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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: Jan 31, 2009
Series: The Church of God's Intention
Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be
Section: The New People of God
Topic: The Church
Message Title: How the Church is the New People of God
Short Title: The Church, the New People of God
Text: Various
Key Words: Church, People of God, Estranged, Redeemed, Fulfilled

Message Outline

Series Setting

The Church of God's Intention
Part 1 What God Intends the Church to Be
God Intends the Church to Be The New People of God

How the Church is the New People of God

- I. The 1st Adam Anticipates the 2nd Adam
- II. Noah & His Family Anticipate Jesus & His Disciples
- III. Abraham & His Descendants Anticipate the New Community of Faith
- IV. Old Testament Israel Anticipates the New Testament Church

Related Scripture

1. 1 Peter 2:9-10
2. Gal 6:15
3. Heb 12 (esp. vv. 18-24, 29)
4. Heb 13 (esp. v.14)
5. Heb 10 (esp. vv. 19-25)
6. Col 3 (esp. vv. 1-4)
7. Eph 2 (3sp. V. 22)
8. 1 Cor 1:26-31

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. In what way did God's dealing with Adam anticipate the church?
2. How about His dealings with Noah?
3. And His dealings with Abraham?
4. And with Israel?
5. How does knowing this effect you as a member of the church?

Memory and Meditation Verse

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. 1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB

2. The Fulfillment of the POG

Last week we looked at the Old Testament (OT) People of God (POG) so that we might come to understand the New People of God (NPOG), i.e., the church. Peter used this “People of God” language speaking to the first century church when he said,

“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. ”

1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB

I repeat this passage not for lack of another good one, but because I don't want you to just smell the good food, but to actually taste it and even eat your fill. So that you might say with Jeremiah the prophet, “Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jer 15:16) And with the Psalmist who relishes, “How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” [Psalm 119:103](#)

Last week, I likened our discussion of the OT POG to the foundation work done when a new house is being built. You can build on sand but the house won't stand up in the storms that will certainly hit it. We looked at three examples of God working with a sub-set of humanity in special focused ways apparently distinct from the way He worked with the rest of humanity. We are referring to this sub-set of humanity as the POG. First God worked with them and then through them to others.

We saw the common theme that God, **by His own determination**, in every case **redeemed** them (often in a miraculous manner) out of a bad situation into a better one -- one that was closer to His original purpose. And what was that purpose? It was man being the man of God's intention, in close relationship with Him, even intimate communion as a devoted son to his loving father. Further it was God's purpose that mankind, from within that relationship, would rule over the rest of creation on His behalf, bringing the knowledge of God to the rest of humanity that God would be glorified.

We looked at Noah and his family, Abraham and his descendents, and the nation of Israel formed with Moses as covenant mediator and then ruled by David as God's chosen King over God's people. We saw that each expression of the POG displayed His ultimate intention for them in part. Never did the OT POG arrive at what anyone could regard as the final end of God's intention. To the degree that each manifestation of the POG in history fell short, it anticipated God's ultimate plan, since God did not promise to redeem in part but in full.

ILLUS. – That partial redemption anticipates full can be seen in the simple illustration that if someone of proven integrity worth \$100 million promised you \$1,000 but only gave you only \$700, you would rightly anticipate the full balance of \$1,000 some day.

So it was for the OT POG regarding God and His promises: to reverse the curse (Gen 3:15), and bless all families of the earth through Abraham's descendents (Gen 12:1-3),

and be their God and them His people (Lv 26:12) and to dwell with them (Ex 29:45). To the extent these promises of God had not happened, the POG expected them to be fulfilled in the future.

This is perhaps best seen in an example of the OT POG we have not yet looked at, the example of Israel after the time of David. David had been promised by God that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever. And David knew that God was speaking of the distant future (2 Sam 7). But the POG after David walked away from their covenant relationship with God. God called them to repentance through prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah, but the people continued to act as if they were not the POG but rather people of their own determination -- autonomous from Him. They were rebels rather than devoted sons. Finally, after much prophetic warning God brought judgment on His people and exiled them. Israel was taken into captivity in Assyria; and Judah into Babylon in the East.

But although God judged them in this way, He also restored a remnant of His people. Once again by His own determination God worked in history in such a way as to bring His people back out of, i.e. to redeem them from captivity back into Canaan where they rebuilt the temple and the city and its walls all which had been torn down.

But their redemption and the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem was unsatisfying and partial especially to those who had known their former glory. We have seen this past week in our Sacred Space classes that most dramatically, God's presence in the form of His glory cloud (that had settled over the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies in both the original tabernacle and in Solomon's temple) never filled the sanctuary of this second temple. All this added up to what could be regarded as an anticlimactic redemption. It was a redemption but painfully partial – no Shekinah glory of the Lord in the temple, no sovereign king on the throne in Jerusalem, much less a Son of David.

You have probably felt this same anticlimax yourself in things you have wanted and then gotten but they don't bring you the value you thought they would. Like the poor soul who made plans for a weekend ski getaway in Sierras. Oh the brochure looked to good: stone fireplace, roaring fire, snow falling outside, beautiful groomed slopes and beckoning glades. You have visions of carving turns in the quiet of fresh powder and sitting by the fire reading a good book drinking your favorite beverage... But when you got there you find that fireplace is in the main lodge crowded with rowdy skiers right next to the bar and your room is down the road three flights up with no elevator – how do they get permission to build these things? Your room turns out to be a dorm and the bathroom is down the hall and the maid definitely did not change the sheets.

God had redeemed a remnant from Israel but, because of the partial sub-ultimate nature of this redemption it anticipated a future final fulfillment when God's presence would once again fill His temple, when God by His determination, and this time by His own coming, would build the final temple in which He would dwell and from which the promised Son of David would rule as King of the Kingdom of God.

Year after year they waited -- decade after decade; century after century... until the time of Jesus. Then the physical temple on the physical mountain in the physical city of Jerusalem occupied by the biological descendants of Abraham would yield its partiality to the ultimacy of the spiritual temple in the spiritual mount Zion and the heavenly spiritual Jerusalem occupied by the spiritual descendants of Abraham who are his sons by virtue of their faith.

We hear this progression from part to full, from physical and local to spiritual and global in the words of the writer of Hebrews speaking to the NT Christians in 12:18-24:

- 18 For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,
- 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.
- 20 For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."
- 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."

- 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,
- 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
- 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

See also Gal 4:21-31

The temporary earthly partial gives way to the eternal¹ heavenly ultimate. And don't miss the time element in verse 22, "You" Christians of the 1st and 21st Centuries "have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly of the church... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant..." You have come! The OT POG finds its fulfillment in the NPOG. **The Church is the NPOG.** The church is this special sub-set of humanity with whom God choose by His own determination to redeem to Himself and to dwell with in a close Father-son relationship characterized by mutual love, peace and rest and to send out on mission that the world would know Him through them. You Christians, are that special group of humanity, you are that church!

I don't know Johnny, that seems so exalted and lofty and I don't feel like that is my experience. How is the church...how are we this NPOG who have so come to Jesus? We will look at one or possible two explanations of how we are the fulfillment of the OT POG and then we will look the rest next week. My hope in spending this much time looking this far back to understand our contemporary reality is that we would grasp firmly God's purposes and His original design, for those have not changed and if we are to understand the church of God's design, we must understand these. How is the church the NPOG?

a) How the Church is the NPOG

(1) The 1st Adam Anticipates 2nd Adam

(a) God's Intention for the Church Seen is in the 1st Adam & 1st Creation

In Adam and Eve we see the very first manifestation of the POG. For an oh-so-short time we catch a peak of the people of God's intention. They were created by Him according to His determination, capable of knowing Him, allowing Him to determine good and evil, carrying His mandate to fill the earth and rule over it, dwelling with Him in the garden He provide, ... Ah, it was the way God would have it, this is the way God would have us. And in this picture with these design elements we see the church of God's intention.

If we are to be the church of God's intention we will want to look to the pre-fall creation and the life of Adam and Eve with God and be like them. Yes there are differences between them on that side of the Fall and Cross and us on the other, but there are more similarities than we might realize.

Some unbelievers think they are living the good life when God would regard them as "dead in their trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1) – dead to the life He intended them to live. But we believers are just as prone to see ourselves as living in the dead realm of our sinful fallen nature in a fallen world, when God has already redeemed us and given us new life in Christ.

I think most of us have more access to Eden than we apprehend. For against Paul's exhortation, we walk by sight and not by faith (2 Cor 5:7). We effectively act "like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea." (Letter (8 November 1952); published in Letters of C. S. Lewis (1966), p.247)

We can remedy this! There is a holiday at the sea for the church of Christ to enjoy now. It is not a holiday of ease and freedom from earthly responsibilities but it is one of peace and rest and communion with God. Do you want that?

Let's look a little more and Adam and us.

(b) The 1st Adam Anticipated the 2nd Adamⁱⁱ

Adam failed to be the son of God as God intended. But his failure prepared us for a 2nd Adam, the True Son of God who would not and did not fail. The language of a 2nd Adam is used of Jesus in the NT.

Jesus is called the “last Adam” in 1 Cor 15:22. And referring to Jesus Paul says in Romans 5:14 that Adam was a “type of Him who was to come”

The 1st Adam caved to the temptation of Satan. The 2nd Adam did not. Remember Jesus being tempted by Satan in Matthew? He did not once give in to Satan's lure, but stood steadfast on what God had already said. In Mat 4:4 after 40 days of fasting in the desert Satan came at Him with “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to be turned into bread.” After 40 days, those stones coupled with His power could have been making His mouth water. But He answered saying, **"It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"**

The 1st Adam brought estrangement from God to all associated with him, the 2nd Adam brought reconciliation/salvation to all connected to Him.

In the 1st Adam we see one man impacting the world to the detriment of God's plan and in the 2nd Adam, one Man impacting the world to restore His plan.

The first Adam was supposed to rule as king under God on His behalf, but didn't. The 2nd Adam came and did – He inaugurated the ultimate Kingdom of God (KOG) as its forever king.

In Mark 1:14-15 we see that in Jesus coming the KOG was “at hand.” Jesus began His preaching with: **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**

At the beginning of Paul's exhortation to put on the new self in [Colossians 3:1](#) we read, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” This speaks to Christ's current and ongoing position of rule and authority.

We have been noting in our Sacred Space study that Jesus **inaugurated** the KOG. We look to His coming again to **consummate** it – to bring about the fullness of all that has been secured but which must for now be accessed by faith. This is the concept we have run into before that describes so well the time in which we live: “the already but not yet.”

The POG have always been the people of the **Kingdom of God**. The kingdom speaks to a certain type of relationship between God and His people. Not only are we adopted ‘sons’ of our Heavenly Father we are also subjects our Lord God.

Where Adam served as the prototypical king charged by God to rule over creation, the 2nd Adam, Jesus Christ, is the final King of the ultimate and everlasting Kingdom of God. And the Christian Church is rightly seen as King Jesus and His subjects who are filled by His Spirit.

We'll develop this more later, but for now just let it sink in that the 1st Adam before the fall modeled the POG of God's intention and then after the fall anticipated the 2nd Adam who would restore and bring about the creation of God's purpose. This 2nd Adam, Jesus, inaugurated the KOG which is the NPOG, the church of Jesus. We live in a kingdom, you and I! It is an 'other-worldly' kingdom. It is a reality more real and less visible than the one you see with your eyes. It is the reality apprehended by faith. And here it is good to remember that "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." (Ro 10:17) As we attend the word of God, the Holy Spirit enables us to grasp by faith what we can not see with our natural eyes.

If we are to be the Church of God's intention we must be (and look like) the people of God's original intention – people joined by faith to the 2nd Adam as much as the OT POG were joined by biological descent from the 1st Adam; people with whom God dwells in intimate communion; subjects of King Jesus. Is that you? Is that us?

Let's see one more thing in Adam and the creational POG to help us understand who we are in the church today.

(c) Adam & the 1st Creation also Anticipates Jesus & the New Creation

The Fall with its death, and some point out even the very threat of death in the pre-fall 1st creation, anticipates a new creation in which all that was lost in the Fall and all that God intended as ultimate would finally and eternally be realized. We see this in the last two chapters of the canon of Scripture.

Revelation 21

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will

dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new " And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

Besides being a wonderful hope for a future reality, interestingly Paul sees the new creation being a reality for Christians of his day.

- [Galatians 6:15](#) -- For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) -- Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

The 1st Adam and the 1st creation anticipated the 2nd ("last") Adam and the 2nd ("new") creation.

Whereas we feel quite comfortable saying that we live in a fallen world (the world of the 1st creation); we don't see ourselves (at least not as easily) as living yet in the new creation. Yet the new creation is the reality of the church. We live as the final community of the POG and we can live as the church of God's intention in the inaugurated but not fully consummated KOG.

If we are to be the church of God's intention we will have to apprehend our new identity as the NPOG the new creation new covenant community. And we will apprehend this only **by faith**.

- By sight I am Nat and Gail's son...
- By faith I am God's redeemed in Christ, born again (John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:3...), a new creature (2 Cor 5:17) in the new creation (Gal 6:15), a stranger and alien in this world (1 Peter 2:11) and a citizen of heaven (Ph 3:20).
- By faith our church is the community redeemed by Christ. By God's grace through faith each member has been made new by power of the His Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we will keep making mud pies if we don't grab hold of this reality. We will keep seeing ourselves only as living in a fallen world and subject to sin and hoping for the return of Christ when we can finally be delivered from all that ails us.

I believe we must give ourselves to the task of owning what Christ has purchased for us. I'm not saying we stick our heads in the sand and call black white. But what Christ has done, He has done. We must not assume it is not a reality just because we can not see it with our natural eyes. This is the mistake of so many today. We can't see it with our natural eyes because it is not a natural reality. The new creation and the KOG Christ has inaugurated is real, but we must see it by faith.

But faith is not something we can just drum up and squeeze out. What do we know about faith from earlier? "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Rom 10:17. We come to see that faith is buoyed in us as the Holy Spirit works with the word of God. Robert L. Reymond says it like this, "The Spirit works by and with Christ's word. Christ's word works by and with the Spirit." (Looking for God In All the Wrong Places – An Appeal for Word-Based Corporate Worship, by Robert G. Spinney, TULIP BOOKS, p.)

God has ordained that His word read or heard or sung in concert with His Spirit actually transforms us (Romans 12:2). Listen for the instrumentality of God's word in the following Scriptures:

- Heb 4:12 -- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- Acts 20:32 -- And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- 1 Cor 1:18 -- For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- 1 Thes 2:13 -- For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
- John 17:17 – **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.**

Listen to the role of the Spirit in these verses

- Eph 6:17 – 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- John 14:26 -- 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
- John 16:13-14 – 13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the reason we open the word and pay such close attention is that God's Spirit uses God's word to build our faith and help us grasp the spiritual realities that are only accessible by faith. Do not settle for a little Scripture here and a little bit there. If you do you will miss the depth of the knowledge of God and the

transformation of your own person into the image of Christ that has always been God's purpose. Immerse yourself in it. Wash yourself in it. As you do, God's Spirit will transform you and give you the faith to apprehend all that Christ has already redeemed us to enjoy! As we do we will be the new community of Christ's redeemed, the new creation and the church of God's ultimate intention.

ⁱ The eternal nature of God's intention should probably be considered. The light and life God created was intended to be eternal and perpetual. The death (sin, separation) that came through Adam to all men, and possibly even the threat of death in the first creation before the fall speaks to the non-ultimate nature of the first creation and anticipates the eternality and ultimacy of the new creation.

ⁱⁱ Re: 2nd Adam

[Romans 5:14](#) -- Nevertheless death reigned from **Adam** until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of **Adam**, who is a type of Him who was to come.

[1 Corinthians 15:22](#) -- For as in **Adam** all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

[1 Corinthians 15:45](#) -- So also it is written, "The first MAN, **Adam**, BECAME A LIVING SOUL " The last **Adam** became a life-giving spirit.

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