

New Testament Overview – J. Carl Laney

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

In his article, "Getting the Big Picture: How we can know the Bible and not just Bible trivia," (Christianity Today, April 18, 1986, pp. 1213), Richard Foster states:

Today a form of illiteracy abounds that is especially dangerous precisely because it is unrecognized. It is particularly prevalent among those of us who read the Bible regularly, memorize verses, and are committed to the authority of Scripture.

I am referring to our biblical and historical myopia or nearsightedness. We lack a world view, a vision of the whole.

Foster goes on to point out that the problem of biblical myopia is especially acute in our Sunday schools. As we teach Bible stories, we often tack on little morals. But that is what they remain: Bible stories with little morals.

He is concerned that "we may never explain how the pieces all fit together, giving a sense of the great flow of holy history." Seldom are believers presented a picture of God's all encompassing plan for the ages.

This lecture is intended to provide you with the "big picture" God's plan for the ages as revealed in Genesis through Revelation.

We will not consider every mile post along the way, but we will call attention to major junctions and points of interest. We will fill in the details as we continue our study in this course.

The major theological focus of this presentation is the sovereignty of God. The God who foretells history is the One who is sovereign over it.

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I. The Eternal Kingdom of God

A. Psa. 10:16

B. Jer. 10:10

C. Psa. 103:19

Psa. 103:19 reveals that God's kingdom is timeless.

As Creator, God has always possessed absolute sovereignty and strength.

God's kingdom is also universal. He exercises His sovereignty both in the heavens and on the earth.

D. Dan. 4:17

II. The False Kingdom of Satan

A. Satan's Fall

Scripture reveals very little about Satan's fall, but his sin constituted an act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of God (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6, Rev. 12:4).

B. Satan's Kingdom

At his fall, Satan instituted a counterfeit kingdom to parallel God's kingdom and challenge His authority.

C. Satan's Subjects

Every king needs subjects, and Satan is no different. In order to gain a following, Satan tempted the first human couple Adam and Eve.

Paul summarizes the consequences of Adam's sin in Romans 5:12. See also Gen. 3:17-18, Rom. 8:20-22.

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III. God's Plan

In view of this situation God inaugurated a program to glorify His name by bringing the sin marred creation back into the blessings of His glorious reign.

A. Redeem Man

B. Reclaim His Kingdom

C. Execute Judgment

IV. God's Redemptive Work

A. The Noahic Covenant Gen. 8:21-22, 9:1-11

B. Redemption Illustrated

C. God's Plan Expounded

God's provision of salvation for men and women of every age is by grace, through faith in God's promise, and based on the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:8,13).

D. Christ's Atonement Provided

E. The New Covenant Enacted

The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek. 36:24-28, Hebrews 8:6-13) amplifies and confirms the blessing promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3).

Unlike the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is unconditional (Jer. 31:31-34) and everlasting (Ezek. 37:6).

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V. God's Kingdom Work

A "theocracy" (literally, "rule of God") is the government or rule of God through divinely appointed rulers or delegated authority.

Graeme Goldsworthy has put it clearly and concisely: ". . . the kingdom of God involves: (a) God's people (b) in God's place (c) under God's rule (Gospel and Kingdom, The Paternoster Press, p. 47).

A. The Kingdom Promised Gen. 12:13

1. A Land (Deut. 30:1-10)
2. A Nation (2 Sam. 7:1216)
3. A Blessing (Jer. 31:31-33)

The Abrahamic Covenant, reconfirmed in Gen. 13:1417, 15:1 21, 17:114, 22:1518, 28:1213, contributes significantly toward the outworking of God's kingdom program.

B. The Kingdom Foreshadowed 2 Sam. 7:1216

1. David's House
2. David's Throne
3. David's Kingdom

C. The Kingdom Presented Matt. 4:17

The fulfillment of the kingdom program with Jesus is clear from the words of Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:3133.

D. The Kingdom Rejected Matt. 12:2237

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E. The Kingdom Culmination Delayed Luke 19:11-27

F. The Kingdom Realized Rev. 20:4-6, 1 Cor. 15:24-28

G. The Kingdom of God in the Present Age

The prophesied kingdom has been postponed and will be consummated in the Millennium. Does the kingdom of God exist today in some form or manner today?

1. The Kingdom is Future
2. The Kingdom is Present
3. The Kingdom: Present and Future

Is there a kingdom of God in the present age?

Yes! The kingdom of God involves God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Today, the people of God are believers in Christ (whether Jew or Gentile). God's "place" would be the body of Christ, the church. God's rule over His people is exercised through Christ and His undershepherds (church elders).

God's kingdom is a present developing reality to be fully realized at the return of Christ the King. Then the literal throne, dynasty and kingdom (Lk. 1:32-33) will be consummated and continue throughout all eternity.

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VI. The Judgment Work

A. Judgment on Satan and His Angels

Matt. 25:41, Jn. 12:31, Rev. 12:9, 19:20, 20:2,10

B. Judgment on Satan's Followers Rev. 20:11-15

C. Purging of the Earth

2 Pet. 3:10, Rev. 21:1, Isa. 65:17,25, Rev. 22:3

Conclusion

There is encouragement in knowing that God does have a sovereign plan for the ages. He knows the end from the beginning. All of history and human existence is under His rule and design.

In the face of uncertainty and misfortune, Christians can be sure that God is in control. As he rules the affairs of the nations, so He rules the affairs of our lives according to His sovereign will.

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Resources for Further Study

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Ellisen, Stanley. Three Worlds in Conflict. Multnomah Publishers, 1998.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. Gospel and Kingdom. The Paternoster Press, 1981.

Kaiser, Walter C. Toward an Old Testament Theology. Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.

McClain, Alva. Greatness of the Kingdom. BMH Books, 1968.

Pentecost, Things to Come. Zondervan, 1958.

Peters, George. The Theocratic Kingdom. Kregel, 1957.