

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GOD'S PLAN IN PURPOSE

Program #1033

Eddie Parrish & Mark Teske

EDDIE: God thought about you long before you were born. God thought about you even before the creation of the world. Does that sound like an interesting topic for study? Stay tuned, and you'll see that it is.

(Singing)

EDDIE: We want to welcome you to *The Truth In Love* program today. Mark Teske is alongside again for our program. We're grateful to have you here as we study God's word regarding an important principle in scripture. We are beginning a new series of lessons today.

MARK: Eddie, it's interesting as we look in the book of Genesis and the creation account unfolds for us, we see in chapter 3 the entrance of sin into the world. We see that Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit that God had commanded them not to eat, the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When they ate the fruit and when they sinned, they tried to hide themselves from God. Then when they came together with God, He had some interesting things to say to them, He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15) Galatians 3:16 tells us that the seed that God was talking about is Christ. When I put all of this together, it looks like God was planning – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned – to bring Christ into the world.

EDDIE: It sounds that way because that's the way it was. God had a plan for the salvation of man which was actually in place before the

creation of the world so that when sin became a reality, God could then start enacting the plan that He had created in His own mind even before the foundation of the world. You see, the Bible is not a series of unconnected and unrelated stories. It seems that some people think it is, but it's not. It's a single story. All of the historical information in the Scriptures has to do with the single unifying theme of scripture, which is the salvation of mankind from the consequences of his own sins through Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

MARK: So we would see throughout scripture, from the beginning to the end, the common theme that everything in some way, shape, or form relates to the salvation of man.

EDDIE: That's right. Today we are beginning a new series of lessons that will explore this plan of God, this scheme of redemption, for the redemption and salvation of mankind. We're going to trace that plan through the Bible by looking at a number of passages that illustrate how God unfolds that plan throughout history. We begin today with God's plan in purpose. In other words, we're going to look at how God planned His plan, if you will, before the foundation of the world. We're going to do that by looking at a number of key important passages that teach that principle. Mark is going to read the first of those passages for us from Ephesians 1.

MARK: I'd love to. Beginning in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

EDDIE: There are some key words and phrases that Paul uses here to illustrate the idea that God's plan was something that was done even before the creation. He mentions that God chose us, (which means to pick out) and therefore, because God has chosen us, we are God's elect. The Bible uses that terminology in passages like 1 Peter 2:9, "You are an elect race." Paul would say to the Thessalonians in I Thessalonians 1:4 that "I know of your election." This text in Ephesians 1 says that God chose us, His people, before the foundation of the world.

When I said at the opening of the show that God had us in mind long before we were born and even before the creation, this is one of the passages that teach that. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of

the world; and therefore, this passage says, we were predestined or foreordained to be the adopted children of God. Now, that idea of adoption and election and before the foundation of the world has raised a lot of questions and issues throughout the centuries in the religious world.

MARK: Has He chosen you and me as individuals to be saved and chosen other people not to be saved? That's how some people have taken this passage. They believe that He's chosen, or predestined, and has sealed your eternal destiny even before the foundation of the world.

EDDIE: You're right. That's how some people have looked at and viewed this passage. But I believe that's an erroneous view. Of course, the truth of the matter is when you think about God's electing us or God's choosing us, there are only two options with regard to how God did that. It either had to be individually, like you described in the views of some, that God arbitrarily chose certain individuals to be saved and certain individuals to be lost. Before the foundation of the world, God looked out through history and said, "Okay, you, Mr. Smith and you, Mr. Jones, you are going to be saved. That's it. You know that you're saved, and that's it. This other Smith and this other Jones over here are going to be lost, and there's not anything that any of them can do to change that arbitrary, fixed-in-stone choice." It had to be that way, (individual choice), or the only other option is that God chose, what we might say, on a corporate or group basis. In other words, that God chose a certain group of people to be among the saved, and the rest would be lost, yet still leaving the individual choice up to people, individuals, as to whether or not they are in that group. Now, those are the only two options.

Like you said, some believe and teach that God did it on an individual basis. But that can't be the case, because if that were true, the whole idea would contradict many passages that indicate that human beings have free will, and that we have the freedom to choose right from wrong, and the freedom to choose whether or not to obey God. If election was on the basis of individuals and if God just arbitrarily chooses whether people are saved or lost, then free will is out the window. You don't have free will, because God chose you or He didn't choose you.

MARK: If you think about the great commission, God would have been sending us on a wild goose chase. If people were chosen

beforehand, why would He send us into the world to preach the gospel to every creature if it doesn't make any difference?

EDDIE: That's an excellent passage. There are a number of passages that are very clear where God indicates human beings have the freedom to choose whether to be saved or lost. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached and said to the people, "Save yourselves from this crooked and perverse generation." (Acts 2:40) Save yourselves. In other words, you have the choice as to whether or not you want to obey.

MARK: When we go back to the Old Testament, we read in Joshua 24:15, "Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." There is obviously a choice that Joshua is telling the people they need to make, and they must decide for themselves which way to go.

EDDIE: Yes. If there was no choice, why did he say choose? It's not that difficult a concept. Jesus said in Revelation 22:17, "Whosoever will, let him come." Now, that implies that people have a will and that anyone who chooses, wills, wants, or desires (whosoever) to come to Him may freely do so if they choose to do it.

MARK: In Matthew 11:28 we read, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Notice the word "come". That is something that we do to respond to Him. Clearly, the choice is up to us.

EDDIE: Right. In John 7:17, Jesus said, "If any man wills to do God's will, then he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak of my own authority." Notice that Jesus said, "If any man." When He says "if any man wills", and desires to do God's will, then that implies that any man can. In passages like II Thessalonians 2:10, Paul spoke of those who did not receive a love of the truth that they might be saved. That's choice.

MARK: Jesus said in Matthew 23:37 that He would have loved to have gathered the Jews together as a mother hen gathers her chicks, "but you would not." Again, the choice is on the individual. They would not. Even though that was God's chosen nation throughout the Old Testament, He is saying here that they all chose not to be a part.

EDDIE: Yes. He didn't say I would have gathered you together, but you could not. He said "You would not." You've chosen not to. In Acts 13:46, Paul had been preaching in the synagogue, and the Jewish folk there did not care for what he taught them about Jesus being the

Messiah. When they rejected the teaching, Paul said in Acts 13:46, "Seeing that you thrust the gospel from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles." Notice, he says they had "judged yourselves unworthy", which again highlights the importance and the reality of individual choice. Those people chose to reject the truth. They weren't forced to. God didn't arbitrarily make them to where they could not accept the truth if they wanted to. They chose to reject it.

MARK: Because "His grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men," (Titus 2:11).

EDDIE: Very true. When you think about all the passages in the Bible that warn us of the dangers of falling, those passages make no sense if a person has been arbitrarily chosen to be saved and therefore, it doesn't matter what they do, they're going to be saved. Paul said, "If any man thinks he stand, take heed..."

MARK: "Lest he fall."

EDDIE: ..."lest he fall." But if God has chosen me to be saved, then I can't fall. Evidently I can, or else why would God give us warnings to that end?

MARK: As we add all of this material together, it seems that the evidence is overwhelming that God didn't choose individuals, but He had to have chosen us as a collective group, as a body, which is His church.

EDDIE: Yes. That's the only possibility left, because the first one can't be true. Especially when you think and talk about individual choice, you have to think about and tie in these passages that lead us to no other conclusion. I think the best way to do that is to consider 1 Timothy 2:4 where the Bible is very clear saying, "God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." That is God's will and His desire. II Peter 3:9 says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Now, if it's the case that God wants all men to be saved and He doesn't want any person to perish eternally, why does the Bible also indicate that most people will be lost? In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it"...but only few will enter into life. Now, if God wants all men to be saved, and He desires that none perish, and yet most people will be lost, what is the determining factor that distinguishes

between God's desire for everyone to be saved and yet most people being lost? It has to be individual choice. It is because people are choosing not to obey God. They have the freedom to choose, and God wants them to choose what's right, but He has not taken away from them their freedom to choose. Most people, sadly, are going to choose the way of destruction, and they're going to choose to be lost.

MARK: Every time that we read in the Bible about the chosen, we can choose to be a part of the chosen, or we can elect to be one of the elect. That choice is clearly on our part.

EDDIE: That's right.

MARK: The evidence overwhelmingly shows that.

EDDIE: Yes. In Ephesians 1, the choosing that God did, the election or the predestination, was not done on an individual basis. It had to be on a group basis, corporately. In other words, God chose before the foundation of the world that when His plan for the redemption of mankind reached its culmination with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and the establishment of His church, that those who would be among the saved would be a part of that body. God said that if you're going to be saved, and if you're going to be one of my people and saved eternally, then you must be in Christ. That's what God chose before the foundation of the world. Now, it's up to me as an individual, and it's up to you as an individual as to whether or not you choose, to be a part of the chosen or if you elect to be a part of the elect. You see, teaching is involved in the whole process, as Jesus said in John 6 when He said that those who want to come to the Father "must be drawn to Him, and I'll raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they should all be taught by God. Therefore, whosoever has heard from the Father and learned from the Father comes to me." (John 6:44-45) The process of coming to the Lord is not through some arbitrary choice that the Lord made.

MARK: But through the hearing and the learning.

EDDIE: That's right. You hear the word, learn it, embrace it, and you make the choice to be obedient to it. Through your choice to be obedient, you become a part of that group that God chose, before the foundation of the world, to be those that are saved.

MARK: The scripture puts it this way, that we are being called by the gospel, by the message, and by the teaching of what Jesus left for us.

EDDIE: Yes. We read in II Thessalonians 2:14, "He called you by the gospel." That's how the calling, the adoption and the election all takes place. So a person becomes a part of the chosen and a part of the elect when he or she hears and obeys the truth. If we're not willing to be chosen, then we won't be. If we are willing to be chosen, then we will be.

Now, another passage that's important in this study comes from 1 Corinthians 2:6-7 where Paul spoke about the mystery of Christ, with the mystery meaning God's plan for the redemption of mankind. He says, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." Or actually, beginning in verse 6, "We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages," or before the world, "for our glory." The passage is simply making the point that God's wisdom in His plan and scheme for the redemption of mankind was ordained, again, before the world, or before the ages, for our glory. God's plan was hidden in the past, but, as he'll say in other passages, has now been made known unto the sons of men.

MARK: As we read through scripture, from Genesis 3 on, we can see that mystery unfolding and being revealed to us, so that by the time we get to the end, it has all been laid out for us. It is no longer a mystery, but it has been revealed.

EDDIE: That's right.

MARK: We can know what God wants us to do.

EDDIE: That's right. In Romans 16:25-26, he makes the same point that he made in the I Corinthians 2 passage, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith." Paul again highlights the fact that for a long time, this plan of God was hidden, but through the prophetic scriptures, and through God's revealing of His will to apostles and prophets, God has made His will known. Again, at this point, our emphasis is on the fact that this was something created before the foundation of the world.

MARK: He was unfolding His plan that He would save this collective group of people, this body, not individuals, but as a totality. So His plan

for this body, or this church, was there from the beginning.

EDDIE: From the very beginning. In Ephesians 3:8-11, which I think you have there, it makes that same point.

MARK: Starting in verse 8, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." So the church, specifically was a part of that eternal plan in bringing the Gentiles along with the Jews into that church, and together in one body. That was God's plan from the beginning.

EDDIE: Yes, it was. Now, there are some people today who will say that the church, as such, as an entity, was an afterthought in a sense. In other words, they say that the church really wasn't a part of God's plan from eternity. The church was the substitute part of the plan that God had to come up with on the spur of the moment. When Jesus came the first time and got rejected by the people and killed, we're told by some that God had to come up with a secondary plan, and that plan was the church. Now, the only problem with that is that it is wrong.

MARK: It doesn't agree with what the scripture says.

EDDIE: Ephesians 3:11 says, "The church was according to God's eternal purpose." The church has always been a part of God's plan. The church was no afterthought, and neither was the death of Christ. Some say that Jesus came the first time to establish a political earthly kingdom, but all of a sudden he was rejected and killed, and that's when God had to come up with this church idea. But the scriptures are clear that even the rejection and the death of Jesus were not unforeseen accidents. They were a part of the plan, too.

MARK: That plan and the church shows us the wisdom of God as in Ephesians 3:10, "That the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church." To deny that the church was in the eternal purpose of God would be to deny His wisdom.

EDDIE: Right. The very existence of the church and the very plan that brought the church into existence is what shows the wisdom of God. The wisdom of His plan is seen in the component parts of the plan,

including the church.

MARK: So when somebody attacks the church, they are attacking the bride of Christ and they're attacking the wisdom of God inherent in that attack.

EDDIE: That's right.

MARK: That's a pretty serious thing to do.

EDDIE: Yes. The church does not show what God is able to come up with in the heat of the moment. The church shows God's eternal wisdom, because it's always been a part of that plan. Peter makes the point in I Peter 1:18-20, that the death of Jesus was a part of that plan as well. He says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Peter says you were redeemed by the blood of Christ, and that was something foreordained.

MARK: There's so much evidence in scripture that shows that it is foreordained. Many of the prophecies of the Old Testament point to the suffering and the crucifixion of Jesus. John the Baptist himself even identified Jesus as the Lamb of God.

EDDIE: That's right.

MARK: The lamb was a sacrificial animal. He identified Him as such. So by that point, it's clear that Jesus was going to be a sacrifice.

EDDIE: That's right. He was, according to Revelation 13:8, "The lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And in a sense, He was. Because His sacrificial death was something that was always a part of God's plan. The church was also according to God's eternal purpose, according to Ephesians 3:10 that you read just a moment ago.

MARK: Even when we look back in the Old Testament at the Passover that the children of Israel had during the days of Moses, that lamb, the sacrifice and the Passover meal were ways of pointing to Christ, that common theme that we see pointing to His sacrifice so that the people might live. It's all connected together.

EDDIE: It is connected together. And there's a passage in I Peter 1 beginning in verse 10, that ties all of that together about that connected story, where Peter speaks of the salvation of man and says, "Of this

salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things which angels desire to look into." That's the connected story.

MARK: So they had the pieces of the puzzle, and they wanted to see the whole picture, but they couldn't at the time.

EDDIE: That's right. But because of the grace of God and the providence of God, we now can see the whole picture. God created His plan for your salvation before the creation of the world. As we continue this series of lessons, we're going to begin to look at God's plan, purposed in His mind before the foundation of the world, and then next time we're going to look at God's plan in promise, and how God began to reveal certain portions of His plan in the form of promises to certain individuals. We will notice Genesis 3:15 that was mentioned at the first part of our program, as well as promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and others as God began, over time, to reveal portions of that plan. Then we'll look at the prophets and other things as well and try to tie the whole Bible picture together in just a few short lessons.

We'd like you to have a copy of this lesson today. If you'll write us at P.O. Box 865, Hurst, Texas, 76053 or e-mail us at requests@thetruthinlove.com or go to our website, www.thetruthinlove.com, you can request either an audiocassette tape, an audio CD or a DVD. Those are absolutely free of charge, no cost or obligation to you. Let us know that you'd like to have one of those, and we'll send them to you. We thank you for being with us.

Mark, thank you for your help today. And we hope to see all of you again next time on *The Truth In Love*.

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