

The Sovereignty of God

Part 3: God's Purposes

The Plan of Redemption, the Gospel, and Missions

Consider then how God, in His infinite wisdom, has planned the outworking of history to achieve this great end of displaying the glory of His name. As we look at Scripture, we see that even the earliest passages speak of God's plan to "save and redeem."

Genesis 3:15: And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And **between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head**, And you shall bruise him on the heel.

Indeed, the entire Bible declares how God is working out His plan for the ages. **Scripture plainly teaches** that it was always God's plan for mankind to fall, for Jesus to die upon the Cross, and for God to redeem for Himself a company of people whom He has **"destined for Glory."** Scripture is replete with passages testifying that these events were **"predestined according to His purpose"** and done by the **"predetermined plan and foreknowledge"** of God.

Ephesians 1:10-12: ^{10c}In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Acts 2:22-23: ²²Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—²³this Man, delivered up **by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28: ²⁷For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸**to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.**

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵**He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the kind intention of His will**, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 3:11-12: ¹¹This was in accordance with the **eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord**, ¹²in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Titus 1:1-2: ¹Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of **those chosen of God** and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ²**in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago**, ³**but at the proper time manifested**, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior;

2 Timothy 1:8-11: ⁸Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹**who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling**, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle and a teacher.

Question #74: What specific words and phrases in the above Scriptures reveal that God planned, from the beginning, to “save and redeem” a number of fallen sinners? _____

Question #75: How do these passages speak to the *absoluteness* of God’s sovereignty in your mind? _____

Since these things in God’s Word are necessarily true, we must now consider the means God ordained to carry out His plan for the ages. The **Bible plainly declares** that God uses the proclamation of the Gospel message in this late age to bring about His purpose of glorifying Himself in the redemption of sinners. He has charged His church with the great task of evangelizing the nations (missions). He has done this both for the sake of His great name, and so that the Lamb will receive the reward of His suffering. Since God has created both mankind and angels as morally responsible, He holds them accountable to His standard of morality. Scripture therefore affirms that both mankind and angels will stand in judgment before God and are accountable to God’s sovereign authority.

2 Peter 2:4: For if **God did not spare angels when they sinned**, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, **reserved for judgment**;

Hebrews 2:16: For assuredly **He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.**

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: ¹³The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, **because this applies to every person.** ¹⁴**For God will bring every act to judgment**, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Romans 3:19: Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and **all the world may become accountable to God**;

Romans 14:12: **So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God.**

1 Peter 4:1-5: ¹Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. ⁴And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you; ⁵**but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

Question 76: According to the above verses, what do mankind and angels have in common? _____

Question #77: According to the above verses, how has fallen mankind been blessed astoundingly more than have fallen angels? _____

Question #78: Ponder this astounding blessing; then write a short prayer of gratitude to God for it. _____

God expects His creatures, whom He has made for His own purposes, to live according to God's standard of moral character which requires perfection, purity, and holiness. Because all of mankind has fallen short of the glory of God (His perfect standard of moral character), they stand in great need of redemption – a need God provided for long ages ago in His **plan of redemption**. In our late age, God's plan of redemption is coming to pass through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As God's people proclaim the work of Jesus, who was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind and God's required redemption price, the purpose of God in redemption is being accomplished as He calls out His chosen people from every tribe and nation.

Romans 3:23: for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

Romans 16:25-27: ²⁵Now to Him who is able to establish you **according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,** ²⁶but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, **according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;** ²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Question #79: Why do all people everywhere need to be redeemed? _____

Through this gospel (the message of the person and work of Christ), the judgment of God for the sins of mankind has been cancelled for all who believe. By faith in Christ they enter into a state of redemption. Their debt of sin has been paid as God's wrath and judgment were satisfied at the cross. Christ Jesus Himself, in His perfect life and atoning death, fulfilled the law of God (God's perfect standard of moral character) and paid the just penalty for the wages of sin. This we call **justification by faith**.

Romans 3:21-28: ²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;** for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;** ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, **that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** ²⁷Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but **by a law of faith.** ²⁸For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**

Question #80: According to Romans 3:21-28, what did Christ do that makes it possible for God to freely forgive fallen sinners? _____

Because of this great work, God has exalted Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son of God and the man, to be the sovereign king and judge of the living and the dead. Therefore all nations and all people, in every age and generation, will bow the knee before the sovereign authority of Christ when judgment comes at the consummation of God's plan for the ages.

Ephesians 1:18-23: ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.** ²²**And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things** to the church, ²³which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

2 Timothy 4:1-2: ¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead**, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Philippians 2:9-11: ⁹Therefore also **God highly exalted Him**, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,** ¹¹**and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

Question #81: According to the above scriptures, do any nations or people exercise *sovereign* ruling authority on this earth? _____ Explain your answer. _____

This message of the Gospel is the *means* by which God brings to pass His eternal purpose in Christ to redeem. This is why missions is a key element of God's glory in the church. Scripture commands us to carry the Gospel to the far corners of the earth.

Mark 16:15: And He said to them, **"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."**

Ephesians 3:8-12: ⁸To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, **to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,** ⁹**and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God**, who created all things; ¹⁰in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with **the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,** ¹²in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Matthew 24:14: And **this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.**

Romans 10:14-15: ¹⁴How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And **how shall they hear without a preacher?** ¹⁵**And how shall they preach unless they are sent?** Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!”

So then God fully intends to save all those whom He has purposed to save. This He will accomplish by His great missionary people, the Gentile Church. The accomplishment of His purpose is *certain*! Scripture affirms that our sovereign God will save *all* of the people He has intended to save. Every last one *will* be saved.

John 6:37-39: ³⁷**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹**And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day.

Revelation 5:9-10: ⁹And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and **didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** ¹⁰And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Question #82: Describe the significance of the missionary activity of Christ’s Church. _____

Christ did all that was needed to *secure* the salvation of His church.

John 19:30: When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, “**It is finished !**” And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

In all of this great plan to redeem, God’s people magnify the *glory* of His grace in salvation. All of God’s redemptive acts throughout history work to the *end (the ultimate purpose)* of the praise of the glory of God’s excellency and nature as our Savior.

2 Corinthians 4:15: For all things are for your sakes, that **the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.**

Ephesians 1:3-14: **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶**to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He *freely* bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰**with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²**to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ **should be to the praise of His glory.** ¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, **to the praise of His glory.**

Even the very *state of being* to which God’s people are destined is said to be “glory”!

Ephesians 1:18: I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance** in the saints,

Romans 9:23-24: ²³And He did so in order that He might **make known the riches of His glory** upon vessels of mercy, which **He prepared beforehand for glory**, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Question #83: For what ultimate purpose did God purpose and act to save fallen sinners? _____

Question #84: Look back through this section and select one or more passages to memorize that will help you remember God's ultimate purpose for saving you.

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