

THE FATHER'S COVENANT

Introduction to God's Purpose

I have found that it is very difficult to understand what God is doing if we don't have some basic understanding of His eternal purposes. There are several things mentioned in the Scriptures that relate to God's purpose; but, previously, I have seen these as separate goals. I am now beginning to see how all of the different aspects of the various goals of God's purpose are actually one purpose.

We know from the Scriptures that one of the Father's goals is to have a family, to bring many sons to glory¹. We also know that another goal is to have a body² and a bride³ for His Son and to build a dwelling place, a temple, for the Holy Spirit⁴. While each of these are presented in a manner that makes us think of them as separate, they are actually just different aspects of the same purpose.

God is One; however, there is an aspect of God that is Father, an aspect that is the Son, and an aspect that is Holy Spirit. Thus, doctrinally we conclude that the Godhead is a Trinity. However, some have taken that to an extreme, even to the point that when discussing the Godhead it sounds like three Gods instead of One. We must remember that there is only one God, not three. Just like there is only one of us, yet, created in God's image, there are three aspects of us, body, soul, and spirit, even though there is only one us.

In the same manner, the purpose of God is one, even though it is presented in three aspects:

1. a family of sons for the Father;
2. a body and a bride for the Son; and
3. a temple for the Holy Spirit.

When these three aspects of the Father's purpose are put together we have the full expression of the Kingdom of God, where the Son, as King, is Head of all things and all things are summed up under Him⁵. As we enter into His purpose, we become fellow citizens in the Kingdom with the saints and a member, child, in the household, family, of God.⁶

1 Hebrews 2:10

2 Colossians 1:18; 24; I Corinthians 12:27;

3 Ephesians 5:25-27

4 Ephesians 2:20-22

5 Ephesians 1:20-23

6 Ephesians 2:19

God's Covenant with Himself

I have heard and read a lot of sermons about the various covenants in the Bible. Some speak of the Adamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant and various other covenants up to and including the New Covenant. These are presented in such a manner that one gets the impression that God made each of these covenants with man and, as each one failed, He would make another one. The impression is that God is somehow fumbling around with man trying to find an arrangement that will work. Entire books are written about the various covenants and covenant relationships and how important they are. Most of this comes from a lack of understanding of God's purpose and how it relates to man.

The Scriptures tell us that the Lamb was slain before or from the foundation of the world⁷. That means that before God made man, the sacrifice for his sin was already done. God has not been fumbling around trying to make something work, but His plan included the perfect sacrifice of the Perfect Lamb so that His purpose for which man was created could be accomplished in spite of man's sin.

This means that in Eternity past, that is, before the world was created, God's purpose was already realized within Himself. This would include the Son taking on the form of a man and offering His body as a sacrifice and His blood as an atonement⁸. It would also include the Son destroying the works of the Devil⁹, purging the Heavens and the earth of the taint of rebellion and disobedience¹⁰, and saving us from the present evil age¹¹. This means that *the Son had agreed to all of this before the foundation of the world*.

So, we have in that agreement between the Son and the Father within the Godhead the only true covenant ever made. It was a covenant that God made with Himself in order to realize the fullness of His purpose. God's actions occurred in Eternity; however, they unfold in time. Each time a piece of paper that is folded multiple times is unfolded, more of the written message is revealed and we can read more of it. It is the same way with God's unfolding purpose in time. As He unfolds more, we see and understand more.

We have given separate covenant names to God's agreements with men when, in actuality, each touches on the unfolding of God's original plan, which dealt with the realization of His purpose. This plan has always been a family plan. God intends a family, which is the basic building block of all the other aspects of His intention.

The Beginning of Family

When God made Adam, it was with the intention of fulfilling His purpose. After creating an appropriate habitat for man, God gave them His first commands. They had to do with fulfilling His purpose.

7 Revelation 13:8

8 Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 9:12

9 I John 3:8

10 Revelation 21:1

11 Galatians 1:4

Genesis 1:28 NKJV

- (28) Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Adam was to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth as part of God's family purpose. God also included work as part of His purpose. They were to subdue the earth and have dominion over all living things.

The Garden, as a picture of the Kingdom of God, was a training ground for Adam in these areas. God also gave Adam a test command for obedience, which is the primary requirement for the Kingdom of God. Without obedience, Adam would be incapable of fulfilling the purpose of God within His Kingdom. Of course, God foreknew that Adam would fail in his obedience test, so the Lord begins to unfold more of his Eternal purpose.

Out of the new family, God would bring forth a Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, that would pass the obedience test. He would then be given a Name above all names; be enthroned at the right hand of the Father as the first born of many Sons. From this Seed would come forth the family of God's intention.

There is a lineage of the Seed that is the unfolding of God's purpose, which begins with Adam. The next major piece of God's purpose is revealed with Abram. (I skipped Noah, because God basically restated his command to Adam to Noah without any real changes other than a couple of specifics that related to the flood.)¹²

God chose Abram and made promises to him. These were family promises—to make from him a great nation; to make the families of earth to be blessed in him; to make him a blessing.

Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV

- (1) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.
- (2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.
- (3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Abram understood that this was a family promise of heirs and an inheritance for the heirs, but as time went on, it appeared that Abram would not have a natural heir. It was then learned that a child was promised, an heir from his own body.

Genesis 15:1-7 NKJV

- (1) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward."
- (2) But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the

¹² Genesis 9:1-2

heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?"

- (3) Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"
- (4) And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."
- (5) Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."
- (6) And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.
- (7) Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

So, God promised him a direct descendant from his body and from him numerous descendants and an inheritance for them. This is the blessing of family covenant—an inheritance.

A little later God unfolds a little more of His purpose so that Abram becomes a participant in God's Eternal covenant.

Genesis 17:1-9 NKJV

- (1) When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.
- (2) And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."
- (3) Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:
- (4) "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.
- (5) No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.
- (6) I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.
- (7) And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.
- (8) Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
- (9) And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

The result of participating in God's covenant is the family blessing of multiplication. The covenant then extends to the descendants and provides them with an inheritance. In keeping with this covenantal promise of God, Abram's name was changed to Abraham. Abram means "exalted or high father"; but,

Abraham means “father of a multitude”.

The covenant was not only with Abraham but was also with his offspring, his descendants. Not only was Abraham to keep the covenant, but also his descendants “throughout their generations”. This is the true meaning of patriarch—a father establishing descendants who are obedient to God, walk in His ways, and receive the inheritance.

Why did God choose Abraham to reflect the Fatherhood Covenant? Because, in His foreknowledge, God knew that Abraham would be a true father and would establish his household to keep the way of the Lord. When the Lord visited Abraham concerning Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah, He decided to share with Abraham what He was about to do and He gives us the reason.

Genesis 18:17-19 NKJV

- (17) And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,
- (18) since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
- (19) For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

As we participate in the Father's Covenant, we represent the stand of our household as it relates to the things of God. That is part of a father's duty and obligation to the Lord. It means that father's have to take the place of functional headship in their families. Part of the father and head functions include passing on to succeeding generations the covenant promise and blessing of God and the obligation of obedience to the Lord.

The way that God has designed the family causes it to reflect and exemplify in the earth the eternal aspects of the Godhead. Fatherhood, headship, and fellowship are integral components of the Godhead and will always exist as a functional dynamic in God. The family has been designed by God in such a manner that the family can only work properly as these three components operate as a functional dynamic between family members.

Abraham's Seed

Now, we need to understand that we also participate with Abraham in the covenant promise and blessing. The New Covenant is simply another unfolding of God's Eternal Covenant and reveals more of God's intention.

While we see Abraham's descendants in the natural, Paul points out that the promise was made to his Seed, singular, not to many seeds.

Galatians 3:16 NKJV

- (16) Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ.

Christ was brought forth from the lineage of Abraham and Paul is saying that Jesus was the true child of promise and that we as Gentiles, who are not natural descendants of Abraham, can be heirs of Abraham and receive the inheritance that is promised to the descendants of Abraham by becoming a part of Christ, that is, by being “in Him”. The new criteria given to us to determine if we are part of Abraham's lineage is whether or not we are sons by faith.

Galatians 3:29 NKJV

(29) And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:7 NKJV

(7) Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

God purposely made the lineage to be “of faith” so that it would be “according to grace” so that all, even those who are not natural Jews could receive the promise.

Romans 4:16 NKJV

(16) Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Paul even makes it clear that some of the natural descendants of Abraham according to the flesh are not heirs of the promise. He shows that the “Israel” of God is not natural Israel but is composed of both the children of the natural seed of Abraham who walk by faith and the children of the spiritual seed (Christ) who walk by faith. It is these who are together children of the promise.

Romans 9:6-8 NKJV

(6) But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel,

(7) nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED."

(8) That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

Sign of the Covenant—Circumcision

Family is instituted by sacrifice, even by blood. The first family came into existence when God put Adam asleep, opened his side, and removed a rib. From the rib God fashioned woman and presented her back to Adam as his wife, who was now bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

It cost Adam something, a part of himself, to have a bride. This is why we men are to love our wives and give ourselves for them just as Christ loves the Church and gives Himself for her. Jesus gave His life in order to have a Bride. He is the example for us.

Not only did Abraham have to be willing to offer his son as a sacrifice (see Genesis 22:1-19), he also was given circumcision as a sign of the covenant¹³. This was for himself, his household and for his descendants. Anyone that was of the household that was not circumcised was to be cut off from the family because they had broken the covenant.

The New Testament brings the covenant forward to those who walk in the steps of faith while uncircumcised.

Romans 4:11-12 NKJV

- (11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,
- (12) and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

Paul makes it plain that the outward aspects of circumcision as a sign of the covenant was in the same category as the outward observance of the Law. Jesus moved obedience from an outward observance to an inward condition of the heart in His sermon on the mount.¹⁴ Paul tells us that the sign of the covenant made a similar transition from outward sign to inward condition of the heart.

Romans 2:28-29 NKJV

- (28) For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh;
- (29) but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

Paul makes it even clearer to the Philippians when he defines the true circumcision. One of the criteria is worshiping God in the Spirit.

Philippians 3:3 NKJV

- (3) For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

The true heirs of the Father's Covenant are those who are sons by faith in Christ Jesus, who, from a circumcised heart, worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in their flesh or natural abilities or lineage.

¹³ Genesis 17:10-14

¹⁴ Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7

What it means to us

The blessings of God are associated with family when we are family as God intended according to His covenant. God bestows His blessing upon that which He appoints. He has appointed and established the Father's Covenant.

It is through the Father's Covenant that the presence of God in the family empowers the family. The absence of God in the family leaves the family powerless. The empowered family is under the blessing while the powerless family struggles under the curse.

Husbands and fathers that walk in the Father's Covenant release the covenant blessing of God within their families. Families who stay bonded together in the name of Jesus will have bestowed upon them more abundant blessing.

Covenant Breach

The break-up of family life is a breach of God's covenant with man. Malachi makes it very clear that God judges those that breach the Father's Covenant.

Malachi 2:10-11 NKJV

- (10) Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers?
- (11) Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD's holy *institution* which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.

Because of the covenant breach, God would not receive their offering anymore even when they cried out with tears.

Malachi 2:13-16 NKJV

- (13) And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore. Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.
- (14) Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.
- (15) But did He not make *them* one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.
- (16) "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

These are very strong words in Malachi. When it comes to His family covenant, God is very serious. It is to our peril if we take it lightly. We break covenant with God when we fail to live responsibly as husbands and fathers.

When we break covenant with God we are abandoning God. We abandon His will in our lives and take away our family's spiritual covering. We abandon ourselves because we cut ourselves off from the blessing that accompanies the covenant.

It is the father, not the mother, who passes on the fullness of the blessing from one generation to another. If the dad has breached the covenant, he will never find complete satisfaction until that covenant has been restored to him or he has sought and found forgiveness from God

Family, as God intends family, takes priority. We give priority to family by giving priority to meeting the needs of the individual members of the family. The needs of each family member are unique.

The dad's main job is to preserve the family, preserve the idea of family, and preserve the power and blessing of family. The mother's job is to help him do that. The husband and wife who live their lives in this manner are in covenant with God.

Headship and Father Power

God placed the man as the head of his family. Paul writes, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3).

As the heads of our families, we men have been given a special empowerment from God to do our jobs as fathers. Mothers do not have this father-empowerment and cannot get it because God has sovereignly given it to the fathers who walk in the faith of Abraham. Brothers, sisters, step-dads, uncles, aunts, and grandparents do not have it and cannot get it. Each of those have their own empowerment that corresponds with their function, but it is not the father power.

The supernatural, transcendent power of a father flows from Father-God, which enables us, as men, to be godly fathers to our families. It is a deposit of God-life within us. Once we have been given this power from above, we are able to be what we are supposed to be in relationship to our families. It enables us to be more and do more than we ever could as mere men. When the father is operating as father, the father power is automatically present.

Power has to do with an unseen energy or force that makes something work. It is that force with which God has gifted men that enables us to be what He wants us to be to our families. Without father power in operation, we men cannot be fathers as God intended.

Father power carries with it an authority that comes from God. When we seek God's guidance and act accordingly, we will act under the power of His authority. Things get done, work is accomplished, lives change.

Losing the Birthright

Because God is unfolding His Eternal Covenant through family, Satan's goal is to destroy the family—especially the father's role. This would trash the birthright, the inheritance, with the blessing. The birthright and the blessing can be lost in one generation. All it takes is one generation of absentee fathers to yield a lost generation of kids.

Failure to pass on the birthright and the blessing leaves the family vulnerable to the curse. This curse is then passed on from generation to generation unless God shows mercy and reestablishes the authority of the father in our homes.

Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV

- (5) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
- (6) And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

Before the Lord returns the problem between the generations will become increasingly worse because of the loss of father power through covenant breach. It will become so bad that if God doesn't do something about it, He would have to curse the earth.

Before the Lord returns there will be a great move of the Holy Spirit through His prophetic people that will turn the heart of each generation. Covenant breaches will be healed and father power will be restored. There will be a release of the family blessing as the men again take their proper place as husbands and fathers, becoming truly functional heads of their families.