

For What Purpose was the Son of God Manifest?

We all are very much aware of what Jesus did on the cross two thousand years ago. We are also very much aware of what Jesus did after that in respect to taking our punishment and then rising from the grave and ascending to the Father. We all are so very thankful that, through Jesus, eternal life is now available to all and can be experienced by those who believe in, and accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

The first thing I would like to visit in this discussion is the topic of what “eternal life” really means. When we express or say the term “eternal life” in the presence of many Christians, the immediate picture that comes to mind is “eternity in heaven when our life on this earth is over.” This is definitely an aspect of “eternal life.” However, it is not the definition of “eternal life” – at least according to Jesus. Jesus, in John 17:3, expressly states what His definition of “eternal life” is, “*And this is life eternal, that they might **know** thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*”

According to Jesus, His definition of “eternal life” is to “know” the Father. The term “know” means “to be as one” in the context of two becoming one, such as a husband and a wife coming together in the marriage rite and then in the consummation of the marriage – this completes the scriptural aspect of marriage as it states that the two shall become one flesh. The relationship between God and His people has always been associated with aspects of a marriage - two becoming as one. We must recognize that in John 17:3, Jesus is emphatically telling us that our mindset towards eternal life should not be so much “destination” oriented as it should be “relationship” oriented.

That, I believe, has become a problem over the past years for Christianity. It seems that when we teach our people to evangelize, the main aspect of our evangelism training is to get people to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior so that they would spend eternity in heaven. We know of evangelism “techniques” that are all about getting to heaven. We tell people to accept Jesus and their sins will be forgiven and they will go to heaven when they leave this physical life. We ask questions such as, “Do you know where you will spend eternity?” Or, “When you die which would you prefer – heaven or hell?” This creates a “destination Gospel” instead of a “relationship Gospel” which changes, in a very subtle way, the full message for which Jesus came. We tell people that accepting Jesus will “give them a born again spirit” and that they now become a child of God and are “on their way to heaven.” These concepts are not necessarily incorrect. However, this was not Jesus’ main purpose for coming to this earth and it was not His main message.

If we continue reading John 17, we will see that Jesus’ main purpose for coming was to restore relationship between God and Man. We all know that Jesus came to bring “peace” upon this earth. However, this “peace” is not just a quietness and serenity. This “peace” is the same “peace” that the angels declared at the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:13, 14, “*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace**, good will toward men.*” So what is this “peace” that the angels were proclaiming? This “peace” is the Greek word “*eirene*,” which literally means, “to be set at one again.” It infers that God and Man, who were once in “oneness” (in the Garden) and then became separated because of “the fall,” are now able to be “set as one, again.” In other words God, the Father, whose heart was always to be in “oneness” with His prized creation that was created in His image and likeness, “opened the door” and made a way for Man to be “set as one, again,” relationally, with Him. It would be accomplished through the “*Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the earth*,” Jesus, our Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ. (Revelation 13:8)

Wait a minute!!! Did we "hear" what we just read??!! Jesus was "slain **before** the foundations of the earth." A way of salvation was pre-ordained and pre-destined even before the earth, which includes Man, was even created. That is how much it was in the heart of God for us to be as one with Him. He made a way back to Him even **before** we were created. Wow!!! Let's take a "Selah" moment and "pause and think" on that for a moment.

As we previously, discussed, God created Man (Adam and Eve) to be one with Him, which they were. They were created in His image and likeness. He gave them everything He was. He would continually come and visit "in the cool of the day" to have fellowship with them. Then one day.... We know the account of what happened with Adam and Eve. The devil understood the power of that "oneness" and the depth of what that "oneness" brought to any relationship. The "tactic" he used then, and still uses to this day if given the opportunity, is to bring distrust into the midst of the relationship between man and God. The devil told Adam and Eve that God was holding back on them. He implied that God was lying to them. If God was a liar and if He was holding back on them, how could they trust God concerning the other things He had promised them? Therefore, they began to doubt God in what He told them about "death." They began to believe that God might have lied to them concerning the tree. Therefore, because of the deposit of mistrust placed within their heart, they began to believe the lie of the devil that they would not die if they ate of the tree.

Granted, they probably did not know what the word "die" or "death" really implied because there was no death upon the earth up until that time. Nothing had died. However, it did not matter that they did not know the full implications of disobedience. The same applies to us, today. It does not matter if we do not know what exactly would be the implications that our sin would bring upon ourselves. If God tells us to do or not to do something, then we need to **trust** that it is in our best interest to simply obey. Why? - Because we **trust** that God always has our best interests in His heart. It was this little deposit of "mistrust" placed within Adam and Eve that led to their fall and experience "death." Simply put, the "death" that they experienced was not so much that their physical bodies began to deteriorate but rather the greater effect was that of being separated, relationally, from God. "Oneness" was broken.

When that thought of mistrust was allowed to enter in, it created a chain reaction that led to their ultimate sin. The sin was their action of disobedience by eating of the fruit. However, the root of the sin came from a deposit of mistrust that was allowed to be placed within their heart concerning who God is and what He had said. That is what led to the sin and ultimately caused the break in the relationship of "oneness" between them and God. They hid from God. They lied and blame shifted. That perfect "oneness" was broken. There was now separation between Man and God, just as it is spoken of in Isaiah 59:2,

*"But your iniquities (*the mistrust of God within their heart) have separated between you and your God, and your sins (*the actual act of disobedience by eating of the tree) have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."*

It not only brought a separation from being "as one" with God but it also brought a separation within their own relationship as husband and wife that affected their "oneness" with each other. We all know the principles concerning sin and its affects.

But God... Remember, as we discussed previously. In God's infinite wisdom in knowing the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end, He had a "predestined" plan. Jesus was the "Lamb, slain **before** the foundations of the earth." What Adam and Eve had done did not take God by surprise. He had a predestined plan of salvation and redemption, as well as the ability to bring "oneness" again between God and Man. He declared this in Genesis 3:15, *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* This, as we all know, is the first "Messianic prophecy" concerning Jesus.

We must grasp and understand that God's heart is not just one of being in unity but rather it is one that yearns and desires "oneness." He yearns for us to be single hearted, with and for Him. As discussed in a previous essay,** unity is when two distinct people or parties choose to come together and do something together. They are still each who they are, two separate entities, but they are doing something in agreement. That is good. However, it is not what God prefers. "Oneness" is when there are two or more persons or parties that each lose their own identity and become as "one" in a totally new identity. In the context of our discussion, it means that each of us, when we accept the plan of "oneness" that God instituted before the foundation of the earth was even created, by accepting Jesus into our hearts, lose our own identities and become "one new man in Christ." (2Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15)

This leads us to the main purpose of this discussion. Recently, in one of our BibleShares, we were discussing and studying 1John. Now I know that many of our friends who may have a leaning toward the "hyper-grace" thinking might leave this discussion at this point when I mentioned 1John. I am not saying who, but it has come to my attention that many who follow after the "hyper-grace message" would like to see 1John removed from the Bible. You may say that I am being a little overly sarcastic. However, I have heard this out of the mouths of some "Christians." Anyway, lest I digress... let's go forward.

As many of us would know, in 1John 3:8b it states, *"... for this purpose was the Son of God manifest, to destroy the works of the devil..."* Wait a minute... I would like to correct what I just wrote because this is NOT the correct use of this scripture. The first mistake is my usage of the scripture identification, "1John 3:8b." Why would this be a mistake? Well, when we begin to "divide" scriptures into "a, b, c" sections we may very well be taking them out of their correct context and making that "section of the scripture" say something that it might not really be saying. My second mistake is that I must also look at the scriptures prior to that scripture, as well as scriptures following that particular scripture to make sure that I am understanding the full context in which the writer was trying to express their thought.

Being in church for many years, I have heard this "section" of the scripture used over and over. There was even a cute little chorus using this section of scripture that was very popular and we all sang. We have used this scripture to declare that Jesus came to destroy, the "works of the devil" such as sickness, disease, poverty, death, etc. And this is all true. However, in its context, the writer, the Apostle John, wrote these words concerning the principle of sin and how God loved us so much (1John 3:1), that he had set us free from, not just the bondage of sin, but the lifestyle and patterns of sin that had previously separated us from God. You see the 1John 3:8 in its entirety states, *" He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."*

In the verses previous to this verse, John is talking about sin and the person who **continually** and **habitually practices** sin. 1John 3:4-7 tells us, *"Everyone who commits (practices) sin is guilty of lawlessness; for [that is what] sin is, lawlessness (the breaking, violating of God's law by transgression or neglect--being unrestrained and unregulated by His commands and His will). You know that He appeared in visible form {and} became Man to take away [upon Himself] sins, and in Him there is no sin [essentially and forever]. No one who abides in Him [who lives and remains in communion with and in obedience to Him--deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] commits (practices) sin. No one who [habitually] sins has either seen {or} known Him [recognized, perceived, or understood Him, or has had an experiential acquaintance with Him]. Boys (lads), let no one deceive {and} lead you astray. He who practices righteousness [who is upright, conforming to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action, living a consistently conscientious life] is righteous, even as He is righteous."* (Amplified Version)

Uh-oh!!! I can go further in this; however, I will just let the scripture speak for itself.

**Essay by Ray Tripi - "Is There a Difference between Unity and Oneness"

<http://www.simplysimpleworship.com/Is%20There%20a%20Difference%20Between%20Unity%20and%20Oneness.pdf>

I would like to get back to verse 8 and our discussion. The primary purpose that John is telling us of why Jesus came to earth was the same message that the angels were declaring when Jesus was born - to destroy the works of the devil and bring "peace on earth," restoration of the broken relationship between Man and God. The primary work of the devil is sin. Everything else is an outgrowth or outcome of sin and the sinful nature. John was saying that Jesus was manifested on this earth to destroy the effects of sin. The purpose of "sin" as we saw from the beginning is to bring separation between God and Man and break the relationship of "oneness." We know that sin separates Man from God. Sin does not separate God from Man. Romans 8:35-39 tells us that nothing can separate us from God's love. God always loves us and desires to be in a relationship of "oneness" with us. It was our sin that came in the way. Jesus was manifested to destroy that work of separation that sin and the devil established way back in the Garden.

Now, as a child of God, if a person truly is a child of God, the desire for sin and to do sin should be repulsive. John is not saying that a child of God does not sin. What he is saying is that our desire should be one that we do not want to sin. I know that there is a fine line here. What it comes down to is an attitude of the heart. We all know the scripture in 1John 1:9 that states, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* But yet John goes on to declare the scriptures that we just read previously. Is John schizophrenic? No. John is relating to the fact that we **do not have to sin** any longer and that as a true disciple of Jesus, our heart should be that of one that does not habitually and practice sin. We must flee from it. In Ephesians 4:24 it tells us, *"And that **ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**"* This tells us that we do have a responsibility in this.

1John 3:9 tells us, *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed** remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* God's "seed" is now within the born again believer. What is that "seed" that is now within the believer? It is the same "seed" that was deposited within Mary's womb. It is the "seed" of God's Living Word, Jesus, working within each of us through the infilling of the Holy Spirit to now live a holy, consecrated lifestyle - the same lifestyle that Jesus walked in when He was manifested upon the earth. Jesus demonstrated, through His lifestyle, that a person living a lifestyle led by the Holy Spirit and the Living Word of God **can** overcome a sinful lifestyle. The lifestyle of sin can be destroyed and overcome by the true born again child of God because of being in "oneness" with the Father, just like Jesus did. Jesus walked and lived it. He died on the cross. He took our punishment, and rose from the grave. In doing so Jesus "destroyed" the works of the devil that was done in the beginning through Adam and Eve when he deposited a mistrust of God which led to disobedience and ultimately sin, causing separation from God, the Father. Jesus did what He did so that the relationship of "oneness with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ," would be restored with man and we would once again be "set at one" with God.

Truly, *"For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son..."* He loved us even before He created us. God loves "oneness" with His creation. He desires "oneness." Should not that be our heart's desire - "oneness" with the Father and with Jesus? It is available through Jesus. For all of us who have Jesus, we have been brought back into that "oneness," whether we totally understand it or not. As Christians, the "seed" is within. We are no longer of this world nor anything in it. *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is **NOT** of the Father and is not in Him,"* (1John 2:16) neither should it be found within His sons and daughters.

Jesus emphatically tells us throughout John 17, that our mindset towards "eternal life" should not be so "destination" oriented, as much as it should be "relationship" oriented. Eternal life for the Christian is, *"...to be **one** with the Father and His son, Jesus Christ,"* all the days of our lives - both, while here on this earth, as well as for all eternity.

My brothers and sisters, it was for this purpose that the Son of God was manifest.