

## Fulfilling God's Eternal Purpose

- 1 With all the pow'r in heav'n and earth  
Our resurrected Lord's endued;  
If we unite and live by Him,  
The enemy will be subdued.
- 2 In Jesus' name we must declare  
That we shall overcome the foe;  
We draw authority from Him  
The serpent's head to crush below.
- 3 No matter what, thou mountain high,  
In heav'n or earth, where'er thou art,  
At any cost we'll level thee,  
In Jesus' name thou must depart!
- 4 Faith orders thee, "Remove from here,  
And be thou cast into the sea!"  
We should, we must, we can, we will,  
Fulfill God's purpose faithfully. (*Hymns*, #892)

Each stanza of the above hymn is full of rich imagery depicting God's eternal purpose, a determined goal that God intends to accomplish through a corporate entity, the church. The identity of this corporate body is not named, but its existence is presumed. God's heart's desire and objective in the creation and redemption of man are implicit in every stanza—the bringing forth of the church, a constitution of God's Son, Jesus Christ, joined to and incorporated with His chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and transformed people to form the Body of Christ. Such an entity is both divine and human, physical and mystical, and incomprehensible to the natural or soulish man yet fully understood and embraced by the spiritual man (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-16). It is for such a church and as such a living Body that the believers engage in an often fierce hidden spiritual warfare.

The author of the above hymn, Watchman Nee, uses poetic utterances to evoke vivid portraits in words, conveying particular thoughts and feelings related to spiritual warfare and the destiny concerning the church. The author depicts a corporate group of people, "we," who, drawing upon the power and authority of the resurrected Christ through the exercise of faith, will thoroughly and absolutely overcome and defeat the rebellious enemy of God. The foe, who also is never identified by name, is Satan, a once glorious angel of God who has become the

usurping ruler of the world, the people and the place that God created for His own purpose and good pleasure.

Stanza 1 focuses on our source—being energized and strengthened by the power of the resurrected Christ; our way—standing in oneness with and living by Christ; and our goal—subduing the enemy of God. Stanza 2 emphasizes our course—drawing upon the authority of Christ to declare victory in the name of Jesus, to overcome the foe, and to crush the serpent's head. Stanza 3 focuses on our endurance—removing every barrier to the Lord's authority on earth and at personal cost, leveling every mountain that challenges God's rule. Stanza 4 accentuates the crucial burden of the hymn—exercising faith with a view to fulfilling God's eternal purpose.

### God's Eternal Purpose

The central burden of this hymn is God's eternal purpose, as expressed in stanza 4. The Bible is exceptionally clear that man has an intrinsic calling. Buried deep within every man's fallen nature and subconscious feelings lies an intuitive awareness that he or she is a creature created with a purpose and a destiny. The goal of God's calling and His will is highlighted in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

This chapter confirms the status of humanity in God's good pleasure—the Father planned and purposed a prominent destiny for humanity by creating humanity with a view to sonship; God's only begotten Son fully accomplished the Father's plan by His ultimate triumph over God's adversary and by His ascension to pre-eminence over all of God's creation; and the Spirit is continuously transmitting the effectual, powerful, and authoritative position of the Son into the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated sons of God, constituting, uplifting, glorifying, and empowering them to be the church, the Body of Christ. This is the revealed peak of God's good pleasure to be worked out in and through created humanity. Paul further reveals that God has caused the riches of His grace to abound to us in the Beloved, constituting us sons of God with the goal of fulfilling His eternal purpose—the heading up of all things in Christ.

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## The Whole World Lying in the Evil One

Human beings with their created capacity to match God and labor together with God for His purpose in creation have come into confusion, turmoil, and disarray on the earth today. The Bible declares simply and authoritatively, “We know that...the whole world lies in the evil one” (1 John 5:19). After humanity’s initial decision to seek a purpose apart from God, humanity fell from one level of pointless and senseless vanity to another. In an ultimate state of perversion and depravity, humanity gave up God. Romans 1:18-32 exposes humanity’s final condition without God.

This portion begins with the wrath of God being revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness, it continues with a litany of deviations from God’s ordinations and attributes, and it ends with fallen man’s perverse delighting in these deviations, making humanity without excuse in relation to God’s judgment. Humanity, in such a state, is left in a hopeless condition of self-preservation and isolation. Lawlessness and darkness are rampant; surely, the whole world lies in the evil one.

The usurping activity of the enemy, Satan, the adversary of God, opposes and frustrates the achievement of God’s goal in humanity. All humanity has been divided into two groups: believers and unbelievers, those who are joined to God by faith and those who are separated from God by unbelief. Believers aspire to sustain an active allegiance to God for His purpose; unbelievers follow the dictates of the flesh, the world, and the self by passively and unconsciously or passionately and consciously adhering to the satanic system with its hidden ruler manipulating their minds and hearts and making them his unsuspecting slaves (cf. Eph. 2:1-3; John 8:31-36).

Satan, in order to usurp the God-created man, formed an anti-God world system on this earth by systematizing men with religion, culture, education, industry, commerce, entertainment, etc., through men’s fallen nature, in their lusts, pleasures, and pursuits, and even in their indulgence in necessities for their living, such as food, clothing, housing, and transportation...The whole of such a satanic system lies in the evil one ([1 John] 5:19). (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 John 2:15, note 2)

## Being Saved from the Heap of Collapse

God’s eternal purpose is to head up all things in Christ,

the things on the earth and the things in the heavens. Currently, the universe is in a state of collapse—without a proper headship. Under the deception of the satanic darkness, humanity today is in a cesspool of rebellion and confusion. God in Christ is taking the necessary steps to bring an end to humanity’s chaotic way of life by heading up all things in Christ and fully defeating His adversary and antagonist. In the *Life-study of Ephesians* Witness Lee comments on God’s heading up of all things in Christ:

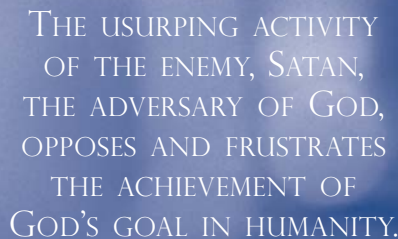
God’s eternal intention is to head up all things in Christ, who has been appointed to be the universal Head. The first step God takes to accomplish this is to head up His chosen ones in Him. One by one, God rescues His people from the heap caused by the universal collapse. Most Christians, however, do not realize that this is what God is doing and do not pray about it. Instead, they have the natural concept that man is fallen and needs to be rescued from hell. According to the Bible, God’s salvation is not primarily to save us from hell; it is to save us from the

heap of collapse. God has brought us out of the universal collapse and has placed us under the unique Head, Christ. Because of the angelic rebellion and the human rebellion, none of the created beings is under any head. There is simply no headship in the universe. But Ephesians 1:10 says that all things are to be headed up in Christ. Most of today’s govern-

ment leaders do not care for Christ; they are not under the headship of Christ. Since this is the situation, how can Christ be the Head over all things? God is endeavoring to head up all things in Christ. He is working to bring every item in the universal collapse back to the headship of Christ. (76)

There is a state of collapse both in the unseen heavens and on the visible earth, but it is more apparent in the physical realm than in the heavenly. In the world today, there is an increase in the manifestation of intense animosity and strife within personal, community, regional, national, and international spheres—each being assembled to defend and contest against others for personal and group ascendancy. Conflict, discord, and rivalry abound in every place and at every level of human society.

Regrettably, most Christians have little realization of the need for a universal heading up in Christ, being more focused on personal failures and shortcomings, and hence, there is little prayer related to this central purpose of God. The burden of the hymn is that we, the believers,



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would respond to and match God's desire for His final triumph over His subtle challenger. We must exercise to fulfill God's intention.

### **The Power of the Resurrected Lord**

Stanza 1 speaks of the power of the resurrected Christ, who died for our offenses and was raised for our justification (cf. Rom. 4:25). After the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, He was crowned with glory and honor and established as both Lord and Christ, with authority over all the heavens, the earth, and the underworld (Heb. 2:9; Acts 2:36). The Bible affirms that the believers are fully identified with the victorious Christ in His resurrection: "If we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5), and "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6).

**T**here is a supreme power that is operating in us who believe (1:19-23). This is the power of life over death, the power that raised Christ from the dead. When He was raised, we were included in His resurrection; we were raised together with Him and seated with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (2:6). This identification is substantiated in us when faith accepts and appropriates the reality of who Christ is and what He has accomplished. In Christ we have already conquered death! What has been fully and absolutely accomplished in Christ must be seized and lived out by us in oneness with Christ.

Our hope is rooted in the experience of our identification with our Lord Jesus Christ in His all-conquering resurrection life. Although the benefits of His death and resurrection are effective for all men, one can be made alive only by receiving the grace of God given in Christ Jesus. Receiving this grace is an action of faith. This faith is the gift of God; that is, it comes by the hearing of the word of God and is allotted to us by God (v. 8; Rom. 10:17; cf. 2 Pet. 1:1).

Our experience of salvation through Christ Jesus must be through the word of God. The Spirit of God is the word of God (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17). Faith rises up in us in response to the Spirit as the word being transmitted and dispensed into us, becoming the reality of the resurrected Christ in us; He thus becomes our supply, our nourishment, and our enjoyment. In this way God in Christ as the Spirit becomes our bountiful supply to be lived out through us (Phil. 1:19-21), and we find the meaning of

our human life. By uniting with and living by Him, we experience the expansion and extension of Christ within us and out from us as our real life. Through His life operating in us, the enemy will be subdued in our daily living in all that we do, think, and say. Satan and all his subordinates will also be put to shame through the rising up of many saints in oneness as the church—the full expression of the resurrected and glorified Christ (Eph. 1:22-23).

### **Overcoming God's Enemy in Jesus' Name and by His Authority**

Stanza 2 emphasizes our course. The church draws upon the authority of Christ to declare victory in the name of Jesus, overcoming the foe and crushing the serpent's head: "In Jesus' name we must declare / That we shall overcome the foe; / We draw authority from Him / The serpent's head to crush below." A name is a designation of the person; therefore, a name is of utmost significance. When the birth of the Savior was announced to Mary and to Joseph, the name of Jesus indicated His status as "Jehovah the Savior" (Matt. 1:21). It was further proclaimed that His name would be called Emmanuel, which means "God with us" (v. 23). These were not mere suggestions for naming the child; these were astounding declarations that the child who was about to be born was Jehovah the Savior, God with man! For thirty-three and a half years this God-man lived humbly and obediently to God among the inhabitants of Israel (Phil. 2:5-8).

After this God-man was put to death on the cross, the name of Jesus was further exalted: "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (vv. 10-11). The name of Jesus is above every name. It is through this name that we live and conquer the enemy of God. The unique authority that will crush the serpent's head is the name of Jesus. This name is the person of the Christ with whom we are fully joined and by whom we live. When we call upon Him, we are saved out of our condition of darkness and death into a realm of life and light to be a people who tell out His virtues (Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:9) and who are positioned to participate in the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.

**T**he authority that we draw from Him is the ultimate authority in the universe. When the Lord commissioned His disciples to go and disciple the nations, He declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). God has subjected all things under the feet of the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:25-28). The man Jesus has been given the highest name in the universe. He has been exalted to be the Lord of all. His reign over heaven and earth has one unique goal—to bring all the enemies of God into subjection under His feet.

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God has ordained that this man, Jesus, rule over all until all have been brought into subjection and submission. When all things have been subjected to Him, He, in His humanity, will give all things over to the Father so that God may be all in all.

**B**y faith, as the disciples of Jesus, we are now on the earth to cooperate with Him in carrying out His administration for the heading up of all things. As disciples, we should be the first to be subdued. The love of Christ must gain our full allegiance; our human will must become one with His will and voluntarily submit to God in Christ. The yielding of our will to God is in contrast to joining it to Satan's kingdom, which operates inwardly in the natural man and in the world outwardly. Our experience demonstrates that the will of God is superior to Satan in power and is multiplied in grace, goodness, kindness, love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Our obedience generates a great rescue from the realm of darkness under Satan's subtle usurpation. After surrendering our will to the Lord, it becomes resurrected to stand with Him in resisting the enemy in all his deception; eventually, as we draw upon the authority of Christ to subdue God's enemy, God will crush him under our feet (Rom. 16:19-20). May we be delivered from mere doctrinal assent to this great salvation and be brought into the reality of living in oneness with Christ!

### Enduring at Any Cost

Stanza 3 focuses on our endurance. This verse is both a battle cry and a commitment that we will remove every barrier to the Lord's authority on earth and that, at any personal cost, we will level every mountain challenging God's rule: The divine life that we have received is not without suffering and persecution. We have become the enemies of Satan and his minions. We need endurance, but it is essential that we realize that our endurance depends on the God of endurance. The endurance in us

is based on God's promises that produce hope in us. Ours is the endurance of hope (1 Thes. 1:3). Our hope is the hope of glory, which is Christ in us (Col. 1:27). Paul testifies, saying, "Our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). We too must learn to stand in faith and endurance. Endurance comes at the expense of our soul-life.

**I**n Matthew 16:24-25 the Lord Jesus warned His disciples, saying, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it." To follow the Lord Jesus, to be one with Him for the fulfilling of God's will, we must come to the end of reliance on ourselves. When we are willing to pay the price of our own soul-life, we find ourselves in the reality of intimate oneness with Christ, and we are empowered in the might of His strength to participate in the carrying out of God's eternal will.

When the Triune God Himself becomes the reality in our being, we will be able to say to the enemy with all authority: "In Jesus' name thou must depart!" As stanza 4 says, we should, we must, we can, and we will fulfill God's purpose in the way of being joined to the living Christ. God has planned, Christ has accomplished, and the Spirit is anointing. Now we can cooperate and live by Him to utterly subdue His enemy.

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### Works Cited

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- . *Life-study of Ephesians*. Living Stream Ministry, 1984.

### Two Rebellions Leading to a Universal Collapse

Due to the two rebellions, the angelic rebellion and the human rebellion, the whole universe is in a state of collapse. In God's eyes there is no order on earth; instead, there is a heap caused by the collapse.

The entire universe is a heap of collapse caused by rebellion. God created the universe in an excellent order, but an archangel, the head of the age before Adam, rebelled and became Satan. (See Isaiah 14.) Satan's rebellion caused the first collapse in the universe. In Genesis 1 God came in to restore the creation that had been ruined by this rebellion. Actually, chapter one of Genesis is not primarily a record of creation, but of restoration. In the restored universe God created man and made him the head of creation. But this man, Adam, fell. This was the second rebellion that led to the second collapse. As a result of these two rebellions, the whole universe has become a heap of collapse...In this heap some people are higher than others, but all remain in the collapse.

From *Life-study of Ephesians* by Witness Lee, pp. 75-76