

Brownsville Revival, Part 1

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill explores the overarching purpose of God and its implications for believers in the context of the Brownsville Revival.

Duration: 59:26

Scripture: Psalm 67:1-2, Psalm 96:3, Isaiah 42:6-7, Malachi 1:11, Acts 13:36, Acts 20:27, Romans 8:28, Galatians 3:8, Ephesians 1:11, 2 Timothy 1:9

Topics: "Revival", "God's Purpose", "The Abrahamic Covenant"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose and calling in the life of believers, using the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle to illustrate how many Christians possess fragmented pieces of truth without seeing the complete picture. He discusses the significance of the Abrahamic Covenant, highlighting that God's intention was for Israel to be a blessing to all nations, not merely to enjoy His blessings for themselves. Ravenhill warns against the church's focus on conversions over callings, urging believers to recognize their divine purpose and to manifest God's glory in their lives. He stresses that true leadership requires a clear vision of where one is going, and that understanding God's overarching plan is essential for effective ministry.

Transcript

Dr. Bob Phillips, I don't know if everybody's a doctor or not, but don't call me doctor because I'm not, so you know. Anyway, but asked if I would sort of give a little bit of an outline as to where we're going. I can't give you that right away because I haven't thought that far ahead, so I'll be honest.

But I did tell him that what I was going to do today, is this a little loud or echoing, or is it just me? Anyway, that I would do a little bit on the sort of the overall picture of the Word of God, what I would call the purpose of God. And the reason I want to do that is for this very simple reason that if you're a leader, you've got to know where you're going. That sort of makes sense, doesn't it? If you're a builder, you need to know what the house is going to look like when you finish, you need to be able to follow the plans and so on and so forth.

There are some great leaders in the world as far as leadership is concerned. Michael Jackson, I dare say, is one of the great leaders of the world. And depending on your definition of greatness, you understand what I'm saying.

He can have a hundred thousand people come to a concert or whatever. In other words, following him and so on, but he doesn't know where he's going. So we need to have some sort of an idea of what leadership is all about and where we're going in order to be a good leader.

Let me begin with a little poem that I heard many, many years ago. I was down in Fiji, I think, back in the 60s and an Indian brother there ministered one Sunday morning. Back in those days, I was with Youth World Mission and we're in the South Pacific Islands and working in this particular little church in a place called Nandi in Fiji.

Anybody from Fiji here? No. And this guy stood up and the only thing I can remember about his whole message was this poem. And so let me give you his entire message.

Now he was talking about a soldier, a United States soldier who was over in Britain, during either World War I or World War II, I can't remember now. And he was walking past the graveyard, took some time to look at all the various grave stones, the epitaphs, and so on. And there was a poem on one of these tombstones and this was the poem.

If you want to write it down, it's not exactly Shakespeare, but it says, remember friend, as you pass by, as now you are, so once was I. As now I am, so soon you'll be, prepare for death and follow me. All right, everybody got that down? Okay, let me say it again. Remember friend, as you pass by, as now you are, so once was I. As now I am, so soon you'll be, prepare for death and follow me.

Well, the soldier took a little bit of time. He was sort of challenged by what he read, but he wasn't satisfied. He went back to his barracks, got a chisel and a hammer, came back and he put another few lines under the verse.

And this is what he put, to follow thee I'm not content, until I know which way you went. So it depends where you're going, doesn't it? You know, so I want to look at where we're going and we will get into things like character qualities and study some of the leaders of the Word of God, Nehemiah or Abraham, some of these men in the days to come, some of the requirements on kings and priests and so on. But what I want to do today, I want to look at this whole theme of the purpose of God.

And this will give us somehow the big picture. One of the things that's always been of interest to me is the big picture. That's something that I've always longed to have an understanding of.

You can go into bookshops and you can see all the various parts sort of spread out, you know, books on prayer, books on revival, books on this, books on that, and so on. You know, books on the family, books on how to succeed, books on, you know, financial independence and how to raise a family and all those various things. But when you put all those pieces together, what does it look like? I've often said that I think most believers have got what I would say is a jigsaw puzzle of pieces in a plastic bag, but they do not have the box.

And you know the box gives you what the pieces look like when they're all put together. How many can I sort of identify with it? In other words, what happens to the average believer, he goes to church on a Sunday morning and somebody preaches on a particular theme, again raising a family. So he goes home and he has this little piece of a jigsaw.

And then he goes to Wednesday night and somebody's speaking on the book of Jeremiah. He goes to, you know, Thursday night home group and somebody's speaking about the Spirit. He goes to Sunday

morning again and the pastor's decided he's going to do a series on, you know, eschatology.

And then he goes again back on the Wednesday night meeting and somebody's speaking about the prophetic. And so each time he goes to church he gets a little piece of the jigsaw puzzle. And yet nobody sort of puts all the pieces together, so he doesn't know sort of where they all fit in.

What's the point of raising a family? What's the point of the gifts of the Spirit? Where do all these pieces fit in? And if you've ever had a jigsaw puzzle without the pieces, obviously, without the cover, I mean, you know, it's frustrating because you don't know if the blue is, you know, the blue of a lady's dress. You don't know if it's the blue of the ocean. You don't know if it's the blue of a building or if it's blue sky.

All you've got is this little piece of blue, you know. And then you've got another little piece of blue over here and a piece of red and so on. You don't know if the red is a Ferrari or if it's a, you know, again some house or some roof or whatever it is.

And so we need to, again, put all those pieces together and give at least a sort of a general overview of the Word of God. And so that's basically where I'm heading. One of Paul's favorite expressions in the book of Corinthians is, I would not have you ignorant.

And I don't want you to be ignorant, again, concerning the purpose of God. I think one of the things the church has been largely concerned about is conversions rather than callings. Let me say that again.

I think we've been more concerned about conversions as opposed to callings. Let me make a difference between those two. In other words, the church is largely concerned with securing their salvation rather than pursuing their purpose.

Now there's nothing wrong, obviously, with getting people saved. Thank God for this revival. Thank God for the thousands of people that have been saved and so on.

But J. Sid Loebaxter, some of you are familiar with J. Sid Loebaxter's writings. He has a devotional book called, *Awake My Heart*. If anybody wants a good devotional book, I assume it's still on the market.

That's one of the better ones. At least it's got some sort of substance to it and some sort of meat to it. You know, most devotionals you can read in 30 seconds and then you're through with your devotions for the day.

But this one's got a little bit more substance. But anyway, in one of his devotionals he makes the statement, you can have a saved soul but a lost life. You can have a saved soul but a lost life.

In other words, you can know that you're saved. You can know that you're born again. You can have a radical conversion experience and 30 years later die, go to heaven, and yet your entire life has been meaningless.

You know you're saved. You may have an intimate relationship with God. You may be on fire for God.

You've got a saved soul but a lost life. And I don't believe that's God's ultimate purpose for any of us. And so there is a difference again between salvation and our calling, our destiny, what God has for us.

And we need to be aware of that. Somebody else has said that most Christians become so engrossed in the subject of Christianity that they lose sight of the object. And again, that's one of the big problems in the

church.

We become so engrossed in the subject that we lose sight of the object. It's rather like a medical student who goes to school and he studies every branch of medicine. And so at the end of, you know, 50 years he's an expert on the brain.

He's an expert on the circulatory system of the body. He's, you know, an expert on, what, the heart, and the anatomy, and the eyes, and everything else. But then you go to him knowing that he's an expert, knowing that he's got all these certificates on the wall.

And you say to him, listen, have you ever fitted anybody with a pair of glasses? He said, no. Have you ever delivered a baby? No. You know, have you ever performed an operation? No.

Have you ever done this and you have you done that? No, no, no, no, no, to all of the questions. And yet he's an expert. He studied all those things, but he's lost sight of the object.

And I think one of the dangers, again, in the average Bible school is that you can go, you can sign up for all the various courses, and come out, and then becomes sort of a professional student, so to speak, that you go on, and on, and on. Because, well, I haven't really studied this, and I want to go to this school. I want to sit under this particular brother, and you know, this guy's expertise, and so on.

Ninety-nine years later, you're still studying. In other words, you've become, again, concerned, or engrossed in the subject, and lost sight of the object. And we always need to maintain the object.

The reason that you're studying, obviously, is because God has got a purpose for your life. There's a calling, hopefully, that you understand, and will be revealed to you, as to what God wants you to do with your life. And so, what I'm going to do, again, is look at this big picture, what I'm going to call the purpose of God.

Let me give you some scriptures. First of all, in 2nd Timothy 1 and verse 9. Incidentally, if anybody, if I'm going too fast, or whatever, just slow me down, one of the problems I have is sort of speeding up. People will tell me that, at least.

But 2nd Timothy 1 and verse 9, the Bible says, He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling. All right, He saved us, and called us with a holy calling. How many of you are saved? Okay, a few may give an altar call here at the end.

How many are called? Okay, good. You've got that down pat. If you're saved, you're automatically called.

Most people don't know that. He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling. We need to understand, God has got a destiny.

He has a purpose. He has something in mind for each and every one of us. The moment you are saved, you're automatically called.

Now, not everybody is called to the same necessarily, but we're all called into the purpose of God. Acts 13 and verse 36, David served the purpose of God in his generation, and afterwards he slept. Which is a fancy way of saying that he died.

But anyway, David served the purpose of God in his generation. In other words, David understood that God had a purpose. And David understood what that purpose was, for his particular generation, his particular time.

And he was involved in serving the purpose of God. You and I should be able to put our name in that verse. Mine's already in there, but you can adapt it to yours.

And you know, you should be able to say, Mary, John, Tom, whatever it is, served the purpose of God in their generation. Obviously, you can't serve the purpose of God in the past generation. You can't serve in the future, apart from preparing your children possibly.

But the only generation that you and I can serve in, is this present generation. And this is a generation that we're responsible for. And so we need to, again, not to serve our own interests, but to serve the purpose of God in our generation.

Acts 20 verse 27, Paul addressing the elders of the church of Ephesus. And he says, I did not shrink or hold back from declaring unto you the whole purpose of God. In other words, Paul was not one of these sort of preachers that had pet themes, and that's all they got.

You know, whether it was prosperity or faith or whatever it was. He says, I did not hold back from declaring the whole purpose of God, the whole counsel of God. He understood, again, that God had something in mind, and he let the church know what it was that God was doing.

Hebrews 6 and verse 17, talks about the unchangeableness of God's purpose. Let me say that again, the unchangeableness of God's purpose. Somebody has made the statement that the instruments may vary, the purpose remains the same.

Let me say that again, the instruments may vary, but the purpose remains the same. Rather like somebody that is building a house. His purpose, obviously, is to build a house.

Right now, right opposite where I live, they're building a house. So every day I look out of my office, and I see a little bit more progress. But the purpose, again, is to build somebody a home.

But in the process of building that home, there's going to be numerous instruments that are going to be used. These days, of course, most of them are electric, electric saw, you know, electric nail gun, or whatever drives that thing, air, I guess. But if one of those instruments fail, the purpose remains the same.

In other words, what they do, they take the air gun back, and they have it repaired or replaced. If the motor, the engine seizes up for some reason, then they'll go out, and they'll replace the instrument. And over the years, if you like, the purpose of God has had to replace various instruments.

Some of them due to death, because of the fact that we don't all live forever. Some of them due to various failures, whether it's moral, whether it's disobedience, or whatever. But the purpose of God remains unchangeable.

The instruments vary, and we see that in our generation. We see instruments that God has had to lay aside for one reason or another, but His purpose remains the same. Philippians 2 and verses 1 and 2 talks about being intent on one purpose, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose.

Now all these verses, you'll notice, just have the the word purpose in it. That's what I'm trying to get across here. Romans 8 verse 28, all things work together for good to them that love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose.

Ephesians 1 and verse 11, having been called to His purpose. All right, it's good to understand again that God has got a divine objective. God is doing something.

He's not sort of sitting back in heaven, you know, I'm some sort of lazy boy, sort of twiddling his thumbs. He's got a purpose in mind, and we are to be involved in that purpose. The Bible says we are to be laborers together with Him.

Laborers together with Him. In other words, He is laboring, He is working, He's got an objective. And so that's, again, just a sort of an introduction.

What is God's purpose? Ultimately God's purpose is that the whole earth will be filled with His glory. That's, if you like, His ultimate purpose. Tied in with that, of course, is the the supreme purpose of God in our generation.

It's going to be the final consummation of the marriage of the bride and the bridegroom, the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. But again, His purpose is that one day the earth is going to be filled with His glory. Now there's all sorts of views as to how that's going to happen.

I personally believe that when we're talking about the glory of God, we're not talking about some sort of, you know, cloud hovering over the horizon one morning, where we wake up and think, boy, it's extra bright now. I thought we're into, you know, that this is getting towards the end of the summer and, you know, the sun shouldn't be this bright this early in the morning. You get out, pull back the curtains, and all of a sudden, you know, this sort of shimmering light.

That's not my impression, at least. If that happens, fine. But I think the glory of God is the nature and the character of God revealed.

The Bible says of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He turned water into wine, this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and He manifest His glory. In other words, the glory of God is who God is. It's His nature.

It's His character. It's His power, and so on. And so when Hebrews says that the earth is going to be filled with the glory of God, I believe it's going to be the expression of God's nature and character revealed, not in some sort of inanimate sort of object like a cloud, but through His people.

After all, when God created man in the beginning, we were created in the glory of God, in the image of God. And because of our sin, the Bible says that we've all sinned and come short of what? God's glory. In other words, we do not measure up to what His standard is of holiness, and you know, character, and so on and so forth.

And so there's going to come a day, I believe, when the earth is going to be filled with the glory of God. In other words, when the church is going to be so Christ-like that people, as we heard the other night, was it last night in the message, that they're going to look at us and call us Christians, Christ-like ones. Jesus said, I've manifest thy glory to those that thou gavest me, John 17.

In other words, He expressed the likeness of God. He expressed the image of God, the character of God, the love of God, forgiveness of God, compassion of God, whatever it is. He says, I've manifest your glory to them.

And I believe God is wanting us to manifest His glory to the world. In Isaiah 40, there's an interesting portion of scripture here that you can muse on in your own time. But verse 3, it says, A voice is calling, clear the way of the Lord in the wilderness.

Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley will be lifted up. Every mountain and hill will be brought low.

The rough ground will become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed. And notice, God is saying here, He's not talking about, you know, some sort of construction project.

He's talking about individuals. There's basically sort of four categories that we all fit into. Some of you are mountains, some of you are valleys, some of you are rough, and some of you are crooked.

And maybe some of you are all of those. But God is wanting to deal with those areas. In other words, a valley has to be filled in.

A valley is somebody that's got a low estimation of themselves, a false sort of humility, and they feel they're worthless, and so on and so forth. They've got to know who they are in Christ. They've got to be raised up from that sort of valley of, I can't do anything, I'll never be anything, I could never, you know, preach, I can never go to the mission field, I can never prophesy, I can never sing, I can never, or whatever it is, you know.

Those are valley individuals. And as a result, the glory of God is not manifest through those sort of individuals. Likewise, there are some that are mountains.

Mountains, again, of course, are the opposite. They're convinced that they can do anything and everything, and so on, and who needs God, sort of thing. I've got a degree, or I've got, you know, a particular sort of personality, and so on.

And the mountains have got to be brought low. In other words, there's got to be humility before there can be a revelation of the nature and the glory of God. Jesus said, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden.

And then he says, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and humble of heart. And then there's those that are crooked. Again, that sort of Jacob personality that's always sort of scheming and, you know, conniving, and always got an angle on things, always thinks, you know, if I, if I, you know, play my cards right, then I'll get ahead, and it doesn't matter how he treads over people, and so on.

That, you know, there's that sort of Jacob type thing, where he's crooked, and he needs to be made straight. And then there's a rough sort of an individual. Those are people, you know, just, they'll speak the truth without love.

You know, boy, do you look ugly, or your dress is terrible, or you're, you know, I don't like your glasses, or, you know, whatever it is, you know, it's just boom, and it's rough, it's crude, it just devastates, there's no compassion, there's no love, and so on. Now, all of those things, again, have got to be corrected. And then it says, then the nature of God, the glory of God will be revealed.

And so God's ultimate purpose, in one sense, again, is to bring about his glory. He's coming back for what sort of a church? Okay, looking for the word, glorious. Thank you, thank you.

I know, it's, it's the afternoon session. Okay, he's coming back for a glorious church. What does that mean? It means that it's going to express the nature, and the character of God.

You know, the bride is going to be worthy of the bridegroom, right? He's not coming back for an old, woosened up, sort of a hag, you know, missing her teeth, and her hair, and you know, and so on and so forth. He's coming back for a glorious church. And while God is not interested in outward appearances, he is interested in the heart.

But it's the heart, again, this area of character, that has got to be dealt with. And so, here's the voice that's calling, again, prepare ye the way of the Lord in the wilderness. And what would happen, of course, in those days, is that literally, when a king returned in triumph from battle, they would go before that king, and they would make the passage as smooth as possible, so as to not impede the progress of the king.

And the king would come back, leading all the captives in a train behind him, and so on. They would literally clear out the debris. There's some known cases where they filled in, obviously not huge valleys, but you know, areas where the king could quickly come.

And I think one of the things, again, that hinders the progress of the return of Christ, in that sense, is the condition of the church. Not so much the condition of the world, but the condition of the church. How many of you know that the Bible says, looking for and hastening the coming of the Lord.

I personally believe that the coming of the Lord is a sort of floating decimal point, that we determine to a degree ourselves. That we can hasten it, and we hasten it by being ready. The Bible says, the bride has made herself, what, ready in Revelation.

And when the bride is ready, then the bridegroom will come. When the bride is so irresistible, and so full of compassion, and purity, and everything else, then the bridegroom, I believe, is going to come back. And so, this is part of it.

Anyway, this is not exactly what I want to deal with today, other than to just to mention that. Let me see. What I basically want to deal with is what is called the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant is one of the major themes of the Word of God, and one of the things that we very much need to understand. And that's primarily what we're going to be looking at. All right, in Genesis, let's turn to that Genesis chapter 12.

Let me say first of all, that when God created man, obviously everything was fine, until man chose to sin, rebel against God. And so, God had to come up, if you like, with plan two, or plan B. You can get into that in some sort of doctrinal discussion again on foreknowledge and so on. I don't want to tap into that, other than to say that man failed.

Whether God knew that he would fail or not, that is a theological debate that there's two sides to. As Winky Prattney said, was God the author of his own unhappiness? So, you can think about that. In other words, did he create his own unhappiness, and then repent of it later? Or did he give man a total free will, and therefore man was able to choose? And when man chose, that was his, that was not pre-known.

And so, therefore God, again, had to act accordingly. Anyway, those are things that, you know, Dr. Brown will answer for you. But Genesis 12, verse 1. Now the Lord said to Abraham, go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

And I will make you a great nation. I will bless you. I'll make your name great.

And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those that bless you, the one that curses you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

All right, that is what we call the Abrahamic covenant. God begins his whole process again. As I said, when an instrument fails, God raises up another instrument.

But his purpose is an unchanging purpose. And so, God's instrument failed. God begins again, if you like, through this wonderful man by the name of Abraham.

And he appears unto Abraham, this heathen man. And he gives him this promise. I want you to leave where you are.

I want you to go out. But, and he says, I will make out of you a great nation. But it doesn't stop there.

You'll notice right in the very, the very origin of the nation of Israel. Obviously, Abraham being the, the great, great, great, great granddad of the nation of Israel. He says, not only will I make you a great nation, and bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.

But I will bless those that bless you, and curse the ones that curse you. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Now, we need to make sure we understand the whole Abrahamic covenant.

That there was a purpose that God raised up the nation of Israel. And that whole purpose there is embodied, if you like, in seed form in the Abrahamic covenant. Abraham is an interesting character in the sense that he is possibly the most famous of all Jews, apart from obviously the Lord Jesus Christ.

But to the, to the Orthodox Jews, I would say Abraham and Moses were the two greatest patriarchs that they had. They talked about, you know, were of Abraham's seed. They prided themselves when Jesus talked to them.

And when they talked to Jesus, they said, listen, we weren't born of fornication like you were of Abraham's seed. Very proud of the fact they were descendants of Abraham. And so, the interesting thing again about Abraham was, Abraham was a Gentile who became a Jew.

All right, we need to understand that. And therefore, the book of Romans says, he is the father of all those that believe. He's the father of all those that believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

We can both, if you like, lay claim to him in that sense. Because the way in which he became a Jew in the eyes of God was through faith. And Paul says, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly.

He is a Jew who is one that is circumcised of the heart. A real Jew in the eyes of God, again, is not simply one that is circumcised of the flesh, but one that is circumcised of the spirit. And Paul makes that very clear.

But here is this wonderful man, again by the name of Abraham, God's promise to him, God's covenant promise. And this covenant now is repeated several times, because God is trying to emphasize the importance of it. So, you have it in Genesis 12 initially, and then over in Genesis chapter 18.

Let me read this to you. Genesis 18 and verse 17, And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Speaking of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Since Abraham will surely become a great and a mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

And notice again, God's intention. I'm going to use this man, and I'm going to use his seed to bless all the nations of the earth. For I have chosen him, he says, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about him.

So there we have it repeated again, and not quite as the same terms, but certainly brought out very clearly. Then over into Genesis chapter 22, and verse 16, By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son. Indeed, I will greatly bless you.

I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, as the sand which is on the seashore, and your seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice. So three times God speaks to Abraham, he reminds him of the fact, Abraham I have come to you for this reason, because I want to bless you.

But that blessing in and of itself is not just for your sake, because through you all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed. There was a song that was popular a number of years ago, I'm at the seat of Abraham, and it sort of went around the faith camp a lot. And I don't know all the, what's the, all the stanzas for it.

But I, as far as I know, I don't think there was anything in it about the responsibility of Abraham. In other words, it had in it all the blessings that accrue to Abraham. And so since I'm at the seat of Abraham, then I can appreciate and have all these blessings.

But you'll notice that with the blessings came responsibility. When God appeared to Abraham, he not only said he would bless him, he gave him a responsibility. And that was to bring blessing to the nations of the earth.

Now that's, that's balance. And we need to have that balance. We need to understand that that balance is true in the prosperity doctrine.

That God will bless you, but he blesses you for a reason, so that you will have seed to sow. Not so that you can, you know, bolster your bank account and so on. And it's, it's important again that we hold everything in balance.

There's a tremendous little verse there in Romans 11 verse 32, I think it is, where it says that, from him and through him and to him are all things. That verse is an excellent verse to test every doctrine by. Is it

from God? Is it through God? And then the ultimate test, is it to God? And you can look at the prosperity doctrine for instance, is it from God? Yes.

Riches and honor come from thee, you know, and there's numerous verses that talk about God wanting to bless us. Is it through God? Yes, he's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus in heavenly places, as well as every material blessing to a degree in Christ Jesus in earthly places. But is it to God? Most of the time, no.

It terminates in man. And we say, listen, if you give ten dollars to my ministry, then you'll get a hundred dollars back. And we don't say you'll get a hundred dollars back, so you've got a hundred dollars worth of seed now to sow back into somebody else's ministry.

We basically present it, if you give to me, God will bless you, end of the offering. And that is not biblical. And so the Bible says again, everything is from him, through him, and ultimately everything goes back to him.

And you'll notice that the very next verse, one of my pet peeves, you'll soon discover is chapter divisions. They're not inspired, they're not there in the original. But one of my, again going back to that verse, from him, through him, and to him are all things.

Paul says, therefore I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, that you give your body a living sacrifice. In other words, you give back to God what came from God. And everything is derived from God, everything is sustained by God.

In him we live, we move, we have our being. Therefore, Paul says, everything ultimately needs to go back to God. I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, you give back to God that which is from him, that which is through him.

It's the context of Romans 12 and verse 1. Most of us can recite it from verse 1 on, but we need to see it in the context of the previous verse at the end of chapter 11. So anyway, going back, here is God then speaking to Abraham, and he says, Abraham I have appeared unto you for this reason, not only to make you, not only to bless you, make your name great, make of you a great nation, but also that you will bring blessing to all the families of the earth, or all the nations of the earth. Both of those are the same word in the Hebrew.

All right, Genesis chapter 26 then, and verse 4. And God now is speaking to Abraham's son Isaac, and he says, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your seed all these lands, and by your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And so here we have this Abrahamic covenant coming now, not only to Abraham, but being passed on to Isaac. Over into chapter 28 and verse 14.

And God now is speaking to Jacob, Isaac's son. Jacob is having a dream, and the dream of course is, we refer to it as Jacob's ladder there, where he's fleeing his father's house, heading to Laban's house, and so on. But the Lord appears to him, and verse 13, and behold the Lord stood above him, or above it, and said, I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham, the God of Isaac, the land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed, or your descendants.

And your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, to the south. And in you and in your seed, or descendants, shall all the families of the earth be

blessed. So here we've got now this, this promise reiterated over and over, three or four times, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob.

God reminding these individuals, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and they're referred to in the Word of God as the fathers, the fathers. Abraham is the father of all those who believe, but the three fathers of the Old Testament are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so God is trying to establish something here, right at the very beginning of the nation of Israel, that Israel has a calling upon their life.

They have a mandate, there is a destiny that God has for them. And the same thing of course applies to you and to I. All right Acts 3 and verse 23. We'll have some time at the end of this for questions.

You normally have a break? You do? No? Yes? There is, it's up to me. Okay, okay. I thought maybe you had, you know, afternoon tea and Devonshire tea or something.

But Acts 3 and verse 25. Yes, that's what I was looking for. Thank you.

It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your father, saying to Abraham, in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Now you'll notice many times when this covenant is repeated that the first part is left off. Not necessarily that that's super important, but the last part is important, that in your seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

That's the part that at least is consistent all the way through. And so here in the New Testament again we have this statement made. Now what then exactly did God have in mind when He made this promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What was in the thinking of God? What was in the mind of God? Turn with me to the book of Galatians.

Galatians chapter 3 and verse 8. Galatians 3 and verse 8. And it says, In the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying all the nations shall be blessed in you. Now this is a key verse that ties in. Again this is one of the big pictures of the Bible here.

Way at the very beginning, right way before, the bulk of the Old Testament obviously concerns the nation of Israel. We're going right back to the origin of Israel. We're going right back into, if you like, the seed that God planted.

Knowing that at least what He intended that seed to produce one day. And right at the very beginning He makes these promises over and over and over. I'm going to bless you, but you're going to be a blessing.

You're going to bless the nations of the earth, or the families of the earth, whatever word you want to use. Again they're both in there, all the nations, all the ethnic groups of the world. And so here Paul now clarifies that statement.

And it says that what God was doing back then, He was preaching the gospel. The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles. It speaks of justification of the Gentiles.

The Gentiles being anybody other than a Jew obviously. And He would justify the Gentiles by faith. And He preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, all the nations shall be blessed in you.

So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer. All right, what does then the word blessing mean? The word blessing today, you sneeze and somebody will turn to you and say, God bless

you. If you're under four foot, somebody will pat you on the head and say, bless you my child or whatever.

And we do that to little kids and so on. But what does the Bible mean when it says that you're going to be a blessing? Does that mean simply that you're going to sort of you know walk through the nations of the earth and say, God bless you, you know God bless you and so on. Or is there something a little more practical to it to that? Well Acts 3 gives us an understanding.

Back into this verse that we just looked at a moment ago. Acts 3 verse 24, likewise it says, all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and his successors onward also announced these days. So notice here, it ties in all the prophets are speaking about something from all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel way back again in the early history of of Israel and his successors onward announced these days.

What are these days? It is you, he says, who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant. In other words the covenant applies to you, which God made with your father saying to Abraham, in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And then verse 26 interprets for us, for you first God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.

So notice there we have what the blessing is. The blessing is the fact that God raised up his servant, his servant being the Lord Jesus Christ, to bless us. What is the greatest blessing of all? It's turning us from our wicked ways.

In other words it's salvation. It's the, it's the gospel. So when God said way back now, going back to Abraham, Abraham in your seed or through your seed all the families of the earth are going to be blessed.

It means that as a nation you're going to bring the gospel to all the nations of the earth. Paul makes that very, very clear then from Galatians. In other words God had a purpose for the nation of Israel.

And let me read you a statement that has helped me over the years concerning the purpose of the nation of Israel. And this is by G. Campbell Morgan. G. Campbell Morgan one of the great British writers.

Some of you are familiar with him. But he says this, God's intention for Abraham and his seed was the raising up of a nation of men and women who in divine partnership with God himself would impact the nations of the earth. And then he goes on, it cannot he says be too often emphasized that it was not the election of a nation from among others in order that upon that nation God might lavish his love while he abandoned the others.

The purpose of God was far wider than the creation of this nation. It was the creation of a testimony through this nation for the sake of the other nations. The divine intention was for a people who under his divine government, God's divine government, should reveal in the world the breadth, the beauty, the goodness of that government.

A people who gathered in their national life about his throne and his altar obeying his commands and worshipping him should reveal to outside nations the meaning of the kingdom of God. It was not he says the selection of a pet but the creation of a pattern. All right that's very important that the nation of Israel was not ever intended by God to be a pet.

In other words we talk about a teacher's pet. You know my brother down here what's your name? John. You know I pick on John he's my pet you know and John gets all the favors and so on and so forth he may deserve it but you know and you're all conscious of the fact that you know this guy can get by with murder

because he is always sort of you know bringing me apples or talking good of me and whatever and you know we've established a rapport and I like the guy and so you know he gets off assignments, he gets out early, he gets this, he gets that and you guys don't have a chance.

Now a lot of people have that concept about Israel that there's something about Israel that is extra special to God and the rest of the nations do not quite measure up. They don't quite measure up. They're not really as precious to God as Israel is precious to God.

He says no he said it was not the selection of a pet but the creation of a pattern. In other words the reason that God raised up the nation of Israel was that they were to be a light in the midst of darkness. They were to be a testimony.

They were to bring the other nations into what they had so that they could be the recipients again of all of God's blessing and everything else. In other words God was not excluding the other nations. He was simply using Israel basically as a missionary nation.

That's what Israel was called and raised up for. Only one reason that God chose Israel or raised up the nation of Israel. They were to be missionaries to the nations of the earth.

That was his intention and what was to happen was this basically. God raised up this nation and he gave them certain laws. Judicial laws, dietary laws, you know governmental laws and and so on spiritual laws.

And as they walked in obedience. Now all of this of course is conditional upon obedience. But as the nation of Israel walked in obedience to the ways of God to the laws of God then God blessed them.

They were blessed every time they went out to fight. They won. They were blessed by their crops never failing.

There was always an abundance of rain and so on. We quote the verse don't we? If my people which are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, turn from the wicked ways, seek my face, then I will heal their land. That was because of disobedience.

If they're walking in obedience their land was blessed. The laws that they had kept them from certain diseases. The laws that they had concerning the family kept them from you know all sorts of social ills and so on.

And as a result of that then the nations ran about were to look on. And they were to look at the nation of Israel provided again that they were walking in obedience. And they were to say what is it about you people? You know your crops never fail.

This is our third year of drought. You know well you don't have the same divorce rate that we do. Your kids aren't on drugs.

They're not rebellious like our kids. Because you know there was a rule in the Old Testament that if you're you know if you had a rebellious child you rocked him to sleep. And okay so they had all these laws again that govern them that were for their good.

It was for their good. And so the other nations then would look on and say listen what is it about you people? I mean you win every single battle. Your crops never fail.

You don't have the same social ills that we do. You don't have the same diseases that we do. And so on and so forth.

And then in turn Israel was to say well listen there's nothing about us. But we have a God. And our God is a good God.

He's a loving God. He's a kind, gracious, compassionate God. And so on.

And you know as long as we walk in obedience he's given us good laws. The laws of liberty. The Bible calls them the laws of liberty.

How many of you know that laws are liberating? If you don't believe that then when you pull out of the parking lot at 4 30 head down the other side of the road. And you'll find out that you know that is a liberating law to drive on the right side of the road isn't it? Okay so God gave laws that were laws of liberty. As long as you you know remain in these particular laws and so on you will be blessed.

And so then the other nations were to look on and they were to say listen is there any chance that we could join you? You know we're sick and tired of our God. I mean we you know we have to you know bow down three times a day. We've got to bring our little bowls of rice.

We've got to appease our God. In fact we've got so many gods I can't keep up. You know if I miss one of them maybe some mishap's going to happen and so on.

You've got a God that's all summed up in one God. And he's the God of agriculture. He's the God of this.

He's the God of that. He's everything. And we've got to you know keep all these various gods appeased.

And you know our gods you know they're not loving gods. They're not gods that are gracious and kind. They're always gods that demand, demand, demand, demand, demand.

Paul said that on Mars Hill Acts 17. He says the God that I'm telling you about is a God that gives. Which is radically different than all the gods of the nations around about.

They demand it. If you've traveled and I'm sure some of you have. But you know I've spent a little bit of time in India and some of the Malaysia.

Some of those places. And you'll see in the back of just about everybody's home. Some sort of little altar.

And they go out there every single day with a bowl of rice. And they set it there. Again trying to appease their God.

And so these nations then will look on and say listen could we become one of you. And of course that was God's, that was God's purpose. Yes they could become part of the nation of Israel.

The only requirement was they had to be circumcised. The males. But then they became a child of God.

Just like everybody else you see. Now that was God's intention for the nation of Israel. Now let me give you some scriptures along those lines.

First of all let's go back to Genesis 12 for a moment. I mean Exodus 12 sorry. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron this is the ordinance of the Passover.

Verse 43. No foreigner is to eat of it. Now a foreigner was obviously anybody other than an Israelite.

But every man slave purchased with money. After you have circumcised him he may eat of it. So we find then that anybody could be a partaker of the Passover.

The Passover in the New Testament obviously was fulfilling Christ. It's speaking of salvation and so on. So in other words anybody could come into the nation of Israel.

It was not an exclusive club. It was not something who said listen you're born into this thing and unless you're born into it there's no other way that you can become a part of the nation of Israel. No.

Anybody. Any foreigner provided he was willing to identify with the terms that God instated he could become a child of God. In fact God wanted them to become his children that way.

Now Psalm 67. Let me give you a number of scriptures here that just bring out this concept of God wanting to bless the other nations. Psalm 67 verse 1. God be gracious to us and bless us.

Cause your face to shine upon us. Here the psalmist understands that God is a God of blessing. God wants to bless us.

There's never any question in the Word of God that God wants to bless us. I am the Lord and I change not. So he still wants to bless us.

But notice the psalmist understands why. Verse 2. That thy way be known on the earth. Thy salvation among all people.

So God he says I want you to bless us so that your ways will be known on the earth and your salvation among all nations. See the psalmist is thinking bigger than just himself. He's not saying God I want all your blessings.

You know I want to have a Cadillac. I want to have a mansion. I want to have this.

I want to have that and so on. I want all those blessings. He says no bless me in order that the nations of the earth may also be blessed.

Let the people praise thee O God. Let all the people praise thee. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy for that will judge the people with righteousness or uprightness and guide the nations of the earth.

Let the people praise thee O God. Let all the people praise thee. The earth has yielded its produce.

God our God blesses us that all the ends of the earth may fear him. So here the psalmist understood the blessing of God. He put it in its correct perspective.

God you want to bless us because in turn we can then testify to the nations of the earth and in turn they can also be recipients of your blessing. And so there is one verse Isaiah 42 and verses six and seven. I am the Lord I have called you in righteousness.

I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you. I will appoint you as a covenant to the people as a light to the nations to open blind eyes to bring prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. I am the Lord that is my name.

I will not give my glory to another nor my praise to graven images. But notice I have appointed you he says as a covenant to the people as a light to the nations so that you can open their blinded eyes bring prisoners out of the dungeon those who dwell in darkness from the prison. In other words God had a purpose for the nation of Israel.

They were to be a light. They were to be a testimony. They were to be witnesses.

The Jehovah's Witnesses take that verse in Isaiah there. You are my witnesses said the Lord. Obviously it applies strictly in that sense to the nation of Israel.

But they were to be a witnessing nation. They were not to be exclusive. Isaiah 49 verse 3 and he said to me you are my servant Israel in whom I will show my glory.

And then going down verse 6 and he says is it too small a thing that you should be my servant. What is the function of a servant? To serve his master obviously. So God is saying listen is it too small a thing? I mean are you despising the fact that you're my servant God is saying to the nation of Israel through the prophet Isaiah.

He says to raise up the tribes of Jacob to restore the preserved ones of Israel. I will also make you a light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. Now very very clear there God says listen you know are you despising the calling that I placed upon you? Are you treating it as though it is not a privilege to represent my cause? You are my servant Israel.

You are to be a light so that my salvation may reach to the nations of the earth. All right that's clear enough. I trust Isaiah 62 verses 1 and 2. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent.

For Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet until her righteousness goes forth like brightness. Her salvation like a torch that is burning. And the nations will see your righteousness and kings your glory.

And you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will designate. And you will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. A royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Notice again that the nations will see your righteousness and kings will see your glory. And then over into Isaiah 66 and verse 18. For I know their works and their thoughts the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues.

And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them and will put survivors from them to the nations. Tarshish, Patlod, Meshach, Rosh, Tubal, Javan and so on.

It says the distance the distant coastlands that have neither heard my fame nor seen my glory. And they will declare my glory among the nations. So here again God's desire is the nations.

The nations you'll see how many times this thought of the nations comes up again in Isaiah's testimony. Let me give you some others. Psalm 22 and verse 27 and 8. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord.

And all the families of the nations will worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord and he rules over the nations. You would again see from that God's longing is to reach the nations.

Psalm 96 verses 3 and 10. Verse 3. Tell of his glory among the nations. His wonderful deeds among all people.

Verse 10. Say among the nations the Lord reigns. Indeed the world is firmly established.

It will not be moved. He will judge the people with equity. Psalm 117.

Praise the Lord all nations. Lord him all peoples. For his loving kindness is great towards us and the truth of the Lord is everlasting.

Praise the Lord. So how does somebody really genuinely praise God unless they've got reason to praise the Lord. But to praise the Lord all nations.

Psalm 150. Again let everything that has breath praise the Lord. And then Malachi 1 and verse 11.

It says for my name will be great among the nations. All right we could go on and on and on. There are some books concerning this.

Some of them are out of print. But give this you know God's plan if you like for the nations of the earth is so important that we understand it. Let me just have you look at one and well you don't really need to turn to it I guess.

But the book of Jonah. The book of Jonah as you know is the missionary book of the Old Testament. And it very very clearly illustrates God's purpose for the nation of Israel.

In other words Jonah was a type of what God intended for the entire nation of Israel. God comes to Jonah. You recall the story and he said Jonah I want you to go to Nineveh.

That was the worst possible place for a Jew to go. It was the the most atrocious most vile nation on the on the earth. City at least well nation.

It would be like saying a number of years ago I want you to go and you know speak to Idi Amin. There he is with all his cannibalism and murder of people and so on and so forth. Or for that matter in recent years someone like Saddam Hussein.

You know the way America reacts to to what Saddam has done. And Jonah right from the very beginning somehow knew that God may have mercy. And he thinks listen I'd love to go if I can honestly genuinely pronounce judgment.

God if you'll sort of follow through I'll go basically. Because at the end of the book he says I thought this was going to happen. But what he does of course he goes in the opposite direction.

And he takes off as far as he can from the calling of God upon his life. Now again this is a true story. A lot of expositors you know put it down as sort of a parable analogy or whatever.

But it's obviously a true story. But it does have a parabolic aspect to it if you like. It represents the nation of Israel.

God had a calling on the nation of Israel. Instead of fulfilling that calling if you went they basically went in the opposite direction. And then they got into sin and rebellion and so on.

What does God do? God brings them into captivity until they learn the lesson. You'll notice that when the nation of Israel came out of captivity after all those years we have no idolatry after that. No at least the idolatry in the sense of worshipping foreign gods and so on and so forth.

It cured them once and for all. But let me have you look at the book of Jeremiah for a moment. Jeremiah 51 and so Jonah is taken into captivity.

How was he taken into captivity? He was thrown overboard. We don't need to go into all the details of that. After confessing that you know he really was a man of God.

He had a call of God upon his life. And the reason that there was all the disturbance and turbulence and so on and so forth going on around him was because it was his fault. And so they said okay that's fine.

And so they threw him overboard. And then he went into captivity. The captivity was it was a whale of some sort of some great fish.

The Bible doesn't actually say it was a whale. And he was swallowed by the whale. And what happened when he was in captivity? He repented.

Good now you got the message. I think it was brother Andrew that says he spent three days and three nights on a foam blubber mattress. But anyway he was in the belly of the whale for three days and finally he repents.

And after his repentance God what? Spits him out. And he's on land. And he fulfills the purpose of God.

Now look what Jeremiah says here. This is an interesting little portion of scripture here. In verse 34 Jeremiah 51.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me and crushed me. He has sent me down like an empty vessel. He has swallowed me like a monster.

He has filled his stomach with my delicacies. He's washed me away. All right there is the captivity.

The Bible likens it to a great fish opening its mouth swallowing him. Some sort of monster. He's down in the stomach of that monster with all he says filled his stomach with my delicacies.

He's washed me away. In other words he's being gulped down and he's swimming around there inside the belly of the whale. Verse 44.

I will punish Bel in Babylon and I will make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth. So God likens their time of captivity to being swallowed by Babylon. Babylon being this great fish if you like in the analogy of God.

They get swept away into the belly of this this fish called Babylon. And God says ultimately I'm going to cause this fish to spew out what it swallowed. And of course Israel ultimately comes out of its captivity.

And so Jonah really is a sort of a representative book of the nation of Israel. It's not just Jonah himself. Obviously he was disobedient.

But it was a sort of a parable. It was an analogy again of what the nation of Israel did. They rebelled against the calling of God upon their life.

They wanted the blessings of God. They didn't want the responsibility that goes with the blessing. Now we need to be careful because that's exactly the problem with the church.

Is that we want all the blessings of God but we don't want to be involved in the responsibility that goes with it. And so we need to be careful also that we don't end up with the same results. All right I've got other verses here just talking about the nation of Israel.

I don't know if we need to look at them all. Let me give you one other in 2nd Chronicles chapter 6. This is Solomon's prayer of dedication when he is opening the the temple. And it says in verse 32.

And also concerning the foreigner who is not from thy people Israel. When he comes from a far country for thy great namesake and thy mighty hand and thine outstretched arm. When they come and pray towards this house.

Then hear thou from heaven from thy dwelling place and do according to all that the foreigner calls to thee. In order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee and do as thy people Israel. And that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

Now you see there were individuals all the way through the Old Testament that understood the big picture. The average person in Israel sort of lost sight. They thought well we're Israelites we're blessed God loves us.

You know as long as we sort of tie and celebrate so many feasts a year and so on and so forth we can have a lot of you know a lot of fun. We're special. And there were certain ones obviously the prophets and certain kings and so on.

They understood that God was after something more than that. And so in this prayer of dedication this wonderful temple Solomon is saying listen let it be that the nations of the earth will come. All the foreigners of the earth will come because of your great name.

In other words there's going to be something going on in this temple that is going to magnify your name. That is going to exalt your name. That is going to express your nature and your character.

And it's going to draw people from the ends of the earth and let them come that they may know.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30125.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-ravenhill/brownsville-revival-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net