

The Bible: Its Subject and Purpose

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The Bible reveals God's purpose to be glorified, and the supreme subject of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: John 17:22, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:3

Topics: "Bible Study", "Gods Glory"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer preaches on the reasonable revelation from God, emphasizing the Creator's communication with His creation through nature, Christ, and the written Word. The supreme purpose of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is for His glory, which is not self-seeking but a reflection of His infinite worthiness. The Bible serves as God's message to man, highlighting the importance of glorifying God in all aspects of life, including creation, salvation, service, and even death, ultimately pointing to the glory of Christ as the supreme subject of the Scriptures.

Transcript

Revelation from God is reasonable. In the presence of the fact of the material universe, a belief in a sufficient Creator is demanded of all rational beings. And, having recognized the Creator and man as the consummation of creation, it is reasonable to expect that the Creator will communicate with the creature, revealing His purpose and will. God the Creator has done this having revealed Himself in various ways:

1. Through Nature. -- The eternal power and Godhead, we are told are revealed by the things which are created (Rom 1:20), but, while the revelation is limited in that it discloses nothing of those divine attributes which have to do with redemption and the destiny of men, it is sufficient to the extent that the heathen world is without excuse if they do not recognize that there is a God.

2. In Christ. -- In the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), God became manifest in the flesh. The Son of God came into the world to declare God to men in terms of human understanding. By His incarnation, otherwise inscrutable facts concerning the eternal God have been translated into the limited range of human comprehension. This revelation contemplates not only the Person and power of God which was already set forth to a limited degree in the things created, but more particularly the love of God as set forth in the sacrificial death of Christ. Christ is an exact portrait of God (Heb 1:3), and we should always consider Christ as God manifest in the flesh (1Ti 3:16).

3. The Written Word. -- This chapter has to do with the written Word as a manifestation. The Bible not only presents God as its supreme subject, but also unfolds His purposes. The written revelation is all-inclusive.

It not only restates all the facts concerning God which are revealed through nature, and gives the only record concerning God's manifestation in Christ, but it enlarges the divine revelation into infinite detail regarding God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, angels, demons, man, sin, salvation, grace, and glory. In recognizing the unique character of the Bible, two things especially noted in the title of this chapter may be emphasized:

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

We understand from the written Word of God that there is one supreme purpose which actuates God in all He has done or will do from the beginning of creation to the farthest reaches of eternity whether it is in Heaven or on earth. For this one purpose angels were created; so, also, the material universe and man, and, though hidden behind an inscrutable mystery, we know that even sin was permitted and redemption was provided with a view to the realization of this supreme purpose. This supreme purpose is the Glory of God.

That God should bring all things to pass that He might be glorified would seem self-seeking to an infinite degree, from a mere human view-point; but this theme cannot be limited to the range of human conceptions. In the light of Scripture revelation, we conclude that because God is infinite in His being, His perfections, and His blessedness He is worthy of infinite glory, and it would be an injustice of infinite proportions should His creation withhold from Him that honor and glory which are rightfully His.

God is not self-seeking; He who is the fountain source of all truth must be true to Himself as Creator and Lord of all. It is man who is self-centered and who can conceive of nothing more desirable than that man should be exalted and glorified. It is man who does not understand the normal relation which should exist between the Creator and the creature, and does not ascribe to the Creator that glory which is rightfully due Him because of His person, His position, and His character (Exo 24:10, Exo 24:17; 1Ch 16:17-29; Psa 57:11; Isa 6:1).

Since the Bible is God's message to man, its supreme purpose is His supreme purpose; which is, that He may be glorified. The Bible records:

1. That "all things ... that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (for his glory, Col 1:16). Angels and men, the material universe and every creature, are all created for His glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psa 19:1).
2. The nation Israel is for the glory of God (Jer 13:11; Isa 43:7, Isa 43:21, Isa 43:25; Isa 60:1, Isa 60:3, Isa 60:21; Isa 62:3).
3. Salvation is unto the glory of God (Rom 9:23), even as it will be a manifestation of the grace of God (Eph 2:7), and is now a manifestation of the wisdom of God (Eph 3:10).
4. All service should be unto the glory of God (Mat 5:16; Joh 15:8; 1Co 10:31; 1Pe 2:12; 1Pe 4:11, 1Pe 4:14). The Bible itself is God's instrument by which He prepares the man of God unto every good work (2Ti 3:16-17).
5. The Christian's new passion is that God may be glorified (Rom 5:2).
6. Even the believer's death is said to be to this one end (Joh 21:19; Phi 1:20).

7. The saved one is appointed to share in the glory of Christ (Joh 17:22; Col 3:4).

II. THE SUBJECT OF THE BIBLE

The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme subject of the Bible. Like a glass this book reflects "the glory of the Lord" (2Co 3:18); but the Lord Himself has been manifested that He, in turn, might reflect the glory of God. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6).

QUESTIONS

1. On what ground is it reasonable to expect that God would reveal Himself to man?
2. What passage of Scripture indicates that God has revealed Himself to man through nature?
3. What concerning God is thus revealed?
4. Is nature's revelation complete?
5. By what means has God made a perfect revelation of Himself to man?
6. Wherein is this revelation superior to that of nature?
7. Indicate the various aspects of the divine revelation as set forth in the Bible.
8. What is the supreme purpose of God as revealed in the Scriptures?
9. Why is it in no way self-seeking on the part of God to wish to accomplish His own glory?
10. Wherein is real self-seeking disclosed?
11. Name seven ways which are indicated in the Scriptures whereby God is said to be glorified.
12. Point out the Scriptures which state that all creation is for the glory of God.
13. In what way is God glorified through the salvation of a soul?
14. Describe how Christ is the manifestation of God's glory.

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