

Man's Search for the Meaning of Life

In this study of Christian Evidences we will endeavor to evaluate the meaning of man's life in relationship to: God's over-all purpose for man, man's place in the entire cosmos and God's plan for redeeming man.

Because the Gospel seems to be profoundly *offensive* to the natural man, we need to be able to give sound reasons for our hope of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Man longs to find meaning and purpose for his existence and for the existence of the world around him. The Christian believes that this meaning is found in Jesus Christ and His provision of salvation.

In evaluating man's search for meaning, we must first consider God's purpose for creating man and the world in which man lives. Infinite God, Who existed from eternity, when He created man - and the world - did so out of His own free choice and for a high, and glorious, purpose.

Since the phenomena of this earth shows man to be at the heart of whatever God's purpose was in creation, even the possibility of extra-terrestrial life in no way negates this fact.

There is no evidence that life, comparable to human life, exists anywhere else in the universe, or, that any other planet in the solar system could support human life!

The complex of **thermal, hydraulic, chemical, meteorologic**, and other, factors and processes, which enables man to live on earth, is so *unique*, and *intricate*, that it would have to be duplicated almost exactly on some other planet before that planet could support life!

When one considers the immensity of our universe; the countless myriads of systems of planets; the uncounted galaxies, or stars, which are infinitesimal in number, and the fact that it would take literally hundreds of years, traveling at the speed of light [186,000 miles per **second**] just to reach some stars that we know of, he's heart sinks in dizziness at the thought of it all, while his mind reacts with a response of "*will not compute!*"

It becomes an obvious fact, then, that even a causal reasoning of the nature of the phenomena of this earth leads one to a realization of the necessity of a purposeful God!

OUR OWN LITTLE EARTH IS THE ONLY PLACE OF HUMAN HABITATION, AS WE KNOW IT!

One can *speculate* all he chooses to about other forms of intelligent life out in the universe, but there is no evidence whatsoever that human life does, or even "*could*," exist beyond this earth, unless, of course, man could transport his own atmosphere along with him. It would be *difficult*, almost impossible, to conceive of the chemical basis for biological processes that are necessary for human life...such as DNA...carbon dioxide...water...air...and other elements...being duplicated anywhere else in the universe.

The possibility of the existence of "*spiritual beings*," as distinct from "*physico-chemical life*," is an entirely different matter which we will deal with later.

It certainly is reasonable to conclude, within the limits of our ability to comprehend it, that God's purpose in this creation involves man at its center!

Somehow the nature of man...[his intellect; his volitional powers; his emotional being; his moral and spiritual; ability]...is all related to God's very own nature!

Man, and man alone, is created in the image of God

Communication and fellowship between God and man, which is so sadly missing for most today, is not only possible, but, as Scripture teaches, is also the very purpose for which God created us!

Scripture also teaches that, when man deliberately disobeyed God, he lost fellowship and communication with God, a lost which not only alienated and separated man, in his natural state, from God, but which also caused him to struggle against the very environment which was created to be his home.

The explanation for this state of affairs is defined in Scripture as "S-I-N"...which can be defined as the doing of what is contrary to God's will and purpose.

Romans 3:23 tells us, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God* - or, God's ideal"...and Romans 5:12 teaches us, "*Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death [separation from God's life and His ultimate intention for man] by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

Why does God allow sin? The answer to that question is simply that . . . because real, genuine, sincere, fellowship between God and man must be a mutual decision . . . man must be free to reject God's fellowship . . . His purpose for him!

Because man is "*lost*" from God's original purpose for him, he needs someone to "*save*" him . . . he needs a *Savior*!

Despite the fact that God's holiness and justice preclude any type of reconciliation which is initiated or earned by man, His omnipotent purpose, and love, for man desires that His salvation be provided by some means.

The only resolution of this impasse is that God Himself must both *initiate* - and *consummate* - man's salvation.

There is no other way!

However, in order for there to be true reconciliation between God and man, His plan, and provision, for reconciliation, and man's subsequent salvation, had to meet the following criteria:

1. This reconciliation had to satisfy the requirement of divine justice, with the penalty of death and separation from God having been completely paid.
2. This reconciliation had to demonstrate God's love to man in such a way that man would freely reciprocate God's love, in gratitude for the gracious provision of restoration to His fellowship.
3. This reconciliation had to be communicated, and effected, on the human level in such a way that man could comprehend, and appropriate, it.
4. Because God desired to draw man's love and worship back to Himself, rather than to some other creature, He, and He alone, had to be the source of this reconciliation.
5. This reconciliation had to provide man with the assurance that, not only would God forgive him of his past, but He would also provide him with power which would enable him to live henceforth in fellowship with God, with a purified conscience and a confident hope.
6. This reconciliation had to be universal in scope, enabling all who desire salvation to be saved, and, yet, it had to be such as to not *compel* men, against his free will, to accept [receive] it.
7. This reconciliation had to not only pay for the penalty of death, but it also had to culminate in life, and in the complete elimination of God's curse upon sin.

Upon careful study, it becomes evident that the *only* way all aspects of this criteria could be met, and satisfied, if, in fact, man was to be reconciled to God, is that God, Himself, would have to become man, He would have to die in substitution **for** man's sin and, then, would have to rise from the grave in victory over sin and death! This is the price God would have to pay to redeem man from eternal separation from His love and fellowship.

The criteria, which were enumerated upon before, are all satisfied by the following means, and the following means *alone*!

1. God became man . . . was made *flesh* . . . by sending us His Son Jesus Christ Who, because He lived in fellowship with the Father as perfect man, being the only man without sin and, therefore, not under condemnation for His own sins, and because He was infinite God, was capable of being the substitute for all man . . . suffering the righteous judgment of God for the sins of the whole world.
2. The sacrificial love of God in Christ, Who freely gave His own life by suffering for - and dying in place of - the guilty sinner, provides the maximum possible demonstration of God's love for man and it is, therefore, the greatest possible divine magnet to draw man's own love and gratitude to Himself.

3. By God, Himself, becoming man, He was not only able to perfectly demonstrate His holiness and love to man on a level that would be comprehensible to man, but He was also able to provide man with a perfect example of what human life can be when it is lived in fellowship with its Creator
4. Since Jesus Christ is God as well as man, the love that He awakens in the heart of a redeemed sinner will draw that sinner to God, rather than to some other man or angel.
5. Because Jesus completely bore, endured, the penalty for man's sin, thereby paying, in full, the price it took to redeem man, man, as a result, can not only have his guilty conscience rightly purged, but he can also have his heart filled with God's love, a love that will enable him to abhor the very sin which had before separated him from God.
6. Since, as both omnipotent God and perfect man, Jesus has "*tasted death for every man*," He is able to offer free forgiveness and salvation to all who will receive it, while, at the same time, not forcing acceptance of this salvation upon any whose hardened hearts, even yet, prefer to remain independent of God.
7. Though, as man, Christ died for the sins of the whole world, as God, His death conquered death, which, ultimately, rescinded death's curse on man's sin.

Thus, it becomes clear that it is only because of Christ's substitutionary atonement that God is able to be both just and "*the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus Christ*" [Romans 3:26] and that "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself*" [2 Corinthians 5:19].

Not only is this God's great salvation plan the only [and only necessary], and sufficient, means by which men are saved and made ready for eternal fellowship with Him, but it is also the only means by which man can know, and love, God as Redeemer, and Lord, as well as Creator and Provider!

God's plan to reconcile man to eternal fellowship with himself will only finally be consummated when Christ returns to earth.

This present age, when viewed and measured from the perspective, and in the light, of eternity, will seem to have been short-lived, and our present trials and heart-aches will be quickly forgotten in the joyful activities in the endless future. [See Isaiah 65:17]

This present age is the age of "*necessary preparation*" for eternity because it is now - in this present life on earth - that God **re**-creates men and women, by developing and training, their gifts and character, in order to equip them for their future responsibilities and their eternal habitation. [See 2 Corinthians 5:17]

If man chooses to reject God's fellowship, and to remain independent of God, he will spend his eternal existence separated from God, because God, by His very nature, cannot *force* His fellowship upon man.

Although the subject of heaven and hell...[and the doctrine of eternal rewards] are subjects that cannot be taken up in this present study, one, nonetheless, would do well to study these subjects in order to have a truer perspective of God's character and purpose.