

The Purpose of Creation

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the eternal purpose of creation, focusing on God's intricate plan from before the foundation of the world to bring together a redeemed people, the church, through Christ. It challenges the notion of purposeless evolution and highlights the significance of believers in God's grand design, showcasing how everything in creation, even food and nature, was made with the believer in mind. The sermon underscores the importance of gratitude and thanksgiving for God's thoughtful creation and redemptive purposes.

Scripture: Ephesians 3:9, 1 Timothy 4:3, Job 38:7, Revelation 12:17, Hebrews 1:6, 1 Corinthians 3:21, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:16, Genesis 1:1

Topics: "Eternal Purpose of Creation", "Gratitude for God's Design"

Description

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Transcript

I have detoured from Ephesians probably for these summer months. Likely in late August we'll resume that, if not before. I've wanted us to turn our attention to Genesis.

And you can turn there now. Genesis 1.1 My concern has been an increasing concern not just that the Word of God is under attack. In fact, that it certainly is.

We could do a series on the sufficiency of Scripture. My primary concern as of late has been it's not a new thing. It's just I guess God has brought me to a place where a number of factors all kind of came at me and have been building up in my own mind just this attack on the book of Genesis.

Genesis 1-11 It is being questioned even by those who supposedly are evangelicals calling it myth. The first three chapters of Genesis are especially in the sights of the devil it would seem. This is my third sermon.

I did one on dogmatic assertions. I did another on the miracle of creation. Today, I want us to think about the purpose of creation.

One of the things that's happening is this. This barrage, this constant, constant assertions that come at us that this account in Genesis is fictional, this is myth, this is fairy tale, this can't be taken seriously, especially in light of modern science. It disproves this.

When science and Scripture are coming head to head, we need to deny what Scripture says, embrace science. We have to modify the Scriptures, modify our interpretation, because after all, science is absolutely true and everything that the scientists are saying is absolutely true. And so when the two conflict, if we don't want people to lose their faith in Jesus Christ, we can't be connecting Christ to Genesis because if Genesis is failing in the face of science, then what people are going to do is they're going to question Christ.

What's happening is we're barraged by this message, this evolutionary propaganda. What is behind all of this? What is part and parcel? What's in the package is that with this message is also this subtle reality, if evolution is reality, that there's no purpose in anything. Everything is happening accidentally and randomly.

That's what I want to deal with today. Because I want you folks to walk out these doors and behold everything, and I want you to recognize there is very much a mind behind it all and it is with purpose. And when you look around, everything has purposes, complexity, multi-levels of purpose, but there's primary purposes, there's eternal purposes that are being carried out by a God who is thinking, by a God who is wise, by a God who has purpose and a God who has a plan.

You see, all this evolution negates all that. It's just there's no reason to anything. Everything is randomness.

Everything is meaningless. Everything is just chance. Everything, it just happened.

There was this chance meeting of proteins and we just were here. And that's all there is to it. And if you want to look for significance in any of it, it just isn't there.

The whole thing is insignificant. The whole thing is just a haphazard fluke. So that's what I want us to think about today.

Now, think with me here. Jesus Christ specifically mentions Genesis 1 v. 27 and Yes, you can look at it there. 1 v. 27 God created man in His own image.

In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them. And then if you jump over to 2 v. 24, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Do you know where Jesus Christ specifically alludes to both these verses? Both these verses? Anybody have an idea? Matthew 19, when He was dealing with the Pharisees concerning divorce. What I want you to recognize is this. Beyond question, the Lord Jesus Christ viewed Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 as a trustworthy record of what took place at the beginning of human history.

Do you know what Christ also freely spoke about? The blood of Abel. Do you remember where He mentioned that? Matthew 23, again, speaking to the Pharisees. He also spoke of the flood of Noah.

Anybody remember where He spoke about that? As in the days of Noah. Where does He say that? Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse. To question the basic historical authenticity and integrity of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 is to assault the integrity of Jesus Christ's own teaching.

Make no mistake about that. Also, let me give you another fact. The genealogies I just came through.

Anybody systematically reading through the Bible this year? Raise your hand if you're systematically reading through the Bible this year. Oh brethren, please give yourself to reading the whole Bible through Genesis to Revelation. I just came through 1 Chronicles.

Anybody else been there recently? Right now I'm in 2 Chronicles. Do you know that there's a genealogy in 1 Chronicles 1? And did you know that there are also two genealogies in the Gospels? Anybody know where they are? Matthew 1 and where's the other one? Luke where? 3. Did you know that both the genealogy in 1 Chronicles that I was just reading not too long ago and the genealogy in Luke 3, did you know both genealogies trace mankind back to Adam? Did you know that? You say, okay, so? Look, both accounts regard Adam as the first human being. What I'm saying by that is you've got Old Testament and New Testament references that show us that Adam is the first man.

Can you name any other books in the New Testament that speak about Adam? Romans? Where else? Or how about Eve? Anybody think of where Eve is specifically spoken about? 1 Timothy. Brethren, the reality is this, that the Genesis creation account is referred to in Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Zechariah, Matthew, John, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Revelation. The fall of Adam is specifically referred to in Job, Isaiah, Hosea, Romans, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy.

My point is this, to call into question the first 11 chapters of Genesis is to call into question the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ, the trustworthiness of the Pentateuch, of the prophets, of the poetic literature, of the Gospels, of Paul, of Peter, of John. You get any idea here? This is a whole. This is a collective whole that we have in Scripture.

And it's not like people are coming along and saying, well, you know the reason I don't think Genesis 1 through 3 is in the Bible is because Jesus never mentions it. People don't say that because that isn't true. Nobody is saying, well, I don't think it's true because it's never mentioned in the Law and the Prophets.

No, it is mentioned in the Law and the Prophets. People don't say, well, I don't believe it's true because it's never mentioned in the Gospels or never mentioned in the New Testament, never mentioned in the Epistles. See, all that is false.

It's mentioned in all those places. Now here's another thing. Have you ever noticed that reading through the book of Genesis, now see, typically all the authorities out there, they don't have any problem with Genesis 12 and following.

Their big problems, 1 through 11. Why? Because in there you have God creating, in there you have man falling, in there you have the flood account, in there you have the Tower of Babel account. These are the things people don't like.

But it's not as though you read the first 11 chapters and it's like, oh, wow, that really sounds different than the rest of the book. Let's do a very quick survey. We're going to do this backwards.

Look at Genesis 37.2. Very quickly. I don't want this to take a long time, but I just want you to get a feel for something. Genesis 37.2. These are the generations of Jacob.

Now, if we were to sum up the book of Genesis, what you would basically see is Genesis. What does Genesis mean? What does it mean? Genesis. The beginning.

The origins. Right. And what you see is the origin of the heaven and the earth, the origin of Adam, and then what you follow is God working down through a very specific family line.

Abrahams, namely. And so, why? Because this is the line that is most important. It's the most important line in human history.

This is the line of people that God is going to deal with. This is the line of people that God is going to give His covenant to. This is the line of people from which the Messiah is going to come.

And as you're finishing out the book, basically the book ends with this, the sons of Jacob. That's what you have at the end of the book of Genesis before you let into the Exodus, and Joseph, and you know the whole thing that happens with Egypt there. But as you're finishing out, the last major pronouncement of generations is these are the generations of Jacob.

Now let's backtrack. Go to 36.9. 36.9 is probably a page in front of you. These are the generations of Esau.

Now back up a little further to verse 1 of 36. These are the generations of Esau. That is Edom.

Back up a little more. Genesis 25. Verse 19.

Genesis 25. I just want you to get a flavor. 25.19 These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son.

I add that because it seems to be significant in the mind of Moses as he writes this. These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Let me go back a little bit before this.

Go back to verse 12. These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son. Let's go back further.

Let's go back to Genesis chapter 11. Genesis 11. Verse 27.

Now these are the generations of Terah. And you see what we're doing? We're backing through this. We had Jacob.

But you see, Jacob had a brother, Esau. Jacob and Esau. These are the two that came forth from Isaac.

Which came forth from... I mean, you have Isaac and you have Ishmael. The generations of Isaac, the son of Abraham. The generations of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

We go back further. Terah. Now these are the generations of Terah in 11.27. Terah fathered Abram.

That's the significance of Terah. He was the father of Abram. Go back a little further.

Go back to verse 10. Chapter 11, verse 10. These are the generations of Shem.

Shem, of course, is the son of Noah. These are the generations of Shem. Shem is the son of Noah from whom Abraham comes.

From whom Judah comes. From whom David comes. From whom Christ comes.

Okay, we back up a little more. These are the generations of Shem. Go back to 10.1. These are the generations of the sons of Noah.

Not just of Noah himself. These are the generations of the sons of Noah. Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

You go back to 6.9. Genesis 6 and verse 9. These are the generations of Noah. And of course, coming through the flood, Noah and... there were only eight. Noah and his sons and all their wives.

All of mankind comes through Noah. The Messiah comes through Noah. The lineage of Abraham comes through Noah.

These are the generations of Noah. Now let's back up again. 5.1. This is the book of the generations of Adam.

Now Adam, he's the father of all of mankind. He was the first. 1 Chronicles and Luke chapter 3, they show us this is the first.

These are the generations. This is the book of the generations of Adam. Now if you go back to 2.4, there was something there before Adam.

In 2.4, these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. You see, there is a consistency, there is a uniformity about this book. It's not like we sit down and we read the first three chapters and we say, oh boy, they sound so much different than the rest of the book.

Or you read the first 11 chapters and you think, wow, this is really inconsistent with what you find in the rest. No, this is the book of beginnings. This is how it all started.

And we need to be really clear. People don't reject Genesis 1-3 because it's different from the rest of Genesis. And they don't reject Genesis 1-3 because the rest of the Bible never mentions Genesis 1-3.

People don't reject Genesis 1-3 because Jesus never refers to it. They don't reject it because the apostles never referred to it. That is not the reason.

Hear me carefully. There is one reason people reject Genesis 1-3. They are unbelievers.

Now that may sound very simplistic, but Scripture says, hear this carefully, by faith, we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God. Where is that said? Hebrews? Where? Where? 11-3 By faith, we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God. Can we put that in some slightly different language? By faith, we embrace Genesis 1. Now, do you know what it means for a man or a woman to have a brain, a mind, that refuses to acknowledge this truth? Can you see them there, sipping their green tea at a fancy coffee shop? Many other places as well.

They can be holding a can of beer in front of a TV screen here on the east side somewhere. But you can see them there, scoffing at the idea that God created all this. Claiming to be wise.

Exchanging the glory of the immortal God. Do you want to see how wise they are? The Apostle John says this, whoever does not believe God has made God a what? A liar. A liar.

Do you know what these scientists are? Some people like to say, oh, they're Ph.D.'s. They're professors at Harvard. Do you know what the Bible calls them? Liars. Oh, fools.

Yes. Scripture calls them liars. They are liars.

Well, what it says is they're calling God a liar. They are liars. But imagine this.

Basically what these guys are doing is they're walking around all the time. And basically, what Scripture says they are saying is this. They're denying what God has said.

They're making God out to be a liar. They are walking around all the time with arms lifted. Liar, liar, liar.

And it's like day after day, Scripture is talking about pours forth speech. It's speaking. You remember what we saw in Romans 1 that they're left without an excuse.

Why? Because the reality is that these attributes of God are being declared in the things that God has made. Day after day, pours forth speech. It's speaking of God.

And they're saying, God didn't do that. God didn't do that. That's not true.

That's not true. All this speech, they're saying God's a liar. God's a liar.

God's a liar. God didn't do that. And you know what? In the same book that we were looking at that it's by faith that we believe that God created all of this in the beginning, you know what that same book says? The same book says they were not allowed to enter because of their unbelief.

Who's they? The Hebrew children out in the wilderness? They couldn't enter where? They couldn't enter God's rest because of their unbelief. Listen, when we call God a liar, when we say this isn't true, when we deny what God has spoken, what Scripture tells us is that they can't enter. Can you imagine? They're sitting there thinking themselves so smug.

And all they're doing is they're pronouncing a restless eternity. God's anger at that. And you know what Scripture says? By their unbelief they were broken off.

You find in Romans chapter 11 that like branches, and I know those are Jews again, but because of their unbelief they're broken off. By unbelief you're not in the tree. By unbelief you don't get in the land.

By unbelief you don't get into the rest. By unbelief you're calling God a liar. You know what Scripture also says? Whoever despises the Word brings destruction on himself.

And you know what we say? This is like Dawkins says. God sure didn't give us any proof. Why did He do so much to conceal Himself? There was a guy in hell one time that said, I've got five brothers.

And you know what really needs to happen? We need somebody to rise from the dead. We really need a miracle. You know what really needs to happen? All these scientists need to discover Noah's ark or something like that.

Or they need to find something written in the DNA that in very pronounced fashion shows them that there is truly a God. And you know what Abraham said to that man there in hell? He said, they have Moses and the prophets. Do you know what Moses wrote? Like Genesis.

Like Genesis 1. You see, they have that. And what Abraham says to that man is if they won't believe Moses and the prophets, they would not believe even though one were raised from the dead. This is the issue.

It's a matter of faith. You either hold one view or the other. Either everything that exists is a result of the activity of the everlasting God, or it's the result of some blind impersonation.

It's one or the other. And we're faced by this. This is either the eternal God, the infinite God, or it's the result of something that isn't Him.

It's something that randomly happened. The random coming together of some atoms or some proteins. This is the result of some impersonal random chance.

Brethren, this is what we have to come face to face with. Who are we face to face with? I mean, when you pull back the veil, is there no veil? Is there nothing at all? Or when you pull back the veil, is the Holy One of God there? That says, I created all this. And He's moving and He's got purposes.

And this whole thing is unfolding. There's no veil. There is nothing there.

I mean, we call out into the outer recesses. You know, we're broadcasting all the time. Maybe aliens are out there.

But it just comes back and there's nothing there. There's nothing there. There's just emptiness.

Is that what it all is? What are we face to face with on this ninth day of June in 2019? Who's there? Who's here? I mean, if we could pull back the veil. There was a day when Stephen saw that veil pulled back. And what did he see? Jesus Christ at the right hand of His Father.

Is there no veil? Is there nothing behind there? There were times we sang Hark the Herald Angels Sing. There's times when there's been breakthroughs. We remember our brother's story that he talked about.

Suddenly, his eyes were open. Suddenly, there was something. I've heard Paul Washer talk about that.

Suddenly, his eyes were open. And there's a whole other world there. Or is there nothing? Is that just some... I mean, Paul just didn't get enough sleep? Stephen, well, that's all make-believe.

After all, it's in the Bible. None of that's reliable. Is there actually nothing there? Or if we pull it back, is there this blinding reality of One who is so holy that sin cannot dwell in His presence? No.

Are we just victims of blind chance? I mean, what is it? If there's a God there, is there infinite wisdom behind all of this? Is this just some indifferent evolutionary process? Do you ask the question, where did we come from? Where are we going? Why is all this here? Did you emerge from just some primitive slime? Is that it? A victim of some accidental meeting of these proteins in some slime pool somewhere? Is that all that it is? Brethren, the thing that I'm wanting us to ask is about this, or is there not a God there who is designing, who is planning, whose thinking is way beyond our thoughts? His thinking is not comprehensible to us. Or is there nothing? I mean, when we die, is there nothing? When we breathe our last breath and we're there and we're dying and we're eaten up by cancer or we're having a heart attack or right before I get hit by that car? And then what? It's like turning the TV off and there's now just nothing. There's silence there.

Is that what it is? Brethren, this sense of eternity that I feel written on my heart, that you feel written on your heart, this longing for eternal life, is that all just some random firing of the neurons in your brain and it's just meaningless? It just happens that it comes out that way? Man's constant quest to get back... I was thinking about it. I was thinking about political parties in this country. You know what? There's never going to be a time when any one party is going to continue to win and win and win and win for like ten elections in a row.

Why? Because man is constantly desiring a utopia. And because he doesn't get it in one party, he goes back to the other one. There's always this search.

That's what's behind it all. There's this craving. There's this search.

There's a desire. A desire for what? For this utopia that man can never find. Well, maybe it's in socialism.

Maybe it's in communism. Maybe it's in a democracy. Maybe it's in a republic.

I mean, we're always looking. Maybe it's in a theocracy. Man is grasping.

Why? Because he wants something better. You know what all this is? It's a constant quest to get back to Eden. Is that just make-believe? Did that just happen by chance? Is there no reality to that at all? Or is there a God Almighty beyond conception and understanding existing from eternity? He made everything out of nothing.

Is death really the end? Death is not the end. Read your Bible. The fewness of hands that came up.

You've got to read your Bible. Read your Bible. Read your Bible.

Read your Bibles and live. Read your Bibles and find the truth. Read your Bibles and find your God.

You've got to go there. Scripture says this. Scripture says, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.

Through the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom. See, man can't get smart enough to find God. Through all of man's wisdom, he can't find God.

The only way you can find God is if God shows Himself to you. And do you know where God has stated He will show Himself to people? In this book. Yes, out there in nature as well.

He does say that. He does say He reveals things about Himself. But you will never get the detail of revelation that you will get from here out in natural revelation.

God tells you a whole lot more here. You've got to go here. You've got to live here.

Canst thou by searching find God? That came from Job of old. The mightiest philosophers and scientists have never been able to find God. He won't be found by them.

Why? He evades the eyes of the proud. Brethren, far from this creation coming forth from some mindless, impersonal accident, Scripture says there is a mind. And there is such a mind who has conceived all of this.

And what I want us to do is have a proper perspective that when God entered into Genesis 1.1, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And there are things that were going on in God's minds. There was something going on that I want us to step back and see.

This thing has plan. This thing has purpose. This thing is going somewhere.

We are moving in a direction. I want you to think. God has thoughts.

God tells us. I created. And it's not just a demonstration of His almighty power.

God specifically says His understanding is unsearchable. You think about that. His understanding is unsearchable.

It means that with every bit of your capacity, even the capacity of an Einstein, God is doing things and there's a complexity and He is operating above. Now, He pulls back the veil and He allows us to see certain things. And I want us to see some of the things that He actually shows us.

Some of the things that are going on in God's thinking, His devising, His designing, His planning, which may have escaped you. Or maybe you've seen them, but you haven't connected all the dots. Let's connect some of the dots.

I want you to turn to 1 Timothy 4. Now notice something. The Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods.

Now, yes, the Spirit of God speaks and He reveals things to us. And He tells us that in the last day, there are going to be deceitful spirits. And what these deceitful spirits are going to do is they are going to set forth teachings that attack marriage and attack food.

Teachings that forbid us marriage and require us to abstain from foods. But here's the thing. Look what's said next.

Foods that God created to be received. Okay, as soon as you have language like that, that God created to be received, there's purpose there. With thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For everything created. See, we're talking about God creating. Did God create in the beginning? In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

And He created everything in them. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving for it is made holy by the Word of God in prayer. If you put these things before the brothers, that's what I'm wanting to do.

I want to put this before you, brethren. You will be a good servant. That's what I want to be.

Now we're talking about the thoughts of God. What I want you to do is get a glimpse into the mind of God when He was back there creating. Because I'll tell you this, Christian, sometimes we think about Christ dying on the cross.

And we can think, wow, He was dying for me. Sin was laid on Him. My sin was laid on Him.

We think like that. And that wouldn't be wrong thinking. But I want us to go back all the way to Genesis 1-1.

Because you know what a verse like this tells me? God specifically had in mind Brother Joe, who loves lemon meringue pie. And God is creating the lemon. You tell me, did God purpose to make that lemon so that Brother Joe, a believer who knows the truth, might eat that and give God thanks? You better believe it.

That's exactly what we are being told. When God said, let there be potatoes. Hey, I like mashed potatoes.

And gravy. And turkey with cranberry sauce, which we had on Wednesday. Brethren, God created chickens.

Was He envisioning that sister eating her omelet? And saying, thank you, Lord. That's exactly what this verse says. See, sometimes we have this idea that in the mind and the plan, the procedure and process by which God does things, that almost like God created, and then, okay, what am I going to do with this? No, no, no.

What you have to recognize is God, if there's any mind that is a logical mind, it is the mind of God. When we do things, we have an end in view. God had an end in view.

God didn't just wind this whole thing up and let it go, and then, oh, man, fell. Now I've got to rethink this whole thing. Wait.

God created potatoes, and He created chickens, and He created cranberries, when there not only wasn't any man, there wasn't any believer. And yet, when He created it, He created it with that believer in mind. What ought to jump out is a very profound and pronounced reality about God.

He thinks. He plans. He purposes.

He doesn't create something to only then, after the fact, figure out what He's going to do with it. When Genesis 1-1 happened, God knew exactly where He's going with it all. You know, we observe Thanksgiving.

This isn't just about Thanksgiving. But I'll tell you this, when a whole group of Christians get together at Thanksgiving, and they all bow their heads, and they've got the pumpkin pie, and they've got the squash, and I'm thinking like a Michigander would think. I know the further south you go, you get variations.

But you know, that table full of Christians saying, Lord, thank You. That's why God did this. And I think if we've got eyes to see, oh brethren, if we have eyes to see, you have to recognize that church Craig was talking about is behind the eternal purpose of all of this.

Have you ever read about the Lamb's Book of Life? There is a textual issue there. It's either the Lamb's Book of Life was before the foundation of the world, or Christ was slain before the foundation of the world. But the reality is, before Genesis 1-1, God had in mind who those believers would be that He was making that lemon for, that pumpkin for, that chicken for, to be eaten by Christians with Thanksgiving.

You see, He was creating it for that. You say, yeah, but all the lost people eat. They're only getting the spillover.

That's it. When this guy sits down with his cafe mocha to sip it and discuss with his erudite buddy about how Genesis 1-3 is a fable, and he sits there sipping this tea with no gratitude, no recognition of the God who gave it to him. Do you know what that resonates with? Romans 1 that says they don't give honor to God and they don't give Him thanks.

And the very thing that God created for you Christians to be eaten with Thanksgiving, He's eating it, He's drinking it with no thanksgiving, and it says the wrath of God is revealed. God and His anger are very reality. These people sit there, an unbeliever, and God's wrath is fueled.

Brethren, what we need to see is... I'll show it to you again. Ephesians 3-9. This was a text that I mentioned in the first message.

It talks about the God who created all things. But what I didn't mention, which I did as I've been going through Ephesians, if you look in verse... let's just read this very quickly. Verse 6. The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs.

Members of the same body, partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. Okay, that's the mystery. That the Gentiles are fellow heirs with Jews.

Members of the same body of the redeemed. Okay, of this Gospel, I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of God's power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

See, he's preaching this to the Gentiles because the mystery is that the Gentiles are getting saved. They're being added to this same body of believers. And, verse 9, to bring to light for everyone, what is the plan of the mystery? Okay, now let's get this.

The plan of the mystery, hidden for ages. How far back? Oh, ages. Back and back and back through all the ages.

This is the God who created all things. And what I mentioned to you is it just seemed somewhat arbitrary that Paul attaches this. More like he just likes to recognize God as the God who creates all things.

But I do want you to see this. As God created all things, so that... Don't you find that a very interesting transition? God created all things, so that the church out of all the things that are created, here's the church. And above all the mountains and the sun and the moon and the stars, the thing that is most out of all the creation going to leap forward to manifest God's manifold, that's many-colored, many-faceted wisdom, is the church.

And to make it known to the rulers and authorities and the heavenly places. Now notice this. This was according to the eternal purpose.

Lock right in on that. The eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eternal purpose.

All your Bibles say it. What's an eternal purpose? If God has an eternal purpose, is it safe to say that God had this purpose in His mind in Genesis 1? That logical? Yes. It's called a plan.

It's called an eternal purpose. But He called it a plan. The plan of the mystery in verse 9. The plan of the mystery.

He called it in verse 6 the mystery. The eternal purpose. The God who created all things.

He created them so that within the whole created realm there might be a church. What you have to recognize is this. God was going somewhere with it all.

When God created all of this, do you know what He says in Ephesians? He says, even as He chose you, when? When were you chosen Christ? Before Genesis 1. If you're a Christian, you were chosen in Christ. What's in Christ? Well, you're either in Adam or you're in Christ. If you're in Christ, you're saved.

You see this whole idea about Christ. It's amazing. This plan.

He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. The eternal purpose. If you're looking for a purpose, as He's creating, let there be light.

As He's putting this earth in order. What you need to recognize is this whole thing was very specifically created by God to be a stage for the church. That's His primary purpose.

When you walk out here, listen, when you walk out here and you see a lamb, and you say, well, you know, there's a lamb, and what happened was Jesus came along and He saw the lamb, and He saw the shepherd, and He used that as an illustration because after all, it was there, and God created it for a thousand other reasons, but Jesus just happened to see it and thought, ah, there's parallels here. Maybe I'll draw... Has it ever entered your minds that God created the lamb because first, His eternal purpose had to do with a people? And He had His people in mind and said, I'm going to create an animal that is a shadow. Because when I send my Son into the world, I want Him to have ample... The mountains, why create the mountains? The mountains are round about Jerusalem even as God is round about His people.

You see, you can look at these things and you can say, which came first? What I'm telling you is this. God had an eternal purpose. And with logical minds, people don't randomly... Kenny Lee was telling me that he wants to buy a house.

If you find Kenny Lee driving around the city, you say, Kenny, you call Kenny. Kenny, what are you doing driving around the city? Why are you doing that? I don't know. Well, you ought to have a reason.

Okay, let me think of a reason. Oh, I'm going to look for a house. Nobody does that.

But see, isn't it amazing how people think God thinks like that? Oh, well, God created it all, He didn't know where He was going with it all and man fell into sin. God could have never known about that. After all, He's not the author of sin.

We can't charge Him with knowing about that. That could not fit in His plan. That caught God by surprise.

Now God came up with an ulterior plan. He had to come up with a way to salvage mankind. I mean, the dispensationals speak like that concerning the Gentiles all the time.

Well, you know, God wanted to save the Jews, but the Jews rejected their Messiah and so God went to plan B. Wait a second. The eternal plan is that the Gentiles are in the church. That's the eternal plan.

God was going somewhere with all this. When God created the lightning, do we say, well, since it's already there, let's draw on it and maybe you get a sense of the judgment of God from it. No.

God has wrath. And God was creating all of this to give expression to Himself and to give imagery to us and to be a landscape in the midst of which this church would come. You see, we look at all of it.

There's mountains and there's grand canyons and there's all the politics that go on in all the countries. Oh, you hear about it. There's all the media and all the intricacies of all the merchandising and the commerce throughout the world and all the jets that fly and all the military operations around the world.

And you've got people doing their things and living their lives and building houses and building buildings and building bank accounts and the whole structure of this world goes on. And I want you to know this, when God created the whole thing, in His mind was Christ and Christ's people. And when you're looking for a grand plan behind it all, it says that it is to unite all things together.

Things in heaven, those who have already gone to heaven, the Jews namely, by and large, and those on earth, these Gentiles, at that time, bringing them together, Jew and Gentile, one new man in place of the two. And this is the mystery that was hidden for ages in God, this God who created all things. So when you sit down and eat, you recognize He was thinking about you, Christian, when He made those things.

And as much as you can say, He created that potato for you to sit down and eat the mashed potatoes and say, thank you, Lord. In the same way, when you drive across that plain and you come into Colorado and you begin to see on the horizon the distinct outline of the Rocky Mountains, or you watch the sun set. We were looking at some pictures of the sun setting over Lake Travis earlier this week.

Brethren, when you see that, you have to recognize the same thing is true of those things that's true of what Paul says. That sunset was created so that you, Christian, could give thanks to God. This whole thing was created.

See, with all that's going on, we can look at the church and we think, ah, the church, it's so insignificant in the midst of all of it. But what I want you to know is this whole thing is happening for the sake of the church. This whole thing is happening for the sake of God's people.

The eternal plan before the very foundation of this world, before God even said, let there be light, before Genesis 1-1, there was something unfolding. Brethren, what you need to recognize is this, there are these angels that are sitting out there and it says that God who created all things so that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Have you ever read there in Job 38? Do you know what happened when God laid the foundations to it all? It specifically says the morning stars, the sons of God, broke out into praise.

Have you ever read that? Do you know the angels were created before Genesis 1-1? In that last message when I was mentioning Genesis 1-1 is the beginning of all of this. It doesn't mean that God never created before that. It doesn't mean that God had not been doing many things throughout all eternity.

Brethren, there's significant evidence right there. The angels already existed and when God created, they broke forth into praise and they've been watching. You can say the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ah, the Bible interpreters have gone back and forth. Is that the good angels? Is that the bad angels? I mean, if you cross references with Colossians, there's reasons to think that those are bad angels. I'll just tell you this.

God is doing it in the observation of all the angels, good and bad. And that's evident. We sang at Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.

Where does that come from? That comes from Luke's Gospel. You know what happened when a Savior was declared before these poor shepherds in Bethlehem? The angel broke forth and declared glory to God and peace on earth. Why? There was an angel.

You know what it says in Hebrews 1? God told all those angels to worship Him. You see them watching. You see them observing.

And God says, the God who created all things, says, you know where my wisdom is most going to be shown in all of this? It's going to be shown in the church. The manifold wisdom of God. You think about it.

Women, have authority on your head. Why? Because of the angels. The angels are watching.

Peter says things into which the angels long to look. They're worshipping. They're watching.

They're observing God's eternal purposes as they unfold. Brethren, when God created marriage, that was not an ending of itself. Marriage may have come first chronologically.

Just like when we work out a plan. Just like if Kenny Lee's buying a house. What would be one of the first things that he might do? Well, he might contact a credit union to see if he qualifies for a loan.

But you wouldn't say that that was the end of the purpose. The reason that he wanted to do that was because in the end, he wanted a house. The same way God's mind works.

It's not illogical. God had His end in view when He created it all. And what was the end? The end is Christ who loves His people and would give His life.

And He creates marriage as a shadow. Lightning is a shadow. As I talked about the worm becoming a butterfly, is the shadow.

Listen, the first and preeminent and primary eternal purpose that God had in mind was to bring together a people of all nations and bring them together in Christ. A bride for His Son who would be clothed in righteousness and sit down their triumphant. This isn't the end.

The end is a new heavens and new earth. But even then, what's that new heaven and that new earth? It's the setting. It's the stage in which the church is going to move forward.

Could there be another new heaven and another new earth beyond that? There could be. God could redo this thing, make many more, and we could become spectators. But I don't think we're going to be spectators because what I'm told is we're going to rule cities.

And I've often wondered, wait, if all those who are faithful are ruling cities, and this one has rule over five cities, and that one has rule over ten cities, who's in the cities if we're all ruling the cities? But I think what the picture is is God is going to do things and He's going to set us over those things and we're going to have responsibilities. What you have to see when you walk out into this world is God's primary task in all of this is about redemption and a redeemed people and the Christian. Do you recognize of all the people in the world, Scripture specifically says He's got His eye on you? Do you recognize what it says in Revelation 12, out of all the people in the world, the devil has his eyes on you? He does battle against

those who keep the commandments of God and bear this testimony of Christ.

You see, there's a very reality to the focus. When you see food, you walk through some of the supermarkets today and look at that spread. You can go to H-E-B Marketplace over there on Broadway.

It's got one of the most fabulous produce sections, Christian. You walk through there and you can see all these unbelievers who are in there and they're taking it and they're putting it in their bag and in their carry, in their little halfling. It's the yuppie kind of halfling.

But as you watch them, you can run over and say, God made that squash for me. Look at you like, what? So what? Let them look at you like that. But you should be jumping up and down.

God did all this for me. And not only that, He sent His Son into this world to rescue me and save me from all my sins. Yes, He made the squash for me, but He sent His Son.

Have you not heard what Paul says? He said, Christians to the Corinthians, all the world is yours. Everything is yours. Me, Paul, and Apollos, and Barnabas, and all of it, and all the world, it's all yours.

God did it all for you. When that sunset is out there and beautiful, you can feel real small and real insignificant. And you know what? In and of ourselves we are.

But as one for whom God has bought with the blood of His Son, He did it for you to offer praise and thanksgiving. And in the midst of this whole realm, everything, every nuance, everything is working together for the good of those who love God. You see, the whole thing is revolving around us.

We feel insignificant. We feel small. We're not in the news.

We're not in the highlights. We're not on the billboards. We're not the prime thing in the eyes of this world.

But the reality is, if you read this book, you're going to leave here and you're going to go partake of that meal. And you can go all the way back to Genesis 1 and you can think about God saying, let there be this and let there be that. And He had in mind you on that afternoon of June 9, 2019 as a believer, as one who believes and knows the truth.

He created it for you. That's what Scripture says. See, we have to recognize we're not some little insignificant afterthought.

And we're not living in a world where there's no purpose. There are purposes. And God is moving.

And things are unfolding in the redemptive purposes. And while all the governments and the FBI and the CIA and all the militaries of the world and they do all their secret and their covert things, there is a secret wisdom and a mystery that's been hidden for ages in God. And they don't know about it.

But we know about it. And we're partakers in it. And what they don't recognize is all their important people and all their important functions and all of it, that it's people like us who sit in this little run-down warehouse over at 311 Hedges.

Some of the most important people in the entire earth. People for whom God created the things that He created. There's purpose.

And all these evolutionists, they want to take the purpose out. They want to take the personal aspect of God out because chance is impersonal and it's meaningless. There's a God who is thinking and a God who has purpose and a God who designed it all.

This is the Creator. The God who created all things. Father, I pray that... Oh Lord, gratitude.

I pray that if You would use me to accomplish anything by these words, it would just be that these brethren would be ever so thankful and that they would show forth gratitude in the food they eat, in the sunset they watch, in the bird they get to hear sing, in the rest that they have when they rise, just to recognize the eyes of the Lord are running to and fro around this earth. His eye, His ear, Your eyes, Your ears ever attentive to and set upon those who are trusting only in Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, may that be one of the primary realities, characteristics of this church.

May it be a place of gratitude. A place of thanksgiving. A place of joy.

A place, Lord, where we recognize in humility the great indebtedness that we have to You and to our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You, thank You, thank You for taking thought of us. We are insignificant.

We read in Your Word how we are to consider our calling, that You have taken the things that are not to confound the things that are. We are those things that are not. We are those lowly things.

We are those things that by the world's estimation are foolish, but we're the objects of Your love. And oh Lord, redeeming love. We thank You, thank You, thank You for that.

We thank You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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