

of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>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.\_\_\_\_\_

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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:** <sup>8</sup>To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, **to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God,** who created all things; <sup>10</sup>in 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. <sup>11</sup>This was in accordance with **the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,** <sup>12</sup>in 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:** <sup>14</sup>How 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? <sup>15</sup>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:** <sup>37</sup>**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me,** and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup>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:** <sup>9</sup>And 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.** <sup>10</sup>And 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.\_\_\_\_\_

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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, <sup>4</sup>just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup>He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup>**to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He *freely* bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, <sup>8</sup>which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him <sup>10</sup>**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 <sup>11</sup>also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup>**to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ **should be to the praise of His glory.** <sup>13</sup>In 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, <sup>14</sup>who 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:** <sup>23</sup>And 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,** <sup>24</sup>even 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?\_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #84:** Look back through this section (pages 10 to 16) and select one or more passages to memorize that will help you remember God's ultimate purpose for saving you.



**Notes:**

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# The Sovereignty of God

## Part 3: God's Purposes

### God's Decree and Foreordination

#### The Certainty of God's Purposes Being Fulfilled

Since God is clearly all-powerful and all-knowing, governs His creation by a mighty providence, and inevitably brings His plans and purposes to pass, we see that God's purposes are *immutable (unchanging and certain)*. The Bible plainly declares that God's purposes will be established in history because His counsel (plans and purposes) are certain.

*Psalm 33:11:* The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

*Proverbs 19:21:* Many are the plans in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD, it will stand.

*Hebrews 6:17-18:* <sup>17</sup>In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, <sup>18</sup>in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

**Question #85:** List words and phrases from the above passages that affirm the immutability of God's plans and purposes. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #86:** If even one of God's plans and purposes failed to come about, what would we have to conclude about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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This discussion of God's decree is clearly related to His sovereign authority. Since God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, He necessarily decreed everything that happens. He has *declared* or *proclaimed*, according to His counsel and will, everything that comes to pass. This *decree of God* cannot be thwarted or hindered, because His *invisible hand* providentially carries it out in history. The Bible plainly declares that *God will bring to pass what He wills in His sovereign decree*.

*Isaiah 46:9-11:* <sup>9</sup>Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, <sup>10</sup>Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, "My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure"; <sup>11</sup>Calling a bird of prey

from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. **Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.**

Consider the words of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* on the Decrees of God:

**Question 7:** What are the Decrees of God? **Answer:** The Decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

*Ephesians 1:9-11:* <sup>9</sup>He made known to us **the mystery of His will**, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him <sup>10</sup>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 <sup>11</sup>also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will**,

Whatever comes to pass has been *eternally decreed by God*. This means that God has *approved* (in the sense of permitting or preventing them) all of the events of history. This we call *foreordination*. God has *fore* (from before time began), *ordained* all that ever has happened or will happen in history. Jonathan Edwards described *foreordination* like this: “*Whether God has decreed all things that ever come to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that He knows all things beforehand. Now, it is self-evident that if He knows all things beforehand, He doth approve of them or doth not approve of them; that is, He is either willing they should be, or He is not willing they should be. But to will that they should be is to decree them.*”

*Numbers 23:19:* God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; **Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**

Jonathan Edwards also addressed God’s decree in relation to the problem of evil: “*God decreed from all eternity all the evil that He ever does permit, because God’s permitting is God’s forbearing to act or to prevent. It can be made evident by reason that nothing can come to pass but what is the will and pleasure of God should come to pass.*” (Job 12:13-22; Proverbs 8:14-16; Isaiah 40; Acts 2:23, 4:28) Learn then that history is the product of God’s eternally wise planning, creative purpose, providential preservation, and common grace. God fills space and time with His presence, sustains it, and gives it purpose and value. The omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent One is Lord of time and history, not vice versa. His purposes are providentially accomplished in time and space.

*Isaiah 14:24-27:* <sup>24</sup>The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, **“Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,** <sup>25</sup>to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulder. <sup>26</sup>**This is the plan devised against the whole earth;** and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. <sup>27</sup>**For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”**

**Question #87:** On what basis (bases) did God foreordain whatever comes to pass?\_\_\_\_\_