

Restoring Hope in Purpose and Destiny: The Corporate Purpose of Humanity

I. INTRODUCTION – THE PURPOSE AND ROLE OF HUMANITY

- A. The insufficient search for personal, individualistic purpose and destiny
- B. Review of the Trinity and Trinitarian Thinking
 - 1. Trinity –
 - a. Trinity is the most essential description we can make concerning God. It is not an attribute of God – it is His essence. The most basic, core description we can make of God is that He is relational. He perpetually exists in community. God does not exist apart from deeply intimate relationships of love and delight directed outward towards other persons.
 - b. Here we understand that *community* stands as the central symbol of all existence. All that is, revolves around this central description and perpetual existence of God. Everything that God does and everything we could consider ourselves participating in should be viewed through this lens. It is the primary category through which we should consider life, as it is God’s primary category.
 - 2. Kingdom – “*the kingdom of His Beloved Son*”(Col. 1:13) who welcomes others to become sons and thereby brothers of Jesus (cf. Rom. 8:29).
 - a. When we speak of Jesus as Lord we are not talking about a detached authoritarian. We are relating to a Son who has forever been in a relationship of love and delight with His Father and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. He is our brother. He calls us as His own, is not ashamed to welcome us in (Heb. 2:12), and eagerly shares with us His status as son of God and heir of the kingdom (Gal. 4:7). The *kingdom* is unthinkable without Trinity.
 - 3. Glory of God –

- a. in Trinitarian terms, we understand that the glory of God existed as something shared between the Father and the Son before the world existed (John 17:5). It consists of his manifold perfections, especially His relational ones (cf. Exodus 34, also John 1:14; Ps. 57:10-11; 108:4; 111:3-4; 115:1; 145:5-8) and is something He intends to share with us (John 17:22; Romans 8:18-21; 8:29-30; 9:23; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 1:27; 3:1-4; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 John 3:1-2; Ps. 8:5; 84:11; Isaiah 60:2, 7, 9, 19). God's glory therefore cannot be something over and against humanity, but seems more relational.
 - b. Understanding God's glory (not only, but significantly) as the *interpersonal sharing of outwardly moving love* heals the seeming contradiction between the explicitly Biblical testimony that God is love and God's pinnacle passion is for His glory. While God's passion for His glory can seem like selfishness, the utter opposite of love, quite the contrary is true. God's passion for His glory is the resolute commitment of a being with unbounded capacity of emotion and unlimited potentiality of power, to move outwardly in love for the benefit of and union with other persons.
4. Sin as anti-love, the destruction of community - In light of a renewed understanding of *glory as relationality*, sin is then falling short of *that glory*. Sin is anti-love, the destruction of community. We then understand holiness as living in whole relationships with God and other humans.
- C. Finding our purpose and destiny is only possible when we see our individual selves as a part of, not in separation from, the greater community of humanity

II. FIVE MAIN POINTS IN UNDERSTANDING OUR CORPORATE PURPOSE

- A. First, the Garden of Eden was the first sanctuary and Adam was the first priest
- B. Second, Adam's commission was to expand the garden to fill the earth
- C. Third, Adam failed his commission, but it was passed on to others
- D. Fourth, our eschatological hope is the certainty of the garden being reestablished through the expansion of the temple
- E. Fifth, Adam's commission is still alive today in the Church through the Spirit - this is our purpose and destiny

III. FIRST, EDEN AS THE FIRST TEMPLE/SANCTUARY - ADAM AS THE FIRST PRIEST¹

- A. Sanctuary – the place where humans and the Divine dwell together in community
- B. *The Garden as the unique place of God's presence* – Genesis 3:8 speaks of God's "walking back and forth" in the garden which is the same way later passages describe God's presence in the tabernacle (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14; 2 Sam. 7:6-7)
- C. The Garden as the place of the first priest
- D. Adam as the first (Archetypal) priest-king

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." Genesis 2:15

1. Eden as the unique place of God's presence – Genesis 3:8 speaks of God's "walking back and forth" in the garden which is the same way later passages describe God's presence in the tabernacle (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14; 2 Sam. 7:6-7)
2. Adam's commission to *cultivate* and *guard* (serve and keep)
 - a. The Hebrew word '*abad*' is very flexible. It's basic meaning is "serve" but can be translated in many different ways. When in an agricultural context (like the Garden of Eden) it is translated *cultivate*.
 - b. However, every other time the word '*abad*' appears together with *shamar* (to guard, keep) it is in context either to the priests *keeping* the charge of the sanctuary or to Israel *keeping* the law or word of God (cf. Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14). It seems as though we are meant to connect Adam's commission with the priesthood and serving God.
3. The first *torah* (law/instruction)
 - a. Immediately following Adam's commission to keep the charge of the sanctuary and the law of God, a command is given. This closely parallels the many texts about *keeping* the law of God, but especially the following passage (directly in context to the building of the temple):

¹ Much of the following is borrowed from Gregory K. Beale. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downer's Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2004).

“But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples.” 1 Kings 9:6-7

- b. It follows that Adam’s failure to keep the law given here (to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) results in his expulsion from the Garden and the sacred space therein.
4. Adam “put to rest” in the garden
- a. The word used in Genesis 2:15 normally translated “put” or “placed” is not one of the usual words for such a meaning (*nathan* and *sim*). Rather it is the word *nuach* which means “to rest” or “caused to rest.”
 - b. This is the same root of the word used to describe God’s “resting place” in the Temple (Ps. 132:7-8, 14; Is. 66:1)

E. *The Garden as the place of the first guarding cherubim*

“He drove out the man, and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24

“And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. ²⁰The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another...” Exodus 25:18-22

“Around all the walls of the house he carved engraved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms...³²He covered the two doors of olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He overlaid them with gold and spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees....So also he made for the entrance to the nave doorposts of olivewood...³⁵On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied on the carved work.” 1 Kings 6:29-35

“The inside of the nave and the vestibules of the court, ¹⁶the thresholds and the narrow windows and the galleries all around the three of them, opposite the threshold, were paneled with wood all around, from the floor up to the windows (now the windows were covered), ¹⁷to the space above the door, even to the inner room, and on the outside. And on all the walls all around, inside and outside, was a measured pattern. ¹⁸It was carved of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub.” Ezekiel 41:15-18

- F. *The Garden as the place of the first arboreal (tree-like) lampstand – the description of the lampstand makes it seem like a small tree, possibly a replica of the Tree of Life.*

“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold...³²And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; ³³three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx [bulb] and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.” Exodus 25:31-33

- G. *The Garden as formative for garden imagery in Israel’s Temple – the temple is consistently described with botanical imagery, making the atmosphere somewhat ‘garden-like’*

“The nave in front of the inner sanctuary, was forty cubits long. ¹⁸The cedar within the house was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers.” 1 Kings 6:17-18

“He covered the two doors of olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers...Around all the walls of the house he carved engraved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms.” 1 Kings 6:23-29

“The capitals were on the two pillars and also above the rounded projection which was beside the latticework. There were two hundred pomegranates in two rows all around, and so with the other capital. ²¹He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple. He set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Boaz. ²²And on the tops of the pillars was lily-work.” 1 Kings 7:20-22

“Then he made the sea of cast metal... ²⁴Under its brim were gourds, for ten cubits, compassing the sea all around. The gourds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast...²⁶Its thickness was a handbreadth, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily. It held two thousand baths.” 1 Kings 7:23-26

“So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the LORD...⁴⁹the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north, before the inner sanctuary” 1 Kings 7:49 – 10 tree-like lampstands resembling an orchard

H. *Eden as the first source of water*

“A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.” Genesis 2:10

“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.” Ezekiel 47:1

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city” Revelation 22:1-2

“They feast on the abundance of your house [temple], and you give them drink from the river of your delights [literally, ‘the river of your Edens’]. ⁹For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.” Psalm 36:8-9

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD; And whose trust is the LORD. ⁸“For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream; And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green; And it will not be anxious in a year of drought; Nor cease to yield fruit...¹²A glorious throne on high from the beginning; Is the place of our sanctuary. ¹³O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the LORD.” Jeremiah 17:7-13

I. *The Garden as the place of precious stones*

“The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.” Gen. 2:12

“You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel...You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. ¹²And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel.” Exodus 28:9-12 [high priestly garments]

“So I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones and marble.” 1 Chronicles 29:2 [material for the construction of the temple]

“The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid an altar of cedar. ²¹And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. ²²And he overlaid the whole house with gold, until all the house was finished. Also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold.” 1 Kings 6:20-22

J. The Garden as the place of the first mountain

“You were in Eden, the garden of God... ¹⁴“You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God.” Ezekiel 28:13-14 – Eden was on a mountain

“You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.” Exodus 15:17 – Israel’s temple was on mount Zion

“In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south.” Ezekiel 40:2

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God...” Revelation 21:10

K. The Garden as the first place with an eastern facing entrance

“He drove out the man, and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24

“Then he went into the gateway facing east, going up its steps, and measured the threshold of the gate, one reed deep.” Ezekiel 40:6

L. Ezekiel’s view of the Garden of Eden as the first sanctuary

“You were in Eden, the garden of God... ¹⁴You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked... ¹⁸By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it

consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you.” Ezekiel 28:13-18

M. *Early Judaism’s view of the Garden as the first sanctuary*

1. In the *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* 21:8, the eviction of Adam from the Garden of Eden is compared to being thrown out of the temple and to the temple’s eventual destruction.
2. The book *Jubilees*, dated to about 160 B.C. connects the temple and Eden in 8:19, “And he [Noah] knew that the Garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord. And Mount Sinai (was) in the midst of the desert and Mount Zion was in the midst of the navel of the earth. The three of these were created as holy places, one facing the other.”
3. Testament of Levi 18:6, 10 – temple described with Garden of Eden imagery
4. 1 Enoch 24-27 – temple described with Garden of Eden imagery. In 24 and 25, the Tree of Life is said to have been transplanted as the lampstand in the Holy Place of the temple.

IV. SECOND, ADAM’S COMMISSION TO EXPAND THE GARDEN AND FILL THE EARTH

A. The expansion of Eden

“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Genesis 1:28

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work (cultivate) it and keep it.” Genesis 2:15

B. The expulsion from Eden

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:22-24

V. THIRD, ADAM’S COMMISSION IS PASSED ON

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma², the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done...And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Genesis 8:20-21; 9:1

“And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham...¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” Genesis 22:15-18

[And the LORD said to Issac] “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”

“Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him...God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁴May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!” Genesis 28:1, 3-4

“And God said to him [Jacob], “I am El-Shaddai: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. ¹²The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” Genesis 35:11-12

² Every one of the thirteen other occurrences where *burnt offerings* appears together with *soothing aroma* occur in context to the tabernacle in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. “Soothing aroma” occurs over 40 times in reference to the tabernacle and temple in Genesis through Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.

“If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, ⁴then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. ⁵Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. ⁶I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land... ⁹I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you...¹¹I will make my dwelling [tabernacle] among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. ¹²And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.” Leviticus 26:6-12

“He will love you [Israel] and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.” Deuteronomy 7:13

“And I will multiply people on you, the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt. ¹¹And I will multiply on you man and beast, and they shall multiply and be fruitful. And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 36:10-11

“I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ²⁸Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” Ezekiel 37:26-28

VI. FOURTH, OUR ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE IS THE CERTAINTY OF THE GARDEN BEING RESTABLISHED THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF THE TEMPLE

A. The eschatological expansion of the temple

1. Numbers 24:5-9 - *How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel! ⁶Like palm groves that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the LORD has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. ⁷Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. ⁸God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows. ⁹He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.”*
2. Isaiah 49:19-20 - *“Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land— surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away. ²⁰The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: ‘The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.’*
3. Isaiah 51:3 – *“For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.”*
4. Isaiah 52:9-10 – *“Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”*
5. Isaiah 54 - *“Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married,” says the LORD. ²“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.” ³For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.*
6. Isaiah 66:1-2 – *“Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? ²All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

7. *Jeremiah 3:16-18 – “And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. ¹⁷At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.*

8. Daniel 2 - Isaiah 2/Micah 4

B. Column 6 from the *Hymn Scroll*

¹²...And all the nations shall know Thy truth

And all the peoples, Thy glory...

¹⁴...And Thou has sent out

¹⁵a sprouting

as a flower that shall bloom forever,

that the Shoot may grow into the branches of the eternal planting

And its shade shall spread over all [the earth]

[and] its [top]

¹⁶reach up to the hea[vens]

[and] its roots go down to the Abyss

And all the rivers of Eden [shall water] its [bou]ghs and it shall become a [mi]ghty

¹⁷forest, [and the glory of] its [fo]rest shall spread over the world without end,

as far as Sheol [forever]

[And] it shall be a well-spring of light as an

¹⁸eternal unfailing fountain.

In its brilliant flames

All the son[s of darkness] shall be consumed...

C. The Temple in the Book of Acts

“Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him [Stephen] speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” ¹²And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, ¹³and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” Acts 6:11-14

1. Stephen is here accused to speaking blasphemy against the temple (“this holy place”) by saying that Jesus will destroy the temple and change the customs. In effect, Jesus will significantly alter the form and expression of the faith of YHWH.

^{7:1} *And the high priest said, “Are these things so?”* ² *And Stephen said: “Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, ‘Go out from your ... ⁶ And God spoke to this effect... ‘and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place [i.e. the temple]’ Acts 7:1-6*

2. Stephen does not deny these accusations. Rather he begins an elaborate and brilliant confrontation of those who opposed him. Instead of justifying himself he seizes the moment to describe what the Spirit is saying about the temple.
3. Indeed, Stephen affirms that the God’s purpose in calling Abraham was directly for the Jewish people to eventually *worship* in a particular place, that is, the tabernacle and temple.
4. Nevertheless, Stephen maintains an anti-temple position by assert the impossibility that God’s could fully and truly dwell in a building. God’s presence is meant to fill the earth.

⁴⁴ *“Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. ⁴⁵ Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸ Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, ⁴⁹ “ ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? ⁵⁰ Did not my hand make all these things?’ ⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” ⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.” Acts 7:44-54*

5. In Acts 15, the Jerusalem council meets to discuss the inclusion of Gentiles into the faith, which up to that point had been solely Jewish. The tide begins to turn when Barnabas and Paul recount how the presence of the Spirit had been made manifest in Gentile communities. James then affirms their report by saying that the presence of the Spirit among the Gentiles, and the expansion of the community of faith *is the fulfillment* of the prophecy from Amos 9:11ff concerning the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David – the place of worship and divine dwelling.

“And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, ¹⁶“ ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸known from of old.’ ¹⁹Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.” Acts 15:12-20

“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’” Acts 17:24-28

- D. The consummation of the ages – Revelation 21-22

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place [tabernacle] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:1-4

“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.” Revelation 21:22-23

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:1-5

VII. FIFTH, ADAM'S COMMISSION IS STILL ALIVE TODAY IN THE CHURCH - THIS IS OUR PURPOSE AND DESTINY

A. The church as a garden temple

“He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s cultivation [vineyard, garden], God’s building.¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled [sophia, wise] master builder [architekton] I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw...” 1 Corinthians 3:8-12

1. The only mention of buildings made with gold, silver and precious stones is the Temple (cf. 1 Kings 5:17; 1 Kings 6:20-21, 30, 35; 1 Chronicles 22:16; 29:2-7)
2. *Sophos architekton* (wise master builder) is language very similar to that used in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) of *Exodus 35:31-32* with regard to those who worked with gold, silver and stone in the construction of the tabernacle.

“...filled with a divine spirit of wisdom [sophia]...to be a master builder [architektonein] in all works of a master builder [architektonias] in order to form gold and silver...and works of stone.”

3. The connection between the Garden of Eden and the temple, makes more sense of the seemingly odd combination of agricultural and architectural metaphors, calling the people of God both God’s vineyard/garden and God’s building (temple).
- B. *Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. ¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. ^{5:1}For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*
- C. *“Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ¹⁷“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. ¹⁸“And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:16-18*
- D. *“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14*

E. *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22*

F. *“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” 1 Peter 2:4-6*

Psalm 92:12-15 – the righteous man or woman becoming an agricultural part of the temple – *“The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, ¹⁵to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”*

G. This is our corporate destiny. Every human being has this commission. It is a mission that we cannot do on our own and we cannot be disqualified from. Being human qualifies us for the original commission to fill the earth with the glory of the community of God dwelling in His presence. We are enabled to do so as we give our lives to the Lord and allow Him to fill us with His Spirit.