

The Plan and Ability of God

Introduction

- A. One of the most encouraging subjects in the Bible has to do with what God desires to do in the life of the Christian and how He points out that He has the ability to fulfill that desire.
- B. This subject demonstrates that which is unique in Christianity - the power of God. We are not only exhorted how to live we are given the ability and wisdom to do so.

I. The Old Testament Illustration.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up. Daniel 3:16-18

Observations:

1. These three young men had been taken captive and brought to Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar had subjugated much of the known world and had selected these three, among others, to work in his new government. Naturally speaking, they had everything to gain if they would conform to the requirement of Babylon and its king.
2. The test came when all were required to bow to the idol which the king made to celebrate his great victory. These three men refused. The verses above summarize their reply. God did rescue them from the furnace and used their testimony to glorify Himself.
3. This is not only a demonstration of the power of God but an example for us as we live for God. It is important to see that these three young men, (a) knew the will of God, (b) knew what God could do, and (c) they wanted the will of God as their first priority.

II. The New Testament Application.

- A. God is able to build us up and give us an inheritance, Acts 20:32.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Observation: This verse indicates that God has the plan and ability to use His Word to meet the needs of His people. In particular He desires to save us (inheritance) and to cause us to grow and prosper as a believer (build you up). We must choose to cooperate as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

B. God is able to keep His Word, Romans 4:21.

And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised. He was able to perform.

Observation: This is the testimony of Abraham and Sarah. They believed God and recognized His power to fulfill His Word. We must respond like this - claim His promise - and believe Him.

C. God is able to make all grace abound to us, II Corinthians 9:8.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Observation: This is a promise to each of us. God desires to minister to us, through His grace, that we may have the ability to live and serve Him. We must face the question - is this high on the list of our priorities?

D. God is able to answer prayer, Ephesians 3:20.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Observation: This is probably one of the greatest promises of the Bible. The very structure of the verse assures us that He will hear and answer our prayers.

E. God is able to keep His people, I Timothy 1:12.

For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Observation: Paul wrote these words from prison. He knew he was to die. He writes to Timothy about his salvation and the ministry God had given to him. Here he affirms his belief that God will keep him and enable him to finish the work. This is God's promise to each of us.

F. God is able to give us sympathetic help, Hebrews 2:18.

For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor (give sympathetic help) them that are tempted.

Observation: Since Jesus Christ suffered and died in our place - He knows our need and can minister effectively to us. He lived our life, here on earth, and seeks to help us.

G. God is able to save us to the uttermost, Hebrews 7:25.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Observation: This verse simply means that there is no need we have but that He can meet it and there will never be a time when we are without His saving grace. He lives (prays) to keep us.

Conclusion: In Jude 24 we are also promised that He is able to keep us from falling