master of all, the sovereign of all. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, and we are complete in him.

He has a body, not just that body that he took upon himself at his incarnation, but at his resurrection and ascension, he took upon himself another body, a corporate body, the church, the fullness of him who fills all and in all. So brothers and sisters, this is the heavenly vision, the all-inclusive heavenly vision. This is the essence of the eternal purpose of God, and it is God's will that each and every one of us will see this heavenly vision.

But brothers and sisters, oftentimes we think that if we receive the revelation of the heavenly vision from above, and if we really see it in our heart, the heavenly vision, then we got it, we are in possession of it. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Thank God for revealing his son to us and in us, but that is just the beginning.

It gives us the incentive, the desire to see that this heavenly vision will become our vocation. Put it another way, having the revelation alone does not mean that we possess it. You remember in the epistle to the

Ephesians, the apostle Paul, he tries to pass on the heavenly vision that he saw to the Ephesian believers.

But as he began to speak to them, try to pass on to them, he realized that it is really beyond any human speaking. He really depends completely upon the spirit of God. So you remember how in that letter, he stopped and prayed twice.

The first prayer is recorded in Ephesians chapter one, and there he prayed for the Ephesian believers that God will grant them the spirit of wisdom and understanding to the full knowledge of God and to enlighten them the eyes of their heart that they may know. In other words, in order to really know, you need revelation. By the grace of God, he is the God who reveals himself.

It pleases him to reveal his son in us. So we need he, God, to reveal his son in us. And by revelation, we know.

We really know who our Lord Jesus is and what he is to us and what is that which is uppermost in his heart, even the church. But brothers and sisters, as the apostle Paul went on sharing, you remember in chapter four, again, he bowed his knee before the Lord, and he prayed the second prayer. Now, why is it that the first prayer is not sufficient? The first prayer is on revelation, is on seeing, is on knowing the heavenly vision.

But the apostle Paul realized even revelation doesn't mean possession. In order that the heavenly vision may be our possession, or to put it another way, that we are possessed by that heavenly vision. We become part of that heavenly vision.

We are being included in that heavenly vision, in that eternal purpose of God. He realized that there needs something more to be done. So he prayed a second prayer.

The second prayer is not for revelation, for knowing. The second prayer is that we may be strengthened in the human man by the power of the Holy Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. And then we may apprehend with all the saints the love of God, and to be filled with the love of God.

In other words, the second prayer is for apprehension, for possession, for to be filled. So brothers and sisters, this time our emphasis is more on this matter of having been given the heavenly vision. How can we apprehend it? How can we possess it? How can we be filled with it? And that is what obedience is necessary.

So brothers and sisters, revelation always is a calling. When God reveals himself, when Abraham saw the glory of the Lord, there is a calling to Abraham. God calls Abraham to leave all that is of the old, and to go to that which is altogether new.

Brothers and sisters, when we receive revelation from above, and see what is the heavenly vision, naturally a calling comes upon us. And the calling is that we may respond to it. We may possess it.

Many are called, but few are chosen. Why is it that not all who are called are chosen? It is because of this matter of obedience. So how important it is, brothers and sisters, that we are all learning to be obedient to the heavenly vision.

Because only by being obedient to it, that heavenly vision will really become ours. And we become that heavenly vision, part of it. So this is the emphasis of this time.

And because the emphasis is on this matter of obedience to the heavenly vision, therefore we use three different persons to illustrate and to help us how in a practical way, in our own lives, that this heavenly vision may become our vocation. My responsibility is on the life of Christ. Now when I first received that assignment, I was amazed.

The reason why I was amazed is, I think it is ironical. Because Christ is the heavenly vision. So why is it that we should use the life of Christ as being obedient to the heavenly vision? But as I meditated before the Lord, the more and more I began to realize that we cannot find a more perfect example of not being obedient to the heavenly vision than the life of Christ.

Now why is it so? He is the heavenly vision. He is the objective. He is the purpose of God.

But brothers and sisters, he's more than that. He is also the author and finisher of the heavenly vision. He is the beginning of that heavenly vision.

And he is the end of that heavenly vision. He is the one who brings the heavenly vision into view. Make it possible.

Lay the foundation. And he is the one who complete it. Finish it.

Bring it to pass until it is fulfilled. So brothers and sisters, there is no better example in the practical living than in the life of Christ. How he is not disobedient.

How he is obedient to the uttermost. 100 percent. Fully obedient.

Absolutely obedient to the heavenly vision that his father has planned. Now in order to go into the life of Christ, now you remember the apostle Paul and John said, if he should write down everything that Christ done, even when he was on earth, within that 33 and a half years, the world cannot contain the writer. So who can exhaust the life of Christ? Even in this area of not being disobedient to the heavenly vision.

So we try to share the life of Christ in three sessions. The first session will be the life of Christ in eternity past. And then the life of Christ in the days of his flesh.

And then the life of Christ in glory. And we, by the grace of God, we look to him to show us how even from eternity past through his life on earth and enter back into glory, into eternity to come. He is always being obedient to the heavenly vision.

That is to the purpose of God. So will you please turn with me to the gospel according to John chapter one. The gospel according to John chapter one.

We'll read the first three verses. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things receive being through him. And without him, not one thing receive being, which has received being. Ephesians chapter one.

Ephesians chapter one verses nine and 10. Having made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself for the administration of the fullness of time to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth. And finally, Colossians chapter one.

Colossians chapter one. We begin with verse 15 through verse 19, who that is the son of God's love is image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation, because by him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships of principalities, authorities, all things have been created by him and for him. And he is before all and all things subsist together by him.

And he's the head of the body, the beginning, the assembly, who is the beginning firstborn from among the dead, that he might have the first place in all things for in him, all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. The life of Christ is all together different from our lives. Why? Because our life begins with birth.

When we are born into this world, our life begins. But with our Lord Jesus, with Christ, this is all together different. His life begins the eternity past.

We would never be able to understand him if we only know him. In that short period, he was on earth when he took upon the flesh of a man. The only way to really know him, we have to go back to the very beginning.

So the apostle John, in writing his gospel, he begins with this. In the beginning was the word. Now that beginning is the beginning of all beginnings.

Genesis chapter one, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. That is the beginning of creation. But John chapter one, verse one, in the beginning was the world.

That is way back beyond the beginning of creation. In other words, where there was absolutely nothing, only God who is the beginning. So here you find in the beginning was the word, was the logos, the speech, the utterance, the expression, the exact image of God.

You know our speech, our utterance, are one with us. But here you find in the beginning was the word. And the word was with God.

And the word was God. And he was in the beginning with God. So here you find the mystery of the Godhead.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the son, he is the voice, he is the utterance, the speech, the revelation of God. And yet he is with God. And he is God.

One in two. Two in one. And we know it is also in the spirit.

So here you'll find in the beginning, Christ was the word. He was God's expression. He was God's revelation.

He was God's word, speech. He manifests, expresses God. He was with God.

And he was God. That is what he is. Now you remember that when God speaks to man, he has to use ways that man can understand.

So if we try to understand what's happening, we have to use some kind of human expression. He seems as if that in the beginning there was God the supreme, the father. And with him was the son, his image, his utterance, his expression.

And the father and the son, they are having fellowship with each other in the spirit. And their fellowship is so sweet, so harmonious. They share everything equally.

They do not withhold anything from each other. As if they just flow back and forth in love. It is a fellowship in the spirit.

It is a fellowship in love. It is a fellowship in light. There is no darkness, no shadow, no shade, no turning.

It is a fellowship of righteousness. Nothing hidden. It is a fellowship of love, full and complete.

We cannot just imagine how sweet, wonderful, glorious is that fellowship. So the father and the son are fellowshiping with each other, sharing the same with each other without holding back anything. And it is all done in the spirit.

Now as this fellowship was going on, let us imagine that they just talked to each other. And the father loved the son so much. He wants to express his love to his son.

And the way to express is to give. So he wants to give to his son. And what should he give? He wants to give everything to his son.

He wants to make his son the heir of all things. But knowing that his son is love, just as he is, and love will not be satisfied just by receiving. Love will not be satisfied just with things.

Love wants response. So even though God had in his mind to create the heavens and the earth and all the things within, yet he realized that even all these were not satisfied. He did not satisfy the love that is in his son.

So he decided, even in eternity past, that he would give his son a helpmate, his like, that will really respond to his love. He will share not only with his glory, but even with everything that his son will go through. So this is all going on in their fellowship.

God told his son, I love you. I want to express my love in the fullest way that I can. I want to create all things.

And I want to create a creature that will be created in our image after our likeness. So he can be your companion. He can understand you and he can respond to you and be one with you.

But God being omniscient, he knows everything from the end to the beginning, from the beginning to the end. So as he was thinking of creating all things, including man, he foresaw that there will be problems, there will be rebellion, sin will enter into this world. And while the father was thinking about these things, what should he do? The son volunteered.

The son said, father, if it pleases you to do this, if it is your heart's desire to give me a helpmate, now we realize there will be great difficulties. But father, go ahead. I'm willing to offer myself as the lamb to solve all the problems and to make the impossible possible.

So brothers and sisters, even before the foundation of the world, in eternity past, there in that fellowship of the father and his son in the spirit, the son voluntarily, wholeheartedly, without any reservation, he offered himself to be the lamb. Now, will you please turn to first Peter? First Peter chapter one. First Peter chapter one, verses 19 and 20.

Now there, the apostle Peter was talking about the how we are redeemed, not by corruptible things, but by precious blood, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot, of Christ, foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but who has been made manifested at the end of times for your sake. So here you'll find that our Lord Jesus as the lamb was foreknown before the foundation of the world. In other words, he does not become a lamb only when he came into this world.

He became a lamb even before the foundation of the world, foreknown by God. Because as you read these two verses, you find that the antecedent is not to the blood, but to Christ. It is Christ, a lamb, without blemish and without spot, foreknown before the foundation of the world.

So where does the obedience of Christ to the heavenly vision begin? It began in eternity. Now if you would turn to Revelation chapter 13. Revelation chapter 13, verse 8. And all that dwell on the earth shall do it to homage everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the slain lamb.

Here you'll find the book of life is the book of life of the slain lamb. And that was from the foundation of the world. Now in first Peter, it is before the foundation of the world, he was a lamb without blemish, without spot.

And here in Revelation chapter 13, he was considered as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In other words, when the world began, he was considered already as the slain lamb. But then you know, someone who knows Greek says, actually the word before and from are the same Greek word.

So it can be translated before, or it can be translated from. Now if that's the case, that there doesn't seem to be any difference. Whether he was the lamb from the from before the foundation of the world, and he became the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it doesn't seem to have any difference.

But anyway, I think one thing is sure, and that is the obedience of our Lord to the heavenly vision began in eternity past. Now why is it this is so important to us? Now if you will turn to Ephesians chapter one, Ephesians chapter one, verse four, according as he has chosen us in him before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. Now, brothers and sisters, when are we chosen? We are chosen in Christ before the world's foundation.

But how can we be chosen before the world's foundation unless he is a lamb before the foundation of the world? So here you'll find our being chosen can be traced way back to eternity past. Now isn't this something wonderful? That our being chosen is not just an accident, even though we do not know it. But God knew it all together.

Even before the foundation of the world, we were already being chosen in Christ because he is a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. So that gives us the assurance. It is God's will that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

This is God's purpose for us. And this purpose cannot be changed. That is our security.

That is our confidence, knowing that once he has chosen us, he will complete it. And we are being chosen even before the foundation of the world in Christ. I do not know how you feel, brothers and sisters, but to me I feel I cannot contain myself.

That is the glory of God, what he has purposed in our lives. And then, of course, because the son, in obedience to the heavenly vision, offered himself as the lamb, God was able to go ahead with his plan. And then you'll find in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

When God created the heaven and the earth, and all the things within, everything was perfect. God never creates anything unfinished. The heaven declares the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork.

And when God created all things, he created all things in his son. That is to say, the son is the architect. Out of the character, the nature of the son, he created the heavens and the earth.

So everything in the heavens and the earth is an expression of himself. Just like an architect. If an architect is very artistic, the building he designed will be artistic.

If the architect is very practical, his design will be different, because all the design is an expression out of himself. So in Colossians chapter 1, that all things were created in him, out of his design. Out of his nature, everything expresses him in a small way.

There was glory. There was harmony. When God laid the foundation of the earth, the morning star sings for joy.

And the morning stars refer to the angelic hosts. Because in the first creation, God created the angels. And everything just surrounds the throne of God and brings glory to the son.

We do not know how long this continues on. But one thing we do know, that in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, and the earth became void and ruined. In other words, there was a catastrophe coming into this creation.

This earth that we know of comes under judgment. Water surrounded it. It entered into darkness.

Everything was ruined, empty, without purpose. Now why? In Genesis, he didn't tell us why. But as you read the word of God, you will find when you come to Isaiah chapter 14, verse 12 to 15, and to Ezekiel chapter 28, verse 11 to 19, then you find God began to leak out to us, as it were.

How did it happen? Because in the very beginning, when he created the heaven and earth, the highest creation was angels. And among the angels, probably the first created, or the highest angel created, was Lucifer, the brilliant star. And he was an anointed cherub to God's throne.

So close to God's throne. He was gifted. He was given great power and authority and rulership.

And in the beginning, he served God well. But somehow, pride entered into his heart. As you read in Isaiah 14, you'll find the five I. I, I, I. Brothers and sisters, you know, I is always the root of all evil.

Instead of God, Christ, it becomes I. This angel began to be conscious of his beauty, conscious of his talents, conscious of his power. And he began to aspire for himself higher and higher position. He was to be equal with God.

In other words, he was to be equal with God's beloved son. He wants to take the place of God's beloved son. And there is no sin greater than that.

And because of this, he was thrown out of the heavenly place. And brothers and sisters, most likely our earth, our planet, maybe our solar system, were put under his authority before. And when he fell, all that were under his authority fell into judgment.

Did God give up? No. Once God has purposed, and remember, he purposed it for his son. He would never change it.

So we do not know how long it continues on. But then we find in Genesis chapter 1 verse 3, and the Spirit of God brewed it over the deep. The Spirit of God used his warmth, as it were, over the ruin.

And in six days, God restored it to be habitable. Now why? You know, God's reaction is never negative. God's reaction is always positive.

God's reaction is always progressive. Instead of giving up and saying, now it is finished. God said, no.

My plan is I will create a creature a little lower than the angel. And yet, that little creature will overcome my enemy. And will bring all things under my feet.

Brothers and sisters, is it a glorious plan? And here you find on the sixth day, how he created man in his own image after his likeness. And God gave dominion to man. And God gave responsibility to man.

Subdue all things. Bring all things back to my feet. This is your responsibility.

But unfortunately, again, we find man sinned. But does God give up? No. Again, you find his reaction is progressive.

More advanced. Better. Higher.

Because in the fullness of time, he sent his son into this world to be a man. And in that man, God secured everything that he has planned in eternity past. So dear brothers and sisters, this is the general plan we find in the word of God.

But anyway, I think one thing I hope it will really register in our heart. And that is, our Lord Jesus is not only the heavenly vision. He's also the one who makes that vision possible.

Makes that vision real. Makes that vision real in each one of us. The impossible has become possible.

And it is all because of the obedience of Christ to the heavenly vision. So may the Lord encourage us. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we are amazed at thy wisdom, thy knowledge, thy ways, thy love. How we praise and thank thee that what thou hast purposed for thy beloved son cannot fail. It shall be done.

And we do praise and thank thee it is thy son that is thy instrument, thy vessel of bringing all things into being. O Lord, we want to give thee praise and glory. May what thou hast purposed in Christ for us.

Be such a power within us that it will enable us to follow the lamb wheresoever he goes. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

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