

The Truth about Sovereignty – Part 3

Third, can God's counsel and purpose be rejected?

1. When the Bible speaks of God's counsel, this is simply referring to the fact that God has decided and purposed to do something. The word "counsel" means "volition," God deciding and choosing to do some things.
 - We saw already that mankind was created in the image of God and was therefore created with volition, the ability to make choices and decisions.
2. In an effort to explain tragic situations, a person might say, "We have to trust that this is part of the hidden and mysterious counsel of God. It is part of the counsel of His will."
 - They infer that the counsel of God is a mysterious and hidden thing that we cannot possibly know or understand. Is this a Biblical concept?
3. **Ephesians 1:9** states that God has **made known** the mystery of His will and the good pleasure of His purpose. The phrase "made known" is also translated "declared," and in another place, "I give you to understand."
 - So according to the Bible, God has declared and made known His purpose. He has given it to us to understand.
4. This matches what Paul said in **Acts 20:27**, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*" What is he referring to? God's Word!
5. God has **revealed** to us His counsel and purpose. How? In His Word.
 - Paul said in **1 Corinthians 2:16**, "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*" How do we have the mind of Christ? We have His Word.
 - Over and over in the Bible, the counsel of God is seen as being synonymous with His Word. **Jeremiah 23:18-22; Isaiah 30:1-2**
 - I hold in my hand the counsel of God. This tells me clearly His purpose and His plan. It tells me what He has done in time past (**Ephesians 2:11**), what He is doing today (**Ephesians 2:13**), and what He will do in the ages to come (**Ephesians 2:7**).
 - God has clearly revealed **today** things that He planned to do in eternity past. **Titus 1:2-3**
 - When someone starts talking about the mysterious and unknown counsel of God, you know you are dealing with someone who either doesn't know his Bible or does not have confidence in his Bible.
6. So when we ask the question, "Can God's counsel be rejected?" the answer is rather obvious. If His Word can be rejected, His counsel can be rejected. They are one and the same.
7. For example, let's compare **Isaiah 46:10** with **Luke 7:30**.
 - God says "*My counsel shall stand,*" but we see men rejecting the counsel of God in **Luke 7:30**. Is this a contradiction? Of course not. The answer is to look in the context.
 - In **Isaiah 46**, God's counsel is referring in context to His plan to establish His kingdom in Jerusalem for the nation of Israel. vs. 13

- So, John the Baptist came and preached to Israel to repent and be baptized in preparation for the prophesied kingdom. Yet we see leaders within the nation of Israel rejecting the counsel of God, refusing to be baptized by John.
 - They refused to participate in the counsel, purpose, and plan of God.
 - Will God ultimately accomplish His prophetic plan that He has purposed to do in Israel? Absolutely! God's purpose will stand. Yet those in Israel can choose to resist it and not participate in it.
 - God has a plan and will see to it that it is accomplished, but He will not force anybody to be a part of it. Mankind was created with volition to make that choice. As you read the Bible, one thing is abundantly clear. God has always desired a people that desire Him.
8. Today God is offering His grace to all people in every nation. This grace period was planned before the foundation of the world, but kept secret until God's time.

Colossians 1:25-27

- God has a special plan and purpose for all those that believe on His Son. God predestinated those who would believe to certain blessings and future glory in the heavens. This is the subject of **Ephesians 1:1-11**.
 - Whether you believe or not will not stop God from accomplishing His heavenly plans for the body of Christ, but He graciously invites you to be a part of it and participate in His plan. **1 Timothy 2:4, 6**
 - Some people choose to believe, other men, as Paul said, put the Word of God from them and judge **themselves** unworthy of everlasting life.
9. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
- 1 Corinthians 1:21**
- What is God's purpose and good pleasure for today? To save those that believe.
 - So, how is the counsel of God rejected today? By rejecting His Word and not believing on Jesus Christ.
10. This is the constant theme of God's Word. Will men choose to stand in the counsel of God or reject the counsel of God?
- **Psalm 106:12-13** - How was God's counsel rejected? They no longer believed His words.
 - **Psalm 107:11** - They scorned (contemned) God's counsel (God's plans). How? By rebelling against the words of God.
 - **Proverbs 1:23-30** - They rejected the purpose and plan of God by not hearkening to God. God's counsel will stand (**Proverbs 19:21**), yet they refused His counsel.
 - We have seen this same principle in **Jeremiah 23:18-22** and **Isaiah 30:1-2**.

Concluding thoughts:

1. God has purposed to accomplish an earthly plan for the nation of Israel (**Isaiah 46:9-13**) and a heavenly plan for the body of Christ (**Ephesians 1:1-11**). This is the counsel of His will.
2. These plans are not hidden and mysterious. The prophetic plan has clearly been made known (**Acts 3:20-24**) and now the mystery plan for the Body of Christ has been made known through the apostle Paul (**Ephesians 1:9, 3:1-9**).

3. In eternity, one thing will be left standing, the counsel, purpose, and plan of God. Nothing will hinder God from fulfilling His plans.
4. But for now, Satan is the god of this world (**2 Corinthians 4:4**) and Satan is seeking to fulfill his agenda and desires to use men to accomplish his purposes.
5. All of mankind is faced with a choice, to believe Satan's lies or to believe God's Word.
6. God invites men to participate with Him in His plan. In fact, He pleads with mankind, but gives mankind the volition to choose. What will be your choice?