

Intro

On May 2nd, 2011, U.S. Special Forces raided an Al-Qaeda compound, successfully executing Osama bin Laden. The culmination of a decade-long hunt

Early on in the search, identifying al-Qaeda couriers was a high priority. In 2002 interrogators uncovered a potential lead. When the courier went missing in 2004, they concluded he was with bin Laden. The courier popped up again in 2010 and they followed him back to a compound they speculated was bin Laden's location. The compound's unique and unusual security features led analysts to conclude the compound was designed to hide someone of significance like bin Laden.

At that point, intelligence was gathered like compound dimensions, number of residents, and patterns of the residents.

A helicopter raid was settled on to be carried out by Navy SEALs. Preparation included mock-ups in full-scale replicas of the compound simulating mission conditions. The final go-ahead was given by President Obama on April 29, 2011. Weather conditions delayed the operation till May 2nd. The actual mission lasted 40 minutes, resulting in the death of bin Laden and four others, one being the courier.

Operation Neptune Spear was a plan carefully thought out and brought to successful completion. Lots of time and resources went into it. This morning we see God's sure and certain eternal plan unfolding.

BIG IDEA: God's eternal plan of redemption

READ PASSAGE

PRAY

Body

Passage Focus

As events are unfolding the divine plan from before the foundation of the world is in motion.

We're on to events unfolding on Wednesday into Thursday the week of Jesus' death.

Point 1: God's plan will be accomplished

Explanation

"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." – 26:2

- speaks as if crucifixion is certain

In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. – 26:12

- speaks as if his death is certain
- Mark 14:5 says the ointment was worth 300 denarii = 300 days of wages = a year's salary

My time is at hand. – 26:18

- “at hand” = near. About to happen.

The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, - 26:24

- In other words, what is written must happen. Set in stone.

Jesus knows what’s coming!

Elsewhere in the Bible we learn that Jesus’ death was planned before time began:

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, - 2 Tim 1:8-10

- God’s purpose was settled “*before the ages began*”
- God’s grace was given to us “*before the ages began*”
- God’s eternal purpose and grace occurred when Jesus took on flesh, lived a sinless life, died for our sins, and rose from the dead.
- Through the cross Jesus “*abolished death and brought life and immortality.*”

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. – Gal 4:4-5

God’s appointed time for the Son to redeem his people is about to occur!

Divine sovereignty

What we see here is divine sovereignty. Acts 2:23 says Jesus was “*delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.*” Acts 4:27-28 says that the major players, like Herod and Pontius Pilate, were gathered together “*to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*”

Put positively, God “*works all things according to the counsel of his will*” (Eph 1:11). Put negatively, God’s purposes can’t be thwarted (Job 42:2).

Of what comfort is divine sovereignty to us?

- 1) World events aren’t beyond the scope of God’s control.
 - 2) From the major events to the most mundane occurrences, our lives aren’t beyond the scope of God’s control.
 - 3) God brings good things from man’s evil intentions.
 - 4) We don’t have to worry that somehow we are stuck in God’s plan B for our lives (there’s no such thing! – Ps 139:16).
- God is directing our paths behind the scenes, orchestrating the smallest of details.
 - 5) God’s ultimate sovereignty over all things ensures that Jesus’ statement about drinking the fruit of the vine with us in the eternal kingdom is a sure thing.

God’s plan is certain.

Point 2: God's plan involves betrayal

Explanation

On the flip side, we see human responsibility.

- 1) The evil plot of the chief priests and elders to capture Jesus by stealth and kill him (26:3-4).

Why did they have to capture Jesus by stealth? Because there would be an uproar among the people (26:5). Recall that on Palm Sunday as Jesus was drawing near to Jerusalem crowds went before him and followed him pronouncing him the Son of David, the Messiah (Matt 21:1-11). Jesus had a following and things wouldn't go well if he was arrested publicly.

- 2) Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (26:15).

Either 30 days wages (denarii) or 120 days wages (shekel), but very little value in comparison to the woman's ointment.

After all that he'd witnessed – silencing religious authorities, healing, casting out demons, reading people's hearts, raising the dead, stilling storms, feeding the 5,000 – how could Judas reject Jesus? Didn't he know he couldn't get away with the treason?

- 1) Satan's deception
- 2) Greed – John 12:6 reveals that Judas was a thief who frequently stole from the communal money bag.
- 3) Maybe not the Messiah Judas desired?
- 4) Sin is insanity

▪ Judas sinned against Jesus despite overwhelming evidence! Despite seeing Jesus' goodness (think raising a woman's daughter from the dead). The problem isn't a lack of proof or information. The problem is a fallen heart. The human heart indeed is desperately wicked (Jer 17:9).

What am I capable of? The story of Judas is sobering.

Awe and praise

"The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." – 26:24

God is orchestrating the crucifixion, but Judas is still responsible for his treason. God orchestrates the events in such a way that Judas remains responsible for his betrayal, and God is not a perpetrator of evil. God stands behind evil in a different way than he stands behind good. But God does stand behind all things. God never infuses evil into the human heart, but he does infuse good into human hearts. Think being born again, regeneration. God uses the evil intent of sinners to bring about good (Gen 45:5-8; 50:20). Think Joseph's brothers and Judas. God works good because that's who he is. Think God working the fruits of the Spirit in us (Gal 5:22-23). Think God reproducing his own character in our hearts. Think God sending his Son to die in our place to rescue us from the penalty our sins deserve.

What's the biblical response to the richness of God's unfolding plan of redemption? Awe and praise.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. – Rom 11:33-36

Human responsibility

No one can say, “the devil made me do it.” Yes, the devil played a part in Judas’ betrayal (Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 27), but Jesus holds Judas responsible.

No one can say, “God made me do it.”

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. – Jas 1:13-15

God’s plan encompasses human rebellion.

Point 3: God’s plan requires substitutionary atonement

Explanation

for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. – 26:28

▪ Forgiveness of sins requires the shedding of blood. The body and blood of one in the place of the many.

This is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. The heartbeat of the gospel. The good news of salvation from the penalty and power of sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Atonement

1) Passover

The Jewish Passover recalled the time when the Israelites in Egypt selected lambs without blemish, killed them, and sprinkled blood on the lintel and the doorposts. When the LORD saw the blood on their doorposts, that home escaped the final plague inflicted on Egypt. Blood protected one from judgment.

2) OT animal sacrifices

Old Testament sacrifices laid the sin of Israelites on animals for a sort of temporary cleansing (Lev 9:7; 16:21; 17:11). These sacrifices needed to be repeated. That’s substitution.

3) Types of Christ

The Passover and animal sacrifices foreshadowed Jesus’ blood “*poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*”

Passover gives way to the Lord’s Supper. Animal sacrifices cease because Jesus died once for all for our sins.

Through faith and repentance we’re passed over at the final judgment on the basis that Christ died as our substitute, taking the full punishment our sins deserve. The Father laid on Christ all our sins.

Atonement speaks to escape from the punishment our sins deserve because a substitute (Jesus) took the punishment in our place. New Testament atonement concepts include forgiveness of sins, propitiation (appeasement of wrath), ransom (price paid for release from slavery), redemption (release from slavery

which is bondage to sin), and reconciliation (restored relationship). The price paid for our rescue was the body and blood of the sinless lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. – Isa 53:5-6

God hates sin

Punishment required because God can't overlook sin.

Hating sin = God is good.

Instructs us to hate sin and turn from it.

God is self-giving

Jesus suffers so we don't have to.

Jesus cares about our suffering (his nature is to rescue).

Instructs us to give of ourselves to our brothers and sisters and those who are lost.

God is merciful

He's willing to pardon you if you approach him on his terms (faith and repentance).

He's merciful with us as we progress towards Christlikeness.

Instructs us to have mercy on sinners and sufferers.

God's plan requires the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus.

Point 4: God's plan is covenantal

Explanation

for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. – 26:28

Luke's account notes the new covenant is in view.

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." – Luke 22:20

Peter Gentry defines covenant in this way: "A covenant is an enduring commitment which defines a relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation(s) specified on the part of at least one of the parties toward the other, made by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visual ritual."

The visual ritual of the Old Covenant was the blood of an oxen (Exod 24:3-8). The visual ritual of the New Covenant is Jesus on the cross. Jesus is the covenant sacrifice.

In Israel's history, "a covenant always entails (1) a relationship (2) with a nonrelative (3) that involves obligations and (4) is established through an oath." – Peter Gentry

In the New Covenant, God enters into relationship with the many, he meets all the obligations himself, and he secures the promises entailed in the New Covenant with an oath. The promises in Jeremiah 31:31-34 include:

- 1) *"I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts"* = indwelling Holy Spirit
- 2) *"I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* = personal relationship, reconciled relationship, hostility removed, peace with God
- 3) *"for they all shall know me"* = everyone involved in this covenant relationship is saved
- 4) *"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* = permanent forgiveness of sins on account of the finished work of Christ [**pause: say the finished work of Christ**] (Jesus pays for sin once for all and his sacrifice doesn't need to be repeated)

In terms of human responsibility, the blessings entailed in the New Covenant are entered through faith and repentance. Turning from rebellion to trust. Trusting in the finished work of Christ, not our own merit. Trusting in Jesus as person to whom we're committed, not just trusting facts like a history book.

God is relational

We enter into reconciled relationship with God through faith and repentance. He desires personal relationship with us in such a way that he speaks to us in the Bible (like a friend speaks to you during our fellowship time), we pour out our hearts to him in prayer (like sharing your deepest thoughts with a friend), and there's a mutual commitment between us (like a husband and a wife).

God is committal

Like our church covenant where we commit to watchful oversight of one another (elder and non-elder alike).

God's plan is relational

Point 5: God's plan ends with the kingdom

Explanation

"I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." – 26:29

Application

Assumed of course is the resurrection to life Jesus spoke of in John 5:29. The sheep being welcomed into the Father's kingdom. God dwelling amongst us. Death, sin, and suffering a thing of the past. Creation restored.

In the Lord's Supper we look back to the finished work of Christ, and we look forward to the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21-22.

God's plan ends in the Father's kingdom.

Prayer

Welcome Ralph to lead us in the Lord's Supper.