

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

"Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isaiah 43:7.

The message of the prophet Isaiah was national, but our text turns our attention from the corporate life of the nation to that of the individuals who composed it. Here he says to the individual a little more fully what he has already said to the nation. The opening words of this text indicates that the prophet was thinking not so much of the whole nation of Israel as of the individuals who made up the nation. "Every one" is a distributive by use of which the thought passes to individual life, and the great purpose of its being.

This text is a revelation of the principle that has application in the case of every individual life. All the things said concerning the chosen people of God, in their deepest intention, reveal the thought and purpose of God for all men.

I. Man Is A Creation Of God.

In this one brief verse three words are used to describe that creation. "I have created him." It is an all-inclusive word, which indicates actual causing to be, by the God of omnipotent power and wisdom. In the first chapter of Genesis you will find this word translated "created" appears three times. It is used only when there was an entirely new beginning. It is the essential word that indicates the original act of causing to be.

"I have formed him." This word "formed" indicates a process. It is a word which is perpetually used of the potter at his work at the wheel. By manipulation of things already existing, a new thing is made to be.

"I have made him." The word "made" indicates the outlook on the result. I have made. I have accomplished. I have finished. He assumes responsibility for the result.

It is significant that the prophet used these three great words when he wrote about what God does in the case of man. In all his complex nature man is a thought and a work of God. We look out upon nature and see in the handiwork of man inventions and improvements, but there is no advance in man, save as that which already lies within him potentially is realized in the process of human history. All culture is simply the development into visibility of powers divinely bestowed in the creation of man. How wonderful are the thoughts of men! We see them expressed in architecture, in sculpture, in art, in poetry, in philosophy; but all these are broken lights of that essential thought of God which He wrought out when He made man. Man is of divine creation.

Not only is man a divine creation, but he is a divine expression, made in the image of God. Man is distinct from all the lower creation in this, and herein lies his dignity, he is made in the likeness of God.

Every man is a divine creation. Occasionally somebody says of some outstanding man, "God made So-and-So and broke the mold." What is the suggestion? That God occasionally makes some remarkable man and breaks the mold, that there may not be any repetition. He breaks the mold after He has made every man. Every man is an individual, a special thought of God incarnate in human flesh. When Jesus Christ stood before Pilate, and Pilate challenged Him as to His Kingship and as to truth, the Master said, "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." It was a great declaration of conscious individuality, potentiality and responsibility. In some measure every man can say the same. The trouble is we do not all find out for what we were born and for what purpose we came into the world.

II. Man Is Created For The Glory Of God.

Man is God's creation, God's formation, God's making, and, therefore, precious to the heart of God. In God's estimation man was worth dying for. God said, "I have created him for my glory." How shall this be said so that the declaration may startle us into attention and change the current of our lives? It ought so to do, and will do so, if we can but hear it as we ought to hear it. What is the purpose of human life? There is the day of birth, and out there somewhere is the day of death, and these are but human terms, the full meaning of which none of us fully understands. The beginning and the end are included. What is the real meaning of the interim, of all that which lies between the wail of birth and the darkness of death? What is the real meaning of human life, its true purpose?

Let me mention some things. There are such things as the amassing of wealth, the acquisition of knowledge and the pursuit of pleasure. I mention these only to dismiss them. The deepest in you promptly says, "No, it cannot be that a man divinely created has as the purpose of his existence such things as these. Let them be dismissed.

The great end of all creation is God's glory. He so created all things that they should set forth His glory. Everything, as it issued from His hand, was so made as to show forth and proclaim His glorious and unapproachable majesty, power and greatness. Hence the outburst of the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Psalm 19:1-2.

God's glory may be set forth unconsciously, as it is by the things that are devoid of intelligence—the sun, the moon, the stars, etc. It is set forth consciously also, as by the host of heaven, the angels and the children of men. For the better setting forth of His glory, God "created man in His own image." Then when man had marred the image in which he was made, God redeemed him. Thus he is still able to set forth God's glory, and to do so is the end of his being. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I Corinthians 10:31. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:20. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Living to the glory of God is the law of the universe, is a perfect ideal of life, is commanded in the scriptures and is profitable.

Man is able to glorify God. The powers of his personality, the exercise of his reason, the activity of his will and the putting forth of his energy can all be to the glory of God. Belshazzar, in all the splendor of his hall of feasting, with his nobles about him, fell into the terrible error and sin of sending for the vessels of the Lord out of which to drink. What was the charge of the messenger of God? "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." The messenger of God did not say anything about his drunkenness or lust, but back of them was the failure to realize the true purpose of his being, which was to glorify God. And all have sinned in that way. So, our blessed Lord said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

1. Man is created for the knowledge of God.

There is given to man a consciousness of God which no other being has. In the olden days Zophar said, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The answer which was intended, and which is correct, is "by no means." The very first way in which man glorifies God is by coming to know Him.

2. Man is created for fellowship with God.

In every man there is a capacity or ability to listen to the voice of God. In him there is the possibility of sympathy in thought and feeling with God. It is truly wonderful that man has been made for communion with God.

3. Man is created for cooperation with God.

What was it in the beginning? Go, dig this garden and keep it. When Adam began his delving and digging, his watching and his cultivation, until there came first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, what was he doing? He was working with God. He was a partner with God. Cooperation with God is the law of human life, and for that man was created.

4. Man is created for revelation of God.

The story of how Christ glorified God is told in His own words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Cooperation with God in His case was Redemption and Renewal; gathering the thorns out of the garden and bathing them in His blood that the curse might be removed. Christians are obligated to be "workers with God." Godly men and women are in cooperation with Him. Through their lives in the Lord's churches the kindness of God is to be manifest and His gospel is to be proclaimed to all. Man fulfills the purpose of his being by such activity with God as will result in the revelation of the Heavenly Father. For cooperation with God man is made.

Any man who lives for any lower thing than to glorify God is prostituting his God-given powers. Do I take these hours and days, these powers, this thought, this mind, this spirit and use them for any other purpose than to glorify God? If so, that is prostitution. To fail to seek the glory of God is to sin.

In the light of this consideration, what about your life? God requireth that which is past. Where is it? What of the years that have gone? You can name the date and place of your birth. Somewhere is the day of your death. You cannot name it. What have you done with these years since you were born? You must acknowledge that you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Yet it is to those who have so sinned that He has sent His Son. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

See how you have failed. Then, understand that great declaration, "I am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour." Come to Him as a personal Saviour and you will find Him full of pity and full of power. Your past may be forgiven and you may yet live to His glory.