

GOD'S SUPREMACY: THE END OF MISSIONS

Introduction

1. This morning we have been suggesting that missions exists because the glory of God is belittled. God has called us to worship Him and the world worships everything but Him. God's purpose in creation, in redemption, in perfection has always been for His glory alone. We read in Ephesians 1, that the entire purpose of God summarized in one phrase is, "for the praise of His glory."
2. The Psalmist writes, "May the whole earth be filled with his glory." That's God's purpose and it will happen, but it's not reality yet. That's why missions remains. Missions is the declaration of the message that God is glorious and man has foolishly attempted to rob God of His glory and to transfer that glory to himself. Man takes delight not in God but in himself and in the things that he fashions after himself. In the words of Paul, man has **"exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever."** Romans 1 is alive and well on planet earth.
3. All things were made **by** Christ and **for** Christ. Even the redemption of sinful people was accomplished for the glory of God as a gift to the Lord Jesus from the Father and that gift will be fully realized when all the inhabitants of heaven glorify Him in worship.
4. God came to Paul at Corinth with words of encouragement that He had many people there. So, as Paul spoke the Gospel, the Gospel would be effective. God has also spoken to us in His word saying that He has many people yet who must hear the Gospel and we are given the wonderful privilege of communicating the life-giving message to all who will hear, and the wonderful promise that the Gospel will be effective for some. The purpose of saving this world-wide multitude is for the praise of His glory, or to say it another way – that He might be worshiped! How do we know?
5. We know because God has made it clear that the nations will be glad and sing for joy. There **will be** people from every tribe and tongue and nation in that great heavenly chorus who will magnify the glory of God in the face of Christ. And when that number is completed, missions will be no longer. We have not arrived at the end of missions. It may yet remain far off, but we can see glimpses of the end even now.

6. Kids, today we are talking about missions. God wants those who believe in Him to tell people about Him. God's purpose is that these people will do what toward God (They will **worship** Him)? When God has saved all He is going to save the mission of telling people about Jesus will be what (**finished**)? To worship God means that we see God as more important than anything and we tell Him so. One way we can worship God is to what (**sing to God**)? When we get to heaven how many nations and languages and people groups will be represented (**all of them**)?

I. THE END OF MISSIONS IS SEEN IN A GROWING PASSION

A. A passion for God's purpose – Romans 11:33-36

1. God has a purpose in reaching the nations. Romans 1:14-17 – ***14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."***
2. God had a purpose for reaching Paul. (It was through Paul that the message of Christ would spread to the nations. Note Paul's words: "I am under obligation both the Greeks and to Barbarians ... I am eager to preach the Gospel to you ... I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation." This culminates in Romans 11:33-36 - ***33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*** For Paul as well as all the Bible writers and the great saints of the ages, the end of missions is the glory of God! Paul understood God's purpose and that was the focus of his passion!

B. A passion for God's people (Romans 9:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20)

1. Romans 9 is about the sovereignty of God. It addresses God's purposes in saving some and not saving others. It is a lesson about God's supremacy in salvation and everything else. But in the context of sovereignty Paul shows his passion for reaching his own people – the Jews – with the message of salvation.

2. I am struck with Paul's words in the first five verses. ***I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.*** This is Paul. He knew better than any other the glorious wonder of God's redemption and the terror of eternal separation from God. Yet here he is in anguish, offering, if it were possible, the forfeiture of his own salvation if only his kinsmen according to the flesh might be saved. That is a passion for the glory of God that God might be known among all peoples! That's a heart broken for those who were given the revelation of God, but whose eyes were blinded to the truth of what they possessed!
3. I also see Paul's passion in the new life of some new converts in a new church in a new area in Thessalonica. Paul cared deeply for them. He was concerned for them, not only for them, but for their lives to be lived for the glory of God. In fact, Paul found in them great joy and thus great cause for giving glory to God, as they endured suffering and many trials for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ!
4. The end of missions can be seen on the horizon as the people of God develop a passion for the glory of God in the evangelization of those who do not know God, as well as a passion for the growth and development of the people of God in their pursuit of the glory of God in all things! Is that possible for us? It is if we are developing a passion for the supremacy of God in all things! God is delighted in our delight in Him. As our passion for Him grows, our effectiveness for Him will increase. God uses those who have a passion for Him! Where is our passion? May we cry out to God to stir it up as we set our affections on things above! The end of missions can be seen in a growing passion for God. Also on the horizon...

II. THE END OF MISSIONS IS SEEN IN THE GREAT COMMISSION (What is the great commission?)

You probably immediately are thinking of **Matthew 28:18-20** – ***¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and***

of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” May I suggest another passage first: **Luke 24:45-47 – ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.** These words were spoken to the disciples in the upper room following the resurrection of Jesus. Here's what these verses tell us:

- A. The “great commission” was God's plan for the **ages**. It existed before Jesus ever uttered these words or before Luke or Matthew ever recorded them. This great commission was already written down for the disciples, and Jesus quoted it to them. Jesus had to be referring to the OT. Note two things about this passage:
1. The Gospel was already in written form in the OT.
 2. The Gospel was always intended to be a proclamation to all the nations. We don't often think of the Gospel in the OT and we tend to assume that the OT was concerned only with the Jews. Not according to Jesus! This was God's plan for the ages.
- B. The great commission was God's plan for the **nations**
1. The hope of the nations is in the **declaration of the glory of God**. Psalm 96:3 – ***Declare His glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.*** Psalm 117:1 - ***Praise the Lord all nations. Extol him all peoples.*** Isaiah 34:1 - ***Draw near O nations, to hear, and hearken, O peoples! Let the earth listen, and all that fills it, the world, and all that comes from it.***
 2. The hope of the nations was in **the promises of God** that one day they would worship the one true God. Psalm 45:17 - ***I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.*** Psalm 86:9 - ***All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.*** Psalm 102:15 - ***Nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.*** Psalm 22:27 - ***All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.***
 3. Those who would make known God's name become the hope of the nations. Psalm 18:49 - ***For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing to your***

name. Psalm 57:9 - *I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.* It appears that the Lord Jesus intended that the missionary task of the church is to press on to all the unreached peoples of the world until Jesus comes. Jesus seems to say that this will be done before He comes again. He can make that promise because it is Jesus Himself who is building His church, who gives the increase. But it is ordained by Him that the means to which this certain end will take place is through the proclamation of the Gospel by the people of God to every tribe and tongue and nation. And since all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth, we have been commissioned with this job and we need to get it done! What will it look like when the job is complete? We are given a glimpse.

III. THE END OF MISSIONS IS SEEN IN THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN – In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as given to the Apostle John in a vision of the culmination of the coming of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory, John literally sees the end of missions – the culmination of the nations gathered around the throne in glorious worship of our most worthy God. We consider briefly four passages. I am just going to read them with little or no comment.

- A. Revelation 7:9-10 - ***9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*** God's intention is to be worshiped by converts from every nation and tribe and tongue.
- B. Revelation 14:6-7 - ***6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."*** Here is a final call as it were to the nations to give God glory by worshiping Him alone or to face judgment.
- C. Revelation 15:4 - ***Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been***

revealed.” All who have been redeemed will gather before Him and all will give Him glory. He is the only one deserving of such!

- D. Revelation 21:3 – ***And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*** Surely we can say that the final goal of God in redemption is not to obliterate the distinctions of the peoples of the world, but to gather all of them into a diverse group unified around the person of the Redeemer! We have shown you just a glimpse of the nations bringing God glory, worshiping their Lord and Savior. We are gathered here to do the same. All across the world there are those who belong to Christ, redeemed by the blood, who are right now or who have earlier today or will later today proclaim the name of Christ! It's exciting to see. It is a little taste of the great joy that will follow in heaven, but it is also a reminder that the goal of missions is not yet realized. There are yet millions who do not revere the Lord Jesus in worship.

Conclusion

1. The goal of God in all of history is to uphold and display His glory for the enjoyment of the redeemed from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
2. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. Certainly in heaven, our joy will be great as we delight in the glory of God. God's glory and our delight, our enjoyment, are not at odds now and neither will they be in heaven.
3. The goal of missions is worship. That's the reason for our emphasis today. The final scenes in heaven are the passionate worship of almighty God by peoples gathered from all the ages and from all the nations. That's in heaven. That's why we're saying today that missions begins and ends in worship! The immediate goal of missions is to see this happen now as a foretaste of the ultimate goal to be realized around the throne! So we evangelize that people might know God and worship Him. We plant churches and disciple people so that they might know God and worship Him. And we keep doing His mission until it is completed and we find ourselves among this vast multitude of people from every tribe and tongue and nation – gathered together worshiping our great God and Savior!
4. **Piper, pp. 222-223 – “There is something about God that is so universally praiseworthy and so profoundly beautiful, and so comprehensively worthy and so deeply satisfying**

that God will find passionate admirers in every diverse people group in the world. His true greatness will be manifest in the breadth of the diversity of those who perceive and cherish his beauty. The more diverse the people groups who forsake their gods to follow the true God, the more visible God's superiority over all his competitors. By focusing on all the people groups of the world God undercuts ethnocentric pride and puts all peoples back upon his free grace rather than any distinctive of their own. This humility is the flipside of giving God all the glory, Humility means reveling in his grace not in our goodness. In pressing us on to all the peoples God is pressing us further into the humblest and deepest experience of his grace, and weaning us more and more from our ingrained pride. In doing this he is preparing for himself a people – from all the peoples – who will be able to worship him with free and white hot admiration.” There it is, the end of missions, the supremacy of God in all things by all peoples at all times, for all eternity! Hallelujah!

5. We're not there yet, but we will be there someday. God has promised that He will accomplish His purpose. We have the privilege of working with Him to see it happen!