

2013 Basic Doctrines (15) **(The Plan of God)**

Our lesson text comes from Paul's second Roman imprisonment as a **prisoner of the Lord** and not of religion or of Roman opposition.

(2 Tim.1:8, 12) "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our **Lord, or of me His prisoner**; but join with me in **suffering for the gospel** according to the power of God."

Paul wrote 2nd Timothy from a cold dark Roman dungeon, as a criminal of the state, for preaching the grace gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Tim.4:13, 21).

Many of his followers had deserted him because of persecution and false doctrines (2 Tim.1:15; 2:17-18; 3:1-9; 4:1-5, 10, 14-18).

Paul knew that his ministry was nearly completed and that he would soon meet his Lord face to face (Acts 9:4-5; 2 Tim.4:7-8; 2 Cor.5:6-8).

Pay close attention to what Paul tells us in his last will and testimony about the **plan of God**.

(2 Tim.1:9) "Who has **saved us and called us** with a holy calling, **not according** to our works, **but (alla) according** to His own purpose (plan of God) and grace granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."

The conjunction **BUT (alla)** is used in its adversative form of contrast. Dana and Mantey remind us that the primary purpose of a Greek conjunction is "a turning point or direction of a thought."

"**Not according to** (kata+accusative of norm and standard) **to our works**." Paul has reminded us that we are NOT saved by works.

Then Paul used the adversative form of contrast with the conjunction **alla** to remind us that we are saved by God Grace Plan - "**But (alla) according to His own purpose** (prothesis) [The Plan of God] **and grace** (charis)."

This lesson will study four aspects of the Plan of God.

- 1. The Greek word prothesis is translated purpose. Prothesis is a compound Greek word (pro) [Beforehand] and (thesis / tithemi) [To place or set] used by Paul as a doctrinal term for the Plan of God.**

In 2 Tim.1:9, Paul is teaching that the plan of God was established at the Eternal Life Conference (ELC).

(2 Tim.1:9) "Granted (ten didomi / a.p.ptc.asf) us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (chronos aionios) [Divine history]."

This is a common teaching of Paul regarding the plan of God

(Eph.1:4) "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." (ELC)

Plan of God: God designed one single, all-comprehensive and perfect plan for the human race at the Eternal Life Conference (ELC) (Eph.1:3-14) – “But according to **His own purpose.**” (2 Tim.1:9)

Plan of God: God designed it by His sovereign will in such a way that every believer can participation in it by human will (Matt.26:39; John 3:16; Rom.1:16).

2. Because the Plan of God never comprises God’s essence, it always has every believer’s best interest.

(Rom.8:28). “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those** who are called according to **His purpose** (prosthesis/ plan of God).”

This is why an event based on the Word of God can pass from the category of **impossibility to possibility to actuality** (Luke 1:37; Rom.4:16-25).

The Plan of God is bound by the infinite faithfulness of God to complete what He has promised or decreed.

(Rom.4:21) “And being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able to perform.”

(1 Cor.1:9) “God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Thess.5:24)

3. There are two important points to be learned regarding the believer’s participation in the Plan of God.

First important point to be learned is that God doesn’t coerce volition to fulfill His Plan.

(Jonah 1:1-3)	Go – No; and
(Jonah 3:1-2)	Go – obeyed (Matt.21:28-32)

Second important point to be learned is that once a choice is made either to you or by you, God will take appropriate action within His plan

(Gen.39:4-21)	<u>To you</u> – Joseph - Potiphar’s wife
(Gen.50:18-20)	<u>By you</u> - Joseph - his brother

It is interesting to note that **God caused** Joseph to find favor in the eyes of Egyptians (Gen39:4, 21) because of his participation in the plan of God.

4. It is also important to grasp the simplicity of the Plan of God by the following these three basic categories of it.

The Plan of God operates by God’s Perfect Timing in all three categories: (Eccl.3:1; Eph.5:15-16).

- **Phase I** (salvation) Entrance into earthly plan of God under Perfect Timing (2 Tim.1:9; Acts 13:48; John 6:40).
- **Phase II** (CWL) Orientation and operation in plan of God under Perfect Timing (2 Cor.6:2; Heb.11:1, 6; Ps.130:5; 2 Pet.3:18).
- **Phase III** (believer in eternity) Entrance into heavenly Plan of God under Perfect Timing (Matt.6:10); (2 Tim.4:7-8; Phil.3:20-21; 2 Cor.5:6-8; 1 Pet.1:4).

(Acts 20:27) “**For I did not shrink from declaring the whole purpose (ten boule) [Decrees] of God.**”