

# GOD HAS A PLAN

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## Subject Block: The Plan of God

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God has a plan.

- It's plan that demonstrates the centrepiece of his character - his wonderful love. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all"
- A plan that is victorious, majestic and glorious; and into which he places his creation - people like you and me - at it's heart.

God is not confused about his plan. He only has one. And because he only has one glorious plan, we come across it all through his Word. From cover to cover.

Like most successful plans, the plan of God possesses some essential elements:

- an objective (ultimate outcome or vision),
- a strategy (implementing steps or course),
- a time-frame (calendar or completion date),
- a cause (target group or cast of beneficiaries),
- an implementing force (personnel or move of God).

Consider the following examples from the Bible (all glimpses into the great plan of God) and the essential elements they contain.

### Example One

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing.'" (Genesis 1:26)*

- ✦ Objective: for mankind to bear the image and likeness of God and to reign (have dominion) in the earth over the created world. (This is regarded as the 'first purpose' declaration of God that remains operative through every further revelation of the plan and purpose of God).
- ✦ Strategy: God's creative work in the lives of mankind ("let us") and mankind's work in accepting the privilege ("let them")

- + Cause: the created world on earth.
- + Implementing force: mankind.

#### Example Two

*“Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great ... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”* (Genesis 12:1–3)

- + Objective: to bless Abram and, through him, to bless all the families of the earth.
- + Strategy: separation (from country, family and father’s house), the blessing of God coming upon him, promotion from God (*I will make your name great*), and obedience to the command in the statement.
- + Cause: the families of the earth.
- + Implementing force: Abram and his offspring (the New Testament writers regarded this as being Christ and those who believe in him by faith - Galatians 3:16 - 29).

#### Example Three.

*“I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God ... and I will bring you into the land which I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage”* (Exodus 6:6 - 8)

- + Objective: to give the promised land as a heritage (inheritance) to the redeemed people of God. (This story of Israel is the parallel of the story of the Church in the plan of God - 1 Corinthians 10:1–11 and Hebrews 3:1 - 4:13)
- + Strategy: to be brought out, rescued, redeemed and taken as God’s people.
- + Cause: the fulfilment of God’s desire for his people, as expressed in promises to the forefathers of faith
- + Implementing force: the will of God (“I will” 7x)

Example Four:

“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18 – 20)

- ✦ Objective: nations being discipled to Jesus Christ
- ✦ Strategy: Christ’s followers going to the nations with the authority of God; discipling, baptising and teaching wherever they go.
- ✦ Cause: all nations becoming obedient to Christ.
- ✦ Implementing force: the continual empowering presence of Jesus being with believers who “go”.

Example Five:

“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God . . . because the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God . . . we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body”. (Romans 8:19, 21 & 23)

- ✦ Objective: all created life being delivered from bondage (the limitation, death and disorder it fell into when mankind fell in sin); and experience glorious liberty just like the experience of the children of God.
- ✦ Strategy: the maturing of the children of God to full sonship, and their revealing to the world.
- ✦ Cause: the restoration of “edenic” beauty, order and glory on the earth.
- ✦ Implementing force: believers who will not be satisfied with anything less than the fullness of the Spirit bringing them into a full release of power and resurrection life.

Example Six:

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever’”. (Revelation 11:15)

- + Objective: Christ’s kingly rulership over the whole earth.
- + Strategy: the kingdoms of this world becoming void of all influence over mankind (these are spiritual kingdoms promoted by principalities and powers of Satan’s host)
- + Cause: that mankind everywhere live in the blessing and order of the Kingdom of God.
- + Implementing force: not seen in it’s entirety in this statement, however, the trumpet is a type of the prophetic voice . . . from other references we learn the importance of the prophetic voice in declaring destiny, decreeing the Word of the Lord, and calling forth God’s people to fulfil their kingdom mandate.

These are six examples of how we can search out the plan of God in the Word. This is an important discipline for every believer, and an imperative practice for everyone called into the ministry.

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The Plan of God has a beginning – **Genesis 1:1, 26-28**

It has an end (or fulfilment) – **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**

And it is organised through time to succeed – **Psalm 102:12-13**, Galatians 4:4  
When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman. Mark  
1:14-15 Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and  
saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Ephesians 1:9-12**

Understanding the plan and purpose of God comes by revelation:

Genesis 18:17-19 hide

And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth be blessed in him?

**Ephesians 1:15 – 19 enlightened**

Colossians 1:25-29 mystery

The mystery that has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to his saints.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 face to face

For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away . . . now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

God wants us to understand his wonderful plan!

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## **The End is in the Beginning and the Beginning is in the End**

The beginning and the end. Two passages that orientate toward a proper understanding of the plan of God.

- If we can understand the beginning and the end, we can usually figure out what's happening in-between. So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12
- If we can understand the seed, and then properly picture the harvest (beginning and the end), then we can gain a proper understanding of all that happens between seed-time and harvest – the growing or progressing seasons of our life and of the church through history.

## **Revelation 21:22 – 26** an awesome picture of the end

- A city in which God and Jesus reside
  - the presence of the Lord at all times v22
- In which the glory of God fills and illuminates and outshines the sun and the moon
  - an atmosphere totally awash with the glory of God v23
- In which Jesus is light v23
  - we see/understand everything because of the presence of Jesus
- Nations walk in the glory of this city and kings of earth bring their glory and honour into it – the glory and honour of the nations are brought into the city
  - the great heart of God for the nations . . . a massive harvest - all the nations of the earth blessed, and returning with blessing v24
- Kings and nations can freely access the city for it's always open
  - it has forever been on God's heart to be in fellowship with mankind; freely and abundantly . . . always open! v26

## **Genesis 3:8 – 11** let's take a look at the beginning

- A garden in which God would walk (*in the cool of the day* - ruach = wind or spirit) - like the city, God himself dwelt there
- The presence of God would've gloriously filled the atmosphere: there was no sin or limitation in mankind to diminish the power of his presence. Adam and Eve were clothed in the glory – after they fell were they naked, stripped of the glory that had covered them
  - like the city, the atmosphere was totally awash with the glory of God
- The greatest moments for mankind were in completely open fellowship with the Lord, day by day
  - like the city, man could see and understand everything because of their fellowship with God
- They had open access to the Lord; it was only after they had fallen that they wanted to hide

- like the city, it was on God's heart to be in fellowship with mankind; freely and abundantly . . . always open!
  - And the commission was to be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth (Genesis 2:28) in other words, God desired multitudes and nations to enjoy the glory of his presence
    - like the city, the God desired nations to walk in his glory
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As the purpose of God was revealed in the beginning, at seedtime, so it is seen fulfilled and complete at the end.

So for all who live in-between, there are simple truths:

1. It's all about God, his presence and his glory.
  - we don't always realise this when we're first saved
  - some Christians will live their whole lives without realising this
2. Our highest privilege and task is to fellowship intimately with him, and to press on to know his glory.
  - Paul said that he pressed on, that I may lay hold of that for which Jesus has laid hold of me (Philippians 3:12)
3. God is open and accessible to us always; it's our sin and fallenness that hinders us, but the cross opens the way back to his presence.
4. The great heart of God is for multitudes, for nations to know him and his glory.
5. We have been created to reign with God on the earth, so that all creation and countless multitudes are liberated to experience the glory of God forever.
  - The Bible tells us that Jesus is the *firstborn among many* (Romans 8:29) and The beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14) of a new creation, the prototype, the forerunner.
  - Consider his impact upon creation! He demonstrated what Adam had been given but had forfeited when he fell, and what is in store for the rest of the new creation (if we keep pressing on)

- And he's bringing many sons to glory – Hebrews 2:10 (not a mansion over in glory) Beginning of miracles – showed his glory
- the whole creation eagerly waits for the revealing/manifestation of the sons of God Romans 8:19

J.B Phillips – The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because it is so limited – yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in the magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! Romans 8:19-21

## Where's the City?

### Revelation 21

v1 'New' like us – I am a new person in Christ, but it's still me

v2 A city coming down . . . a city prepared as a bride (a city that's a bride, a bride that's a city)

v3 God dwelling with men (as he had in the garden)

v9-10 a city that's a bride, a bride that's a city. Who is the bride of Christ? The church! So as John goes on to describe the city that he sees he is describing the church.

v11 Having the glory of God!!! Then the city is described in prophetic language

v21 Pearly gates and streets of gold . . . this is not a place we go to when we die, it's this body, this bride, this city called the church filled with God and his glory! That people the nations and all creation have longed to see revealed.

### v22 – 26

- This is not a city the church will live in eternally away from the earth and its nations – NO!
- This is the church in which the Lord will live in all his glory, to which the nations will come to worship and bring their honour and glory!