

Our Missionary God

What is God's main purpose in the world and in history? What does He care about? Should we be placing the same emphasis on those things as He does? Are we? Maybe you have found yourself asking these questions. Maybe you just have a desire to know what is most important to your God so you can invest your life in the same things.

We look to the Bible for the answers. As God's Word to us, it shows us God's character, His purposes and intents, and the action that He takes in light of who He is.

When we open up the Scriptures we see that the Bible is not a disjointed collection of many books dealing with many different things. Instead, it seems to begin, end and revolve around one major theme: God's missionary purpose to purchase and restore to Himself a people from every nation on earth. It relates history from God's perspective, beginning with His plan to redeem the lost world to Himself (Genesis 3:15, 12:1-3) and ending with the fulfillment of this missionary purpose when some from every tribe and tongue and people and nation gather before the King of all ages (Revelation 5:9-10; 19:7).

Not only is the Bible the basis for missions, but it appears that missions is the basis for the Bible. The missionary purposes and actions of God form the backbone and plot of the Bible. World evangelization is the central focus of God's work in the world through the ages.

Don't just take our word for it. Take time to scan the panorama of biblical history to see what is on the heart of God and discover His central purpose and plan for mankind.

The Story of the Bible

Introduction

- A. Creation – God creates man in His own image (Genesis 1-2).
- B. Fall – separation from God (Genesis 3).
- C. The Plan – God foreshadows his plan to bring restoration through the triumph of the Messiah (Genesis 3:15).
- D. Flood – God is grieved by man's escalating wickedness and destroys all but Noah and his family in the flood (Genesis 4-9).
- E. Tower of Babel – God divides a united, rebellious mankind by confusing their language and establishing many separate nations (Genesis 10-11).

God's Purpose through Israel

God chooses to bless one of the nations, through which He desires to bless the rest of the nations. Throughout the Old Testament, God shows how He has chosen Israel to be His channel of blessing.

- A. The Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:3). "All peoples will be blessed through you."
- B. The purpose for the plagues on Egypt (Exodus 9:16). Note that Egypt was the most powerful empire at the time.
- C. Throughout history Israel failed to consider the nations, focusing on being a blessed nation while forgetting the privilege and responsibility to be a blessing to all nations.

Yet amid this we find a man after God's own heart, who cannot forget God's redemptive concern for all nations – David.

1. David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:46).
 2. David's prayer for blessing (Psalm 67:1-2, 7).
- D. Solomon used to affect the nations (1 Kings 4:34).
- E. Israel's inward focus brought them to ruin. But God continued to fulfill His purpose through them. He scattered Israel because of their sin, thus dispersing the knowledge of the Most High God throughout the nations of the world.
1. Persia (2 Chronicles 36:20-23).
 2. Xerxes' empire – a Jew becomes queen (Esther 1:1).
 3. The Babylonians and Medes (Daniel 6:25-27).
 4. Assyria – Nineveh was the capital (Jonah 4:10, 11).
- F. The Lord's purpose for Israel restated.
1. As a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6).
 2. For the glory of the Lord in the whole earth (Habakkuk 2:14).

God's Purpose through Jesus

God sends Christ, the promised Messiah, to bring redemption to all men through His death and resurrection.

- A. God so loved the world (John 3:16).
- B. Christ expresses God's redemptive concern for all nations (Mark 11:17).
- C. God destroys the works of the devil through His Son (I John 3:8).

God's Purpose through the Church

Like the Israelites, the Church is God's blessed people, redeemed and chosen to be God's instruments in His plan to redeem some from every nation and people.

- A. Christ commissions His followers to be disciple-makers among all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. Acts 1:8.
 1. Jerusalem (Acts 5:28).
 2. Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1, 5).
 3. The ends of the earth.
 - a. Through Peter (Acts 11:18).
 - b. Through Paul (Acts 9:15, 13:2; Romans 15:20).
- C. Christ's purpose becomes that of the Church (John 20:21; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Conclusion: God's Purposes Fulfilled – the End of History!

- A. Christ has purchased some from every nation and people (Revelation 5:9).
- B. Some redeemed from every nation and people worship the Lamb before the throne (Revelation 7:9-10).

What Is God's Purpose for Us?

God's missionary purpose, declared at the beginning of history, will be accomplished! Thus history is not random and undirected, bouncing from one major event to another. Rather, it is the story of what God is doing in this world. He is directing the course of history toward his goal of redemption, and nothing will thwart His missionary purpose.

The question we are forced to ask as we look at His purposes throughout Scripture is, "What is God's purpose for us?" If the God of Israel is the same yesterday and today, then although His method may change, his purpose is still the same – to bless us in order that we might bring His message of blessing and salvation to all the peoples of the earth.

The compelling and unavoidable call of the Scriptures is to give our lives for the evangelization of those who have never heard.

Will we line up our lives with the purposes of God? Will we give our lives for the cause our Lord lived and died for?

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