

# MASTERPLAN

## Preface

Nothing has shaped my understanding and appreciation of the Scriptures more than grasping God's grand plans for his creation. What a kind and generous thing God has done in giving us his masterplan in his Scriptures, centring on Jesus Christ. Indeed, it unifies the various books of the Bible, reflecting the one God who has inspired all of it. Knowing where the universe is heading, and where God is bringing it, helps me tremendously with appreciating God's loving and sovereign character, and it helps me with orienting my life and my plans to His. My hope and prayer, is that you will be blessed in the same way.

The subject of God's masterplan is quite large, and these studies aim merely to help us dip into it. These studies are designed to accompany my sermon series with the same title. Together, they aim to give us the premise of the subject (Study 1), but also some key implications coming out of it (Study 2 & 3).

I would like to acknowledge that my thinking has been deeply influenced by Graeme Goldsworthy, and in particular, his book titled *According to Plan*. More recently, I have also found Vaughan Robert's book, *God's Big Picture*, very helpful and accessible. It would please me very much if one of the results coming out of my sermons and studies is that you pick up one of these books and read it for yourself.

May God's revelation draw us to praise Him for eternity!

In Christ,

Bernie Leo

# Study 1: Masterplan for Jesus Christ

## Introduction

Describe your favourite plot from a movie or musical or play?

The Bible can seem like disconnected events and teachings, and sometimes we might struggle to discern its relevance for our lives today as a result. This study seeks to show that the whole Bible has a unifying purpose of describing God's masterplan, and none other than Jesus articulates that purpose to us. If we comprehend this, it will greatly impact our understanding and application of Scripture.

## The Main Subject of Scripture

1. Read Luke 24:13-53. What does Jesus say about the main subject of the Scriptures (NB: 'Moses' / 'Law of Moses' represent the first 5 books of the bible)?

2. How do the following references help us understand Jesus' teaching about Scripture?

a. Isaiah 49:1-7

b. Isaiah 53:1-12

c. Psalm 16:1-11

d. Daniel 7:13-14

3. Given what we're told about the main subject of the Scriptures, what is the first step in applying any part of the Scriptures?

## Example of Application

Read Acts 2:22-41. The apostle Peter gives us an example of how the main subject of the Scriptures impacts application.

a. What does Peter say about God's plans?

b. How is it consistent with Jesus' teaching about the Scriptures?

c. How does the centrality of Jesus here impact the way Peter applies those passages?

### **Application for Today**

1. What do you admire about God's masterplan for Jesus Christ? Pause and praise God in prayer

2. How does knowing the main subject of the Scriptures enrich our reading of it today?

3. How would you respond to the following views:

"It's been really hard to find a house I can afford to buy. So, I pray the words of Psalm 2:8, and ask boldly that God would provide some land for me"

"Just as the Israelites of the Old Testament had the temple, Christianity's sacred place is the church"

4. Pray with one another about:

a. What you've learned or been reminded of

b. Your application of Scripture

## Study 2: Masterplan of Salvation by Grace

### Introduction

What is the most gracious act you have experienced or seen?

A key message of the New Testament is that God saves by grace through Jesus. When it comes to what the Old Testament teaches about God's dealings with his people, we can struggle to see that same grace there. Yet, as we explored in the first study, the whole of the Scriptures is unified in its subject matter. It is wholly about Jesus. Indeed, '... the Holy Scriptures [...] are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15). So, in this study, we are going to have a look at examples of God's consistent message of grace.

### Example of Grace in the Old Testament

1. Read Jonah 1-4 (Nineveh is the capital of the the Assyrian nation, who were enemies of God and his people). Describe:

- a. Nineveh
- b. Jonah
- c. God and how he saves

2. Read Matthew 12:38-41

- a. How does the book of Jonah foreshadow Jesus?
- b. How does Jesus describe the Ninevites' standing before God in the end?
- c. How does the coming of Jesus impact God's warning to wicked people?

### Grace in the New Testament

Read Titus 3:1-8. The Apostle Paul describes how God saves by grace.

- a. Explain how God's salvation is undeserved
- b. What are the similarities between God's actions here and in Jonah?

c. How should God's grace shape a Christian's life today?

### **Application for Today**

1. Praise God in prayer for his salvation by grace in Jesus

2. Given what you have learned or been reminded of today, how would you respond to the following views:

a. "I prefer the New Testament over the Old Testament because the it's all about grace, whilst the Old Testament is all about obeying laws"

b. "God only shows love to those who faithfully obey him"

c. "Since we are saved by grace, it doesn't really matter how we live now"

3. Pray with one another about

a. What you've learned or been reminded of

b. How you live in line with God's grace

## Study 3: Aligning Our Plans with God's Masterplan

### Introduction

If you were to travel overseas, would you join a set tour, or plan your own journey? Why?

In studies 1 and 2, we explored central matters of God's masterplan. We saw that it revolves first and foremost around God's Son, Jesus, his anointed king. We also discovered how, in the whole of the Scriptures, God relates with his people with compassionate grace. Salvation by grace is found throughout the whole of the Bible. In this study, we will see that God's masterplan must have an impact on our individual plans.

### Responses to God's Masterplan

1. Read 2 Peter 3:1-18

- a. How will people question the return of Jesus, and what's motivating them?
- b. What warning does God give to scoffers
- c. How do the following verses help with understanding Peter's teaching:
  - i. Acts 1:1-11
  - ii. Psalm 24:1-6
  - iii. Luke 17:20-37
- d. Coming back to 2 Peter 3, what reassurance and hope does God give to those who repent?
- e. What do we learn about God's masterplan in these verses?
- f. How do Christians prepare for the return of Jesus?

## **Our Plans Under God's Masterplan**

1. Praise God in prayer for Jesus' promised return and what that means for us
  
2. If we were to align our plans with God's masterplan, what would that look like in these areas:
  - a. Our study / work / retirement
  
  - b. Our interactions with our neighbours
  
  - c. Our relationships with other Christians?
  
  - d. Our plans for our future (and our children's future)
  
3. What convinces you to change your plans so it aligns with God's masterplan?
  
4. What makes it hard?
  
5. Pray with one another about:
  - a. What you've learned or been reminded of
  
  - b. Your progress in aligning your plans with God's masterplan