

# God's Plan

*God created the universe and everything in it, with human beings at the apex of His creation. We were created in His image with the purpose to represent Him in the world. But sin tarnished our ability to do that properly, and also damaged our relationship with God and our relationships with one another. God set apart the nation of Israel (descendants of Abraham) to represent and showcase Him to the world to draw all people back to Him, but Israel failed in this calling. God sent Jesus as the true Israel and light of the world, to rescue human kind from sin and its consequence. Jesus needed to sacrifice himself to achieve this, and established the church as the family of all nations promised to Abraham, to continue his rescue mission. When Jesus returns, God's rescue plan will be completed with all things fully restored to their original, pristine state. God's restoration plan is presented in the Bible as a story in four parts: Creation, the Fall, Redemption and Final Restoration.*

## **Creation**

### **Genesis 1:27-28**

- What does it mean that God made humans in His **image**?
- God also made humans in His **likeness**, meaning we have some of His qualities. What are some qualities that we share with God?
- Humans were created to take care of God's good creation (2:15). What does this involve?

## **The Fall**

### **Genesis 3:1-8, 23-24**

- In choosing to disobey God what were Adam and Eve actually doing?
- What are consequences of sin mentioned in these verses?
- Think of some situations when you have chosen to follow your own desires even when you have known it was not in line with what God would have wanted. What voice did you listen to in those situations?

## **Redemption**

### **Genesis 12:1-3**

- How did God plan to use Abraham to address the problem of sin?

### **Isaiah 49:6**

- The descendants of Abraham became the nation of Israel, with the calling to be a light to other nations.
- What is light associated with in the Bible?)
- Was Israel successful in their calling to showcase God to the world and draw people to Him? (**2 Kings 17:13-18** and **Judges 8:33-35**).

### **Isaiah 9:6-7**

- This is one of many prophecies in the Old Testament about a Messiah (Ruler/King) who would come out of the nation of Israel. In whom were these such prophecies fulfilled?
- What was God's plan in sending Jesus to earth?

### **John 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:18-21**

- Is there any other way to be rescued from the consequences of sin apart from Jesus?
- A ransom was the price paid to free someone from slavery and then to fully accept that person into your family (= redemption). How big a price did God pay for your freedom and adoption into His family?
- How central is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in God's rescue plan?

### **John 8:12; Colossians 1:15**

- Jesus is the true light of the world, succeeding where Israel failed. He is also the image of God.
- How does Jesus as the true light of the world relate to him being God's perfect image bearer?

### **Acts 13:47**

- The church is now the light of the world. What does this say about the purpose of the church?
- Why is it important to realise the communal rather than purely individual nature of this calling?

## ***Final Restoration***

### **Revelation 21:1-5**

- This is how God will fulfill His plan to restore His entire creation. How do you understand the new heaven and new earth?
- God's presence will fill the entire renewed earth and He will be reconciled with His people for eternity.

### **Revelation 7:9-10**

- In the Age to Come, all people groups will be completely united, worshipping God as one big family.
- Why is it so important for the church nowadays to be a family of all nations and generations, bridging the gaps that typically divide people groups in the world?

### **Romans 8:19-22**

- The entire creation has suffered the consequences of our sin, and eagerly awaits the second coming of Jesus, when God will restore all things. What are some signs of the physical creation "groaning"?
- What are some practical things you can do (or do better) to be a good steward of God's creation?

## ***God's invitation***

### **Acts 17:22-28**

- God is constantly involved in His creation. He has a plan and you are part of that plan - you have been put in the places and times you occupy so that you might find your place in His story.
- Can you think of happenings or events in your life which might have been orchestrated by God to help you come to know Him, or to know Him more fully (vs 26-27)?

#### **REFLECTION**

- What does the story of the Bible (from Genesis to Revelation) tell you about the extent of God's faithful love for His creation, including you?
- How central is Jesus in God's plan of redemption and restoration? In what way?
- How do you respond to God's invitation to partner with Him to bring about restoration and reconciliation in a world that so desperately needs it?
- What do you find particularly exciting in this invitation?