

## God's Ultimate Purpose

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### D. M. Lloyd-Jones

Born in South Wales, Dr. Lloyd-Jones trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and thereafter practised as a physician and was assistant to the famous Lord Horder. After leaving medicine in 1927, he became the minister of a Welsh Presbyterian Church in Aberavon, South Wales. He was there until 1938, when he moved to London to share the ministry of Westminster Chapel in Buckingham Gate with Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, who retired in 1943. This ministry lasted for thirty years until Dr. Lloyd-Jones retired in August 1968. He then engaged in a wider preaching ministry and in writing until shortly before his death in 1981.

God's plan, according to Paul, is to re-unite all things in Christ, to gather them together again, to bring back, to head up once more all things in Christ. The expression immediately suggests that things have already been in a perfect condition once, but that they are no longer in that condition. But they will be so again. They are to be 're-united'.

Originally all things were in a perfect state of harmony under our Lord Jesus Christ, as we are told in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, verses 15-20: 'Who [referring to the Lord] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, 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: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.'

There we have an account of creation's original condition. In the tenth verse of the second chapter of Colossians we read: 'And ye are complete in him (in Christ), which is the head of all principality and power'. Such terms as 'principality' and 'power' and 'dominions' and 'thrones' always refer to the angelic beings, the angelic powers, the great powers in the heavens. So what we are told is that the Lord Jesus Christ was the head of all these powers as He was also the head of the universe. Everything that was made and created was made and

created in Him and by Him and through and for Him; not only the world and animals, but angels and thrones and principalities and powers. Furthermore there was perfect harmony in all these realms. The Lord Jesus Christ was over all — over the angels and all powers and authorities and dominions; then over the world, the animals and the fruit of the earth. Man was made the lord of creation over all animals and inanimate nature. All was absolutely perfect and in a state of entire harmony and unity. Everything worked harmoniously downwards from the great Head, and everything worked upwards, back again towards the Supreme Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, alas, the unity and harmony did not continue; and the present situation of the world is due to that fact. The harmony has been destroyed. First of all there was a revolt, a rebellion, in heaven itself. The devil rebelled and fell, and a large number of the holy angels followed him and fell with him. Immediately there was discord, even in heaven. There is a most significant statement in the Book of Revelation, chapter 12, which throws great light upon the subject we are considering.' In verse 7 of that chapter we read: 'And there was war in heaven'. Discord in heaven! War in heaven! 'Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels'. But the discord was not confined to heaven. The fallen angel, namely, the devil, Satan, came and tempted man, and man fell. The result was discord amongst men — dispute, quarrelling, misunderstanding, warfare, bloodshed, murder, jealousy, envy, and all that follows in their train.

But we must remember that even the creation itself suffered as the result of sin. Paul says in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans that 'the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope' (v. 20). When man fell the earth was cursed, and the story of creation ever since has been 'Nature red in tooth and claw', briars and thorns, troubles, diseases and pestilences. The harmony has gone; the original perfection has vanished and disappeared. That is the position of the world as a result of the fall of the angels, and the fall of man has stemmed from it.

Now we are in a position to see the doctrine of this verse which we are studying. The mystic secret which we as Christians are allowed to share is that God will ultimately restore the original harmony, and re-unite again all things in Christ. Christ is over all and the old harmony will be restored. And we are told how it is going to happen. In regard to men we have already noted that it happens as the result of the redemption through the blood of Christ. Reconciliation to God, and reconciliation with one another is by His blood, by His grace. He has 'made peace', 'the middle wall of partition' is removed. The old enmity, together with all divisions, is abolished. That is, incidentally, a further reason for rejecting the idea of a perpetual distinction between Gentile and Jew in Christ.

Let us be careful to observe that these blessings only apply to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. No harmony is promised to others; they are sent to

'everlasting destruction'; but they will be outside the cosmos, as it were; they will be out of harmony and will not disturb it eternally. As regards the fallen angels it is clear that there is no hope for them. They are 'reserved in chains' in the pit until their final damnation comes [2 *Peter* 2.4; *Jude* 6]. Satan also is to be cast into 'the lake of fire' where he and all his followers are to be tormented for ever [*Rev* 20.10]. As for the good angels, the Scriptures teach us that they come into God's good purpose. In the Book of Revelation, chapter 5, we are told that not only the saints and the redeemed sing the praises of the Lamb that once was slain, but angels — 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands' — and the beasts and the elders all join with the saints in the same chorus. This is part of the harmony that is to be restored.

The same idea appears in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 12, where we are told that already as Christians we have come 'unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. . . ' 'An innumerable company of angels!' They are a part of the harmony; not that they are redeemed (they have never fallen) but they are under Christ's headship and they adore Him and worship Him. They are with us now, and they will be with us sharing in the eternal glory.

The earth is also involved. The Apostle Peter tells us in his Second Epistle, chapter 3, that a day is coming when there shall be a destruction of the present earth and of the world by fire: 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat'. Evil and sin will be burned out of the universe, and there will be 'a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness' (vv. 12-13). The Apostle Paul likewise, in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, tells us that 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now'. It is waiting for 'the manifestation of the sons of God'. Creation will be involved in the restoration of all things: it will be 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' (vv. 19-21). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews joins in, in his second chapter, and says: 'For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou are mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.'

Christ represents us and we are in Him, and so we are going to be elevated to the position of 'lords of creation' again, and everything will be placed under us. The old original harmony will be restored. Isaiah speaks of it prophetically. He saw that a day was coming when 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the

leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fading together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea' [Isa 11.6-9].

The perfect harmony that will be restored will be harmony in man, and between men. Harmony on the earth and in the brute creation! Harmony in heaven, and all under this blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who will be the Head of all! Everything will again be united in Him. And wonder of wonders, marvellous beyond compare, when all this happens it will never be undone again. All will be re-united in Him to all eternity. That is the message; that is God's plan. That is the mystery which has been revealed unto us.

Once more I must ask some questions. Do you know these things? Are you prepared to give time to these things — to listen to them or to read about them? Do you know that these things are so marvellous that you will never hear anything greater, either in this world or the world to come? Do you realize that you have a part in these things? As I said at the beginning, I do not know whether another world-war is coming or not; but whether it be war or no war, as Christians we are in this plan of God. No bomb can be invented no bacteria can be cultivated and used, no chemicals or gases can be brought into use, that can ever make the slightest difference to these things. That is God's plan as revealed in Scripture, and God's plan will be carried out; and if you and I are in Christ we are involved in it. We are destined to be elevated and restored to what man was meant to be. We shall be 'lords of the creation'. 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world . . . (and) angels?' says Paul to the Corinthians [1 Cor 6.2-3]. Let us decide to spend less time in reading the newspapers and more time in reading the Bible.

God forbid that we should abuse the Scriptures by reducing them to the level of our ideas or contemporary events! Look at the ultimate, look at God's grand and glorious purpose. Do not be over-particular in your interpretation of contemporary history, do not waste your time in attempts to fix 'times and seasons'. What matters is God's plan, which is being worked out since the beginning of 'the fulness of times'. Think of, and live for the ultimate restoration of that glorious harmony which is coming, when we with our whole being shall praise 'the Lamb that was slain'.

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