

THE BIBLE AND THE PLAN

by Allon Maxwell

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible calls for belief that it is God's book, written by men to whom God gave the message of what He wanted to say to us. It makes the claim that it contains the whole truth about why God created the earth and what God wants from mankind.

Because I believe what the Bible says, it has become the source of all that gives meaning to life.

The reality of the One True God and His Son, the man Jesus, and the promises that depend on those truths, have opened the prison door of mortality and given me the assurance of eternity in the family of God.

The impossible has been transformed into certainty:

- * The GOOD NEWS about the coming Kingdom of God on earth.
- * The GOOD NEWS about the crucified and risen Jesus.
- * The GOOD NEWS about His power to transform my nature into His own likeness, bringing me, now and for ever, into a real living relationship with His Father.
- * The GOOD NEWS about the present experience of a foretaste of the life and power of that future Kingdom.

All of these wonderful elements of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God are found in the Bible.

It is my unashamed testimony that this GOOD NEWS about the Son of God has changed me from what I was, made me what I am, and given me the hope of what I shall be, when God's work in me is complete.

THE PLAN

It is fundamental to our understanding of the Bible that our eyes are open to see THE PLAN.

From beginning to end, the Bible unfolds God's plan to create a Son, made in the image of the invisible God, reflecting His glory and an exact representation of His nature; a Son who would be the heir of all God's creation; a Son who would rank first among many, in a race of immortal people created for the same purpose.

The earth would be the everlasting possession of that immortal race.

Jesus is the primary and central object of that plan, the beginning, and the end of it.

The creation of Jesus is the reason for all else.

The plan required that, before entering into their inheritance, both the Son and those who would share it with Him, should first be prepared for it, through the experience of a learned obedience, founded in faith and love.

By their own free will choice, they would submit themselves to God for Him to work in them until they reflected the fullness of His love and likeness.

In the foreknowledge of God, the plan recognised that the whole race, with the exception of the Son, would fail their initial test of obedience and require God's gift of His Son to rescue them, if they were willing, from the consequences of failure.

Those who were rescued could then be redirected to the original goal of life in the image and likeness of their creator.

The plan also recognised that not all would choose to accept the offer of rescue, and it made provision for their final judgement, punishment and then destruction.

Immortality would be conditional on meeting God's terms for readiness to share in eternity.

God initiated the plan by creating the world and then our first parents, Adam & Eve.

They were created subject to the limitations of mortality, until their final destiny should be determined.

They were placed under a law, designed to nurture their trust in God, their submission to His will and their love for His ways.

Obedience to the law forbidding them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, would guarantee continuance of life and relationship with God.

Disobedience would result in the penalty of death on the very same day of their sin, cutting them off for ever from life and further opportunity to share in the likeness of God.

The Bible records the initial failure of Adam and Eve, when Eve believed the Serpent's lie. Adam, though not deceived, joined with her in their futile endeavour to steal an impossible short cut to the likeness of God, (who cannot be tempted with evil), through personal experience of evil.

It records their useless attempt to cover their guilt and hide from God.

It tells how God searched for them, found them, called them, and then rescued them from the immediate penalty of their sin.

A Saviour was promised who would be the seed of the woman, (but not of the man), indicating the Virgin birth of the Son of God. ([Genesis 3:15](#))

In anticipation of the certain coming of this Saviour, the death penalty was remitted.

Instead of dying in that very same day, they were given back their lives and allowed to live them out but now outside the Garden of Eden, in new circumstances designed to emphasise their need for God in every aspect of life.

They and their descendants could never return to Eden or inherit the promised dominion over the earth, until the Saviour had come, and the work of restoration and restitution was complete.

This creation story, we are told, provides a picture of God's plan for dealing with all of us, when we respond to His call to turn from our own failure and search for Him with all our heart.

The plan continued to unfold as it touched the lives of certain individuals and nations.

The recorded history of these events provides an amazing overview of God's visible hand at work, to fulfil His purpose.

Finally, Jesus did appear as promised; Son of God without a human father; Son of Man through descent traced back to Adam; Seed of the Woman through His miraculous conception in the Virgin Mary; and heir of promises made to Abraham and David.

Like Adam, Jesus was made in the same image of God, with the same need to learn obedience in order to be perfected.

Unlike Adam, Jesus did not attempt to steal that impossible short cut to the likeness of God. Instead, He humbled Himself to obey, even when obedience meant the cross. In total obedience and love for His Father and us, on the far side of death and resurrection, He found the fullness of the likeness of God and the promised equality.

Jesus demonstrated the perfect obedience which God wants from men. He showed the love for God, which is the secret of obedience. He proved that obedience is possible for other men, like Himself, who love God as He does.

He then died on the cross to rescue those who were willing, from the penalty of their failure to obey.

He rose to life again and lives today, to lead His people on the narrow path back to the likeness of God and the promised eternal inheritance of dominion over all the earth.

Jesus is now in Heaven, at the right hand of His Father, preparing for the day of His return.

When He does return, the final work of cleansing the earth from sin and restoring it as a dwelling place for God and His Son and their people, for all eternity, will be completed.