

# God - Source, Centre and Sustainer

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Jesus Christ said he would return, and we look for that certain coming, but we are not going to indulge in exaggerated prophetic speculations, nor meddle in the muddle of speculative theories. What we are concerned with is that as the people of God, entrusted with the stewardship of the gospel, we continue in the faith, anointed by the Spirit, powerful in word and deed to effect the generation of our time. For this to be true essential changes are necessary now.

If people are to see the church as something other than a dinosaurian relic in the world of the third millennium, then the church must be willing to discard all religious baggage and strip itself of all biblically unsupportable practices in the process. The church must be passionately decisive if it is to be relevant to the need and search of our times, and rediscover its true mission in order to capture this present generation.

For the church in our day to truly be the church it must be sharper, anointed, ready in every respect for the challenges it faces, the church must embrace the costly demands implicit in the necessary changes required to be the church of tomorrow. And it must seek to actively return to those biblical principles that will enable it to be all that God intends for it to be.

Christianity is not a system of beliefs; it is men and women filled with the life of God living their lives his way, doing his will and endued with his Spirit to perform his works amongst men. For biblical communities to fully emerge into all that God intends requires spiritual, moral and intellectual revolution.

Contrary to the erroneous thinking of many Christians Jesus is not going to come at any time. He will currently remain in heaven until the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21). By restoration we do not mean God intends us to go backwards trying to recapture the nostalgic image of the 1st century church, but rather restoration means going forward to complete the purpose for which we have been brought into being. Restoration is not about yesterday but tomorrow in today.

## Why do things need restoring?

When Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees on the question of divorce, he pointed out that Moses had introduced the bill of divorcement as a concession to them because of the hardness of their hearts. But he went on to say, 'it was not this way from the beginning'. [Mt 19:8] Jesus highlighted a divine principle that holds true in every issue of life. To discover the norm of God we must first ask, 'how was it "in the beginning"?'

If we are to understand the consummation of the ages we must first look at their commencement - not the post fall condition of man and our world, but God's fully expressed pre fall intention for man and this world.

The original progression of creation provides us with a clear understanding of the ultimate intentions of the Creator - intentions which figure strongly in the thinking of restorers today. They are as follows:

## **God is the source of all creation. 'In the beginning, God'**

This self-introduction provides no apologetic for the atheist, nor evidential argument for the agnostic. God simply asserts the fact he is the ultimate source, the first cause of all that has come into existence. There was nothing before or beyond him. To the restorationist, anything that cannot root itself in God as its source has no place in the life of the Christian or the practices of the community of God. Restoration ministry therefore seeks to free the church from all additions anything else that binds people with religious fetters, or blinds them with religious darkness. Restoration demands a return to God as the source, centre and Sustainer of all things.

## **Heaven and earth were originally in essential harmony with each other.**

God created the heavens and earth. His will in heaven is to find its expression in man's will on earth. Restorers believe that the purpose of God remains unchanged, irrespective of the catastrophe of the Fall. It is still God's intention that his will be fulfilled in the earth, which is why Jesus taught us to pray, 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' [Mt 6:10] Therefore, any culturally accepted practices that are not aligned with the righteousness of God are not only unacceptable. They are destined to pass away under God's judgement.

## **Creation resulted from an orderly process.**

It was not a muddled jumble of everything brought into being at once, but was an ordered creation, with God carrying out his plan to a timetable. This is a continuing hallmark of authenticity in all God's working in our lives and in the corporate life of the church. God is not the God of sudden, disjointed, jarring movement, but of orderly progress. Restoration is not a sudden act that will conclude this age; it is a progressive process throughout time.

## **Judgement was essential in perfection.**

God's judgement is constructive in intent, not destructive. God stood back from each act of his creation, surveyed it and judged it 'good'. It is interesting to note that although God is perfect, he still judged what proceeded from his perfection. In this way he affirmed that his creation was in keeping with his intention.

## **In all its rich diversity, creation was in perfect harmony.**

Restorers do not think that the church of God or the world around it should assume a bland and boring sameness. Restoration produces unity and harmony in the body without destroying its rich diversity. As the 'restoration of all things' reaches its consummation, so Christ will manifest himself more fully in the unified diversity of human culture. The kingdom of God is rich enough and wide enough to accommodate cultural diversity, as long as that diversity is not in itself an expression of unrighteousness or injustice.

## **Adam's fall did not change God's purpose.**

When God created man, he delegated his authority to him to rule the earth on his behalf. Man was created to be God's regent on earth. His mandate was to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and rule [Gen 1:28]. Had Adam never sinned and instead given himself to fulfilling the will of God, then the earth as we know it would be filled with men and women in God's full image and likeness. There wouldn't be anything on earth out of harmony with heaven. Disease, sickness, poverty, pain, war, violence, greed and all other consequences of sin would never have entered the human experience. Restorers assert that though Adam fell, God's purpose did not change. He still intends a world totally compatible with himself - free of all that has come upon it as a consequence of the fall.

## **Cosmic Conflict**

The crown of God's creation, man, did not evolve from some amoebic life form in a primordial swamp; nor was he the random selection of a chance microscopic life form released by a great bang in the universe. It is inconceivable that the God of infinite intelligence and wisdom, should - at the dawn of a creation sustained by incredibly complex and intricate systems of life support - take some infantile, malformed, randomly selected still-evolving creature to rule on his behalf!! On the contrary, God created human beings with a central uniqueness; unlike any other creature, they are the ones created in the image and likeness of God. God chose man to rule everything else, in order to supervise the bringing of everything to the

fullness of its creation intention. Man is, therefore, the key to the restorative purposes of God in all creative spheres, including the angelic orders, the cleansing of the heavens, the overthrow of Satanic powers, and the establishment of righteousness and justice throughout the earth. [1Co 6:3; Ps 8:4-6] The fact that Christ has assumed the highest place in the universe is indicative that - despite Adam's failure - it is still God's purpose that man be universally supreme in all things. [Col 1:18]

In putting everything under [man], God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:8-9)

Satan's hostility toward the church stems from the root of his hostility toward God's divine purpose. The conflict of the ages is the result of Satan seeking to usurp the position of Christ and the church as heirs of all things. However, even in this age-long conflict, Satan inadvertently serves the purpose of God. We must remember that Satan is not omniscient - an attribute which belongs to God alone. Unable to see into the future, Satan is often frustrated when - having initiated what he believes is a superb plan - he discovers he has served the purpose of God. Nowhere is this more dramatically portrayed than when the cosmic alliance of Satan, the powers of darkness and wicked men conspired to crucify Christ. Following the resurrection, Peter announced that wicked men - in crucifying Christ - had only done what God had predetermined beforehand should be done. [Acts 2:23]

The Cross is the pivotal point in history. Up until that time man was the unwilling slave of Satan (Heb.2:14/15), his mind totally darkened and dominated by evil. Driven to do things he did not want to do, man was impotent in his resistance.(Eph.2:1-3) Satan ruled the world of men. As John said, the whole world lay in the lap of the evil one (1 John 5:19). But then, a different kind of man stepped onto the world stage (John 2:14; 1 Cor.15:47). The birth, life and ministry of Christ empowered the recovery of God's purpose in the drama of human history. Satan did all he possibly could in tempting, opposing, and threatening Christ - but to no avail. Finally, at the Cross, Christ gave Satan (with his evil hosts) free hand to do his worst. When Christ died, he became sin on our behalf. Having never personally experienced sin, Christ took the full wrath and judgement of God against evil (2 Cor.5:21). He gave his life that we might find ours.

The image of Christ crucified was indelibly imprinted in the minds of men, but there was another aspect of the drama going on in the realm of the invisible. Christ - having died in the flesh to pay the full price for man's redemption - proceeded to declare his triumph in the invisible realms. The scriptures say he paraded the evil hosts of darkness as his captives through the heavens (Col.2:15). He stripped both Satan and the satanic forces of all authority over man (Heb. 2:14,15), and in his resurrection became the first of a new order of mankind [Col.1:18] - a mankind over which Satan and sin no longer have dominion (Rom.6:8-11).

The present warfare between the church and the powers of darkness is the means by which God is equipping and preparing his people for their place alongside Christ in the ruling of the universe in the ages to come. Christ has already conquered completely, and the present work of the Spirit is manifesting that victory in the church by her engaging and triumphing in spiritual warfare. [Eph 6:12-13]

Christ has triumphantly returned to heaven from the battlefield, and now sits at his Father's right hand - waiting for all his enemies to become his footstool [ref]. The universal order of authorities, powers, thrones, dominions, kingdoms, spirits, and world structures will all ultimately become his possession. Everything is destined to come under his Lordship.[Php 2:10] When it does, the fullness of the age to come will be ushered in. It's a fullness that God's people - in Christ - have already tasted. [He 6:5]