

God's Present Purpose

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THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

With the one exception of knowing from the Word that he is a child of God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, there is no truth that is more important to the believer than to know the present purpose of God. If we are to walk worthily of this position in which God has placed us, we must not be ignorant of this great truth. Many, indeed, are working at counter purposes with Him because they do not know it. There is no experience in knowing, that will bring tranquility of mind, courage of heart, and inward peace like that which comes from realizing and living harmoniously with God's present purpose. Every professing believer needs to ask, and then seek the answers to, these pertinent questions: What is God's present purpose? What is God doing now? Is He failing or succeeding?

Without any further words of introduction to this subject, permit me to say decisively and emphatically that God's present purpose is to write into the history of His long dealings with the human race a complete record of the grace that is inherent in His character.

By contrast we can say that God is not now demonstrating His power, majesty, justice or judgment. He is demonstrating His grace. This is His present purpose.

That there would be a dispensation of grace, a long period during which God would do nothing but show His favor to the wicked, had been a secret purpose of God, hid within Himself, never revealed in any previous revelation of truth (Ephesians 3:3). It was not part of any previous prediction, and the sole revelator was Paul, the apostle (Ephesians 3:8).

Much confusion has been created due to failure to distinguish between the grace of God as being part of His character, and the dispensation of grace as an absolute method of dealing [with man]. He, being the God of every grace, was always showing grace to men from the time He provided coats of skin to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. We read that Noah, along with seven others, found grace in the sight of the Lord (Genesis 6:8), but it was not an absolute method of dealing with him or the rest of mankind. These were dealt with in strict justice, resulting in God's bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly (II Peter 2:5).

The militant atheist of former years, Robert G. Ingersoll, during the course of his lectures, would shake his fist toward the heavens and cry out, "If there be a God, let Him strike me dead." When nothing happened, it was considered by many to be positive proof of the nonexistence of God. Yet, all that it demonstrated was that God is the God of grace, Who continues to be gracious in view of wicked challenges.

During the present dispensation, every act of God is an act of grace; so much so, that if He cannot act in grace, He will not act at all. During this time all judgment and punishment is in abeyance. Grace is His present method of dealing with mankind; and in the course of displaying His grace, believers have found themselves caught up in the flow of it, and have been carried into the very fullness of forgiveness and salvation. God's purpose is to display His grace, and the present day believer is a by-product of this purpose (Ephesians 2:7; 3:9-11; II Timothy 1:9).

God has now committed Himself to act in grace. He has declared this through His chosen apostle, Paul; and we will do well to take Him at His word and think accordingly. This is the great truth revealed in Paul's epistles, especially Ephesians (Note Ephesians 3:2).

God is now creating within the history of mankind a total and complete record of the graciousness of His character. He is doing this in the administration (dispensation) of grace under which all His government or kingdom purposes are in abeyance.

God's present purpose is succeeding every day and in every way. He is not failing in anything that He purposes to do. Every passing day on the calendar adds one more page to the record of His grace.

The explanation of God's long toleration of evil, His present silence in the face of multiple and manifest wrongs, and His toleration of the works of Satan can be explained only when we realize that God is fulfilling another purpose.

God is now doing all that is necessary to forever establish beyond all question that He is the God of all grace. This is what He is now doing. This is His present purpose.

(edited & abridged)

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