

God's Ultimate Purpose Revealed

by Tim Conway

God's ultimate purpose is to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, in a glorious and eternal empire.

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Scripture: Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 2:14

Topics: "Unity In Christ", "Gods Ultimate Plan"

Description

This sermon focuses on Ephesians 1:10, highlighting God's ultimate purpose revealed in Christ to unite all things in heaven and on earth. The mystery of God's will is unveiled through the plan for the fullness of time, emphasizing the reconciliation and unity brought about by the cross of Jesus Christ. The unity in Christ involves the inclusion of Gentiles as fellow heirs, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility between Jew and Gentile, and bringing all believers together under the headship of Christ. The sermon emphasizes the unstoppable nature of God's plan, the importance of regeneration in bringing about unity, and the ultimate hope and glory awaiting believers in eternity.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, please open them to Ephesians 1. My intention this morning is to focus on v. 10. Let's capture that in context. We'll begin reading in v. 7. In Him, we have redemption through His blood.

He's speaking about Jesus Christ, the Beloved. In Him, we have redemption through His blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose or His good pleasure, which He has set forth in Christ or purposed in Himself or purposed in Christ.

God has a purpose. This purpose has been a mystery for a long time. V. 10, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven, and things on earth.

Now, I've entitled my message God's Ultimate Purpose Revealed. V. 10, God's Ultimate Purpose Revealed. I just very quickly went and looked at various preachers, various commentators to see what sort of titles, what sort of characterization they gave to this verse.

Just listen to this. I want you to get a feel for the magnitude of the verse that we're dealing with. You might just read across this as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven, things on

earth.

You shoot past it. You're done. You go on to the next verse.

You begin dealing with predestination and all that engages you. You can pass right over this verse. Or, as it's so often read in the KJV or New King James, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ and just kind of shoot past us.

Well, listen to this. Martin Lloyd-Jones says of this verse, the central theme of all Scripture. God's final purpose.

Spurgeon sums this up by saying one flock under one shepherd. Albert Barnes, the commentator, one great and glorious and eternal empire. MacArthur, the fulfillment of God's own ultimate purpose.

Alexander McLaren, who I really appreciate. The intention which is deepest in the divine heart. William Barclay calls this verse the day of unity.

R.W. Dale. I'm just curious. Anybody ever heard that name before? R.W. Dale.

I come across his name quite often in an online commentary that I look at often. And this man was a Bible commentator, pastor in the mid-19th century. I really appreciate this guy.

Listen to R.W. Dale. He characterizes this verse by this, our final glory, the fellowship of all the blessed. The Cambridge Greek Testament says this, the ultimate end of the gracious purpose.

And it also says the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. Okay, we've got the big picture here. Paul has been moving towards this.

Paul has come in v. 10 to something that's bigger than just our individual redemption. It's the big picture. And so, what I really want to do is just kind of spend today unpacking this verse and thinking a little bit about the implications.

So, as a plan, let me just kind of cross-reference the primary translations that I know that you guys use and that are used in the world today. Listen, the ESV says as a plan for the fullness of time. The King James Version, New King James, are almost identical on this passage.

That in the dispensation, instead of saying a plan for the fullness of time, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times. The New American Standard says with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times. Those are different.

I mean, they're not so different, but they sound very different. But I think when we look at them, you'll see that there's a reason the translators went in all those different directions and none of them missed the mark. It just has to do with our understanding of words and we'll see this.

Administration, dispensation, plan. You go to the second part of this. To unite all things in Him.

Now, brethren, I'll tell you this. The ESV is absolutely inexcusable at this point. I, for the life of me, do not know why any translators would leave the name of God or the name of Christ out of Scripture when it's there in the original.

And it's there... I mean, I checked, I don't know, upwards of ten maybe, various Greek texts, because you know there's different ones. There's a whole broad range of Greek texts. None of them exclude the name of Christ here.

None of them. In Him is inexcusable. It's in Christ.

And let me tell you something else, that the New American Standard and the ESV, which again is inexcusable, is at the end of this verse, the Apostle Paul affirms again and says, in Him, at the end. He says it twice in this verse. The new translations leave it out.

That's inexcusable. For the life of me, I don't know why they would do that. I mean, I'm thinking if I'm translating Scriptures, what is going to be the biggest, the most primary, the most essential basis of my interpretation? It is going to be to exalt the living God and to exalt His Christ.

And basically what's happening here is to unite all things in Him. KJV says to gather together in one all things in Christ. The New American Standard says this is the summing up of all things in Christ.

And what the KJV and the New KJV do is all things both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. It's like Paul says it again. In Him.

Bringing this emphasis to Christ. In Him. This is God's plan.

And it involves Christ. And you don't want to miss that. Don't miss it.

And like the ESV and the NAS, don't tone it down. It's in Him. Even in Him.

This is Christ. This all has to do with Christ. There is a plan.

Brethren, we need to be captivated by this. That in all the world history, in all the things you see unfolding, it all has to do with Christ. It has to do with a plan.

There is a mystery. And God has brought it in the fullness of times and He set it out there for all of us to see. And it involves Christ.

And it revolves around Christ. And Christ is central to all the plan of God. This entire universe was created for the glory of Christ.

And to bring attention and preeminence to Him, we do not want to miss that. Not at all. Not for anything.

Now, let's think about this. The ESV says plan. KJV, New KJV say dispensation.

The New American Standard says administration. What are we talking about here? We can all handle plan, right? That's easy enough. What is a plan? Well, it's a design.

A plan is the way you do things. You come up with a plan. We need a plan.

James and I were talking about we want to see a children's area developed out here so you parents have a place that's nicely, safely gated in and your children can go out there and play. Well, we're not just going to say, well, let's start and brother, go out there with a shovel and start digging. We need a plan.

A plan is the way you do things. It's a scheme. That's a synonym, but I think a lot of times today we put a little bit of a negative connotation on that word.

Scheming. It almost sounds bad. But it's the idea of a design.

When we talk about dispensation, isn't that word... it's abused to say the least, right? We've got dispensationalists and dispensations. But what we don't want to do is because of any kind of negative connotation we might have with dispensations, lose the meaning of what it is. Basically, it means this.

It means that God has a certain way that He does things or a certain plan for the way He is going to do things at a certain time. Dispensation. What it means is that God is dispensing a divinely arranged way that things are going to work.

That's what it means. So plan, you can see how that fits there. You can see how dispensation works.

Administration. We think about the President has an administration. Well, basically an administration has to do with the way things are managed.

And when somebody manages, they manage with purpose. There's a plan there. Again, I think you can see how all these are intertwined.

Let me tell you, the word for plan or dispensation or administration, it is a Greek word, oikonomia. And it basically is comprised of two parts. The first is oikos, which is home or house.

The second part is nemo, which means to manage. And so, in historic Greek and classic Greek, basically what you had is a word that had to do with managing a household. And very often, there's a word closely associated with this which identifies a steward.

What you have is a steward who is given management of a household. That's the idea. A steward has the management of a household.

And he's under the oversight of the owner of the house. Now, in Scripture, this word carries two different meanings. Because the word can be applied to the steward who has been given charge, or it can be applied to the one in authority.

So it can be applied to the one under authority, or it can be applied to the one in authority. When it's applied to the one under authority, it has to do with his stewardship. And it's often translated that way.

Stewardship. When it's applied to the one in power or the one who has the ownership, it means a plan. It means a design.

That's the idea. Now, here's something interesting. It's used to refer to God right here in Ephesians in chapter 3. It's used of God and it's used of Paul.

Well, God obviously is the owner of the house. Paul is the steward. And you'll see the different ways the ESV captures this.

Go over to Ephesians 3. Ephesians 3.1, For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, assuming that you have heard of the stewardship... there it is. This is our same word. The stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you.

And you can see that when it's the man or the person, the individual under authority, it carries that idea of stewardship or management. But now notice something, because the word is here used again in v. 9. V. 9, And to bring to light for everyone what is the plan. Now there's the word.

The plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God Who created all things. So when the word is applied to the one in authority, it's a plan. When it's applied to the one under authority, it's the one to whom the plan is given.

It has to do with their office or their stewardship or their management. So in Ephesians 1.10, we can see the word is not applied to Paul. The word is being applied to the owner.

And so the ESV in using the term plan is getting to the heart of this. God has a plan. The Apostle is saying that you attach this back to v. 9. You can see that back in v. 9, making known to us the mystery of His will.

What is this mystery? Well, this mystery is captured in this plan. This plan for the fullness of time. There is a plan that God has given and what's happening is He's entrusting people like Paul with a stewardship.

God has the plan. God gives this management to carry out this plan to His stewards. That's the idea.

That's the picture that we have. And it all comes together in the Gospel. And it all revolves around Christ.

He's the focus. He's the center of all this. And brethren, like I was saying, I don't just hand Jeff a shovel and tell him to go out here and start digging.

This is the same way. Brethren, every intelligent head or every intelligent leader or every intelligent owner of a household, of a business, of a farm, a head of state, brethren, if they're intelligent, they have a plan. They have a way that they want to do things.

They have some ultimate design in mind. They're moving somewhere. Listen, any theology that basically makes God look to be impotent or not to have forethought or make God where He's just wringing His hands all the time, running around trying to put out our fires.

Brethren, we need to abandon such thing. Any kind of teaching that says, well, God had a plan for Israel, but it didn't work out like God meant it to work out. So God went to basically the parenthesis.

He went to plan B. And He went to the Gentiles. Anything like that. Any kind of teaching that says, well, God intends to save everybody, but after all, He made it possible, but now He's kind of left it to us and so it can all fail.

Brethren, you look at a human being and you say if he owns a house and he's got people working for him, he owns a business, he's got a plan, there's objectives, there's somewhere he's going, are we going to say God is less competent than that? The wisest strategist in a military occupation, they've got a plan. It's to get to Berlin. We're driving.

You know, they didn't go out and typically just bomb fields. If they did, it was a mistake. The idea was go blow up the petroleum factories, ball bearing factories.

Why? There's a plan. We're seeking to take out the Nazi war machine. Look, you've got purpose.

God's not any different. There is a purpose. God is moving in a direction and you can be certain it's coming to pass.

Christ is at the center of all of this. The next thing we have here is the fullness of times. What's that? God has a plan, a plan.

How does the fullness of time fit in? Well, first off, the fullness of time, I think some of you might recognize right away that that shows up somewhere else. Like maybe in Galatians 4. Why don't you turn over there just a second. Galatians 4.4. This idea of fullness of time.

Now you're turning to Galatians, but you may remember that in Mark 1, Jesus Christ states this. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

We're to repent and believe the Gospel. The time is fulfilled. There is a fullness of time.

When is this fullness of time? Galatians 4.4 captures this. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the law. Now, I recognize that has to do with the incarnation.

Christ is saying the time is fulfilled when He's out there preaching at the beginning of His ministry. But brethren, the life of Christ, the first coming of Christ brought in, it ushered in a dividing line in history so that the fullness of time had come and the last days had come. How does Paul speak about the Corinthian believers? To you upon whom the ends of the ages or the ends of the world have come.

We're at the end. These are the last days. This fullness of time is ushered in with the coming of Christ.

That's the picture that we have here. The moment the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, the time was fulfilled. Last days.

End of the ages has come. And the idea here is that there was a mystery. There was this which was hidden.

And God has this plan and it was hidden. But brethren, what has happened is now it is being consummated in the fullness of time. And what has happened? Christ has come and He set this thing in full motion to be accomplished very soon.

What's happening is the fulfilling of this that we see here in this verse is right now. It is being brought about by God no longer in a concealed manner, but for all to see if we have eyes to see it. What is it that He's doing? Well, notice.

Making known to us the mystery of His will. This is a plan for the fullness of time to do what? Now, the ESV says to unite. We may get to gather together in one.

KJV, the summing up of is what the New American Standard says. All things in Christ. Things in heaven.

Things on earth. Even in Christ. What's the idea of this word? It's an interesting word, actually.

But it carries the idea of, I mean, there are words just for unite. The idea here is to collect together. Let me say the word.

It's anakephalaomai. Kephalaomai. Anakephalaomai.

It's a long word. I don't have the Greek tongue to spit that out really well. But kephalaomai, keph.

There is the word head in there. And it's the idea of summing up everything under one head. Now the ana at the beginning is a prefix that means again.

So the word actually carries a kind of idea that at one time, everything was a whole. It was unified under Christ. Things were fractured, dispersed.

And now, once again, the whole plan in this world is that God is bringing everything back together summed up under this one head all over again. That's the idea here. Now at the end of the ages, everything once again coming together under Christ.

This is God's plan. A wonderful plan. Now, let me show you an example of where this word is used.

Jump over to Romans 13. Romans 13. I'll show you this word used in another context.

I think it will help. Romans 13, verse 8, Oh, no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. Now notice verse 9. For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are, here's our word, summed up in this word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourselves. Now brethren, here's the idea. As the commandments can all be summed up under one expression, which is love your neighbor as yourselves, so what we are moving towards, the mystery that has been revealed is God's plan that as all these commandments can be summed up under one heading of love, that everything, all these things in heaven and on earth will one day be summed up in Christ.

Here's the thing, each individual commandment can be summed up as finding their deepest meaning in love. I mean, if you look at any commandment, what the Apostle Paul is saying is its deepest meaning, all of them, all of them have this in common. We can bring all these commandments together and find that their deepest meaning can be traced back to this one principle to love your neighbor.

In the same way, what he's saying is God is bringing, He's gathering, He's uniting, He's summing up so that our great reason for being, our deepest definition, our deepest meaning is brought together and unified under this one headship of Christ. That's what we're moving towards. Brethren, you have to recognize in eternity to come, our Lord Jesus Christ is slighted now in this world.

But for eternity, everything is going to revolve around Him. Everything is going to come back to Him. Everything is going to be about Him.

Everything is going... Our lives are going to find their fulfillment in Him alone. No more slighted. He'll have the absolute preeminence.

Well, here's the next thing. To unite all things, or to sum up all things, or to gather together all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. What are we talking about here? What are we talking about? I think I mentioned this verse when I was doing my series on eschatology.

And somebody was visiting the church and we went out to eat with them, and he said, when I was preaching, I was saying that this text basically pointed towards chapter 2 and the all things in Jew and Gentile and the middle wall of partition being broken down. And when we were eating, this brother said, I

think the text means more than that. So the question comes up, what do all things in heaven and on earth mean? You can jump to whatever conclusion you want, but contextually, are there any indicators? What are we talking about here? I mean, when we say all things in heaven and on earth, do we mean all creation? Spiritual and material without exception? Everything without exception.

Rocks, trees, animals, the redeemed, the lost, elect angels, do we mean everything? I mean everything. Or do we mean all intelligent beings? Rocks can't think. Rocks can't worship.

Do we mean all intelligent beings? Angels and men? Saved or lost? Elect or not? Is that what we mean? Or do we mean all of creation without exception except the men and demons that are in the lake of fire? Or do we mean all intelligent beings without exception? So what we just mean is the angels and redeemed men. Or do we just mean redeemed men? Is it just the church? What are we talking about here? Maybe you're saying, does it really matter if we answer that question? Well, what we're trying to do is we're trying to get a feel for what Scripture teaches, and so as far as that goes, yes, it matters. I mean, we do want to understand what Scripture is teaching to us.

But here's the thing. If you say, well, all things mean all things. All means all and that's all all means.

You're right, you've heard that. You want to go down that path and you want to say that's what it means, that's what I think it means, because I think that's what the young man that I was having dinner with that day, I think that's what he thought it meant, or at least it meant something more than just the church he believed. Look, I'm not going to argue because certainly, I mean, if you want to go over to Philippians 2 and say, see right there, every knee's going to bow, every tongue's going to confess, well, you might rule out everything but intelligent beings based on that verse, right? Rocks don't have tongues, they don't have knees.

But if you want to say, I think it's everything without exception, in the end, is going to be brought into submission to Christ. Amen. Yes, Scripture teaches that.

Now, some are going to be coerced to bend the knee. And some not. And I would just say this, what's the sense of the unity that you get by Paul's words? Do you think he's saying, you redeemed people are going to have unity with Adolf Hitler and with the devil? Is that the feeling that you get coming from there? That's not the feeling that I get.

But I mean, if you want to say that, okay, I'm good with that. If you want to say, hey, I think it's everything but demons and lost men. I'm not going to argue with you there.

I mean, I can go to Revelation 5 and I can see the church rejoicing, praising Christ and I see the angels right there. There's a unity that way. I can go to Romans 8 and I see that the creation is waiting for this revelation of the sons of God.

Why? Because they're going to partake of something that we're going to partake of. And in that sense, there's going to be a unity. The creation groans.

Well, all creation. That might be anthropomorphic. It might be all creation.

The sun, fire, inanimate things. The whole thing groans because there's a curse. They're recipients of the curse.

If you want to argue that way, okay. The area you don't want to go into is you certainly don't want to take a text like this and say, well, I think that's teaching that all men in the end are going to be saved. And they're all going to be one like that.

Because that would be contradictory to Scripture. We know that the demons aren't going to be redeemed. We know that there's a lake of fire that is reserved for the devil and his angels.

And we know there's a lot of people going to be in there too. So any kind of universalism, you just want to scatter that to the winds. It doesn't stand up to Scripture.

But here's the thing. I believe that what Paul is talking about here is indeed the church. Yes, he uses all things, but all you have to do is search Scripture to recognize that all often has limitations to what's being dealt with in the context.

We oftentimes use all in contextual situations. That doesn't mean every single person, you know, you're well aware of that. But I think what we're dealing with here is that we've got a uniting of men.

We've got a uniting of the Jew and the Gentile. And look, the reason I think that is because I think the context indicates that. And I think comparing Scripture to Scripture and cross-referencing what we have over in Colossians.

First thing, the mystery. Let me ask you something. What you don't want to miss here is that the mystery is precisely this.

Don't disconnect v. 9. The mystery is what? This plan for the fullness of time and what does it involve? The uniting in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth. That's the mystery. Well, you know what's interesting? If you go over to chapter 3, in different words, he tells us all over again what the mystery is.

Do you remember what it is? The mystery is what? The Gentiles are what? Fellow heirs. That's the mystery. See, the mystery is the inclusion of the Gentiles.

That's why I think he's got the church in mind here. Because I think what he's doing is he's giving us a certain perspective on the mystery in chapter 1, v. 9-10. He's giving us a different perspective of the same mystery over in chapter 3. That would be one reason.

But jump over really quickly to Colossians 1. Let me show you what is phrased slightly different, but is undoubtedly a parallel passage. Colossians 1, v. 20. And through Christ to reconcile to Himself... Here we go.

"...all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of His cross." Now brethren, you just have to stop right there and recognize all things on earth and in heaven are being reconciled to God by the blood of His cross. He's talking about reconciliation. And he's talking about what Christ accomplished on the cross.

You see, again, it seems like it's pointing to this unification by way of reconciliation to God and by peace which is made by the blood of Christ's cross. Look, undoubtedly this brings us into some sort of fellowship. There's no question.

There's no question. When the benefits of the cross bring us into submission to Christ, undoubtedly, there's a manner in which that brings us into some type of fellowship in unity with the elect angels and with

the rest of creation that is not pitted against the Lord Jesus Christ. But it doesn't seem here that that's what he has in mind.

Paul belabors that the specific union he has in mind is that which is brought about by reconciliation, which seems to be implying a former alienation. But here's another thing. Paul says this in Ephesians.

You can go back to Ephesians now. And like I pointed out when we were doing the series on eschatology, in this letter to the Ephesians, Paul is not concerned about unpacking the mystery of how you and I as believers are going to be brought into union with angels or with rocks and trees, animals. He's not interested in that.

You know what he spends enormous amounts of time on? Ephesians 2. That you have the uncircumcision, verse 11, and the circumcision, verse 13, the uncircumcision are far off. They've been brought near by the blood of Christ. And we're told, verse 14, He Himself is our peace who has made us both, Jew and Gentile, one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that He might create in Himself.

Now, you notice this. One new man in place of the two, so making peace. That was the same issue.

And what? And might reconcile us both to God. This is exactly what he was saying in Colossians. Peace and reconciliation.

And you see, it was to unite all things in heaven and on earth. But what is it that he's got in mind? The two being made one. Who? Jew and Gentile.

No longer a middle wall of partition. No longer this middle wall, this dividing wall of hostility. There is no longer this separation.

But they might be reconciled as both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Look, when we get saved, that undoubtedly kills the hostility that we have with the elect angels. There's no question.

But that's not the hostility that He has in mind. He has in mind the hostility that were there between Jew and Gentile. Now, notice also another thing.

Look at Ephesians 1.10. What's happening is we've got this mystery of God's will. A plan for the fullness of time. Now that's interesting.

Think with me about the fullness of time. What did we look at and see was the fullness of time? The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

When? The Kingdom of God is at hand. When was that? When Christ came. Now listen, you know what's interesting about that? In the fullness of time when Christ came, something happened.

What happened? Christ said, if you lift Me up, I will draw all men unto Myself. All men! All nations! Do you know what happened? You know what happened when Jesus Christ came? He came and He died and that Gospel went from Jerusalem and it went out to Judea and it went out into Samaria and it went out into the uttermost parts of the world. This is precisely what we were told.

Isaiah tells us that God is going to make Christ a light to the Gentiles, a light to the nations. Do you not read? You should read in Isaiah how the riches of the nations will pour into Jerusalem, into the people of God. You know what we have happen? The fullness of time and then something began to happen that had never happened before.

The ingathering of the Gentiles. The missionary movement. Paul went out.

Planted churches among the Gentile world. Suddenly, you've got churches made up of Jews and Gentiles. That had never happened before.

You can count, as I've said before, search and scour the Old Testament. If you don't include Nineveh, how many of them were truly saved? Perhaps they were. If you don't count Nineveh, you can count on one hand the Gentiles in the Old Testament that might likely have been saved.

You can do that math at home later. But I'll tell you what happened. In the fullness of time, God... this was the mystery that the Gentiles were fellow heirs.

And in the fullness of time, God brought it out into the open. Brethren, think of what this means for you and I. The Gentiles are fellow heirs. We're partakers now.

We're no longer alienated. The two are being made one in the fullness of time. Notice this also.

Ephesians 1.10 This plan for the fullness of time is to unite all things. How? How are all things going to be united? In Christ. Brethren, go back and search from the beginning of this letter to the Ephesians until now.

All the way to the end of the letter. Does in Christ refer to demons? Adolf Hitler? You say, okay, okay, we can rule them out. But does it even refer to elect angels? And unfallen trees and rocks? It doesn't.

The terminology in Christ comes back to those who are blessed. Those who are chosen. Those who are predestined to adoption.

Those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Brethren, that's the context here. This is the emphasis.

And here's the thing, when you go past v. 10, look at v. 11. In Him, we have obtained an inheritance. Okay, yeah, that's Paul including us.

No, it's not. It's not. You see, immediately when he's talked to you about this plan, this mystery, this uniting in Christ, you know the first thing he does? Is he puts Jews over here and Gentiles over here, and he wants to tell you how we both have the same thing.

When he says we here, now there's some times when Paul uses a plural pronoun and he does mean me as well as you all Christians. That's not what he's doing here. Notice, in Him, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we, here's the same we, who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

Who are the first to hope? To the Jew first. You start at Jerusalem and you move out. They were the first.

He told His disciples in the beginning, you don't go beyond the borders of Israel. It's to them first. They were the first to believe.

And then watch what he does here. He shifts. Verse 13, In Him, you also.

Who? You Gentile Ephesians. In Him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Brethren, I point all that out to you because what he's got in mind is reconciliation and he's got in mind the peace that is ours through the cross.

And this letter is all about us and you and we are now one. And the peace has been made. You who were far off, us who were near.

The middle wall of partition, the dividing wall of hostility has been broken down. And we've been brought together and there's now unity here in this way. Brethren, in one verse, if you want to include everything, brethren, it's true.

The creation, there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. We are going to sing side by side with the angels. I don't deny any of that.

But I don't believe that's what Paul's talking about here. I believe that his emphasis of this letter is the unity that is brought about when we get saved. And whether you're black or white, whatever tongue you might speak, whether you're fluent in English or Spanish, whether you're Jew or Gentile, whether you're Roman or Persian or Greek or Egyptian, the issue is this, from every tribe and every tongue, from every nation, from every people, God is bringing together.

And this is the plan. And from the fullness of times... Brethren, before that, you know what you had? 7,000, a remnant, the elect. 7,000 who didn't bend the knee to bail.

But who were they? They were all Jews. Jews, Jews, Jews. And where were they? Well, by the time you get to the days of Paul, you know where most of them were? Where? In heaven.

And you know where most of the believers who were Gentile were at? In Paul's day. On earth. Now, that doesn't mean that there weren't some Gentiles who had already gone.

It doesn't mean that there weren't some Jews that were still here. But by and large, most that were in glory at the fullness of times when Christ came were Jewish. And the truth is that there's multitudes of Gentiles who in Paul's day were still very much alive and walking this earth.

And he's pointing us to this bringing together. Brethren, you have to see yourself in the midst of this. I mean, you walk out today, you've got to recognize there's a plan at work here and you as a Christian are part of it.

God is moving. He's bringing it all together. Christ, this great Unifier.

All things are brethren. The spirits of these just men made perfect. They're there.

And yes, there's angels there. And yes, Christ is there. And there's this great unification.

Every time we preach the Gospel and a new sinner comes to surrender and they repent before Christ, they are swept in. They are brought in. The Kingdom has come and they've entered.

And now, they're in this great plan that is this mystery that is being brought together where the very structure of God, the dwelling place of God is comprised of this multitude of Gentiles. We've been included. Brethren, if you were born 3,000 years ago, we would have almost certainly perished in our sins.

Be glad you were born after the cross. Be glad of the dispensation that we are in. The plan that is being unraveled now that God has a mind to gather in so many of the Gentiles.

Brethren, what is this? This unity, this summing up? Well, it's absolutely contrary to this world. Just look around. Jews still hate Gentiles.

Gentiles hate Jews. Anti-Semitism. It's ripe again.

World War II kind of, I think, gave the world some pity towards the Jews, but that's gone. That's going. You hear Jews are once again having their businesses and their homes tagged and spray-painted and vandalized.

In Germany, it's back again. I mean, all you have to do is look through history. Even among the Gentiles, they hated each other.

Like I say, the Greeks hated the Persians. Everybody hates everybody. Why? Because Scripture tells us men are greedy.

Men are selfish. Men are covetous. Men want.

They desire. And they don't have, and so what do they do? They steal. They kill.

They go to war. Men want. They lust.

And that's everywhere. You say, yeah, it is everywhere. Doesn't look like God's plan is coming together very well, does it? But brethren, let me tell you, and this is where we have to be straight, God never promised that this plan was going to be brought together by politics or by education or by some kind of cultural reform.

Brethren, it doesn't happen. Why? Because you're never going to change the hearts of men just by going out and trying to give some pep talk to this world out here or put a new leader in the White House. It doesn't work.

There's only one way, brethren. Only one way that this plan is being brought about. There's only one way that the nations will quit fighting amongst the nations.

Brethren, there's only one way that blacks and whites are going to be in harmony. There's only one way Jews and Gentiles will be in harmony. There's only one way that cops are going to be in harmony.

There's only one. Our little plans, our little cultural reforms don't work. It doesn't work to say, well, we need to listen to one another.

Listen, nobody can hear one another when their hearts are driven by greed, selfishness. You don't hear others because there's a controlling motive. I want my way.

And it doesn't matter how I try to open my ears to what other people have to say because in the end, I want. That's why I do the things to others when I'm lost. Because I want.

I have an agenda. Brethren, there's only one way that this plan gets worked out and it's by becoming new creations. It's by regeneration.

It's by God converting. Brethren, God has planned, God has designed, God is at work in all of human history and He is bringing this plan together and it is this massive uniting that's going to come. Brethren, it is unfolding.

A vast number of you in this room are a picture of this. Whether it's Jews that are already in heaven. Brethren, do you recognize those 7,000 who did not bend the knee to Baal? They're brothers of you and I in this room that have not bent our knee to Baal in this day.

And we are being brought together in heaven and on earth. You don't know them yet. You don't know them by name.

You haven't seen them. We hear about them in Scripture, 7,000. If you're redeemed, you're going to get to know every single one of those.

And we have our unity. They were before the cross, we're after. We are going to be summed up.

Like all the commandments get summed up under love, we are going to get summed up with them under this great head of Christ. And man is going to be gathered and he is going to be elevated and he is going to be restored to what man was meant to be. And that's the idea here behind this word unite.

It's not just unite, it's reunite. It's anna. It's again, that's what all of this human history is about.

We had the garden. We had perfection. We had the walk in the cool of the day with God.

And what's happening is paradise was lost. You've heard those words before. And what God is doing is He's bringing us back.

But not just the Jew. It's that He's grafting us in. Us Gentiles are getting grafted into the tree by faith.

Brethren, we can't stop. Nothing out here can stop this. Let the politicians do it.

You know, we fret about so many things. Let the politicians do what they do. Let Trump get in the White House.

Some of you groan over that. Let Clinton get in the White House. Some of you groan over that.

Let us have nine justices on the Supreme Court that are as liberal as anything. Let them take away our guns. Let them promote homosexual marriage.

Nothing is going to stop this plan. It is in motion, brethren. God Almighty has it in motion.

There is a chosen people. There is a predestined people for adoption. And it's coming together in the redeemed.

And there will be peace. Those who are far off, those who are near. Middle wall of partition ripped down out of the way.

He's bringing a people together. One united. They're being summed up.

Like every one of us is one of these little commandments all summed up under one big commandment of love. That's what's happening. Every one of us, our truest identity coming together under the sum of Christ.

Let the devil do what he will do. Let him seek to wreak havoc on the church. He will not stop this.

Let there be divisions. Let there be wars. Let there be what this world can throw and the devil can throw.

But we cannot stop this. It is in motion. God has revealed this.

And it's coming to pass. It is His plan and it is certain. It's coming.

I know. We're remembering 9-11 today. Looks like there's terrorism and there's disunity and there's Islam and there's all these things.

But I'll tell you this, brethren, it is being fulfilled. And God is allowing us in many ways in our corner of the world to watch this thing be fulfilled. But it's big.

It's being fulfilled in China. It's being fulfilled all over. As Christians, you are wasting your time if you're not at work seeking to conspire with God and bring this about.

And if you seek to use the world's means, money, power, influence, politics, well, we need to get together and talk. How often has Israel and the Palestinians, how often have they got together and talked? Brethren, there's no remedy. There's no remedy.

You are wasting your time if you use the world's methods to try to kill the racism in the world today. You are wasting your time. There's one way that this is being brought to pass.

It is the peace through the cross of Jesus Christ. That is the only way. And that is the plan.

This whole plan that God is bringing about all comes together in Christ through the reconciliation brought about by the cross. That's how the hostility is killed. Did you hear that? We're going to get to that more in months ahead.

But that's how the hostility is killed. That's how you bring people to love one another. That's where unity is.

As Christians, that's where our identity is. Your greatest identity is not with your family, lest it be the family of God. Your greatest identity is not with Republicans.

Your greatest identity is with those who find their only hope in what Christ did on that cross. Being crushed. Pouring out His blood, pouring out His soul that we might have redemption.

Brethren, once in a while, we just have to stop and say, wow, I'm in this plan. And I can say to some of you, you don't want to be left out of this. Because there is an outside.

There is outer darkness in the end of this. This is all going to be so glorious. You don't want to miss this for anything.

We are going to reign with Christ. We are going to be heirs with Christ. We are going to be exalted and elevated with Christ.

We are going to have all of our identity. We are going to be summed up in Him. These Old Testament saints lived in the days of Elijah, those 7,000.

We're going to make eye contact and we're going to know Christ is everything. Every one of us, we're going to look at each other. I think about it often how many of you, we're going to be there.

And there's a first time in glory when our eyes are going to meet Christ. But there are going to also be the first times in glory when our eyes are going to meet each other's. And we're going to look at each other.

We ran this race together. And we're going to look at each other. And we made it by the grace of God.

We made it. And we're here. And He altogether blows away our greatest estimations of what He was going to be.

Sometimes I imagine us looking at each other standing and sometimes it's on our faces as we kind of twist our neck and look over at one another. Brethren, we need to think about this. We need to rejoice in this.

Look, I know things come in our lives. All manner of things. Sidetrack us, get our attention, things we have to deal with.

I know there's suffering, there's trials, there's difficulties. But this, this is the big picture. Don't lose sight.

Don't lose sight. The kingdoms of this world are indeed becoming the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Open your eyes.

You'll see that. It's happening all around us. It's happening here very soon.

The culmination. And the new heavens and new earth. And out into eternity.

No end. Father, I pray that You would help us to see and feel the glory, the hope. Set our minds fully on that hope to come.

As Peter says, Lord, I pray that in light of texts like this, this would be a people very much filled with hope. We thank You for such a hope. We thank You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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