

The Summing Up Of All Things In Christ
(Paradise Restored)

Introduction: A puzzle begins as a complete picture which is later fractured into many small pieces, only to be reassembled by the one working on it. God's creation was once in perfect harmony but was shattered by sin. But God has revealed to you in Scripture His plan to gather all creation together again in Christ.

I. God Reveals to You this Mystery that You Would not Be Ignorant.
(In all wisdom and insight having made known to us the mystery of His will, which He purposed in Himself, with reference to the plan)

A. A Biblical mystery is something that was hidden in some measure which has now been revealed.

1. Examples of Biblical mysteries.

a. Matt. 13:11 "And He answered and said to them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.'"

b. 1 Cor. 15:51f "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

2. Therefore a mystery is the secret purposes and counsels which God intends to carry into effect in His kingdom.

3. Here, God calls it a plan: *οικονομιαν* has two meanings in the N.T.:

a. With reference to one in authority: plan, scheme, or economy.

b. With reference to one under authority: office, stewardship, or administration of such office (Hodge 22).

B. A Mystery is the Unveiling of God's Secret Will.

1. God has a secret and a revealed will (Deu. 29:29).

a. His secret will can only be known by its effects.

b. You cannot live by that secret will.

2. His revealed will is contained in the law and the Gospel.

3. The text tells us that God's sovereign pleasure was to reveal this mystery to us. *(According to His sovereign good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself)*

a. It pleased God, in the progressive revealing of His will, to disclose this mystery at this juncture of redemptive history.

b. God willed that you would know what His plan was for the end of the ages.

c. Amos 3:7: "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets."

d. God can reveal history because it is He who ordains it by His omnipotent hand.

4. The manner of its revelation. *(In all wisdom and insight)*

a. It is a display of God's infinite wisdom.

b. And His understanding. These are frequently together in Scripture. 1 Kings 4:29; cf. Dan. 1:17; Prov. 10:23.

11. God's Plan is to Bring You and all Creation Harmoniously Together Again Under One Head: Christ. (*With reference to the plan of the fulness of the times, namely, to bring together again for Himself all things in Christ, that is, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth*)
 - A. God's Original Creation Was a Harmonious Unity. [*see Owen*]
 1. God is the source of all being and goodness and has all blessedness in Himself [Ex. **3:14**].
 2. When God created all things, He called them forth *ex nihilo, in nihilum*, giving to them being and goodness as well. (Cf. Gen. **1:31** "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.")
 3. He made two separate rational families and their dwellings corresponding to their nature and use--heaven above and earth beneath.
 - a. Suited to their nature.
 - b. Suited to the preservation of their being.
 - c. And suited to the end of their creation, the glory of God (Owen **369**).
 4. In this state, all things were in a harmonious relationship with God as their immediate head: all men and angels, and all created things.
 - B. But the Sin of Men and Angels Brought Disharmony.
 1. The entrance of sin destroyed this order, for part of the family above and all of the family below fell from their dependence upon God.
 2. The Fall of Adam, the vicegerent of God, had consequences, not only for himself, but for all of creation, for it was in subjection to him.
 - a. Gen. **3:17-19** "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'" "
 - b. Man's habitation now reflects his sin. The wrath of God it evokes has cosmic consequences.
 - c. There is a certain union between man and his environment.
 3. A certain number of the angels also fell from the presence of God and have been kept under everlasting bonds until the day of judgment.

"And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude **6**).

 - a. Because not all of the angels fell, God did not curse the heavens on their account [Owen **370**].

- b. However, to show the severity of sin, He utterly cast off the angels who sinned without hope of redemption (Owen 370).
 - 4. Here, then, was the introduction of disharmony into the creation.
 - a. Satan was to have control over this domain of darkness.
 - b. With the introduction of the redemptive intervention of God, there were formed two opposing kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.
 - c. These will remain in conflict and disharmony until the time of the reconciling of all things.
- C. God Will Bring all Creation Together Again in Christ.
 - 1. His plan was not to restore them to their former state of two families with immediate dependence upon Him.
 - a. Rather to bring both into one under Christ.
 - b. One part preserved from sinning, the other delivered from sin.
 - 2. He will gather together again the things in the heavens.
 - a. He will reconcile the angels.
 - (i) The elect angels are in no need of redemption, for they have been kept from falling by the grace of God.
 - (ii) But their ministry to fallen man brings them into contact with sin and its evil effects (Murray 95).
 - (iii) The good angels are said to be reconciled, therefore, in the sense that they will no longer have to deal with the sinfulness of man, for whose benefit they are sent to render service, nor to guard man against the assaults of "the hosts of darkness" [Murray 95).
 - b. But how are the demons to be reconciled?
 - (i) There is no redemption for the angels. Those which are fallen are forever lost.
 - (ii) The language of Scripture relating the cross of Christ to principalities and powers of evil is one of subjugation. "Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Col. 2:14f).
 - (iii) The fallen angels will be reconciled in the sense that they are fully and finally subjugated and sent into everlasting torment in the lake of fire.
 - (iv) It is reconciliation in the sense of reestablishment of harmony in the created order. "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:25).
 - (v) The peace in the consummated order is the

- result of the removal of all conflict, enmity and warfare.
2. He will sum up the things on the earth.
 - a. He will reconcile the creation.
 - (i) Remember, when man fell, the creation was brought under a curse.
 - (ii) It will be set free from its corruption when it is renovated at the unveiling of the new heavens and the new earth, which is not another creation **ex-nihilo**, but rather a purifying of the present creation. (Cf. Romans 8:18-23 and note that Paul here refers to non-rational creation.)
 - b. He will reconcile man.
 - (i) It was for His own glory that God undertook the work of redemption.
 - (ii) Man was to be the recipient of that redemption, not the angels. Christ took on a human nature, not an angelic one.
 - (iii) But not all men are to be redeemed, as the context tells us, only those whom the Lord has chosen.
 - (iv) The elect will be gathered into one body, so that they, together with the elect angels may sing everlasting praises to the One who redeemed him.
 - (v) The reprobate, those who willingly and persistently rejected the grace of God, will be sent to their well deserved end in the lake of fire to be forever tormented along with the fallen angels.
 3. These things will be summed up in Christ, the Mediator.
 - a. Christ's finished work of atonement has brought about this reconciliation.
 - (i) Only the removal of the sin can release the consequences originating from it.
 - (ii) "In the reconciliation Christ dealt with sin and, more particularly, with the **alienation** which sin entails" [Murray 94].
 - (iii) "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:19, 20; cf. Eph. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:18f; Rom. 5:8-11).
 - b. All will be summed up under Christ's lordship: Phil. 2:8-11 "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- (i) "This glory was reserved for him; none other could be meet for it or worthy of it" [Owen 371].
- (ii) "To answer all the ends of this *new Head* of God's *re-collected* family, all power in heaven and earth, all fulness of grace and glory, is committed unto him. There is no communication from God, no act of rule towards this family, no supply of virtue, power, grace, or goodness unto angels or men, but what is immediately from this new head whereunto they are gathered" (Owen 371).
 - (a) He alone was fit to bear the weight of the glory of having all things depending on Him (Owen 371).
 - (b) The whole breach made on the glory of God in the creation by the entrance of sin is repaired [Owen 373].
 - (c) "He is glorious herein, in that hereby *firmness and security is communicated unto the whole new creation.*". . . But now everything that belongs unto this new creation, even every believer in the world, as well as the angels in heaven, being gathered together in this one head, the whole and all, and every part and member of it, even every particular believer, are secured from ruin, such as befell all things before. In this new Head they have an indissoluble consistency" [Owen 374].
- c. "All that Christ is and does in His mediatorial offices and accomplishments is the fruit of the Father's love, design, and gift" [Murray 103].
 "And all these things are of God who reconciled us to himself through Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18); "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John 3:16); Herein is love, not that we loved God, But that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).
- 4. The Lord also tells us the time of fulfillment.
 - a. This will, take place at the fulness of the times.
 - (i) πληρωματος: "that which fills of with which a thing is filled" (Thayer 518). What is filled are των καιρων.
 - (ii) των καιρων: Not referring simply to the succession of moments as such, rather, "the joints or articulations in these times (chronos), the critical, epoch-making periods foreordained of God . . . when all that has been slowly, and often without observation ripening through long ages is mature and comes to birth in grand decisive events, which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another" (Wuest 45).
 - b. What is being referred to here is the consummation

- of the ages.
- (i) It is the end of the millennium, the church age, and the beginning of the eternal state.
 - (ii) It is the time of the New Heavens and the New Earth where all is once again under the headship of the glorious mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (iii) All things will once more be in their proper relation to one another and to Christ as the head.
5. Until that time, history is conditioned by the warfare between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.
- a. We must continue to do battle using the spiritual weapons which Christ has provided.
 - b. But we have the assurance that Christ has already won the victory.
 - c. The Lord will reconcile the cosmos and the elect angels, and will subjugate the fallen angels and the reprobate. But He has chosen man to be the instruments through which He would bring the word of reconciliation to other men. "Men come into possession of the reconciliation as actual status in response to the gospel proclamation (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18-20)" (Murray 111).
 - d. Let us therefore seek to be obedient to the Lord in all things, and to do all that we do aimed at His glory.

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Owen, John. "Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ, in His Person, Office, and Grace." *The Works of John Owen*. Ed. William H. Goold. 16 vols. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965. 1:367-374.

Hodge, Charles. *Ephesians*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1964. pp. 20-27.