

4/1/21 The Purpose of the New Creation, Part 3

We're going to move into Part 3 of 'the purpose of the new creation'. And so we can stay on the same page, I'll start with a brief review of what we covered in the first two studies we did on this.

A large part of part 1 focused on Job as an historical account allowing us to see what's happening behind the scenes as the war between the Lord and Satan overflows into the lives of God's servants.

We looked at suffering under a silent heaven.

Here's how I closed that study,

Job didn't know the "why", he only knew the God he had come to trust, even in the deepest mysteries and sufferings of his life.

So, when we face what we face, we need to look far beyond the immediate circumstances and, as Peter says in 1 Pet. 1:13, "gird up the loins of your minds" with a fuller reality than just those things which are below.

We have much greater knowledge of life's meaning and purpose than Job did; we know that each time we take a stand for God in the heat of battle, we defeat Satan, bring honor to God, educate angels, and advance in our own preparation for the throne.

Our lives are not trivial and our circumstances are not meaningless.

Our part in this invisible struggle, then, is to trust that God knows exactly what He's doing and will avenge us upon our enemy.

Listen to how Watchman Nee explains this:

"We do not know what the way of the cross is. We do not realize that all which comes our way is permitted by God. Whatever is against our will, whatever causes us to be misunderstood, makes us suffer, blocks our way, or shatters our hope is a cross given by God to us. Yet how do we face such a thing?"

“Whenever God allows a cross to fall on us, He has a particular reason. Each cross has its spiritual mission, that is to say, it is sent to accomplish something special in our life. If we endure according to God’s will, our natural life will be further dealt with and we shall have a greater capacity for being filled with the resurrection life of the Son.”

Then in part 2, we looked at the ultimate goal of all that the Lord takes us through in this life, and the need on our part to clearly understand that goal and to commit to it.

This is one of the quotes I read in closing out last week’s study;

“People with their minds, wills, hearts and bodies committed know what they're after. That man knows where he's going. There's nothing tentative about him. Nothing indefinite. These people or that person, they are not beating the air. Like Paul, "So fight I, not as one that beats the air." There is this registration of an impact of purpose. As the apostle Paul wrote, "This one thing I do... This *one* thing I do".

Now, dear friends, what is our single inclusive purpose in being? Have you got one? Have you become mastered by it? A single purpose in life. The purpose that you bring into your business, into your profession, into your home, into wherever you are. Whatever people may have to say about you, and they can level many criticisms at you and perhaps rightly so, and may on many points have some disparaging things to say, but they have to come back to this: 'That person, that person has a great love for God. They're bent upon the interests of the Lord and there's no doubt about it.' That's a characteristic of Christ with those around Him. He was never abstract, never indefinite, never passive. Meet Him anywhere, and you'll meet One who is definite and deliberate, who carries always with Him this, 'I am about My Father’s business. Come with me. Go with me. Or if you will not, I will not wait. I'm going on.'

“So, do we have this deep sense of being mastered by a single purpose that runs through every aspect of our lives? The Lord has called His church to be like this. If He cannot get the whole, He'll get parts of it like this.”

We'll pick up from there and tie what we've seen into what we are facing in this generation.

Tonight, we're going to look at deception. First in the general sense, so we can see the scope of this and how deception has permeated the world and the Church.

Then we'll get more specific, so we can see the implications to us personally.

The only way we can hope to have clarity of vision and rest or confidence in our souls, is if we faithfully evaluate all we are learning and especially *all we are doing in response* to what we learn, in the light of what the author called, "the one supreme purpose of God."

As we saw last time, growing spiritually in our journey from salvation to the Throne is the Lord's one goal for us – and it should our one goal also.

The specific challenges in our time have never been faced at this level of intensity by any other generation of believers.

And I would guess that what you and I are dealing with now is greater than anything we've had to deal with before in our own lives also.

That's how fast things are moving.

Every prophetic passage that speaks about the last generation does so in language that emphasizes the intensified level of pressure that believers will experience over other generations.

Primarily in the area of deception;

(Matt. 24:24) "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

(2 Thess. 2:3) "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the great falling away comes first."

(1 Tim. 4:1) "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

(2 Tim. 4:3-4) “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

We have to keep in mind that although deception includes false doctrine, it also includes the absence of sound doctrine.

In other words, we can probably recognize the New Age spirituality and demonization of movements like Bethel or the New Apostolic Reformation; or religious leaders like Joel Osteen, Tony Compallo, Kenneth Copeland, John MacArthur, and hundreds of others.

Some of these men are Christians who are just off in areas of their theology that are vital to have right, which they don't (like MacArthur); they aren't intentionally deceiving anyone. Others are demonized and know exactly what they're doing (like Copeland).

But the only way to ensure spiritual advance for a believer is made clear by Paul in Acts 20:25-32:

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

You can see how important delivering the “full counsel of God” is, rather than just those parts of the Bible that are convenient or non-offensive, by Paul's use of the phrase, “I am innocent of the blood of all men.”

This is literally the only way to make sure that those being ministered to can be “built up in the word of His grace”, and secure an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ.

If you’ve ever wondered what Paul meant by “innocent of the blood of all men,” here’s why he said that.

(Ezek. 3:18-21) “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from My mouth, give them a warning from Me. If I say to the wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ but you do not warn him or speak out to warn him from his wicked way to save his life, that wicked man will die in his iniquity, and I will hold you responsible for his blood. But if you warn a wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness and his wicked way, he will die in his iniquity, but you will have saved yourself. Now if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. If you did not warn him, he will die in his sin, and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered. And I will hold you responsible for his blood. But if you warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live because he heeded your warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

Now compare that passage with these other New Testament counterparts,

(James 3:1) “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”

(Heb. 13:17) “Obey those who rule over you . . . for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief.”

So, if a pastor decides he’s going to avoid or censor certain parts of the Bible for fear of offending or losing people, at the Bema seat he will be among those 1 John 2:28 says will “shrink back in shame at the Lord’s appearing”.

He’s responsible to teach what the mystery of Christ is, as a new corporate species of humanity, since this forms the doctrinal foundation for literally everything in the spiritual lives of those in this dispensation. And especially in this generation, he is *absolutely* responsible to teach the eschatological implications of the final spiritual and moral development of that New Creation.

Not only are those in his congregation not able to grow unto full stature because they lack an understanding of God's purpose, but they are also not being warned of the dangers around them.

So, as they remain stagnant in spiritual infancy and defenseless against the wolves that bring deception, the Lord is holding the pastor accountable.

This doesn't let the sheep off the hook for their own responsibility to not "heap to themselves teachers who only tell them what they want to hear", but there is an emphasis in the apostle's writings that shows the greater accountability of the pastor.

The bottom-line is that the *absence* of knowing the truth is just as likely to lead to deception as embracing false doctrine.

I've shared this line from Spurgeon before,

"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."

And another one,

"Just because something isn't a lie does not mean that it isn't deceptive. A pastor who speaks mere portions of truth is a craftsman of destruction, whether or not he is aware of the damage he does."

We can't commit to God's purpose in Christ, if we don't know what that purpose is. And if it's not taught from our pulpits, we will run with whatever *is* taught. Something is going to fill that void in us, because we all desire for our lives to have value.

So, the greatest danger at this time in history is that of spiritual deception. And both pastor and congregation are responsible to resist this through what we saw in Acts 20 – the pastor warns and teaches, the church responds.

The reason I said this would be our 'greatest danger' is partly because of the stress Paul and Peter put on this in their writings about the end time, but also because Jesus Himself says it will be the greatest danger the last generation faces.

(Matt. 24:3-4) “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you.’”

The Jewish style of writing and speaking was to emphasize the main point they wanted to make by placing it at the top of any listing they gave.

You can see also this in Paul’s listing of the gifts in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4:11 (“... first, apostles, then prophets, etc.”).

Deception may refer to anything that’s not “sound doctrine”, but ultimately, since our Christian lives are about “life”, and not just doctrine, there’s as much danger of being deceived by *not responding* to sound teaching, as there is by not hearing it in the first place. (Jas. 1:22) “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, *deceiving* yourselves.”

Listen to this commentator’s explanation of Rev. 3:18: “I counsel you to buy from Me... salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.”

“We have to test everything we think we know by its effect in our lives. You and I may have an enormous amount of what we think to be spiritual knowledge; we have all the doctrines, all the truths. But what is the effect? It is not seeing in a true spiritual sense, if we are not changed. Truly knowing is to be changed, and it is not knowing if it does not bring that about. It would be far better for us to be stripped of all that and to be brought right down to the point where we really do see just a little that makes a difference. We must be very honest with God about this. Would we not sooner have just a very little indeed that was a hundred percent effective, than a whole mountain of knowledge, ninety percent of which counted for nothing? Real understanding, Paul says, is being changed.”

I also wanted to share a more current testimony and exhortation by Chip Brodgen after he moved out of what he called “Churchianity” into the discovery of God’s purpose for His people.

“A middle-aged man came up to me during the lunch break at one of our day-long workshops. His eyes were moist and he grasped one of my hands between his two hands. “Brother,” he said, “I just want you to know that I

learned more from you this morning than I learned going to church for twenty years.” There was a mixture of emotions in the man: joy, for having discovered so many new treasures to be explored; sadness, for all the years wasted warming a pew, making no progress.

“That incident has repeated itself over many years and many workshops with many different people who each expressed the same thing. Is it because I’m such a wonderful teacher? Not at all. It’s due to the fact that Churchianity is content with the status quo. I will never, ever, ever be content with the status quo. I know the status quo all too well: don’t ruffle feathers, don’t go too far, just give people a nice, warm, fuzzy, positive, encouraging devotional talk and be sure to get them out the door by noon.

“Spiritual growth and maturity are *not* the goals of Churchianity. Churchianity has made Christianity into a passive spectator sport for the spiritually obese. In the meantime, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). I believe God calls all of us to grow, to mature, to make progress, to advance.

“Living things grow; if you aren’t growing then you’re dying.

“For the church-addicted, church defines your purpose: who you are, your reason for living, your reason for being. And when church isn’t there anymore, it leaves a great big hole where your purpose used to be. Some will wander away from one church and find another church to fill the void. Some will wander from group to group, movement to movement, to fill the void within the context of their fellowship fantasy. Some will wander away from God and look for carnal, worldly, fleshly pursuits to fill the void.

“Others will come out of Churchianity and discover a whole new reason for living: a new identity, a new calling, a new mission, a new way of seeing the world and one another. You have been taught that the only place God can use a person is within the narrow confines of the local church establishment. But you will discover a new identity that is based on Christ. And you will learn how to find and fulfill God’s Purpose for your life. A Purpose that transcends who you meet with, where you meet, or what you do when you meet. A Purpose that transforms you from Passive Spectator into Active Participant in the Plan of God. A Purpose that makes sense of all the pain

you have suffered, and for which you are willing to suffer all over again, if necessary.

“A Joseph moment, when you realize that God permitted the pain of rejection in order to prepare you for saving the lives of the very ones who rejected you.

“A David moment, when you realize that God blessed you to be a blessing, and made you a king, not so you could be served, but so you could serve.

“An Esther moment, when you realize that you were brought into the kingdom “for such a time as this.”

“A Paul moment, when your personal religious pursuits are interrupted by the Living Lord, and you cry, “Lord, what would *You* have me to do?”

“In those moments you will find a Purpose that is bigger than you, bigger than the meeting of your own needs. A Purpose that makes following Jesus all worthwhile.”

As I said earlier, the people we care about, the ones God cares about, can't commit to His purpose if they don't know what that purpose is; and that is especially true in the consummation of this age.

The deception we are seeing in the Church in the last couple of years, is the same deception the world is believing.

This is where we are starting to see the Church collapse around us. Some churches are even setting up vaccination centers in their buildings.

Others still won't open their doors because they either believe the lies about the virus & vaccine, or are afraid of the government.

In spite of the fact that Heb. 10:25 is a command, not a suggestion.

“Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhort one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.”

And you notice the reason given in that last line – “as you see the day approaching.” This is the most important time in the Church Age to be encouraging one another in the faith.

Now, on a more personal level, Satan is intensely engaged in what Watchman Nee called, “the wearing down tactics of the enemy.” He drew this from Dan. 7:25 and applied it to the end of the Church age as the world moves into the Tribulation.

“And he shall speak words against the Most High [God] and shall wear down the saints of the Most High . . .”

Spiritual, emotionally and physically, there is an increased agenda on the part of Satan to wear us out in this struggle we’re in.

The result he’s looking for is that we will be so exhausted and overcome by pain that we will become deadened and stagnant.

It’s unrelenting and intended to crush us.

The reason the Lord allows this is for the development a greater endurance than most in the Church Age have known – the character of those, who under the greatest pressure of all, remain loyal to their Lord.

He will use this to ensure that His final remnant will have the inner strength to not withdraw or retreat, but have the courage to take a stand while Laodicea goes under.

Houses built on rock vs. houses built on sand.

I hope by now you’re seeing more clearly what the word “overcomer” means, and why it’s not just getting saved, but conquering in the face of a battle raging against us.

The overcoming remnant are those who don’t close their churches, or censor the word of God out of fear of offending or losing people, or abandon God’s purpose to settle for an easier, safer commitment to Christ.

This is the deception Laodicea will embrace – the lie that Christ can be followed in a state of compromise and spiritual cowardice.

One final note on what we *personally* face consistently in this struggle.

Satan uses our past to discourage us and bring our momentum to a standstill through the loss of hope.

In Rev. 12:11 we read this:

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives to the death.”

Regarding the phrase, “the blood of the Lamb”; we need to spend just a minute seeing what that means in relation to overcoming.

We touched on this in our discussion last week when we looked at Jacob, Abraham and David.

We all know what David did – murder, adultery, and counting Israel. All of these brought disaster to him and to his nation. But because his heart was genuinely given to the Lord, his sins were forgiven.

In the New Testament accounts of David, we see statements like this one in Acts 13:36; “David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, and fell asleep, was buried with his fathers.”

Did he? Was David serving the will of God when he murdered Uriah? Why doesn't the Holy Spirit remind us of that in the New Testament?

Because his sins were forgiven. When our sins are forgiven, they are blotted out. This is what it means to stand on the blood of the Lamb.

(1 Jn. 1:7) “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

If we live in a state of transparency, honesty and repentance before the Lord, our past sins are not a barrier to our fellowship with Him.

We are to “forget those things which lie behind” no matter how many times the enemy wants us to remember them.

If we resist him, he will flee from us.

In other words, *the truth will cause the deception to be lifted from our minds*. This is why we study and apply what we learn. We won't be deceived if we know the truth and can identify the lies coming from the prince of lies.

Now, I want to read Isa. 14:12-19.

“How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'
Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.
“Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, saying:
'Is this the one who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
Who made the world as a wilderness;
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’
“All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
But you are cast out of your grave
Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.”

Lucifer lost the second he rebelled. His destiny has never been in question; Christ was crucified before the foundation of the world. The victory was won in eternity. The Lake of Fire was created before the human race even came into existence.

The entire history of the human race is God's vindication of the rightness of sentencing Satan to Hell.

Any of us can look back over history and see the horrible evil, pain, suffering and deception Lucifer has brought to God's creation. This is Satan's character, he's the deceiver of the nations, and the only place this type of being merits is the Lake of Fire.

You can also see in this the seriousness with which God views compliance with the enemy.

This is Satan's world and before he's done, he will kill as many as he can, because he came to steal, kill and destroy, and this is his final push before the Tribulation begins.

For the most part, the Church is deceived, but a remnant sees through all of it – they see the evil for what it is, and are increasingly taking a stand against it.

(Eph. 5:11) "have no fellowship with the . . . works of darkness, but rather expose them."

I don't know how far this will go until the rapture. I know that it will go far enough to make a clear and obvious distinction between the remnant and the non-remnant.

And I know it will continue until the world is removed from the hearts of the remnant. The only access the enemy has to any Christian is through their compromise with Satan's kingdom of religion and immorality.

Once there is no longer any affinity between the Christian and the world, no longer any attraction for what Satan called, "all the kingdoms of this world and its glory", then we are, at that point, 'overcomers'. We will have overcome the world, flesh and devil. Because those are the things the prince of the power of the air controls as his own.

We will be able to say, "Behold, the god of this world is coming and has nothing in Me."

Not sinless perfection, but a spiritual and moral detachment from all that is not of Christ.

There's a moral purity and a spiritual intelligence that will characterize the final remnant of believers.

What happens globally in this next year will genuinely be the final stand of the Lord's people against the ruling prince of this world.

Ok, closing passages:

(Phil. 3:13-15) "(This) one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind."

What's the prize that had completely captured the vision of Paul?

(Rev. 21:1-2) "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The overcoming remnant of the Church age will be the governmental center of the new heavens and new earth - forever.

And that is where our gaze should be fixed.