

HISTORY HISTORY

GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN
FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

ADRIAN ROGERS



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HIS STORY

God's Purpose and Plan from Genesis to Revelation

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INTRODUCTION

Simple.

For most of us, we like things made very clear and simple. Complicated, convoluted, and multi-faceted explanations can leave us all scratching our heads. However, when someone can take an issue and explain it in a clear, plain, and straightforward manner, we are so thankful.

That's what this book is all about. Adrian Rogers has masterfully and simply taken the largest components of the Bible and broken them into eight sections.

As you read, you will learn about the pages of Scripture in these categories:

- The Creation
- The Covenant
- The Cradle
- The Cup
- The Crown
- The Cross
- The Conquest
- The Coming

Our hope is that you will read and begin to better understand the message of the Bible from start to finish. You'll start with the God of creation, learning about His power, His purpose, and His personal interest in your life. Then, you'll move to the wonderful covenant that God made with Abraham and his family.

Going forward, you will discover the cradle and the mystery, ministry, and majesty of Jesus' birth. From there, you will read about the cup that our Savior bore as you learn about the contents of the cup, the communion of the cup, and the consumption of the cup. After the cup, you will read about Jesus' crown of thorns—its mystery, misery, mockery, ministry, and majesty.

As you continue on, you will peruse pages leading you to the cross of Christ. In this section, you will gain insights on the sufferings of the cross, the satisfaction of the cross, and the salvation of the cross. Further, you will read about the conquest of Jesus; His preaching convinces, His persecution continues, His power confronts, His presence compels, and His people confess.

The final chapter will share the future hope of His coming. Jesus is coming again! He is coming visibly, victoriously, and vengefully. We should look forward to His coming!

Ultimately, the Bible is all about the Lord Jesus. We pray that you will find Him, enjoy Him, and get to know Him more as you read through *His Story: God's Purpose and Plan from Genesis to Revelation*.



Chapter 1

THE CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). I believe this verse has been read more than any other piece of literature in all of history. How many people have started out to read the Bible through, and never did? But they got as far as Genesis 1:1.

It is a wonderful verse, and we will never begin to exhaust it with our little teacup minds and this great ocean of truth that is found in Genesis 1:1. But you must understand at least part of it, and you must believe all of it, because it is foundational. You’ll never really comprehend anything else in the Bible unless you understand Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This is foundational truth; functional truth—you must believe it. The key to the rest of the Bible is hung right here by the front door.

The God Who is Presented

The first thing I want you to see about the God of all creation is that He is the God who is presented. Why did I choose that word, *presented*? Because the fact of God is not argued here, and the nature and being of God are not explained. He is just presented. No philosophy, no argument, no apology, no explanation; just “In

the beginning God..." The Bible writers never tried to explain the existence of God; nor should you. You are very foolish if you try to prove God. People talk about the proofs for God, but there are none. Don't let that shock you! The finite can never prove the infinite, you see. The Bible writers *presented* God. God doesn't need any proof, and you are incapable of proving God! "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?" (Job 11:7). Sometimes an atheist will swagger up to a believer and say, "Prove there is a God." That never threatens me—I just smile and say, "Prove there is *no* God."

The finite mind can never prove or disprove the infinite God. He does not lie in the realm of proof. To try to prove God by looking through physical, material things would be like tearing a piano apart to find the *Hallelujah Chorus*. You don't prove God, and you don't disprove God—you believe in God. Sometimes that is leveled against us Christians as though it is an accusation. "*You just accept by faith that there's a God.*" That's right! And let me tell you what the unbeliever does: he accepts, *by faith*, that there is no God! He has never proven there is no God. All men are believers—I choose to believe in God; the atheist chooses not to believe in God.

An atheist is not an unbeliever because he has intellectual superiority. Some of the finest minds this world has ever known have been given to the gospel of Christ. You show me a brilliant man who does not believe in God; I will show you a brilliant man who does. You show me a stupid man who doesn't believe in God, and I'll show you some stupid people who do.

It is not a matter of intellect, and it is not a matter of reason. Not that these things are unreasonable; they are *above* reason. He is the God who is presented, not the God who is argued. If a man does not believe in God, it's because he doesn't want to believe in God. There is no explanation of God given in the Bible, no philosophy for God. God is just presented: "In the beginning God." And, there's not much said about atheism in the Bible. As far as I can see, one-half of one verse deals with atheism: Psalm 53:1a says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" That's it, and then God goes on to another subject.

This word, *fool*, is the word *nabal* in Hebrew. It doesn't refer to a man who has unfurnished rooms to rent upstairs, lacking intellectually. The word *nabal* here means a *morally perverse* person.

Notice what it says. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The problem with the man who doesn't believe in God is in his heart, not his head. It is not that he *cannot* believe—it is that he *will not* believe. He doesn't wish to believe. And this verse in Psalm 53 literally translates as, "The fool has said in his heart, 'No God.'" What is the difference between "there is no God" and "no God"?

For example, after the holidays, many of us have determined to lose a few pounds. So, when somebody serves you a meal and says, "Would you like some pie?" I say, "No pie." That doesn't mean there is no pie. I just mean, "No pie for me. I don't want any."

This is literally what the fool is saying. "The fool has said in his heart, 'No God.'" That is, "I don't want any, thank you." In his heart of hearts, he knows better. Evolution and atheism and all of that exists as a bias against God, not because a man has reasonably and logically figured it out.

Do you know what the atheist believes? Nothing times nobody equals everything. That's not logical, is it? Of course not. You see, it's not that he's figured it out. It's not that he is forced upon that belief by logic. *He does not want the idea of God.* "The fool has said in his heart, 'No God.'" God is not argued in the Bible. The reason people don't believe in God is found in Romans 1:28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting." The idea of God gives them an uneasy feeling, so they think that if they can get rid of the idea of God, they can get rid of that uneasy feeling.

But a man never gets rid of the uneasy feeling of not having God in his heart. He is like a man who bought a new boomerang, and killed himself trying to throw the old one away. It just keeps coming back, and coming back, and coming back. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God..." (Psalm 53:1a). They don't like to retain the knowledge of God in their mind, but you find in Genesis 1:1 that He is, firstly, the God who is presented. Not argued, philosophized, explained, or apologized for; just, "Here it is, folks."

The God Who is Powerful

The second thing to notice is that He is the God who is powerful. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth.” He is the God of all creation. Therefore, He is the God of all power. And the word *created* here is the Hebrew word *bara*. It is used about fifty times in the Bible, and it always speaks of something that only God can do; that is, to make something out of nothing.

Hebrews 11:3 puts it this way, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” Anything you make, you make out of something else. Right? But the things that we see were not made out of things which do appear. The only way you will understand that is by faith. By faith, we understand that by the word of God the worlds were framed. God spoke and it was so. *Ex nihilo*—out of nothing—God made it all. And that speaks of the mighty power of God.

I like what another preacher had to say about it. He said, “God stepped from behind the curtain of nowhere, stood on the platform of nothing, and spoke a universe into existence.” “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). And as we look at His creation, how amazed we ought to be.

There are an estimated 30 trillion cells in the human body. But you see, the cell, small as it is, is not the smallest unit. Smaller than that is the atom. And the atom is mostly empty space. We think we are hard substance, but if you were to take the nothingness out of everybody, from more than 4 billion people on this globe, and squeeze the emptiness out of them, you could put us all—4 billion-plus people—in a gallon pail. We're mostly nothing.

Light travels at 186,282 miles per second. If you were to catch a light beam and start traveling, you'd be at the moon in two seconds. In four years, you'd be at the nearest star. But, friend, even traveling at 186,282 miles per second, you would go more than 10 billion years before you reached the edge of the known universe—and who knows what's beyond that. The vastness of this mighty universe! God spoke and it was so. And God made it all out of nothing.

Now, when I say there are no *proofs* for God, I don't mean there are no *evidences* for God. Do you understand the difference between proof and evidence? If you see a watch, then you say there must be a watchmaker, right? What about the atomic clock of the universe? Do you think that just happened? Scientists don't create scientific laws; they discover them. They are no more able to create them than Columbus was able to create North America—he discovered it.

If there is a city water system, there must be an engineer who designed it. What about the hydraulic cycle in the atmosphere, God's processes of hydrology? We look at beautiful buildings and we see design and purpose. We say there must be an architect. Well, what about the human body? "I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made..." says Psalm 139:14a. As we look around, everywhere we see that He is a God of might and miracle and power. He is a God of power, and we see it in Genesis 1:1. The evolutionist believes it all just happened, that billions of years will turn frogs into princes.

Know the difference between *making* something and *creating* something. People can make things: when you make something, you take a simple form and put it into a more complex form. My wife can make biscuits, but she doesn't create them. She does it with creativity! But she does not create biscuits. She takes already-existing materials and puts them together, and therefore she makes biscuits. You see, to *create*, you have to make something out of nothing—and only God can do that.

I once saw in the newspapers, "Scientists Create Life in Laboratory." Let me tell you something, no scientist ever created anything. He can't do that until he starts making something out of nothing! Suppose your father is a master builder of fine homes, and you watch your father studiously to see what He has done. And then, in your father's absence, you take your father's building plans, tools, and materials, and you build a chicken coop. When you finish, you stand back, stick out your puny chest, and say, "You see that chicken coop? That proves my father doesn't exist."

That is what men do when they come into the laboratory and take God's materials, God's tools, and God's methods and make some life-*like* substances—which is not *life*, in the true form

of the word. A rearrangement, by genetic engineering, of that which God has already brought into existence *is not creation*. That is *making* something—in many instances, it is *distorting* something. I am fearfully afraid of what mankind is able to do and what mankind will do with his so-called vaunted knowledge and wisdom. But only God has the power to create.

The God Who is Purposeful

The third thing about this great God is that He is the God who is purposeful. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). He made it all. Why? He had a reason, a purpose for doing it. And we don’t have to guess at the purpose. I want to give you three reasons why God made it all. What was His purpose?

They were created for His pleasure.

Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” God made it because He wanted to, and He didn’t have to get your opinion or permission. As He said to Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding” (Job 38:4). He is a sovereign God, and it was created for His pleasure.

They were created for His praise.

“For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36). What does that mean? The same thing Psalm 150:6 means when it says, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!”

Everything that is created is created to bring glory to Him. Therefore, the trees lift their leafy arms and say, “Praise God!” The beautiful flowers and the birds on the wing say, “Praise God!” The mighty oceans heave their billows. Niagara rolls and rolls and says, “Praise God!” God made a fish to swim in the sea, a bird to sail through the air. But if you take that bird out of the air and put him in the sea, he’s an unhappy bird. Take that fish out of the sea and

put him in the tree, and, to say the least, he's not doing what he was meant to do.

It is "for in Him we live and move and have our being..." (see Acts 17:28), and until you learn to praise God you'll never learn the meaning of life. You were created to praise Him. "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"

They were created for His people.

After God created these things, He stepped back and said, "That's good." You can see that throughout Genesis 1. He saw that man didn't have a wife, And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:18). These verses tell us it is God's plan that man's good be effected. You see, when God created everything, He had in mind His supreme creation, which is man. And so He made it not only for His pleasure and His praise, but for His people. In a very real sense of the word, He gave it to us, and He told us to have dominion and enjoy it.

Now I want to tell you what the devil wants to do. The devil wants to get you thinking negatively about God; thinking that God is not a good God. And with all of the unction, function, and emotion of my soul I pray that God will etch this into your consciousness: *God is a good God*. God made it for His glory, and for your good; for His praise, but for His people.

I want to give you three verses. Keep these in your mind and live by them, because they will help you. Sin *begins* with thinking negatively about God, and sin *causes* us to think negatively about God.

- "Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).
- "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). Did you hear that? "No good thing." If it will make you healthy, happy, holy, and wholesome, God says, "Help yourself. I love you; I made it for you." God wants for you what you'd want for yourself if you had enough sense to want it! God is such a good God.

- “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). It speaks of God “who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” God wants you to enjoy these flowers. God wants you to enjoy the fish and the fowl. Sometimes we think that because we’re Christians, we can’t enjoy these things. Don’t ever think that God’s physical, material universe is evil! When God made it, God said, “It is good.” The same God that made the pork made the strawberries.

God is such a good God, a wonderful God, a glorious God. He is a God who is presented and powerful, but also a God who is purposeful. God had a purpose in all of this creation: for His pleasure, for His praise, for His people. God flung out the stars and scooped out the seas and heaped up the mountains, and God spoke it and it stood fast.

The God Who is Personal

Now for the fourth thing to see about the nature of God. Not only is He the God who is presented, powerful, and purposeful, but He is the God who is personal.

What do we mean by personal? That He is a person! I don’t mean that He has eyes, ears, hands, and feet. When the Bible uses those images of God, it is using language that the theologians call “anthropomorphic language.” That is, speaking of God as if He had those physical abilities and characteristics, so that we can understand when the Bible speaks of the eyes of the Lord and the hands of the Lord. God is a spirit, but He is a person.

What do we mean by a person? That God has the characteristics of personhood: intelligence, emotion, and will. God is a person, not an impersonal being. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” literally translates as, “In the beginning *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth.” That is the Hebrew word for God: *Elohim*. *El*, which speaks that He is God of might. *El* means strength and unlimited power.

Actually, *Elohim* is a plural noun. It seems to say, “In the beginning *Gods*...”; although it doesn’t, for there is only one God. But look in Genesis 1:26a, and it says, Then God [singular, this time] said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (words in brackets added). Is that just poor grammar? That time it is singular, but there is that plural noun: God, *Elohim*. I believe right here on the threshold of the Bible we see an indication of the nature of God as shown in the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, because as you study the Bible, you find out that all three were present at Creation. All three were active there. Was it *Jehovah* God who created the world? *Elohim* God who created the world? Or was it the Lord *Jesus* who created the world, for the Bible says in the New Testament that Jesus did it all. “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3). There is no contradiction there. You find it all in this little triune noun, this plural noun here: *Elohim*.

Aren’t you glad we find the Savior, and the Holy Spirit, *and* the Father in chapter 1, verse 1 of the Word of God? In the beginning, *Elohim*—the God with whom nothing is impossible, who always keeps His word; the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—created—for His pleasure, His praise, and His people—the heavens and the earth.

Think of all the theological errors that are being refuted here. Atheism is refuted; this verse speaks of God. Polytheism is refuted; it speaks of *one* God. Pantheism, which says that God and nature are the same, is refuted; God is shown here not as a part of nature, but as creating nature. Materialism, the belief in the eternity of matter and material, is refuted. All of these errors are set aside as we see this one, great, personal God. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

He is a real God and a revealed God. Now, I said you could never prove God, but that doesn’t mean that you can never *know* God. You do not know God by proving God; you know God by revelation. In Romans 1, the Bible speaks of people who don’t have a leg to stand on, and are without excuse. They claim to be atheists, but God doesn’t buy it. And here’s why: God says they are without excuse because everybody has an innate awareness of God.