

THE PLAN OF GOD (Part One)

“Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, **but (alla)** according to His own purpose and grace granted in Christ Jesus from all eternity.” (2 Tim.1:9)

Note the contrast established with the conjunction alla (BUT).

- “Not (ouk) according to (kata+acc.of norm and standard) our works.” Paul reminds us how we are not saved.
- “But according to His own (idios) purpose (prothesis/ plan) and grace (charis).” Paul reminds us how we are saved.

The Greek word for purpose is prothesis. It is a compound Greek word (pro/ beforehand) and thesis from (Tithemi) [to place or to set]. To set or place beforehand is a reference to the Plan of God being established at the Eternal Life Conference (“from all eternity”).

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” (Eph.1:4; 1 Pet.1:20-21; John 17:24)

Note also that the Plan of God is revealed through the Word of God –“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose (boulema/ plan of God laid out in decrees) of God.” (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim.3:16-17; 2 Pet.1:20-21)

This lesson will study five aspects of the Plan of God and its effect upon the life of the church age believer.

1. The Plan of God was designed by the omniscience of God before time eternal (2 Tim.1:9; Eph.1:9-11; 3:11-12; Rom.8:28-30).

God designed one single, all-comprehensive and perfect plan for the human race at the eternal life conference (Eph.1:3-12).

It is a perfect plan because it is based on the essence of God and not man: “But according to His own (idios) purpose.” (2 Tim.1:9)

The Plan of God is bound by the infinite faithfulness of God to complete what he has decreed: “And being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.” (Rom.4:21)

“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Cor.1:9; 1 Thess.5:24)

Because the Plan of God never compromises His essences, the Plan of God is always what is best for man. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to **His purpose** (prothesis).” (Rom.8:28)

2. The Plan of God is so designed as to include all events and actions related to their causes and conditions both in heaven and on earth (Matt.6:10; Eph.3:14-15; 6:12).

This is one reason an event passes from a category of impossible to possible and to actual (Rom.4:17-21). This shows us that the omnipotence of God can perform miracles according to the Plan of God.

The decrees of the Plan of God are all comprehensive, not the slightest uncertainty can exist as to one of the smallest events without the confusion of all events (Matt.10:26-31) “**therefore, do not fear**” (Heb.11:8-10) “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matt.10:30)

God does not cause sin or evil in the world (James 1:13-15). He permits it because of free will (volition) in the angelic conflict. An example is Adam and Eve (Gen.3). God did not condone or sponsor what occurred. God gave them the Tree of knowledge of good and evil and taught them the word of God and gave them free will to chose the will of God over Satan (Matt.4:10; 16:23).

3. God allows volition to act independent of the Plan of God. It is important to distinguish between what God permits and what He decrees.

There are three important categories to consider regarding the will of God or what He decrees.

- **Directive will** of God is what He specifically declares in His word (Jonah 1:1-2).
- **Permissive will** of God is what He allows to occur because of volition because it has declared consequences (Jonah 1:3).
- **Overruling will** of God is what He does not allow to interfere with the Plan of God (Jonah 1:4-17).

We learn that God doesn't coerce volition to live by His Plan. However, once a choice is made either by you or to you, God will take appropriate action (Joseph's persecution by brothers) (Gen.50:18-20).

4. Entrance into the Plan of God is based on grace salvation through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:23-25; 1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9; 2 Tim.1:9).

Every Church Age Believer (CAB) enters God's plan of salvation under perfect conditions and timing: "'At the acceptable time, I listened to you; and on the day of salvation I helped you;' behold, **now** is the acceptable time, behold, **now** is the day of salvation.'" (2 Cor.6:2)

The spiritually advancing believer will learn that God's perfect timing in the Christian way of life (CWL) is correlated to consistent walking in the Holy Spirit and in faith (Gal.5:16-17; 2 Cor.5:7; Eph.5:15-18).

Question: "What can I lose in life and lose my happiness about life?"

Whatever it is, it is a misplaced object or source of true happiness in CWL. Most of our disappointments in life are self-induced because of misplaced expectations. Often we lose happiness over the delay because of our anxiety regarding God's timing of the Plan (1 Pet.1:6-7).

The spiritually advancing believer will learn that **waiting by faith** is as important as **walking by faith** (Eccl.3:17; Phil.4:6-7).

The lapse of time between the CAB receiving divine knowledge of a promised blessing and the actual blessing is called perfect timing in the Plan of God (Rom.4:17-21).

5. There are three phases to the Plan of God for every Church Age Believer

- **Phase I** Believer in Salvation (Eph.2:5-10; John 6:40; 10:9, 28-30; Acts 13:48).
- **Phase II** Believer in Time (Rom.8:29; Eph.1:3-6; Heb.11:1, 6; 1 Pet.4:19; 2 Pet.3:18)
- **Phase III** Believer in Eternity (John 14:1-6; 2 Cor.5:6-8; Phil.3:20-21; 2 Tim.4:7-8)

The Plan of God was designed so as to include all events and actions related to their causes and conditions as an indivisible system, every link being a part of the integrity of the whole." (Bob Thieme)