

Unchanging Purpose

By

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“In the beginning, God created” is the way God opens His divine masterpiece of history and law. These words, however, contain much more than the mere command to attention which the beginning sentence in good journalism demands. They tell us that the entire creation, including humanity, was first molded in the mind of the Maker then brought into existence in accord with this infinite and inexorable purpose, and that whatever else may be fathomed by the brain of the creature, there still remains the pattern, the mold, the perfect purpose which exists in the mind of the Creator.

To look at the general picture which the churches of our day present to the world, it is hard to imagine that such a purpose exists, or ever did exist. The church is supposed to be “God’s workmanship,” the “pillar and ground of the truth,” and hence the demonstration of God’s purpose. But this is almost never apparent on the surface, and seldom apparent even upon close scrutiny. While the great organizations of Churchdom may represent an affluent society, good management and skillful engineering, they say little or nothing about the original and final purpose of the Creator. Even the “programs” of the churches, while seeking to attract and to occupy the time of those attracted, hardly give more than a hint as to the mind of God and what He is ultimately after.

Consider the creative intent as stated in Genesis: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26). Thus in one grand sweep, God encompasses the creative purpose in this statement. There is to be a God-like creature (“In our image”) to inhabit the earth, and to enjoy its fruits and have power and control (“dominion”) over it.

God, the designer and creator of all, states exactly what His intention is in creating. Man is to be like God, even “in His image,” with Godly characteristics, in harmony with God, and carrying out the intended purpose of God in relation to the rest of the creation. Since God is an intelligent Being, man is also created with intelligence, so that there might be an intelligent relation between the two, a mind-to-mind relationship between Creator and created, God and man.

Just look at this creature, walking along with his Creator, in perfect harmony with Him. Originally there was no desire on man’s part to distort the image and altar the design, thus there was a perfect working relationship. On the part of God it was a relationship of love and provision: on man’s part it was responding love and reception. As long as man continued to walk in faith and obedience to God, he was able to receive all that the Creator intended - life in a perfect environment. It was not until man turned his trusting mind from God to Satan and tried to attain his goal in opposition to God’s desire that the system was ruined.

Once he had rejected the “image,” man had spoiled the entire operation. He was no longer in harmony with the Designer and Creator. He was no longer fit to be in charge over the earth, and to have dominion over it and the lower creatures. Hence he was deprived of his deathless quality, and the whole earth began to produce things contrary to his desire (Gen. 3:17-19).

The process has been going on so long now that we take it for granted that it is natural: natural for man to sin; natural for the ground to produce thorns; natural for the droughts, famines and floods to devastate the earth; and natural to die. None of these are a “natural” part of God’s original plan. They are contrary to His ultimate purpose. They exist because man rejected God’s purpose and by his own God-given power of will abdicated his kingly position in God’s scheme.

The result of this rejection is being worked out in the chaos of today’s rise of socialism and communism. These twins in economics and politics are rooted in humanism, the doctrine that man is the basis of his own being and that he is the source and authority of his purpose. This doctrine denies that there is a divine and ultimate law outside of man. Socialism and communism deny that economics and politics are to be governed by the Creator of the universe. The modern view of society - call it socialism or communism or any other popular brand name - the modern idea is that man makes his own laws and creates his own destiny according to his own desire.

But the purpose of God still exists. The Bible teaches that God still desires to have man in His own image, and that someday there WILL ONCE AGAIN be a Paradise like Eden, where men shall rule and reign, where there will be no thorns to infest the ground, no sorrow, no obstacles in man’s way, no sickness nor death, and where man and God will dwell together in a mind-to-mind relationship. According to God’s Word, we (Christians) are to become like Christ (1 John 3:2), changed into His own glorious image (Phil. 3:20-21) and shall live in the new earth where righteousness is fully restored (2 Peter 3:13, Rev. 21:1-4, Rev. 22:1-5).

Hence our hope is not an ambiguous mystery, but a definite expectation of the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose “that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:21-23).

Even now, the Scripture says, we are “transformed into the same image from glory to glory...” (2 Cor. 3:18). The process begins when we retrace Adam’s steps backwards, turn our minds and trust to God, and become Christians. The transformation takes place gradually and daily as we hold His image and purpose before us.

A view of the purpose is often partially obscured by the immediate problems. As when one sets out to climb a mountain Peak, he sees the peak from a distance and prepares for a long and difficult climb, but after a few hundred yards the goal is blotted from his view by the trees, and immediately before him is a stream to be crossed and a cliff to be scaled. Yet, in his mind's eye he sees the towering peak, and visualizes himself standing there, viewing the stream and cliff that have been conquered. While he must give attention to the stream and the cliff in their turn, neither of these become a goal nor an end in itself. The purpose of crossing the stream is only that he might continue the ascent to the peak.

Were he merely taking a stroll through the woods and came upon a stream, the stream might become the total focal point of his attention. If it should prove to be difficult and dangerous, he might turn around and go some other direction. This is exactly what has happened to millions of people in the churches. They only stroll through life, scouting religion, with no ultimate goal at all. Often the immediate challenge becomes the end goal: the church building, the recreation program, the gain in attendance, the esteem of man and the glory of worldly success. If and when the church suggests repentance and sacrifice, some real steps toward the Image, entailing self denial and persecution, members may take a walk in another corner of the woods.

But if the Christian has the purpose of God in mind — that man should eventually and for eternity be in His image — he finds a way across the stream, he scales the cliff, despite the difficulty, the danger and the opposition.

The Bible consistently gives a picture of this purpose: in CREATION, undying man in fellowship with God in the Garden; in the DISCIPLINE of man through a special nation for the production of a Savior; in the LIFE of that SAVIOUR as a demonstration of the “effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance” (Heb. 1:3); in the ATONING DEATH of the Savior to restore the RELATIONSHIP OF MAN WITH GOD; in the RESURRECTION to show what immortality is; and in the word picture in Revelation of the FINAL AND ETERNAL PURPOSE FULFILLED in the IMMORTAL MAN AND THE PERFECT EARTH (Rev. 21:1-4, 22:1-5). The coming of Christ to complete this purpose has been the prospect of Christians from the first.

Important questions arise from these considerations: Do YOU have this purpose and goal as your very own?

Do YOU have reason to believe that you are among those to be redeemed and made immortal according to this eternal purpose?

Have YOU claimed the promises upon the terms God has given?

Does YOUR CHURCH bear witness to this eternal purpose by teaching it and seeking to demonstrate it? (Eph. 3:10-f 1)

If your answer to these questions is “Yes,” then you are among the few in these mixed up times who are unharried and unworried. Whatever your circumstances, you may be

optimistic and filled with “peace and joy in believing.” You have a purpose which transcends all immediate obstacles and hardships, “For our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

The cry of the revolutionists of our day, through the press, education and even the apostate churches, is that “times have changed,” insinuating that we must change all the rules God has given. Of course time changes, for time is a movement upon the line of eternity. But the eternal God doesn’t change. His PURPOSE IS UNCHANGING. He will have man in His own image! The men who today are changing the rules to suit themselves are not doing something new. Adam did it, and men have been trying it ever since, to their own destruction. For only the Creator can make man immortal and eternal, and He will do this for ONLY those who desire the life that He desires to give. “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according TO HIS PURPOSE” (Romans 8:28).

Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties of a Christian in these days is to resist the temptation to go along with the times. As even greater and more drastic changes take place in society, with greater lawlessness, with sexual immorality becoming a way of life, and all the changes wrought by the switch from a God-ordered system to a system of humanism, Christians need to remember vividly that our God is One Who “changes not” and that if we want to be salvaged from the destruction of this world, we must align ourselves with His UNCHANGING PURPOSE.

“And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides for ever” (1 John 2:17).

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