

# STONE HARBOR

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at [johnny@stoneharborchurch.org](mailto:johnny@stoneharborchurch.org).

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,  
Johnny

## ***Transformation Card***

*This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.*

Date: Jan 17, 2009  
 Series: The Church of God's Intention  
 Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be  
 Section: The New People of God  
 Topic: The Church  
 Message Title: The Beginning of the People of God  
 Short Title: The Beginning  
 Text: Various  
 Key Words: Purpose, People of God, Church

### ***Message Outline***

The Church of God's Intention  
 Part 1 What God Intends the Church to Be  
 The New People of God - 1  
 The Beginning of the People of God  
 I. They were **Purposed** by God  
 II. They were **Created** by God  
 III. They were **Estranged** from God  
 IV. They were **Redeemed** by God  
 V. They **Anticipated** the Final People of God

### ***Related Scripture***

1. 1 Peter 2:9-10
2. 1 Cor 10:31
3. Exodus 19:4-6
4. Isaiah 43:20-21
5. Hosea 1:6, 9; 2:1
6. Lv 26:12
7. Dt 4:10; 7:7-8

### ***Questions for Thought and Discussion***

1. Where does the idea of the church first show up?
2. Why did God create mankind in the first place?
3. What is God's intention for the people of God?
4. What became of God's people after they fell in the garden?
5. Why did God choose one segment of humanity to call His people?
6. In what way did people of God of the Old Testament anticipate a final people of God?

### ***Memory and Meditation Verse***

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. 1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB

## I. Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be

(The Nature of the Church. What the Church Is According to God.)

### *Introduction*

Today we begin the first of three parts in our series on *The Church of God's Intention: What God Intends the Church to BE*.

We will see that God Intends the Church to Be what can be rightly called...

### **A. The New People of God (POG)**

#### *Introduction*

Speaking to the first century church Jesus' disciple Peter says,

“9But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are **THE PEOPLE OF GOD**; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.”

(1Pet 2:9-10)

In this passage Peter calls the newly formed Christian Church by the very old name, **“the people of God.”**

This phrase and more importantly the concept it indicates is an ancient yet continuing idea, one with a rich OT heritage highlighting that if we are to understand the NT Church we are a part of, we have to begin our discovery in the OT concept from which it emerged.

God has always dealt directly with a subset of mankind in special ways working first with them and then through them to the rest of humanity and indeed all of creation. We will see that there has always been a group of people we can rightly refer to as the People of God (POG).

“The good news of Christ's coming includes the good news of what he came to do: to join us to himself and to one another as his body, the new people of God.” Clowney p. 15

So let's begin by looking at the POG as we first encounter them in Scripture (this week and next). Then the following week we will consider in what way the believers who are the church today are the New POG.

## 1. The Beginning of the POG

I had an opportunity to share with Pastor Kit Culver in a phone conversation (see notes from 2010-01-13) that we were starting this series on the church and how I planned to begin with Adam and Eve as the first people of God as the OT seed bed for our understanding of the church. I was feeling pretty good about beginning at the beginning and doing a thorough and careful discovery from the Scripture. But when I bounced this starting point off Kit, there was a thoughtful pause, followed by, "I'd probably start before that." Before that? Before creation? Don't play with my brain. What is before creation?

Before creation, of course, is the Creator and His idea to create – His purpose, His intention.

So this is where we begin our study of the Church, the new people of God. Before they were even created...

### a) They were **Purposed** by God

Like many profound truths, once stated this seems almost self evident. But this obvious truth gets buried somehow – maybe in the clutter of our minds which are so occupied with the rest of what there is to think about -- important stuff like the first show of the new TV series... you fill in the blank.

ILLUS. -- **That** the story of the people of God really begins with the **idea of God** is no more complicated than acknowledging that before any building is ever built there exists **someone** and their **idea** to build that building.

Before the people of God were ever created there existed God and His idea for them!

Gen 1:1 "In the beginning God..."

#### *(1) That He Purposed Them*

That He purposed them is evident by the fact that He created them!

#### *(2) What His Purpose Was*

What His purpose was takes a little more digging. Let's follow this train of thought. We have already established that...

##### **(a) Before Creation there was God**

##### **(b) God is Triune and therefore Relational**

The triune nature of God is everywhere present in Scripture even in the creation account we read this morning:

- Gen 1:1 God created...
- Gen 1:2 ...the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

- Gen 1:26 Then God said let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...
  - That us was Jesus as attested by John 1:1ff

(i) Characteristics of that Relationship

(a) *Love*

(b) *Intimacy*

(c) *Communion between Father, Son and Spirit*

**(c) God Purposed to Extend His Relational Intimacy via a Relationally Capable Creation --**

A creation that would glorify Him by knowing, appreciating and enjoying Him.

A widely accepted teaching amongst orthodox reformed Christians who hold the Scriptures in high regard is the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The first question asked is: “What is the chief end of man?” And the answer given is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

Early in our Sacred Space study Pastor Kit says, “God is glorified when something other than Himself discerns and acknowledges Him as He is. He is glorified not just when His works are known, but when *He* is known... and such knowledge is personal and relational. The obvious implication is that God’s eternal purpose of self-glorification in creation necessitates the creation of a personal being capable of a relationship with Him... Thus, the centrality of man in the purpose and scheme of creation.” Culver, Sacred Space pp. 5-6.

God created man in His image that He might be in relationship with him and so that in that God-man relationship man would know Him as He is.

Knowing **God** is a completely different thing altogether than knowing **of** Him. It is the difference between knowing of President George Washington, that he was the first president of the United States of America, and knowing your spouse or your kids or your best friend. In the one case you know facts **about** the person. In the other, you know the **person** him or herself. One is propositional, the other is relational.

Regarding what God's purpose was in creating man it is important to note that God was never lacking of something that would perfect Him, He was and is always perfect in every way.

Yet in His perfection God purposed to create His people to know Him!

Parents get a taste of this. You were not incomplete (10 fingers and 10 toes) before you 'created' your kids. But in creating them you can say they have completed you. What joy they have brought into your life...

God is a creative God who chose to extend the relational intimacy He enjoyed within the trinity into His creation by creating mankind in His image – beings capable of intimate communion with Him.

This is how Paul can say in Eph 1:22-23 of God the Father and of Jesus the Second person of the triune God, "And He [God] put all things in subjection under His [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, **the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**"

Paul sees that the church is the fullness of Him who already fills all in all – the completion of Him who is already complete.

**(d) The Hallmark of God's Relationship with His people is Love.**

Scripture testifies that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16)

It follows that the relationship God has with His people would be one in which God loves His people.

We can further see that if mankind is created in His image and in His likeness, that same love man receives from God would be directed back to God, if mankind was being mankind according to God's intention.

Pastor Kit has indicated that the reciprocating of love between Creator and creature created in His image is Sacred Space and Shalom (Peace – the way God designed things to be). And where there is Shalom there is Shabbat (Rest).

This then is the beginning of our understanding of the POG – God's purpose. And His purpose was to create (and then to redeem and reconcile them to Himself) that He might be with them in a relationship characterized by love and intimate communion – the same relationship that He has always enjoyed with the Son and the Spirit.

**(e) Man's role in creation was to rule**

In addition, mankind was to rule over the rest of creation from the position of this relationship with God. Sound familiar?

This is another way of saying, "The creation [including the POG] exists for the purpose of realizing the kingdom of God; for realizing sacred space." Kit Culver, *Biblical Eschatology*, Course Syllabus p.2

**(f) This Beginning Purpose Explains Jesus' Teachings**

That God created mankind for the purpose of being with Him in intimate communion is why Jesus could pray for His disciples, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me." John 17:20-21

That God created mankind for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God with His people exercising dominion on His behalf at least in part explains Jesus' instruction to His disciples to pray, "... Your kingdom come, Your will be done."

So the first thing we discover about the church in the way it was originally conceived as the OT people of God is that they were purposed by God. Not only that God intended them to exist, but that they were intended to glorify Him by enjoying the same intimate communion and love that God the Father has always enjoyed with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And further that they were intended to rule over the rest of creation on His behalf.

Why is this important? God's purpose has not changed! It was His purpose for the OT POG and it remains His purpose of the New POG, the church, and personally speaking, for you!

Secondly, we note about the OT POG...

**b) They were Created by God**

The POG were created the...

**(1) POG by God's Determination**

(Initiative / Choosing)

**(a) God created and breathed into him the breath of life**

- Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created...”
- Gen 2:7 “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man become a living being.”

Adam & Eve did not decide they would come into existence and that they would then strike up a friendship with God. They were His idea created by Him for His purposes.

The POG were created the...

**(2) POG in Relationship to God**

God did not create mankind and then remain distant. Rather Gen 1-3 shows God relating with mankind after creation. What type of relationship did God intend to have with His people?

**(a) Father-Son Relationship**

- (i) Adam was called “the Son of God” in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus (3:38)
- (ii) Scripture records that we were created in His image. Therefore...
- (iii) The POG can be seen as the Image-Son of God
- (iv) God intended to have a Father-son relationship with mankind.

Recognizing that there are many different types of father-son relationships even in this room, what was the Father-son relationship between Creator and image-sons to be characterized by?

**(b) Father-Son Relationship further Explained**

- (i) They were to Live in Intimate Communion with God
- (ii) The Garden of Eden was God’s first Sanctuary the first place of meeting between man and God.

Gen 3:8 records God “walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” Not only had God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, but He Himself joined them their.

Sacred Space students see pp. 6-8 to develop this thought of the Garden of Eden as prototypical of other manifestations of sacred space particularly “the mountain of God” and “the garden of God” as Edenic related dwelling places of God with man. God's Father-son relationship was to be marked by the devotion of the image-son to his loving and perfect Father.

**(c) Presence of God with Man**

More generally speaking, the idea behind the Father-son relationship is the thought of **presence** – the POG are people who benefit from God's presence with them.

- (i) Shalom & Shabbat (Peace and Rest)

The POG were created the...

**(3) POG on Mission from God**

**(a) Cultural Mandate**

- (i) [Genesis 1:28](#)

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

(ii) From the context of intimate communion with God, His created people were to exercise dominion over the rest of His creation.

(iii) Implicit in their ruling/dominion is their mission to witness, i.e., to make God known, to represent, to rule on His behalf.

In as much as the image-son of God is being who God created Him to be it follows that: To know the image son of God is to know the Father to whom the son is joined in the relationship marked by intimate communion with Him, devotion to Him and mutual love.

[John 14:9](#) -- Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

By virtue of their knowledge of God stemming from their Father-son relationship with Him and by virtue of their mandate to rule over the rest of creation, those who encountered the POG would encounter God the ultimate King of the Kingdom of God and in coming to know Him, God would be glorified.

The POG were created the...

#### ***(4) POG with One Singular Point of Focus***

##### **(a) Adam**

The first POG we encounter in the OT were Adam and Eve. We will see that in subsequent history God would continue to work with one person and then through that one to the many.

#### ***Conclusion***

So we have begun our study on *The Church of God's Intention* by noting God's pre-creation intention to glorify Himself via His creation and in the foremost way to glorify Himself by creating mankind in His image to know Him and live in intimate communion characterized by reciprocal love. From the vitality of this communion with God, mankind was purposed and created to rule over the rest of creation and thereby as sons of their Father administer the Kingdom of God for His glory and their enjoyment.

Let it settle in your mind that the church of God's intention is the fulfillment of His original and continuing purpose and His actual creation of the POG. You were created to live in intimate communion with God as devoted children to a perfect Father. If the church is to be the church of God's intention it must be the people He purposed, then created and (we shall see next week) finally redeemed them to be!

**Bibliography**  
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