

The Lord's Plan of Salvation, Part 2

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主の救いの計画 2
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ゴットホルド・ベック

Psalms

33:1 Rejoice in the Lord, righteous ones; for the praise of the upright is beautiful.
33:2 With the lyre, give thanks to the Lord; with the ten stringed harp, play music to him;
33:3 with a new song, sing to him; with shouts of joy, play skillfully.
33:4 For the word of the Lord is upright; and all his works are done in faithfulness.
33:5 He loves righteousness and justice; the world is filled with the gracious love of the Lord.
33:6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; all the heavenly bodies by the breath of his mouth.
33:7 He gathered the oceans into a single place; he put the deep water into storehouses.
33:8 Let all the world fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him;
33:9 because he spoke and it came to be, because he commanded, it stood firm.
33:10 The Lord makes void the counsel of nations; he frustrates the plans of peoples.
33:11 But the Lord's counsel stands firm forever, the plans in his mind for all generations.
33:12 How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen as his own inheritance.
33:13 When the Lord looks down from heaven, he observes every human being.
33:14 From his dwelling place, he looks down on all the inhabitants of the earth.
33:15 He formed the hearts of them all; he understands everything they do.
33:16 A king is not saved by a large army; a mighty soldier is not delivered by his great strength.
33:17 It is vain to trust in a horse for deliverance, even with its great strength, it cannot deliver.
33:18 Indeed, the Lord watches those who fear him; those who trust in his gracious love
33:19 to deliver them from death; to keep them alive in times of famine.
33:20 We wait on the Lord; he is our help and our shield.
33:21 Indeed, our heart will rejoice in him, because we have placed our trust in his holy name.
33:22 Lord, may your gracious love be upon us, even as we hope in you.
[International Standard Version]

This very Psalm we just read is a confession of David and his heartfelt prayer. Those who have this same conviction are blessed. The King called Solomon once said;

Ecclesiastes

3:11 He made everything appropriate in its time. He also placed eternity within them—yet, no person can fully comprehend what God is doing from beginning to end.

The Lord is able, but humans cannot fully comprehend what he does. Moses said;

Psalms

90:2 Before the mountains were formed or the earth and the world were brought forth, you are God from eternity to eternity.

Moses could make this confession because he had a conviction like this. Let us look at one more verse and see what David has said;

Psalms

102:27 But you remain the same; your years never end.

In the previous meeting, we began the discussion about the Lord's plan of salvation. The purpose of the discussion was not merely to understand the word of God better, but for us to love him more. This was what was special about David. The word of the Lord was all in all for him. The Lord does not have to be saved by anyone. The Lord is the one who creates all things. The life of the Lord is not created by anyone. Thus, there is no beginning and no end for this life.

Genesis

1:1 In the beginning, God created the universe.

This verse pulls us back to the past that was an immeasurably long time ago. Nobody knows for sure when it was that God created this whole world. It is only written that the Lord created it. In the Hebrew language, the word 'god' is used in a plural form, not in a singular one. The word 'created' is used for a singular subject. A similar fact can be seen in verses 26 and 27 of the first chapter of Genesis.

Genesis

1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image,...."

It is not, "in my image," but is the plural form.

1:26to be like us. Let them be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, the livestock, everything that crawls on the earth, and over the earth itself!"

1:27 So God created mankind in his own image;

in his own image God created them; he created them male and female.

The concept of the so-called Trinity is already revealed to us in this Genesis. Although the word Trinity does not appear anywhere in the Scripture, it is still the foundation of the Bible. That is to say, the Bible explains God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God is in three persons, but it is still one God. Indeed, the uniformity of God is explained in many parts of the Bible.

Deuteronomy

6:4 Listen, Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

6:5 You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

It is written in the first verse that the Lord is alone. However, in other sections, some personalities of this Lord God are distinguished. These are famous last verses from the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew

28:19 Therefore, as you go, disciple people in all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

28:20 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. And remember, I am with you each and every day until the end of the age.

Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Paul also wrote to brothers and sisters in Corinth;

2 Corinthians

13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus the Messiah, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Let us look at this verse too from the Gospel according to John.

John

14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything that I have told you.

The Lord is one. However, he is working through the personality of Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit- these three personalities are all called by one name, which is God.

Genesis

1:1 In the beginning, God created the universe.

The same thing is explained in different words in John, chapter 1 verse 1;

John

1:1 In the beginning, the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

This verse looks a little elusive and we can't get a clear picture of what it is saying. However, it can be understood from the verse 14.

John

1:14 The Word became flesh and lived among us. We gazed on his glory, the kind of glory that belongs to the Father's unique Son, who is full of grace and truth.

It is valid for anyone to call the Father God. Jesus is called God too, which is also understandable. But the Holy Spirit is also called God.

Acts

5:3 Peter asked, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart so that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back some of the money you got for the land?"

5:4 As long as it remained unsold, wasn't it your own? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? So how could you have thought of doing what you did? You didn't lie only to men, but also to God!"

Here, we see the expressions, "lied to the Holy Spirit" and "lied to God". The very first verse of the first chapter of Genesis begins with "In the beginning, God...." We also see "the Word was God" in the Gospel according to John, chapter 1, verse 1 and verse 14 goes, "The Word became flesh," which means human.

Furthermore, we see from the chapter five of the Acts of the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit is also called the God. It is absolutely true as long as it is written in the Bible. This is incomprehensible and can never be grasped rationally. In the mission for our salvation, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have worked as one person and could never be separated from each other, according to the Bible.

Just like these three personalities worked as one in the two great accomplishments of the Lord God in the history of the universe, the Creation and the salvation, these three personalities, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are working together for the personal salvation of humans today. By the intention of God the Father, by grace of the salvation of God the Son and through the strength of God the Holy Spirit that gives life, we came to believe and were saved. This exactly is the revelation of his grace.

What was the Lord God doing before the Creation began? It is written that the Father God created the Holy Angels before the foundation of this earth was laid. Before the whole universe began, the Lord God

already had the eternal fellowship of love with his son, Jesus. It can be seen from the confession Jesus made in his prayers;

John

17:5 So now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

Thirdly, before the world began, the Lord God had planned the personal salvation for each one of us as clearly stated in the Bible. Furthermore, before the world began, the Lord God already had the plan of salvation for the churches. It is also said that, when the world began, the Lord prepared the kingdom for the people who belonged to him.

Matthew

25:34 Then the king will say to those on his right, Come, you who have been blessed by my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

It is written, "from the foundation of the world."

Before the world began, the Father God designated his Son, the Lord Jesus, as the mediator in the plan of salvation he already had in mind. From the beginning of eternity, his son, the Lord Jesus has determined to accomplish the work of redemption.

Indeed, even before the beginning of this world, God as the perfecter cared about the voice of you and me. Even before the waves raged, the sea roared, the land was formed and the foundation of the world was placed, the God of the almighty already cared about each one of us humans.

It is a wonderful fact for which we can never be thankful enough. This is the fact that no human heart can express in words. All we can do is to fall on our knees at his feet to worship him and to entrust our lives to the Lord God, who loves all things.

In the beginning, God created the universe. How did the Lord God create heaven and earth? The Lord created all heavenly objects, including all stars and planets, by his own authoritative word.

Psalms

33:9 because he spoke and it came to be, because he commanded, it stood firm.

Is there anyone among us who can truly understand this? It is far beyond our imagination. The creator God created angels, stars and planets out of nothing without any materials. The Lord God, who is far beyond our comprehension, did not need any element or material at all to create the universe. What did the Lord create the infinite universe from?

Hebrews

11:3 By faith we understand that time was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are invisible.

All things were created by the word of God. The word of God means Jesus. It is not merely a word.

Colossians

1:16 For by him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether they are kings, Lords, rulers, or powers. All things have been created through him and for him.

Hebrews

1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by a Son whom he appointed to be the heir of everything and through whom he also made the universe.

The Creation was accomplished by the God of Trinity. The Father God, through the Lord Jesus and with the strength of the Holy Spirit, created all things. No one has ever seen or comprehended the Lord God. Nevertheless, foolish human beings never stop to carve an image of God in woods and stones. The word of the Lord against this sin of idol worship is extremely strict and firm.

Now, let us briefly look at the origin of the creation of the universe, its purpose and greatness.

Let us begin with the origin of the Creation. Why did the Lord God create the world? No one has an answer to this question. All we can say is that the Lord has created the world for a purpose of his own.

The creation was accomplished according to the free will of the God of Trinity. The Lord created a plan first. When humans try to build something, they always begin by drawing a plan. The Lord God first developed a plan too and then created the world according to his own wishes. What was the purpose of this creation? What was the reason that the Lord decided to create this world? There are two answers to this question.

Firstly, it was to reveal the glory of the Lord God. Secondly, for the manifestation of the love of the Lord God. He had these two objectives.

The ultimate purpose of all things that the Lord God does is the glorification of the Lord himself. All things are done in the name of the Lord himself, on behalf of the Lord God himself and for the glory of the Lord God to be praised. As the presence of the Lord God is the highest of all things, no person other than himself is qualified to determine the purpose of his work.

Moreover, according to the Scripture, all things were created to indicate the love of the Lord God. The omniscience of Father God can be seen in the

magnificence of this world that consists of an immeasurable amount of materials, animals and plants. However, it takes a personality which is free from ethical constraint to manifest the righteousness of God, love and truth of the Lord.

It was for this reason that the Lord God has created the first humans and expressed the love of himself in them. In other words, it is true to say that the Lord God has created this world for his love to be revealed and the whole world to respond to the love of God.

The goal of God in the coming future is to lead the world so that it receives the sacredness and love of the God himself and brings the whole world to the ultimate blessing and glory.

We cannot comprehend the greatness of this world. Even the dimension of the Earth we live in is far beyond all our imagination and appreciation. Some people have estimated that all things that were created by humans throughout history, let's say all vessels, cities and villages, can be put into a box which is no larger than 300 cubic miles.

However, this earth is large enough to include 260 billion of such boxes of 300 cubic miles. Furthermore, this Earth itself is one of those astronomical elements, which consists of swirling galaxies. It is nothing more than a grain of dust in the vast universe. The Sun is huge enough to include more than 125 million of Earth.

It will take more than 169 years for the fastest express train to reach the Sun from the Earth, which is as distant as 93 million miles. However, even our Sun is one of the billions of stars which make up our Galaxy.

As we look up to the nightly sky, we see that it is filled with stars and the distance between stars seems so narrow. However, actually the distribution of stars in the universe is very sparse. It is as sparse as seeing one tree at every 20 to 60 square miles on the surface of the Earth.

Or, this can be put another way. It is like sprinkling one liter of water over the whole surface of Earth, which is as large as 100 million and 96 thousand square miles. The amplitude of this universe far exceeds our imagination. Even more, we cannot imagine the greatness of the Lord who created the universe. As the long Solomon has said, neither the sky nor the highest heaven can contain the Lord.

1 Kings

8:27 and yet, will God truly reside on earth? Look! Neither the sky nor the highest heaven can contain you! How much less this Temple that I have built!

The greatness of the Creation can be recognized, not only in the stars, but also in the army of angels. What is the purpose of the Earth's existence in this whole universe? Will God rejoice in a world filled with lifeless materials alone?

The Lord God is the God of living things, isn't he? Can materials with no soul praise the Lord, who is the source of all lives? Contrarily, even the world of worms, which is the creation of the Lord God, is filled with lives and some sort of individuality. Very often in the Bible, stars and angels are named without distinction.

It presumably implies that angels are related to and reign stars of their own. How are the angels described in the Bible? To begin with, it can be said that angels are there to track our growth.

Ephesians

3:10 He did this so that now, through the church, the wisdom of God in all its variety might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm

Angels are commanded to oversee our growth and they are sent by the Lord for this reason.

Luke

1:11 An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the incense altar.

1:12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled, and fear overwhelmed him.

1:13 But the angel told him, "Stop being afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to name him John.

Matthew

1:20 After he had thought about it, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," he said, "don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he is the one who will save his people from their sins."

Of course, there are so many parts in the Bible that are similar to this. It is also written that angels are sent to support us in times of trouble.

Hebrews

1:14 All of them are spirits on a divine mission, sent to serve those who are about to inherit salvation, aren't they?

Acts

12:7 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on

his side, woke him up, and said, "Get up quickly!" His chains fell from his wrists.

Furthermore, angels are not only there to help us, but will also be sent to fight for our ultimate victory.

Revelation

12:7 Then a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels fought back.

12:8 But it was not strong enough, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

19:11 Then I saw heaven standing open, and there was a white horse! Its rider is named Faithful and True. He administers justice and wages war righteously.

19:12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many royal crowns. He has a name written on him that nobody knows except himself.

19:13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.

19:14 The armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, follow him on white horses.

The angels are also the keepers of the world order defined by the Lord. It must have been in his mind when Paul wrote this line in his letter;

1 Corinthians

11:10 This is why a woman should have authority over her own head: because of the angels.

It is not for the people they pray with, but for the angels as stated in this verse. It is clearly stated in the Bible that the angels are also the enforcers of the judgment of the Lord God. In this sense, they are very much like servants of the Lord. Moreover, angels will come to praise the Lord God for his work of redemption.

Luke

2:13 Suddenly, a multitude of the Heavenly Army appeared with the angel, praising God by saying,

2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people who enjoy his favor!"

15:10 In the same way, I tell you that there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."

Today, we looked over the origin of the Creation as well as the purpose and greatness of the Creation. As the Scripture says, what we can see is a very small part of the Creation and a temporarily limited part. The eternal world created by God is far greater and higher than what we can see. This was the reason Paul wrote these words in his letters to the brothers and sisters in Corinth.

2 Corinthians

4:18 because we do not look for things that can

be seen but for things that cannot be seen. For things that can be seen are temporary, but things that cannot be seen are eternal.

Jesus was raised to heaven and he is still there above all things.

Romans

11:36 For all things are from him, by him, and for him. Glory belongs to him forever! Amen.

In this way, Paul praised the Lord God. We will be truly blessed if we can live with the same attitude.

End