

God's greatest purpose: the purpose that overlaps eternity. And we've been talking about that all week. It just didn't get that clear until the last two messages. And I want you to know that when we end today, you and I still will not hear a really clear definition of the eternal purpose, but if you keep coming back, I promise you'll get real clear. But there is an eternal purpose that is founded, formed in Christ, and it is found in Christ. But I did say there are some places we can look to see the development of this. Where is the first place you look? God's purpose, His intent. Where is the first place you look? In the Godhead. Thank you. Into eternity past, into the Godhead. So much of the roots of all of our Christian faith and all the origins and motivations — the motivations are there, the habits are there, brothers and sisters. Do you understand what I mean by habits? The habits are there, the spiritual habits, the inclination of the way God thinks. The mind of God is there.

Now, I introduced to you yesterday, in the last meetings, another place where you can begin to look for some evidence of His eternal purpose. Now, you tell me what that was. Genesis 1 and 2. Why would we pick on Genesis 1 and 2? Because it's before sin. And I have said to you again and again, what is it that God planned that has nothing to do with sin? What was God going to do with man if he had never fallen? Never think that all God intended to do is what you find in Genesis 1 and 2 — that He created man to walk with Him in the cool of the garden, and there was nothing more going to happen. God's plan was being worked out; it was not completed.

There was a tree of life; man never ate of. If he had eaten of that tree of life, we would have begun to see that eternal purpose unfold here in the visibles. Now, I have to come back. I have to go into God. I have to return to that place where there's no creation, and I have to ask of my Lord, "What's the provocation here, Lord? Why create? What's Your purpose? What's Your purpose for man? What's Your purpose in creation? What is it You want done?"

Have you considered this this week? Have you been wondering yourself? You've been wondering, what is His eternal purpose? Would you like for me to go ahead and tell you what it is? I think I'll wait until the end of the meeting. I'll hint at it a little bit, but all that we discussed in the last two messages are clear evidences of those things which reflect His purpose. Each one of them all have their origins back in the Godhead.

For instance, we see life, life as a sharing between God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The tree of life in the garden was an invitation for the sharing of that life to enlarge. It's just that simple. And in that, we see a real evidence of His purpose — an enlargement of the fellowship of life. It did not happen, but Jesus Christ came to earth. He continued living by that life as He had in the Godhead, and then He invited His disciples to partake of that life. Was that to save them from their sin? No. No, that invitation had been given previous to the fall. When He invited them to take His life and live by His life, He was repeating to them what He had said to an unfallen Adam. A-D-A-M, not A-T-O-M. An unfallen Adam. Okay, so that's one little indication. Now then, here's the exciting thing — and that is that you can start in Genesis 1 and 2, and you can trace a line concerning that life all the way through the

Old Testament and all the way through the life of Christ, all the way through the history books of the Old Testament and the songbooks — the Psalms — and the prophets, the sermons. The Old Testament is made up of three things: history, the songbook, and sermons. You've heard it as — what is the first part usually called? Well, bigger than that — the Law, okay, the Law and the Prophets and the Poetry. But it's history, songbooks, and sermons. There's a line concerning the highest life all the way through the Old Testament. And then through the life of Christ, it becomes very clear — seen at first in the Father and the Son's relationship, carpenter with God the Father. Then you come into the epistles, and you see the life being shared again, and then you break out into Revelation, 21-22, and it gets so clear — the line of life.

Now, what were some of the other things on our list? And we'll just go through them right quickly. Give me your list. Water, huh? The eternal God. Alright, and also, the corporateness of God — "Let us." As well as man. There is a man. Let me go with the man. There is a man all the way through the Old Testament. Well, sure, there's a man. There are people all over the place. That's not what I mean. I mean, there is *a* man. Now, who is the first man? Adam. No, ma'am. He is not the first man. Well, I don't understand this fully, but there was a man before there was Adam. Now, don't go chasing me down on that. I'm just telling you — He was the very first man.

Okay, but there is Adam, and there's the line of Adam. And there comes the line of the old man, and you can trace it. Boy, he goes through many a trial, danger, toil, and snare, but there is also another line in the Old Testament, and it's the line of the new man. Now, that is something very, very few people have ever heard about — that there is the old man, and there is the new man. You have to look for him very carefully. But his line, his lineage, is there. His lineage was in Noah's Ark, but so was the old man. The old man sneaked on — they didn't know it, but the old man sneaked out. What was his name? Sneaked in so you don't even know — oh, you ignorant people! The old man and the new man — Ham, right? And then Ham came forth and gave birth to a whole bunch of things — I've forgotten what all of them are. What are the other two kids' names? Shem and Japheth. Okay, and there should have been only two sons on that ship, and then there would have been the Gentiles and the Jews. But there were the Gentiles, the Jews, and the old man. Now, I know this gets very complex, but there is a man all through the Old Testament.

Then in the New Testament, you come to what? What do you come to? A man unlike any other man — the New Man. Now, is the Lord Jesus Christ the new man? Well, you're a little smarter than I thought you were. I thought you were going to say yes. No, He is not the new man. He's the Head of the New Man. You and I are also part of the new man, but now then, see what you don't know is — that's just not a man tripping through history. Oh, there's an enormous battle going on and a tremendous fight for God's eternal purpose, a tremendous battle over what this man is to do and to be. So, there's a line all the way through the Old and New Testaments — ends in Revelation 21-22. There's a man there. What a man. Now, there was also the eternal God. He begins in eternity past. You find Him throughout the Old Testament, you find Him in the New Testament and in Revelation, and you find Him in His

final state — or at least in His glorious state. Okay, what were the other things we listed? What? Life? I've already touched life, I think. Okay, there's a garden. There's a woman.

Whoa! Give me one at a time. There's a garden for growing things. The garden — you can trace the garden all throughout the Old Testament. "I never heard of a garden anywhere." You have to be very, very wise to find the garden in the Old Testament, because you have to find not so much the garden as what is being built on the garden or for the garden.

Okay, and there you come to those materials we mentioned. And what are the materials? Gold and bdellium. Bdellium, I'm not going to get into, but those materials stretch all the way across the Old Testament and all the way across the New Testament and are finally found in their final expression. Paul talked about the gold, the bdellium, and the stone. Now, you wouldn't believe that, would you? That Paul talked about the gold, and the bdellium, and the stone that are in Genesis 1 and 2. In fact, he said, "I build with them." He said, "I take them, and I build with them." Are you following me? You look a bit shell-shocked back there. Isn't that wonderful to believe that those four chapters are separated by well over 1500 years in their writing, and the authors who wrote them — and that so many different men wrote between them — and each of them have these things? And it's not something you have to pump really hard to get it; it's there. It's very evident.

Okay, what was another one? Water. Well, the water — the material is in the water. Okay, the water, of course, is the very nature and content of God as a supply to us. And you find that water appearing again in many different ways, sometimes not as water but simply as supply. And there's food there. You know, the tree had fruit. There's food to be eaten and water to be drunk, and that food and that water does go throughout the Old Testament and then really clearly break loose and alive as Christ declares Himself to be the food and the water. And then again, reach their great, revealing, thunderous explanation in Revelation 21-22.

What's another one? A line all the way through the Bible about water. Yes, ma'am. There's a woman. There are actually two women. There are two women in the Scripture. I can tell you who one of them is. I don't know who the other one is. I guess she's Jezebel. No, there is a city who is a woman. And what's her name? Jerusalem. Who's her mother? Huh? Who's her mother? Hagar is her mother. Hagar! Hagar is the mother of one, and Sarah is the mother of the other one. So, there is a woman who is a city. There are two Jerusalems, I guess we would have to say, but they are a woman. And of course, we begin to see a woman very clearly emerging in the Gospels.

Have you ever understood that the Gospel begins with a woman? It begins with a woman. Now, those of you who know that, that's fine. Don't show us how smart you are. Those of you who don't, can you guess what I'm talking about? Can you guess what I'm talking about — the reference in the very beginning of the Gospels to a woman? How's that possible? You never heard of such a thing. Well, John the Baptist declared, "I am the friend of the groom." And who is Christ? The groom. Alright, and what's John doing? He is introducing the groom

to the bride. And that's how the New Testament opens — with a tremendous...the Gospel opens with a tremendous declaration by a man seeking to get a girl prepared to meet her fiancé. Praise the Lord. You find this girl all through the Old Testament and all through the New Testament, and then finally — boom, wow, golly gee — into the ....

What were the rest of them? Two realms. Two realms. Well, of course, that's hardly worth commenting on, isn't it? There are two realms all over the Old Testament, two realms in the New Testament, and there is a marriage of the two realms in eternity future — a marriage of the two realms.

Now, you said two fellowships? Alright, the fellowship of the eternal God and the fellowship of Adam in the garden. And that again is real. We begin to see something of His eternal purpose. God is seeking to enlarge the fellowship. He's enlarging the Life, the participants of life. He's enlarging the fellowship. Until you come to the New Testament, you see that fellowship brought to earth clearly. See, God is not stopped by the fall. Had Adam eaten of the tree of life, that fellowship would have been between God and Adam, like it was between the carpenter Jesus, the Lord Jesus, and the Father there in Galilee. Now, that enlarges in the Epistles — this fellowship — and finds its culmination in Revelation 21-22, so you should spend a lot of time looking at Revelation 21-22.

And are we out of the list yet? Is there anything else? Okay. Let's see what else we can find here in this section. Okay. I don't know what to do here, frankly. There was one other thing I added, and that is — and I need a term for this, being as I'm going to talk about it. Hidden in these two chapters is this: do you know the word *deference*? Deference. *Deference* — that's the way it's pronounced. What is deference? Can somebody tell me what deference is? Give me a definition of deference. Giving place to the other. Almost preference, but not so much preference as giving place to. Giving honor to. Not yourself, but the other one. Deferring to. Deference to the other person. This is here in Genesis 1 and 2. Now, there was one thing that, and we'll find this in the Lord's life, it's in the Trinity. The Father gives deference to the Son, the Son gives deference to the Father, and the Holy Spirit gives deference to everybody.

I want you to go back to your list and review it. I want you to really pay attention to the word *corporate, corporate, corporate*. There's a corporateness in God, and there's a corporateness in man, for there is a corporateness in God's purpose.

So, we come to the next thing, and that is — we come to the purpose for which God created man. The purpose for which God created man. Now, if there was ever a moment in your life to pay attention, it's right now. You can find out what you exist for. You won't like it. You want to exist for a Cadillac, a home, money in the bank, and a promise that nobody will ever disagree with you or get in your way or create a problem. That's what you and I want to be created for. Now, here is an unfallen Adam, and he is told for what he was created. Now, interestingly enough, it does not declare that he is created for fellowship, but he does fellowship. He is not created for eating the tree of life, but he could eat the tree of life. But when we come down to the purpose, we're talking here about *function*. The function of man.

And I come back to impress upon you again — there is a line of two men throughout the whole Old Testament and throughout the New Testament.

I was sitting in a meeting one day in Los Angeles, California, minding my own business, and I got called to the platform to speak. And I got up and talked about those two men — talked about a lot of other things, but I talked about those two men. And I said some things that I shouldn't have said, and I'm going to repeat them right now to show you that I have not lost my sanity. I said that one of these men is the old man, and he is religious; not spiritual, but religious. Now, he's also very sinful, but he's also religious. You never met very many people who are not religious. No matter how sinful, he's also religious. And I don't mean to pick on the Catholics, but they have this wonderful way of combining religion and sin. You go out and get drunk all night, and you go to the priest the next day, and you ask for forgiveness. This is wonderful, the way they can just...it's just so beautifully solved. Religion and sin just kind of all mixed in there.

We Christian Protestants are really dumb. We try to quit sinning. And that is...the Catholics didn't make any effort to do that, and that's why there are more Catholics than there are Protestants. They had a head start. Huh? They had a head start. They really did. Well, they had a head start too, didn't they? I'm not picking on the Catholics, but man is religious. And when he comes to religion, he builds his own building, and he builds it out of clay. He also just naturally organizes religion. And if you've ever read *Our Mission*, you know that I trace the history, the actual, physical history of that. There really is the history of how religion is organized, and Christianity will be stated in the history books clearly. It started out without being organized, and it adopted the structure of the Roman Empire. And all your denominations have basically the same organizational structure. And what we're standing here to do and to be is to be people who are not organized, but who meet under the Lord. I've heard people say so many times, "You have to be organized." That's not true. I would not have wanted to grow up in a home that was organized. I was in a home that was organic. That's why those of you who grew up in a military home were so miserable. It wasn't so much organized as it was regimented. But it wasn't organic. It wasn't a living thing at all.

Now, a body is a living thing. It's not organized. It functions. It's an organism. And the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an organism, and I tell you, brothers and sisters, the non-organized church is just about to die out on this earth, but then the non-organized church has been just about to die out on this earth from the very beginning, and then God raises up men to make sure it doesn't. Isn't it wonderful what happens in Nepal? Nepal was a tribal nation. It's a very short step from a tribe to the church. Very short step. The tribe and the church are very similar in the way they do things. It's tribal. The church is essentially tribal.

If you want a good definition, you've never been in a tribe, so you don't know what that means, but it's not organized. And tribalism is about to die out on this earth. In fact, it was predicted by some sociologists that sometime within the next 50 years, tribal life on this planet will cease to exist. Within the next 50 years, tribal life on this earth will... if that actually happens, Satan will have won this planet. For he works through organization. Now,

I'm just hoping the church of the Lord Jesus Christ will still be around, because if she is, I mean, in her expression; I don't mean...she'll always be here...but in the practical expression, she needs so desperately to be a witness to the headship of Christ, not to the organization of man.

Now, my point in all of this is that there is a line of an old man that runs throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Man built Babylon. Abraham built an altar and kept moving. And in the New Testament, you have the organized religions opposing the church. The church is not an organization. She's a man. She's a man — or he's a man. She's a she until she's under His headship as one. And then they are a new species, a new creation — a new, the Greek says, a *new humanity*. A new kind of a human.

Alright, now then, I just want you to know and be impressed with this. That there is supposed to be a man on this earth doing what God created man for. There's supposed to be a man on this earth doing that which God created man for. Now, what did God create man for? And this gets very important. Now, you won't understand Gene Edwards and what makes him tick; you're about to hear it. This is my passion.

God said to Adam, I have put you here that you might bear before angels, before the animals, and before Me, that you would bear My image. That you would bear about on this earth My image. You cannot get closer to God's eternal purpose than coming to the point of realizing that God wanted a human on this earth who would make God visibly seen. That animals and angels could look and see the image of God being born visibly on the earth. Now, who's going to do that? Who will take up that task? Who takes that torch? What man and what manner of man comes forth and says, God, we are here to fulfill the purpose for which You created man; we are here to bear Your image. Who is this person?

*Let Us* make man and *let them*; it's a them. A *them*. Brother, could you stand here for just a moment, and I'll ask Brother Prem also to come up here, if he will. Can Prem Pradhan possibly carry forth all by himself on this earth and show forth the image of God visibly? No. Can you? Well, come here. Can these two together? No, no. You're at least one or two short here. It takes a *them*. There is no way one human being can show forth the Lord. You show forth this. Somebody else shows forth this. Somebody else shows forth this. I mean, somebody else shows forth this. And someone else shows forth this. And someone else shows forth this. And this. And this. And that. And this. And that, as far as you can go there. And it takes a group of people to show. It takes a *them* to show forth the image of God. And then it even takes a more of them to show forth the body of that image of Him. It takes a bunch of people. You cannot do that, Prem. When you go back home, you know this. Brother Prem Pradhan, what does it take? Tell them what it takes. What does it take to show forth the image of God? The body. The body. Alright. Amen, thank you, brother.

It takes...why are you sitting there like this? How could you dare sit here like this? Do you know how to say amen? No, I want to hear you just say it. Well, say it again. Say it again. Say it again. Say it again. Say it here. Amen. Amen. It's a chorus. Now get your mouth open. You

need it. You don't want to stand in the presence of God's glory nor His purpose and keep your mouth shut. Amen. Amen. He had a purpose of *a them* to show forth His very visibility on this earth. God would have remained invisible. Man would have eaten of God's nature. Man would have shown forth to the principalities, to God Himself, and to everything else created, the very visible image of God. Say amen. Amen.

Now, that's one half, or maybe one third, or maybe one fourth of His purpose—the practical purpose of man on this earth. And how dare we go to church? Does that sentence make any sense? How dare we go to church? We don't go to church. That's a fourth-century concept. It's not a first-century concept. How dare we go to church? We are not only the ecclesia; we are the bearers of the image. Alright, the other one was, let Us make man and let them have dominion. And I will tell you, it has been years since I have mentioned dominion, and the reason is because some Baptist twit got it in his head eight or ten years ago that we Christians are to have dominion; therefore, we're supposed to take over America's political system, and that we're supposed to run the country. God have mercy. That's about the same as when Satan offered the Lord the kingdoms of this world to rule, as long as He bowed before the knee of Satan. And, brothers and sisters, this world system and this political system don't belong to us, even if we run it. You can run it from the bottom to the top. There's one position in it you can't have, and that's the top top. And that belongs to Lucifer.

I am not here to save America's political system. I started this conference off by saying we're not here to save Israel. We're also not here to turn America into a political Christian nation. Brothers and sisters, God gave man to have dominion over the earth. That is a spiritual exercise, and that spiritual dominion does not belong to physical rule of this earth. It has got to do with a battle between us and the enemy. Between us and the enemy for the Lord, we exercise dominion.

Now, I want to go back to these two simple thoughts, and I want to take them back to the Godhead. I need to be really careful here. Somewhere in the Godhead, there's something glorious going on. And God wants to be seen. So, He says, I'll create a man who will show My image; show forth the Godhead. Show forth the greatness. There is also going on in the Godhead; there's a kingdom up there, and there's rule, and there's dominion, and there's authority. And He wants that to be seen in the visible realm, and He wants it to be brought out of the invisible realm into the visible realm. Therefore, He created man, that man show forth the image of this eternal fellowship in God and this glorious, majestic sovereignty of God. And we're going to finish out God's purpose as seen, kind of hidden but a little visible, in Genesis 1 and 2.

We're in the middle of finding out why God created man. Now, brothers and sisters, understand, come back to the Godhead. Why would God want to create man? Somewhere in this, He has His own feelings about this. They are unto Him. They are not unto you. The arrow points in His direction. And what is it? That He can be manifest on the earth. That He can be revealed physically to a visible creation. That He can be seen. Also, in this, we see that there is some sort of something going on in the Godhead that ultimately you and I

would start off by calling it the sovereignty of God, His rulership in all things. And I've always found it fascinating that there's something to me that is missing in Genesis 1 and 2. It should be there. And it's in Revelation. And it's not in the garden. Why is it not in the garden? There's no throne mentioned here, but there's no eating of the tree of life either. There's no eating of the tree of life.

You and I cannot handle authority outside of life. We cannot handle dominion, exercise of authority, outside of life. Saul had outward power. David had inward life. Saul ended up being a man exercising the authority of God in the midst of madness. As you grow older, you'll watch this happen in the lives of men who have power, and they have power with God, but they have so little internal life of God that their outward exercise of authority becomes a kind of madness. And without the life, Adam has no authority. The image begins with the life, and the authority begins with the life. There must come the partaking of the tree of life before there can be any of the showing forth of His image or any exercising dominion. Can you follow that?

Adam never got to be the one who bore His image. We speak of Adam being made in the image of God, but he was not fully in the image of God, for he lacked the nature of God. It was all for him. He lacked the life of God. Therefore, the fullness of the image could not be born, and the full exercise, of course, there was none. There was total failure in exercising dominion because he was told to guard the garden, and he didn't guard it very well, did he? And he ended up being not the one who ruled, but the one who was ruled—ruled by another. It was because there was no life in him.

Watchman Nee said he started out being a living soul, but because he never ate of the tree of life, he also not only became a living soul, he ended up living by his soul. It's one thing to be a living soul; it's another thing to have to end up living by your soul. And the enemy gained dominion. Now, do you realize what that means? There's dominion to be exercised that has nothing to do with the fall. But the fall enhanced the matter, the issue of dominion.

You're looking at me like you don't have the foggiest idea of what I'm talking about, so let me take a little bit longer, and let me get real practical. To the brothers and sisters who now meet in this town, I have something to say to you. And probably what I'm saying right now is...I've thought more about saying it to you than everything else I've spoken this week. And you're going to forget, and I'm going to bring you back to it. And you're going to fail at it. And frankly, I'm going to get irritated at you. This is one of those things that irritates me. But I'll be very patient. Get irritated, but I'll be patient.

You can't do this now, but you've got to never forget that you're here when you gather to fulfill the purpose of God having created man, and that is to show forth the physical, visible image of Jesus Christ. That's why you gather. You gather unto Him. You don't gather to be blessed by songs. You don't gather to pray for one another. You don't gather to share your needs. You don't gather in order to hear somebody speak. You don't gather in order to bellyache. You don't gather because it's wonderful, and you don't gather because it's dry.

You don't gather because it's good, and you don't gather because it's bad. You don't gather because it's wonderful, and you don't gather because it's boring. You meet. You are a meeting place. You meet for one purpose—that is, to project Jesus Christ, not for yourself nor your benefit, but for Him, unto Him, for Him, by Him, through Him, and to Him. Brothers, please never forget that your purpose in this city is to bear the image of Christ when you corporately gather.

Gene, why would you get ticked off by us? 7P.M. How y'all doing? It's nice seeing you. All three of us here, 7 P.M. Well, would y'all like a Coke? While we're waiting, I have some cookies left. If any of y'all got a Bible or songbook—I forgot to bring my Bible, songbook. 20 Minutes later, somebody else comes in. Were we supposed to meet tonight? 15 Minutes later, here comes some more. What are we going to do? Well, let's sing. Amazing, amazing, amazing—let's start there. A little higher—that's too high. A little lower. Amazing...I can't sing that. We got something else we can sing? Thank you, Kathy. I appreciate this. That's nice, Kathy. Alright, I thought that was you, Kathy.

Brothers, are you listening to me? My only question is just really simple: where is His image? In this, where is His image? Where is His image? Brothers, I would almost take you back there to the Lord's table the other night and say, Wait a minute. Are you committed to bearing forth His image? Now, this is going to take time, and you're going to lose it. There really are going to be meetings this bad, but if there's anything I would ask the saints here to remember, it is this—that when you assemble together, you're assembling the parts of Christ. You're assembling the parts of Christ.

Brothers, that's why I asked you a few months ago in the conference this summer at Simpsonwood, and why I really admire the Chicago group. They have rules if you're not there on time. I love that. There are two things I have said: I don't know how to have church life with people scattered all over, and I don't know how to have church life with meetings that don't start on time. They'll kill every time. And this is going to have to be a commitment not only to just be there on time, but to understand the importance of what you're doing. That doesn't mean that every meeting you have to sing and that every meeting you have to be, you know—you're not sitting there under the oppression of, but you move in every way toward bearing His image.

And every once in a while...will you not forget what I'm saying to you right now? Because I said it to you once before, and you've already forgotten. You don't even remember my saying this. Take one or two months to plan one meeting. You meet to plan a meeting—a meeting for His glory alone, a meeting concentrated on Him, a meeting in which you invite, with your own mouth and words, you invite the principalities and the powers to watch. Praise, hallelujah, amen! You invite them to attend. They come anyway. They do observe. They'll hate you for it, but they're going to hate you anyway if you begin bearing His image in the gatherings. We gather. We gather to bear His image on this earth visibly. You have no reason for meeting in Beaumont except primarily and first of all unto Him, to show forth the Lord Jesus Christ in living black and white. Praise the Lord. Amen. Amen.

That's why I came to this city. This is my calling—to plant the image of God visibly on this earth. It is your purpose for existing. Say praise the Lord. Now then, if you will bear that image, someday He may give you a little exercise of dominion. Oh, the brothers love power. “We’ll meet, we’ll meet, we’ll bear the Lord’s image so we can have power. We’re going to have power. We’re going to zap them demons. Demon, you’re zapped.” And boy, we’re going to heal people. We’re going to be impressed. We’re going to heal. Just bring them over here, and we’ll heal them. That sure is poor motivation, saints. No, it doesn’t come that way. Just one day, you look up and you realize you’re in a battle. The brothers and sisters, holding on to one another very dearly, simply, calmly, quietly announce that on this earth, ultimate dominion belongs in the church. Ultimate exercise of authority on this earth belongs to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ under the headship of Jesus Christ.

And that doesn’t mean you’re just going to be in control of everything on earth. Brothers, if that were true, everybody would be joining the church so they could be exercising power. There just come times in the issuing and warfare with darkness that you simply exercise His authority upon the earth. I would ask you not to pay a lot of attention to that, because that does not come out of being a group of people. That comes out of a great deal of the growth of His life in you, and a great deal of suffering, and a great deal of His cross. Out of life will come the image and the authority.

Did you hear that? I know you three brothers, four brothers, kind of standing, sitting all the way right together. What is the purpose for your gatherings, brother? Brother? Brother? Praise the Lord. Okay, praise the Lord—to express the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. I could spend a week right here. I want to spend a week right here. I want to spend a year right here on what it’s like to come into a meeting and see God expressed in His church. It doesn’t happen very often; it won’t happen very much. Having a meeting under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ is rare, but oh, what a glory to Him. And all of this is unto Him. All of this is unto Him. It is not one bit for you. This is why I would put more emphasis on the image and not on the dominion. The dominion will come organically out of the life.

There are two other things here I want to mention to you. I don’t want to leave this, but I will mention to you. One of them is, there’s sonship here. I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but there is sonship. There are only three, I believe, that are called sons of God in Scripture. Help me here. One is angels, and one is Adam, and one is Christ. See, I turn around...let me explain why that’s true. I turn around and I see J.C. Edwards. J.C. Edwards turns around, and he sees Bill Edwards. Bill Edwards turns around, and he sees Steve Edwards. This is true; I know the lineage of my family. Steve Edwards turns around and sees Josiah Edwards. Josiah Edwards turns around and sees Joseph Edwards. Joseph Edwards turns around, and I don’t know what he sees, but he sees his great, great, great granddaddy.

When Jesus Christ turns around, what does He see? What does He see? How did the Father? When the angels turn around, what do they see? Do they see an older grandpa angel? No, no. They turn around, and who do they see? They see God. And when Adam turns around—not Cain—when Cain turns around, who does he see? Adam. But when Adam turns around, who

does he see? God. They're the only three who, when they turn around, they're at the head of their lineage. All they see is God, so they all three carry the term "sons of God." God had a desire to have some sons and daughters. It did not happen because Adam did not take on the genetics, the DNA, of God.

I'm sorry, I've got to come back to image. I just got to come back to image. What did God want when He gave Adam the task of bearing the image of God? He wanted sons of God who would bear forth His image. It could not be done by Adam alone, but by Adam and his family. And together, corporately, they could have shown forth God; it cannot be done by an individual, and Christianity is never going to get anywhere with its individualistic bent.

Now, brothers and sisters, did He ever get what He wanted? Did He ever get what He wanted? Do you realize that in what Adam failed to do, Jesus Christ did do? He was God in bodily form; He was God visible. He could show forth. He can do something you can't do. But He ascended. Do you follow and understand that He ascended, that He is physically not here anymore? Who does it fall to, to bring forth and keep? Who are the keepers of the image of God? It wasn't Peter. It wasn't John. It wasn't James. It was Peter and James and John and Thomas and so forth—but actually, brothers and sisters, it was the Ecclesia in Jerusalem that took over the task, the purpose, of bearing forth the Father's image on this earth, and they did it corporately when He said, "Greater works than these will you do."

See, I, a little boy—I got saved, little boy, 17 years old. I wanted to do greater works than Jesus Christ did. If that wasn't the most stupid, asinine, idiotic, gross thought, but so did every other Baptist preacher I knew. Is that not true? "You shall do greater works" was an address to the body of Christ, not to the individual. That will never be yours. Forget such thinking. And it will be humble, because it will be corporate. No man can possibly stand and survive bearing the image and power of God. It couldn't be done. It would always destroy.

Okay, now come back and say there's sonship here, and we need to find all the glories of sonship. Now there's one other thing left. I want to make sure I didn't leave anything out. By the way, there's this carpet-ness all over this place. There's one other thing. Would you like to make a guess as to what it is? There's one other thing here. What is it? The bride. But we already said there was a woman. That's good. Denise, I'm impressed. Yes, brother. Who said that? Oneness. The chapter ends: "And man and woman, the two shall become one flesh." And the chapter ends with oneness, but it's oneness of flesh, not oneness of spirit. Brothers and sisters, just forget the spirit and forget the flesh, and just know that there is, before the fall, the concept of oneness. Now, where do you figure that came from? Where do you think that idea first originated? It had to originate in the Godhead. Praise the Lord. Now then, when you have oneness, you don't have a man, you don't have a woman. You have an individual made out of two people. You've got an individual made out of two people.

Alright, I think that we're coming now toward the end of a look at the eternal purpose as we can see it on this earth before the fall. We're going to go now and see if we can find all these glorious things in Genesis 1 and 2 and in Revelation 21 and 22. And Denise, do you really

believe that something written 15 or 1600 years later, by someone—this is Moses writing way back here in a desert somewhere—and then all the prophets and teachers, and then Jesus, and then Paul, and then finally the last book in the New Testament, the last two chapters—could possibly, possibly look anything like the first? It's not a reasonable thought, is it? Like the first two chapters? Or do you think that we're going to find in the last two chapters of Revelation what we find in the first two chapters of Genesis? Huh? You do. Yeah, I believe you do too—but is it a reasonable thought to have? Of course, it's not a reasonable thought to have. That'd be like trying to put Shakespeare and Confucius together and some others and find that they all came up with the same conclusion.

Oh well, brothers and sisters, I have not known how to end, how to do this, and I've never in my life done it this way, but this is what I'm going to do. I'm not going to try. I'm just going to read it. I'm just going to read it. Let's see if we can find them. When you find one, if you find one before me, you'd better let me know. Alright, oh, I left out two points. Did I say there's an earth? I've got to go back and say there's an earth. There's earth and land; land, earth, and you find out in Genesis, there's a battle over it. Who's going to win it? You see, the dominion is over this earth. The exercise of dominion is over this earth. There is something in God's eternal purpose that has to do with this planet - with a piece of earth.

Within the Godhead, there is an earth. Who is the ruler? Huh? The Father is the ruler. Does He want to be the ruler? It would appear that He doesn't wish to be the ruler, does it? That He wishes His Son to rule. But there's deference between them both. The deference is there—they give to the other. There is something of God's desire to increase the size of His kingdom rule for Himself, but actually not for Himself, but for His Son—for His Son to rule. And He created a planet where He expected to have His dominion, and He would rule through a man. He would have been happy to rule through Adam. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, Adam would have also had deference—do you understand what I mean? Adam would have deferred back to the Godhead, to the Father.

Well, Adam didn't make it. God still wanted the earth to be ruled by a man. Did Jesus Christ rule on this earth when He was here? Yes, He did. He made the demons obey Him. He had total rule over them. He had total power over taxes—I thought that would get a chuckle—over the seas, the waters, nature. The only time and the only place He didn't was when He chose not to. He came to the very end and said, "I could call down legions of angels right now and end all of this." Satan offered Him the kingdoms of this world. He said, "Keep your kingdoms." The Lord was master wherever He chose to be while He was on this earth.

This planet will yet be ruled. This planet will yet be ruled by the proper One. In the meantime, it is for the church to take a stand on this earth. See, I don't want to get off on this too much right now, but some of you have heard me talk about a colony. You set up a colony in another country, and everything in that little colony looks like the country you came from. Talk about the American colony in Paris. The American colony in Rome. We talked about the English colony in Philadelphia. The Roman colony in Antioch, Pisidia. You go into a Nepalese restaurant in Switzerland—that's where Prem would go if he were in

Switzerland. He'd go to a Nepalese restaurant. He'd go in there, and he'd hear his music, and he'd feel at home. I bet he goes to Indian restaurants all the time when he is in this country. Do you go to Indian restaurants? No, really? Would you go to a Nepalese restaurant if there were one around? Where? Here in Atlanta. In Atlanta, yes. Okay. I would always go to an American restaurant in Europe—get a hamburger, a malt—to keep from going crazy.

Brothers and sisters, we are here to have a colony that says this planet belongs to Him. What's the name of that colony? What's the name of the colony? The church. And there, within that civilization, you bear His image. You walk into the American embassy in Paris, and there'll be a picture of President Bush. Brothers and sisters, when the church assembles, it stands here and says, "We're a colony of heaven. We're waiting for the King to come back and take the piece of land that's His—to take the earth that's His, and here, here is His picture. And here, here is His image. Here is His image." Amen. Well, black folks know how to praise the Lord; white folks can't. Why don't y'all make as much noise as she does? Why don't you clap your hands? Why don't you say, Praise the Lord"? Oh, listen to that pitiful...(laughter).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a" - what? "A bride." There is in Genesis a woman and a man, a husband and a wife. Look at here—we got them again. Made ready as a bride adorned for her—what? Her husband.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them."

Somebody has come back to fellowship in the cool of the day.

"And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be any death, and there shall no longer be any mourning or crying, and the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, Behold, I make a whole new planet, a whole new heaven, a whole new race. Write, for these words are faithful and true, and he said unto me, 'It is done. I am the beginning. In the beginning—I am the beginning and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the springs of the water of life without cost.'" The river's back. Praise the Lord! Everybody in this room, get your mouth open. This is no time to be quiet. You wouldn't be quiet at the second coming, would you? Get your mouth open.

I'm going to read it again: "It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and I will give to the ones who thirst—Christ Himself—the springs of living water without cost. Grace on grace. He who overcomes shall inherit all these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son." Praise the Lord. And for the coward—I'm not even going to read that one. Okay, and here we go to verse 21:9. "And one of the angels who had the seven bowls

and the last plagues came and spoke to me, and he said, 'Come here, and I shall show you the bride.'" Praise the Lord! The one who marries. Brothers, I want to show you the most wonderful verse of Scripture in all the Bible. We're standing on it right now, and it's not what I've read. Genesis ended with oneness, with union. That there is a husband and a bride is not union, because a bride is a married virgin. "*Come up here, and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.*" Praise the Lord! The wife of the Lamb! Praise the Lord! The wife of the Lamb. *Union* between God and man. *Oneness* between God and man. Say Praise the Lord.

"And He carried me away in spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, New Jerusalem." Well, here's New Jerusalem again. What's all this about? And there was a heaven and an earth in Genesis, is that right? And here it says, here comes down something out of heaven from God. What is this? Why is Jerusalem there? There was no Jerusalem in Genesis 1 and 2. "And in it, a great high wall with gates, and at the gates, angels, and the names were written on them, which were the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. And there were three gates on the east and west and north and south. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation—what? Stones. And written on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb of God. And the one who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod of the city and the gates of the wall."

And I'm going to forget all this, but anyway, it says: "And the foundations" – verse nineteen - and the foundations of what? Of the city, "were stones." Did you understand what happened to the river? What happened to the river? They grew the stones, and the stones kept growing, and they became a—what? A city. There is no more a garden. Oh, there is no more a garden! There is, in place of the garden, a great, glorious city that is growing right now. Praise the Lord! And we're sending treasures into it, and He's using those treasures of our spirits to build a city in a garden He took back to the heavens, that He's going to let out of the heavens to come back to earth to build this earth again. And it'll never be a garden. It will be a city, and that city is a woman, made up of living stones, in union and in oneness, with her Lord. Have you seen it? Praise the Lord.

"And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord, the Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple, and the city has no need of sun or moon, for the Lord Himself is the lamp. The Lamb is the lamp. The Lamb is the lamp. And the nations shall walk." And I'm going to have to keep moving here. "And He showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming down from the throne of God and the Lamb."

And God and the Lamb are one, and they sit on the throne together—not as two, but one, and out of the throne comes the life. Brothers, out of the life comes the throne, until finally, out of the throne comes the life. I don't have time to explain to you again what that means; consider it. Okay. "And in the middle of it a street, and there were twelve kinds of fruit, and there was no more any curse. And the throne of God and the Lamb shall be there."

Verse 22:3: "And His bondservants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night, and there shall be no light nor

lamp of the sun, because the Lord God shall illuminate them, and they shall reign forever and ever." And He said, "These words are true." Verse 7, "Behold, I come quickly, and I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And I fell down to worship at his feet, and he said, Don't do that, fellow. Come up here and worship God. And the Spirit and the Bride said, Come. And let everyone who hears say, Come. And let those who are thirsty come. And let those who wish, take the water of life without cost. Let them come. And down at the very bottom, it says, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Let me see if I can explain it to you. Did we do a checklist here? Did we do a checklist? Let's go through it really quickly. Are the sons of God there? The sons are there. Is there a corporateness of God's people there? The entire city is made up of living stones that have been built together out of the river of life. Is the authority there? The authority is there in the throne. Is the image there? The entire city is illuminated by the face of the Son of God, inside of whom is the Lord Jesus, the Father. The entire city is an image of God. For when He stood back from it, He looked at it, and the whole city looked like a jasper stone.

And brothers and sisters, Jasper—the stone Jasper—is the stone of God Himself. When you see that city, you see the image of God. And when the house of God gathers, not now, but ten years from now, and I beg you, brothers who gather in this city, to never lose a commitment to it. I don't care how pitiful your meetings look; at least every once in a while, you can plan a big one. And you can have the Lord's Supper and plan, just in the taking of it, to show forth His glory and His image. You little bitty, bitty people here in Atlanta, Georgia, can show forth God on this earth as a miniature image of the New Jerusalem. The church is a foretaste of that city. You are those living stones. You are going to be built up in this town to show forth the Jasper stone of God.

What else? We had a river. We had the tree. Who eats the tree? The whole city eats the tree. Everything in the city eats the tree and drinks the water. What else? The gold is there, the bdellium is turned to pearl, and the stones are there. I don't have time to go into all this. As I said, we'll spend the rest of our lives going through all of this.

Shall I simply close by telling you that the city comes out at the very center of the throne? The city is a throne, and also on the throne is the Son of God. And within Him is God the Father, who is the light and the lamp. And, brothers, then there is this joining—this incredible, inexplicable, indescribable joining. There is the Father joined to the Son. They sit on the throne.

Flowing from the throne is what? Water. But also, it says, and I didn't have time to look at this, also flowing from the throne is the tree. The tree comes from the throne, and the water comes from the throne. The city comes from the throne. Everything proceeds from Him who sits on the throne. The throne comes from Christ. Christ comes from the Father. Of them, proceeding from it is the water that feeds and makes possible the city, and the tree that feeds, waters it, and gives it drink. And from it, the tree that gives it food. And then the city itself is joined together, one with the other. Every stone fits with the other stones. The

entire city is a great, glorious stone. The pearl is there to let you in. The pearl is the door. The pearl is your Lord who lets you in.

And the gold is there. What's the gold? The gold: it doesn't matter what the gold is. It starts at the throne and goes all over the city. It's one great big street upon which we are carried. It seems to me, brothers, that this divine life we have eaten has become the very way of our life. It is the very street of our life, the very issuing of the way of our life. But it is when you step back and see that you're looking at the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ. We have all joined together, finally. Not just the saints in this town, but the saints in every town. You like that? Okay. Plus, all the saints who used to be in this town. Plus, all the saints that are going to be in this town. Yeah. Plus, all the saints that are in DeKalb. Decatur? Huh? Alright, all over town. Give me another town, Georgia. What other town? Marietta? Don't you have another big town around here? Okay. Gainesville. Is that where you're from, John? Okay, John. All the saints who used to be in Gainesville are in Gainesville and are going to be in Gainesville. Plus, all the saints who used to be in Kathmandu, plus the ones who are in Kathmandu, who are going to be in Kathmandu. And all the saints of the first century in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. We're going to all have a meeting. We don't meet—we don't meet in a meeting. We meet and become...a girl. One great, glorious girl. Amen.

Now we're getting to the eternal purpose. All the saints that used to be, all the saints that are now, and all the saints that are going to be, are going to finally get together. And they're going to become one great, glorious girl. And because this creation has passed away, she's a virgin. Because this creation is gone. She's white and pure. That's you. And there she is—a glorious, glorious, glorious bride. Her name is Jeru—Jerusalem. She's got many parts. See that part right down there? That's me. You see this part right over here? That's you. See this part right over here? That's Paul. You see that part down there? That's my wife, Helen.

One great, glorious girl. She comes down out of the skies. *I saw a multitude that no man could number*, and the heavenly host joined in. And I saw her in spotless white, and she was a virgin, and she's glorious. When I saw her, she looked like a city. She steps forth, robed in white garments, brighter and fuller, and up steps the Lamb. She's perfect. He's flawed. He has a wound right here. We know it's the Lamb, for He had been slain. She came out of that wound. He'll carry that wound forever. It'll be the only imperfect thing in eternity. This is what makes Him Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Nobody else has that scar.

And He takes her—like Adam took Eve—and the two became one flesh. The Lord Jesus takes His bride: All the Old Testament, all the New Testament saints, one glorious, beautiful girl, and lost in light, the two become one. One what? One body, one soul, one spirit—I don't know. They just become one.

And there's nothing left. When you have gathered up all of the new creation into one woman, there's nothing left. There are just her and Him. And then when she and the Lord, and then when the two become one...a moment ago, they were all there was, because that's

all there is in the new creation, but when the two become one, all that is not Christ goes into Christ, and the two are one. And that's all that's left, there is just one. Same place it started. And now He is not one, and He is not all, but He has become one with all there is. *And now He is All in All. And that is God's eternal purpose.*

And if there's anything else that happens after that, it will be this: The Son, who is all in all, will follow His basic nature and go back into the Father, and then the Father shall be All in All.

And I'm here to stand for that on this earth. That's what I'm for. That's what I got out of bed for this morning. That's what I hurt for. That's why I put up with pain. That's why I put up with you. That's why you put up with me.

I can't give this to you again. I give this to a young church. You can get as sloppy as all daylight out if you wish, and you can even forget it, and you can go back to the world, but I'm telling you why you're here. You're here to be evidence of that purpose, and to live out the foretaste of that purpose in this city. Whether I live, if I die this day—that's what you're here for. Forever. And to pass it on to those who care who come after you. And that's what you're in Beaumont for, brother. And if Chicago hears this, that's what you're in Chicago for. And Memphis—if you hear this, this is what you're in Memphis for. And if somebody decides to look at this and you're in Phoenix, Arizona, or you're in Albuquerque, or if you're in Kathmandu, or if you're in Washington, D.C., or Seattle, Washington, or if you're in Cucamonga— these threads all come forth and declare to you: We live unto God for His purpose, and this is His purpose.

I leave you to my Lord. I can't do Him more than this. I used to think I could, but I cannot now. You will be stewards of the mystery, or you will not be stewards of the mystery. I pass on to you the stewardship of the mystery. And when you have been pounced upon, and when it has gotten dry, and when you have suffered all manner of unjustified things, you either will continue to be faithful, or you will not, but that will not be laid at my charge. Brothers, if somebody told me all this when I was 21 years old, I could have saved 10 or 11 years. This is all my heart has been for since my early thirties.

I'm not going to convince you of this again. I'm not going to talk you into serving God. I'm not going to try to talk you into keeping on being a Christian. Brother, now you have to deal with the eternal mind of God, for that which you have been created for, and that which has provoked Him to do all that He has done.

Lord, we bring it to an end and rest it in Your good care. We yield to Your sovereignty. We yield to Your cross. We yield to Your purpose. And we yield to Your Spirit to take care of us and make us strong to be in the heart of God. Amen, Lord. Amen.