

# **GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE**

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## God's Plan of Life

I am convinced that God has a plan for your life. His plan of life for you began even before the world was made.

Look at Psalm 111:

*“Praise the LORD.  
I will extol the LORD with all my heart  
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.  
Great are the works of the LORD;  
they are pondered by all who delight in them.  
Glorious and majestic are his deeds,  
and his righteousness endures forever.  
He has caused his wonders to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and compassionate.  
He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.  
He has shown his people the power of his works,  
giving them the lands of other nations.  
The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy.  
They are steadfast for ever and ever,  
done in faithfulness and uprightness.  
He provided redemption for his people;  
he ordains his covenant forever —  
holy and awesome is his name.*

*The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.  
To Him belongs eternal praise.”*

Each time we encourage someone to look to God, then we are looking to God in our situation, for God has made us His ambassadors and we are to share His love with the world. As you share God's plan of life, the passage in Isaiah 52:7-10 applies to you:

*“How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,*

*who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
‘Your God reigns!’  
Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;  
together they shout for joy.  
When the LORD returns to Zion,  
they will see it with their own eyes.  
Burst into songs of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted His people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The LORD will lay bare His holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth will see  
the salvation of our God.” (Isaiah 52:7-10)*

God’s word of promise for us today is that He has already provided life in the Lord Jesus Christ. How beautiful are those who bring glad tidings of great joy!

The angels proclaimed the birth of the Lord Jesus into this world. They sang, “Today we are proclaiming great joy, for today is born to you, a Savior, Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10, 11)

Because Jesus came on the scene, the angels in heaven rejoiced, for God had come to set His people free. They were excited about the Lord’s plan of life as He moved in behalf of His people, and they rejoiced in it.

### Mankind’s History

Let’s look at God’s plan beginning with Adam. Adam was made in the very likeness of God, being perfect and holy. He had complete fellowship with God, but he chose to be disobedient. He fell away with no possibility of return, being lost and separated forever. However, the Lord immediately set forth a plan to save mankind and to make them right with Him again. His plan began with Adam, the first man, and it continued in the process of time.

Throughout history He called to His people, but they rebelled against Him and walked in their own ways.

In the time of Noah the Lord decided that He would have to put an end to the people and begin again because there was no one but Noah who sought Him. God instructed Noah to build an ark, for at that point God would destroy the world with a flood. Noah and his family were saved, and with them two of every kind of animal. The Lord would again be with His creation, in hopes of having a people who would willfully and joyfully (from their hearts) respond to His love.

Time continued and the Lord established a people who would be set apart to love, honor, and praise Him. He promised Abraham that from his seed would come a great nation which would rule over all the other nations. This promise was established through a man who not only was 120 years old, but his wife was barren. He believed God rather than the circumstances.

God miraculously gave Abraham a son, Isaac. The name means “laughter,” for at first Sarah and Abraham laughed at the promise. Often God’s wisdom is foolishness to man. Isaac had a son, Jacob, and the promise continued. The Lord later changed Jacob’s name to “Israel.”

It was from Jacob, then, that the great nation of Israel began. They went into bondage in Egypt, but God’s love continued to be extended to them.

God called up leaders for His people to follow the way that He would have them to go. Moses was one of those leaders. When the children of Israel were in bondage as slaves in Egypt, the Lord had a plan to set them free. We know those events as the Exodus. God established Himself through Moses when he went before the pharaoh. God performed mighty signs and wonders that caused His people to be set free.

Their freedom began with the event of the Passover. On that night the people were to take a lamb without blemish and offer it up for each of the families represented. They took the blood of the lamb and applied it around the door frames, for the angel of death could not kill anyone whose household was covered by the blood.

After the Passover, the Lord called His people together and they left Egypt. In fact, God’s blessing was so great upon them that the Egyptians were glad to see them go and gave them all kinds of riches. (God was blessing His people).

The Lord freed them and mighty signs and wonders followed them. The sea was parted and in doing so He permanently released His people from Egypt. He continued to provide for them in mighty ways day and night. He went before them in a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day, and the people rejoiced in their God.

God began to raise them up among the nations as a people to be reckoned with. The nations saw that Israel's God was Almighty God and that there was none like Him.

However, the first generation of Israelites rebelled and would not be obedient to God. They were unthankful, stubborn, and rebellious. They died in the wilderness because they would not believe God's promise. As the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, God set down His law for them so that they could understand His ways and prosper. His commandments were given on Mount Sinai so that the people might know what His will was and so they could be obedient and blessed. This was God's provision. If they did not follow His will, they were not blessed.

The next generation consisted of the ones who went into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, that God had set apart from the very beginning for His people. They dwelt in that land, and they rejoiced in their God. They had victory over all their enemies because the Lord was with them, and He continued to move in miraculous ways to establish His people. Even so, they again and again rebelled against Him, wanting to live their own way.

The Lord established leaders who caused the people to see that He alone was God and that they should cast down their idols. These leaders were known as judges and prophets.

The prophets continued to bring the people's attention to the fact that they needed the Lord and that they needed to rely on Him (and His ways) if they were going to have life.

### The Coming Promise

In Isaiah 52:13 we find a promise that foretold what God had coming for His people in order to set them free once and for all: *"See, my servant will act wisely, he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted."* In other words, God was going to send them a servant who would be exalted and lifted up. He was the one who would suffer in behalf of the people so that they might be free.

*"Just as there were many who were appalled at him – his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness, so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him: for what they were not told, they will see; and what they have not heard, they will understand."* (Isaiah 52:14-15)

God's promise on behalf of the people was foretold hundreds of years before it actually happened.

*“Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?  
He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of a dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.  
Like one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:1-5)*

This was God’s promise, foretelling that Jesus was to come to set His people free. Speaking hundreds of years later, Jesus said, *“The thief [Satan] is come to steal, to kill and to destroy...”* (John 10:10) Satan was the one originally responsible for Adam and Eve being tempted to fall away, even though they willfully chose to do so. Then God had to provide a way for mankind to come back to Him. He had to move in man’s behalf.

### The Attributes of Jesus

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.”* (John 14:6) He also said, *“I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10) The name “Jesus” means Savior, the one who is come to forgive us our sins.

The term “sin” means a state of separation from God. Our nature caused us to be totally separated from Him, and our actions simply showed our condition. Then Jesus came to make us right with God. He came to change our natures and to be sons of God rather than sons of the devil. The word “Emmanuel,” which was given to Jesus, means “God with us.”

He came in the form of a man. He humbled himself and gave up the qualities of God, and He became a man in every way. He came to set us free. This has to be understood. Jesus was more than a teacher. He was more than a great prophet. He was actually God in the flesh – God with us.

As shown in the gospels, Jesus demonstrated who God really was. He showed the love, the judgment, the justice, and the mercy of God. Matthew 8:16-17 states that the Lord Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise that we looked at in Isaiah 53.

*“When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with the word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases’.”* (Matthew 8:16-17)

Several hundred years before Jesus came, God prophesied through His men that Jesus was coming to do this work: to set the people free spiritually, physically and emotionally. The healing ministry of Jesus showed us that He wants to move in behalf of His people. He wants to love His people and set them free.

### The Ministry of Jesus

Luke 4:18-19 gives us understanding concerning the ministry of Jesus. He fulfilled the prophecy out of Isaiah: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

Jesus came bearing witness of who His heavenly Father was, that we might have God’s life. In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3 we find more about what Jesus did. *“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit: through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; who disobeyed long ago, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of the good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand with angels and authorities and powers in submission to him.”* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:18-22)

In other words, at the name of Jesus, every knee in heaven and earth is bowing because the Father God has established Jesus Christ as Lord of all. (Philippians 2:9-11)

After his death, Jesus went down and proclaimed victory to the captives in prison (Hades). He shared the good news with them. *“For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body but live according to God in regard to the spirit.”* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:6)

The gospel (good news about Jesus) was preached to the people in prison (Hades). God gave an opportunity to everyone who had died before Jesus came into this world to receive Him as their Lord and have God’s life which He had provided in Jesus. Then Jesus rose from the dead, being proclaimed Lord of all and King of kings, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

### Grafted into His Plan

God has made provisions for us who are considered Gentiles (we who are not the chosen people of Israel), for God has grafted us into the vine (His plan of life). He has provided us the same life that He provided for Israel, His chosen people. We receive that life by confessing with our mouths that Jesus Christ is our Lord and recognizing our need for him to come in and take over our lives, that we might live for God now and not for ourselves. (Romans 10:9-10) God has given us that privilege and provision.

We also want to take a look at what God has for Israel, for the Jews. We know that at this time many of the Jews have still rejected the Lord. We want to understand what is happening and why it is happening.

Take a look at Romans 11:20-24: *“But they [the Jews] were broken off because of unbelief, and you [Gentiles] stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches [Israel], he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and the sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, if you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them [Israel] in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!”* (He was speaking about the Jews coming into the life that God has intended for them from the beginning.)

*“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘A deliverer will come from Zion and will turn ungodliness away from Jacob: and this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins...’ As far as the election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs.”* (Romans 11:25-28) (The patriarchs are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God had promised would be the fathers of a great nation and that the people would be blessed.)

*“...for God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable.”* (In other words, God is not going to change the plan that He has set about in the very beginning to save His people.) *“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.”* (Romans 11:29-31)

God in His infinite wisdom hardened the Jews’ hearts so they could not receive Jesus – so we could receive Jesus and the life of God. God in His mercy is going to take the ban off of them so they are able to receive the life that He had intended for them from the beginning in Jesus Christ.

*“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on all of them. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out. ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?’ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to Him [God] be the glory for ever. Amen.”* (Romans 11:32-36)

### The Return of Jesus

We understand also that Jesus Christ will return. His return is coming soon. Satan, the fallen angels, and all unbelievers will be tormented forever. (See Revelations 20-31; Matthew 25). Jesus will take to Himself all those who call upon His name and receive Him as Lord. In the name of Jesus we are going to have life forever with God.

The moment you receive Jesus into your heart, the life of God becomes yours, and you enter into His plan. From the very beginning God knew that He would touch your heart as you heard His word and you responded, “Lord, forgive me. I need you, Jesus. Come into my life. Come into my heart. I confess you, Jesus Christ, as my Lord.”

God knew from the very beginning that you would come into His life. He knew from the very beginning that you needed His life. He knew that you would be able to receive His life when you received Jesus. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Jesus is coming back. He is going to cast all of those who would not call upon His name into the lake of fire.

It is not that God does not love everyone, but it is a fact that not everyone will be saved. Why not? Even though God desires that everyone be saved (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9), not everyone will believe in God's truth. God's word says that people will condemn themselves because they love the darkness rather than the light in Jesus. (John 3:16-20)

That is what it says! Either we have Jesus in our hearts, or we do not have Him. Either we are saved, or we are not saved. Either we have the life of God, or we do not. If we have the life of God, we will live for Him. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* (John 14:15) *"The commandments are our joy."* (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:3) As we obey what God tells us to do, abundant life comes into every situation.

Jesus is coming soon. He has prepared a place for us. He has it waiting. He is coming to take us to Himself. (John 14:1-4)

I am excited about His return. I am looking forward to that day. In the meantime you and I have to be about our Father's business, so that others will hear these glad tidings of great joy. This is the good news that God has provided for His people to come into His plan of life.

Let us be sharing this love of God, for it is true, "Our God reigns! Jesus Christ is Lord!" If you do not know for sure that you are in God's plan of life, we would encourage you to pray to Him and receive from Him the new life which He has richly provided for all of us in Jesus.

Simply say aloud,

*Father, in Jesus' name, I recognize that my life has been separated from you. Forgive me. I know that in your love for me you sent Jesus to die, and you raised Him from the dead that I might receive your plan of life. Thank you, Lord, for forgiving me because of the blood of Jesus. Come into my life, Jesus. I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is my Lord, and I know in my heart that just as you are risen from the dead, so am I,*

*this moment, risen from the dead to a new life. Thank you, Father, for loving and making me your child and enabling me to enter into your plan of life forever with you. (John 3:16-18; 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:9-12; Romans 10:9-10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17-22)*

What a thrill of joy will come to you when the final trumpet (and shout) sounds from the heavens. You will see Jesus with the angels of heaven coming to take you to be with Him. You will see those who have died rise first to meet the Lord in the air. As you stand there in awe, watching, in an instant your mortal body will be changed into a new spiritual eternal body. You too will rise into the sky to meet the Lord Jesus. (Read 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:42-55 [esp. 51-52]; Luke 24:36-43)

Picture this: The heavens and the earth are removed. All mankind now stands in the Lord's presence to be judged. The books are opened. All who have believed in Jesus and have kept His commandments have their names written in the Book of Life. They will be saved. All who have refused Jesus and lived disobediently are judged at the white throne and cast into the lake of fire with Satan and the fallen angels. (Read Revelations 20:7-15; Matthew 25:31-46 and 7:21-23)

Just imagine! Before your eyes, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. Because of accepting God's plan of life for you, you will see the New Jerusalem come down from heaven, from God. Then you will behold the Lord face-to-face forever! Glory to God! (Read Revelations 21-22)