

## **Election, and God's Kingdom Purpose.**

**pp. 126 - 132**

The doctrines of election and predestination have always given rise to difficulties among Christians. The endless debates about election and free will have led to divisions between the children of God, yet we have to face the fact that serious study of the Word of God is impossible when election is ignored, for it occurs frequently in both the Old and New Testaments and occupies a most important place in the purposes of God. A serious mistake has been made in teaching that the Word of God restricts election to one thing only, namely salvation. Those who assert this should use a concordance and note the number of times the word election is connected directly with salvation alone, and they will certainly be surprised at what they find.

We need to recognize that the Bible is not just a haphazard collection of books under one cover. It is a divine unity revealing a tremendous plan that God is carrying out. Once this is perceived, one has a solid basis for understanding the Word of God. With this we must link God's almighty power and His sovereignty. It is so easy to make plans and then be unable to carry them out for various reasons, inability being one of them. With His plan, God has made certain promises and these are absolutely secure because He is almighty and omniscient, knowing all the future as well as the past.

We need to be like Abraham who, as Paul tells us, was fully convinced that *God was able to do what He had promised* (Rom. iv. 21) even though the outward circumstances seemingly made the fulfillment impossible, for God had promised him a son, yet he himself was physically incapable of having one.

God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel in a dream and finished by promising "I will not leave you until *I have done all that I have promised*" (Gen. xxviii. 15, N.E.B.). Job knew that God always kept His word, for he said "I know that *you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted*" (Job xlii. 2, N.I.V.). Later on, the prophets gave witness to the same thing. God says, "I am He ... Who confirms the word of My servant and *makes the plan of My envoys succeed*" (Isa. xlv. 26, Jerusalem Bible). Also in this prophecy He is recorded as saying "Have you not heard long ago? *I did it all*. In days gone by *I planned* it and now *I have brought it to pass*" (Isa. xxxvii. 26, N.E.B.). And further on we read that God said "I am God, and there is no one like Me. *I reveal the end from the beginning*, from ancient times I reveal what is to be. I say, *My purpose shall take effect ... I have spoken and I will bring about it. I have a plan to carry out and carry it out I will*" (Isa. xlv. 10, 11, N.E.B.). We may remember too the well known words of Isa. lv. 8-11, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways ... So is My word that goes out from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, but *will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*" (N.I.V.).

God told Jeremiah at the beginning of his ministry after he declared that he had seen the vision of the almond tree, "The Lord said to me, you have seen correctly, *for I am watching to see that My Word is fulfilled*" (Jer. i. 12, N.I.V.). "For I know the plans I

have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, *plans to give you hope and a future*” (Jer. xxix. 11, N.I.V.). Ezekiel records the words of God, “I the Lord have spoken, and *I will do it*” (Ezek. xxii. 14; xxxvi. 36).

These Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God is not working in a haphazard way. He has a master plan which He conceived in past eternity. It is centred in Christ and what He would accomplish in His earthly life and witness. Eph. iii. 11 A.V. refers to it as “*His eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”, literally the “plan of the ages”, the ages being the time when the gigantic plan is being worked out by God. He has the power, the wisdom and the foresight to bring this plan to a certain and glorious goal, and not all the opposition of Satan, the powers of darkness, and the unbelieving world energized by him, can prevent this from being accomplished. Even the pagan king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had to learn this lesson. When God had finished dealing with him, he declared, “He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; *none can stay His hand* or say to Him ‘What doest Thou?’.” (Dan. iv. 35).

God never needs to modify His plans, nor can anyone accuse Him of wrongdoing in carrying them out. Moses certainly stated the truth when he said “Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, His works are perfect and all *His ways are just. A faithful God Who does no wrong, upright and just is He*” (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4, N.I.V.). It is this One Who, later on, was revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom the apostle Paul described as “our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 13), and it is His master plan we are considering, and we shall find that this plan is eternally linked with God’s great kingdom which finally finds its complete expression in the “new heavens and a new earth” which God will create when this present universe ceases to exist (II Pet. iii. 10-13). However, we must be very careful not to exceed the revelation of holy Scriptures concerning this kingdom, nor on the other hand to lessen what is revealed therein.

We may be sure that the fall of Satan and his angels, and then the fall of Adam, greatly complicated matters, for sin and death would certainly find no place in the great kingdom of God; and death is an enemy till the last (I Cor. xv. 26). Hence the need for the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus to remove these barriers to God’s purpose:

“For God *designed Him* to be the means of expiating sin by His sacrificial death, effective through faith” (Rom. iii. 25, N.E.B.).

*Protithemi*, a verb meaning to purpose or plan (translated “designed”) shows us that this all-necessary redemption was an essential part of God’s plan, otherwise any sinner could never have a place in God’s perfect kingdom.

“... God, Who hath saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but *because of His own purpose and grace* ...” (II Tim. i. 8, 9).

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, *who have been called according to His purpose*” (Rom. viii. 28).

It is important to realize that the kingdom of God is wider than rule over the earth. Too often it is restricted in this way. But the Word of God reveals that this great kingdom includes the heavens (see the author's *The Kingdom of God in Heaven and on Earth*). In considering the kingdom theme we shall discover that election is connected with each phase of the kingdom. In the earthly part of the kingdom of God, the people of Israel dominate, but God's purposes cannot be restricted to them, for God wills that Gentile nations will be blessed with them so that finally God will be King of all the earth (Zech. xiv. 9), "...For the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9, A.V.).

To attain this, God plans to use Israel as a channel to reach the nations, so first of all He chooses or elects them:

"The Lord did not set His love upon you, *nor choose (elect) you*, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deut. vii. 7, A.V.).

"The Lord has declared this day that you are His people, His treasured possession as He promised ... He has declared that He will set you in praise, fame, and honour *high above all the nations He has made* and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God as He promised" (Deut. xxvi. 18, 19, N.I.V.).

"If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands that I give you today, *the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth*" (Deut. xxviii. 1, N.I.V. and see verse 13).

"He (God) has revealed His word to Jacob, His laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know His laws" (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20, N.I.V.).

See also Deut. iv. 37; xiv. 2; Psa. cxxxv. 4; Isa. xli. 8; xlv. 4; lxxv. 9, 22.

God's plan in all this was expressed by Paul when he warned the opposing Jews at Pisidian Antioch that he would turn from them to the Gentiles because of their opposition. Yet concerning their Messiah and them he quoted:

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles *that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth*" (Acts xiii. 47, N.I.V.).

But it may be objected that these promises to Israel were conditional. So they were, and if this summed up God's dealings with Israel, there would be no future for them. But through Jeremiah, God revealed His purposes of grace to this undeserving people, by making *a New Covenant with them*. This was to take the place of the Old Covenant of Law given through Moses (Jer. xxxi. 31-37). This is a long passage and the reader should carefully ponder over these verses. God says He will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and Judah. It would not be conditional like the Old Covenant of Law, because God would impress His law (His truth) on their minds and they would get to know Him from the least to the greatest. He would forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more. He makes the challenge and says that if the creation of day and night, earth and heaven, could be made to vanish; then the descendants of Israel would cease for ever to be a nation before Him. Or if the foundations of the earth could be searched out and the heavens above be measured, then, says God, "I will reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done".

The covenant was ratified by the shed blood of Christ:

“In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, This cup is the *new covenant in My blood*, which is poured out for you” (Luke xxii. 20, N.I.V.).

And the reader should carefully note what is written about the New Covenant in the epistle to the Hebrews (chapters ix. and x.).

There can be no doubt there must be a future restoration of Israel, for this rests on the New Covenant of grace and the shed blood of Calvary. Rom. xi. seals all this by the Apostle telling us that all Israel will be finally saved because of this covenant with them (Rom. xi. 25-29) and the fact that God’s gifts and His unconditional promises are irrevocable. They cannot be changed or wiped out. All this cancels the idea held by many that because of their failure, there is no future for the nation of Israel and all their blessings have now been handed over to the church and they are the spiritual Israel. Such teaching is quite unscriptural and therefore wrong. What we must not miss is the fact that Israel were an *elect people* and although they have failed in the past and spiritual blindness has come upon them, this is not for ever, but only “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (xi. 25, 26). At the Lord’s Second Coming, the blindness will be taken away, the nation will be saved and become a channel of blessing to all the earth.

There is another Scriptural fact we must not forget, and that is God never leaves Himself without a witness. In the darkest times of Israel’s apostasy there was always a godly remnant who were faithful. This is what Elijah had to be reminded of (xi. 2-5), and this was true during the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles during which Israel, in the mercy of God, was given another opportunity to repent, in which case their sins (including the killing of their Messiah and King) would be forgiven and He would return to them and the kingdom promises, spoken of by all the holy prophets, could then be fulfilled (Acts iii. 17-26); a passage of Scripture of great importance which is usually overlooked. It is noteworthy that election is linked with this remnant, “even so then at this present time also there is a remnant *according to the election of grace*” (Rom. xi. 5).

After the failure of Israel at the end of the Acts, we have the revelation of a new creation, a new Man (Eph. ii. 11-16) consisting of a number taken from Jews and Gentiles. They were *elected by the Father* before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4) and are identified with Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension (Eph. ii. 4-6), for they are seen here as enthroned with Christ in the highest glory “far above all”. No wonder they are exhorted to set their hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and not on earthly things! (Col. iii. 1, 2).

Thus we see that the wide plan of God embracing the highest heavens down to earth is under-girded as it were by God’s elective choice, for He has not only conceived this great plan which embraces the whole universe of a new heaven and a new earth, but He has selected those who take their part in the establishment of this plan and we can be sure that an all-wise God has chosen the right people to do this!

As an earthly example, it is like a person owning a piece of land which he wants to develop. So he plans to do this, and to carry it out he employs others to assist in the work. He chooses (elects) certain firms whom he feels will produce the best work for him, and provided that he does not infringe the law in what he plans, he cannot be criticized. He cannot employ everybody! Yet, when God does something similar to this He is judged to be unfair because He elects some and leaves out others! Not only this, but these critics confine election to salvation and nothing else, whereas we have seen that it goes far wider. Of course it includes salvation, for those whom God has selected have become involved in sin and death and these must be removed, otherwise the divine kingdom plan can never be realized.

This realization awaits the creation of new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. iii. 13). These are spotless and perfect with spotless and perfect beings in them and so it is here that the final kingdom of God is realized and God's perfect rule and control will be supreme with nothing to spoil it.

We must not confuse the 1,000 year reign of Christ (the millennium) with this final phase of the kingdom of God for the millennium takes place *in the present heaven and earth* at the return of Christ and can be called the most favoured age since the fall of man. There will be universal peace, but sin and death are still there, so it cannot be the fulfillment of the perfect kingdom.

Ephesians i. looks forward to a time when all in heaven and on earth will be brought under the headship of Christ and then there will be perfect unity. The N.I.V. renders it "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ" (i. 10). "Gather together in one" of the A.V. is literally "head up again" in Christ. Phil. ii. 5-11 N.I.V. reveals the time when Christ is exalted to the highest place and then when every knee shall bow in heaven, earth, and even under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Jehovah). This will be to the glory of God the Father.

Here the divine plan comes to a glorious conclusion. As Ezekiel was told, God is carefully watching over His plan as it is fulfilled step by step. His sovereignty allows nothing to frustrate it. The eternal reign of God will fulfil to His eternal glory.

## **Election, and God's Kingdom Purpose.** pp. 126 - 132

The doctrines of election and predestination have always given rise to difficulties among Christians. The endless debates about election and free will have led to divisions between the children of God, yet we have to face the fact that serious study of the Word of God is impossible when election is ignored, for it occurs frequently in both the Old and New Testaments and occupies a most important place in the purposes of God. A serious mistake has been made in teaching that the Word of God restricts election to one thing only, namely salvation. Those who assert this should use a concordance and note the number of times the word election is connected directly with salvation alone, and they will certainly be surprised at what they find.

We need to recognize that the Bible is not just a haphazard collection of books under one cover. It is a divine unity revealing a tremendous plan that God is carrying out. Once this is perceived, one has a solid basis for understanding the Word of God. With this we must link God's almighty power and His sovereignty. It is so easy to make plans and then be unable to carry them out for various reasons, inability being one of them. With His plan, God has made certain promises and these are absolutely secure because He is almighty and omniscient, knowing all the future as well as the past.

We need to be like Abraham who, as Paul tells us, was fully convinced that *God was able to do what He had promised* (Rom. iv. 21) even though the outward circumstances seemingly made the fulfillment impossible, for God had promised him a son, yet he himself was physically incapable of having one.

God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel in a dream and finished by promising "I will not leave you until *I have done all that I have promised*" (Gen. xxviii. 15, N.E.B.). Job knew that God always kept His word, for he said "I know that *you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted*" (Job xlii. 2, N.I.V.). Later on, the prophets gave witness to the same thing. God says, "I am He ... Who confirms the word of My servant and *makes the plan of My envoys succeed*" (Isa. xlv. 26, Jerusalem Bible). Also in this prophecy He is recorded as saying "Have you not heard long ago? *I did it all*. In days gone by *I planned* it and now *I have brought it to pass*" (Isa. xxxvii. 26, N.E.B.). And further on we read that God said "I am God, and there is no one like Me. *I reveal the end from the beginning*, from ancient times I reveal what is to be. I say, *My purpose shall take effect ... I have spoken and I will bring about it. I have a plan to carry out and carry it out I will*" (Isa. xlv. 10, 11, N.E.B.). We may remember too the well known words of Isa. lv. 8-11, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways ... So is My word that goes out from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, but *will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*" (N.I.V.).

God told Jeremiah at the beginning of his ministry after he declared that he had seen the vision of the almond tree, "The Lord said to me, you have seen correctly, *for I am watching to see that My Word is fulfilled*" (Jer. i. 12, N.I.V.). "For I know the plans I

have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, *plans to give you hope and a future*” (Jer. xxix. 11, N.I.V.). Ezekiel records the words of God, “I the Lord have spoken, and *I will do it*” (Ezek. xxii. 14; xxxvi. 36).

These Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God is not working in a haphazard way. He has a master plan which He conceived in past eternity. It is centred in Christ and what He would accomplish in His earthly life and witness. Eph. iii. 11 A.V. refers to it as “*His eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”, literally the “plan of the ages”, the ages being the time when the gigantic plan is being worked out by God. He has the power, the wisdom and the foresight to bring this plan to a certain and glorious goal, and not all the opposition of Satan, the powers of darkness, and the unbelieving world energized by him, can prevent this from being accomplished. Even the pagan king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had to learn this lesson. When God had finished dealing with him, he declared, “He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; *none can stay His hand* or say to Him ‘What doest Thou?’.” (Dan. iv. 35).

God never needs to modify His plans, nor can anyone accuse Him of wrongdoing in carrying them out. Moses certainly stated the truth when he said “Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, His works are perfect and all *His ways are just. A faithful God Who does no wrong, upright and just is He*” (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4, N.I.V.). It is this One Who, later on, was revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom the apostle Paul described as “our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 13), and it is His master plan we are considering, and we shall find that this plan is eternally linked with God’s great kingdom which finally finds its complete expression in the “new heavens and a new earth” which God will create when this present universe ceases to exist (II Pet. iii. 10-13). However, we must be very careful not to exceed the revelation of holy Scriptures concerning this kingdom, nor on the other hand to lessen what is revealed therein.

We may be sure that the fall of Satan and his angels, and then the fall of Adam, greatly complicated matters, for sin and death would certainly find no place in the great kingdom of God; and death is an enemy till the last (I Cor. xv. 26). Hence the need for the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus to remove these barriers to God’s purpose:

“For God *designed Him* to be the means of expiating sin by His sacrificial death, effective through faith” (Rom. iii. 25, N.E.B.).

*Protithemi*, a verb meaning to purpose or plan (translated “designed”) shows us that this all-necessary redemption was an essential part of God’s plan, otherwise any sinner could never have a place in God’s perfect kingdom.

“... God, Who hath saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but *because of His own purpose and grace* ...” (II Tim. i. 8, 9).

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, *who have been called according to His purpose*” (Rom. viii. 28).

It is important to realize that the kingdom of God is wider than rule over the earth. Too often it is restricted in this way. But the Word of God reveals that this great kingdom includes the heavens (see the author's *The Kingdom of God in Heaven and on Earth*). In considering the kingdom theme we shall discover that election is connected with each phase of the kingdom. In the earthly part of the kingdom of God, the people of Israel dominate, but God's purposes cannot be restricted to them, for God wills that Gentile nations will be blessed with them so that finally God will be King of all the earth (Zech. xiv. 9), "...For the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9, A.V.).

To attain this, God plans to use Israel as a channel to reach the nations, so first of all He chooses or elects them:

"The Lord did not set His love upon you, *nor choose (elect) you*, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deut. vii. 7, A.V.).

"The Lord has declared this day that you are His people, His treasured possession as He promised ... He has declared that He will set you in praise, fame, and honour *high above all the nations He has made* and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God as He promised" (Deut. xxvi. 18, 19, N.I.V.).

"If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands that I give you today, *the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth*" (Deut. xxviii. 1, N.I.V. and see verse 13).

"He (God) has revealed His word to Jacob, His laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know His laws" (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20, N.I.V.).

See also Deut. iv. 37; xiv. 2; Psa. cxxxv. 4; Isa. xli. 8; xlv. 4; lxxv. 9, 22.

God's plan in all this was expressed by Paul when he warned the opposing Jews at Pisidian Antioch that he would turn from them to the Gentiles because of their opposition. Yet concerning their Messiah and them he quoted:

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles *that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth*" (Acts xiii. 47, N.I.V.).

But it may be objected that these promises to Israel were conditional. So they were, and if this summed up God's dealings with Israel, there would be no future for them. But through Jeremiah, God revealed His purposes of grace to this undeserving people, by making *a New Covenant with them*. This was to take the place of the Old Covenant of Law given through Moses (Jer. xxxi. 31-37). This is a long passage and the reader should carefully ponder over these verses. God says He will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and Judah. It would not be conditional like the Old Covenant of Law, because God would impress His law (His truth) on their minds and they would get to know Him from the least to the greatest. He would forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more. He makes the challenge and says that if the creation of day and night, earth and heaven, could be made to vanish; then the descendants of Israel would cease for ever to be a nation before Him. Or if the foundations of the earth could be searched out and the heavens above be measured, then, says God, "I will reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done".

The covenant was ratified by the shed blood of Christ:

“In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, This cup is the *new covenant in My blood*, which is poured out for you” (Luke xxii. 20, N.I.V.).

And the reader should carefully note what is written about the New Covenant in the epistle to the Hebrews (chapters ix. and x.).

There can be no doubt there must be a future restoration of Israel, for this rests on the New Covenant of grace and the shed blood of Calvary. Rom. xi. seals all this by the Apostle telling us that all Israel will be finally saved because of this covenant with them (Rom. xi. 25-29) and the fact that God’s gifts and His unconditional promises are irrevocable. They cannot be changed or wiped out. All this cancels the idea held by many that because of their failure, there is no future for the nation of Israel and all their blessings have now been handed over to the church and they are the spiritual Israel. Such teaching is quite unscriptural and therefore wrong. What we must not miss is the fact that Israel were an *elect people* and although they have failed in the past and spiritual blindness has come upon them, this is not for ever, but only “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (xi. 25, 26). At the Lord’s Second Coming, the blindness will be taken away, the nation will be saved and become a channel of blessing to all the earth.

There is another Scriptural fact we must not forget, and that is God never leaves Himself without a witness. In the darkest times of Israel’s apostasy there was always a godly remnant who were faithful. This is what Elijah had to be reminded of (xi. 2-5), and this was true during the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles during which Israel, in the mercy of God, was given another opportunity to repent, in which case their sins (including the killing of their Messiah and King) would be forgiven and He would return to them and the kingdom promises, spoken of by all the holy prophets, could then be fulfilled (Acts iii. 17-26); a passage of Scripture of great importance which is usually overlooked. It is noteworthy that election is linked with this remnant, “even so then at this present time also there is a remnant *according to the election of grace*” (Rom. xi. 5).

After the failure of Israel at the end of the Acts, we have the revelation of a new creation, a new Man (Eph. ii. 11-16) consisting of a number taken from Jews and Gentiles. They were *elected by the Father* before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4) and are identified with Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension (Eph. ii. 4-6), for they are seen here as enthroned with Christ in the highest glory “far above all”. No wonder they are exhorted to set their hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and not on earthly things! (Col. iii. 1, 2).

Thus we see that the wide plan of God embracing the highest heavens down to earth is under-girded as it were by God’s elective choice, for He has not only conceived this great plan which embraces the whole universe of a new heaven and a new earth, but He has selected those who take their part in the establishment of this plan and we can be sure that an all-wise God has chosen the right people to do this!

As an earthly example, it is like a person owning a piece of land which he wants to develop. So he plans to do this, and to carry it out he employs others to assist in the work. He chooses (elects) certain firms whom he feels will produce the best work for him, and provided that he does not infringe the law in what he plans, he cannot be criticized. He cannot employ everybody! Yet, when God does something similar to this He is judged to be unfair because He elects some and leaves out others! Not only this, but these critics confine election to salvation and nothing else, whereas we have seen that it goes far wider. Of course it includes salvation, for those whom God has selected have become involved in sin and death and these must be removed, otherwise the divine kingdom plan can never be realized.

This realization awaits the creation of new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. iii. 13). These are spotless and perfect with spotless and perfect beings in them and so it is here that the final kingdom of God is realized and God's perfect rule and control will be supreme with nothing to spoil it.

We must not confuse the 1,000 year reign of Christ (the millennium) with this final phase of the kingdom of God for the millennium takes place *in the present heaven and earth* at the return of Christ and can be called the most favoured age since the fall of man. There will be universal peace, but sin and death are still there, so it cannot be the fulfillment of the perfect kingdom.

Ephesians i. looks forward to a time when all in heaven and on earth will be brought under the headship of Christ and then there will be perfect unity. The N.I.V. renders it "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ" (i. 10). "Gather together in one" of the A.V. is literally "head up again" in Christ. Phil. ii. 5-11 N.I.V. reveals the time when Christ is exalted to the highest place and then when every knee shall bow in heaven, earth, and even under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Jehovah). This will be to the glory of God the Father.

Here the divine plan comes to a glorious conclusion. As Ezekiel was told, God is carefully watching over His plan as it is fulfilled step by step. His sovereignty allows nothing to frustrate it. The eternal reign of God will fulfil to His eternal glory.