

The outworking of God's Plan and Purpose

Eternity past: The Sovereign Plan of God

Eternity Past

God's sovereign purpose in eternity
– a people for his name.

Choice of the elect.
Agreement of the Son to die for sin.

From Adam to Noah. c. 4000 BC to ? BC.

Creation of Man
c. 4000 BC

The Fall

Gen 3:15
The Gospel hope begins

Cain murders Abel

Sin rampant
Gen 6:5;
unknown time

Christ revealed as: the promised deliverer. Necessity of blood atonement demonstrated. The conflict between the elect and the reprobate, or the flesh and the Spirit, demonstrated by Cain and Abel.

From the Noahic Covenant to the call of Abram. ? BC to c. 2100 BC.

Noah
The Flood

First Covenant
(with the earth)

Babel, Nimrod,
Empires, idolatry

Unknown period;
at least 300
years.

Christ revealed as: the Saviour (symbolised by the ark) in whom the elect are saved from wrath and sin. Judgment on the world of sin demonstrated by the global Flood. Nimrod established the idolatrous world of occult religion, which persists in many forms today, even in apostate churches.

Comments

Dates before Abraham are traditional proposals only. Dates before Moses are uncertain. Dates of the Exodus are debated; the date here is the traditional early viewpoint.

Gen 3:15 is the 'proto-evangelium'; the promise of a deliverer to be born of a woman.

Note that each section closes with failure and apostasy until Christ comes.

From the Abrahamic Covenant to the death of Joseph. c. 2100 BC to c. 1800 BC.

Covenant with Abraham.

Gospel promised.
Built altars to God.
Built his own wells

Isaac

Built altars to God.
Didn't build new wells but re-opened Abraham's.

Jacob / Israel

Built altars.
Loved by God while elder brother hated.

12 Patriarchs Joseph

No altars built.

430 years of silence during bondage in Egypt.
[1876-1446]

Christ revealed as: the willing sacrifice (Isaac), the suffering prince (Joseph); the Seed of the covenant promise. Faith for justification demonstrated by Abraham. Predestination demonstrated (Jacob over Esau). Resurrection symbolised (Isaac, Joseph's bones, Abraham's hope). Pilgrimage symbolised. The line of covenant promise demonstrated.

From the Mosaic Covenant to the end of the Judges. 1446 BC to 1050 BC.

Moses. Exodus – birth of Israel. Giving of Law.

The Tabernacle, Priesthood & offerings

Conquest of Canaan. [1406]

Period of 13 Judges
Apostasy & turmoil for 325 years.

Men did what was right in their own eyes.

Christ revealed as: the mediator, the coming prophet, and the leader of his people by Moses. He particularly represents Christ in the prophetic work of revealing God's word to his people. Christ's life, work, glory and fruit are fully symbolised in the Tabernacle and its services. The chief symbolism of the Tabernacle is to demonstrate God dwelling with his people. The offerings point to the benefits of Calvary and the fulness of the cross; the High Priest symbolises Christ as mediator and representative of his people. These are the means to ensure fellowship with God. The Exodus prefigures the deliverance of the elect from the world. The Promised Land is expressive of the fulness of blessing in Christ; even the patriarchs understood this to prefigure heavenly matters. The law was given to highlight the depth of sin in man and point to the need of God's Messiah-Deliverer-Saviour. Note the importance of God's word. Israel symbolises the people of God, fellowship established through covenant. However, only a small remnant was actually the faithful people of God. The condemnation of the Canaanites demonstrates the condemnation of sin and the penalties of the second death. The judges are types of Christ as the deliverer of his people.

Comments

The most important development in the Messianic Hope is the covenant promise to Abraham, which is the precursor of the Gospel. Christ is the Seed of Abraham and the fulfilment of this promise (Gal 3:16). Abraham saw Christ by revelation and rejoiced in this (Jn 8:56).

From the establishment of kingship to the Greek Period. 1050 BC to 423 BC; then Gap between the testaments.

Samuel;
kingship; **David,**
united monarchy.
[1050-931]

Solomon
**The Temple
Psalms**

Divided monarchy,
apostasy. [931-586]
Prophetic ministry
[Malachi - 433]

Exile to Assyria [721]
& Babylon [586-539].
3 returns of Judah
[538-444]

400+ years of
silence between
Malachi & John
the Baptist

Christ revealed as: the Prophet and Judge (Samuel) and the King (David). Establishment of the Covenant with David shows the rule of Christ over all. Solomon at his height is a type of the fulness of Christ's kingly glory. The enormous number of sacrifices at the dedication of the temple symbolises the fulness of the cross.

Conflict of David with Saul demonstrates the war between the old and the new nature, or the flesh and the Spirit. Burst of prophetic ministry is always necessitated by degradation amongst God's people. Israel's key failure was the refusal to listen to God's word.

From the Messiah to the End. 2,000+ years.

The Messiah.
Cross,
resurrection,
ascension

The church.
The Spirit
outpoured.
Testimony

The church
gathered is the
expression of
God's kingdom

Church expands.
Gospel proclaimed.
Growing opposition
and antichrist

Second Coming
The Judgment
Hell

Christ comes to be the living expression of all that was promised in the shadows, God in human form. All that was promised, or presented symbolically, is achieved by Christ. He is the true sacrifice, he is the true prophet, priest and king, and he is the living word of God. The Spirit is poured out upon him in fulness.

The elect are now gathered into the church, the fulness of God's expression of his people, united with Christ as new creatures, on whom the Spirit has been outpoured and in whom God dwells by the Spirit. However, they do not yet have spiritual bodies to contain the new heart and spirit, and must live in pilgrimage on the earth until the coming of the Lord.

Comments

Israel (the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom) was conquered by Assyria and dispersed amongst that empire in 721 BC. Judah (the Southern Kingdom) was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and the exiles taken to Babylon in 586 BC. After 70 years (foretold by Jeremiah) only about 50,000 or so returned with Ezra, and Nehemiah (who supervised the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem). Three prophets encouraged the work on the walls, on the Second Temple (completed 516), and admonished the sins of the people (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).

The Greek Period regards the authority of the Seleucids after the break-up of Alexander's Empire, then the Hebrew Maccabees and finally the Romans.

Eternity Future

The new world

Heaven on
Earth.
God dwells with
man for eternity

God's purpose
achieved: a
people for his
name

No eye has seen
nor ear heard what
God has in store
for us.

This is the fulness of God's plan and purpose, now finalised in the new world. What God started out to achieve, a people who will fellowship with him in righteousness and faith and who will manifest his divine glory, is consummated. God as an immaterial spirit decreed to fill the universe with a material manifestation of his glorious character. He does this in Christ, and through Christ in the elect, who fill the universe with the reflection of God's beauty.

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