

GOD'S UNIQUE PURPOSES IN CREATING HUMAN BEINGS

By Rick McKinney, 2023

(Scripture references are from New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

The Psalmist declares, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork (Ps. 19:1). Indeed, all creation is designed to give glory to God. The Psalmist also writes, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:3-5). Unique among all God's creation human beings are made in God's image and likeness; male and female He created them (Gen. 1:26-27). What is or perhaps Who is this image and likeness of God?

Well, God the Father has an only begotten, uncreated Son who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of His very being (Heb. 1:3). He indeed is God's self-image of Himself, for whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father (Jn. 14:9). And the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth testifies to this truth on behalf of the Son (Jn. 15:26, 1 Jn. 5:6-12). The triune, communal and family-like nature of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be seen in the Holy Family, which is perhaps an icon of the Holy Trinity, In the Holy Family Jesus, the Son of God is present, and Joseph, His foster father, images God the Father to God the Son, as all fathers appear to do to their own children for good or ill. Then there is Mary, the mother of Jesus, also known as the spouse of the Holy Spirit, she the ponderer who was overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, no human person was or is closer to the Holy Spirit than Mary.

The triune family-like nature of God also appears to have been revealed to Moses when God tells him that He is the God of Abraham, the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob (Ex. 3:6). No person in history is more associated with fatherhood than Abraham, the "father of many nations" and the father of three major religions. Isaac is best known as the long-promised son given over to sacrifice as is the Christ, the Son of God. Jacob is the blessing seeker who became the blessing bestower at the end of his life. And it is the Holy Spirit that those in Christ have come to know as The blessing, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, "is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Him" (Ac. 2:38-39). The family of Abraham and its long history, as related in the Sacred Scriptures, reveals who God is and what His nature and character are like.

In the sacred text it is written, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8) and that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). It is said that love without sacrifice is cheap and not worthy of the name, "but God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rm. 5:8). Laying down one's life out of love is what manifests what true love is and

to do that requires, it appears, that one has a bodily life to lay down in space and time. God is love and He desired and predetermined to manifest that love by humbling himself, taking on the form, in Christ Jesus, of a human servant slave, emptied himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. And thus, His name so manifests the glory of God that it induces every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth to bend the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:5-11). The incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ appears to be integral to the manifestation of God's nature and character to all heavenly and earthly beings.

Not that God needs anything, but He does appear to desire things, as St. Paul relates, "God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4). Just as a couple with one or more children may desire and choose to adopt many more children, so it appears that God desires a large family with many children, born of the Spirit, chosen to be conformed to the image of His Son in true holiness (Rm. 8:28-30, Eph. 1:4). And He chose one virgin daughter, full of grace, to be the mother of His only begotten Son (Lk. 1:26-38), as well as the mother of all His adopted children (Jn. 19:26-27, Rev. 12:17). God also desired a radiant spousal bride for His Son, one formerly stained by sin, but now, at His own great cost, presented to Himself without stain or blemish or blame (Eph. 5:25-27, Rev. 21:9), and so for her to partake in a union or communion with the divine nature (2 Pt. 1:4, 1 Cor. 10:16-17). God's purpose for human beings appears to be family related – sons, daughters, mother, bride, spouse. And it is the family, especially the human family, that sacrificial love is most clearly made manifest. Unlike other creatures, human beings take decades to mature and require the loving provision, protection and guidance of their parents who are committed to them and to each other for the long haul. Is it any wonder that the attacks of the enemy, and his fallen angels, center on undermining marriage and the family?

In contrast to human beings, angels are servants, worshipers, and wind-like messengers of God (Lk. 1:19, Ps. 104:4, Heb. 1:7, Rev. 7:11), but they are not begotten into families and apparently do not participate in the family of God as do the saints, the children of God, and heirs with Christ (Rm. 8:16-17), nor are they the bride of Christ. Yet they long to look at the unveiling of God's plan for the human race (Eph. 3:9-11, 1 Pt. 1:12). They are perhaps like John the Baptist, who said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled" (Jn. 3:29).

All of creation was made to glorify God, but it appears that in many ways in order to manifest a great deal of the manifold variety of God's glorious nature, He desired the creation of flesh and blood beings made in His image and likeness that were capable of freely cooperating or resisting in the manifestation of His character and holy nature, a

nature that is humble, merciful, faithful, loving, longsuffering, sacrificial, obedient, trusting, searching, guiding, guarding, providing, healing, forgiving, assuring, interceding, revealing, uniting, transforming, perfecting, imparting, and much, much more.

God created such beings in space and time with tangible bodies as well as minds, wills, hearts, and spirits. Of course, with beings who have an independent freedom there is the strong possibility, as it was with the angels, of them not seeking, trusting, or obeying God. Unfortunately, this has been the propensity of human beings since our first parents and there seemed no remedy to heal the breach. But unlike the angels, we beings within time are afforded the opportunity to change within time and God foreordains Himself the sacrificial and transforming role to affect that change in time and space. He did this by first preparing a chosen people and then sending forth His only begotten Son to effectively redeem the human race by tangibly giving up His own body and blood in sacrifice, and then be raised in glory. By sending forth the Holy Spirit, God empowers and then makes holy a new creation of human saints. Of course, within God's infinite plan of love people still have free will to accept or not accept God's saving offer of love as revealed in Christ Jesus and this also occurs in most every moment of our lives.

Jesus prayed, "I ask that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us" (Jn. 17:21). So, it appears that God Himself shared our human nature so we could share in His divine nature, a loving nature that is family-like, sacrificial, and marked by holy and humble character. He in us and we in Him as spousal bride and children of God, reflecting and manifesting God's glorious nature. What could be better or more glorious or more purposeful than that?