

GODS PLAN FOR ALL MANKIND AND FOR ALL TIME!

No builder would think of beginning construction on a building unless he had a plan, or blueprint, in hand.

No entrepreneur would embark upon a new venture without a business plan to insure, at least theoretically, the success of his endeavor.

Would the great God of Creation begin the grandest of all projects without a plan in hand?

This is all the more important when we realize that God's plan is not only for the vastness and intricacies of the universe as a habitat for man, but for the wise inter-working of laws that would govern man's relationships with each other. God must provide not only sufficient time to prepare a physical home for his creation, but also time for man's development to appreciate and properly utilize the home which God has prepared for him.

What was the ultimate design of this great Divine Plan? Nothing less than the production of a race of intelligent creatures who would, not of coercion but from a free will, render service to Him in total harmony with each other throughout eternity.

Since He was not planning a race of robots who would serve because they had no other choice, He devised a method for giving them a contrasting lesson with evil and with good. Seeing for themselves the effects of both, He had no doubt that intelligent men would choose good, with its effects of health, happiness and life.

A PLAN OF THE AGES

Like any master builder, He knew that this final objective would best be accomplished in phases. Therefore, he first set forth three great periods of time, or "worlds." The Bible identifies these eras as "the world that then was," the Present evil world" and "the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:6-13)

{ Chart showing the three worlds is here indicating also Creation, The Floor and The Kingdom between the arches }

The first of these periods lasted 1,656 years—from the Garden of Eden to the Flood of Noah. During this period, when a man's age spanned centuries instead of decades, the government of earth appears to have been under angelic rulership. When materialized angels intermarried with women of earth, the Bible records that the judgment of God was evidenced by a flood wiping the earth clear of life, except for the eight-person family of Noah.

The second period, or dispensation, is the longest of the three. It has extended from the flood even to the present time. During this period man has been left largely to his own devices. Men have tried tribal or patriarchal rulership, feudalism, capitalism, empires, republics, democracies, socialism and communism. Each has merited the condemnation, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.” (Daniel 5:27) In the third dispensation, still future, man will have the contrasting experience of a government of righteousness. Although that government will be strict in nature, its results will be the re-education of mankind to learn God’s laws and the fruitage of obeying them. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isaiah 26:9)

AGES WITHIN DISPENSATIONS

During the second dispensation of man’s experience with evil, God has not been inactive. While leaving man to his own devices, He has been using the same period to train and develop co-laborers for the great uplift work of the third dispensation. Thus we see this dispensation subdivided into three smaller periods or “ages.”

{ Chart with ages inserted here }

The first of these we call the “Patriarchal Age.” In it God dealt with the hereditary heads of one selected family, the family of Abraham of Ur, in the Chaldees. Chosen on the basis of his obedience to go to an unknown land, Abraham was given a unique promise, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:18) In the preceding verse this “seed” was divided into two parts—one was likened to the “sand which is upon the sea shore” and the other to “the stars of heaven”—one earthly and one heavenly.

The story of Abraham and his immediate descendants, Isaac and Jacob, covers the rest of the book of Genesis. It demonstrates the marvelous way in which God prepared them to be the head of a nation, the nation of Israel.

Following the death of the last patriarch, Jacob, his twelve sons form the nation of Israel. During the next 1845 years, we follow their tumultuous history, preparing them for a still future work of leadership when, “ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:23) These will be that seed of Abraham that was to multiply as “the sand which is by the seashore.”

This period comes to an end with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-looked-for Messiah of Israel, the Christ. His life, His teachings, His death and His resurrection became the turning point of all history. The whole world revolves around the cross of Calvary.

There a new age began. Israel, as a nation, was rejected for a season. A new group was selected. These were not from any one nation, but of every tribe and nation and

denomination. Their common bond was not hereditary, but the bond of belief in Jesus of Nazareth. They gladly claimed the name their enemies heaped upon them—"Christians." These were destined to become Abraham's seed "as the stars of heaven."

The next dispensation is also divided into two periods. The first of these is called "The Kingdom of Christ" because it will be under his dominion. From Revelation 20:1-4 we learn that it is to be a thousand years in length. It is an era of transition, introduced by a trouble so intense that it is called "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."

Though marked early by the glorious resurrection of all earth's billions who have ever died, it will not be an easy time. Men will come back with the same mind-set with which they died. The "survival of the fittest" and "might makes right" will still dominate their thoughts. The process of unlearning these concepts and replacing them with God's law of "love, welling up in every heart, meeting a kindred response from every other heart" will neither be quick nor easy. But it will be productive. It will revolutionize the way men think and live.

The strong ruler-ship of Christ necessary to retrain men, scarred so deeply by six thousand years of exposure to evil, will not be permanent. Having accomplished its purpose, it will be replaced by the kingdom of God so long sought by the Christian's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) Then Christ will step aside, God will be "all in all," and everyman will be a king in his own right.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)

Thus, in these six progressive ages, men will retrace their steps from the effects of the original sin and fall from Adam's perfection in Eden, to paradise restored.

But God's Plan of the Ages tells still more. As these successive ages form the background for God's work, the chart following shows how God deals with man, his planned family, during these periods of time.

THE PYRAMID SYMBOL

{ contains also a picture of a split pyramid shape showing a separated top stone }

Throughout the chart following, the symbol of a pyramid, either in its complete or truncated form, is used to represent men or classes of men.

This symbol is not randomly chosen, but because of the unique quality of the pyramid shape. All the patterns of the whole are found complete in the top stone itself.

Thus Christ, and those who demonstrate their perfection in Christ-likeness, are represented by complete pyramid structures. Those who have fallen from this ideal are shown by truncated, or headless pyramids, since they do not copy the standard of perfection. However, even the incomplete, the imperfect, once reunited with Christ as their head, take on the image of their Head, and are shown once again by complete pyramids.

{The following page shows a chart with boxes of explanation and arrows to the parts of the chart that they describe. I will give you the text. You will have to do the set-up}

ADAM (“a”), created perfect, with his wife, Eve, in the Garden of Eden is the beginning of the human race and the starting point of God’s Plan for Man.

SIN ENTERED (“b”) when Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation. Expelled from Eden, they lost perfection as well as their Edenic home.

ABRAHAM (“c”) and others faithful in ancient times though not perfect in fact, were so reckoned by God—“justified by their faith.”

DEPRAVED MANKIND (“d”) after the flood, continued in their evil ways, remaining on the plane of sin and death (“R”).

ISRAEL (“e”), in contrast, was raised typically from this condition by their covenant endeavor to keep God’s perfect law.

JESUS (“g”), a perfect man, became an exact corresponding price for Adam.

JESUS AT JORDAN (“h”) was begotten to spiritual life by God’s Holy Spirit. Though not yet a spiritual being, this was the first step in that direction.

THE CROSS not only redeemed Adam and his race, but removed Israel’s curse of the law as well.

JESUS (“i”) ROSE FROM THE DEAD an invisible being to a spiritual nature, “far above all principalities and powers.”

HIS ASCENSION (“k”), 50 days later, gave him the full glory of office of God’s own Divine Nature.

AS HEAD OF HIS CHURCH (“l”), Christ said, “Lo I am with you always even to the end of the age.” And again, “You have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST during their earthly sojourn is divided into four classes:

NEW CREATURES (“n”), who serve their Lord with “all their heart, soul, mind and strength.”

A GREAT MULTITUDE (“m”) of consecrated Christians who prove half-hearted in carrying out their vows.

PASSIVE CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS (“p”) who, though sincere, will not achieve heavenly goals without making a consecration of their life to God.

HYPOCRITS (“q”), who make up all too large a portion of Christianity, will benefit nothing from this association.

THE PERSONAL RETURN OF CHRIST (“r”) begins a period of “harvest” in which Jesus gathers his church (“s”) as “wheat” from “tares,” from former associations to be with him. “For if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” United with Christ in the heavens, they are shown by figure “w”.

THE TIME OF TROUBLE (“S”) which ends the Gospel Age will judge all the nations of the world, but “judgment must begin at the house of God.”

WHILE THE CHURCH (“s”) is removed from the scene,

THE GREAT MULTITUDE (“t”) will “wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.” Though severely tested, they will be “saved, so as by fire.”

PASSIVE CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS (“u”) will find the institutions in which they trusted failing round about them, but those who sincerely pray, “Thy kingdom come” will find that prayer soon answered.

HYPOCRITS (“v”), lacking faith, will be the sorest hit in the turmoil that brings this age to an end in the “Battle of Armageddon.” However, they too will be raised from the dead into the kingdom which is “for the just, and for the unjust.”

THE COMPLETED PICTURE

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (“s”) form the top of Christ’s pyramidal government to “bless all the families of the earth.” Administering justice to earth’s resurrected billions, these will “live and reign with Christ a thousand years.”

A GREAT MULTITUDE (“y”) who follow Christ, but with less than whole-hearted devotion, willingly “serve before the throne.”

ISRAEL (“z”), restored to life, to their land and to God’s favor, will be in the forefront of kingdom blessings—“to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

MAN (“W”), God’s planned family, will be raised from the dead and educated in the Laws of God on a “highway of holiness.” This process will be so effective that “no man will say to his neighbor, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest.”

GOD’S PLAN OF THE AGES --- MAN’S BEST HOPE!