

## GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES

(By Br. George Wilmott for the Radio Program, Bellingham, KGMI, April 19, 1981, Fort Worth Ecclesia.)

In speaking on the subject, GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES, I realize, of course, that some of my hearers do not even believe that God exists, and hence are unable to accept the idea that there is, or can be, an orderly and coordinated Divine Plan of the Ages concerning mankind. But I am sure that many who doubt the very existence of God have not given the matter sufficient intelligent thought. When the facts are seriously considered, it is almost impossible not to believe in a Supreme Creator. Let us use our deductive reasoning.

A basic fact is that effects must be produced by competent causes. This is self-evident to every reasonable mind. Everything that happens must be caused by something. Everything that exists must have been made by someone. And if the thing has beauty, symmetry and intricacy of design, we know that it must have been produced by a Superior Intelligence. We reach this conclusion by pure reasoning. Thus it is not necessary to see the Supreme Creator in order to believe in him.

And the evidences that God exists are overwhelming. Everything around us proves God. Every tree, plant and flower amazes us. Intricate in design, exquisitely beautiful in form and texture, each speaks of a wisdom and skill above the human. It is an absurdity which boasts of human skill and ingenuity, and attributes to mere chance the regularity, uniformity and harmony of nature. The very fact that there are dependable and unvarying laws of nature, presupposes an intelligent lawgiver.

And there are some truly amazing attributes possessed by the animal creation which are beyond human wisdom. To name just a few: The snake has an infrared sensor so responsive that it can detect temperature changes of one-thousandth of a degree. The hornet navigates accurately even on cloudy days by sensing the light's polarization. The mosquito talks to other mosquitoes from afar through a communication system impervious to jamming. The bird flies thousands of miles from the tree branch in your back yard, and returns to the same branch through stellar navigation. Such powers have been exercised by the lower animals for untold ages; but men have only recently understood these amazing characteristics, and are seeking, sometimes vainly, to duplicate them scientifically. This is certainly proof of an Intelligent Creator far superior to the human.

But the greatest masterpiece of all earthly creation is the human entity itself. It is extremely complicated, and exhibits God's handiwork in every respect. Man has mental

attributes far above the animal creation. He has moral and ethical qualities totally lacking in the lower animals.

And by using deductive reasoning, not only can we prove that God exists, but we can also determine just what he is like. Impossible! you say? Not at all. It is self-evident that the highest and grandest thing created cannot be superior to its Maker, but must of necessity be inferior to it. Since the grandest earthly creation of God is man; and since man is endowed with the characteristics of justice, love and wisdom; it follows that God, the Creator of man, must possess these attributes to a far wider and grander degree. And from our observation of the immensity and orderliness of the universe, we realize the tremendous power of God. So we know what God is like because of the things he has created. We know that he is just, benevolent, wise and powerful, and much more so than we are. It must be so. Thus, without seeing God with our eyes, we see him with our minds. And we instinctively love and seek to worship such a great and wonderful God.

Now comes our next proposition: How can we know what God's plan is for humankind? Again we use deductive reasoning. Is it not logical to suppose that such an infinitely wise and good Being as God is, having made man mentally capable of realizing that He exists, would then be moved by his love and justice to supply the wants of man's nature by giving him some revelation concerning himself and his Plan for mankind? All must agree that this is an entirely reasonable supposition. And where do we find such a revelation? We find it only in the Bible. This book was written over a period of many centuries by men inspired by God's spirit, who faithfully recorded what God wanted to reveal to mankind. And we can identify the Bible as God's Word because it is the only ancient record which explains to the satisfaction of every reasonable mind such important subjects as: How the earth was prepared for man's habitation, describing the various geological events preceding the appearance of life; and then the exact order in which the various forms of vegetation and animal life appeared upon the earth; facts which are confirmed by the latest scientific findings. How man was created perfect and designed to live forever and how he fell from perfection into sin and death. Why evil and calamities are now permitted. How man was redeemed from death; as a result of which the dead will be raised, and all the willing and obedient of mankind be restored to perfection, the love everlasting in health and happiness upon the earth. The Bible also contains prophecies of future events, and tells when they will take place. Written thousands of years ago, it foretells and accurately describes present conditions, and locates just where we are now in relation to God's Plan, and reveals what we can expect in the immediate future.

The question may be asked: If man was created perfect, and designed to live forever, why is he in such an imperfect condition today? He suffers disease, pain, calamities, sorrows, and all manner of evils, and dies an early death. Why is this so? The Bible tells us how God required the first man, Adam, to be obedient to him in order to continue to live. This

was an entirely just requirement. Do we not expect obedience from our children? And he purposely made the test of obedience very easy. He simply designated a certain fruit tree, and asked Adam not to eat of it. Adam failed under the test. God therefore withdrew his favor from him, and Adam began to die. It was after Adam had sinned against God that he brought forth his children. Thus they were all born imperfect; “born in sin and shapen in iniquity,” as expressed in Psalm 51:5. The human race began to degenerate, and has fallen steadily ever since. This accounts for present day conditions. It was Adam’s sin of disobedience that is the cause of all human miseries.

But God did not leave mankind in such a hopeless condition. Being loving as well as just, he provided a means of redeeming man from death. He provided a Ransom. Thus we read in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And we read in 1 Tim. 2:5 and 6 of “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Ransom means “corresponding price,” or “equivalent price.” To illustrate: Suppose a man is captured and held by an enemy who demands the payment of a certain sum for his release. That sum represents the value of the man—his price or ransom. When Adam disobeyed God and was condemned to death, a perfect man’s life was forfeited. In order to redeem Adam’s life and thus release him from death, another perfect man’s unforfeited life must be yielded up in offset, in the place and stead of the forfeited life. This is the ransom price for Adam.

God arranged for this price to be provided. He gave his only begotten Son. Jesus was born a man, of the human race. But, unlike other men, he was perfect, because God was his Father. He was the equivalent of Adam before Adam sinned. He sacrificed his perfect human life. He died without deserving to die, in the place of Adam who deserved to die. God accepted his sacrifice as the Ransom price for Adam. Thus Adam and all his race who inherited death through him, were redeemed and must live again. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Hos. 13:14, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death.” And we read in Acts 24:15 that “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Every man who has ever lived, whether good or bad, will be raised from death during God’s Kingdom under Christ, soon to be fully established on earth. It will be a benevolent but firm Kingdom, ruling in absolute justice and equity. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:34: “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Many prophecies of the Bible indicate that this Kingdom is now at hand. The signs are numerous and unmistakable. In our subsequent discussions we will consider some of these prophecies and identify their fulfillment.

Thank you for listening; and God bless you!