



THE  
PURPOSE  
OF  
GOD



by Dale Rumble

Preface

What is the purpose of God?<sup>1</sup> Most believers are likely to answer this question by one or more of the following statements:

- to save sinners and to heal the sick
- to cast out demons and destroy the works of Satan
- to establish social justice, peace and prosperity

There is a common thread in each of these statements, one that comes from a mind-set pervasive in gospels preached today. God is presented as a great divine supermarket in the sky whose purpose is to serve us. In short, a central focus of preaching has been the needs of fallen man and that the purpose of God is to meet those needs. In a subtle way, salvation from sin has been made the ultimate goal of the gospel.

This is not a correct emphasis in the gospel of the kingdom. The heart of God desires more than bringing sinners to a place of being justified from their sin. He has purposed to bring those who believe into a maturity of righteousness under His government where they can gain a special place in glory and fellowship with Him. The bible, first of all, is a declaration of what God *will do for Himself*. His purpose is centered in the glory of His inheritance in the saints. What we have been saved to become in Him, is how we are to view the purpose of God. To understand this more clearly, one must consider the following question, “Is there anything of higher value or of greater worth than the life, suffering, death and resurrection Jesus?”

As believers, our humanity cries out, “nothing is more valuable!” However, this is the wrong answer, for it views the worth of our Lord’s sacrifice from the perspective of our need as sinners. God views the answer from His perspective, which is quite different. Before Adam sinned or was created, even before the world and the heavens were created, God purposed to accomplish something that He desired very much for His own glory. He considered what it would cost to achieve His goal. He recognized that the price was very great; it would require the death of His Son on the cross. When He weighed this cost

against the value of what He would gain in return, the latter was worth more to Him!

This divine perspective is how we, as God's sons, are to view the gospel, and how we are to understand our call in Christ. We have been offered a very great privilege. Grace and mercy have been extended to us, enabling us to enter a stream of events that have been occurring over the centuries—events initiated by God, which will one day consummate in the completion of His purpose. Our priority in knowing Him as our Lord and Savior is to understand His purpose and to wholly give ourselves to it.

It all begins when the issue of our sins is dealt with. We have no part in God's plan until, through faith and repentance, our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. God is not willing that any man should perish. However, His purpose is not simply in how many will be saved, but in the fellowship and relationship He will establish with those who, being saved, seek to grow up into the maturity offered them in Christ.

Because He foreknew all about each one of us and our needs, He has made total provision for them. Therefore, *His purpose*, not our needs, is a correct emphasis in the gospel of the kingdom.

Because of God's great love and mercy, the very dregs of society are often the ones who respond to the gospel and become jewels in His crown. Thus, the place to begin our service is to share His heart of love and compassion for lost men. This emphasis must never be lost.

## In the Beginning

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The place to begin is in recognizing that God's purpose, and our place in His purpose, were established before the world was created. In His foreknowledge, God looked down the corridors of time and saw each person who would respond in faith to His call in their respective generation.

*Who has saved us, and called us with a **holy calling**, not according to our own works, but according to **His own purpose and grace** that was granted us in Christ Jesus **from all eternity**. (2 Timothy 1:9)*

Each believer who responded was first of all prepared in his mother's womb to serve in the purpose of God (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:1-9; Galatians 1:15). We are all born with specific personalities, talents, weaknesses and strengths. However, we cannot serve God with our natural endowments. When these attributes are taken to the cross and laid down in death, God can raise them up for His service; through union with Him, our bodies become containers of divine life. There will come a time when, having been trained by the Spirit in trials and testings, by His grace, we are prepared for a unique place of service in the body of Christ. Each of us have been given grace according to our weaknesses and the specific sphere of service we have been called to. We are vessels of God's special design for Himself alone. The goal is that Christ might work through us to fulfill His purpose in our generation (Ephesians 2:10).

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ. This was the wisdom behind the mighty works of God in creation, and the same wisdom is behind the call of God to individuals into His purpose. This wisdom is described in Proverbs 8:22-31), where she declares that she was possessed by the Lord in the beginning of His way, and that she was a supporting master workman when He created the world and set in motion those events that would bring His purpose to pass. As wisdom saw His plan unfold over the centuries, she rejoiced and had delight in the sons of men who would respond to Him in each generation (verse 31).

It is quite astounding, and most encouraging, to realize our entire life has been foreknown by the Lord. For good reasons, each of us were born in our particular generation of time. Knowing our weaknesses and strengths, our successes and failure, our childhood, our talents, our circumstances, our hurts and insecurities and the difficulties we have faced, God has

woven a harmony of events together for each life, including the friends and ministries He brought into our life, in order to give us the best opportunity to respond to His call and embrace His purpose for our day. We must first be certain of the *sure foundation* we have in Him, having been baptized in water and with the Holy Spirit. Also, we are to remember the lessons we have learned in the past. However, we are not to look back; our vision is for the future. We are not to expect that God will move in the future like He has moved in the past. We are living in a unique time when God will bring this age to an end. We are to keep our eyes on Him and what He is doing in our generation. Our first priority is to be in His presence. We are to forget what lies behind, including all mistakes and decisions we now wish we had made differently (Isaiah 43:18-19; Philippians 3:12-14). Where we are today is *precisely* where the Lord knew we would be! Accordingly, He has provided for us all the grace that we will ever need, considering both our past mistakes and the dimensions of service we have been called into. We will discover that *all things* do work together for our good when God is in them.

*And we know that God **causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.** (Romans 8:28)*

Finally, the purpose of God is not an option or a probability; it is *certain* to be fulfilled!

*For I am God, and there is no one like Me, **declaring the end from the beginning** and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, “**My purpose will be established,** and I will accomplish all My good pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9-10)*

*The counsel of the Lord stands **forever**, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Psalm 33:11)*

God has *never* reacted to unexpected events; He has simply acted, knowing all that will take place. He has *never* changed His planned course of action. He is not a second behind schedule. What He has purposed to do, *will be accomplished!*

Since He has declared His purpose from the beginning, we can discover what it is by simply reviewing the history of His words to our forefathers in the faith.

## What is His Purpose?

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When God speaks to us through His word as our heavenly Father and expresses His purpose, it is in terms of us being His sons. In doing so, He speaks out of who He is, for He is the spiritual Father of all who have been born of His Spirit. He has purposed to bring forth sons who have been conformed into the image of His only begotten Son (Romans 8:14-19; Hebrews 12:5-11; Ephesians 1:3-6).

When God speaks through His word to us as the Son, and expresses His purpose, it is in terms of our being His bride or His body. Again, He speaks out of who He is, for He is the bridegroom and He is head of His body (1 Corinthians 12:12-17; Revelation 19:7-8).

However, when God speaks through scripture to us as the Holy Spirit, He expresses His purpose in terms of us becoming His dwelling place, His house or His city. In this third sense, God is speaking out of *what* He is, for God is spirit (John 4:24). It is highly significant that God speaks more often in this third way than both of the other two combined! Although all three are simply different expressions of the same purpose, there is an emphasis concerning the house of God that must be understood in order to know how we are to respond to Him.

Let us take a walk through the scriptures to discover how, over the years, God has progressively revealed His purpose.

## Abraham

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God first began to unfold His purpose to Abraham, with whom He established a covenant that was to be the basis for man's redemption. God revealed many things to Abraham over

a period of roughly thirty-nine years that covered the time when he was first called to leave his place of birth, until finally, he was proven and found faithful when asked to offer up Isaac. In this period of time, Abraham had righteousness imputed to him; he underwent circumcision; he paid tithes to Melchizedek; he was tested in many ways, including the birth of Ishmael, and finally the birth of Isaac in his old age when both he and Sarah were barren. During these years the gospel was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). considering all of these things, what was it that God built into Abraham's heart? What vision or purpose did He impart to the one who became the father of all who would subsequently believe? It was this:

*. . . he (Abraham) **was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** (Hebrews 11:10)*

All the great ones of faith who followed Abraham, also looked for a heavenly city.

*But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:16)*

The purpose of God is centered in a city that He is building. This truth is where we begin our quest to understand what God has purposed to accomplish for Himself.

## Moses

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After Abraham, the Lord raised up other men in succeeding generations to whom He revealed new truths concerning His purpose and the significance of His house. Moses was the second man God chose to give such revelation to. He gave explicit instructions to Moses concerning the pattern of how to build a tabernacle for God to dwell among the nation of Israel.

This structure was a shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, and the Lord emphasized to Moses that it must be built according to the pattern that God gave him (Exodus 25-40). The pat-

tern contained symbolic revelations within the material used, the dimensions and other structural details of the walls, the holy place and the most holy place. Every item of furniture, including its location, its material and its size, were types (or shadows) of spiritual things pertaining to the house of the Lord that is being built today. When the tabernacle was finished, the glory of God filled it.

*Now Moses was faithful **in all His house** as a servant, **for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later.** (Hebrews 3:5)*

Indeed, much of the truth required today to correctly build local churches is symbolically hidden in the pattern and structure of the tabernacle.<sup>2</sup>

## David

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The next, and thus the third man, to whom the Lord gave further revelations of His house was the psalmist, David.

David was a man after God's own heart because his spirit was filled with what was also in the Lord's heart. When one reads through the Psalms, he will find them filled with references to the dwelling place of God. The following are some examples:

*One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, **to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to mediate in His temple.** (Psalm 27:4)*

*O Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, the **place where Thy glory dwells.** (Psalm 26:8)*

***Glorious things** are spoken of you, O city of God. (Psalm 87:3)*

*How **blessed** is the one whom Thou does choose and **bring near to Thee to dwell in Thy courts** . . . . (Psalm 65:4)*



**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God,** His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King. **God in her palaces has made Himself known as a stronghold.** (Psalm 48:1-3)

How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! . . . How blessed are those who dwell in Thy house! **They are ever praising Thee; How blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the highways to Zion.** (Psalm 84:1, 4-5)

O Lord, **who may abide in Thy tent?** Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? **He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.** (Psalm 15:1-5)

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. **This is My resting place forever;** here I will dwell, for I have desired it. (Psalm 132:13-14)

Planted in the house of the Lord, they (the righteous) will flourish in the courts of our God. (Psalm 92:13)

Through the words of David, we discover many new truths concerning the house of God. For example:

- It is both a mountain and a city.
- It is a place of His glory.
- Only the righteous will dwell there.
- The righteous who are planted in His house will flourish in His presence.
- It is a place of worship and prayer.
- It is a place of great supply, abundance, joy, strength and defense from evil.
- It is to become the place of God's everlasting habitation, which He refers to as the place of His eternal rest.

- It is a place to behold the beauty of the Lord, to meditate, to be nourished and strengthened by an abundance of goodness and lovingkindness from His presence.

Although at this point, we do not fully understand the purpose of God, nor the significance of His house being a place of rest, yet our knowledge is increasing with each new revelation.

David's heart was so consumed with the theme of God's house that he sought to build a magnificent temple for Him. However, the Lord told David that he was not to do so. He promised David that, in the future, one of his descendants would build the house of God. Furthermore, this house would be established for eternity, and it would also have in it a place for David as well (1 Chronicles 17:10-14).

It is a new and important revelation to understand that the *House of God is to be built by the Lord Jesus Himself*. He is the promised descendant of David. He is the architect and builder, appointed by His Father to this apostolic task (Hebrews 3:1-6).

## Solomon

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Solomon took the material that his father David had assembled, and built what was perhaps the most expensive building ever constructed. When he had finished the work, the glory of God filled the place; and then Solomon received a great revelation concerning the house of God. Very simply, it was the truth that God is *not* seeking for a house *to contain Him*. Indeed, God cannot be contained in any structure, for His Spirit is everywhere.

*But will God indeed dwell with mankind on earth: Behold, heaven and the highest heaven **cannot contain Thee**; how much less this house which I have built. (2 Chronicles 6:18)*

We build earthly houses as shelters to contain us, but this is not what God is seeking. Thus, although we do not yet understand His eternal purpose, we are gaining new insight.

# The Prophets

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Greater understanding of the Lord's purpose concerning His house is provided for us in the words of His prophets. For example, Isaiah revealed that God has provided a special cornerstone for the foundation of His house.

*. . . behold, I am laying in Zion, a **tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.** He who believes in it will not be disturbed. (Isaiah 28:16)*

We recognize that this cornerstone is the Lord Jesus upon whom our faith rests. He is both the cornerstone and the builder of the house of God.

The Lord declares through Isaiah that He will glorify His glorious house. He also makes it clear that the place believers may have in His house is altogether a matter of godly character. Their lives must be compatible with His glory.

*. . . I dwell on a high and holy place and also with the **contrite and lowly of spirit** . . . . (Isaiah 57:15)*

*Thus says the Lord, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being, but to this one I will look, to him who is **humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.**" (Isiah 66:1-2)*

The prophet Micah reveals that the city of God will one day become the place from which the government of God will go forth to all nations of the earth. This points to the very great importance that this city of God will have in the last days.

*And it will come about **in the last days** that the **mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains.** It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. And many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." **For***

***from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:1-2)***

Let us next consider the words of the greatest of all prophets concerning the house of God.

## Jesus

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Jesus told His disciples that there were many dwelling places in His Father's house. He promised to go and prepare a place for them, one that would be near Him. Furthermore, no one can come to His Father's house except through Himself; He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:2-6). He declared that His house was to be a place of prayer.

In prayer to His Father, at the completion of His earthly ministry, Jesus focused on the glory of God. He told His Father that the glory He had given to Him, He in turn, had given to the disciples *so that they could become one*, being perfected in unity. He then asked the Father that the disciples might in the future be with Him in His place of glory (His house), in order to behold His glory (John 17:20-24). One can picture the house of God as a place of great glory, where many believers are gathered around the Lord Jesus in a harmony of worship.

Since the glory of God is a most important aspect of the Lord's house, it is necessary for us to understand what it is. There is a record in the book of Exodus when Moses asked God to show him His glory; God replied that He would declare His *name* and make *His goodness* pass before him. His words to Moses reveal that the glory of God is related to His holy nature.

*Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin . . . ! (Exodus 34:6-7)*

In the spirit world, the glory of God is Shekinah brightness that would consume us if we were present in our flesh. However, in this world, the glory of God is *His character!*

Thus, we read concerning Jesus:

*And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and **we beheld His glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth**. (John 1:14)*

*And He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature . . . . (Hebrews 1:3)*

The teachings of Jesus, His gentleness, humility, love and acts of mercy, along with His miracles and way of life, *all* demonstrated the character and the heart of His Father. He displayed the glory of God!

*No man has seen God at any time: the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has **explained (revealed)** Him. (John 1:18)*

We can say at this point in our study that the purpose of God concerns building a place of His rest among those who have been reconciled to Him through the life and death of His Son, who has provided the way for them to come into His presence and glory. As we next turn to the epistles, we find greater understanding of how the Spirit of God builds His house, and of our responsibility in the building process. The mystery of His purpose is unfolding.

## Peter

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Peter's first epistle reveals that believers are the material used to build the house of God; and that they are to serve there as priests.

*You also, as **living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4)*

The following truths emerge from this scripture:

- The Lord's house is built of *living stones*. Here the emphasis is not a pile of stones, but of stones carefully selected to fit a specific place where they are cemented to other stones. The goal is not conformity (i.e. bricks) but a *diversity* of stones, different in size, shape and appearance. This speaks of men and women, who are unique in their grace, calling and service that are being built together in an expression of the life of God.
- Their primary service is to be *priests* unto God, worshipping and praising Him who loved and redeemed them from sin.
- The house is *being built up today*, but it is *not* yet complete.

We will find that these revelations of Peter are greatly expanded in Paul's writings

## Paul

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The Pauline epistles integrate previous revelations of God's purpose concerning His dwelling place, with new insight to reveal more clearly the inheritance offered to believers in the house of God.

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you **(Gentiles) . . . are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling of God in the Spirit.** (Ephesians 2:19-22)*

The place of rest that God earnestly desires is *being built* today by the Holy Spirit, as believers, from every race and culture, are relationally fitted and joined together in their union with Him. Families, home churches and local fellowships are

the arenas where the dynamics of such building takes place. Each believer must recognize and be committed to where God has placed him in His body (1 Corinthians 12:18). Here he will be built together with other members, being sanded and shaped as a living stone to fit the place prepared for him.

*Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)*

*Therefore, encourage one another, and build up one another . . . . (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

*And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another. (Romans 15:14)*

*And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)*

*Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, . . . . see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:12, 15)*

The Lord does not glue together religious organizations to build His house: it is not an amalgamation of Christian feudal systems. Ordinary men and women, with all their human limitations, are being built together by the Spirit into a glorious dwelling place fit for the glory of God. This requires, first of all, that the proper foundation be laid in place. For this reason, the Lord anoints apostles and prophets to establish local churches upon Himself, so that the vision and architecture of each local house anticipates all that He is going to build in the Spirit. Since each believer has a part to play in the building process, the Lord anoints five ministries to instruct and equip the saints with spiritual tools for this purpose. These tools are gifts of the Spirit, ministry graces and knowledge of the word of God (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14; 1 Peter 4:8-11).

*And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

The dynamics of ministry alone, no matter how valid it is, can never build the Lord's house, anymore than tools alone could build anything. Material is required! This building material is the life qualities of hearts that are in union with Christ. It is the fruits of His Spirit that give evidence of our union to Him and to one another. In a local body this bonding in relationships is expressed in terms of "ligaments" and "joints."

*... holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, **being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments**, grows with a growth which is from God. (Colossians 2:19)*

*From whom the whole body, **being fitted and held together** by that which every joint supplies, according to the **proper working of each individual part** causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16)*

Joints and ligaments are not truly members of a body; they are the relationships or interfaces between members that are necessary for the members to work together in harmony. They represent the heart and soul of the building process!

The question arises, "What happens if a believer does not humble himself to function as an accountable, dependent member of a local assembly, but walks alone and aloof from the input of others? The answer is confusion and loss, for such action does *not* fit in the purpose of God.

*He who separates himself seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom. (Proverbs 18:1)*

The responsibility that believers, especially ministers, have in how they build, is made clear by the words of Paul to the church at Corinth.



*You (Corinthians) are . . . God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation and another is building upon it. **But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.** For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, **because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.** If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, **he shall receive a reward.** If any man's work is burned up, **he shall suffer loss;** but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:9-15)*

It would appear that the dwelling place Jesus prepares for His followers is made up of virtues and fruits of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the gold, silver and precious stones) which are developed in their lives here below. Humility, intercession, faith, patience, mercy, compassion, etc., provide spiritual material for our abode above. This involves not only our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, but also the relational bonding we develop with other members in the life of Christ. This latter aspect is an essential part of the building process. What we build today, we will live with for all eternity!

To be saved and go to heaven is one thing; to have a place of honor and glory in the city to come is quite another. The quality control to ensure that God's standard for His house is met, is divine fire! What we build in His name must be able to stand the test of His fire if we are to receive a reward in the age to come. The fire that destroyed the prophets of Baal is the same fire that came upon the disciples at Pentecost. Our God is a consuming fire! Works of the flesh, or the finger prints of man's control, will not be found there when the house of God is finished (Psalm 127:1).

The following scripture presents us with a clearer expression of the purpose of God. The Greek word, "OIKONOMIA," translated as "administrations: can also be translated as "stew-

ardship” or “the law or order of a house or household.” This latter phrase is what provides clarity to the text.

*In all wisdom and insight He (God) made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him (Christ) with a view to an “order of a household” suitable to the **fullness of the times**, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him also **we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will. (Ephesians 1:8-11)*

Jesus is the architect, the builder, as well as the foundation for God’s house; *all* things will be summed up in Him, and His glory will fill the house. He calls us through the gospel to an inheritance *in His glory; to a place in His house.*

One cannot separate the glory of God from His house!

*. . . God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that **you might gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)*

What does it mean to gain the glory of Christ? Our inner man, made alive because of union with our Lord, is clothed with mortal flesh, which we long to be released from and to be clothed with our new house, eternal in the heavens, a building from God not made with hands.

*For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, **shall not be found naked.** (2 Corinthians 5:2-3)*

This raises a second question, “How can our new heavenly bodies, made in His image, be naked?” The answer is that this nakedness concerns the glory of God. Just as our inner man is today clothed with flesh and our physical bodies are clothed with garments, so our future heavenly bodies are designed to be clothed with God’s glory. Every believer is promised a resurrec-

tion body; this is ours altogether by grace according to promise, for we all will bear His image (1 Corinthians 15:49; 1 John 3:2). However, our glories in the resurrection will not all be the same (1 Corinthians 15:40-42). When rewards are handed out, there will be glory for some and tears for others (Romans 2:10, 8:17; Matthew 25:1-29; Luke 12:35-48).

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

Thus, the gospel message not only calls men to eternal life but also to gain the glory of Christ.

## Hebrews

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As we continue our walk through scripture to understand the purpose of God, we come to the book of Hebrews. This epistle reveals three further truths concerning the “rest of God” (Hebrews 4). First, the Greek word for rest is “KATAPAUSIS,” which literally means “a place of resting down.” Thus, God’s rest is associated with a *specific place*.

Secondly, we learn from Hebrews 4:10 that for a believer to enter into the rest of God, he must lay aside and cease from his own works. Therefore, the rest of God is also a *state of being*.

Thirdly, the fullness of God’s rest does not yet exist; *it is yet future*.

*There remains therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9)*

If we bring together all that we have learned so far in our study of the purpose of God, we would still lack clear distinct understanding. Like Abraham, we too are looking for a city which we cannot yet see.

*For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are **seeking the city which is to come.** (Hebrews 13:14)*

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . . (Hebrews 12:22)*

The new Jerusalem is the final revelation of God's purpose. Let us examine what the last book of the bible has to say about the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, the place of His rest. Here we will understand the purpose of God.

## Revelation

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We discover that the *specific place* of God's rest will be upon the earth among His people. With all the universe and all heavens to choose from, God has purposed to dwell forever on earth! His place of rest on the earth is within the holy city, the new Jerusalem.

*. . . behold, the **tabernacle of God is among men,** and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be among them. (Revelation 21:3)*

*. . . come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife** of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the **holy city, Jerusalem** coming down out of heaven from God, **having the glory of God** . . . . (Revelation 21:9-12)*

We learn that the city of God is the wife (bride) of Christ, and that she is *clothed with the glory of God* as she comes down to earth.

The scripture reveals what is required of those saints who are identified with the city of God; what qualifies them to be the bride of Christ and to be clothed with His glory.

*Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and **His bride has made herself ready.** And it was given to her to clothe herself in*

*fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the **righteous acts of the saints.** (Revelation 19:7-8)*

Clearly, Godly character and deeds, not just imputed righteousness, is what makes the bride of Christ distinct.

It is apparent that other saints, not part of the bride, will also be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

*And he said to me, "Write, **blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" (Revelation 19:9)*

We discover scriptures that reveal how significant the rewards are which will be given to those saints who have *wholly followed Christ in His purpose* (Revelation 22:11). These scriptures open our eyes to further perceive the deeds and qualities of character that will make the bride of Christ distinct in glory and authority from other believers.

*He **who overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and **he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem . . .** (Revelation 3:12)*

*He **who overcomes**, I will grant to him **to sit down with Me on My throne**, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father in His throne. (Revelation 3:24)*

*And he **who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end**, to him **I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . as I also received authority from My Father.** (Revelation 2:26-27)*

The government of God will proceed forth over the nations and over all creation from the New Jerusalem. Here He will dwell forever, and in the ages to come He will rule through His sons, those who have endured and overcome.

The place of God's dwelling is both a city and a company of saints. those who make up His city are saints who have

proven themselves worthy to reign with Christ and to share His glory and authority.

All saints will judge the world and fallen angels; however, these saints who overcome will reign with Christ for all eternity from the place of God's rest.

*. . . His bondservants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and **His name shall be on their foreheads**. And there shall no longer be any night (in the city); and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and **they shall reign forever and ever**. (Revelation 22:3-5)*

They never leave His presence in the city, whereas other saints come and go from the city.

*Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city. Revelation 22:14)*

*Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27)*

These truths bring greater clarity to the following words of Paul to Timothy:

*. . . for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; **if we endure, we shall also reign with Him**. 2 Timothy 2:11-12)*

## Conclusion

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By bringing together all the truths God has revealed to us, we can now express the eternal purpose that has been in His heart since creation. It is this: to build out of spiritual relationships with redeemed men and women the city of His eternal rest, a place on earth that, *for the first time* will express the *fullness* of His glory to all of creation; from where the government of His kingdom goes forth and where He will have fellowship

with men. When Jesus was on earth, He displayed the glory and fullness of His Father. However, He was only one individual. God has purposed to bring forth a company of sons who have been conformed to the image of Jesus, that together, for the first time ever, will display the fullness of His glory. This is His purpose.

From this, I can define the purpose that God has called me and each of His children to as follows:

To love and obey the Lord; To allow the Holy Spirit to build me relationally with other believers in order to fit me as a living stone into that unique place in His body which was prepared for me from the foundation of the world; To recognize and walk in the grace, power and authority He has extended to me to fulfill my call in witness and ministry.

The Lord has equal love and compassion for every human being. He is not willing that any one should perish; He desires all men to repent and believe the gospel. However, His eternal purpose goes beyond meeting the needs of lost men. It starts here, but God is first of all a builder! He planned from all eternity to build together those who love truth, into a spiritual expression of the fullness of the glory and magnificence of His person. This is His purpose!

We are entering a period of great testing, a time of deepening darkness and spiritual warfare. However, it will also be a time of great harvest as the Lord purifies and prepares His church for His glory (Isaiah 60:1-7)

In the light of this, it is well for each of us to prayerfully evaluate *what* we are building in His name. The consequences of *how* we build are eternal! Will it stand the test of God's fire? Does it establish His purpose? Today is the time to answer these questions.

## References

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1. The subject material of this tract is taken from chapter 6 of my book, "PREPARED FOR HIS GLORY."

2. This treatment of the tabernacle is found in chapter 9 of my book, "THE DIAKONATE," and in the tract, "BUILD ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN."

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