God's Plan to Restore His Image in Man

To understand what God has laid out in His plan, we need to look at the purpose the Lord had in mind when He created man.

As we read Scripture, we can see that in His eternal plan God's purpose was never merely to create beings higher than the angels. He set out to make a being in whom His own nature would be revealed, one made in His image and after His likeness. He created a being utterly different from anything He had made before. (And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Genesis 1:26-27)

We can say with certainty that when God created man, His purpose was entirely different from His purpose for the angels, who were created to be servants. God determined to give the Lord Jesus brothers and sisters, to fill His Kingdom with beings who would be like His Son. (For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29)

Man's Capacities

We have a soul and a spirit. God has given us the capacity to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love and to choose. He did this because He determined beforehand in His plan that we should be like Him.

But He did not stop at this likeness. God created us and gave us these capacities so that we would use them. It is our responsibility to put them to good use and to work together with Him until we reach the stature He has set for us.

God's plan is not limited to a cheap salvation made up only of repentance **(putting off the old man)** and the forgiveness of sins. It includes **the restoration of God's image** in us **(putting on the new man)** and bringing us *unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13).

This is the highest thing a man can aspire to. (And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created. Ephesians 4:24)

The Perfection of God's Plan

The first man was deceived by Satan, and his sin passed upon all men. But that does not mean a mistake slipped into God's plan. Everything happened just as it was foreseen in this plan, drawn up in eternity, which God worked out with great care down to the smallest detail.

God begins this work of restoring the image of Christ in man at the moment of the new birth, and He has all the power to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until

the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6)

To picture this, think of a car being built in a modern robotic factory. The manufacturer has a starting point on the assembly line where the first part goes in. At the end of the process, out comes the car, built and finished down to the last detail.

So it is in God's factory. He begins this work of restoring His image in man, and He completes it down to the smallest detail.

If man, whom God created, can finish what he starts, how much more can God! God has the finest factory there is, and in it He works together with every person who answers His call.

He gives us new birth and transforms us step by step into His image, until we reach the stature of His Son. (But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

It is a perfect plan, drawn up with great precision, point by point, without even the smallest detail missing. What He begins, He brings to completion. (Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:8)

The Goal of God's Plan

God's plan provides for the Lord Jesus to have many brethren who will be like Him. Everything that comes into our lives has been ordained by God to work on our character until we come to resemble the Lord Jesus. (And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God… to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28)

Our life on this earth, everything we do from morning till night, must be subject to this great project of God's. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1) If we do not live this way, if we live this life in the flesh just to enjoy it, then we have not really understood God's work with man. We will settle for Satan's offer, a cheap salvation that consists only of the forgiveness of sins. (For many walk… that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18)

In His eternal plan, God determined to make us His sons, so that we would grow and come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Now are we the sons of God… we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**. 1 John 3:2)

Self-Examination

We warn those who do not study Holy Scripture carefully, who do not understand that they must reach this standing and are content with the forgiveness of sins alone: on that great day they will be in for a great surprise. In the Kingdom of God, the Lord Jesus will have only brethren who resemble Him, who have prepared themselves and have reached the measure of

the stature of His fulness!

Many think this standard is too high for us, yet this is our calling. The true God calls us to rise above the corruption of this world and come to bear the image of Christ, because only then will we be able to dwell with Him.

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Go to the next article: The Perfecting of Man's Character in God's Plan

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