

Chapter 17

PLAN OF GOD

The Holy Bible is an amazingly unified text that encompasses the whole plan of God to bring salvation to man through Jesus Christ and complete all of history in our Savior (Ephesians 1:10). Knowing the plan of God helps us realize the meticulous detail by which He brought us eternal life through His wisdom, knowledge and love, for his good pleasure and praise (Ephesians 1:4-8).

Key to this plan is:

- ▶ The structural elements to bring salvation.
- ▶ The teaching elements allow us to recognize the Savior.

Both are detailed in this Chapter in the order of the scriptures. Keep in mind that these are overviews and not an exhaustive study.

PROGRESSION OF THE PLAN OF GOD

Having mentioned some basic rules then, let's look at several different major sections of scripture.

1 Adam and Eve

(Genesis 2-3) - The sin in the Garden of Eden completely corrupted the mind and physical being of man and separated him from God (Romans 5:12-14). God punished Adam and Eve for their disobedience (Genesis 3:16-19).

2 Key Messianic prophecy

(Genesis 3:15) – God first promised a solution to the sin problem created by Adam's fall by indicating that Eve's seed would defeat the serpent (Satan) who caused the transgression in the garden.

3 Cain and Abel

(Genesis 4) – Eve hoped the birth of her son, Cain (Genesis 4:1) would provide the holy man God promised in Genesis 3:15. Cain, unfortunately, proved to be a man of sin. and killed his brother Abel because he offered a more acceptable sacrifice. Therefore, God banished Cain. From this time onwards begin the threads of two separate societies, one from Cain that hates God and embraces sin versus the people of God's choosing who love and obey Him. Over time, the sons of God were overtaken by wicked men, and the world was filled with sin (Genesis 6:1-6).

3

Noah

([Genesis 6-9](#)) – Because of so much sin in the world, God sent His wrath to destroy mankind in the great flood; except for Noah and his immediate family whom he graciously saved in the ark. Noah was a type (foreshadow) of Christ in that:

- He was chosen by God.
- He built the ark out of obedience in faith.
- The end (the beginning of the flood) came suddenly at an unknown time.
- The chosen were saved from God's wrath.



After Noah God gave man a third opportunity to be obedient to God.

Key Messianic Prophecy (Genesis 9:25-27) – This verse states that the Messiah would come from the line of Shem, indicating the land of Palestine.

- ▶ Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) – After Noah, over time people divided into 70 countries. However, in the land of Babylon the Tower of Babel was created to replace and resist God. Babylon came to represent in scripture a system of government that is anti-God and will ultimately be destroyed in the tribulation (Revelation 17 and 18). God punished man for his sin by confusing the languages to inhibit their ability to work together to resist God.

- ▶ Abraham (Genesis 11:30 through Genesis 25:11) – Abraham is a central figure in scripture. God chose Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees, which he did by faith, coming to Palestine at God's direction. Abraham received then the first major covenant from God (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-5). The Abrahamic Covenant consists of three promises and represents the cornerstone of scripture from which the rest of God's plan is completed. The three promises are:
 - *Isaac, Abraham's son* – He was significant because Abraham and his wife Sarah were too old to bear children and so was a test of faith which Abraham passed (Genesis 15:1-6). The provision of a son was a sign to Abraham of God's faithfulness to complete the remaining two promises that would not be fulfilled in his lifetime.
 - *A blessing to all nations* – This is a promise of Messiah coming from Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:16) through Isaac (Genesis 21:12; Romans 9:7; Galatians 4:28; Hebrews 11:18). Isaac was a type of Christ whom God ordered Abraham to sacrifice as his only begotten son. God saved Isaac from sacrifice by providing a ram in his place (Genesis 22:1-18). It is through Isaac that the spiritual blessings of Messiah come (Genesis 21:12; Romans 9:7; Hebrews 11:18).
 - *A founder of a great nation* – This is Israel and the promise comes through Abraham's grandson Jacob to the 'seed after you' (generations following Jacob). It was confirmed by the sign of circumcision in Genesis 17:7-14; Psalm 105:6).

Key Messianic Prophecy (Genesis 49:10) – When Jacob gave blessings to his sons he further identified the coming Messiah as a king from Judah.

- ▶ Moses and Israel (Exodus through Deuteronomy) – Moses is a central figure in the Bible and is the next step contributing to the completion of the two promises given by the Abrahamic Covenant. Moses was the founding leader of the nation Israel which provided the seed of Messiah through the line of King David (2 Samuel 7:14).
- Moses is a type of Christ in that he was:
 1. Chosen by God to redeem his people.
 2. Rejected by his people.
 3. Went away and returned to take them “home” to their promise rest (Israel).
 4. He was the mediator of the Mosaic covenant from God to Israel (Galatians 3:20) as Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant from God to believers (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- Egypt is a symbol of a nation resistant to God and is characterized as unfaithful Jerusalem in scripture. (Revelation 11:7, Matthew 2:15).
- The law of Israel (Exodus 20-24) – God gave Israel the law which had three basic purposes in providing:
 1. *A government* – This was important because Israel was generally an uneducated people who were subjugated as slaves by Egypt away from more affluent, organized, and educated societies.
 2. *Centralized worship* – This was important because individual believers did not have the Holy Spirit and were susceptible to the temptations of the more seemingly wealthy and secure heathen societies surrounding them.
 3. *Teaching about Messiah* – The law provided to what may have been an illiterate people numerous symbols and teachings to teach them about God’s marvelous plan to bring Messiah to save them from their sins.

These teachings included symbols associated with the:

- Tabernacle, which included the Holy of Holies and The Mercy Seat, the Holy Place, and its accouterments.
- The high priest and his adornment.
- The feasts and the sacrifices.

Key Messianic Prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:15,18) – Messiah would come from the Jews and be a prophet like Moses.

- ▶ The state of Israel – This chosen people was God’s fourth gracious attempt to provide a way for people of the world to seek and obey Him. Israel’s history can be conveniently divided between several time periods.
 - *Theocracy* – God’s intention for Israel was for them to become a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and His unique people (Exodus 19:5-6). In redeeming them he promised them a rest, safety, and a land (Deuteronomy 12:9-12). Unfortunately, following their redemption through the Red Sea, Israel immediately sinned and tempted God at Massa (Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95:7-11), and they fell into judgment. Israel’s judgment will not end until the great tribulation just before Christ’s future return to reign on the earth. God desired to lead Israel as a theocracy, through his representative Moses, then Joshua, into the promised land which would be their rest, a place of peace symbolizing their final holy Kingdom under Messiah. Israel failed to take the land, however, as God directed. For this reason, and continued unfaithfulness, they suffered resulting attacks from heathen countries in and around the promised land (described in the book of Judges). Ultimately, Israel then longed for a king like other nations so they could attain superficial stability instead of faithfully seeking God and the greater benefits of being His people (1 Samuel 8).

- *The kings* – God graciously allowed a king, as the Israelites requested, through the leadership of Samuel. This change ended the theocracy. However, Israel chose Saul, the wrong King, and God ultimately provided His choice, David (1 Samuel 16), who initiated the line of Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12-16). God later confirmed David by a covenant (Davidic Covenant) promising him an eternal throne, house, and kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16); God later upheld again these promises (Psalm 89:20 through 132:8). Israel under David reached its height of power and under his son, Solomon, symbolized the glory power and riches of the Messianic kingdom (Matthew 12:42).

Key Messianic Prophecy David was known as a person after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Accordingly, God used David to bring forth numerous Messianic prophecies often reflecting Christ's own affliction. Below are some, but not all, the important Davidic prophecies:

- Psalm 2:7-8 – This passage predicts the resurrection of Messiah (Acts 13:33).
- Psalm 8:4 – This passage indicates Messiah as Son of God, being made lower than the angels for a period of time before glorification. Further, Messiah would come and assess His people.
- Psalm 16: 8-10 – Speaks to the resurrection of Messiah.
- Psalm 22 – Describes Messiah's death on the cross.
- Psalm 34:20 – States that Messiah's bones would not be broken on the cross (see also John 19:36; Exodus 12:46).
- Psalm 45: 6-7 – Messiah is God, righteous and eternal.
- Psalm 49:15 – Messiah will redeem us.
- Psalm 68:18 – Ascension of Christ.
- Psalm 69,109 – Messiah will be betrayed.
- Psalm 110:1,4 – Messiah will have all enemies under his feet and is from the order of Melchizedek (see also Genesis 14; Hebrews 7).

THE PROPHETS – After Solomon, Israel continued in sin and Israel was split into separate northern and southern kingdoms. God graciously helped Israel by revealing His will through the prophets. The age of the prophets started with Elijah and was initiated by miracles. Ultimately, important new revelation, given through the ensuing major and minor prophets (e.g., Isaiah and Hosea), warned Israel of coming judgment and urged repentance but also gave further details of the coming glorious Messianic kingdom. Nonetheless, Israel continued in sin and God carried away the especially sinful northern kingdom and its 10 tribes to Assyria in 722 BC, and ultimately the southern Kingdom at the beginning of the 6th century BC to Babylon for a 70-year exile. Following the exile, many Israelites in Babylon returned to the southern kingdom of Judah where they rebuilt the temple within the walls of Jerusalem. However, God left them in a time of prophetic silence until the coming of the Messiah 400 years later (inter-testament period). Major Messianic prophecies are given in both the major and minor prophetic books:

- Isaiah 7:14 – Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- Isaiah 9:1-6 – Messiah is God and will have a just government.
- Isaiah 11:1-2 – Messiah will come from a poor region in Samaria.
- Isaiah 42:1-4 – The gracious aspect of Messiah's ministry.
- Isaiah 53 – Messiah will die for our sins.
- Isaiah 59:20-21 – Messiah will bring salvation and the Holy Spirit.
- Isaiah 61:1-2 – Messiah will have a ministry of good news, physical as well as emotional healing and providing liberty.
- Jeremiah 31:31-34 – The New Covenant which includes the kingdom promise and Holy Spirit.
- Zechariah 9: 9-11 – Messiah as king will arrive poor and on a donkey.
- Zechariah 12:10 – Messiah will be pierced.
- Zechariah 13:7 – Messiah will be struck and Israel scattered.
- Malachi 3:1; Malachi 4:5; Isaiah 40:3 – God will send a forerunner, as Elijah, to urge Israel to repent. This was John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11-15).

THE GOSPELS – At the right time God sent his only begotten Son to the world to fulfill his promise of the coming Messiah who would save people from their sins ([Isaiah 59:20-21](#)). In doing so He presented the Kingdom to the Jews indicating they should believe in Him as Messiah to save their souls. ([Matthew 3:7](#); [Matthew 4:16](#); [Matthew 10:7](#); [John 3:3,16](#)). God sent John the Baptist as the prophesied forerunner ([Isaiah 40:3](#); [Malachi 3:1](#); [Malachi 4:5](#)).

- Jesus proved His Messiahship through:
- His lineage from King David ([2 Samuel 7:14](#); [Matthew 1](#), [Luke 3](#)).
- The virgin birth ([Isaiah 7:14](#); [Matthew 2:15](#)).
- He would be called out of Egypt ([Matthew 2:15](#)).
- Fulfillment of specific Old Testament prophecies (please see prior section).
- His power and purity at the temptation ([Matthew 4:1-12](#)).
- His miracles ([Isaiah 61:1](#) fulfilled in [Luke 4:16](#); [Isaiah 42:1-4](#) fulfilled in [Matthew 12:7-10](#)).
- The witness of God the Father ([Matthew 3:14](#), [Matthew 17:7](#), [John 12:28](#)).
- The witness of the Spirit ([Matthew 3:14](#)).
- His teaching in parables ([Matthew 13:39](#); [Psalm 78:2](#)).
- His death ([Matthew 27](#)).
- His resurrection ([Psalm 2:7-8](#), [16:8-10](#)).

COURSE OF HIS MINISTRY - The Jews rejected Christ's claim of Messiahship ([Matthew 12:22-45](#)). They crucified Him in an unjust death on the cross for which He died for our sins to provide a way of salvation. On the third day, Christ was resurrected from the dead ([Matthew 28:1-10](#)) to provide eternal life for all those who believe, by faith alone. He then appeared to the disciples, to the women, and to 500 others ([1 Corinthians 15:4-7](#)). At Pentecost ([Acts 1](#)) He ascended from the Mount of Olives to heaven where He sat down at the right hand of God the Father and sent His Spirit to begin the church ([Acts 2:4](#)).

The CHURCH – The church is the body of Christ. Its membership consists of all Christians (New Testament believers) under the headship of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18). It began when Christ ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit back to seal and empower believers (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 1:20-23). Christ tasked the apostles to spread the gospel across the world in the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and just before His ascension predicted the completion of His command (Acts 1:8). Its fulfillment is in Colossians 1:6. The early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2-6) had the following characteristics, it was: essentially Jewish, small in number, and led by the apostles with help from deacons. Importantly, God connected the message of Christ in the Gospels to the early church through Peter's preaching and miracles. Starting in Act 7 the church was persecuted and spread afar from Jerusalem helping to fulfill Christ's prediction (Acts 1:8). Saul was converted in Acts 9 and then called Paul. He was personally taught by Christ (2 Corinthians 12:2-5) and became the major apostle to complete the knowledge of the New Testament (Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2-3). Paul and the other apostles established churches and God's commandment (detailed in Romans through to Revelation 3) for the 2nd generation of Christians and beyond (apostolic authority). Characteristics of the more mature church were that it spread across the world (Colossians 1:6) led by elders in every city and assisted by deacons, and was primarily gentile; though many congregations seemingly had a large proportion of Jews such as Rome, Corinth, and northern Asia Minor. Further, in the mature church, miraculous signs had stopped (Matthew 11:13; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13). The commandment given by Christ to Paul, as set down in the epistles, is how God communicates in the current church age (Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2-3; Hebrews 1:1-2). The church acts as the body of Christ to accomplish His will, spread the gospel, and nurture believers in their walk with God.

END TIMES – At the end of the church age God promises to conclude all in Christ (Ephesians 1:10-11) which will involve the fulfillment of his covenant with Abraham and include His glorious return to bring all believers in Himself and to eternal life. Christ also will fulfill the promises given to the Jews for their Kingdom and their land, as part of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Revelation 4-22; 1 Thessalonians 4, 5; 2 Thessalonians 1, 2).

SUMMARY

God has initiated, carried out, and will bring to conclusion His marvelous plan of salvation. The plan began before all time in choosing His believers through the ages, convicting them, driving them to Himself, causing them to believe in Christ's death on the cross, and giving them positions of eternal security in their legal innocence and membership in God's family as well as the church, sealing by the Spirit, and creating in them a new regenerated person. God will bring His believers to salvation for eternity with Him, providing us now with great hope, confidence, and an anchor for our souls.

By structure, this great salvation was accomplished through the Abrahamic Covenant which provided for the seed (which is Messiah {[Galatians 3:16](#)}) through Isaac to bring Salvation to man as well as the physical seed of Israel to Jacob to provide the man Jesus Christ through the Covenant of David. God will fulfill all His promises to His chosen individuals through Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God that we have such a blessed Savior! All honor and glory are due to God and Christ!

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