

REACHING OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

As Elders

Just because we have been predestined by God does that mean we will automatically reach that eternal destiny? Does God's sovereignty overcome man's apathy and man's responsibility to fulfill God's eternal purpose? If God has predestined us is it His responsibility to see that we fulfill that destiny? These questions have presented theological problems that have been argued for hundreds of years. Some have tried to present a compromise solution that doesn't compromise God's sovereignty OR relieve man of responsibility. God in His sovereignty predestines man according to His eternal purpose without consulting man to see if that destiny is acceptable to man. Man has no say in establishing God's eternal purpose. Man accepts full responsibility to fulfill God's eternal purpose but is totally inadequate and helpless to do anything except as God empowers and enables man. Because man is only dust and can do nothing God has predetermined to come and live in man and by incarnation fulfill His purpose IN man and THROUGH man. Without God man can do nothing or be nothing but dust! God predestines by His sovereignty. Man is still helpless to fulfill! However, man by surrender to God, can be changed by God's indwelling to fulfill His eternal destiny and bring joy to God's heart. This "infilling" and "outworking" is the theme of this study.

God has **predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son.**

ROM 8:28] And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are **called according to His purpose.**

ROM 8:29] For whom He foreknew, **He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,** that He might be the first-born among many brethren; [30] and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

1 COR 2:7] but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory;** [8] the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

EPH 1:5] **He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself,

according to the kind intention of His will,

We haven't been predestined to be saved or lost but to be conformed to the image of His Son. We have been predestined to His glory and also to the adoption as sons. We have been predestined to participate in God's hidden wisdom.

While all this seems rather abstract, by understanding this principle we may add the many scriptures that better defines that eternal purpose. For example we have been predestined to the throne of God but it is the responsibility of man to fulfill that purpose by overcoming as He

overcame. Even though God predestined us it is not automatic but requires the cooperation of man and a degree of consecration to overcome as He overcame.

We have been predestined to become a bride for Christ, the wife of the Lamb. However, we must grow up in all things into Christ and be without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless! Even if man cannot do all that it still does not excuse man because God will work His characteristics into the surrendered and yielded person who will ask, seek and knock. Of course not all will bother with all that because they have some assurance that “they are saved” and will not go to hell. They rejoice in being “saved from” but have little concern for being “saved unto” God’s eternal purpose or His Kingdom.

EPH 1:11] also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will**, [12] to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Since there is but ONE GOD and He has no equals or rivals His will and His way will result in His eternal purpose being completed. Since Satan is a created being he is no rival for God. Since he was created by God he can be destroyed by God anytime God pleases. Since Jesus Christ totally defeated Satan at Calvary and removed all his authority on the earth (over the redeemed) Why didn’t God remove Satan from the earth?

I can imagine a conversation such as this in heaven. God is telling Satan that he is finished and his eternal destiny is already sealed and that he will spend eternity in hell along with all those who follow him. However, God determines that Satan can roam the earth and function in the heavenlies until the bride of Christ is perfected. Once she (the overcomers and manifested sons) is perfected he will be cast into hell. In Rev 12 we see that when the man child (overcomers) are caught up to the throne of God, immediately there is war in heaven and the devil is cast out.

The devil will harass the church to prevent the church from coming to perfection simply for self preservation. If the church is hindered from coming to perfection Satan can prolong his days. Once Satan is cast to the earth he knows that he has only a short time left.

REV 12:12] "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

REV 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, **he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.**

Once the overcomer bride is seated and Satan is cast out he now must harass the church that remains on earth to try to gain a little more time. Of course that “short time” we know will be 7 years.

If Satan would just leave the church alone with no hassle the church would soon become apathetic and backslide. The more he hassles the church the more alert she must be to resist and the more

she grows through conflict. He doesn't understand this any more than he understood about crucifying Jesus. God doesn't owe him an explanation. This hidden wisdom has been predestined for us!

1 COR 2:7] but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; [8] **the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;**

Since God has predestined the perfected church to a higher order than any other created beings in the universe it means that the church must come to a greater perfection than any other created beings in the universe. In fact she has been assigned the task of judging the world and judging the angels. If "redeemed humanity" is as corrupt as the world how could they possibly judge the world in righteousness? If redeemed humanity acts like the angels that rebelled with Satan how could they judge these angels?

The whole social order on earth would soon be totally corrupt if it were not for the functioning church providing salt and light in a decaying world system. If the church would ever cease to function in righteousness the world system would soon collapse in rottenness. As the world system becomes more and more filthy the church must become more and more righteous. If the church becomes apathetic the evidence will be seen in society. God must hold redeemed mankind responsible because God set man on the earth and by His sovereignty assigned man the place of dominion over the earth. Man was created to rule over the earth now and in eternity future God has ordained that the perfected church will rule with Christ over ALL the works of His hands. God has exalted and predestined man to the highest order of beings in the universe and just beneath the sovereignty of the God Head Himself. God created man to be "just a little lower than God." My Bible says "for a little while lower than God."

It should be clear that we are not yet come to that exalted place in God's eternal Kingdom. It should also be clear that God has a tremendous work ahead of Him if He is going to perfect us for that place. The beauty and perfection of that place IS the New Jerusalem which is the bride of Christ and the joy of the whole earth.

Even though we have not yet arrived at that exalted place we are in training FOR that place. Part of our training is in overcoming all the schemes of the evil one and to stand unmovable in Christ. This is the position of the overcomer and the testimony of the remnant church that IS the salt of the earth and the light of the world. At the present time while we see the world slipping into total perversion it is clear that God is raising up a new breed of intercessors and prayer warriors who will stand in the gap for the unconcerned church and act in her behalf. The remnant church that is functioning within the purpose of God is restraining the corruption that is in the world.

2 THES 2:6] And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. [8] And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; [9] that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

When the remnant church is snatched away the Holy Spirit will have no one through which He is able to restrain and the lawless one will be revealed. REV 12:12 Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Since God has assigned the dominion of the earth to man He will not usurp that authority. However, God will work through man to enforce the victory of Calvary upon the world rulers of darkness. It is God in the overcoming church that restrains that evil one. When the overcoming church is taken out the devil will be free to loose a preview of hell upon the earth. This is called the great tribulation. At the end of 7 years the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and His saints will return to execute dominion and judgement upon the earth. The beast and the false prophet will be seized and thrown into the lake of fire. Satan will then be bound for 1000 years during the millennial reign of Christ with His saints upon the earth.

What the first Adam and his wife failed to do , the Last Adam and His wife will fully do.
Then "the man Christ Jesus" and His bride will function in the dominion **and glory** that was given to the first Adam to rule over the earth. While Satan has no God given authority to rule on the earth, the only hindrance to his usurping total control of the earth is the remnant church. Jesus Christ has been given ALL authority over heaven AND earth and therefore Satan has no authority to rule on the earth. The church has been given delegated authority through Jesus Christ to now rule on this earth. We are being trained in rulership now for eternity by enforcing His victory at Calvary on the forces of evil and darkness.

PS 149:5 Let the godly ones exult in glory; Let them sing for joy on their beds. [6] Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, [7] **To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishment on the peoples;** [8] **To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron;** [9] To execute on them the judgment written; **This is an honor for all His godly ones.** Praise the LORD!

God's eternal plan is to bring the sanctified church to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ so that she might be CO-SOVEREIGN with Him. She is to be the fullness of Him who fills all in all. She is to grow up in all things into Christ who is her head. Even though Christ's victory on Calvary is total and finished, God has ordained the enforcement of that victory to the overcoming church. By completing this assignment the church is being developed and trained for eternity. Even though it is very obvious that the bulk of the church is totally unconcerned with this assignment , the remnant church must not and will not fail to complete this victory.

PS 8:1 O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name in all the earth, Who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens! [2] From the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast established strength, **Because of Thine adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.**

The "prayer ministry" of the church is what keeps the church from becoming a "religious treadmill" of ineffective activity that fails to impact God's enemy on earth. "Ye shall receive power" expresses the effectiveness of faith filled prayer. Trying to reach the lost who are citizens

of the kingdom of darkness without effective prayer and proclamation against the enemy that has them bound is just the treadmill of evangelism. We may wonder why so many of those who come to the altar soon return to the darkness. They may have been convinced of their need but never released from the chains that bind them. They may have responded to the gospel but never released from their prison cell. Telling the prisoners “you can go free” is encouraging but if their captor doesn’t release them this remains an empty promise.

ISA 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, **To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;** [2] To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God;

Psa 149 says that it is the saints that execute VENGEANCE upon the nations. We may have interpreted that to mean following the tribulation but Isa 61 says this is all part of preaching the gospel. Does God take vengeance upon Satan by setting his captives free? Then who is He going to use to accomplish this work? The remnant church! To be effective in releasing the prisoners there must be this dual ministry of preaching the Kingdom of God and the prayer ministry of the church that releases the captives.

To preach the “good news” and the year of jubilee without actually releasing the captives through the authority of Christ and His victory at Calvary over the enemy of men’s souls is nice work but ineffective.

Luke 4 :17 And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, [18] "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. **HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN,** [19] TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

To say that we are the people of the anointing is just words unless we actually do what the anointing has sent us to do. Preaching the Kingdom without the ministry of setting people free by releasing them from captivity is ineffective. Teaching the Kingdom to those who are already free is proper ministry but doesn’t add to the church. This is why the “prayer ministry of the church” is absolutely essential to the preaching of the gospel. “These kind only come out with prayer and fasting” is referring to the “prayer ministry of the church.”

Jesus did both ministries of preaching the Kingdom and the prayer ministry of releasing the captives. Before Pentecost the disciples were ineffective in the prayer ministry and ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. After Pentecost they were daily in the temple praying and God was adding to the church daily. Our greatest weakness is effective prayer.

In these last months God has been dealing personally with us over defects in our lives, which was necessary. We have spent many quiet hours, silently communing with God and asking Him to deal with our character etc. These times were certainly not lost. They were foundational but were

ineffective in releasing the captives! I have felt an increase in the anointing to preach to the ones already released. However, our prayer ministry has been ineffective in releasing the captives that are all around us so they can hear the good news. Even though the bulk of our church is not concerned, that cannot be the position of the elders who have to take up the slack left by the unconcerned or uninformed. The burden of this “prayer ministry” has fallen upon us. In other churches they have “intercessor teams” but I have not been able to discern how effective they have been in releasing the captives and telling the prisoners “You can go free.”

It is time that we make the transition from a subjective waiting on God (which is certainly not wrong) to a more offensive ministry of PSA 149:8] **To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; [9] To execute on them the judgment written;**

So that we don’t spend more time treading water let us ask God to teach us how the prayer ministry of this church is designed to work. In other words “Teach us to pray, effectively to complete this ministry You have given us to do.” **This is an honor for all His godly ones.**

Praise the LORD!

Obviously we need to be very familiar with exactly what Jesus accomplished on Calvary and our legal right to enforce that judgement that has been written. PSA 149:9] **To execute on them the judgment written;**

If we don’t know what was written we will certainly be ineffective [8] To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron;

The key to effectively functioning in EPH 6 chapter is in fulfilling Psa 149. It would be quite helpful if God had spelled out exactly how this spiritual warfare works and how we enforce the victory of Calvary. Our only confidence must be if God has called us the Holy Spirit will teach us. What other hope is there?