

What Is God Doing Today ?

God is doing what He has always been doing. He has not changed.

Still doing the work He has always been doing.

That is:-

The restoration – The redemption – The salvation of His children

Nothing has happened, as we look back over the history of humanity, that is not known by God who knows the end from the beginning.

Isaiah 46:9-10 [NIV] *“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”*

At no point in the redemption story has God been taken by surprise.

God’s great purpose is our salvation, saving us from ourselves.

God is accomplishing this through Jesus Christ, He is God’s Plan.

Look at three things in this presentation.

- 1 God is the God of Mission
- 2 Jesus is His method, **Jesus is the gospel**
- 3 The church is a vehicle through which God is accomplishing His Mission, His Will.

God is the God of Mission

Often in the past we have felt that God is the God of the church and He has given the church a mission.

This is really upside down thinking.

Actually, God is a God of Mission, who has a church, and He uses the church to accomplish part of His Mission.

John 5:16 [NIV] *“So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.”*

Jesus had been performing miracles on the Sabbath day which had upset the Pharisees, Sadducees and the scribes.

John 5:17 [NIV] *“Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”*

The issue was that Jesus was indeed working, but the problem was that it was the Sabbath day, which they believed to be unlawful.

This belief was partly because the religious leaders thought that God rested on the Sabbath day as well as them.

This belief was based on:-

Genesis 2:1-2 [NIV] *“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. **By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.**”*

What was the work that God had been doing?

The physical creation.

Since that day there has been no more physical creation by God, only a continuation of what He had set in motion at the first creation.

Genesis 2:3 [NIV] *“And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”*

This is thought as the way the Sabbath began, how God established the Sabbath day.

But what God is showing us is that He finished all the physical creation and was then commencing His spiritual creation, called “God’s Rest” in other scriptures.

John 5:17 [NIV] *“Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”*

Jesus said that His Father is always working.

God’s spiritual blessing of creation is within “His Rest.”

Hebrews 3:7-11 [NIV] *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘**They shall never enter my rest.**’”*

It was because of rebellion that our forefathers did **not** enter into “God’s Rest.”

Hebrews 4:1-3 [NIV] *“Therefore, since the promise of entering his [God’s] rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” **And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.**”*

“have believed” [past tense] “enter” [present tense] “finished” [brought into being] Greek word “ginōmai” [ghin-om-ahee].

At the end of the physical creation God’s spiritual Rest began and His Will is that we all enter into that rest.

This is only done through faith in God’s Promises.

John 5:17 [NIV] *“Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”*

What is this work the Father and Jesus Christ are doing?

The spiritual creation of His children that is in “*His Rest.*”

This creation is a “*day*” that is a blessing to all humanity.

God is still working to bring His sons and daughters back to Him, into the intimate relationship He had with Adam and Eve **before** sin, rebellion, entered into that relationship.

1 Peter 1:17-19 [NIV] *“Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

The way of the forefathers [the Mosaic covenant] did **not** redeem God’s children.

It was **not** intended to do that, it had a very different purpose altogether.

Romans 7:5-7 [NIV] *“For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! **Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.** For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”*

The law shows us what is in rebellion to God’s lifestyle of perfect holiness.

Romans 3:20-31 [NIV] *“Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished, he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. **For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.** Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”*

Observing the law will **never** make us righteous.

The law is upheld only because it points towards sin.

Only faith in Christ and what God has done through Him for all humanity can justify us and restore our relationship with our Creator.

1 Peter 1:18-19 [NIV] *“For you know that it was **not** with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

Only the blood of Jesus Christ the only Son of God can redeem us.

Acts 20:28 [NIV] *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, **which he bought with his own blood.**”*

We have been bought [redeemed from death row] by Christ’s blood.

1 Peter 1:20 [NIV] *“He [Jesus the Christ] was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”*

This mission that God is on, this work He has always been doing, started before the creation of the first physical human being.

God does indeed know the end from before the beginning.

God knew that a method of redemption would be necessary.

Hebrews 2:10 [NIV] *“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.”*

God is bringing many children to glory [perfection].

2 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but **everyone to come to repentance.**”*

God is **not** willing that any should perish, this **is** the Will of God.

Not the wish.

Not the hope or desire.

But the Will of God.

This has to inform our view of mission.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 [NIV] *“This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, **who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**”*

All humans to be saved.

Why?

Because all humans are God’s created children made in His image.

The only difference between those who have met Christ and become Christians and the rest of humanity is that Christians know they are God’s children.

Our knowledge does **not** change the fact that all humans are children of God, and God’s Mission is to seek them to have a father-child relationship with them, as He does with “*born again*” Christians.

Jesus is our salvation

Acts 4:12 [NIV] *“Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

Buddha, Mohammed or any other human name will **not** do.

John 14:6 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, **“I am** the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father **except through me.**”*

No other way to salvation.

1 Corinthians 3:11 [NIV] *“For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Christ our **only** foundation on which we can build our life.

2 Corinthians 5:21 [NIV] *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

The only way to righteousness.

If Jesus does **not** take our sins we cannot become righteous in God’s Eyes.

Acts 10:42-43 [NIV] *“He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he [Jesus the Christ] is the one whom God appointed as judge of the **living and the dead**. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

Both living and those who have died without knowing the true God, all need to have faith in Jesus Christ.

John 3:36 [NIV] *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

Only through belief in Jesus Christ can we receive the gift of eternal life.

In Christ and Christ alone we find the mission of God accomplished.

This is the way God has chosen to fulfil His Will.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 [NIV] *“For there is one God and **one mediator** between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**, who gave himself as a ransom for all men, the testimony given in its proper time.”*

Only one mediator between us and God, the **man** Jesus Christ.

Jesus is very clearly the method by which God will accomplish His Mission.

It is **not** through any activity.

It is **not** through satisfying any requirements of laws or obedience.

It is entirely through the work of Jesus that we find God’s Mission being fulfilled, our salvation and redemption.

The church is a vehicle through which God chooses to accomplish His Mission, His Will

The work of the church is the work of God and Jesus **through** Christ’s body on earth, the Church.

By definition the church is **not** congregations or denominations.

Romans 8:9 [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. **And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**”*

This is the **only** definition of the church, spirit begotten people.

It may be that only a few people who sit in a congregation are truly Christians.

Or you could sit in a congregation of a thousand people and every one of them is a true Christian.

We are **not** the ones who are to make that judgement, only God can see into the hearts of human beings.

Only people who have the active presence of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ sent, in them are truly Christians.

Such people who are led by the Holy Spirit and develop through that intimate relationship the “*fruits of the spirit*” are truly Christians.

Matthew 28:18 [NIV] “*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*”

The commission given to the disciples.

The word “*authority*” is sometimes translated “*power*”.

Jesus said this because there is something that has to happen because the next word He uses is “*therefore*”.

Matthew 28:19 [NIV] “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*”

“*as we go*” is a good translation “*make disciples*”.

Why the power?

Acts 1:4-5 [NIV] “*On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, **but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.**”*”

Baptised with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 [NIV] “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

Receive power when Holy Spirit comes on you.

Told to wait for Holy Spirit.

If the witnessing is **only** telling the story of Jesus, why do we need the Holy Spirit?

We don't need the Holy Spirit to tell a good story, many people have this gift of story telling.

Acts 1:8 [NIV] “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

“*witness*” Greek “*martus*” or martyr.

It is saying that **they themselves will be the witnesses, not** what they say but **what they are.**

“*witness*” could be translated in present day language “*exhibit*”.

Wherever we go we are an “*exhibit*” of Jesus Christ.

Can you now see why we needed the Holy Spirit?

Could we be an “*exhibit*” of Jesus without Jesus living in us?

Romans 8:13-14 [NIV] “*For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*”

We have to be led by the Holy Spirit.

John 7:38-39 [NIV] “*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.*” **By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**”

The fruits of the Holy Spirit will flow through us to other people.

The major “*fruit*” will be love. “*Agapé*”.

A love that continues to flow towards others however they respond to it.

When the Holy Spirit dwells in us we have in us all the power of the universe and more.

Not our power [or authority] it is God’s Power [or authority].

Jesus in us “*exhibits*” Himself in us wherever we go, we **might speak** as well **if** the Holy Spirit prompts us to do so.

Jesus **never** exhibited an “*in your face*” approach to other people.

People flocked to Jesus Christ because of what He was; compassionate, merciful, kind, loving, exhibiting all the “*fruits*” of the Holy Spirit, God.

John 13:34-35 [NIV] “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

This is the love that is in our lives because the Holy Spirit is in us, Christ in us.

John 15:12-13 [NIV] “*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*”

If we all “*lay down our life for one another*” that is a lot of love that is exhibited.

John 17:20-21 [NIV] “*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*”

How does this unity of Christians tell the world that God has sent His Son into the world?

John 17:22-23 [NIV] “*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*”

The same prayer.

How does this happen?

I don’t know!

It is a MIRACLE!

It is God working where we cannot work.

It is God producing something we cannot produce.

God makes this work when He finds this agapé love in the person or fellowship of people.

We can make some serious mistakes when we think about mission, if we think about programmes.

There are programmes that work to bring people into a congregation.

The important thing for the church, which is made up of individual people, is to be an exhibit of Jesus Christ working in us.

Because we have Jesus Christ dwelling in us.

This means every one of us is an evangelist.

We cannot actually avoid this, unless we quench the activity of the Holy Spirit in us.

Mission is not our work, it is the work of God in and through us.

What is the work of the church then?

To be Holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16 [NIV] *“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: **“Be holy, because I am holy.”**”*

We are to be perfect.

Matthew 5:48 [NIV] *“**Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**”*

Same command.

The Greek word is “*tēlēiōs*” meaning “*complete*”, “*mature*” [mentally and morally].

There is very little mentioned in the New Testament as far as programmes are concerned in context of mission.

But if we search the New Testament for what we are to become as individually and as a fellowship you will find very little else.

We are constantly called to come to perfection and to holiness.

James 1:4 [NIV] *“Perseverance must finish its work so **that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**”*

Become mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Ephesians 1:15-17 [NIV] *“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, **so that you may know him better.**”*

Paul’s prayer for us to know God better.

When we do this, when we have this intimate relationship with Him, then God will be able to accomplish His Mission through us as His children.