

Section 5, Promises About God's Plan
Introductory Article
536 words

Promises About God's Plan: Introduction

Human beings are set apart from the rest of creation by our propensity to plan. While Proverbs commends the ant for its diligence (Prov. 6:6-8), it indicates that only in the heart of humans are plans to be found (Prov. 16:1, 9). And the only reason humans plan is because we are created in the image of a God who plans.

The greatest example of planning ever undertaken at the human level also illustrates the power of the plans of God. Karl Marx, a 19th century German philosopher who wrote *Das Kapital*, and who collaborated with Friedrich Engels to write *The Communist Manifesto*, propagated a series of ideas which would come to infect and effect the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Nikolai Lenin, a Russian revolutionary intellectual, formed the Bolshevik Party in Russia to implement Marxist social and economic thinking. The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 was the beginning of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, better known as Communism. Seventy years later, by 1987, Communism was bankrupt in Russia. The idea that the state could implement human prosperity through atheistic materialism was proven to be unworkable. Russia's president, Mikhail Gorbachev, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for his role in dismantling the most costly human plan in history.

This failure of a human plan to dominate the world provides a fitting backdrop to this section of the *Promises of God Study Bible*. For it demonstrates the undeniable truth that no human plan can ever supercede the plans of God. Planning is commended in Scripture, as long as our plans are consistent with God's (Jas. 4:13-17). And it is his plans that will ultimately be fulfilled in history (Ps. 2). The greatest source of peace about the past, security about the present, and confidence about the future that anyone can have is to trust in a good and loving God who is working out his plan.

But God's plan is not just a plan for "history." History, as they say, is biography—the sum total of the lives of individual people as they face the challenges and contingencies of life. How can the individual Christian benefit from the promises God makes about his plan? First, by discovering that God has a divine purpose for everything. From his purpose flows a plan for our life. We learn to remove "accident" from our vocabulary as we discover that there are no accidents with God. We discover God's attention to the details of life, that his plan for us includes good purposes and good results. And we also learn how pain can be a part of God's plan—that it forges our character and focuses our hope. Finally, we learn not to fear the evil in the world, because evil is limited by the boundaries of God's good plans.

Communism failed not because it was a human plan, but because it was a plan that was contrary to God and his plan. If God is truly God (and he is) then the wisest thing we can do is to learn to live our lives in the light of his plan for us. God is a God whose plans—conceived in eternity and implemented through our lives—cannot fail.