

Glorification

AN INTRODUCTION

Although the focus of this article is on the glorification of the Saints, it is important that I first distinguish the difference between glorification of the saints and glorification of God.

Of God:

When we speak of the “glory of God” or “God’s glory” we are speaking to God’s inherent perfection in the wholeness of what and who He is. When we speak of the glorification of God, the term “glorification” refers to the fulfillment of glorifying, as His glory is manifested, recognized and honored in creation. In other words, in both the act of glorifying God and the result of His glorification, we as believers – when abiding in accordance to His word – make visible the glory of our invisible God, to those around us.

In glorification of God, we do not give God more glory God Himself does not change. Rather, glorification is the natural and realized result of glorifying. Thus, God being glorified results in God’s glorification. Not because God has become more glorious, entered a glorified state, or undergone any change in His nature. Rather, His eternal glory has been brought to its intended manifestation and acknowledgment within creation.

Of the Saints

When we speak of the glorification of the Saints (believers), the term “glorification” refers to a future event when believers will be adorned, glorified, perfected, and presented in splendor. In this usage, glorification is perhaps among the most profound theological and doctrinal topics and yet it is also one of the most overlooked of Biblical truths. In this context, glorification, in its simplest of terms refers the wedding day of Christ – the groom – and the Church – His bride. As with most wedding days, the focus of Biblical glorification of Saints (believers) is not so much about glorifying the groom, as it is on the glorification of the bride. It is the moment when everything that God has prepared and planned before creation itself finally comes into focus. The focus of the groom and the wedding day is on the bride being revealed, adorned, **glorified, perfected**, and presented in splendor.

Glorification of the saints is essentially the final state of perfected humanity. Glorification is not just honor or exaltation; it is the completion of salvation, where believers are fully conformed to Christ. That includes things like:

- freedom from sin (no remaining corruption)
- full moral and spiritual perfection
- resurrection of the body in incorruptibility
- perfect knowledge of God as far as a creature can possess it

- complete communion with God without hindrance

In this framework, glorification *includes* perfection. **It is not glorification without perfection; perfection is part of what makes it glorification.**

However, a nuance matters:

1. Perfection does not mean “becoming God”

Even in glorification, saints are not perfect in the sense of becoming infinite, omniscient, or equal with God. They remain creatures. Their perfection is *creaturely perfection*—wholeness, maturity, and freedom from sin.

2. Some traditions distinguish “positional” vs “moral” glory

Some theological systems might speak of believers being “glorified” in terms of status (e.g., being honored, raised, or declared righteous) in a more forensic sense. But even there, the *final eschatological glorification* still assumes transformation into a perfected state.

3. Biblical framing

Texts like [Romans 8:30](#) (“those whom He justified He also glorified”) and [1 John 3:2](#) (“we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”) link glorification directly with transformation into Christlikeness. That “likeness” is typically understood as moral and spiritual completion.

Glorification of the saints is not of the saints glory but is instead of Christ’s glory ([John 12:23-24](#), [Acts 1:9-11](#), [Philippians 2:9-11](#), [Hebrews 1:3](#) and [Revelation 5:12-13](#) which envisions a future where all creation will acknowledge Christ’s glory). This is His glory that He by His grace and by His good pleasure, shares with us ([Romans 8:17](#)). This is the heartbeat of glorification – the profound mystery – as it pertains to Christ and His Church ([Genesis 2:24](#), [Matthew 19:5](#), [Ephesians 5:31-32](#)).

There is so much more to glorification than I have included in this introductory summary. Our comprehension – of what God has progressively revealed of it in Scripture – requires immersing ourselves in Scripture. However, the concept of Glorification is not beyond our understanding as God has revealed it to us. I cannot do justice to this subject by attempting to summarize it to single page, but I will try to break it into parts so that those who are interested in this subject – a glorious and exciting subject – can read the things I have found enlightening.

As with all that I write and share, I remind each and every person to take an active role in their faith. While I sincerely appreciate the listening ear, I beg that no one take my word for these things but instead test them to Scripture for themselves. Only God’s word is worthy of your complete trust.

Glorification of the Saints – the Bride – Is Where:

1. The bride is prepared

Just as a bride is made ready, Scripture says believers are made ready for Christ.

- "His bride has made herself ready"
- "Clothed in fine linen, bright and pure"

Glorification is the moment when God completes that preparation.

2. The bride is revealed

A wedding day is the unveiling — the moment the bride steps into the room and everyone rises. Glorification is the unveiling of the sons and daughters of God. Creation has been waiting for that moment.

3. The bride is adorned

A bride doesn't adorn herself with her own beauty — she is *given* beauty. Likewise, glorification is not self-improvement. It is God adorning His people with:

- immortality
 - incorruptibility
 - perfect righteousness
 - perfect union
-

The bride is united with the groom

The wedding day is the moment two become one. Glorification is the moment when:

- the Spirit
- the soul and
- the body

are finally brought into perfect harmony in Christ. No more tension. No more fragmentation. No more "flesh vs. spirit." Everything aligned, everything whole.

5. The day is about the bride's glorification

This is the part most people miss. The wedding day is not about the groom being glorified for He is already glorified. It is about the bride being glorified by the groom's love. Likewise, glorification is God placing His glory on His people. Not because they earned it. But because He loves them.

A simple way to say it: Glorification is the moment when God dresses His people in the fullness of His beauty, just as a groom delights to present his bride in splendor.

In holy union with Christ, the believer will be perfected. The believer will not be imputed with perfection but will instead be conformed to it. We will need not hide in the crevice of a rock or cover our eyes at the sight of God's full glory, but instead we will see God face to face ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). Through Christ's sharing of His glory, His spirit, never again will we be capable of falling short of the glory of God. Never again will we sin and be separated from Him. What glorious wonders await those whom He glorified.

Scripture is shockingly explicit about this, and when we take it seriously, it reshapes how we understand salvation, creation, and the destiny of humanity. It is nothing short of glorious.

Although, Glorification is often taught as being about restoration (as if God will restore believers to a pre-fallen state), Glorification is instead about transformation. It is about a transformation so profound that the Apostle Paul himself could only describe it as becoming a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). This new creation however, is not created ex nihilo. This new creation is created in Christ, meaning it is a participation in His resurrected humanity and holy matrimony between our spirit and His. This distinction is essential for understanding glorification, perfection, and the destiny of redeemed humanity.

The Perfect Nature & Character of God

God's natural attributes form a seamless, interwoven whole that expresses the perfection of His divine nature. They are not isolated traits but mutually reinforcing realities that reveal a God who is complete, coherent, and utterly without contradiction.

God's **aseity** establishes Him as the uncaused cause—the One whose existence is necessary and self-sustaining. Because He depends on nothing, His **immutability** naturally follows: a being who receives nothing from outside Himself cannot be altered by anything outside Himself. This unchanging nature is not static but the fullness of perfect being. His **simplicity** ensures that His attributes are not separate components but identical with His essence. God does not *have* love, power, or knowledge as qualities added to Him; He *is* love, power, and knowledge in one unified act of being.

From this unified essence flows His **eternity**. A God who is pure, unchanging being cannot be subject to temporal succession. Time does not pass for Him; He possesses all moments in a single, indivisible “now.” This eternal

nature harmonizes with His **omniscience**, for a God outside time knows all temporal events without learning or forgetting. His knowledge is not accumulated; it is intrinsic to His eternal being.

God's **omnipresence** and **infinity** work together to express His boundlessness. Because He is not composed of parts or limited by space, He is wholly present everywhere. His presence is not spread thin but fully Himself in every place. This infinite presence pairs naturally with His **omnipotence**. A God who is unlimited in being is also unlimited in power. His Omnibenevolence is not partial, His power is not arbitrary but flows from His perfect nature—He cannot contradict Himself, but He can accomplish all that is consistent with His perfect will.

His **unity** ensures that none of these attributes compete. God's justice does not battle His mercy; His power does not overshadow His goodness; His knowledge does not diminish His relational presence. Instead, each attribute expresses the same perfect essence from a different angle. His **transcendence** and **immanence** illustrate this beautifully: He is above creation in His nature, yet intimately present within it by His sustaining power. He is both infinitely beyond and lovingly near.

Together, these attributes reveal a God who is not merely the greatest being among others but the **perfect**, necessary, self-existent foundation of all reality. His attributes do not merely coexist—they interlock, reinforce, and illuminate one another, forming a harmonious whole that displays **the fullness of divine perfection**.

This is a foundational truth: **God alone is perfect in His being**. This flows from His **aseity**—He exists from Himself, depends on nothing, and receives nothing. He is the fullness of being, the One whose essence is identical with existence. Because God is also **simple**, His attributes are not parts added to Him; He *is* His attributes in perfect unity. He is:

- perfect power
- perfect knowledge
- perfect goodness
- perfect holiness
- perfect love

Perfection is not something God *has*; it is what God *is*.

The guiding principle for how Scripture must be read

The idea that God's attributes never clash with one another is more than a theological footnote — it's a **guiding principle for how Scripture must be read**. When you approach the Bible assuming that God's love, justice, holiness, mercy, wrath, patience, and sovereignty all coexist in perfect unity, you begin to interpret His actions and His words through the lens of **divine harmony rather than human contradiction**.

God is not a composite being made of competing parts. He is **one**, and everything He is flows from that perfect unity. His love is never sentimental in a way that compromises His holiness. His justice is never harsh in a way that diminishes His compassion. His mercy is never indulgent in a way that weakens His righteousness. Every attribute complements the others, forming a coherent and complete picture of who He is.

This matters because Scripture often presents different attributes in different contexts. One passage may emphasize God's judgment, another His tenderness, another His sovereignty, another His nearness. If we treat these as competing truths, we distort the character of God. But when we understand that **every attribute is fully true at all times**, we begin to read Scripture with a deeper sense of coherence. God's actions in history, His dealings with humanity, and His redemptive plan all reflect a nature that is perfectly balanced and utterly consistent.

This harmony also protects us from creating a God in our own image. If we elevate one attribute above the others — love without holiness, justice without mercy, sovereignty without goodness — we end up with a distorted theology. But when we hold all His attributes together, we see a God who is infinitely complex yet perfectly unified, a God whose nature is not fragmented but whole.

In the end, the unity of God's attributes invites us to trust Him more deeply. Because He is never internally conflicted, His actions toward us are never arbitrary. His love is a holy love. His justice is a loving justice. His mercy is a righteous mercy. Everything He does is the expression of **one perfect, infinite, and harmonious God**, and that truth becomes a foundation for both understanding Scripture and knowing Him personally.

Through Scripture, we clearly see not only what God is in regard to His glorious nature – His attributes – but who God is, in His glorious Character, in what He chooses to do. This is important because without understanding who God is in character is to understand God as an impersonal machine, without purpose. and to know God's character without His nature is to know God as capable of thinking and acting with purpose, but without ability. Equally it is important to understand both what and who God is when interpreting Scripture.

Entropy: The Inevitable Fall of Man

The fall of man was an inevitable consequence of God giving man free will. This is not because God caused it to be so, but instead it is because God cannot create that which is equal to – little lone greater – than Himself ex nihilo ([Nehemiah 9:6](#), [2 Samuel 22:32](#)). Not even the greatest angel – that God created ex nihilo – could truthfully claim equality to God. Only God in His perfection is without entropy. Only God's promises and teachings are flawless and proven true. Only His ways are just, free from injustice or partiality, and always consistent with His nature. God's nature is love, mercy, and truth (in mention of but only a few), qualities that are not merely attributes of God but His very essence of perfection. God alone is unchanging perfection. ([Numbers 23:19](#), [Mark 10:18](#), [Psalm 18:30](#), [2 Samuel 22:31](#), [Deuteronomy 32:4](#), [1 Corinthians 1:9](#), etc...)

God cannot create another God, because:

- a created being would depend on God
- a created being would have a beginning
- a created being would have potentiality and thus, entropy
- a created being would not be identical with its own essence

A being with these characteristics cannot be perfect in the way God is perfect.

Thus, **God cannot create an equal or greater being**, not because of a limitation in God, but because of the logical impossibility of a “created uncreated being.”

The Only Way for God to Create Something Perfect Is to Create Something “of” Himself

If God creates something **from nothing**, it is necessarily finite and imperfect. But if God creates something **from Himself**, it shares His nature. This is why:

- The **Son** is eternally begotten of the Father (**eternal generation**).
- The **Spirit** eternally proceeds (**procession**).

These are not acts of creation. They are acts of **eternal self-communication** within the divine essence. The Son and Spirit are:

- Uncreated
- infinite
- perfect
- immutable
- simple
- eternal

Because they are **of God**, not **made by God**. Thus:

God can only produce perfection by communicating His own essence, not by creating something outside Himself.

This is why the Trinity is the only “perfect plurality” in existence.

Perfect Purpose and Perfect Plan

God is Omniscient, He does not guess or anticipate but instead He knows all things past, present and future. He knows all possible realities, both created and uncreated. God knew when, where, how, and why Man would fall to sin. God is a God of purpose, a God of plans and – before creation itself – God had both a purpose and a plan for:

1. The creation of Man (created ex nihilo, created very good but not perfect as per God is perfect)
2. The fall of Man
3. The redemption of Man (through faith in Christ)
4. The glorification of Man (the perfection of man through unification and conforming of believers in Christ. Christ becomes our perfection)

The intent is for all to be glorified

God can sovereignly plan creation and glorification without intending, causing, or determining anyone’s rejection of Him, even though He foreknows that some will freely choose it.

As an analogy:

- A parent gives their teenager a car knowing that driving is essential for growth, maturity, and future independence. The parent also knows—based on experience and statistics—that the teen will likely make mistakes.
- The parent’s *intent* is the teen’s development. The parent’s *permission* allows the possibility of accidents. The parent’s *foreknowledge* does not cause the accidents. Neither, by any stretch of the imagination does it imply that the parents intended the accidents.
- Likewise, God’s intent is human glorification. His permission allows free will. His foreknowledge does not cause rejection nor does it mean that God intended that anyone should reject Him.

This preserves God’s goodness, sovereignty, and desire for all to be saved while maintaining genuine human freedom.

How this fits with Predestination

In the event that one should ask how does “Predestining” fit into this analogy I would simply answer that the Biblical context of predestining speaks to predetermining the resulting destiny of an action. For example, if the teenager makes the right decisions when driving, then the teenager is predestined to receive reward. Conversely, if the teenager makes a wrong decision, then they are predestined to receive some form of penalty. Again, the parents could be said to have given potential for the teenager to make a wrong choice, but their intent would be that the child make the right decision and receive the predestined reward. Regardless, it is teenagers choice that determines if they are to receive the reward or the penalty that the parents predestined.

Predetermining on the other hand when used in context of predetermining – as in this analogy – the choice and action of the teenager is simply unbiblical and such concepts do not fit contextually and or progressively – intact – throughout all Scripture.

The parent-and-teenager analogy illustrates a key distinction:

- **Foreknowledge** (the parent knows accidents are likely)
- **Intention** (the parent does not *want* or *plan* the accidents)
- **Causation** (the parent does not *cause* the accidents)
- **Permission** (the parent allows the teen to drive because driving is part of growing into maturity)
- **Predestination** (Right choices and actions are destined to reward, Wrong choices and actions are destined to penalty)

This maps closely to the theological categories of **free will**, **foreknowledge**, and **divine permission**.

How this fits within Glorification

1. **God’s intent: universal repentance** : Scripture repeatedly affirms that God’s desire is that all should come to repentance and share in glorification. This supports the claim that rejection is not God’s intention.

2. **God’s plan: creation → fall → redemption → glorification**. In this framework, the fall is not the *goal* but the *context* in which God’s redemptive glory is revealed. This means:

- The fall is foreknown
- The fall is incorporated into God’s plan
- The fall is not *caused* by God
- Human freedom remains real

3. **Human free will: the capacity to do otherwise**. If God genuinely gives humans free will, then humans can choose something **other than what God desires**. This is exactly what the analogy captures: The parent’s will is for safety and maturity, but the teen’s free choices can diverge from that will.

This preserves God's goodness, sovereignty, and desire for all to be saved while maintaining genuine human freedom. The real tension isn't between **foreknowledge** and **free will**—those can coexist. The deeper tension is between **God's will of desire** (what He wants) and **God's will of permission** (what He allows for the sake of a greater good).

With all this said however, it is not to say that what God creates ex nihilo is flawed or that it is not perfect in accordance with His purposes and plans.

Before the beginning of time itself, God had elected (chosen) Himself to become flesh and to pay the price that His justice demanded for the sins of the human inhabitants of this world. God's plan was not merely to restore mankind to a pre-fallen state so that the same inevitable consequence could be repeated. Instead, God's plan was to use the fall as the means to create a new creation, to transform that which was created ex nihilo and at its best was very good, into that which will be perfect. A transforming power that is not merely an imputation or putative state of perfection but instead an event of glorification in conforming the bride (the Church) to the image and inseparable love of Christ – the Bridegroom ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

This is the mystery Paul describes in [Ephesians 5:31–32](#): the future union of two free, though unequal, partners and where the two become one in a covenant of love ([Romans 8:9](#)). This process of transformation should not be understood as a blending of the divine and the human, nor as the loss of distinction between them. Even the phrase "one flesh" does not imply that either person loses his or her individual identity. A man does not become a woman, nor a woman a man when united as one in holy matrimony. This transformation does not mean that we will become Christ, that we will become God, gods or goddesses. There is only one God and there will never be another.

While we know that God has created all that has been created, we know not the technical details of how He created, [Job 38:2-41](#). Likewise, neither may we comprehend – certainly I do not – the technical details of how God will transform believers into a new creation, but God says that He will. Scripture clearly says that which was created very good, that which fell to sin, that which was separated from God, that which was redeemed by Christ, that which is being perfected will become a new creation. A new creation inseparable from God, perfected and glorified in Christ. This is not a plan B instituted after the fall of man, but instead this is the plan and always has been the plan that God instituted before creation itself. This is the plan, this the why it was necessary, that for a little while, we are created a little lower than the angels. So that there will come a time when we as believers will become greater than the angels. Where we will have a perfection that will allow us to draw closer to our perfect God than would otherwise be possible – even for the angels. In our glorification, we will experience the glory of God beyond anything even the angels could begin to imagine.

What is Perfection?

The English word "perfection" found in some translations of the New Testament (see [Ephesians 4:13 ESV](#) vs [Ephesians 4:13 KJV](#)) is translated from the Greek word "telios", identified in the Strong's Concordance as G5046. The Strong's concordance defines the word as: **complete** (in various

applications of labor growth mental and moral character etc.); neuter (as noun with G3588) **completeness**: – of full age man perfect.

Thayer's Definition includes: brought to its end, finished. Wanting nothing necessary to completeness (Lacking nothing) . Perfect, that which is perfect, consummate human integrity and virtue of men, full grown, adult, of full age, mature.

When God saw everything that He had made, He said it was "very good" ([Genesis 1:31](#)). God did not say it was perfect and this is because it was created ex nihilo and could not be perfect. If Adam and Eve were perfect then they would have wanted nothing necessary to completeness – perfection. However, when Eve saw the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desired to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate ([Genesis 3:6 ESV](#)). Eve was therefore wanting something necessary to completeness, to perfection. Now it was not a sin for Eve to desire to be like God, else we would have to say Eve sinned even before eating the forbidden fruit. Furthermore, if desiring to be like God is a sin then every Christian that desires to be like Christ must too be guilty of sin. Disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit that God had commanded Adam and Eve not eat of, was the sin. A wrongful act that a perfect being would not engage in, because a perfect being would be unable to do anything unrighteous.

In its classical sense, the English word "perfect" also means "complete" or "lacking nothing." We can understand perfection conceptually, but we may not be able to measure it fully in practice. It is easier to recognize imperfection by imagining something better; but if we cannot imagine an improvement, how can we know whether the object is truly perfect or whether our imagination is simply limited? In nearly every complex case, only God has the necessary middle knowledge—the full range of "what ifs"—to declare something perfect with certainty.

Perfection of the Saints in Glorification

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that God is the God of glory, that Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory, and that God will share His glory with His children through glorification. Salvation, already begun in the present, will reach its fulfillment in eschatological glory.

One important New Testament theme is perfection, though it is often neglected. Several related Greek terms—teleiotes, teleiosis, teleo, and teleios—help frame this idea. In brief, the motif of perfection may be outlined as follows:

- God has an intended goal (telos) for His people.
- That goal includes the perfection (teleios) of the individual believer.
- This requires a perfecter (teleiotes) who must Himself be perfected and so become perfect.

- In this way, He can perfect (teleo) those who come to God and bring them to perfection (teleios).

In this life, “perfection” refers to spiritual, moral, and doctrinal maturity. In the life to come, it also refers to the completion of salvation. In this way, God’s intended purpose (telos) reaches its fulfillment.

Useful material on perfection is relatively scarce, largely because debate over the extent of sanctification in this life often overshadows the subject. As a result, perfection as a dimension of salvation—and as an eschatological theme—is frequently neglected. Yet the theme presents God’s goal (telos) for His people: through the Perfecter, believers grow into spiritual, moral, and doctrinal maturity in this life and reach the completion of salvation in the life to come.

The doctrine of perfection may be summarized as follows:

- Having been perfected through His own experience (see Hebrews), Christ is both the Perfecter of believers and their perfection. He is the leader (arxegos) of believers because He first attained perfection ([Hebrews 2:10](#)). He did so by entering fully into the conditions of human existence ([Hebrews 2:12–18](#)), learning obedience through suffering ([Hebrews 5:7–10](#)), and finally enduring death itself. Raised from the dead, He stands as the perfect fulfillment of all that the Old Testament promised: the true and perfect Moses, Aaron, priest, temple, sacrifice for sin, and Savior of all who come to God through Him.
- In this life, Christ gives believers His perfection while also calling them to maturity. His bestowed perfection is equivalent to salvation (soteria; [Hebrews 2:10](#); [5:9](#)), so in this sense Christ Himself is the perfection of believers. As the perfect One present in both the believer and the Church, He leads His people toward glory by calling them to faith and growth in Christian maturity. Yet this present growth points forward to a future, completed perfection. For that reason, passages such as [Philippians 3:12](#) and [Hebrews 10:14](#) anticipate the character of final glorification.
- In the ages to come, maturity gives way to full perfection. This belongs to the structure of glorification, and in that sense perfection and glorification coincide. [John 17:23](#) and [Hebrews 2:10](#) both point to this final completion, in which believers are brought into perfected unity and glory through Christ.

The Pre-fallen State

The **body** led by the **soul**, the **soul** led by the **spirit** and the **spirit** led by **God**

Creation Was Never the Final Goal—It Was the Beginning of a Process

Scripture never presents the original creation as the *end* of God’s plan. Instead, it presents creation as the **starting point** of a divine process leading to glorification. Paul writes: “[The creation itself will be set free... into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.](#)” — [Romans 8:21](#). Creation was designed to move **toward** something—the **glory of redeemed humanity**. This means:

- Eden was not the final state
- Adam was not the final man
- The first creation was not the final creation

Creation was the **arena** in which God would bring about the perfection of His people *in Christ*. This aligns with the doctrine of **teleology**—God creates with an end in mind.

God Created Man “in His Image,” Not “of His Essence”

Genesis 1:26: “Let us make man **in our image, after our likeness**”. Man is created in God’s image, not of God’s essence. This distinction is crucial:

- God is uncreated, infinite, perfect
- Man is created, finite, and mutable

This aligns with the doctrine of aseity: only God is self-existent. Thus, Adam was:

- good
- upright
- holy

but Adam was **not perfect in the divine sense**. Adam reflected God, but he did not **share** God’s essence. This means Adam had:

- free will
- potentiality
- mutability

And where there is potentiality, there is the possibility of entropy—moral or spiritual decline.

Free Will Introduces Potentiality, and Potentiality Makes the Fall Inevitable

A being with free will must have the capacity to choose. This means such a being has **potentiality**. Potentiality is the opposite of God’s nature, for God is **pure act** (*actus purus*). Adam’s potentiality meant:

- he could choose good
- he could choose evil
- he could grow
- he could fall

Thus, the fall was not an accident—it was a **metaphysical possibility inherent in creatureliness**. This is why Paul writes:

“In Adam all die.” — *1 Corinthians 15:22*

Adam’s fall was not merely moral; it was the outworking of the fact that **created free beings are not perfect**.

The Fallen State

The **spirit** led by the **soul**, the **soul** led by the **body** and the **body** led by the **world**

The Fall Was Foreknown and Incorporated Into God's Redemptive Plan

Scripture teaches that Christ's redemptive work was planned **before creation**:

- "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." — [Revelation 13:8](#)
- "He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**." — [Ephesians 1:4](#)

This means:

- God knew Adam would fall
- God planned redemption before creation
- Creation was designed with the incarnation in view

The fall did not derail God's plan—it **activated** it.

The Redeemed State

The **body** led by the **soul**, the **soul** led by the **spirit** and the **spirit** led by **Holy Spirit**

God's Plan Was to Become Incarnate and Bear Man's Punishment

The incarnation was not Plan B. It was the **centerpiece** of God's eternal purpose.

- "The Word became flesh." — [John 1:14](#)
- "He bore our sins in His body on the tree." — [1 Peter 2:24](#)

Christ became:

- fully human
- in the likeness of sinful flesh ([Romans 8:3](#))
- yet without sin

This reveals the harmony of God's **justice** and **love**:

- Justice: sin must be punished
- Love: God Himself bears the punishment

The cross is where God's attributes meet in perfect unity.

Believers Are Imputed With Christ's Righteousness in This Life

Justification is **imputed righteousness**: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." — *2 Corinthians 5:21*

This righteousness is:

- legal,
- forensic,
- declarative,
- complete

But it is not yet **transformative perfection**. Believers still sin, still struggle, still groan (*Rom 8:23*).

Thus, imputation is the **beginning**, not the end.

The Glorified State of the Saints

The **body**, the **soul** and the **spirit** – not just led – but **glorified, perfected** and **united in Christ**

Glorification Is the Final Step—Perfection “In Christ”

At the resurrection or rapture, believers are **glorified**: "Those He justified, He also glorified."
— *Romans 8:30*

Glorification includes:

- removal of the sin nature
- transformation of the body (*1 Corinthians 15:52–54*)
- perfection of the will (*1 John 3:9*)
- inability to fall (*Jude 24*)
- eternal union with Christ (*Romans 8:39*)

This is not merely imputed righteousness. It is **imparted, shared, participatory** righteousness.

Believers become:

- incorruptible
- immortal
- sinless
- perfected

Not by nature, but by **union with Christ**.

Glorification Is Participation in Christ's Life—Not Creation of a Perfect Creature

God cannot create perfection from nothing. But He can **communicate** perfection from Himself. However, a being created ex nihilo could never be capable of receiving God's perfection – His full glory. **In order for this to happen God had to create a being capable of natural death so that Christ could become the image of that being and in turn redeemed beings could become in the image of Christ.** With this understanding we better grasp why our God – a God of purpose – purposed to do as He has done. This is why glorification is described as: "[Christ in you, the hope of glory.](#)" — [Colossians 1:27](#)

Believers are:

- "partakers of the divine nature" ([2 Peter 1:4](#))
- "conformed to the image of His Son" ([Romans 8:29](#))
- "like Him" ([1 John 3:2](#))

This is not becoming God. It is **sharing in Christ's resurrected humanity**.

Glorified Saints See God in a Way Angels Cannot

Jesus said: "Their angels always behold the face of My Father." — [Matthew 18:10](#)

Angels see God—but not in the same way glorified believers will.

Believers will see:

- "God face to face." — [1 Corinthians 13:12](#)
- "We shall see Him as He is." — [1 John 3:2](#)

This is the **beatific vision**, something angels do not experience in the same mode because:

- angels are not united to Christ
- angels are not redeemed
- angels are not adopted as sons
- angels do not share Christ's resurrected life

Believers will behold God **in Christ**, sharing the Son's own relationship with the Father.

Summary: Creation Was the Beginning of God's Plan to Perfect Humanity in Christ

Why Glorification Produces True, Eternal Perfection

- God cannot create perfection **from nothing**.
- But God can perfect a creature **by uniting it to Himself in Christ**.
- Glorification is not creation; it is **participation**.

- The believer's perfection is **derivative**, **dependent**, and **eternally upheld**.
- This perfection removes all potentiality for sin.
- Therefore, glorified believers can never fall, sin, or be separated from God.

This is the only metaphysically coherent way for a creature to become perfect.

Putting it all together:

- God created man in His image, not His essence
- Free will introduced potentiality
- Potentiality made the fall inevitable
- The fall activated God's eternal plan
- God became incarnate to bear man's punishment
- Believers are justified by imputation
- Believers are glorified by participation
- Glorification perfects the believer in union with Christ
- This perfection is eternal, sinless
- and unbreakable
- Glorified believers see God in a way angels cannot

Thus: **Creation was never the end. Glorification of the Saints in Christ was always the goal.**

Reflection

Throughout this introductory section we have proposed that the Bible is not merely a collection of historical events, moral lessons, or independent doctrines. Rather, it records the progressive unfolding of God's eternal purpose. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture reveals one continuous story centered upon Jesus Christ and culminating in the glorification of redeemed humanity.

The Old and New Testaments consistently present God as the **God of Glory**, Jesus Christ as the **Lord of Glory**, and believers as those who are called to share in His glory. Salvation therefore extends beyond forgiveness and justification. It is the gracious work by which God prepares His people for the glory He has purposed for them in His Son.

This introduces one of the great but often overlooked themes of Scripture: **perfection**.

The New Testament repeatedly employs words derived from the Greek root **telos**, meaning *end*, *goal*, *purpose*, or *completion*. From this family of words we learn several foundational truths:

- God has established an eternal purpose (**telos**) for His people.
- That purpose culminates in their perfection (**teleios**).
- Such perfection requires a Perfecter (**teleiotes**) who Himself must complete the work entrusted to Him.

- Having been perfected through His earthly mission, Jesus Christ now perfects those who come unto God through Him.

Perfection therefore belongs to both the present and the future.

Today believers grow toward spiritual, moral, and doctrinal maturity.

Tomorrow they shall be perfected in glory.

This distinction will guide the remainder of this work as we follow God's purpose from creation to its glorious consummation.

Key Takeaways

- Scripture tells one continuous story and reveals one unified purpose from Genesis to Revelation.
- Creation, the fall, redemption, and glorification are not isolated doctrines but successive stages in God's eternal purpose.
- God's ultimate purpose centers upon and is revealed in Jesus Christ.
- Salvation prepares believers for glorification.
- God's eternal goal (**telos**) is the perfection of His redeemed people.
- Christ is the believers savior and both the Perfecter and the believer's perfection.

Looking Ahead

If God's purpose unfolds progressively, we must begin where Scripture begins—with creation itself.

THE LANGUAGE OF CREATION

Before examining the creation of mankind, it is important to understand that the opening chapters of Genesis employ several different Hebrew words to describe God's creative activity. Although our English Bibles often translate these words as *create*, *make*, *form*, or *build*, they are not necessarily synonymous. Each carries its own nuance and contributes to our understanding of the creation account.

Whether these distinctions indicate differences in chronology, method, purpose, function, or emphasis must ultimately be determined by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. Therefore, before drawing theological conclusions from Genesis, one should first understand how these words are used throughout the creation narrative.

Created (*bara* — בָּרָא | Strong's H1254)

The Hebrew word **bara** is translated **create** and is used exclusively of God throughout the Old Testament. It describes God's unique creative activity and frequently carries the idea of bringing into existence something new and unique.

Some understand **bara** to refer exclusively to creation *ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing), while others recognize that Scripture also uses the word to describe God bringing forth something entirely new from material He had previously created. Regardless of one's position, the emphasis remains the same: **bara** highlights the uniqueness of what God creates rather than the process by which He creates it.

This distinction becomes important because Moses does **not** use **bara** to describe every creative act recorded in Genesis. Instead, he reserves it for only certain acts of creation, suggesting that he intentionally distinguishes **bara** from the other Hebrew words he employs.

Made (*asah* — עָשָׂה | Strong's H6213)

The Hebrew word **asah** is most commonly translated **made**, although its range of meaning is considerably broader. Depending upon the context, it may mean:

- to make
- to do
- to accomplish
- to prepare
- to appoint
- to ordain
- to establish
- to produce

Unlike **bara**, which emphasizes God's unique creative activity, **asah** frequently emphasizes the ordering, appointing, preparing, or accomplishing of God's purposes.

Throughout Genesis, **asah** occurs far more frequently than **bara**, making it one of the principal words used to describe God's work during the six days of creation.

Formed (*yatsar* — יָצַר | Strong's H3335)

The Hebrew word **yatsar** means **to form**, **to fashion**, or **to shape**. It is the word commonly used of a potter shaping clay into a vessel.

Rather than emphasizing origination, **yatsar** emphasizes careful workmanship, design, and purpose. It conveys the picture of an artisan skillfully shaping something according to a predetermined plan.

This word first appears in relation to mankind when Genesis records: "[Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground...](#)" ([Genesis 2:7, ESV](#)).

The imagery is striking. Adam is not simply said to be created; he is **formed** from the dust of the ground, emphasizing God's personal workmanship in preparing the physical body of man.

Built (*banah* — בָּנָה | Strong's H1129)

The Hebrew word **banah** means **to build**, **to construct**, or **to establish**. Throughout the Old Testament it is commonly used of building:

- houses,
- cities,
- altars,
- kingdoms,
- and families.

Its first appearance in relation to mankind occurs in [Genesis 2:22](#): "[And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman...](#)" (ESV).

The English word **made** unfortunately obscures the Hebrew. Moses does not use **bara**, **asah**, or **yatsar**. He deliberately uses **banah**. Literally rendered, the verse reads: "[And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He built into a woman.](#)"

This distinction is noteworthy because Eve is neither said to have been created (*bara*) nor formed (*yatsar*), but rather **built** (*banah*) from that which God had previously taken from Adam.

The Importance of These Distinctions

At first glance, these four Hebrew words may appear to be little more than stylistic variations. Many commentators simply treat them as interchangeable descriptions of God's creative activity. However, the opening chapters of Genesis suggest otherwise.

Moses consistently employs these words in deliberate contexts. Certain things are **created** (*bara*), others are **made** (*asah*), Adam is **formed** (*yatsar*), and Eve is **built** (*banah*). Such consistent distinctions naturally invite the reader to ask whether the Holy Spirit intentionally chose these words to communicate different aspects of God's creative work.

This observation does not, by itself, establish a doctrine. Nor should we force meanings upon the text that Scripture itself does not support. At the same time, neither should we dismiss these distinctions as insignificant before allowing Genesis to speak for itself.

Allowing Genesis to Interpret Genesis

Rather than beginning with theological conclusions, we should first allow the creation account itself to unfold. As the creation account unfolds, the repeated use of these four Hebrew words begins to form recognizable patterns. Those patterns, in turn, provide an important foundation for understanding not only the creation account itself, but ultimately the unique creation of mankind in the image of God.

THE PATTERN OF CREATION

Having established the distinction between the Hebrew words **bara** (create), **asah** (make), **yatsar** (form), and **banah** (build), we can now examine how Moses actually employs these words throughout the creation account. One of the fundamental principles of sound biblical interpretation is that **Scripture must be allowed to interpret Scripture**. Therefore, before asking *why* Moses chose these particular words, we should first observe *where* and *how* he uses them.

As we carefully work through the six days of creation, an unmistakable pattern begins to emerge.

The Beginning

Taking Genesis at face value of its sequential order, Genesis opens with one of the most familiar verses in all of Scripture: *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* (Genesis 1:1, ESV). Here Moses uses the Hebrew word **bara**. This opening declaration records God's initial act of creation, God created:

- **the heavens and**
- **the earth**

This establishes God as the Creator of everything that follows. Nothing exists apart from Him. He alone is the source of all creation. The earth is then described as: *"...without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."* (Genesis 1:2, ESV). Already we see that although God has **created** the heavens and the earth, the earth has not yet been ordered or prepared for life. Much of what follows during the six days involves God bringing order, purpose, and function to that which He has already created.

Day One — Light

God's first recorded command is: **"Let there be light."** Notice that Moses does **not** say that God **created** light. Nor does he say that God **made** light. Instead, God simply speaks, and light appears.

God then separates the light from the darkness and names them Day and Night.

This immediately raises an interesting observation. If Moses intended **bara** to describe every new thing that came into existence, one might naturally expect light to be described as being created. Yet the text deliberately refrains from using **bara**. Therefore, this verse may be understood in one of two ways:

First, God may have been commanding the manifestation of the electromagnetic radiation (light) that had already been created when He created **"the heavens and the earth"** *ex nihilo* in [Genesis 1:1](#). If this understanding is correct, then the stars, planets, sun, and moon may likewise have already existed, although their light had not yet become visible from the surface of the earth—perhaps because the earth's dense atmosphere initially prevented that light from penetrating to the surface. In this view, God's command, **"Let there be light,"** is not the creation of light itself but its appearance or manifestation upon the earth.

Second, the statement may also refer to the manifestation of the uncreated presence of God Himself. Genesis records that, before God spoke, **"...darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"** ([Genesis 1:2](#)). God's command, **"Let there be light,"** may therefore signify the manifestation of His own glorious presence, the radiance of His glory illuminating the darkness that covered the earth. Throughout Scripture, God's presence is repeatedly associated with light ([Psalm 104:2](#); [John 1:4–9](#); [1 John 1:5](#); [Revelation 21:23](#)).

Personally, I do not believe these two interpretations are necessarily mutually exclusive. They may both be true, giving the command **"Let there be light"** both a physical and a theological significance. God may have simultaneously caused physical light to become manifest upon the earth while also revealing the radiance of His own glorious presence.

This understanding also harmonizes with a broader pattern that begins to emerge throughout [Genesis 1](#) and [2](#). Repeatedly, God says **"Let..."**—*"Let there be light," "Let there be an expanse," "Let the waters... be gathered together," "Let the earth sprout vegetation," "Let the waters swarm,"* and *"Let the earth bring forth."*

In many of these instances, the emphasis appears not to be upon the initial creation of something *ex nihilo*, but upon God sovereignly ordaining, appointing, or causing that which already exists to become manifest, functional, or productive according to His divine purpose.

However, rather than drawing conclusions prematurely, I am – at this stage – simply noting the distinction and suggest allowing the creation narrative to unfold.

Day Two — The Expanse

God next declares: “[Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters...](#)”. Genesis then records: “[And God made the expanse...](#)”.

Here Moses uses **asah**, not **bara**. God separates the waters above from the waters below and calls the expanse Heaven. Again, something is **made**, not **created**.

Some Christian apologists have proposed that, prior to the separation of the waters described in Genesis, the earth’s atmosphere may have contained a substantial canopy of water vapor. According to this interpretation, the canopy originated from the waters already present upon the earth and may have been dense enough to obscure the sun, moon, and stars from view, despite their having already been created in [Genesis 1:1](#). Some advocates of this view also suggest that such an atmospheric condition may have influenced the earth’s climate and gravitational dynamics, potentially affecting tidal cycles and contributing to ocean levels so high that dry land had not yet appeared.

Day Three — Dry Land and Vegetation

God’s subsequent separation of the waters—placing some within the atmosphere as clouds—may have, by His sovereign design, allowed the winds to disperse them. According to this understanding, the gradual clearing of the atmosphere could have permitted the sun and moon to exert their gravitational influence more fully upon the earth’s waters, potentially contributing to the retreat of the seas and the exposure of the dry land described in [Genesis 1:9–10](#).

Notice once again God’s deliberate use of the command: “[Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.](#)”

The text does not say that God **created** the dry land at this point. Rather, He commands it to **appear**. This suggests that the land already existed beneath the waters but had not yet been made visible. Only after the waters were gathered together did the dry land become manifest.

By this point in the creation account, a recognizable pattern begins to emerge. Just as God had previously commanded, “**Let there be light,**” He now commands, “**Let the dry land appear.**” In neither instance does the text explicitly describe the creation of the object itself at that moment. Instead, God’s command appears to bring into view—or make manifest—that which had previously been brought into existence but had not yet been observable from the earth’s surface.

As the creation narrative continues, this pattern is repeated several times. Whenever God issues a command beginning with “**Let...**”—whether, “[Let there be...](#)”, “[Let...appear,](#)” or “[Let...bring forth](#)”—the emphasis frequently appears to be not upon creating something *ex nihilo*, but upon God sovereignly ordaining, appointing, or causing something that already exists to become manifest, functional, or productive according to His divine purpose. This recurring pattern becomes increasingly significant as we continue through [Genesis 1](#) and [2](#).

God then commands: “[Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit...](#)” Again, Moses does not use **bara**. The earth itself is commanded to bring forth vegetation according to God’s command. It is also noteworthy that vegetation is not described as being **created** in this passage. If the pattern observed thus far is intentional, it may suggest that, like the dry land which already existed beneath the waters before being commanded to appear, the vegetation likewise already existed within the earth as part of God’s original creation recorded in [Genesis 1:1](#). God’s command, therefore, was not necessarily to create vegetation at that moment, but to cause the earth to bring it forth and make it manifest according to His sovereign purpose.

Notice the progression that is beginning to emerge. Light is commanded to appear, not created. Dry land is commanded to appear, not created. Vegetation is commanded to spring forth from the earth, not created. In each case, God’s command beginning with “[Let...](#)” appears to **make manifest** that which had already been created or prepared, rather than describing a new act of creation *ex nihilo*. The emphasis continues to be upon God’s sovereign word bringing order and productivity to His creation. Whether this pattern is intentional must ultimately be determined by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, but by this point it is becoming increasingly difficult to dismiss it as mere coincidence.

Day Four — The Heavenly Lights

God declares: “[Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens...](#)”

These lights are given specific purposes:

-
- to separate day from night,
- to serve as signs,
- for seasons,
- for days,
- and for years.

Genesis then records: “[And God made the two great lights...](#)”. Again, Moses chooses **asah**. The sun and moon are **made**, not **created**. He likewise records that God made the stars. Their purpose is emphasized more than their origin. They are **appointed** to govern the day and the night and to give light upon the earth.

Day Five — Fish and Birds

It is not until the fifth day that Moses again uses the Hebrew word **bara**. Genesis records: “[So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm... and every winged bird according to its kind.](#)” ([Genesis 1:21, ESV](#))

This is highly significant. For the first time since [Genesis 1:1](#), living creatures are specifically said to be **created** (*bara*). Moreover, they are described as **living creatures** (*nephesh chayyah*). This marks an important transition within the creation account. Plants possess biological life, yet they are never described as *nephesh*. Fish and birds are the first creatures specifically identified in this way.

Any introductory biology text will attest that fish and birds, like all living organisms, are composed of the same basic elements found within the earth—primarily carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, calcium, and other naturally occurring elements. From a biblical perspective, these elements were all part of the material universe God created *ex nihilo* in [Genesis 1:1](#). One might therefore expect Moses simply to write, “**God made the fish and birds,**” just as he later writes, “**God made the beasts of the earth.**” Instead, Genesis deliberately states, “**God created the great sea creatures... and every winged bird...**” Although their material composition was not new, the fish and birds themselves are presented as a new and unique act of God’s creative work.

If the pattern we have observed thus far is intentional, the significance appears to lie not in their physical composition but in the introduction of something fundamentally new into creation. Fish and birds are the first beings presented as **living creatures** (*nephesh chayyah*)—the first creatures possessing both a physical body and a living soul.

This observation also helps explain the language Moses employs on the sixth day. When God later brings forth the land animals, Moses no longer says that He **created** them but that He **made** them ([Genesis 1:25](#)), even though they too are described as **living creatures** (*nephesh chayyah*). If this pattern is indeed intentional, it may indicate that the truly new element introduced on the fifth day was not the material from which these creatures were composed, but the introduction of animal life itself. The land animals would then be understood as being **made** according to that already established pattern, just as the vegetation had been brought forth from the earth according to God’s prior creative work.

This observation should not be overlooked, for it becomes increasingly significant as the creation narrative unfolds.

Day Six — The Land Animals

On the sixth day God declares: “[Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds...](#)”. Genesis then records: “[And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind.](#)” ([Genesis 1:25, ESV](#))

Here we encounter another noteworthy distinction. Although the land animals are likewise described as **living creatures** (*nephesh*), Moses does **not** say that God **created** them. Instead, he says that God **made** them. This difference deserves careful consideration.

- The fish and birds are **created**.
- The beasts, livestock, and creeping things are **made**.

Why?

At this point, I will simply acknowledge the distinction without forcing a conclusion. However, it is reasonable to ask whether Moses intends the reader to recognize that the fish and birds introduce something fundamentally new into creation—the first appearance of living creatures possessing both

body and soul—while the land animals are subsequently **made** according to that already established pattern.

Whether this understanding is correct must ultimately be determined by the testimony of Scripture as a whole.

The Climax Approaches

As remarkable as the previous five days have been, the creation account has been steadily building toward one final act. Everything that has come before now prepares the reader for the creation of mankind.

Here the language changes once again. God does not simply command the earth to bring forth man. Nor does He merely create or make him as He had the other living creatures. Instead, God first announces His intention: “**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.**”. With these words, the creation narrative reaches its climax.

The careful distinctions Moses has been making throughout the six days now become increasingly important, for the creation of mankind is described unlike anything that has preceded it.

THE CREATION OF MAN

Having carefully followed the pattern established throughout the six days of creation, we now arrive at the climax of God’s creative work. Everything that has preceded this point appears to prepare the reader for the creation of mankind. Unlike every previous creative act, God does not simply issue a command for the earth or the waters to bring forth life. Instead, He pauses and declares His intention. “**Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’**” (Genesis 1:26, ESV)

Several observations immediately distinguish this passage from everything that has preceded it.

First, God does not simply command the earth to produce mankind as He had done with the beasts of the field. Rather, He personally announces His intention: “**Let us make man...**”

Second, mankind alone is said to be made “**in our image, after our likeness.**” Every other living creature is described as being created or made according to **its own kind**. Mankind alone is said to bear the image and likeness of God.

Third, before mankind is even created, God assigns him dominion over every other living creature. This immediately establishes mankind as unique within the created order.

Genesis then records the fulfillment of God's declaration: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, ESV)

Here another important observation emerges.

1. In verse 26 God says, "**Let us make man...**" using the Hebrew word **asah**.
2. Yet in the very next verse Moses writes, "**So God created man...**" using the Hebrew word **bara**.

Both words are intentionally employed in describing the creation of mankind.

1. The fish and birds were **created**.
2. The beasts of the earth were **made**.
3. Now mankind is both **made** and **created**.

It is important that we do not simply dismiss these distinctions as though they possess no significance. Moses has demonstrated throughout [Genesis 1](#) that he carefully distinguishes between these words. It is therefore reasonable to believe he does so intentionally here as well.

Dominion

Immediately following man's creation, Scripture records: "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...'" (Genesis 1:28, ESV)

- Dominion is not presented as something mankind earned.
- It is part of God's original design.
- Mankind was created to represent God's rule upon the earth.
- This authority was not given to the angels.
- Nor was it given to the animals.
- It was entrusted uniquely to mankind.

This further distinguishes man from every other earthly creature.

Genesis Returns to the Sixth Day

The first chapter of Genesis provides a broad, sequential and cosmic overview of creation over six days. The second chapter of Genesis provides additional details concerning mankind's creation. This is not a second creation account. Rather, it is an expansion of the sixth day.

[Genesis 1](#) presents the panoramic view.
[Genesis 2](#) presents the close-up view.

The focus is no longer upon the creation week as a whole but upon God's unique creation of mankind.

The Formation of Adam

Genesis 2 records: "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." (Genesis 2:7, ESV)

Here Moses introduces yet another Hebrew word.

- Adam is not said to be **created**.
- Nor is he said merely to be **made**.
- He is **formed** (*yatsar*) from the dust of the ground.

The imagery is that of a master craftsman carefully fashioning His workmanship. This also reminds us that although mankind possesses a material body like the animals, Scripture carefully distinguishes the manner in which God prepared that body. No such description is given concerning any other earthly creature.

The Breath of Life

Genesis next records that God: "...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life..." (Genesis 2:7, ESV). This statement is equally remarkable. Only of mankind does Scripture describe God personally breathing the breath of life into His creature. Whether one understands this to describe the impartation of biological life, spiritual life, or both, it clearly distinguishes the creation of Adam from every other creature recorded in Genesis.

The result is immediate: "...and the man became a living creature."

The Hebrew expression is **nephesh chayyah**. Adam became a living creature. Interestingly, this is the very same expression previously used of the fish, birds, and land animals. This observation should not be overlooked. It demonstrates that mankind shares something in common with the animal kingdom. Like the animals, man is a living creature. Yet Genesis simultaneously distinguishes mankind in numerous other ways.

Man alone is:

- **made** in God's image,
- **created** in God's image,
- **formed** from the dust,
- personally **given** the **breath** of life **by God**,
- and **entrusted** with dominion over creation.

Thus, while mankind shares certain characteristics with the animal kingdom, he is also uniquely distinguished from it.

This naturally raises an important question. If Adam became a living creature (*nephesh chayyah*) just as the animals did, then in what specific sense was he uniquely created? Put another way, where within

the Genesis account do we find the distinctive creative act that sets mankind apart from every other living creature?

While Scripture does not explicitly answer that question, the text itself may suggest a reasonable explanation. God did not first breathe one kind of life into Adam and then another. Rather, He performed one deliberate act: “...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...”. Although Scripture does not explicitly explain the mechanics of God’s **breath of life**, it is interesting to observe that man breathes through **two nostrils**, causing a single breath to divide while remaining one breath. This provides a fitting illustration of how God’s one act of breathing into Adam could have simultaneously imparted both natural life and spiritual life. In that single divine act, Adam became a **living creature** (*nephesh chayyah*), sharing with the animals a body and a living soul, while also being uniquely created in the image of God through the possession of a human spirit through which he could enjoy fellowship with the God who is Spirit.

If this understanding is correct, then [Genesis 2:7](#) beautifully harmonizes the entire creation account. Through one divine act, God both **made** Adam a living creature like the animals and **created** him uniquely unlike the animals. He possessed a body formed from the dust, a living soul, and a human spirit, making him the only creature revealed in Scripture to possess all three.

The Creation of Eve

The uniqueness of mankind becomes even more apparent in the creation of the woman. Genesis records: “[So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man... And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman...](#)” ([Genesis 2:21–22, ESV](#))

Sometimes, things get lost in our English translations of the Bible and unless we endeavor to research the original words and their meanings, we can often miss a profound significance behind those words.. Here the English word “**made**” in reference to “[he made into a woman](#)” is translated from the Hebrew word *banah*. Literally, the passage says: “[...the rib... He built into a woman.](#)” This is the fourth distinct Hebrew word Moses employs in describing mankind.

- Adam is **made**.
- Adam is **created**.
- Adam is **formed**.
- Eve is **built**.

No other aspect of creation is described using this combination of terms.

A Growing Pattern

At this point, several observations have accumulated.

- The heavens and the earth are **created**.
- The expanse is **made**.

- The heavenly lights are **made**.
- The fish and birds are **created** as living creatures.
- The beasts are **made** as living creatures.
- Mankind is **made** in God's image.
- Mankind is **created** in God's image.
- Adam is **formed** from the dust.
- Eve is **built** from Adam's side.

Standing alone, any one of these observations might appear insignificant. Taken together, however, they form a consistent and undeniable pattern. As the biblical revelation unfolds, these distinctions become increasingly significant and provide the foundation for understanding both the nature of mankind and the remarkable truth that mankind alone was created in the image of God.

UNDERSTANDING THE PATTERN

Having carefully examined the creation account, we are now in a position to consider the significance of what Moses has recorded. Throughout the previous chapters we have intentionally resisted drawing theological conclusions, choosing instead to allow Genesis to establish its own pattern. We have observed that Moses consistently distinguishes between what God **creates**, what He **makes**, what He **forms**, and what He **builds**. We have also seen that these distinctions become increasingly concentrated in the creation of mankind.

The question naturally follows: **Why?**

Are these distinctions merely stylistic variations, or did Moses intentionally employ different words to communicate different aspects of God's creative work?

While we should always exercise caution when interpreting Scripture, we should be equally careful not to dismiss repeated patterns that the Holy Spirit intentionally records. Sound biblical interpretation requires that we neither force meaning upon the text nor ignore meaningful distinctions within the text.

Throughout this study we have adopted a simple hermeneutical principle:

Scripture must be allowed to interpret Scripture.

Rather than appealing first to theological systems or philosophical speculation, we should ask whether the Bible itself sheds further light upon these observations.

Isaiah Confirms the Pattern

One of the first passages that draws our attention back to the language of Genesis is [Isaiah 43:7](#). God declares: "...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." ([Isaiah 43:7, ESV](#)).

This verse is remarkable. Isaiah does not simply say that God created His people. Neither does he say that God merely made them. Instead, he deliberately employs three of the very same Hebrew words introduced in Genesis. God says He:

- **created** them,
- **formed** them,
- and **made** them.

This demonstrates that the distinctions observed in Genesis were not confined to the creation account alone. Hundreds of years later, Isaiah continues to distinguish between these same creative acts. This alone does not prove precisely what each word signifies. However, it does strongly suggest that the distinctions were intentional rather than accidental.

The Progressive Nature of Revelation

This pattern is entirely consistent with the way God reveals truth throughout Scripture. God rarely reveals an entire doctrine in a single passage. Instead, He progressively unfolds His truth throughout redemptive history.

- The doctrine of the Messiah is progressively revealed.
- The New Covenant is progressively revealed.
- The inclusion of the Gentiles is progressively revealed.
- Even the doctrine of the Trinity is progressively revealed.

The opening chapters of Genesis introduce God as Creator. Later revelation identifies the Son as the divine Word through whom all things were made ([John 1:1–3](#)). Still later, Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit's active role in creation and redemption. The doctrine itself does not change. Rather, our understanding becomes progressively clearer as God continues to reveal Himself.

I believe the same principle applies to biblical anthropology.

- Genesis introduces mankind.
- Genesis records how God created him.
- Genesis distinguishes between creating, making, forming, and building.
- Genesis tells us mankind was created in God's image.

Yet Genesis does not fully explain what all of those statements mean. Instead, Scripture gradually unfolds that understanding throughout the remainder of the biblical record.

Building Upon the Foundation

This is why we must intentionally delayed drawing conclusions. If we begun with Paul's statement concerning man's "spirit, soul, and body" ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)), then we risk being tempted to read that distinction back into Genesis without first asking whether Genesis itself contains the foundation for such an understanding. Instead, by working in the opposite direction, we can allow Moses to establish the pattern. Only now are we prepared to ask whether later revelation builds upon that foundation. If

Scripture progressively reveals the nature of God, it should come as no surprise that Scripture likewise progressively reveals the nature of the very creature made in God's image.

With the observations made thus far therefore becoming the foundation— not yet the conclusion—the next step is to examine if and how later biblical revelation itself presents man as possessing a threefold nature consisting of **body, soul, and spirit**.

THE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF MAN

Nowhere in the Bible will you find the word **Trinity**, nor will you find a single verse that simply states, “**God is three Persons in one.**” Nevertheless, Scripture progressively reveals the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit while consistently affirming that there is only one God. The doctrine of the Trinity is therefore not built upon one isolated verse but upon the cumulative testimony of Scripture.

The same principle applies to the doctrine of mankind.

It therefore stands to reason that the discovery of man's tripartite nature would likewise be progressive. Furthermore, if there is indeed some correspondence between the trichotomy of man's nature—body, soul, and spirit—and the Persons of our triune God, then it is only to be expected that the same air of enigma that surrounds the one would also surround the other. As God progressively revealed His own nature, so too we should expect Him to progressively reveal the nature of the creature made in His image.

This also helps explain why the human spirit receives so little direct attention in the Old Testament. Before the Holy Spirit was given to believers, the human spirit is mentioned only indirectly. Just as the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit is largely implied rather than fully developed in the Old Testament, so too the distinction between the **psyche** (soul) and the **pneuma** (spirit) remains largely undeveloped. Had the Old Testament explicitly revealed the tripartite nature of man while only hinting at the plurality of Persons within the Godhead, the progressive harmony of God's revelation would have been disrupted. It is therefore entirely consistent that the doctrines concerning the nature of God and the nature of man should unfold together throughout the course of Scripture.

Even so, the Old Testament does contain early indications of man's tripartite nature, beginning in the opening chapters of Genesis. As we have already observed, God **formed** man from the dust of the ground, **made** him a living creature, and **created** mankind, male and female, in His own image. If the pattern we have observed is intentional, these distinctions may correspond to the formation of the body, the impartation of the living soul, and the unique creation of mankind as spiritual beings created in the image of God.

Genesis therefore lays the foundation without fully explaining it. It introduces mankind as uniquely created in the image and likeness of God, distinguishes between God's acts of **creating, making, forming, and building**, and records that Adam was formed from the dust, that God breathed into him the breath of life, and that he became a living creature. The fuller significance

of these truths is not abandoned by later revelation but progressively unfolded throughout the remainder of Scripture, culminating in the New Testament's explicit distinction between **body, soul, and spirit**.

Isaiah Continues the Pattern

One of the clearest examples appears in [Isaiah 43:7](#). God declares: "...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (ESV). This verse is remarkable because Isaiah intentionally repeats the very language established in Genesis.

God says He:

- created,
- formed,
- and made

those who are called by His name. Isaiah does not define these terms, but neither does he collapse them into one another. He preserves the distinctions already established by Moses, suggesting that they remain significant beyond the creation account itself.

The New Testament Provides Greater Clarity

As revelation continues, the New Testament begins to describe mankind with increasing precision. Paul writes: "[Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#)" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, ESV).

Notice that Paul does not simply refer to the body and soul. Neither does he merely speak of the inward and outward man. Rather, he deliberately distinguishes between:

- spirit,
- soul,
- and body.

Likewise, the writer of Hebrews declares: "[For the word of God is living and active... piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow...](#)" (Hebrews 4:12, ESV).

Again, soul and spirit are distinguished rather than treated as synonymous. These passages do not invent a new doctrine. Rather, they provide greater clarity concerning what Genesis had already begun to reveal.

Genesis Revisited

Looking back at Genesis through the light of progressive revelation, several observations become increasingly significant.

- Adam's body was **formed** from the dust of the ground.
- God **breathed** into him the breath of life.
- Man **became** a living creature (*nephesh*).
- Mankind was **created** in the image of God.

These are not isolated statements.

Together they form a coherent picture that becomes increasingly clear as later revelation unfolds. Just as the doctrine of the Trinity emerges progressively from the cumulative testimony of Scripture, so too does the doctrine of the tripartite nature of man. Neither doctrine is built upon a single verse. Both arise from allowing the whole counsel of God to interpret itself.

A Unique Creation

- Animals possess physical bodies.
- Animals are likewise described as living creatures (*nephesh*).
- Angels are spirit beings.

Yet mankind alone is described as being:

- made in God's image,
- created in God's image,
- formed from the dust,
- personally receiving the breath of life from God,
- and ultimately revealed as possessing **body, soul, and spirit**.

This does not mean mankind shares God's divine essence. The Creator and the creature remain infinitely distinct. Rather, mankind uniquely reflects God's image according to God's design.

Just as the doctrine of the Trinity answers the question,

"What is God three of?"

the doctrine of the tripartite nature of man answers the question,

"What is man?"

The one concerns the nature of the Creator. The other concerns the nature of His image-bearer. Having seen that Scripture progressively reveals mankind as consisting of body, soul, and spirit, we may now examine each individually to better understand both God's original design and the effects that sin would have upon that design.

THE NATURE OF MAN

Having established that Scripture progressively reveals mankind as consisting of **body, soul, and spirit**, we are now prepared to examine each individually. Although these three aspects of man's nature are distinguishable, they should never be understood as three separate beings. Rather, together they constitute one complete human person.

Just as Scripture reveals one God while distinguishing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so Scripture reveals one man while distinguishing between the body, the soul, and the spirit.

The comparison, however, should not be pressed beyond what Scripture reveals. Man does not possess God's divine nature, nor is he a trinity in the same sense that God is triune. Rather, man reflects God's image as a finite creature created according to God's design.

Understanding these distinctions helps explain not only how God created mankind but also why redemption affects every aspect of man's being.

The Body

Genesis records: "[Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground...](#)" ([Genesis 2:7](#)). The body is mankind's physical nature. It is that part of man formed from the dust of the earth and through which he interacts with the physical world. Through the body we see, hear, speak, touch, work, eat, and carry out every physical action. Scripture never presents the body as evil in itself.

- God formed it.
- God declared it good.

The body became subject to corruption because of sin, not because physical existence is inherently sinful. Indeed, one of the great promises of redemption is not escape from the body but its future resurrection and glorification.

Paul writes: "[...who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body...](#)" ([Philippians 3:21](#)). Thus the body remains an essential part of God's eternal purpose for mankind.

The Soul

Genesis continues: "[...and the man became a living creature.](#)" ([Genesis 2:7](#)). The Hebrew expression is **nephesh chayyah**. The word **nephesh** is frequently translated **soul** throughout the Old Testament. Earlier in Genesis we observed that the fish and birds were the first creatures specifically said to be **created as living creatures** (*nephesh*). Later the beasts of the earth are likewise described as **living creatures**, although they are said to be **made** rather than **created**. This observation is significant. It demonstrates that mankind shares something in common with the animal kingdom.

- Both possess a body.

- Both are described as **living souls** (*nephesh*).

This should not surprise us.

- Animals possess intellect appropriate to their created nature.
- They possess desires.
- They display affection.
- They experience fear.
- They exhibit recognizable personality and instinctive behavior.

Scripture therefore distinguishes them from plants, which possess biological life but are never described as **living creatures** (*nephesh*).

Mankind likewise possesses a soul. However, Scripture immediately begins distinguishing man's soul from that of the animals by describing mankind as uniquely created in God's image and entrusted with dominion over creation. The human soul therefore encompasses those immaterial faculties through which man thinks, reasons, chooses, remembers, imagines, desires, loves, grieves, rejoices, and exercises moral responsibility.

The Spirit

If Genesis had ended with mankind becoming a **living creature**, little distinction would exist between man and the higher forms of animal life. Yet Scripture does not end there. Throughout the remainder of biblical revelation another aspect of mankind gradually comes into view.

Paul writes: "...your whole spirit and soul and body..." (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
Likewise, Hebrews speaks of: "...the division of soul and of spirit..." (Hebrews 4:12)

These passages reveal that the spirit is distinguishable from the soul. The human spirit is that aspect of man's nature uniquely created for fellowship with God.

Because **God is Spirit** (John 4:24), it is through the human spirit that mankind is capable of knowing, worshipping, loving, and communing with his Creator.

This should never be confused with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. The human spirit is entirely created.

Nevertheless, it is through man's spirit that God intended spiritual fellowship to occur.

One Complete Person

Although Scripture distinguishes between body, soul, and spirit, it never divides mankind into three independent beings.

- Rather, man is one person.
- Each aspect of his nature contributes to the whole.
- The body enables man to function within the physical creation.
- The soul provides personality, self-consciousness, intellect, emotion, desire, and will.
- The spirit enables communion with the God who is Spirit.
- Together they form one complete human being.

This understanding also explains why Scripture can sometimes speak of man simply as body and soul, body and spirit, or even soul alone, depending upon the emphasis of the passage. Such expressions no more deny the tripartite nature of man than speaking of “heart” or “mind” denies the existence of the rest of the person. Scripture often emphasizes the aspect of man’s nature most relevant to its immediate purpose.

God’s Original Design

Recognizing these distinctions prepares us for one final question. How were the body, soul, and spirit intended to function together? Scripture not only distinguishes these aspects of man’s nature, it also reveals an order within God’s design. Understanding that order is essential to understanding both the Fall and the work of redemption. For that reason, we must now consider how God originally intended mankind to live before sin entered the world.

GOD’S ORIGINAL DESIGN

Having seen that Scripture distinguishes between the body, soul, and spirit, we are now prepared to consider how God originally intended these three aspects of man’s nature to function together. It is one thing to recognize that mankind consists of body, soul, and spirit. It is another to understand the relationship that exists between them.

Scripture never presents these three aspects of man’s nature as existing independently of one another. Nor does it present them as competing for control. Rather, before the Fall they functioned together in perfect harmony according to God’s original design. Understanding that design is essential because it provides the foundation for understanding the Fall, the Christian life, and ultimately God’s work of redemption.

God is Spirit

Jesus declared: “[God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.](#)” (John 4:24, [ESV](#)). This statement is profoundly important.

God is not a physical being.
He is Spirit.

Consequently, God's fellowship with mankind was never intended to occur through man's physical body. Nor was it intended to occur merely through man's intellect or emotions. Rather, fellowship with God necessarily occurs through that aspect of mankind created for communion with the God who is Spirit. This is why I believe the human spirit occupies such an important place within God's original design.

The spirit is not the Holy Spirit. Neither is it divine. It is entirely created. Yet it is that aspect of man's nature uniquely suited for fellowship with his Creator.

God's Intended Order

If this understanding is correct, then God's life and fellowship were intended to flow through mankind in an orderly manner.

This order may be illustrated as follows:

1. God communed with man's spirit.
2. The spirit directed the soul.
3. The soul governed the body.

In this arrangement, every aspect of man's life functioned according to God's purpose.

- The spirit remained in continual fellowship with God.
- The soul willingly submitted to the influence of the spirit.
- The body faithfully carried out the desires of the soul.

Everything functioned in harmony.

The Soul as Mediator

The soul occupies a remarkable position within man's constitution. It stands between the spirit and the body. On the one hand, it is capable of responding to the influence of the spirit.

On the other hand, it continually experiences the appetites, desires, and sensations communicated through the body.

This places the soul in the position of decision. Through the intellect, the soul reasons. Through the conscience, it discerns. Through the emotions, it responds. Through the will, it chooses.

In God's original design, every one of these faculties functioned under the influence of a spirit that enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. Thus, man's thoughts, desires, decisions, and actions reflected the character of his Creator.

The Body as Servant

The body was never intended to govern mankind. Rather, it served as a vessel for the Soul and the Spirit, an instrument through which the inner man expressed himself.

Through the body mankind exercised dominion over creation. Through the body Adam cultivated the Garden. Through the body mankind fulfilled God's command to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. The body was therefore neither evil nor inferior.

It faithfully served God's purpose so long as it remained under the proper authority of the soul, which itself remained under the influence of the spirit in fellowship with God.

The Harmony of Creation

Prior to the Fall, Scripture records no conflict within mankind. There is no struggle between flesh and spirit. No internal warfare. No guilty conscience. No shame. No fear. No hiding from God. Everything functioned according to God's original design. Adam's thoughts reflected truth.

His desires reflected holiness. His will reflected righteousness. His actions reflected obedience. The body willingly served the soul. The soul willingly followed the spirit. The spirit remained in perfect fellowship with God. The result was complete harmony.

Created in the Image of God

This understanding also sheds light upon what it means for mankind to have been created in the image of God. Mankind does not possess God's divine essence.

Neither does mankind become a miniature trinity. Rather, mankind uniquely reflects God's communicable attributes according to God's design.

- Love.
- Holiness.
- Justice.
- Mercy.
- Creativity.
- Wisdom.
- Dominion.
- Stewardship.
- Truthfulness.
- Righteousness.

These qualities were intended to be expressed through a human life properly ordered under God's authority. The image of God therefore involves much more than possessing certain abilities. It also involves functioning according to the order God established at creation. Only then does mankind properly reflect the character of the One in whose image he was created.

GIVEN COMMANDMENTS

Having created Adam and Eve in His image, God immediately blessed them and gave them specific commandments ([Genesis 1:28](#)). He commanded them:

- To be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.
- To subdue the earth.
- To exercise dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and every living thing that moves upon the earth.

These were not mere suggestions. They were divine commandments, every bit as binding as God's later command not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

It is also worth noting that the English word **subdue** translates the Hebrew word **kabash** (כָּבַשׁ, Strong's H3533), meaning *to bring into subjection, to conquer, to bring into bondage, to make subservient, to dominate, or to tread down*. Adam's dominion was therefore intended to be active and purposeful rather than passive or merely symbolic.

GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

For some Christians, the expression **free will** can be problematic when applied to human beings. Human will, after all, always operates within external constraints. Our choices are limited by the options available to us, by our knowledge, by our abilities, and by countless other factors beyond our control.

Adam and Eve, for example, possessed no more ability to intentionally choose to grow physical wings than they possessed the ability to choose any other impossibility. Unless God first provided the means, the method, the opportunity, the awareness, and therefore the ability, such a choice simply did not exist. This is why I distinguish between **freedom of will** and **freedom of action**.

Properly understood, moral agency is not the unrestricted ability to choose absolutely anything imaginable. Rather, it is the **response-ability** to freely respond through action or inaction with respect to what is right and wrong, and to be held accountable for those responses.

This distinction is reflected in the history of the English language itself. The word **responsible** derives from the Latin *responsus*, conveying the idea of an obligation or commitment to respond. Responsibility, therefore, is the moral obligation of a moral agent to respond appropriately—to do what is right and to fulfill an entrusted duty.

Today, responsibility is often understood primarily as accepting personal ownership of one's duties, where failure produces feelings of guilt or shame. While that idea is certainly related, it does not fully capture the biblical concept.

The word **accountable**, dating from the fourteenth century, combines the words **account** and **able**, conveying the idea of being **liable** to give an account. Liability is the legal or moral obligation by which a lawful authority may demand justice, call an individual or entity into account, and impose the appropriate consequence for damages or injuries resulting from dereliction of duty, willful misconduct, disobedience, or even gross neglect.

Responsibility and accountability are therefore inseparable. Responsibility establishes one's obligation to act; accountability establishes the certainty that one's actions—or failures to act—will be judged. Accountability must be real and enforceable, for if there are no corresponding consequences, it becomes little more than an empty word. As Hosea declared,

“They have spoken mere words; with false oaths they have made covenants, so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.” ([Hosea 10:4](#))

For moral agency to have genuine meaning, responsibility must be accompanied by accountability, and accountability must carry fitting consequences for both obedience and disobedience.

CREATED VERY GOOD

God cannot create another God, because:

- a created being would depend on God
- a created being would have a beginning
- a created being would have potentiality and thus, entropy
- a created being would not be identical with its own essence

A being with these characteristics cannot be perfect in the way God is perfect.

Thus, **God cannot create an equal or greater being**, not because of a limitation in God, but because of the logical impossibility of a “created uncreated being.”

The Only Way for God to Create Something Perfect Is to Create Something “of” Himself

If God creates something **from nothing**, it is necessarily finite and imperfect. But if God creates something **from Himself**, it shares His nature. This is why:

- The **Son** is eternally begotten of the Father (**eternal generation**).
- The **Spirit** eternally proceeds (**procession**).

These are not acts of creation. They are acts of **eternal self-communication** within the divine essence. The Son and Spirit are:

- Uncreated
- infinite
- perfect
- immutable
- simple
- eternal

Because they are **of God**, not **made by God**. Thus:

God can only produce perfection by communicating His own essence, not by creating something outside Himself.

This is why the Trinity is the only “perfect plurality” in existence.

Adam and Eve were created in the **image** of God, reflecting aspects of His nature; they were not created to share in God’s divine essence. Consequently, they were not perfect in the absolute sense that **God alone is perfect**. Nevertheless, although **formed** from the dust of the earth and **made** living creatures, they were, as Scripture declares, made “**very good**.” Being created **a little lower than the angels** ([Hebrews 2:7–9](#)), Adam and Eve were without sin and without flaw, perfectly suited to fulfill the perfect purposes of God according to His perfect design. It was in this sense that God “**created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them**” ([Genesis 1:27](#)).

Key Takeaways

- God alone possesses absolute perfection.
- Creation was declared **very good**, meaning it perfectly fulfilled God’s purpose for that stage of His plan.
- “Very good” should not automatically be equated with absolute perfection.
- Adam was created without sin yet remained a created being.
- The first creation establishes the foundation for understanding why God’s purpose extends beyond Eden.

Looking Ahead

If creation was very good, why did it fail?

Before answering that question for mankind, Scripture first presents another created being who fell.

THE ANGELS

The English word “angel” is derived from the Greek word “angelos,” and the Greek word, in turn, comes from the Hebrew word “Mal’ akh,” which stands for messenger. Throughout Scripture God’s angels are described as heavenly messengers, that act under God’s divine command to serve His perfect purposes and designs and to reflect His goodness, His majesty and His holiness. Angels are pure spirit creatures, created very good by God on the day that He created the heavens and the Earth, *ex-nihilo*.

Pure Spirits

To say that angels are pure spirit beings is not to say that angels are of the same substance or essence of God. God is not an angel, and angels are neither an extension of God nor are they gods themselves. Scriptural passages that describe individuals who saw “[the angel of the Lord](#)”, as having seen God are best understood as theophanies or Christophanies, manifested appearances of God ([Judges 13:21-22](#)).

Therefore, to say that angels are pure spirit beings is simply to say that angels are incorporeal creatures that inhabit the spiritual realm and as all creatures – having a beginning – angels are subject to both some form of time and space and are therefore neither Omnipresent nor eternal, as in having always existed.

Without Body

No created being brought into existence *ex nihilo* can withstand the full glory of God. Furthermore, Scripture appears to indicate that creatures possessing physical bodies are able to endure even less ([Hebrews 2:6-7](#)) of God’s manifested glory than created beings who exist without physical bodies. Humans for example consistently collapse under manifestations of God’s glory:

- [Exodus 33:20](#) (“no man shall see me and live”)
- [Isaiah 6](#)
- [Ezekiel 1](#)
- [Daniel 10](#)
- [Revelation 1](#)

Although angels are capable of being temporarily manifest in various physical forms, angels – by the nature of spirit – (could be said to have a soul) are without bodily form and are therefore invisible. Hence, angels are genderless, they do not marry nor do they procreate and while angels are neither immortal nor incorruptible, neither do they -naturally – die or decay. Angels were given to have the attributes of personhood, will and emotion and they were endowed with wisdom, intelligence and power nearer in perfection and nature to God, than any other being created from nothingness. The implication of [Hebrews 2:6-7](#) is not that man will become like or equal to the angels. Humans will never become angels after they die, and angels will never become humans. Instead, the implication is that man will surpass the angels in glory and honor, in relationship, worship and service to God.

Therefore, for the present age, the heavenly creatures known as angels—created as incorporeal spirit beings—appear, by their very nature, to possess greater knowledge of and exposure to God’s glory than mankind, whose experience is mediated through physical bodies of flesh.

Angels Have Limitation – Not Perfect

On the premise that God cannot create from nothingness – not derived of Himself – something that is equal to or greater than Himself, it follows then that angels may be considered the greatest being God can create *ex-nihilo*. Many of the early church fathers – like Thomas Aquinas – understood angels to be the highest in hierarchy of God’s created beings. With this said, let’s say that the heavenly creatures known as angels – “for now” – have greater ability to withstand, endure and draw nearer – have greater exposure – to God’s full glory than we as mere fleshly humans. However, even their exposure to and comprehension of God’s infinite full glory is limited ([1 Peter 1:12](#)). These limitations are equally illustrated in Isaiah’s prophetic vision in which he saw seraphim – a type of angel – standing in close proximity to God and covering their faces and feet with their wings ([Isaiah 6:2](#)). This passage not only expresses their reverence and awe of God, but it also denotes their act of having to shield themselves from the radiance of God’s glory.

The Angel Lucifer

As an angel, Lucifer is traditionally understood to have been the greatest among the angelic host and may well have represented the highest order of being that God created *ex nihilo*. While [Ezekiel 28:12–15](#) is addressed to the king of Tyre, many Christians have long understood the passage to extend beyond its immediate historical context, providing a glimpse into the origin and fall of Lucifer.

The description of Lucifer as the “[seal of perfection](#)” should not be understood to mean that he possessed the absolute perfection that belongs to God alone. Rather, it signifies that Lucifer was the consummate example of a created being—created **very good**, without flaw, and perfectly suited to fulfill God’s perfect design and purpose (cf. [Ezekiel 28:15](#); [Genesis 1:31](#)). Like Adam, Lucifer was without sin, yet unlike God, he remained a finite, created being capable of moral choice and therefore capable of falling.

Furthermore, Scripture describes Lucifer as having walked “**in the midst of the stones of fire**” ([Ezekiel 28:14](#)). While the precise meaning of this expression is not explicitly explained, it may reasonably suggest that, among all created beings, Lucifer enjoyed the greatest proximity to God’s glorious presence. If so, he possessed the highest degree of access, privilege, and exposure to the glory of God afforded to any created being.

The Fall of the Angels

Lucifer became consumed with pride. While Scripture does not explicitly reveal the precise cause of that pride, I believe it may have arisen from God’s determination to create mankind in His own image and to entrust humanity—not the Lucifer—with dominion over the earth. Although mankind was created “**a little lower than the angels**” ([Hebrews 2:7–9](#)), humanity alone was created in the image and likeness

of God and given authority to rule over the earth as God's vice-regent. Furthermore, the angels themselves were commissioned to minister to mankind, a creature lower than themselves in the created order.

If this understanding is correct, Lucifer's pride may well have been fueled by dissatisfaction with God's sovereign purposes and jealousy over the unique honor and destiny God had bestowed upon mankind. Refusing to accept the order established by his Creator, he rebelled against God and persuaded many of the angels (One third) to join his revolt.

His subsequent fall, therefore, was not the result of ignorance but of a deliberate misuse of the extraordinary position, privilege, authority, and knowledge that God had entrusted to him.

Yet this highlights an important theological truth of the limitations of that which is created. After all, if Lucifer had possessed perfect unlimited knowledge of God and unlimited exposure to the fullness of His glory, how could rebellion against God ever have appeared to be a rational course of action? Likewise, how could one-third of the angelic host have been persuaded to join him?

Unless one is prepared to argue that angels possess less intelligence, less understanding, or less awareness than mankind—a conclusion few would be willing to accept—it becomes exceedingly difficult to explain how such exalted beings could have imagined that rebellion against the omnipotent Creator could ever succeed. A creature possessing perfect knowledge of God and unlimited exposure to His infinite glory could scarcely conclude that mutiny against Him was anything other than utterly futile.

This observation suggests that, although angels possess knowledge and access to God's presence far surpassing that of mankind, they nevertheless remain finite creatures. Their knowledge, like their nature, is finite. Consequently, biblical passages describing angels as beholding the face of God should not be understood to imply exhaustive knowledge or unlimited exposure to God's infinite glory. Rather, such expressions are best understood as idiomatic language describing their privileged (greatest but still limited) access to God's immediate presence and unmediated communication with Him (cf. [Matthew 18:10](#)).

Indeed, finite creatures—even the highest of angels—cannot fully comprehend or exhaust the infinite glory of God. Lucifer's rebellion therefore demonstrates not that he possessed complete knowledge and still rebelled, but that even the greatest created being remained finite, capable of pride, self-deception, and the misuse of the freedom God had entrusted to him.

Lucifer Is Now Satan and Fallen Angels Are Now Demons

Lucifer, having rebelled against God, became known as **Satan**, and the angels who joined his rebellion became what Scripture commonly refers to as **demons** or **unclean spirits**. The English word **Satan** is translated from the Hebrew word **śāṭān** (Strong's H7854), meaning "**adversary**,"

“opponent,” or **“accuser.”** It is one of the names or titles given to Lucifer after he became God’s adversary—an enemy in open rebellion against his Creator.

Many people speak of Satan as though he were the opposite of God, but such language can create serious misconceptions. Satan is not God’s opposite in the sense of being an equal and opposing counterpart. God has no equal. Satan is a created being, whereas God is the eternal, uncreated Creator of all things. Satan should therefore never be thought of as God’s evil twin, but rather as God’s opponent, enemy, and adversary. The distinction is significant. Satan stands in opposition to God, but he is utterly incomparable to God in power, authority, wisdom, or nature. Just as darkness is overcome by light, so Satan’s power is ultimately overcome by the infinitely greater power of God.

Scripture also refers to Satan as **“the evil one”** (1 John 5:19). This title provides important context for understanding how the Bible sometimes uses the word **evil**. Allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, references to fallen humanity as **“evil,”** such as Jesus’ words, **“If you then, who are evil...”** (Matthew 7:11), should not be understood to mean that human beings are evil in exactly the same sense or to the same degree as Satan. Rather, they describe mankind as sharing in the fallen condition brought about by sin and, apart from God’s saving grace, living in opposition to God’s righteous will.

Jesus expressed this same principle when He told certain unbelieving Jews: **“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.”** (John 8:44)

He was not teaching that Satan was their literal father, but that their unbelief, rebellion, and conduct reflected the character of the one whose will they had chosen to follow. In this sense, Scripture identifies fallen beings with Satan’s rebellion, just as those who are born of God are called children of God because they bear His character and seek to do His will.

Understanding this distinction is essential. Scripture does not present evil as an eternal force existing in opposition to God, nor does it portray Satan as God’s equal rival. God alone is eternal, self-existent, and uncreated. Satan remains a finite creature, entirely subject to God’s sovereign authority.

Evil is therefore not a “thing” that God created, but the corruption, distortion, and misuse of that which God originally created good. It arose when created moral beings freely rebelled against their Creator. Lucifer became the first to do so, followed by the fallen angels and – as we will soon see – later by mankind. Consequently, **evil has no independent existence apart from the good that it corrupts.** It is not a created substance, nor an opposing power existing alongside God, but a **parasitic** corruption of God’s good creation.

This truth is evident throughout Scripture. Lucifer was not created evil but was created **“the seal of perfection”** and **“blameless”** until unrighteousness was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). Likewise, Adam and Eve were not created sinful but were created **“very good”** (Genesis 1:31). In both cases, evil was not something God created, but something that arose through the willful misuse of the freedom and moral agency God had entrusted to His creatures. Evil, therefore, is not an eternal principle competing with

good, nor does it possess an independent existence of its own. Like darkness, which is the absence of light, evil is the corruption and absence of the righteousness for which God's creation was originally designed.

Consequently, Satan should never be understood as God's equal rival. He is a finite, created being whose rebellion is already judged and whose ultimate destiny is certain. The same sovereign God who created all things good will ultimately judge evil, destroy death, cast Satan and his demons into the lake of fire, and forever abolish every corruption introduced by sin. In the end, God's goodness, righteousness, and glory alone will remain, vindicating His perfect purposes from the very beginning.

Fallen Angels Cannot be Redeemed

Although Satan and his demons are fallen angels, no longer serving as God's messengers or existing in communion with Him, they nevertheless remain spirit beings. The holy angels have no need of salvation, while Satan and his fallen host are presented in Scripture as having no possibility of redemption.

From the beginning, angels were created as spirit beings to enjoy a greater degree of access to God's presence than creatures of flesh. With that greater privilege came greater knowledge, greater understanding, greater awareness, and consequently greater responsibility. As Scripture teaches, ["Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required"](#) (Luke 12:48). Greater privilege necessarily carries greater accountability and greater liability.

This distinction also appears to bear directly upon the question of redemption. Unlike mankind, angels were not created with physical bodies. Being incorporeal, they possess no physical life that can be offered in death as a sacrificial payment for sin. Throughout Scripture, atonement is accomplished through the shedding of blood, for ["without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"](#) (Hebrews 9:22), and ["the life of the flesh is in the blood"](#) (Leviticus 17:11).

For this reason, it is significant that the Son of God did not assume the nature of angels but the nature of man. As the writer of Hebrews declares: ["For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham."](#) (Hebrews 2:16, ESV)

By taking upon Himself a true human body, Christ was able to suffer, shed His blood, and die as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the very nature of angels places them outside God's redemptive plan. Had the Son become incarnate as an angel, He would have assumed the nature of an incorporeal spirit being rather than a mortal man of flesh and blood. Such a nature could not accomplish the kind of sacrificial death that Scripture presents as necessary for atonement. Consequently, fallen angels, by virtue of their created nature as spirit beings, are not presented in Scripture as redeemable.

Key Takeaways

- Lucifer was created blameless according to God's design.
- Sin did not originate because God created evil.
- Even beings created good may rebel.
- The Fall of Lucifer demonstrates that goodness alone does not guarantee permanence.
- God's purpose therefore extends beyond merely creating good beings.

Looking Ahead

The same principle now appears in humanity.

Adam likewise entered creation without sin.

THE FALL OF MANKIND

Having become God's adversary, Lucifer now became known as Satan, the devil and or the evil one who, in the futility of his rebellion against God, was cast out of heaven and confined to the earth along with those angels who followed him. Jesus Himself testified to this event, declaring, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." ([Luke 10:18](#))

The details of that fall are revealed more fully in passages such as [Isaiah 14](#), [Ezekiel 28](#), and [Revelation 12](#), which together describe Satan's rebellion against God and his expulsion from the heavenly realm. Having become God's adversary, Satan entered God's newly created world, appearing in the Garden of Eden in the form of a serpent—not merely to deceive mankind, but to oppose God's purposes by corrupting the very creature created in His image.

Yet before Satan ever entered the Garden, God had already prepared the means by which Adam and Eve could exercise the moral agency He had entrusted to them. By creating the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and commanding Adam and Eve not to eat of its fruit lest they die, God provided them with the opportunity to exercise moral agency. The forbidden tree served as both the means and the mechanism by which God enabled them to demonstrate obedience or disobedience. It gave them the capacity—and therefore the responsibility and accountability—to freely choose between doing what was right and doing what was wrong.

While it may be said that God created the potentiality for Adam and Eve to disobey, He did not create the necessity of their disobedience. Nor did He tempt, compel, coerce, or cause them to sin. Rather, as moral agents created in God's image, Adam and Eve possessed the ability to make genuine choices and were therefore fully responsible and fully accountable for the actions they freely chose to take.

God had provided them the option, the awareness (and even warning) of the option, and therefore the ability (God enabled them) to freely act in obedience or to freely act in disobedience, and sin. Thus, while God created the potentiality for Man to act in sin, never did He necessitate, nor did He cause Man to act in sin. It was by Adam and Eve's disobedient and free action, (not God's) that they brought the catastrophic consequences of corrupted physical and spiritual natures, death, a cursed world, and separation from God, not only upon themselves but that has ever since, been visited upon, and inherited by all of Adam's posterity, each born with the propensity to commit sin and fall under judgement and penalty of sin.

The act of eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is commonly referred to as **the original sin**. Yet this act involved more than the violation of a single command. In that same moment, Adam and Eve also failed in the responsibility God had entrusted to them from the beginning. God had given mankind dominion over the earth and commanded them to "subdue it" and exercise authority over **every living thing that moved upon it** ([Genesis 1:26–28](#)).

When Satan entered the Garden in the form of the serpent, he did so as a rebel already judged in heaven and now in open defiance of God's authority upon the earth. Adam and Eve were therefore

confronted not merely by a talking serpent, but by God's adversary himself. They were not simply called to resist temptation; they had already been entrusted with dominion over the earth and over every living creature that moved upon it. The serpent, being one of those creatures within the created order, fell within the authority God had already delegated to mankind "subdue ... every living thing that moved ...".

The serpent therefore fell within the scope of that God-given dominion in which Adam should have exercised the authority entrusted to him by subduing rather than submitting to him. Yet this authority was never intended to rest in Adam's own human strength. Created a little lower than the angels ([Hebrews 2:7-9](#)), Adam was naturally no match for Satan. His ability to subdue the serpent was never to be found in the power of his humanity, but in the power, authority, blessing, and ordination of God.

Throughout Scripture, God consistently chooses what the world considers weak in order to display the greatness of His own power. Adam was of no exception. As the Apostle Paul writes, "God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong" ([1 Corinthians 1:27-29](#)). Gideon conquered the Midianites with only three hundred men. David, a shepherd boy, defeated Goliath. Jehoshaphat prevailed through worship rather than military might.

Likewise, when the seventy-two disciples returned rejoicing, they acknowledged that "even the demons are subject to us in Your name" ([Luke 10:17](#)). Their authority did not reside in themselves but in the One who had sent them. Adam stood in the same position. His victory over the serpent was never to be achieved through his own strength, but through complete dependence upon the God who had entrusted him with dominion. This is why Jesus said: [Luke 10:18-19 ESV](#) "... 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. [19] Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you'". In other words, Jesus was saying that Adam had at one time been given that same authority, it was not new.

However, instead of exercising that God-given authority and rejecting the serpent's deception, Adam and Eve submitted themselves to him. Rather than ruling over the creature as God's appointed vice-regents, they allowed the creature—and the adversary working through it—to rule over them. As Genesis records, the serpent said, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ([Genesis 3:4-5](#)). Enticed by the serpent's words, Eve took of the fruit and ate, and Adam, who was with her, likewise ate in direct violation of God's command.

In disobeying God, Adam and Eve became like Satan in the very thing that defined his rebellion: unbelief and disobedience toward God. Instead of ruling over the serpent, they allowed the serpent to rule over them. Instead of exercising dominion, they surrendered it. Instead of standing in freedom under God, they entered into bondage through sin. In yielding to the serpent rather than ruling over him, Adam and Eve abandoned the role God had appointed for them. The Fall, therefore, was not merely the breaking of a commandment, but also the forfeiture of a responsibility. The very authority they were created to exercise under God was surrendered through unbelief and disobedience.

Satan did not overpower Adam by force, nor did he possess the authority to bind him against his will. Adam and Eve voluntarily surrendered the position God had given them through their own disobedience. The serpent's weapon was deception; his power lay in temptation. Satan merely presented the temptation. Adam and Eve bound themselves by willingly rejecting God's command and eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ([Genesis 2:17](#)).

Thus, the Fall was not the result of Satan conquering Adam through superior power or authority, but of Adam relinquishing through unbelief and disobedience the authority God had entrusted to him. Adam's defeat was not imposed upon him—it was self-inflicted.

A Bad Decision Despite Good Intention Remains A Bad Decision

While we should take lessons from Adam and Eve, we should not judge them. It is important to understand that neither Adam nor Eve were deceitful, malicious, or possessed sinful intentions prior to disobeying God's command concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Eve did not desire wickedness; she desired wisdom. Yet there is nothing inherently sinful in desiring to be wise like God. Indeed, throughout Scripture God's people are encouraged to seek wisdom, and wisdom itself is repeatedly presented as a virtue rather than a vice. Nor did the serpent promise Eve that she would become **God**. Rather, he promised that she would be "like God, knowing good and evil" ([Genesis 3:5](#)). Likewise, Eve never expressed a desire to be God, but only that the tree "was to be desired to make one wise" ([Genesis 3:6](#)).

If the mere desire to be wise like God were itself sinful, then Eve would necessarily have become sinful **before** eating the forbidden fruit. Likewise, if the desire to be like God were inherently evil, then mankind would never have been created **in the image and likeness of God** ([Genesis 1:26–27](#)). Such conclusions are not only contrary to the testimony of Scripture but they also defer from the lesson to be learned from it.

The sin, did not lie in Eve's desire for wisdom, but in the means by which she chose to obtain it. Rather than **trusting** – having faith – in God's wisdom and obeying His command, she sought wisdom through an act of disobedience. Thus, the Fall teaches an enduring principle: **a bad decision made even with the best of intention is still a bad decision**. A person may sincerely desire something that is good, noble, and even God-honoring, yet if that desire is pursued contrary to God's revealed will, the decision remains a bad decision. Good motives cannot sanctify disobedience, nor can noble intentions transform what God has declared wrong into something right.

One of the great tragedies of the Fall is that Adam and Eve were not driven by hatred for God or by a desire for evil. Rather, they were deceived into believing that a good end could be obtained through the wrong means. Their intentions may well have seemed reasonable, but sincerity does not determine righteousness—God's Word does. A decision made contrary to God's revealed will remains a bad decision regardless of how sincere, noble, or well-intentioned the motive behind it may be. In the

end, it was not their desire for wisdom that condemned them, but their unbelief – their lack of faith in the words of God – expressed through the willful act of disobeying the command of God.

THE CATASTROPHE OF THE FALL

The tragedy of the Fall should never be minimized to the mere act of eating forbidden fruit. The fruit itself possessed no mystical power. Rather, it was Adam and Eve's unbelief and disobedience toward God that brought about the true catastrophe.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they did not simply become guilty before God. Sin affected every aspect of their being. Their fellowship with God was broken. Their thoughts, desires, affections, and actions became corrupted. The harmony that had existed between body, soul, and spirit was profoundly altered. Spiritual death entered the human race, and with it came corruption, suffering, and physical death.

The consequences of the Fall therefore extended far beyond the Garden of Eden. Every descendant of Adam would thereafter be conceived into a world already under the curse of sin, inheriting a corrupted nature while living amid the sorrow, suffering, injustice, and death that inevitably accompany separation from God.

Like a **Hereditary condition** – emphasizing a consequential condition that is passed from parent to child, sin is an inherited (consequential) condition of corruption that is most commonly understood to be passed to the child through the seed of the male human parent. Just as a child may inherit a genetic condition from his parents without having personally caused it, so every descendant of Adam inherits the corruption of humanity's fallen – sinful – condition without having personally committed Adam's sin.

Personal guilt, however, arises when each morally accountable individual willingly acts in unbelief and disobedience toward God. Thus, inherited corruption explains why every accountable person sins, while personal guilt explains why every accountable person stands accountable before God.

It is important to understand the progression of moral accountability:

- God created mankind in His image and likeness, giving him moral agency—the God-given ability and responsibility to respond to God's revelation through obedience or disobedience.
- With moral agency comes responsibility, for every moral agent has a duty to respond rightly to the revelation and commands of God.
- God's commandments establish accountability by defining both His righteous standard and mankind's obligation to obey it.
- Temptation presents the opportunity to choose, but it does not compel the choice.
- Satan is guilty of tempting mankind, but he is not guilty of mankind's sin.
- Adam was guilty of his own sin because he willingly responded to Satan's temptation with unbelief and disobedience.

- Every descendant of Adam inherits a corrupted (sinful) nature that separates mankind from God, but the inherited sinful nature itself does not constitute personal guilt.
- Personal guilt is incurred when a morally accountable individual falls short of God's glory through his own sins of commission or omission.
- **Thus, corruption is inherited; guilt is personal.**
- **Corruption brings separation from God, Guilt brings judgement from God.**
- With guilt comes liability—the obligation to answer before God's righteous judgment and to bear the just penalty for sin.
- Thus, corruption is inherited; guilt is personal. Responsibility arises from moral agency, accountability is established by God's commandments, and liability follows when those commandments are knowingly violated.

God created mankind with moral agency. Moral agency brings responsibility. Responsibility under God's commandments establishes accountability. Accountability, when violated through unbelief and disobedience, results in guilt. Guilt incurs liability before God's justice, and liability demands a just penalty. This is precisely why mankind cannot redeem himself and why redemption through Jesus Christ became necessary.

Spiritual Death & Separation From God

Before Adam sinned, God warned him: "...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." ([Genesis 2:17, ESV](#)). Yet Adam did not die physically on that very day. He continued living for many centuries before eventually experiencing physical death.

This immediately raises an important question. **In what sense did Adam die on the very day he sinned?**

Scripture consistently answers that question by describing fallen mankind as spiritually dead. Paul writes: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins..." ([Ephesians 2:1, ESV](#)). Likewise, "...even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..." ([Ephesians 2:5, ESV](#)).

This death should not be understood as the annihilation of the human spirit. Neither should it be understood to mean that mankind ceased bearing the image of God. Rather, it describes the loss of the living fellowship with God for which mankind's spirit had originally been created.

Isaiah describes the same reality when he writes: "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God..." ([Isaiah 59:2, ESV](#)). The separation was spiritual, the human spirit that had once enjoyed unhindered communion with God was broken. It no longer functioned according to God's original design and the authority that they were to exercise under His rule was surrendered.

Reversal of God's Design

With that separation came the loss of mankind's living fellowship with God. Although man's spirit continued to exist, it was no longer in communion with the One from whom it was created to receive life, truth, wisdom, and direction.

The result was a complete reversal of the order God had established. The spirit now looked to the soul, the soul looked to the body and the body looked to the world.

Before the Fall, the spirit, in fellowship with God, directed the soul, and the soul directed the body. After the Fall, the soul, no longer receiving its proper guidance from God through the conduit of the human spirit, increasingly looked instead to the testimony of the physical body—its sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—to interpret reality and determine its course. Rather than living from God's perspective outward, mankind now began living from the world's perspective inward. This reversal became one of the defining consequences of spiritual death.

It marked the entrance of spiritual death into the human race and provided Satan with the foothold he sought within God's creation. The one whom Adam had been commissioned to subdue instead became the one to whom mankind submitted. Instead of exercising dominion under God, mankind entered into bondage under God's adversary.

Scripture therefore describes Satan as **"the ruler of this world"** ([John 12:31](#)), **"the god of this age"** ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)), and **"the prince of the power of the air"** ([Ephesians 2:2](#)). These titles do not imply that Satan possesses authority equal to God's, but they do reveal the dreadful consequences of Adam's surrender. Although mankind remains morally responsible for every sinful thought, word, and deed, Satan delights in exploiting that fallen condition through deception, temptation, violence, suffering, and destruction. **No enemy of God has ever been a friend of man.**

The history of the world stands as undeniable testimony to the consequences of that surrender. Every war, every genocide, every act of terrorism, every murder, every rape, every abuse, every slave trade, every dictatorship, every famine born of human greed, every persecution of God's people, every broken family, every addiction, every disease, every funeral, and every cemetery bear witness to the devastating effects of mankind's separation from God. Since Adam's fall, every human being—without exception—has ultimately succumbed to death. Some have perished peacefully after long lives, while countless others have suffered unimaginable horrors at the hands of wicked men under the influence of the evil one. The twentieth century alone witnessed atrocities claiming well over one hundred million lives. Yet even these staggering numbers fail to capture the true magnitude of the Fall, for every grave that has ever been dug, every tear that has ever been shed, and every life that has ever ended ultimately trace their origin back to mankind's rebellion in Eden.

The repeated failures recorded throughout human history and Scripture should not be viewed as isolated events unique to particular people or particular dispensations. Rather, they reveal a consistent pattern that spans the whole of redemptive history.

- Adam was created without sin and declared by God to be “**very good.**” Yet Adam fell.
- Lucifer likewise was created blameless according to God’s perfect purpose and design, yet Lucifer rebelled.
- The Book of Judges records Israel’s repeated cycle of faithfulness, blessing, comfort, apathy, apostasy, bondage, suffering, repentance, deliverance, and restoration, only for the same cycle to begin again.
- Likewise, every dispensation recorded throughout Scripture exhibits the same general pattern. Whether under innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, or even the present administration of grace, mankind continually falls short of God’s glory. The outward administration changes, yet the same recurring pattern remains.

The Cycle of Sin

These repeated failures should cause us to pause and consider an important observation.

Adam did not fall because he possessed a sinful nature. He did not fall because he lived in a fallen world. He did not fall because God withheld His fellowship, His blessing, or His provision. Adam fell while living in a perfect environment, enjoying unhindered fellowship with God, and possessing a nature free from sin.

If even the first Adam, created “very good” according to God’s perfect purpose and design, could fall from such a privileged position, then it becomes far easier to understand why fallen mankind continues to repeat the same cycle of unbelief and disobedience throughout history. The repeated failures recorded in the Book of Judges and throughout the various dispensations are therefore not surprising anomalies; they simply reinforce a pattern already established in Eden.

This observation does not yet explain **why** the pattern exists, but it does demonstrate that the problem cannot be attributed merely to environment, government, covenant, or outward administration. Nor can the ultimate answer simply be the restoration of mankind to Adam’s original condition. History itself repeatedly demonstrates that something more is required.

Not Abandoned By God

Yet God’s purpose for mankind was not abandoned by the Fall. Although the human spirit no longer functioned in living communion with God as it had been created to do, God did not leave mankind without witness. From the beginning, through His creation, His providence, the testimony of conscience, and ultimately through His Word. God repeatedly reveals Himself and graciously invites men and women everywhere to repent and believe. His invitations are universal, His commands are universal, and His desire is that none should perish but that all should come to repentance. Although fallen mankind now interpreted reality primarily through the testimony of the physical senses, those same senses remained instruments through which God continually reveals Himself and calls mankind to seek after Him. The tragedy is not that God has ceased calling mankind, but that mankind has so often refused to listen.

Yet, every sunrise, every star in the heavens, every act of genuine love, every awareness of right and wrong, every longing for justice, every desire for meaning and purpose, and every recognition that something is profoundly missing bear witness to the Creator for whom mankind was made.

Separated from God, mankind has sought throughout history to fill that emptiness with wealth, power, pleasure, fame, knowledge, religion, possessions, relationships, drugs, and countless other substitutes. Yet none of these can restore what was lost in Eden, because the void is ultimately spiritual rather than material.

As Augustine famously observed, **“You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”** That very restlessness bears witness to the fact that mankind was created for fellowship with God. Thus, although the Fall disrupted the proper order of man’s nature, it did not eliminate God’s continual revelation of Himself, nor did it remove mankind’s God-given responsibility and ability to seek the One who first sought him.

As Paul declared to the Athenians, God ordered the nations and the times in which they live **“that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us”** ([Acts 17:27](#)).

Although mankind’s spirit no longer functioned in living communion with God, the body and the soul continued to serve God’s purpose. Through the eyes, ears, mind, and conscience that God Himself had given, mankind could still observe His creation, hear His truth, consider His works, and respond to His revelation. **The spirit had lost its proper communion with God, but God had not ceased making Himself known.**

Scripture reveals an important principle concerning the human heart. Every response to God’s revelation shapes the heart that responds. Just as repeated acts of obedience cultivate greater sensitivity to God’s voice, repeated acts of unbelief cultivate increasing resistance. Habits are formed through repetition. What begins as a deliberate choice gradually becomes a settled disposition.

This helps explain God’s commission to the prophet Isaiah: **“Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes...”** ([Isaiah 6:9–10](#))

God was not arbitrarily preventing the people from believing. Rather, knowing they would continually reject His Word, He sent Isaiah to preach despite their persistent unbelief. With every repeated refusal to listen, their hearts became increasingly hardened. They became so accustomed to ignoring God’s warnings that they gradually ceased to hear them altogether. The problem was not that God had stopped speaking; the problem was that they had formed the habit of refusing to listen.

The same principle appears throughout Scripture. Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his own heart before Scripture speaks of God hardening it. The writer of Hebrews repeatedly warns, **“Today, if you hear His**

voice, do not harden your hearts.” These warnings would be meaningless if mankind were incapable of responding. Instead, they reveal that every response to God’s revelation either softens or hardens the heart.

This principle should not be underestimated. Every decision makes the next similar decision easier. Repeated obedience strengthens faith. Repeated unbelief strengthens unbelief. Just as habits of righteousness are formed through practicing righteousness, habits of disobedience are formed through practicing disobedience. Eventually what began as a series of choices becomes the settled character of the individual.

God therefore continues to call sinners, not because they possess the ability to save themselves, but because He, in His grace, continues to reveal Himself and graciously invites them to respond. The tragedy is not that God has ceased calling mankind. The tragedy is that mankind so often becomes accustomed to ignoring His voice.

Why Doesn’t God Simply Set Things Right?

To many, the greatest obstacle to believing in God is not the lack of evidence for His existence, but the existence of evil itself. They cannot understand how a God who hates sin, injustice, suffering, and death, and who possesses the power to bring them all to an end, could allow such things to continue. To them, the tragic realities of this present world appear incompatible with the existence of an all-powerful and perfectly good God.

Yes, God is perfectly holy, He hates evil, He delights in mercy, and He takes no pleasure in the suffering of His creatures. However, God has nevertheless permitted the untold atrocities, diseases, wars, oppression, and death that have marked human history to occur. This naturally raises the question:

If God is all-powerful, why does He not simply appear in His full glory, destroy Satan, judge evil, and restore the world to the way it was before sin entered creation?

To many, such a solution appears obvious. If God truly loves mankind, why allow sin, suffering, disease, injustice, and death to continue? Why not simply intervene, remove evil forever, and establish His righteous kingdom upon the earth?

The answer, however, is far more sobering than many realize.

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly reveals that sinful mankind cannot stand in the unveiled presence of His full glory. When Moses asked to behold God’s glory, the Lord replied, “You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” ([Exodus 33:20](#))

Likewise, whenever God revealed even a measure of His majesty, men instinctively fell upon their faces, overwhelmed by His holiness and acutely aware of their own unworthiness. God's holiness is not merely one of His many attributes; it is the absolute perfection of His very being. That which is finite, corrupted by sin, and separated from God cannot endure the unveiled presence of the infinite Creator.

This reality should cause us to reconsider the question and instead ask : **If God allows such temporal suffering in order to extend to mankind every opportunity to escape His judgement, how much more dreadful must that final judgment be?**

In answer, the present world, grievous though it is, is not the fullest expression of God's judgment upon sin. Rather, it stands as a solemn reminder that a far greater judgment yet awaits those who remain separated from Him. Every moment that God delays that final day is not evidence of indifference, but of extraordinary patience, mercy, and grace, "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

Were God to appear today in the fullness of His unveiled glory, then yes, Satan's rebellion would indeed come to an end. Every act of wickedness would cease. Every injustice would immediately be judged. Yet so too would every man and woman who remains separated from God. Justice would be perfectly satisfied, but mercy would cease. The opportunity for repentance would forever end.

It is therefore by God's grace—not by His absence—that the present world continues. God has not turned His back upon mankind. Rather, in His longsuffering mercy He has turned His face, He has veiled the fullness of His glory, allowing time for sinners to repent, believe, and be reconciled to Him before the day when Christ shall return to judge the living and the dead. This also explains why God could not simply overlook Adam's sin.

Many imagine forgiveness to be nothing more than the cancellation of a debt. If that were the case, God could simply have declared mankind forgiven without requiring the Incarnation, the Cross, or the Resurrection. Such a view, however, fails to appreciate both the nature of sin and the righteousness of God.

Throughout this work I have carefully distinguished between mankind's inherited corrupted nature and the personal guilt incurred through one's own sins. These two realities are not identical and should never be confused. Nevertheless, although distinct, both result in the same tragic reality: separation from God.

Every descendant of Adam inherits a corrupted nature and is therefore conceived into a state of spiritual separation from God. As each morally accountable individual responds to that corrupted nature through his own unbelief and acts of disobedience, he likewise becomes personally guilty before God.

This distinction should never be misunderstood as suggesting that inherited corruption is somehow insignificant or that personal guilt is limited to only a few. Scripture leaves no room for either conclusion.

- On the one hand, mankind is born separated from God through Adam's fall;
- on the other, "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" ([Romans 3:23](#)).
- **We are not sinful because we sin, we sin because we are sinful.**

Every morally accountable person confirms through his own sins the very corruption he inherited. Thus, both mankind's inherited condition and his personal guilt testify to the same reality: apart from Jesus Christ, all stand in desperate need of reconciliation with God.

Every accountable individual will one day give an account of himself to God. This explains why redemption required far more than the simple cancellation of sin's penalty. Had Christ come merely to pay the debt of mankind's transgressions, redemption itself would remain incomplete. Forgiveness alone could never accomplish God's ultimate purpose.

Suppose, for a moment, that God simply restored redeemed mankind to the same condition Adam enjoyed before the Fall. What would ultimately be accomplished?

- Adam was created **very good**, according to God's perfect purpose and design, yet Adam fell.
- Lucifer likewise **was created blameless** according to God's perfect purpose and design, yet Lucifer rebelled.

Returning mankind to a pre-fallen state would not guarantee that history could never repeat itself. It would merely restore mankind to the same position from which mankind had already fallen.

Clearly, God's purpose must be something infinitely greater than simply reversing the Fall. The Incarnation itself points to that greater purpose.

Key Takeaways

- Adam's fall confirms what the fall of Lucifer already demonstrated.
- The problem cannot simply be explained by environment.
- The Garden was not enough.
- Sin corrupted every aspect of mankind's existence.
- Fallen humanity cannot restore itself.
- God's purpose was not defeated by the Fall but advanced toward redemption.

Looking Ahead

If mankind cannot restore himself, redemption must come from outside mankind.

That Redeemer is Jesus Christ.

WHY REDEMPTION WAS NECESSARY

If God's ultimate purpose were merely to forgive sin, redemption could rightly be viewed as the destination of His plan. Scripture, however, presents a far greater vision. Redemption is not the end of God's work but the necessary means by which He accomplishes His eternal purpose.

God created mankind in His image, **knowing that mankind would fall**. Yet the Fall did not frustrate God's purpose; rather, it became the stage upon which His wisdom, justice, mercy, grace, and love would be revealed in their fullest measure. In the fullness of time, the Creator entered His own creation.

Jesus Christ assumed our humanity, bore our sins, satisfied the righteous demands of God's justice, conquered death through His resurrection, and opened the way for fallen mankind to be reconciled to God.

Yet reconciliation itself is not God's final goal. Through redemption, God is preparing a people who will not merely be forgiven but glorified; not merely restored to what was but made new; not merely returned to Eden but perfected and united in Christ forever. Salvation therefore should never be viewed as the conclusion of God's plan but as the indispensable path leading to the glorious inheritance God purposed before the foundation of the world.

The eternal Son of God did not merely become man in order to pay a legal debt. He became what He had created in order to redeem what He had created and ultimately accomplish the purpose for which mankind had been created from the very beginning.

The Cross was therefore never an end in itself and neither was forgiveness or justification. Each serves a far greater purpose. The Apostle Paul writes: *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son... And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified."* (Romans 8:28–30)

Notice carefully where Paul concludes God's redemptive work.

- He does not conclude with creation.
- He does not conclude with the Fall.
- He does not conclude with forgiveness.
- He does not even conclude with justification.

He concludes with **glorification**. This is the climax of God's redemptive plan.

- Creation was the beginning.

- The Fall revealed mankind's need.
- The Incarnation made redemption possible.
- The Cross satisfied God's justice.
- The Resurrection conquered death.
- Glorification fulfills God's eternal purpose.

Everything that has occurred throughout history—including the entrance of sin into the world—has unfolded within the sovereign knowledge of God, who, without becoming the author of evil or violating the moral agency He graciously bestowed upon mankind, has continually worked all things toward the fulfillment of His eternal purpose in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The question, therefore, is no longer, **“Why did God allow the Fall?”**, the greater question becomes, **“What has God been accomplishing throughout the whole of redemptive history?”**

The answer is not found merely in creation, nor merely in forgiveness, nor merely in redemption. The answer is found in Jesus Christ.

- The purpose is Christ,
- Creation is for Christ and
- Redemption is through Christ.

Glorification is the means by which God's purpose for redeemed humanity reaches its consummation in everlasting union with Christ. From the very beginning, God's eternal purpose has been to glorify redeemed humanity through eternal union with His beloved Son.

At this point another some important question naturally arise:

- If God is all-powerful, perfectly loving, infinitely wise, and rich in mercy, why did He not simply forgive mankind?
- Why was the Incarnation necessary? Why the Cross? Why the shedding of Christ's blood?
- Why could God not simply restore Adam and Eve to the Garden of Eden and begin again?

These are not merely theological questions. They strike at the very heart of God's character.

- If God is perfectly loving, why does He judge?
- If He is perfectly just, how can He forgive?
- If He desires that none should perish, why not simply pardon mankind and bring an end to sin?

The answer lies not merely in God's love, nor merely in His justice, but in the perfect harmony of all His divine attributes.

- God cannot deny His own nature.
- He cannot cease to be just in order to be merciful.
- Nor can He cease to be holy in order to demonstrate love.
- Everything God does remains perfectly consistent with who He is.

Scripture proclaims that God created mankind in His own image and likeness. It progressively reveals that man has a tripartite nature, having a spirit, a soul and a body and that He endowed humanity with genuine moral agency. Adam and Eve were not created as machines programmed to obey, nor as irrational creatures incapable of moral choice. They were created with the God-given ability—and responsibility—to respond to God's revelation through either obedience or disobedience.

- With moral agency came responsibility.
- With responsibility came commandments.
- With commandments came accountability.
- With accountability came liability.

The moment Adam and Eve knowingly violated God's command, they were spiritually separated from God and had incurred a debt they could never repay. They became guilty before the righteous Judge of all creation. Justice therefore demanded satisfaction. This principle governs every just society.

A judge who simply overlooks evil is not regarded as compassionate but corrupt. Suppose a convicted murderer stood before a judge, found guilty beyond all doubt, and the judge simply declared, *"I choose to forgive you. You are free to go."* Such a judge would not be praised for mercy. He would rightly be condemned for abandoning justice and failing those who suffered because of the crime.

Likewise, God's justice cannot simply ignore sin. If sin carried no consequence, God's commandments would become meaningless, responsibility would cease to exist, accountability would disappear, and justice itself would be destroyed. A universe without justice would ultimately become a universe without righteousness.

Yet neither can God deny His love. Throughout Scripture He reveals Himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but desires that they should turn and live.

- His justice demands that sin be judged.
- His love desires that sinners be saved.

How can both remain perfectly true? That is the dilemma redemption answers.

Left to ourselves, we possess neither the righteousness to satisfy God's justice nor the ability to restore what sin has corrupted. We cannot redeem ourselves because the very nature that incurred the debt has itself become corrupted. Fallen mankind therefore stands not only guilty before God but utterly incapable of paying the debt he owes. This also explains why redemption could never come through another fallen human being. Every descendant of Adam stands under the same condemnation. One debtor cannot satisfy the debt of another debtor.

Neither could redemption come through an angel. Angels were not created to become mankind's representatives, nor does Scripture reveal any provision whereby an angel could redeem fallen humanity.

Redemption required One who could truly represent mankind while remaining entirely free from mankind's guilt. The necessity of redemption therefore reveals something remarkable about the wisdom of God. Long before mankind understood the depth of its need, God had already purposed the means by which both His justice and His love would be perfectly displayed.

The question was never whether God desired to forgive. The question was how God could remain perfectly just while fully justifying the guilty. Scripture reveals that there was only one possible answer. The Redeemer would have to become one of us.

- Not merely appear as a man.
- Not merely speak to mankind.
- Not merely teach mankind.

The Redeemer would have to enter the very creation He had made, assume the very nature He intended to redeem, satisfy every righteous demand of God's justice on behalf of mankind, and overcome the very death that sin had introduced into the world. Only then could justice, mercy, grace, and love meet in perfect harmony without any one of them being compromised.

The question is therefore no longer simply why redemption was necessary. The question now becomes: **Why did the Creator Himself become the creature?** That question brings us to the very heart of the incarnation and to the One whom Scripture calls **the Second Adam**.

The Second Adam

Having established why redemption was necessary, another important question naturally follows. Why did the eternal Son of God become man? Why was the incarnation necessary?

The answer reaches back to the very beginning of Scripture.

God created mankind in His own image and likeness and appointed Adam to exercise dominion over the earth as His representative. Adam was not merely the first man; he stood as the representative head of the human race. Through his unbelief and disobedience, sin entered the world, bringing corruption, suffering, and death upon all his descendants.

If mankind was to be redeemed, redemption would have to come through another representative.

Scripture reveals that representative to be Jesus Christ—the Second Adam.

The Apostle Paul writes, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit... The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ([1 Corinthians 15:45, 47](#)).

This comparison is deliberate.

- The first Adam stood as the representative head of the first creation.
- The Second Adam stands as the representative Head of a new creation.
- Where the first Adam brought death, the Second Adam brings life.
- Where the first Adam disobeyed, the Second Adam obeyed.
- Where the first Adam failed, the Second Adam triumphed.

Throughout more than thirty years of earthly life, Christ never sinned. Peter therefore declares, “[He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth.](#)” (1 Peter 2:22). Likewise, the writer of Hebrews testifies, “[For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.](#)” (Hebrews 4:15)

Who is this Jesus Christ, the Second Adam? He is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior and the Redeemer of humanity. He is God Himself, who incarnate in the flesh fulfills His plan of salvation and redemption of the fallen man who will trust in Him.

Throughout the history of the Church, great emphasis has rightly been placed upon defending the deity of Jesus Christ. He is, and forever shall be, truly God. Yet, in emphasizing His divinity, some have unintentionally diminished the significance of His genuine humanity. In doing so, they risk diminishing the significance of the incarnation itself.

Likewise, some have unintentionally diminished the greatness of Christ’s earthly victory by assuming that His divinity gave Him an advantage unavailable to the first Adam. Such reasoning, however well intentioned, overlooks one of the very purposes of the incarnation. The eternal Son of God did not merely appear as a man; He truly became man in order to accomplish as the Second Adam what the first Adam failed to accomplish.

The contrast between the first Adam and the Second Adam is striking. The first Adam entered a world untouched by sin. He lived in a tranquil garden upon a blessed earth, free from corruption, suffering, sickness, and death. He enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God through his human spirit and was entrusted with dominion over God’s creation. **The first Adam lacked nothing that was necessary to fulfill God’s purpose for him.** Scripture records only a few explicit commands given to him, yet he fell.

The Second Adam entered a world already under the curse of sin. Rather than a tranquil garden, He was born into poverty. Rather than peace, He lived among hatred, violence, disease, and death. Rather than facing a single temptation, He endured temptation throughout His earthly life. Rather than obeying a handful of commands, He perfectly fulfilled the entire Law of God – all 613 commandments. He experienced hunger, thirst, weariness, grief, rejection, betrayal, torture, and ultimately death upon a cross. Yet throughout more than thirty years of earthly life, He never once sinned.

The contrast becomes even more striking when we consider the circumstances of each man’s testing. Adam was tempted in the midst of abundance. He had eaten freely from every tree of the garden except

one. Christ, by contrast, was tempted after forty days of fasting in the wilderness. Adam fell while surrounded by every earthly blessing. Christ remained faithful while enduring hunger, weakness, and the full weight of a fallen world. The first Adam yielded to the tempter under the most favorable of circumstances; the Second Adam overcame under the most adverse.

It would diminish the significance of Christ's victory if one were to conclude that He overcame simply because He relied upon powers unavailable to the first Adam. Scripture presents a very different picture. Although Jesus never ceased to be God, He voluntarily chose not to live independently by exercising His divine prerogatives for His own advantage. Rather, He lived the life of a true man in complete dependence upon the Father. He declared,

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing." (John 5:19)

and again,

"The Father who dwells in Me does His works." (John 14:10)

Christ did not act independently for His own advantage but lived in perfect submission to the Father's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Likewise, the Second Adam demonstrated what mankind was always intended to be when living in complete dependence upon God.**

This understanding also helps explain why the New Testament repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus Christ truly came **in the flesh**. Throughout the history of the Church, many heresies sought to diminish Christ's humanity by portraying Him as only appearing to be human or by denying that He truly shared in our humanity. Scripture responds by insisting that the incarnation was real. Redemption required more than God visiting mankind; it required that the eternal Son of God truly become man. Only then could He stand as the Second Adam, faithfully representing the very race He came to redeem.

The New Testament places remarkable emphasis upon confessing the true humanity of Jesus Christ. John writes,

"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." (1 John 4:2)

Likewise,

"Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh." (2 John 7)

These warnings should not be misunderstood as minimizing Christ's deity. Scripture abundantly affirms that Jesus Christ is truly God. Rather, they remind us that His genuine humanity is equally essential to the Christian faith. Had Christ merely appeared to be human, He could not truly represent humanity as

the Second Adam. Only by becoming fully man could He obey where Adam disobeyed, overcome where Adam fell, and redeem the very race He came to save.

The incarnation therefore was not merely the means by which Christ could die. It was an indispensable part of God's eternal purpose. The Creator entered His own creation. The Son of God became the Son of Man. Only then could the Second Adam accomplish what the first Adam failed to accomplish.

Yet even His perfect obedience, glorious though it was, did not by itself satisfy the righteous demands of God's justice. Mankind's guilt still remained. The debt of sin still required payment. The wages of sin was still death.

The obedient life of the Second Adam therefore leads inevitably to the Cross, where justice, mercy, grace and love would meet in perfect harmony.

The Incarnation

The Incarnation stands at the very heart of the Christian faith. Everything God had promised from the beginning of redemptive history now converged in one extraordinary event. The eternal Son of God entered His own creation. John writes, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."* ([John 1:14](#))

The One who had eternally existed with the Father did not merely appear to be human. He truly became man. This truth is so central to Christianity that the Apostle John warns believers to test every spirit by its confession concerning Jesus Christ. He writes, *"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."* ([1 John 4:2](#)). Again, *"Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh."* (2 John 7)

It is remarkable that Scripture repeatedly emphasizes Christ's genuine humanity. This emphasis should never be understood as minimizing His deity. Rather, it underscores how essential His humanity is to God's plan of redemption.

Had Christ merely appeared to be human, He could never truly have represented humanity. Had He not become one of us, He could not redeem us. The Church has therefore rightly confessed throughout the centuries that Jesus Christ is one Person possessing two complete and distinct natures.

- The eternal Son—the Logos—did not become half God and half man.
- Neither did He exchange His deity for humanity.
- Nor did His divine nature absorb His human nature.

Rather, the one Person of Jesus Christ possesses both a fully divine nature and a fully human nature.

- His divine nature remained everything that God eternally is.
- His human nature consisted of everything that genuine humanity is.

- He possessed a true human body.
- He possessed a rational human soul.
- He possessed a genuine human spirit.
- He experienced genuine human development.

Luke tells us, *"Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."* (Luke 2:52). The writer of Hebrews likewise declares, *"Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God."* (Hebrews 2:17). Again, *"For because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted."* (Hebrews 2:18)

These passages reveal something profoundly important. Jesus did not merely observe human life. He entered it completely.

- He experienced genuine human weakness.
- He experienced genuine human growth.
- He experienced genuine human temptation.
- He experienced genuine human suffering.
- He experienced genuine human sorrow.

Yet throughout His entire earthly life He remained completely without sin. His humanity was therefore not less than ours. It was humanity as God intended humanity to be. This distinction becomes extremely important.

- If Christ's humanity were incomplete, then His representation of mankind would likewise be incomplete.
- If His humanity merely appeared genuine, then His obedience would likewise become only apparent.

But Scripture allows no such conclusion. The Redeemer became fully man because mankind required a true human Representative.

- Everything Adam was created to be, Christ became.
- Everything Adam failed to accomplish, Christ fulfilled.
- Everything Adam lost, Christ restored.

Yet Christ came not merely to restore. He came to accomplish something greater. The Incarnation therefore was not simply the means by which Christ could die. It was an indispensable part of God's eternal purpose.

- Only by becoming truly man could He faithfully represent mankind.
- Only by becoming truly man could He obey where Adam disobeyed.
- Only by becoming truly man could He suffer on behalf of mankind.
- Only by becoming truly man could He become the merciful and faithful High Priest of His people.

The mystery of the Incarnation therefore reveals not only the love of God but also His astonishing wisdom.

- The Creator became part of His own creation.
- The eternal Son entered time.
- The Lord of Glory humbled Himself to become the servant of all.

Yet another set of questions immediately arise:

- If Jesus remained fully God while becoming fully man, how are we to understand Paul's remarkable statement that He "**emptied Himself**"?
- Did the Son somehow cease to possess His divine attributes?
- Did He surrender His deity?
- Or does Scripture intend something altogether different?

To answer these questions, we must now consider one of the most profound doctrines of the Incarnation—the doctrine commonly known as **Kenosis**.

Kenosis: The Self-Emptying of the Son

One of the most remarkable truths revealed in Scripture is that the eternal Son of God voluntarily chose to enter His own creation as a true man. This voluntary self-emptying, commonly referred to by the Greek term *kenosis*, has often been misunderstood. Some have concluded that Christ laid aside His deity or surrendered certain divine attributes. Scripture, however, teaches no such thing.

The eternal Son never ceased to be God. He did not become less divine, nor did He exchange His deity for humanity. Throughout His earthly life He remained fully God while simultaneously possessing a complete human nature. The Incarnation was therefore not the subtraction of deity but the addition of genuine humanity. The one Person of Christ possessed two complete and distinct natures united without confusion or division.

The two natures of Jesus refer to the doctrine that **the one person Jesus Christ has two natures, divine and human**. In theology this is called the doctrine of the hypostatic union, from the Greek word *hypostasis* (which came to mean substantive reality). While Scripture progressively reveals Christ to have two natures, it does not explicitly address the question of whether Jesus Christ has two natures or only one. However, understanding that Christ has two natures is the most Scripturally consistent and theologically sound position.

The New Testament clearly attests that Jesus is a real man, born into the human race. It also clearly attests that Jesus is God. [John 1:1](#) states that the Word is God and then in [John 1:14](#) we see that the Word John is speaking of is Jesus who "tabernacled" among us. Matthew and Luke both tell of Jesus' birth to the Virgin Mary and provide His human lineage.

Some members of the early Church councils grappling with heresies regarding the divinity and humanity of Christ tried to explain the nature of Christ by saying:

1. That the divine Spirit came upon the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him at the crucifixion. However, in this scenario, it might seem as though Jesus had two natures, but

He would be two persons, Jesus the man and Christ the divine, each with their own nature sharing the one body.

2. That Jesus Christ was only one person and that He only had one nature. The problem with this explanation is that His nature would be something of an amalgamation of divine and human. He would not be fully human because the divine nature has mixed with the human nature, making Him something more than human. He would not be wholly God because the human nature has mixed with the divine nature, making Him something less than divine.

Therefore, and as described in the Chalcedon (AKA Chalcedonian) creed the council of 451 AD believed that the only way to adequately explain the nature of Christ was to say that Jesus is one Person with two natures—a human nature and a divine nature. He is both God and Man. His two natures are inseparably united (not mixed) in what theologians term the “**hypostatic union**.” Hypostatic union is basically having two distinct natures (a Union) in one person. ‘God and Man in two distinct natures and one person forever. Thus, Jesus was / is fully a member of the human race with a fully functioning human nature (without sin) and simultaneously Jesus was / is wholly God.

“... according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son ...”

This angle of interpretation – known as perichoresis – was brought in to explain that which was otherwise a fundamental difficulty in understanding both **Kenosis** and the **Trinity**. For example, how could the three Persons be totally equal, yet distinct; for once they are distinct, they can surely not be equal? Perichoresis or in its closest English equivalent, “inter-penetration” / “mutual indwelling.”, represents the idea that the Persons are mutually involved in one another to such a degree that they are equal. Although the word itself is not found in the Bible, many believe this term is supported by Jesus’s prayer for mutual intimacy.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and **that the world may know** that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:21-23 KJV).

This brings us to the moment of “**ah ha**”, for if Jesus had a real human nature – spoiler alert, He did – then as much as Jesus had a real human body so too did He have a real human soul and a real human spirit. **This will become one of the most vital pieces to understanding how Jesus was glorified and perfected and how we will become perfected and glorified in Him – how we will share not in Christ’s divine nature but in His perfect human nature.**

Thus, when Scripture speaks of Christ emptying Himself, it does not mean that Jesus gave up or set aside His divine nature but that He took on a human nature and it was through this human nature and manner in which He chose to live during His earthly ministry. Rather than exercising His divine prerogatives independently for His own advantage, He willingly assumed the position of a servant and lived in complete dependence upon the Father. Throughout His ministry He repeatedly testified that His works were performed in obedience to the Father's will. Everything He did flowed from that perfect relationship of trust and obedience.

In this respect, Christ succeeded precisely where the first Adam failed. Adam had been created with everything necessary to fulfill God's purpose for him, yet he chose independence over dependence. The Second Adam likewise possessed everything necessary to fulfill the Father's purpose, yet He never acted independently. Every temptation was met with obedience. Every trial became another opportunity to trust the Father completely. In doing so, He revealed what humanity was always intended to be—a life lived in perfect fellowship with God.

Christ Perfected

The doctrine of Kenosis also prepares us to understand one of the most profound statements found in the book of Hebrews. Twice the writer declares that Christ was "made perfect."

"It was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." (Hebrews 2:10)

Again,

"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Hebrews 5:8–9)

At first reading, these verses may seem surprising. How can the eternal Son of God, who is perfect in every respect, be said to have been "made perfect"? The answer lies in the distinction already established between Christ's two natures. Scripture never teaches that Christ's divine nature required perfection.

- God is eternally perfect.
- His wisdom is perfect.
- His holiness is perfect.
- His righteousness is perfect.
- His glory is perfect.

Nothing can be added to the perfection of God, nor can God become more perfect than He already is. Consequently, the perfection spoken of in Hebrews cannot refer to Christ's deity. Rather, it concerns His humanity and the completion of His incarnate mission.

The eternal Son assumed a true human nature so that He might accomplish, as the Second Adam, what the first Adam failed to accomplish. Throughout His earthly life He faithfully fulfilled every obligation placed upon Him by the Father. He resisted every temptation. He remained obedient under every trial. He willingly embraced suffering, rejection, betrayal, and finally death itself.

In this sense, Christ was “made perfect” because His earthly calling reached its appointed goal. The Greek word *teleioō* carries the idea of bringing something to its intended end, completion, or fulfillment. It is closely related to *telos*, meaning “goal,” “purpose,” or “appointed end.”

From the beginning, God has worked according to an eternal purpose. Creation had a purpose. The Fall did not destroy that purpose. Redemption serves that purpose. Now, in the Incarnation, Christ fulfills that purpose by perfectly completing the mission the Father entrusted to Him.

- The first Adam was placed in a tranquil garden and entrusted with God’s purpose for humanity. The Second Adam entered a fallen world and fulfilled God’s purpose for humanity.
- Where Adam’s obedience ended in failure, Christ’s obedience continued all the way to the Cross.
- Where Adam sought his own will, Christ continually sought the Father’s will.
- Where Adam brought death to those he represented, Christ brought life to those united with Him.

His perfection, therefore, was not a movement from moral imperfection to moral perfection. He was without sin from the very beginning. Rather, it was the completion of His vocation as the incarnate Son.

- Every temptation resisted.
- Every act of obedience rendered.
- Every prophecy fulfilled.
- Every suffering endured.
- Every sacrifice accepted.
- Every step brought Him nearer to the completion of the work the Father had given Him to accomplish.

Even His death did not conclude that work. His resurrection completed it. The resurrection was not merely the restoration of life. Nor was it merely the public vindication of His innocence. It marked the completion of His incarnate mission.

The humanity He had assumed now entered its glorified condition. The obedient Servant was openly exalted. The Second Adam stood victorious. The Founder of our salvation had completed the work entrusted to Him. Here we again distinguish carefully between Christ’s two natures.

The divine Son did not receive a glory He previously lacked. From all eternity the Son possessed the glory of God. Rather, it was His assumed humanity that completed its earthly mission and entered its glorified state. The One who had entered the world in humility now stood as the glorified Man—the firstfruits of the new creation and the representative Head of redeemed humanity.

This is why the writer of Hebrews can immediately speak of Christ as the One who perfects others. Having completed His own incarnate mission, He now becomes the Perfecter of those who belong to Him. The writer declares: "For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." ([Hebrews 10:14](#))

Notice the order carefully.

1. Christ first completed His own mission.
2. Only then does He perfect His people.
3. He is not merely the Savior who rescues sinners from judgment.
4. He is not merely the Redeemer who purchases mankind from the bondage of sin.
5. He is also the **Perfecter**, bringing to completion the very purpose for which mankind was originally created.

This truth may be summarized in the following way: **The first Adam was created sinless but not perfected. He possessed everything necessary to fulfill God's purpose for him, yet remained capable of failure. The Second Adam was likewise born without sin. Yet through His perfect obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death, and resurrection, He brought His incarnate humanity to the perfection required to become not only the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, but also its Perfecter.**

The eternal Son became what He had created so that what He had created might ultimately be perfected in Him. This brings us to the next glorious truth. If Christ has become the Perfecter of redeemed humanity, **how do those who believe participate in His perfected life?**

The answer is found in one of the most beautiful expressions in the entire New Testament: **the believer is "in Christ."**

The Cross: Where Justice, Mercy, Grace & Love Meet

Having seen that Jesus Christ fulfilled the vocation of the Second Adam and completed the earthly mission entrusted to Him by the Father, we now arrive at the central event toward which His entire incarnate life had been moving.

The Cross. The Cross was not an unforeseen tragedy. Neither was it merely the cruel execution of an innocent man. From before the foundation of the world, God had purposed that His Son would become the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Every sacrifice under the Old Covenant, every drop of blood shed upon Israel's altars, every Passover lamb, and every prophecy concerning the suffering Messiah pointed forward to this single event in history.

The Cross stands at the very center of God's redemptive plan. Yet to understand its significance we must ask another question. **Why was the Cross necessary?**

Could God not simply forgive mankind? This question was introduced in the previous chapter, but it finds its answer here. Throughout Scripture, God reveals Himself as perfectly holy, perfectly righteous, perfectly just, perfectly merciful, perfectly gracious, and perfect in love. These attributes are not independent qualities that compete with one another. They exist in perfect harmony because they belong to the very nature of God Himself.

- God cannot deny His holiness in order to express love.
- Neither can He abandon justice in order to demonstrate mercy.
- Nor can He overlook sin in order to display grace.
- Everything God does must remain perfectly consistent with who He is.
- Had God simply ignored mankind's rebellion, justice would have been abandoned.
- Had He judged mankind without providing redemption, His mercy would never have been revealed.

At the Cross, however, every divine attribute shines together in perfect harmony.

- Justice is satisfied.
- Mercy is extended.
- Grace is freely given.
- Love is perfectly demonstrated.

Paul writes, *"God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* ([Romans 5:8](#)). Likewise, *"God put Christ forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness... so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."* ([Romans 3:25–26](#))

These words reveal the astonishing wisdom of God. The Cross did not require God to choose between justice and mercy. Instead, justice and mercy meet together in perfect agreement.

- Sin is judged.
- The sinner may be forgiven.
- Justice is upheld.
- Grace is bestowed.
- Love is revealed.
- The righteous Judge Himself provides the sacrifice His own justice requires.

Here the Old Testament sacrificial system reaches its fulfillment. For centuries, Israel brought lambs, goats, and bulls before the altar. Yet Scripture repeatedly teaches that the blood of animals could never truly remove sin. Those sacrifices pointed beyond themselves. They anticipated the coming of the true Lamb of God.

John the Baptist therefore declares, *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* ([John 1:29](#)). Unlike every sacrifice that preceded Him, Christ offered Himself once for all.

No further sacrifice remains necessary. The perfect High Priest became the perfect Sacrifice. The One who offered the sacrifice was Himself the sacrifice.

- Everything pointed to Him.
- Everything found its fulfillment in Him.

Yet the Cross reveals more than God's justice. It reveals the immeasurable depth of His love.

- The Creator willingly endured the judgment deserved by His own creatures.
- The Holy One bore the penalty incurred by sinners.
- The sinless One suffered in the place of the guilty.

Isaiah had foretold this centuries before. *"He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed."* (Isaiah 53:5)

At Calvary, justice was not ignored. It was exhausted. The debt incurred by Adam's race was fully satisfied. Nothing remained to be paid. Christ Himself declared, *"It is finished."* (John 19:30)

These words announce far more than the end of Christ's suffering. They proclaim the completion of the redemptive work the Father had entrusted to the Son.

- The sacrifice was complete.
- The debt was paid.
- Justice had been satisfied.
- Redemption had been accomplished.

The veil separating God and man had been torn from top to bottom, declaring that through the blood of Christ a new and living way into the presence of God had been opened. Yet even the Cross does not stand alone. Had Christ remained in the tomb, death would still reign.

- The Cross required the Resurrection.
- The sacrifice required vindication.
- The Redeemer who died must also conquer death itself.

The Cross therefore accomplished everything necessary for mankind's redemption. But redemption accomplished at Calvary must now be personally applied to those who believe.

This raises another vital question. **How does the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ become life for fallen mankind?**

The answer is found in the salvation God freely offers through His Son.

Salvation: From Death to Life

Having established that the Cross fully satisfied the righteous demands of God's justice, another question naturally arises. **How does the finished work of Christ become the possession of those who believe?**

Scripture answers this question with one glorious word: **Salvation.**

Salvation is far more than the forgiveness of sins. Neither is it merely rescue from the penalty of hell. Rather, salvation is God's gracious work by which He delivers fallen mankind from the power and consequences of sin and restores them to fellowship with Himself through Jesus Christ. From beginning to end, salvation is God's work.

- It originates in His eternal purpose.
- It is accomplished through His Son.
- It is applied by the Holy Spirit.
- It reaches its consummation in the glorification of the believer.

The Apostle Paul writes, ["For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."](#) (Ephesians 2:8–9). Likewise, Peter declares, ["According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."](#) (1 Peter 1:3)

These passages remind us that salvation is not something mankind achieves.

- It is something God gives.
- No amount of moral effort can erase the guilt of sin.
- No accumulation of good works can satisfy the justice of God.
- No religious ceremony can restore what Adam lost.

Salvation is possible only because Christ has already accomplished everything necessary for redemption. When the sinner hears the Gospel and responds in faith, God immediately performs what fallen humanity could never accomplish.

- The guilty are justified.
- The condemned are forgiven.
- The alienated are reconciled.
- The enemies of God become His children.
- Those who were spiritually dead are made alive together with Christ.

Paul describes this transformation in striking language: ["And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked... But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us... made us alive together with Christ."](#) (Ephesians 2:1–5)

Notice that Paul describes fallen humanity as spiritually dead. Death in Scripture signifies separation.

- Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.
- Spiritual death is the separation of mankind from the life of God.

The Fall brought both. Adam did not cease to exist when he sinned. Rather, his fellowship with God was broken. The human race inherited that same condition. Separated from God, mankind became incapable of restoring himself to the life for which he had originally been created.

Salvation reverses this separation. Through Christ, fellowship with God is restored. The believer is reconciled to the Father.

- His sins are forgiven.
- He is adopted into God's family.
- The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within him.
- He passes from death to life.

Jesus Himself declared, "[Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.](#)" (John 5:24). This new life is not merely a future promise.

- It begins the very moment a person believes.
- The believer does not wait until death to become God's child.
- He becomes God's child now.
- He does not wait until heaven to possess eternal life.
- He possesses eternal life now.

Yet, while salvation is complete in its accomplishment, it is progressive in its application.

- The believer has been justified.
- He is being sanctified.
- He shall be glorified.

These three aspects of salvation must never be confused.

- Justification declares the believer righteous before God.
- Sanctification progressively conforms the believer to the image of Christ throughout this present life.
- Glorification brings God's work to its final and perfect completion.

Each depends entirely upon the finished work of Christ. Each unfolds according to God's eternal purpose. Salvation, therefore, is not merely an event. It is the beginning of a new life. Everything changes because the believer has been brought into a new relationship with God through His Son.

This naturally raises another important question. If salvation restores mankind to God, **how is the believer now related to Christ?** Scripture answers with one of the richest expressions found anywhere in the New Testament.

The believer is **in Christ**.

In Christ

Having seen that salvation is God's gracious work accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are now prepared to consider one of the greatest truths revealed in the New Testament. How does everything Christ accomplished become the possession of those who believe?

The answer is found in one of the Apostle Paul's favorite expressions: **"In Christ."**

Throughout his letters Paul repeatedly speaks of believers being "in Christ," "in Him," "with Christ," or "through Christ." These are not merely poetic expressions. They describe the believer's new relationship with the risen Lord and form the foundation upon which every aspect of salvation rests.

God has not merely chosen to bless believers through Christ. He has chosen to unite believers to Christ. This distinction is profound. Salvation is not merely receiving gifts from Christ. It is being brought into living union with Christ Himself. Everything God purposes to give His redeemed people is found in His Son.

Paul opens his letter to the Ephesians with these remarkable words: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."** (Ephesians 1:3)

Notice carefully where every blessing is found.

- Not beside Christ.
- Not apart from Christ.
- Not merely because of Christ.

Every spiritual blessing is found **in Christ**.

- Outside of Christ there is no justification.
- Outside of Christ there is no reconciliation.
- Outside of Christ there is no adoption.
- Outside of Christ there is no eternal life.
- Outside of Christ there is no resurrection.
- Outside of Christ there is no glorification.

Everything God has purposed for redeemed humanity is found in His Son. This truth has been foreshadowed throughout Scripture.

- Noah and his family were preserved only because they were within the ark.
- Israel escaped judgment only because they remained beneath the blood of the Passover lamb.

- The cities of refuge provided safety only for those who entered them.

Each of these points beyond itself. Each illustrates the same glorious truth. Safety is found within God's appointed provision. Likewise, salvation is found only in Christ. The believer therefore does not merely believe certain truths about Jesus. He is united to Jesus.

Paul writes, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20). Again, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17). And again, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3)

These passages reveal that union with Christ is not symbolic language alone. It is the believer's new spiritual reality. Everything Christ accomplished as the Second Adam now becomes the inheritance of those united to Him by faith.

- His righteousness becomes our righteousness.
- His sonship becomes our adoption.
- His inheritance becomes our inheritance.
- His life becomes our life.
- His victory becomes our victory.

Because we are united with Christ, God no longer regards us as we once were in Adam. He now regards us according to His Son. This truth also explains why Paul repeatedly contrasts Adam with Christ.

- The first Adam became the representative head of fallen humanity. All who remain in Adam share in the consequences of Adam's disobedience.
- The Second Adam becomes the representative Head of redeemed humanity. All who are in Christ share in the blessings secured by His obedience.

Paul writes, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22). Notice the two spheres of existence. Humanity is either **in Adam** or **in Christ**. There is no third position.

- To remain in Adam is to remain under sin and death.
- To be united with Christ is to enter into life.

Yet another important distinction must be maintained.

- Union with Christ does not mean believers become Christ.
- Neither does it mean believers become divine.

Scripture never teaches that redeemed humanity becomes God or shares in God's divine essence. The distinction between Creator and creature remains forever. Our union with Christ is real.

- It is intimate.
- It is eternal.

But it never abolishes our humanity. Rather, we remain fully human while eternally united to the One who is both fully God and fully man. This distinction is essential to the Christian hope. Christ remains forever the unique Son of God. Believers remain forever His redeemed brothers and sisters.

- He is the Head.
- We are His body.
- He is the Bridegroom.
- We are His bride.
- He is the Vine.
- We are the branches.

Each illustration preserves both union and distinction. The believer therefore participates in everything Christ accomplished, not because he possesses these blessings by nature, but because he is united to the One who accomplished them.

Yet this raises another set of important questions.

- If believers are truly united with Christ, why do they continue to struggle with sin?
- Why does Scripture continue to speak of sanctification?
- Why does Paul confess, “[For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.](#)” ([Romans 7:19](#))

The answer lies in understanding the believer’s present condition. Although believers have been united with Christ, they have not yet experienced the full completion of everything that union will ultimately accomplish.

- They have been justified.
- They are being sanctified.
- They **shall be** glorified.

God has already declared them righteous because they are united with His Son. Yet He continues preparing them for the day when redemption reaches its glorious completion. That present reality—and the hope toward which it points—forms the subject of our next chapter.

Clothed in Christ - Righteous Yet Awaiting Perfection

Having established that believers are united with Christ, another important question naturally arises. If believers are truly **in Christ**, why do they continue to struggle with sin? Why does the Apostle Paul confess, “[For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.](#)” ([Romans 7:19](#)). Why does Scripture continually exhort believers to pursue holiness if they have already been declared righteous before God?

The answer lies in distinguishing between the believer’s **standing** before God and his present **condition**. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the believer’s standing before God is complete. His condition, however, is still being transformed. This distinction is beautifully illustrated by one of our Lord’s own parables. Jesus describes a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. Every guest was expected to wear the wedding garment graciously provided by the king himself. One man attempted

to enter wearing his own clothing. Because he rejected the garment the king had provided, he was cast out into outer darkness ([Matthew 22:1–14](#)).

The lesson is unmistakable.

No one enters the Kingdom of God clothed in his own righteousness. Every believer must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Paul writes, “[For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.](#)” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Again, “[There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.](#)” (Romans 8:1)

This is the glorious doctrine of imputed righteousness. God no longer regards the believer according to his own righteousness but according to the perfect righteousness of His Son. Christ Himself becomes the believer’s righteousness.

The believer therefore stands fully accepted before God—not because he has already become perfect, but because he is clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

Yet this immediately raises another question. If believers already possess Christ’s righteousness, why does sin remain such a present reality?

The answer is that justification does not immediately complete everything God purposes to accomplish in His children. The believer has been declared righteous. He has not yet been made perfect. That work awaits its final completion in glorification. This understanding also sheds light upon an important question concerning the nature of mankind.

Throughout the history of the Church, some have understood man to consist of two parts—body and soul—treating the terms *soul* and *spirit* as interchangeable. Others have understood Scripture to describe man as consisting of body, soul, and spirit. Without attempting to question the sincerity of those who hold the bipartite view, I believe Scripture consistently presents mankind as tripartite.

At creation God formed man’s body from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul ([Genesis 2:7](#)). Elsewhere, Scripture distinguishes between soul and spirit ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#)), suggesting that together they form distinct yet inseparable aspects of one human person. More importantly, I believe the Fall explains why some Christians conclude otherwise.

Before the Fall, man’s human spirit existed in living communion with God. The spirit fulfilled the very purpose for which God had created it. When Adam sinned, that communion was broken. Man became spiritually dead—not in the sense that his human spirit ceased to exist, but because it no longer functioned as God had intended. Separated from fellowship with God, the human spirit no longer exercised the role for which it had been created.

Consequently, fallen humanity gives little outward evidence of this distinction. From observation alone, man appears to consist only of body and soul. In that sense, one can understand why many conclude that the biblical terms *soul* and *spirit* describe the same reality.

I would respectfully suggest another explanation. The distinction becomes evident once again through the saving work of Christ. The Gospel does more than announce forgiveness. It restores what the Fall had broken. The writer of Hebrews describes the Word of God as, *"living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit..."* ([Hebrews 4:12](#))

I understand this passage to describe more than mere discernment. Through the Gospel, God restores the proper relationship between the believer's human spirit and Himself. The human spirit once again enters into living communion with God through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The believer therefore possesses something the unbeliever does not. His spirit has been made alive toward God. Yet even now the believer has not reached perfection. The body still bears the effects of the Fall. The flesh continues to oppose the things of God. The restored spirit delights in God and longs for obedience.

The soul finds itself between these opposing influences. Paul describes this inward conflict throughout [Romans 7](#) and [Galatians 5](#). The Christian life therefore becomes a continual struggle—not because redemption has failed, but because redemption has not yet reached its appointed completion.

This reality may be pictured as a continual tug-of-war. The flesh seeks to draw the soul toward the desires of the fallen world. The restored spirit draws the soul toward God. The believer experiences this conflict daily.

The struggle itself is evidence, not of spiritual failure, but of spiritual life. Before conversion there was no such conflict, for the spirit lay estranged from the life of God. Now, because the believer has been brought into communion with God through Christ, the struggle begins. This explains why sanctification is progressive. God has already declared the believer righteous because he is clothed in Christ. He now progressively conforms the believer to the image of His Son while he awaits the completion of salvation. Paul captures this tension beautifully when he writes, *"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own."* ([Philippians 3:12](#)). Likewise, the writer of Hebrews declares, *"For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."* ([Hebrews 10:14](#))

Notice the glorious paradox. The believer has already been perfected in one sense because he stands clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ. Yet he is simultaneously being sanctified as God prepares him for the day when redemption reaches its full completion.

- Our present righteousness is therefore both real and graciously imputed.
- Our future righteousness will be real, complete, and fully realized.
- Today we are accepted because we are clothed in Christ.
- Tomorrow we shall be perfected because we shall be united forever with the perfected Christ.

The believer therefore lives between two realities. He looks back to the Cross where redemption was accomplished. He looks upward to Christ in whom every spiritual blessing is found. And he looks forward to the day when faith shall become sight, sanctification shall give way to glorification, and what is now imputed shall be brought to its glorious completion.

For this reason, the Christian's greatest hope is not merely forgiveness.

- Nor merely justification.
- Nor even sanctification.
- His hope is glorification.

For the work God began in redemption shall finally reach its appointed end when those who are in Christ are conformed perfectly to the image of the Son and forever share in His glorified humanity.

Reflection & Takeaway

Throughout this section we have seen that redemption is one of the greatest demonstrations of God's wisdom, justice, mercy, grace, and love. Yet redemption itself was never God's final destination. Rather, it is the indispensable means by which He accomplishes the eternal purpose He established before the foundation of the world.

We have seen why redemption was necessary. Because God is perfectly holy and perfectly just, He could not simply overlook sin. Justice demanded satisfaction. Yet because God is also perfect in love, mercy, and grace, He purposed from eternity to provide the very sacrifice His own justice required.

We have seen that this redemption required far more than the death of an innocent man. It required the eternal Son of God to enter His own creation as the Second Adam. Possessing both a complete divine nature and a complete human nature, Christ faithfully fulfilled the human vocation entrusted to Adam. He obeyed where Adam disobeyed. He trusted where Adam doubted. He remained faithful where Adam fell.

We have also seen that Scripture speaks of Christ being made perfect. This perfection did not concern His divine nature, for God is eternally perfect and cannot become more perfect than He already is. Rather, through His incarnation, suffering, obedience, sacrifice, death, and resurrection, Christ brought His incarnate human mission to its appointed completion. Having fulfilled everything the Father gave Him to accomplish, He became not only the Savior and Redeemer of mankind but also its **Perfecter**.

Through faith, believers are united with Christ. They are justified before God, clothed in Christ's perfect righteousness, reconciled to the Father, adopted as His children, and brought into living communion with God through the indwelling Holy Spirit. These blessings belong to every believer because they are found **in Christ**.

Yet the believer's present experience reminds us that God's work is not yet complete.

- Although declared righteous, believers continue to struggle with sin.
- Although restored to fellowship with God, they still inhabit mortal bodies affected by the Fall.
- Although their human spirit has once again been brought into communion with God, the soul continues to experience the conflict between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit.

The believer therefore lives between two glorious realities.

- He looks back to the Cross, where redemption was accomplished once for all.
- He lives in the present, clothed in Christ's righteousness and being progressively conformed to His image.
- And he looks forward with confident hope to the day when God's work shall reach its glorious completion.

This distinction is essential.

- Redemption restores.
- Glorification perfects.
- Justification declares the believer righteous.
- Sanctification progressively transforms the believer.
- Glorification completes the purpose for which God created mankind from the beginning.

The first Adam was created very good according to God's purpose for him, yet he was capable of falling. The Second Adam fulfilled God's purpose for mankind through His perfect obedience and became the Perfecter of redeemed humanity.

Those who are united with Christ shall one day share fully in the perfected humanity of their risen Lord—not by becoming divine, but by being perfectly conformed to His glorified human nature through everlasting union with Him. Thus, redemption is not the conclusion of God's eternal purpose. It is the bridge that leads to its consummation. The story that began in Genesis has not yet reached its final chapter.

- One glorious work still remains.
- The completion of salvation.
- The perfection of redeemed humanity.
- The New Creation.

Reflection: *Redemption accomplished everything necessary to save mankind. Glorification will accomplish everything God intended mankind to become.*

NOT RESTORATION BUT TRANSFORMATION

Having considered creation, the Fall, redemption, and salvation, an important question remains.

- **What exactly has God accomplished through Jesus Christ?**
- Has God merely restored mankind to the condition Adam enjoyed before the Fall?
- Is salvation simply God's means of returning redeemed humanity to the Garden of Eden?
- If so, another question immediately presents itself.
- **What would prevent history from repeating itself?**

Adam was created without sin and declared by God to be **"very good."** He lived in a tranquil garden upon a blessed earth, enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God, and lacked nothing necessary to fulfill God's purpose for him. Yet Adam still chose unbelief and disobedience.

Nor was Adam's failure an isolated event. The Book of Judges records Israel's continual cycle of blessing, comfort, apathy, apostasy, bondage, repentance, deliverance, and restoration, only for the same cycle to begin again. Likewise, every dispensation recorded throughout Scripture demonstrates mankind's repeated inability to remain faithful to God. Though God's dealings with humanity differ throughout redemptive history, the outcome remains remarkably consistent. Left to himself, mankind continually falls short of God's glory.

These observations should cause us to ask whether God's ultimate purpose has ever been merely to restore mankind to Adam's original condition.

Suppose, for a moment, that redemption simply returned mankind to the exact state Adam enjoyed before the Fall. Adam himself demonstrates that such a restoration, glorious though it would be, could never guarantee that another fall would not occur. History has already answered that question. Scripture therefore directs our attention toward something far greater than restoration.

The Apostle Paul writes, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."** (2 Corinthians 5:17). Notice carefully what Paul does **not** say. He does not say believers have merely been restored. He says they have become **a new creation**.

Likewise, writing to the Galatians, Paul declares, **"For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."** (Galatians 6:15). Again, the emphasis is not upon returning to what once existed, but upon something entirely new.

The Apostle John likewise looks beyond restoration. Writing concerning the future of God's children, he says, **"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."** (1 John 3:2). John

acknowledges that believers are already God's children, yet he also declares that God's work in them has not reached its completion.

Something still awaits the people of God. The same expectation appears throughout the writings of Paul. Believers await:

- the redemption of their bodies,
- their heavenly inheritance,
- conformity to the image of Christ,
- glorification,
- and the revealing of the sons of God.

Each of these points forward rather than backward. They direct our attention:

- beyond forgiveness.
- Beyond justification.
- Beyond restoration.
- Toward a future work that God has purposed for all who belong to Christ.

This should not surprise us. From the opening pages of Scripture, God's purposes unfold progressively. Creation unfolded in stages. Redemption likewise unfolds progressively. The first creation prepared the way for redemption. Redemption now prepares the way for something even greater.

Throughout this work we have repeatedly observed that God's purposes always move forward rather than backward. Scripture never presents God's plan as merely recovering what was lost in Eden. Rather, every major movement of redemptive history advances toward a glorious consummation that surpasses the beginning.

- The Garden of Eden was wonderful. Yet Scripture concludes not with another garden, but with a New Heaven and a New Earth.
- Adam walked with God. The redeemed will dwell with God forever.
- Adam possessed life that could be lost. The redeemed inherit life that is eternal and incorruptible.
- Adam was created **very good** according to God's perfect purpose and design. The redeemed are promised conformity to Jesus Christ Himself.

These are not merely restored blessings. They are greater blessings. This observation should profoundly shape how we understand salvation itself.

- Forgiveness is glorious.
- Justification is glorious.
- Reconciliation is glorious.
- Adoption is glorious.

Yet none of these appears in Scripture as God's final objective. Rather, each serves as a necessary step leading toward the consummation of His eternal purpose. Redemption should therefore never be

viewed as the destination of God's plan, but as the bridge leading to its fulfillment. The question is no longer whether God intends to do something greater than restore Eden. Scripture clearly indicates that He does.

- The question now becomes: **What is this new creation?**
- More specifically, **What does it mean to be "in Christ"?**

For it is only **in Christ** that the New Testament declares this new creation becomes a reality.

In Christ

Having established that God's purpose is greater than merely restoring mankind to Adam's original condition, we must now ask an even more important question. **How does God accomplish this new creation?**

The answer is found throughout the New Testament in one of its most repeated and profound expressions:

"In Christ."

The significance of this phrase can scarcely be overstated.

- Believers are chosen **in Christ**.
- Redeemed **in Christ**.
- Justified **in Christ**.
- Sanctified **in Christ**.
- Made alive **in Christ**.
- Raised with Christ.
- Heirs with Christ.
- Glorified with Christ.

Again and again, the New Testament directs our attention away from ourselves and toward the person of Jesus Christ. Every spiritual blessing God has purposed for His people is found in union with His Son. This language is neither accidental nor merely poetic. It reveals the very heart of God's eternal purpose.

The Christian life is never presented as an independent relationship in which forgiven sinners simply attempt to imitate Christ from a distance. Rather, believers are repeatedly described as being **in Him**, while Christ Himself dwells **in them**.

Jesus declared, "**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**" (John 15:4)

This illustration is both simple and profound. A branch possesses no independent life apart from the vine. Its life, nourishment, fruitfulness, and continued existence all depend upon its union with the vine. Likewise, the believer's life is not self-generated. It is derived entirely from Christ.

The Apostle Paul expresses this truth with remarkable simplicity: ["It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."](#) (Galatians 2:20). Again, ["Christ in you, the hope of glory."](#) (Colossians 1:27). Notice carefully what Scripture emphasizes. Our hope is not merely that Christ died for us. Glorious though that truth is, Scripture goes further. It declares that Christ now lives **in** His people.

Likewise, Paul writes, ["Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."](#) (Romans 8:9). Again, ["Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts..."](#) (Galatians 4:6).

These expressions deserve careful consideration. The New Testament presents something even greater. Believers are united with the risen and glorified Christ. This union is not a participation in His divine essence but a living union with the incarnate Son, whose perfected humanity has become the prototype of the new creation.. This distinction is vital.

Adam possessed a human spirit through which he enjoyed genuine fellowship and communion with God. Yet Adam remained a created being whose fellowship with God could be broken through unbelief and disobedience. The New Testament presents something greater. Believers are united with Christ Himself.

This does not mean that believers become Christ. Neither does it mean that believers become God, become gods, or somehow acquire God's divine essence. Scripture teaches none of these things. The distinction between Creator and creature remains forever. God alone possesses life in Himself. God alone is eternal, self-existent, incorruptible, and inherently perfect. Everything created derives its existence and life from Him.

Yet through union with Christ, believers participate in blessings that could never belong to them apart from Him. Paul writes that we are ["heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ."](#) (Romans 8:17). Peter declares that believers become ["partakers of the divine nature."](#) (2 Peter 1:4).

I believe however this expression should not be understood to mean that believers become divine in essence or share God's incommunicable attributes. Rather, through union with Christ, believers participate in the life God graciously imparts through His Son while forever remaining creatures. It is because we are united with the incarnate, risen, and glorified Christ that we share in everything He accomplished as the Second Adam

John writes, ["...when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."](#) (1 John 3:2). Paul likewise declares, ["...who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body."](#) (Philippians 3:21). Notice carefully what Paul says. Our lowly body is transformed to be like His glorious body. The pattern is not His divine nature but His glorified humanity. The resurrected body of

Christ is the firstfruits and prototype of the redeemed humanity God has purposed from the beginning. Through union with the glorified Man, believers are conformed to His perfected human nature while forever worshipping Him as the eternal Son of God.

Notice the pattern.

- Every promise is centered upon Christ.
- Every blessing flows through Christ.
- Every future hope is realized in Christ.
- Nothing is accomplished apart from Him.

The New Testament employs several illustrations to reinforce this truth.

- Christ is the Vine.
- Believers are the branches.
- Christ is the Head.
- The Church is His Body.
- Christ is the Bridegroom.
- The Church is His Bride.

Though each illustration differs, every one teaches the same reality. The redeemed are inseparably joined to Jesus Christ. This union is not merely positional.

- It is living.
- It is personal.
- It is eternal.

Indeed, it is the foundation upon which every aspect of the believer's future hope rests.

- It is because we are **in Christ** that we are justified.
- It is because we are **in Christ** that we receive eternal life.
- It is because we are **in Christ** that we are called sons and daughters of God.
- It is because we are **in Christ** that we shall be glorified.

Everything God has purposed for redeemed humanity is found in His Son. The New Testament therefore presents Christ not merely as the means by which sins are forgiven, but as the very sphere in which God's eternal purpose is accomplished. The question is no longer whether believers are united with Christ. Scripture repeatedly declares that they are.

The remaining question is this: **Why is this union so essential to God's ultimate purpose?** Why does Scripture continually direct our attention to being **in Christ** rather than simply being restored to what Adam once possessed?

The answer leads us to the climax of God's redemptive plan. It is through union with Christ that God accomplishes what the first creation alone never could.

Perfected Through Union with Christ

Throughout this work we have followed the progressive unfolding of God's eternal purpose.

- We observed that mankind was created in the image of God.
- We saw that Adam's unbelief and disobedience brought corruption, separation, and death into the human race.
- We saw that redemption through Jesus Christ reconciles fallen mankind to God.

Yet one important question still remains.

If Adam himself, though created without sin and declared "very good," nevertheless fell from his original condition, what assurance is there that redeemed mankind would not simply repeat the same tragedy if restored to Adam's original state?

Scripture's answer is both profound and glorious. God's eternal purpose has never been merely to restore mankind to what Adam once possessed. Rather, He is bringing redeemed mankind into something infinitely greater through His Son.

Earlier in this work we observed that Adam possessed a human spirit through which he enjoyed genuine fellowship and communion with God. Yet Adam remained a created being. His fellowship with God, though real, could nevertheless be broken through unbelief and disobedience.

The New Testament now reveals something far greater. It repeatedly speaks, not merely of fellowship with Christ, but of believers being **in Christ**, Christ being **in them**, and believers possessing **the Spirit of Christ**.

This distinction should not be overlooked. Jesus Himself prayed, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us... I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one." (John 17:20–23)

Likewise Paul declares, "**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" (Colossians 1:27). Again, "**Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.**" (Romans 8:9). And again, "**Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts...**" (Galatians 4:6)

The language of Scripture is unmistakable. Adam possessed a human spirit through which he communed with God. The redeemed are said to possess **the Spirit of Christ**. This does not mean that believers become Christ. Neither does it mean that they become God, become gods, or somehow partake of God's divine essence. Scripture teaches none of these things. The New Testament repeatedly speaks of believers possessing the Spirit of Christ, Christ dwelling in them, and believers abiding in Him.

This language does not suggest that believers become divine or are absorbed into God's essence. Rather, it describes the living union established by the Holy Spirit between redeemed humanity and the risen Christ. Because the One to whom believers are united is the incarnate Son whose humanity has been perfected and glorified, His perfected humanity becomes both the pattern and the destiny of all who belong to Him.

The distinction between Creator and creature remains forever. God alone possesses life in Himself. God alone is eternal, self-existent, incorruptible, and inherently perfect. Everything created derives its existence and life from Him.

Yet Scripture also reveals that through union with Christ believers participate in blessings that could never belong to them apart from Him. Paul declares that believers are "[heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.](#)" ([Romans 8:17](#)). Peter writes that we become "[partakers of the divine nature.](#)" ([2 Peter 1:4](#)). John declares, "[...when He appears we shall be like Him...](#)" ([1 John 3:2](#)). Paul adds, "[...who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body...](#)" ([Philippians 3:21](#)).

Notice what every one of these passages has in common.

- Every blessing is found in Christ.
- Every promise is fulfilled in Christ.
- Every future hope is realized in Christ.
- Nothing is accomplished apart from Him.

Earlier we observed that Adam's sin brought separation between God and mankind. The human spirit no longer functioned according to God's original design, and the soul increasingly looked to the body and its physical senses for its perception of reality.

The New Testament presents the exact opposite movement. Through the indwelling Spirit of Christ, the believer is progressively transformed as the soul once again learns to walk according to the Spirit rather than according to the flesh. This work begins in salvation and continues throughout sanctification.

Yet even sanctification is not God's final purpose. Scripture continually directs our attention beyond the present life. Paul writes that believers have been "[predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.](#)" ([Romans 8:29](#)). Notice the goal:

- Not merely forgiveness.
- Not merely justification.
- Not merely restoration.
- But conformity to Jesus Christ.

At this point it is important to recognize a principle that has guided this work from the beginning. Scripture often reveals **what** God has done without fully explaining **how** He has done it. For example, the opening words of Genesis simply declare, "[In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.](#)" ([Genesis 1:1](#))

Scripture plainly reveals that God created all things *ex nihilo*—out of nothing. Yet it nowhere attempts to explain the infinite mechanics by which the eternal God brought the universe into existence by His word. The process itself remains beyond human comprehension. The fact that God created all things does not. The same principle appears throughout Scripture.

- We know that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin.
- We know that Christ was raised from the dead in a glorified body.
- We know that believers will likewise be raised and transformed.

Scripture clearly reveals these truths, even though it does not explain the infinite manner by which God accomplishes them. The same is true concerning glorification.

Scripture repeatedly declares that believers are **in Christ**, that Christ dwells **in them**, that they possess **the Spirit of Christ**, that they will be conformed to His image, and that they will become **a new creation** in Him.

These truths are not speculative. They are the plain testimony of Scripture. Exactly **how** God accomplishes this glorious union has not been fully revealed. That mystery belongs to God. What has been revealed belongs to us.

Therefore, our confidence rests not in our ability to explain the infinite workings of God, but in the certainty of what God has promised. Just as we confidently affirm that God created the heavens and the earth *ex nihilo* without fully comprehending how He accomplished that work, so we likewise affirm that God will perfect His redeemed people through eternal union with Jesus Christ, even though the glorious mechanics of that transformation remain beyond our present understanding. Everything now begins to converge:

- Creation pointed forward to Christ.
- The Fall revealed mankind's need for Christ.
- Redemption was accomplished by Christ.
- Salvation brings us to Christ.
- Sanctification conforms us to Christ.

Finally, God's eternal purpose reaches its glorious consummation as redeemed mankind is perfected through eternal union with Christ.

- The redeemed will forever dwell in Christ,
- Christ will forever dwell in them.

Through this eternal union, believers shall share in His glorified human life while forever worshipping Him as the eternal Son of God. The distinction between Creator and creature remains eternal, yet the communion between Christ and His redeemed people will never again be broken.

The redeemed will not merely possess the communion with God that Adam once enjoyed. They will forever be united with Jesus Christ. It is this union—not merely restoration—that accomplishes what

the first creation alone never could. It is this union that forever secures redeemed mankind against another fall. It is this union that fulfills God's eternal purpose.

Christ the Perfecter

Having seen that every blessing of salvation is found **in Christ**, we must now ask how Christ becomes the One through whom redeemed humanity is perfected.

Scripture is careful to teach that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. As God, He possesses absolute perfection eternally. His divine nature needed no improvement, no completion, no correction, and no maturing. God cannot become more perfect than He already is, for perfection belongs inherently to His very nature.

Therefore, when Scripture speaks of Christ being **made perfect**, it must not be understood as though He were ever morally flawed or deficient in His deity. The perfection spoken of concerns His incarnate mission as the Son of Man. The eternal Son of God became man, entered the conditions of our existence, suffered, obeyed, died, and rose again, thereby fully completing the work the Father had given Him to accomplish.

The writer of Hebrews declares:

"For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." (Hebrews 2:10) Again: "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Hebrews 5:8–9)

These passages do not suggest that Christ moved from sinfulness to holiness. Rather, they teach that through His suffering and obedience, Christ became the perfectly qualified Redeemer, Mediator, High Priest, Sacrifice, and Savior of His people.

He became what we are in order to redeem what we are. He entered our humanity in order to perfect humanity in Himself.

As the Second Adam, Christ submitted to every condition necessary to faithfully represent mankind. He was tempted, yet without sin. He suffered, yet remained obedient. He died, yet conquered death. Through His incarnation, obedience, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, and exaltation, He brought His redemptive mission to its appointed completion.

Christ is therefore not merely the One who forgives. He is the One who perfects. He is the One who glorifies.

The same book of Hebrews declares: [“For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”](#) (Hebrews 10:14)

This verse beautifully holds together the believer’s present standing and ongoing transformation. In Christ, believers have been perfected in the sense that His completed sacrifice fully secures their acceptance before God. Yet they are also “being sanctified,” showing that God’s work in them continues until final glorification.

Christ is both the perfected Redeemer and the Perfecter of the redeemed.

- He is the perfect Prophet, revealing God fully.
- He is the perfect Priest, offering the perfect sacrifice.
- He is the perfect King, ruling in righteousness.
- He is the perfect Sacrifice, without spot or blemish.
- He is the perfect Mediator, truly God and truly man.
- He is the perfect Savior, able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him.

This truth is central to the doctrine of glorification. Redeemed humanity is not perfected independently of Christ. Nor is mankind perfected by returning to Adam’s original condition. Mankind is perfected only in the One who first entered our humanity and brought it to completion through perfect obedience.

- The first Adam failed in a garden.
- The Second Adam triumphed through suffering.
- The first Adam brought corruption and death.
- The Second Adam brings righteousness and life.
- The first Adam showed that created goodness could fall.
- The Second Adam reveals that perfected humanity is found only in union with Himself.

This is why Christ is not merely the beginning of salvation but also its goal. He does not simply rescue sinners from judgment; He brings them into the perfection God purposed for them from the beginning.

Paul writes: [“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.”](#) (Philippians 3:12)

Paul understood that salvation had already begun, but its completion still lay ahead. He belonged to Christ, yet he still pressed forward toward the goal. Present maturity pointed toward future perfection.

That future perfection is not achieved by human effort. It is accomplished by Christ, in Christ, and through Christ.

- He became man so that mankind could be redeemed.
- He suffered so that mankind could be restored.
- He obeyed so that mankind could be represented.
- He died so that mankind could be forgiven.
- He rose so that mankind could receive life.

He was perfected in His incarnate mission—not because His deity lacked perfection, but because the humanity He assumed faithfully completed the vocation entrusted to the Second Adam. Having brought His humanity through perfect obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and glorification, He now becomes the Perfecter of all who are united to Him. Believers are therefore perfected, not by participation in His divine nature, but by everlasting union with the glorified humanity of the risen Christ.

Therefore, the believer's hope is not merely that Christ has done something **for** him, but that Christ will complete something **in** him. The perfected Redeemer is also the Perfecter of all who belong to Him.

This prepares us to understand the final question. If Christ is the perfected Redeemer and the Perfecter of His people, how does He bring redeemed humanity into the perfection God has purposed?

The answer is found in eternal union with Christ.

Prepared for His Presence, To See His Full Glory

Throughout this work we have traced the unfolding of God's eternal purpose from creation to glorification. We have seen that mankind was created in the image of God, that sin brought corruption and separation, that redemption was accomplished through Jesus Christ, and that God's ultimate purpose extends far beyond merely restoring mankind to Adam's original condition.

One final question now remains. **Why has God done all of this?**

- Why create?
- Why allow the Fall?
- Why redemption?
- Why the incarnation?
- Why the Cross?
- Why sanctification?
- Why glorification?

Scripture's answer is remarkably consistent. From beginning to end, God has been preparing a redeemed people to dwell forever in His presence through His Son. This truth begins to emerge even in the earliest pages of Scripture. When Moses desired to behold God's glory, the Lord replied, "[You cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.](#)" (Exodus 33:20).

God's holiness was never the problem. Mankind was. The limitation did not lie in God's willingness to reveal Himself but in mankind's inability to stand in the fullness of His unveiled presence.

The same truth appears throughout the Old Testament. The tabernacle and later the temple were carefully designed around separation. The Most Holy Place remained hidden behind a veil. Only the high priest could enter. Only once each year. Only with sacrificial blood.

Every aspect of Israel's worship testified that sinful mankind could not freely dwell in the immediate presence of a perfectly holy God. Yet even there, God was revealing something greater. The veil was never intended to be permanent. It pointed forward to Christ.

When Jesus gave His life upon the Cross, ["The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom."](#) ([Matthew 27:51](#)). Access to God had been opened. Yet even this was not the end. The tearing of the veil marked the beginning of something far greater. The Apostle Paul writes, ["For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."](#) ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). Likewise John declares, ["Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."](#) ([1 John 3:2](#)).

These promises reveal the glorious destiny awaiting every believer. The redeemed are not merely forgiven. They are not merely justified. They are not merely restored.

They are being prepared for something infinitely greater. The humanity that once could not behold God's unveiled glory without perishing shall, through union with the glorified Christ, be perfectly fitted to dwell forever in the full presence and full glory of God.

This, I believe, helps explain the entire movement of redemptive history.

- Adam enjoyed fellowship with God. The glorified believer will dwell forever in God's unveiled presence.
- Adam possessed life that could be lost. The redeemed receive life that can never perish.
- Adam walked with God. The redeemed will reign with Christ.
- The first creation revealed God's wisdom. The new creation reveals the fullness of His wisdom, His justice, His mercy, His grace, and His love.

Earlier in this work we observed that Scripture frequently reveals **what** God has accomplished without fully explaining **how** He accomplishes it. The same principle applies here. Scripture clearly teaches that redeemed believers will be conformed to the image of Christ, that they will become a new creation, that they will possess the Spirit of Christ, and that they will dwell forever in His presence.

Exactly how God accomplishes this glorious transformation has not been fully revealed. That mystery belongs to Him. What He has revealed is sufficient.

Just as Scripture simply declares that God created the heavens and the earth *ex nihilo* without explaining the infinite mechanics of creation, so Scripture declares that redeemed humanity will be glorified in Christ without fully explaining the infinite manner by which God accomplishes that work.

Faith therefore rests, not upon complete explanation, but upon the certainty of God's promises. The final pages of Scripture reveal the glorious fulfillment of those promises. John writes, "**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.**" (Revelation 21:3). Again, "**They will see His face...**" (Revelation 22:4).

The significance of these words should not be overlooked.

The Bible begins with mankind walking in fellowship with God. It ends with redeemed humanity dwelling forever in His immediate presence. The separation introduced by sin has forever disappeared. The veil is gone. Death is gone. The curse is gone. Sin is gone. Nothing remains to separate God from His redeemed people.

The believer will not merely survive in God's presence. He will rejoice in it forever. Here, at last, God's eternal purpose reaches its glorious consummation. Creation has become the new creation. Redemption has accomplished its purpose. Glorification is complete. The Bride is united with her Bridegroom.

Christ is all in all.

The redeemed behold the glory of God—not from afar, not dimly, not through shadows and types, but face to face. Everything that began in Genesis now finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. God's eternal purpose has reached its glorious completion. Believers are not glorified by becoming participants in Christ's deity. They are glorified through everlasting union with the glorified and perfected humanity of the incarnate Son, who remains forever one Person possessing both a complete divine nature and a complete human nature.

Key Takeaways

- God's eternal purpose was never merely to restore Eden.
- Christ is both the Perfecter and the believer's perfection.
- Union with Christ accomplishes what the first creation alone never could.
- Redemption reaches its consummation in glorification.
- God's purpose culminates in redeemed humanity dwelling forever in His presence.
- The new creation fulfills God's eternal purpose.

Looking Ahead

Rather than another doctrine, the reader is now invited simply to behold the unity and beauty of God's completed work.

EPILOGUE

The Beginning and the End

The opening pages of Scripture record the beginning of creation. The closing pages reveal its glorious consummation. Between those two bookends unfolds one continuous story. Not the story of man's search for God. But the story of God's eternal purpose accomplished through His Son.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. In the end, He reveals a new heaven and a new earth.

In the beginning, darkness covered the deep. In the end, **"night will be no more."**

In the beginning, God planted a garden. In the end, He reveals a holy city descending from heaven.

In the beginning, mankind walked with God. Then sin brought fear. Shame. Separation. Death. Adam hid among the trees of the garden. In the end, the redeemed hide no longer. "They will see His face."

In the beginning, cherubim guarded the way to the Tree of Life. In the end, the Tree of Life stands freely accessible to all who belong to Christ.

In the beginning, the ground was cursed because of sin. In the end, **"No longer will there be anything accursed."**

In the beginning, death entered the world through one man. In the end, **"Death shall be no more."**

In the beginning, sorrow began. In the end, **"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes."**

In the beginning, the Creator walked among His creation. In the fullness of time, the Creator entered His creation. In the end, God dwells forever with His redeemed people.

The story that began in Genesis was never simply about creation. Neither was it merely about the Fall. Nor only about redemption. Every page has pointed toward Jesus Christ.

- He is the Creator.
- He is the promised Seed.
- He is the Lamb.
- He is the Second Adam.
- He is the Redeemer.
- He is the Bridegroom.
- He is the Head of the Church.
- He is the Firstborn of the New Creation.
- He is the Alpha and the Omega.
- The Beginning and the End.

Throughout this work we have sought to follow the unfolding of God's eternal purpose.

- We observed that mankind was created in the image of God.
- We observed that creation, though declared "very good," was never the final destination of God's purpose.
- We observed that Adam's fall revealed the inability of anything less than God's own perfection to remain forever secure.
- We observed that redemption through Christ did far more than merely restore what had been lost.

It opened the way for something entirely new.

- The believer is not merely forgiven.
- He is not merely justified.
- He is not merely restored.
- He is being conformed to Christ.
- He is becoming a new creation.
- He is being prepared for everlasting union with the Son of God.

The purpose has always been Christ.

- Election is in Christ.
- Redemption is through Christ.
- Sanctification is by Christ.
- Glorification is with Christ.
- The consummation is the Bride united to Christ.

From beginning to end, everything finds its meaning in Him.

One day faith shall become sight. Hope shall give way to fulfillment. The work God began will be complete.

The redeemed shall stand before Him—not because they have attained perfection by their own merit, but because God has perfected them in His Son. Then the words spoken by the Apostle Paul shall reach their fullest realization: ["For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part; then shall I know fully, even as I have been fully known."](#) (1 Corinthians 13:12).

And the promise given to the Apostle John shall likewise be fulfilled: ["Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."](#) (1 John 3:2)

Finally, the voice from heaven will proclaim the glorious fulfillment of God's eternal purpose: ["Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God."](#) (Revelation 21:3)

Then shall every purpose of God stand complete. The Bride shall dwell forever with her Bridegroom. The glory of God shall fill all things. Christ shall be all in all. And the story that began with, “[In the beginning...](#)” shall never end.

“To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
(*Romans 11:36*)

The Consummation of God’s Eternal Purpose

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.” — Romans 11:36

Every great story possesses both a beginning and an ending. Scripture is no different. Its opening words declare, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” Its closing pages reveal God’s glorious promise: “*Behold, I am making all things new.*” Between these two declarations unfolds one continuous purpose—not a series of disconnected acts, but the progressive revelation of God’s eternal plan accomplished through His Son.

This study has sought to follow that unfolding purpose.

At the outset we considered the nature of God Himself. Before anything existed, God alone was. Perfect in holiness, wisdom, justice, love, power, and glory, He possessed within Himself no deficiency that creation could satisfy. The universe did not arise because God lacked fellowship, purpose, or fulfillment. Rather, creation proceeded from the abundance of His own perfect will according to an eternal purpose established before the foundation of the world.

Creation was therefore neither accidental nor arbitrary. It was purposeful.

When God completed His creative work, He declared it to be “**very good**.” Throughout this study we have observed that the Hebrew word *tov* speaks not merely of moral excellence but of that which fully accomplished the purpose for which it was created. Creation was exactly as God intended it to be. Yet Scripture never presents the first creation as the final expression of God’s eternal purpose.

- The first creation was **very good**.
- The New Creation is **perfect**.

This distinction provides the key to understanding the entire biblical narrative.

The first Adam was created innocent, holy, and equipped with everything necessary to fulfill God's purpose for him. Yet he remained capable of unbelief and disobedience. The Fall demonstrated that created goodness alone could not secure God's eternal purpose. Neither Adam's failure nor Satan's rebellion surprised God or frustrated His sovereign plan. Rather, both revealed mankind's need for something greater than innocence.

Humanity required redemption. Yet, as this study has sought to demonstrate, redemption itself was never God's final objective. Throughout redemptive history God progressively revealed that:

- Forgiveness
- Justification
- Reconciliation
- Adoption
- Sanctification

all serve a greater purpose. Each is indispensable. None is ultimate. Each prepares the way for glorification.

The turning point of history came with the Incarnation.

The eternal Son of God entered His own creation as the Second Adam. Remaining fully God, He assumed a complete human nature consisting of a true human body, a rational human soul, and a human spirit. He did not cease to be God, nor did His humanity diminish His deity. The one Person of Christ forever possesses two complete and distinct natures united without confusion or division.

As the Second Adam, Christ accomplished what the first Adam failed to accomplish.

- Where Adam distrusted God, Christ trusted perfectly.
- Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed.
- Where Adam brought death, Christ brought life.

Scripture therefore speaks of Christ being made perfect. This perfection never concerned His divine nature, for God is eternally perfect and cannot become more perfect than He already is. Rather, through His incarnation, perfect obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and glorification, the humanity He assumed faithfully completed the vocation entrusted to the Second Adam. Having fulfilled His incarnate mission, Christ became not merely the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, but also its **Perfecter**. Here lies one of the central conclusions of this work. The believer's ultimate hope is not merely:

- Forgiveness.
- Restoration.
- Sanctification.

Our hope is **perfection through union with Jesus Christ**. Throughout the New Testament every spiritual blessing is found **in Christ**.

- Election is in Christ.
- Redemption is through Christ.
- Justification is in Christ.
- Sanctification is in Christ.
- Glorification is with Christ.

Nothing God has purposed for redeemed humanity exists apart from His Son. Yet this union must be understood carefully.

Scripture nowhere teaches that believers become divine or participate in God's divine essence. The distinction between Creator and creature remains forever. Rather, believers are united with the incarnate Son whose humanity has been perfected and glorified. Because He entered our humanity, brought it to its appointed perfection, and now lives forever as the glorified Man, all who belong to Him shall likewise be perfected through everlasting union with Him.

The Second Adam has therefore become the prototype of the New Creation. This realization transforms our understanding of glorification. Glorification is not merely:

- Receiving a resurrected body.
- Entering heaven.

It is the completion of God's eternal purpose for redeemed humanity.

- The first Adam enjoyed fellowship with God.
- The glorified believer shall dwell forever in God's unveiled presence.
- The first Adam possessed life capable of being lost.
- The redeemed inherit incorruptible life.
- The first Adam reflected the goodness of the first creation.
- The glorified believer shall forever bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Scripture's movement is therefore never backward. It is always forward.

- Not Eden restored.
- But Eden surpassed.
- Not merely innocence regained.
- But perfected humanity secured forever in Christ.

This truth also illuminates the biblical doctrine of perfection.

- God alone is perfect by nature.
- Christ, in His divine nature, is eternally perfect.
- Christ, in His humanity, was brought to the completion of His earthly vocation through perfect obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and glorification.
- Believers are presently being matured through sanctification while awaiting the completion of salvation in glorification.

Only then shall God's eternal purpose reach its appointed goal. The opening chapters of Genesis therefore cannot be understood apart from the closing chapters of Revelation.

- Creation anticipates the New Creation.
- The Garden anticipates the Holy City.
- The Tree of Life anticipates everlasting life.
- The first Adam anticipates the Second Adam.
- The first creation anticipates the New Creation.

Everything points to Christ. Everything finds its fulfillment in Christ. Everything reaches its consummation in Christ. At last the redeemed shall behold the glory of God face to face.

The communion lost in Eden shall not merely be restored—it shall be infinitely surpassed. The humanity that once could not behold God's unveiled glory without perishing shall, through everlasting union with the glorified Christ, be brought to the very perfection for which it was created from the beginning.

- This perfection is not the acquisition of deity.
- Neither is it the absorption of the creature into the Creator.

Rather, believers are perfected through everlasting union with the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ. The same humanity that the eternal Son assumed, and which He brought to its appointed perfection through His incarnation, obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and glorification, now becomes both the pattern and the destiny of redeemed humanity. Only because Christ first perfected our humanity in Himself can those who are united with Him be perfected in Him.

- There can be no glorification apart from this perfection.
- There can be no perfection apart from union with Christ.

As the first Adam became the representative head of fallen humanity, so the Second Adam has become the representative Head of redeemed humanity.

- His perfected humanity is the firstfruits of the New Creation.
- Those who belong to Him shall forever bear the image of the heavenly Man.
- Only then shall redeemed humanity be fully prepared to behold the unveiled glory of God.
- What Moses could not endure...
- What Adam never experienced...
- What no created being could attain through the first creation...
- shall become the everlasting inheritance of all who are in Christ.

For the humanity that once could not see God's face and live shall, through union with the glorified and perfected humanity of Jesus Christ, be perfectly fitted to dwell forever in the immediate presence of God and behold His full glory. This everlasting union is beautifully illustrated by the Apostle Paul in his teaching concerning marriage.

Quoting Genesis, Paul writes: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* (*Ephesians 5:31*). He then immediately adds these remarkable words: *"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church."* (*Ephesians 5:32*).

From the very beginning, marriage was more than a human institution. It was a divinely ordained picture of a far greater reality yet to come. Just as a husband and wife become one while remaining two distinct persons, so Christ and His redeemed people are united in an everlasting covenant while forever remaining distinct.

- Christ does not cease to be God.
- The believer does not cease to be human.
- The Creator and the creature remain forever distinct.

Yet through this eternal union the redeemed are joined to Christ in a communion more intimate and more enduring than any earthly relationship could ever portray.

- Adam and Eve pointed beyond themselves.
- The first marriage anticipated the last.
- The earthly bride anticipated the heavenly Bride.
- The union established in Eden anticipated the everlasting union between Christ and His Church.

Thus, God's eternal purpose reaches its fullest expression, not merely in redeemed humanity standing before God, but in the Bride dwelling forever with her Bridegroom. Through everlasting union with the glorified and perfected humanity of Jesus Christ, the redeemed are themselves perfected and glorified, becoming forever fitted to behold the unveiled glory of God. What began with the creation of one bride in Genesis finds its glorious fulfillment in the marriage supper of the Lamb, where Christ and His redeemed people shall dwell together forever.

Here, at last, God's eternal purpose reaches its glorious consummation.

- Creation has become the New Creation.
- Redemption has accomplished its purpose.
- Perfection has reached its appointed end.
- Glorification is complete.
- Christ is all in all.

The story that began with **"In the beginning..."** ends exactly where it was always intended to end.

Redeemed humanity, perfected through everlasting union with the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ, shall dwell forever in the unveiled presence of God. There they shall behold His full glory, not because they have become divine, but because through the perfected humanity of the incarnate Son they have themselves been perfected and glorified according to God's eternal purpose. The Creator and creature shall remain forever distinct, yet forever united in perfect fellowship through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace.

To Him alone be glory forever and ever.

Amen.

