

CB - 1/16/66 p.m.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

Eph. 1: 9-12

Intro: In a world characterized by chaos and confusion, it may come as a surprise for some to hear it declared that God ~~is~~ ^{does} not ~~of~~ ^{share any} confusion, is not the least bit in doubt as to what ~~he~~ ^{He} is doing.

J. C. Hammond says, "There is nothing which more stabilizes faith than the full discovery that God is working to a plan" ("On Understanding Be Men", p. 108).

Our text makes this fact abundantly clear (as do other portions of Scripture).

Actually the details of God's overall purpose included every area of creation and could be called related purposes - a subject which include the investigation of all of the Bible.

If we do not understand what God is doing, then we can easily spend our time with things which are ultimately destined to failure because they do not conform to this purpose.

God's purpose is concerned with removing from creation all that hinders the happiness of men.

This is what the nations of the earth are likewise concerned with.

Can we not say, then, that men are working in harmony with God? Let us see.

What are ^{the} areas where men are looking for the solution?

Eric Fife, in his book, Man's Peace
God's Glory, mentions three:

- (1) Politics and government. See pp. 21 ff.
- (2) Ignorance - requiring education.
- (3) Materialism. Communism speaks of the "haves" and "have nots".

Another area which is getting more and more attention these days is the moral precepts of life, only here it is being presented to us under the label, a new morality. Old restraints are being frowned on, sin is being made a respected member of society. Along with this many are subscribing to false teaching that God is DEAD!

Is all of this in conformity with the purpose of God?

Obviously one recognizes great needs: corruption in government - the few taking advantage of the many; social problems; ignorance, illiteracy, disease, poverty. One does not need to leave our own shores to find these problems, but they are overwhelming problems in other lands.

Can we work at the correction of these ills with the hope that in so doing our world can become the world that we would like for it to be?

The answer is NO!

A world set on correcting social ills and dismissing moral restraint is the design for today.

But what does the Word of God say? Two things which are absolutely essential:

- (1) The purpose of God is concentrating

on the ultimate glory of Jesus Christ. Cf. Phil. 2:9-11. Here in our text, "That... He might gather together in one all things in Christ..." (v. 10).

(2) The purpose of God concentrates on the complete transformation of man. Note: "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ" (v. 12).

The fulfillment of God's purpose concerns Christ and those who have trusted Him because they (and only they) are the ones who will eventually be made to the praise of His glory.

So the root of the world's troubles is to be found in man, and until man is changed, the world cannot be changed.

Experience has proven that

- (1) Governments do not change men
- (2) Education does not change men
- (3) Things do not change men,

if we are thinking of changes which produce the peace within which results in an abiding happiness.

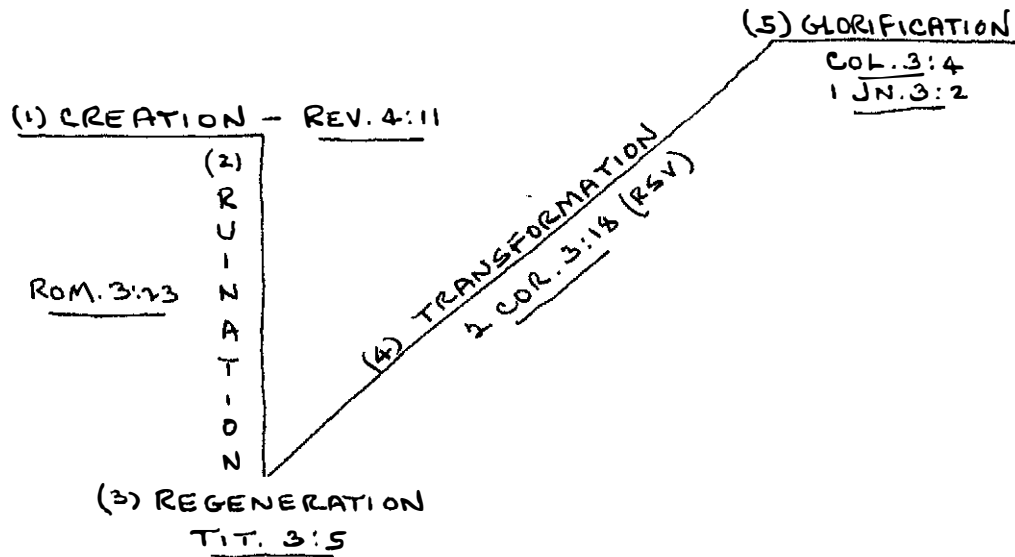
To be sure, these are needs, and to be sure, it would be wonderful if everyone did live under good government, with good education, and sufficient possessions, but with all of these we would still have the basic problem.

We want these without God.

In the wealthy section of a certain midwestern city it is said that there was hardly a home that was not touched by divorce, or suicide, or alcoholism, or ^{criminal} children.

If money were our asset, these things would not be true.

Let me take you to the Word in the time that remains + look as closely as we can at THE PURPOSE OF GOD under these five words:



I. CREATION.

Why did God create man? (I won't insult your intelligence by asking, Did God create man?)

Listen to the Scriptures.

Rev. 4:11 - "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (lit., through thy will) they are and ~~were~~ created."

Rom. 11:36 "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Ampl. N. T. - "All things originate with Him . . . live through Him . . . and tend to consummate in Him."

Col. 1:16 - "For by him were all things created . . . all things were created by him, and for him."

Heb. 2:10 - "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things . . ."

So man was not only created BY God, but FOR Him, i.e., for His glory.
What happened?

II. RUINATION - Rom. 3:23.

It is ~~universal~~ - "all have sinned".
It is specific - "sinned", lit, have missed the mark.

It is effective - "come short", ὑστεροῦνται, to be in want, to be lacking.
This word is used in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:14). It is not to have what it takes.

This is where men are today. They are missing the mark for which they were created & they do not have what it takes to hit it!

No amount of money, or education, or good government can change this. The only way it can be changed is for the Creator Himself to set the creatures feet back in the path of God's original purpose.

If man is left to himself his doom is final, his case is hopeless.

Samuel Medley (d. 1799) lived a life of dissipation until he was wounded in a battle at sea in 1759. He was in the British navy. He convalesced in the home of his grandfather who was a Christian. His grandfather read the Gospel to him, and, as a result, he was saved. One of the hymns Medley wrote expressed his testimony:

"He saw me ruined in the fall
Yet loved me, notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate--
His loving kindness, oh, how great!

But how does this come about?
This takes us to our third word:

III. REGENERATION.

This word is found only 2x in the Bible: Mt. 19:28, Tit. 3:5.

The first has to do with creation (cf. Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:1; Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rom. 8:21-23).

The second is concerned with individuals.

The fall into sin brought death; regeneration is to pass out of death into life, out of darkness into light. It is the new birth. (See Trench, p. 65).

God in mercy does this through Christ. See Tit. 3:4-7; John 3:16.

What is involved?

(1) "Washing" - $\delta\iota\alpha\ \lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\upsilon$

This word is found only 2x in the NT: here, and Eph. 5:26. It comes from the verb, $\lambda\omicron\upsilon\omega$, which means to wash the whole body, as compared with washing parts of the body ($\nu\iota\pi\tau\omega$), or with washing inanimate things ($\pi\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$). See Trench, pp. 160 ff. (Our Lord used the first two of these verbs in John 13:10, recognizing the distinction.)

Washing removes defilement. Man is not cleansed by acts of his own righteousness, but through the mercy of God. The result is justification (Tit. 3:7). It would seem that the washing is through the Word.

(2) "Renewal" - $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$.

Cf. Rom. 12:2. This leads to our fourth word, showing that regeneration involves more than just the restoration of life.

"This is the gradual conforming of the man more and more to that new spiritual world into which he has been introduced, and in which he now lives and moves; the restoration of the Divine image" (Trench, p. 65).

What about this

IV. TRANSFORMATION?

Paul speaks of it in 2 Cor. 3:18

(RSV): "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

"Changed" - μεταμορφούμεθα. It is the word used of the Lord's transfiguration.

Our word is metamorphosis.

Trench says that this is an inward change (as well as outward - mine), and that it is a change into something wholly different.

The Spirit of God is producing it, making us who are regenerated "that we should be to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:12).

This brings us to our fifth and last word:

V. GLORIFICATION. Cf. Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:2.
Also Rom. 8:16-18; 28-30.

Then, and only then, will God's purpose in creation be completed - for those who have received Christ.

Men deal with symptoms. They can do no better. God changes the heart.

Concl: In view of what we shall be, cf. 1 Cor. 10:31 + Rom. 12:2.