

THE PLANS AND PURPOSES OF GOD

1. God always thinks, speaks, and acts purposefully. He is a purposeful God.
 - a. **Proverbs 16:4** 4 Yahweh has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.
 - b. **Isaiah 46:9-11** 9 I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.... 11 I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass. I have purposed, and I will do it.
 - c. **Ephesians 1:4-11** 4 In love 5 [God] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to the **purpose** of his desire, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his desire, according to his **purpose** that he set forth in Messiah 10 as a **plan** for the fullness of time, to unite all things in [Messiah], things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the **purpose** of him who works all things according to the counsel of his desire....
 - d. General and special revelation show God is purposeful.
 - (1) **Isaiah 55:10-11** 10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
2. God's plans and purposes derive from his infinite power and perfect character.
 - a. **Isaiah 25:1** 1 Yahweh, you are my God. I will exalt you. I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
 - b. God never acts arbitrarily or capriciously.
3. God acts for the purpose that:
 - a. People may know there is none like him on the earth.
 - (1) **Exodus 9:14** 14 I [Yahweh] will send all my plagues on you [Pharaoh] yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.
 - b. His name may be proclaimed in all the earth.
 - (1) **Exodus 9:16** 16 For this purpose I have raised you [Pharaoh] up, to show you my power so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.
 - c. We may tell our children and grandchildren about him.
 - (1) **Exodus 10:1-2** 1 Yahweh said to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, 2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am Yahweh.
 - d. We may know him personally as God.

- (1) **Exodus 16:12** 12 At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God.
- e. He may unite all things in heaven and on earth in Messiah.
 - (1) **Ephesians 1:4-11** 4 In love 5 [God] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to the **purpose** of his desire, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his desire, according to his **purpose** that he set forth in Messiah 10 as a **plan** for the fullness of time, to unite all things in [Messiah], things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the **purpose** of him who works all things according to the counsel of his desire....
4. God is sovereign, so no one can stop him from executing his general plan and purpose.
 - a. **Isaiah 14:24-27** 24 Yahweh of armies has sworn: As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, 25 that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot. And his yoke shall depart from [Israel], and his burden from their shoulder. 26 This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. 27 For Yahweh of armies has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?
 - b. **Isaiah 46:9-11** 9 Remember the former things of old. For I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.... 11 I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass. I have purposed, and I will do it.
 - c. God uses even his enemies to carry out his plans and purposes.
 - (1) **Revelation 17:17** 17 God has put it into their hearts [of the ten kings] to carry out his **purpose** by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.
5. God knows how all his plans and purposes will play out in the future.
 - a. The general plot of the biblical story is already written. See *The Biblical Story*.
 - b. Ahead of time, God knows the potentialities and actualities of our lives.
 - c. Individual human beings exercise limited free will within the biblical story.
 - (1) **Psalms 139:16** 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
6. God has a **general** plan and purpose for:
 - a. The universe.
 - (1) **Ephesians 1:4-11** 4 In love 5 [God] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to the **purpose** of his desire, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the

riches of his grace 8 that he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his desire, according to his **purpose** that he set forth in Messiah 10 as a **plan** for the fullness of time, to unite all things in [Messiah], things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the **purpose** of him who works all things according to the counsel of his desire....

- b. Angels.
 - c. Mankind.
 - d. Planet earth.
7. God has a **special** plan and purpose for:
- a. Nations and communities.
 - (1) Israel.
 - (a) **Jeremiah 29:11** 11 I know the plans I have for you [Israel], declares Yahweh, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
 - (b) **Acts 17:26-27** 26 [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.
 - (2) Tribes within Israel.
 - (a) **Numbers 33:54** 54 You [Israel] shall inherit the land by lot according to your clans. To a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance. Wherever the lot falls for anyone, that shall be his.
 - (3) New Zealand.
 - (4) Timaru.
 - b. Families.
 - (1) The Colemans.
 - c. Individuals.
 - (1) **Psalms 139:16** 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
 - (2) **Ephesians 3:8-11** 8 To me [Paul]...this grace was given, to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Messiah 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the **plan** of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal **purpose** that he has realized in Messiah Jesus our Lord....
 - (3) Jeff.
8. God's plans and purposes do not obliterate human free will, but they do constrain it.
- a. We don't get to choose many things related to our individual plan and purpose.
 - (1) **Acts 17:26-27** 26 [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.

- b. We do, however, get to decide whether we will run the course God has set out for us.
9. God reveals much about his plans and purposes to those with the capacity to listen.
 - a. **Ephesians 3:8-11** 8 To me [Paul]...this grace was given, to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Messiah 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the **plan** of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal **purpose** that he has realized in Messiah Jesus our Lord....
 - b. Sometimes God communicates his plans and purposes ahead of time.
 - c. However, God is not obligated to do so.
 - d. We should desire to know God's plans and purposes.
 - e. The "meh, whatever" attitude ill befits the Christian.
 10. If we fulfill the special purpose God gives us, we will contribute to his general purpose.
 - a. God's special plan and purpose is unique for each individual and family.
 - b. We must reject all envy and jealousy with respect to God's special plans and purposes.
 - (1) **Ecclesiastes 5:18-19** 18 Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat, drink, and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. 19 Everyone also to whom God has given wealth, possessions, and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God.
 - c. We have the capacity to reject God's special plan and purpose for our lives.
 - d. We have the capacity to deceive ourselves as to God's special plan and purpose for our lives.
 11. It is comforting to know God is in charge and that his plans and purposes are perfect.

Bibliography

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Plan of God*. Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003.

Notes