



First Baptist Church At The Villages

Ministry Plan 2020 • Plan of God • Romans 9:9-15 •

For Use By Groups November 3 - 9, 2019

MAIN POINT

God has a plan for the world and for His church.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How important is it for an organization to have goals and a plan to get there?

Whose job is it in an organization to establish the goals for a company? What authority does this person have to make certain that those goals are reached?

The president, CEO, or the board of a company has the responsibility to set the goals for that company. Goals, however, wouldn't be much use to a company or organization without a reasonable plan to make those goals happen. Who creates the budget? How will they meet their production goals? How much will they charge for their product? How will they advertise? How many new employees do they need to hire to meet their goals? Not only does a company's leader need to plan, but he or she also needs to know how to carry out that plan. God is the King of the universe, and Jesus is the Lord of the church. God has a plan for the world and for His church. The Lord said to Israel, "For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans for your welfare, nor for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). This is great news for those who love God. However, we cannot accomplish this plan without God, so He has promised He will be with us every step of the way.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Romans 9:9-15.

What does Paul’s example from the history of Abraham’s family tell us about God’s plans? What does it teach us about God’s sovereignty?

If God has detailed plans for the future and they always come to pass, how does that affect human responsibility?

This passage demonstrates to us that God has a definite plan, right down to the outcomes of people’s lives. “Though her sons had not been born yet or done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to election might stand . . . she was told: ‘The older will serve the younger’” (Rom. 9:11-12). God’s plan did not determine Esau and Jacob’s behavior; they were responsible for their actions. Jacob did not deserve God’s blessing any more than Esau; in fact, God’s kindness to Jacob made it seem as though God hated Esau by comparison. (When Jesus called His disciples to “hate their father and mother,” He meant that they were to love God with everything they had and, by comparison to anyone else, this love would look like hate. See Luke 14:26.) God’s plan included grace to Jacob. God blessed Jacob to the point that Jacob was more prosperous than Esau. Jacob’s descendants, not Esau’s, saw the Messiah come through their family.

| Have a volunteer read Romans 10:14-17.

What part does the church’s responsibility for gospel proclamation play in God’s overall plan? Why must the church preach the gospel in every nation?

What is the core message God desires the church to preach?

Jesus told His disciples that “the good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations” (Matthew 24:14). Jesus’ words show us that the gospel will, without a doubt, be preached in all the nations. God’s plan is that “a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language” will be gathered before the throne of God in heaven to worship Jesus (Revelation 7:9). The church has a part in this plan: God’s will is for us to carry His gospel to those who haven’t yet heard it. The good news for the church is that we will succeed! There is no doubt that God will have His way; His gospel will be preached in every nation. This does not mean it will be easy or that we won’t suffer, but it does mean that we will triumph in the end.

| Have a volunteer read Romans 11:1-5.

What prevented the 7,000 men from bowing down to Baal in the days of Elijah?

Why is it important to understand that a “remnant” of Israel was in Christ in

Paul's day?

God's plan never included abandoning the children of Abraham. During the apostasy of Elijah's day, the Lord kept for himself 7,000 men who did not follow the others in the worship of Baal. In Paul's day, God's plan was to save some of Abraham's descendants as well. After all, Paul, Peter, John, James, Nathaniel, and all the other apostles were Jews themselves. God's plan includes the keeping of His promises to Abraham, and Abraham's children.

No matter how grim a situation may seem, the good news is that God is still at work in the world to accomplish His plans. Though it may seem that worldwide evangelism is impossible, we can be certain that the gospel will make it to every tribe. We also know that it is God's plan to raise the dead to life in Christ, for us to live with Him in heaven, and for us to enjoy Him forever!

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In what ways does knowing God has a plan bring comfort and hope to our lives?

How does knowing that God is sovereign over all things motivate us to live boldly for Christ as His followers?

How are we to be a part of God's plan for the world?

God's vision for our church, and therefore God's vision for our group, is to "Make Fully Devoted Followers of Christ." Our church has a plan to work toward fulfilling God's vision...

Make it personal: (1) Does our group have a plan for 2020 that includes growing together, serving together, and reaching out together? (2) Do you, as a Christian, have a personal plan for how you will grow, serve, and reach-out in 2020?

PRAYER

In a time of group prayer, ask the Lord to help us trust Him and the plans that He has for us. Pray that God will give us, individually and as a group, wisdom to recognize His plan for the coming year and the courage to do it. Pray that God will fill us with grace that we may live courageously to tell others the beauty of the gospel.

COMMENTARY

9:10-13. While the promise of salvation was not made on the basis of lineage, neither was it made on the basis of merit, or good works. Isaac was chosen instead of Ishmael, and Isaac married Rebekah, who gave birth to twin boys. At first, it would seem that both the boys—Jacob and Esau—would be chosen by God since they were both the sons of Isaac through whom salvation promises were flowing. Not so. Before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, Rebekah was told that the older will serve the younger (see Gen. 25:23). And why was Jacob chosen over Esau? So that God’s purpose in election might stand. Paul is affirming God’s right to choose in order to accomplish His purpose—not only His purpose leading to the death of His Son as a sacrifice for sin, but all other of His eternal purposes as well. The language used by God—Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated (see Mal. 1:2–3)—is poetically comparative, not absolute. Rachel was loved by Jacob more than Leah (Gen. 29:31-33; cf. Deut. 21:16-17), and Christians are to “hate” their parents and other family members, even their own life, in comparison to their love for Christ (Luke 14:26; cf. Matt. 10:37). The focus in all these instances is not on the “not chosen”—how could God hate Esau? How unloving for Jacob to hate Leah! Imagine being asked by God to hate your parents! Rather, the focus is on the chosen—Jacob preferred Rachel (for his own reasons); God chose Jacob (for His own reasons); we choose Christ over all others. The “not chosen” are not chosen according to purpose, not according to hate.

9:14-15. Is God unjust? This question has been raised before by Paul’s antagonists. Interestingly, the first time Paul was accused of making God unjust for condemning sinners (Rom. 3:5), and now he is accused of making God unjust for saving sinners (Rom. 9:14). This alone is evidence enough of humankind’s basic problem: in our natural state, we simply resist the ways of God. That contradiction returns us to the point that Paul made earlier in the epistle that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Humans, Paul said in Romans 3:10-18, are not righteous, do not understand or seek God, have turned away and become worthless, lie and practice deceit, murder, and cause ruin and misery. This puts us all, proverbially, “at the mercy of God.” Is justice negated by mercy? Absolutely not. Justice is served in the condemnation of all according to our sins. If God, in His mercy, chooses to extend mercy to some to accomplish His purpose of bringing salvation to many, justice has still been served to all by condemning their sin to begin with. Neither is it unjust for God to choose some in the nation of Israel to receive His promised blessings and others not to receive them. As God spoke to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy” (Ex. 33:19). Moses was the only one to see God’s glory on a personal basis. Was it unjust for God to choose Moses? No, it was an evidence of mercy and compassion according to His purpose for Moses, for Israel, and for the whole world. No one deserves to be chosen, to be made holy

(set apart) and once again fit for God's purpose. God's purpose in election is totally a function of the divine action called mercy.

| Romans 10:14-17

What must occur for someone to call on the name of the Lord? Someone must first be sent to proclaim the gospel message, and then listeners must pay attention and believe. In the absence of any one of these factors, no one can call on the name of the Lord. Paul quoted several OT passages to show that the conditions described in verses 14-15 had been met for Israel. The gospel message was proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews listened and simply did not believe. The Gentiles heard too, and many embraced it. Paul's citations show that the Gentile conversion was predicted in the OT. Ultimately, all peoples are a disobedient and defiant people. Israel was singled out in this way due to their consistent rejection of God's message and messengers (see Ac 7:51-60).

| Romans 11:1-5

11:1-4. Paul continued explaining that the unbelief of Israel is no argument against the gospel. Israel's blindness is not total, and God is still working with the nation. In the days of Samuel, the nation rejected God as their king and chose a human king. Yet God continued to work with His people: "The Lord will not abandon His people, because of His great name and because He has determined to make you His own people" (1 Sam 12:22). In Paul's time, they had rejected Jesus as King Messiah and their leaders said, "We have no king but Caesar" (Jn 19:15), but God was not finished with them. Paul himself was evidence that God was saving some Jews. God's election of the nation ("whom he foreknew," v. 2; cp. 8:29) is immutable. Even in times of national apostasy, God saves a "remnant."

11:5-6. "Grace" is by definition unmerited favor. Grace would cease to "be grace" if works played a role in election.