

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 6



FOR AS MANY AS ARE
LED BY THE SPIRIT OF
GOD, THEY ARE THE
SONS OF GOD.
ROMANS 8:14, KJV

MAN IN GOD'S PLAN

Scripture Texts: Titus 1:2; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; Romans 8:29-30; Matthew 25:34; Revelation 22:17

Sin is an abnormal, unhealthy spiritual state. Sin is common (for all have sinned), but it is a foreigner in human nature. It is fallen nature. The purpose for which God made man is his normal state. His purpose is that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love through Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 1:4**).

Does God think only of His own glory, praise, and pleasure? No, He delights in giving. He loves and planned the best for man. Before the Creation God formed a plan to have a people with eternal life, holy, doing holy works, like Christ, and possessing the Kingdom of God. These are those who choose Jesus Christ and His plan.

MEMORY VERSE: *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

—2 Timothy 1:9

Eternal Life

Titus 1:2 Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Notice three basic points. (1) What is promised? Eternal life, the life of God. It is without end. It is more than mere existence. It is good, having the qualities of God. It must be obtained on God's terms. Eternal death also lasts forever but is bad, having the qualities of Satan. (2) Who promised? God. The promise is sure because God cannot lie. (3) When promised? God decided before the world began that man was to never die, and He planned a way to accomplish this end. Man's sin, his refusal to take life on God's terms, has lost it to him. Still, through God's mercy, it can be regained (**Romans 5:21**).

Holy Works

Ephesians 2:10 Saints are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus in verses 1, 5, to people quickened in Christ, saved from sin by Him. They were not saved by their own works, they are the work of God, his workmanship. (See **2 Corinthians 5:17**) No one can be saved by his own work, only by the work God does in him. God before ordained or planned that we do good works in His strength. Works God calls good are holy works.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 We are called with an holy calling, called unto holiness. This is not according to our works—not like the unholy works we do of ourselves. It is God's purpose. God gives the grace to perform it. This grace is in Christ, has been since before the world began. God's unchanging plan is that man should be holy. The means of becoming so is wrapped up in our Saviour Jesus Christ. It was promised in the old dispensation. It was made manifest when Jesus came and died to put His Gospel in force. Both the promise and the fulfillment are told in Zechariah's prophecy in **Luke 1:67-80**.

To Be Like Christ

Romans 8:29-30 God, looking ahead from eternity to the time of the inhabited earth, planned that the people should be conformed to the image of his Son. He predestinated or appointed beforehand that His Son, Jesus, would be the firstborn among many others who would become His brethren. This fulfillment is still going on. This is a joint action of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. First, Christ calls and convicts us of sin and draws us toward Himself by His Word. The Spirit reproves the world of sin (**John 16:8**). Jesus said, No man cometh

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unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6). No man can come to me, except the Father . . . draw him (John 6:44).

Second, **he did predestinate**—He planned beforehand that men would be called, and those who answered His call would be justified—**he also justified**. Here justified seems to include all the work of God in making one a child of God (Matthew 22:14). Third, **them he also glorified**. He glorifies these children. There is an earnest or foretaste of glory here of the glory that awaits in the next life when bodies are made new in Heaven. Jesus said He had given glory to His people (John 17:22). Peter was **a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed** (1 Peter 5:1).

Has God decided that certain ones will be saved and others lost, and that without our power to change? Some teach this. Remember, all Scripture agrees. Truth cannot contradict truth. **The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance** (2 Peter 3:9). He invites whosoever will to come to Him and says, **him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out** (John 6:37). It is the plan that is predestinated, foreordained, and determined. The set plan is that God will have a people conformed to the image of Christ. Those people will be the ones who choose to come to Him. What is the standard of perfection that is our goal? God set the goal. (See Ephesians 4:13; Ephesians 5:27.) This goal must be attained if man is to fit into God's plan.

To Receive Inheritance

Matthew 25:34 Jesus was describing the final Judgment. The righteous will be told, **Come . . . inherit the kingdom**. The Kingdom of God is a two-fold kingdom. It consists of both sides of the River of Life. It is entered or received in this world (Matthew 12:28; Romans 14:17). He speaks of those who have a foretaste of it here. At the Judgment these will enter into full possession.

An inheritance is received because of one's relationship to the owner. The Kingdom of God belongs to the children of God, those born into His family here.

Whom Does This Plan Cover?

Revelation 22:17 Those **athirst, whosoever will**, anyone, everyone, YOU may **take the water of life freely**. Most will not because it requires living by God's plan. A few will enter the never-ending, never-changing, ever-expanding plan of God (Matthew 7:13-14).

When Jesus said, **Let him that heareth say, Come**, He put the passing on of the invitation into our hands. The privilege of helping a bit in determining who has a chance to choose is ours. Just ask Him to place you in the harvest where He can use you most. Where should we start? When? How should we prepare?

JUST A THOUGHT

"What men think of as WHEAT, God may often consider CHAFF."

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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