

# The Plan and Purpose of God

God has a real plan for the human race upon planet Earth, and a definite purpose for His creation. The Bible is the only book in the world by which God speaks to mankind. There is no other source where we can learn about God's plan and purpose.

Reading the Bible with an open, enquiring mind will show that the plan and purpose of God is revealed throughout, from the very first book – Genesis – right through to the last – Revelation. This is endorsed by the Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection, when he said this to two disciples as they travelled:

*“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).*

At this point, only the Old Testament was complete, but the Lord Jesus is like a golden thread running through the whole of God's word.

## In the Beginning

In the beginning God created man and woman, Adam and Eve. They were placed in the Garden of Eden and were given the following commandment by God:

*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die (Genesis 2:17).*

They both disobeyed God and ate the fruit (Genesis 3:1-6), and their disobedience was the first sin. Consequently, they were cursed to die:

*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return”(v19).*

Sin and death have been with us ever since, but God's purpose and His plan for the salvation of men and women was put into action from the day Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden (v23–24).

## Promises to Abraham

The Old Testament tells us God's plan continues with promises made to faithful Abraham and his children: they and their descendants were to be given the promised land of Israel. To Abraham God said:

*Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you (Genesis 13:14–17).*

Abraham was promised he would become a great nation, and we can see that the blessing extended to all people:

*Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice (Genesis 22:17–18).*

Through Abraham's descendants, Isaac and Jacob, the nation of Israel was born. This nation was the first kingdom of God but the people rejected the Lord God from being their king, demanding one they could see like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8).

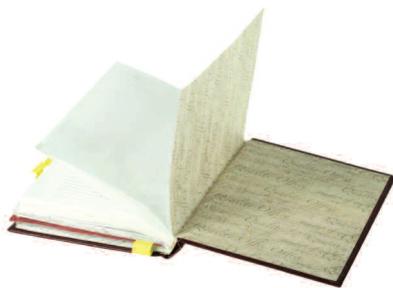
Around 1000 years after Abraham came King David, called "a man after God's own heart". He was promised a son who would also be the Son of God, who would save the people of Israel and ultimately bring salvation to the whole world (2 Samuel 7:8–16).

## **The Work of Jesus**

At the time of Jesus' birth there was a prophet called Simeon who spoke about Jesus, the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, and what he would do in the future:

*For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel (Luke 2:30–32).*

The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was sent to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection from the dead to eternal life for all who believe in God and obey His commandments. Jesus said:



*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

As part of God's plan, Jesus also came to provide us with the way of reconciliation to Him. Jesus was, as John the Baptist said "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

For this to happen, it was necessary for Jesus to submit to crucifixion, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Apostle Paul compared the sin of Adam with the obedience of Jesus:

*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous... so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:19, 21).*

Paul described this aspect of God's plan and purpose succinctly:

*Since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first-*

fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:21-26).

We saw in the promises made to Abraham that God's purpose extends to all people, not just the Jews. We are told specifically that the Gentiles (non-Jews) were also brought into God's plan. In Jerusalem at the council of believers, Simon Peter "declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14).

## **Jesus' Return as King**

In order for God to complete His purpose with the earth, Jesus Christ has to return from heaven to reign as king over the restored kingdom of God. We read about his ascension to heaven, and the promise made at that time:

*Now when he had spoken these things, while they watched, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).*

We find the same message when we look in the Old Testament:

*In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44).*

Not everyone will be allowed into the Kingdom of God. Jesus explained this to his disciples particularly by means of parables, such as in Matthew 25. Jesus will raise from the dead and judge all who had opportunity to follow him. Those who have shown faith and tried to follow Jesus' example will enter that wonderful kingdom.

*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).*

## **The Plan**

The Lord God in heaven created the earth, He formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). In fact, He wants to fill the world with people who want to worship Him, to fulfil His stated purpose:

*Truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD (Numbers 14:21).*

The Lord Jesus is to return from heaven to set up God's kingdom upon earth and ultimately he will hand over the kingdom to God Himself:

*When all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).*

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