

God Works in Phases

1 Corinthians 3:4-9 states, “*For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Paul and Apollos, fellow workmen for God, are nothing without His increase. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that plants any thing, neither he that waters; but God that gives the increase. Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*”

As one studies life, or, as he reads Scripture, he becomes aware that God works in phases. We see how that God develops us in a phase, and then moves on to the next phases of His plan to our life.

In Mark 4:28 we read where Jesus taught, “*The earth brings forth the fruit, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*” It is a picture of how things grow, the phases God uses in producing fruit. As you look at the natural world around you . . . a field of grain . . . trees . . . or, even man, himself, you see this law of God, working in phases, operating.

In the study, and observation, of creation, one realizes that the Bible does not teach the theory of evolution, however, it does teach “*progressiveness*,” that God always works in phases. In the book of Genesis, when we read of God’s creative hand, we see first “*the brooding of the Holy Spirit over the earth, that had become void and without form.*” God first created “*light*,” which was a necessity of life for God’s created beings. Then He created the heavens, and the earth is formed, the sea appears, and dry land appeared. God then brings about the day and the night, then, He causes vegetarian life to appear upon the earth. He, then, brings about the lower forms of animal life, and ***finally*** He created man and woman. God spoke into existence, and created, all creation – in phases!

Notice, too, in God’s *revelation of His will for man*, it was progressive. He worked in phases. God did not reveal the whole of His entire will to just one prophet at one time. No! He began by forms, and ceremonies, of great truths He wished to reveal to mankind. He gave picture of what He desired to teach to man. Then, God rose to a higher spiritual perception, in His revelation of truth. He revealed to mankind that, “*Obedience was better than these sacrifices.*”

Jesus referred to this progressive, process, that God uses in dealing with mankind. In John 4: 21, Jesus said to the Samaritans at the well, “*The time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.*” He continues in verse 23, “*A time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.*”

In John 5:1-9, we find the healing of man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been an invalid for 38 years. When Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed, he said, “*I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.*” This is a strange story indeed. The first one in the pool after the “*the stirring of the water*” was healed. Evidently, God worked at time through this method between the period of time after the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, because of man’s inability to comprehend, completely, His healing power.

Look at God's truth on "*the immorality of the soul,*" that is, life after death. The Old Testament has very little to say about this subject. We do get a glimpse of it in the book of Job, and, hope of "*life after death*" is expressed in the psalms, but, when you get to the New Testament, we are told that, "*Christ brought life and immortality to light.*" Immortality has always been true of man, but man could not grasp it, however, Christ, when He came to earth, "*brought life and immortality to light,*" that is, He revealed it in a manner that to mankind could understand it. He made this truth of God clear!

Take the plan of salvation that God has for mankind. The theme of redemption begins in the book of Genesis, however, it is very indistinct, unclear, vague, hazy, and uncertain in its tone. It was like music coming from afar, you hear a note here and there, but you can't quite make it out. However, as it comes closer, it is more distinguished and clear.

Through the ages, prophet after prophet arises, each adding some "*new phase*" to the original theme. From some mountain peak of prophetic activity (such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or some minor prophet) the strains of God's message, majestically begin to roll, until they ring out with the clearness of a bell. Perhaps from a valley of decaying bones God's prophetic message is given. Sometimes God was silent, the strains die away, as if the music is muffled.

Truth came down through the ages, progressively, until, at last, the bugle call, sounding like the hallelujah chorus, announces the birth of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Over the hills of Bethlehem, in full chorus, the angels sing, "*Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will toward men.*"

Look at the Dispensations presented in Scripture, the various periods in what God dealt with mankind. We see how one age led up to, and prepared the way, for a subsequent, better, age. This progressiveness of God's dealing with mankind will continue until the final, perfect age of Christ's kingdom is established upon earth.

At times, down through the ages, we see dark pages of man's response to God and His revealed will. From the beginning of the Old Testament, we see God's method of revelation is that of "*progressive growth.*" Finally, God's will is made clear by Christ Jesus, God's Word is complete. Man has a sufficient declaration of God's will. He has the infallible guide in all matters of faith and practice.

In our Christian life, God works in phases

God develops in us maturity in the phase of spiritual growth that we are in, and then He moves us on to the next phase of His plan for our lives.

I began preaching in 1948 . . . [I previously said I began preaching in 1949, however, I found some old preaching records of mine that was dated 1948] . . . Anyhow, I preached, as a youth leader, in National City, California. I then went into full time ministry, preaching revivals for almost two years, after which, I pastored my home church, in National City, for about a year, as fill-in, until they could get a pastor. In 1951, Martha and I married and traveled in evangelistic work for about 6 years. We had revival meetings all through the south, ending up in New England. In 1954, we accepted the Assembly of God church in New York City, where we pastored for about 8 years and where our children were born. We accepted the church in Schenectady . . . in the Tri-city area of Schenectady-Albany-Troy area . . . for about 7 or 8 years.

We then went to Buffalo in 1970 and pastored for 12 years. We came here to Rome, New York, in 1983 and have been here for 17 years.

I can look back over my life and see how God has worked in our life in phases, and we are now about to enter into a new phase of God's dealing, "retirement."

I also believe that God has a new phase of ministry for this church, something better for you, and something very different for us.

We will close a chapter in our life, in God's dealing with us in one phase, and we will begin a new chapter in our life.

In God's dealing with us, He allows our circle of influence, to affect each other for a certain period of time. We need each another for that period of time that God, in His wise providence, has ordained. Our lives often appear scrambled and unrelated, like looking at a tapestry from the under side, seeing the tangled mass of loose ends, a disjointed and unconnected pattern, completely unsymmetrical. However, God, looking at the above side, sees the beautiful design he is weaving!

*"My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me,
I can but choose the colors, He worketh steadily.
Oft times He weaves sorrow, but I, in foolish pride,
Forget He see the upper, and I the underside*

*Not until the loom is silent, and the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the pattern, and explain the reason why,
The dark threads are as needful in the skillful Weaver's hand,
As the threads of gold and silver, for the pattern which He planned.*

I agree with the preacher who wrote, "I don't know what I have accomplished by coming to this town. I only know that I have come with God in my heart, and have done my best. I am not keeping books. God is doing that. Some day on the other side of the River, I am going to take down my book and look at it. I'm sure God will let me see it then, and I am going to see just what I have accomplished with I came to this town." I could not have stated it better.