

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST

Part I: Applying The Truth That Believers Are In God's Eternal Plan

I. Introduction

- A. The legalization of abortion and the rise in lethal acts of terrorism in our era make the value of human life and existence lower in human societies, what can influence even believers to cease being productive for Christ.
- B. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, Vol. III on Soteriology lists 33 truths that are not themselves experienced, but that apply to each believer, and the **first** truth, that believers are "In the Eternal Plan of God" (Ibid., p. 234-236), if applied, cause us to see God's value of our existence that we stay productive in life.

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are In God's Eternal Plan.

- A. The fact that every believer is "in the eternal plan of God" is clarified four ways in Scripture (as follows):
 1. Every believer was **eternally FOREKNOWN in Christ** by **God** one day to **become His child**, 1 Peter 1:2:
 - a. Though impossible for us humans to fathom, Scripture claims that from all eternity past, God foreknew who would come to trust in Christ in history and thus come to belong in Him, 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 11:2.
 - b. Some claim "foreknew" in 1 Peter 1:2 means "ordain" or refers to what God ordained to exist so as to make it knowable. Yet, the verb *proginosko* ("foreknow") and its noun, *prognosis* ("foreknowledge") in classical Greek, the Koine (common) Greek or the Septuagint, always means only "to know beforehand." (C. Gordon Olson, Th. D., "Beyond Calvinism and Arminianism: Toward An Amyraldian Soteriology," a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting, December 29, 1981) Also, there is no proof that Scripture verses using these words refer to anything besides "knowing beforehand." (See our notes on "Making Sense of God's Election" on the home page of our Nepaug Church web site.)
 - c. Accordingly, from eternity past, God knew beforehand who would trust in Christ and be saved.
 2. Every believer was **eternally PREDESTINED in Christ** by God one day to **BE TRANSLATED** into Christ's likeness **AND TRANSFERRED INTO** God's heavenly **PRESENCE**, Romans 8:29:
 - a. According to Romans 8:29. the believer was predestined to "be conformed to the image" of Christ, a phrase in this context that refers to the translation of the believer into the "heavenly image" of Christ at the rapture of the Church, cf. Romans 8:18-25, 29-30 with 1 Corinthians 15:49.
 - b. Ephesians 1:4 reveals God intended for believers in Christ to be with Him in His heavenly presence, the meaning of "before" (KJV) (*katenopion*) being that of local presence rather than God's figurative viewpoint. (cf. *katenopion* and its use in the New Testament and classical Greek, Koine Greek and Septuagint as noted in our work, "Making Sense of God's Election")
 - c. Thus, God from eternity past predestined all He knew beforehand would be in Christ one day to enter into His heavenly presence through the rapture conformed to the bodily image of their glorified Savior.
 3. Every believer was **eternally CHOSEN in Christ** by God due to God's **love** and **full acceptance** of him **in Christ TO EXPERIENCE** this **PREDESTINATION** to **HEAVENLY BLISS**, Ephesians 1:3-6.
 4. Every believer **in Christ** was then **CALLED** to this destiny by Christ's Gospel, Rom. 8:30; 1 Thess. 5:24.
- B. Applying this positional truth of being "in the eternal plan of God" produces great confidences for the believer in his earthly life regardless what he might face that appears to make his life and existence futile (as follows):
 1. Realizing that since he believed the Gospel, God called him by it and eternally foreknew him as His own and **now fully accepts** him in the Beloved One, Jesus Christ, the believer sees his **existence is invaluable** to **GOD** so as to live **righteously** for **God's glory** in his **present life**, Eph. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 John 3:1-3!
 2. Realizing that since he is within God's eternal plan regardless of his current sojourn in an evil, doomed world, and in view of the **brevity** of **this earthly life**, the believer should be motivated to use **every possible opportunity** he has **now** to **live righteously** for God's coming eternal rewards. The opportunity to live by faith will soon forever end when faith becomes sight, so we need to take advantage of our waning opportunity to do so to live by faith! (1 John 3:2-3 and 1 Cor. 15:58 with 1 Cor. 13:12)

Lesson: Every believer is "in the eternal plan of God," for God in eternity past knew he would believe in Christ and become His child, so God eternally chose him to be divinely predestined as His child to be translated and transferred to heaven, and God then called him to salvation by Christ's Gospel.

Application: Realizing the theological implications of being "in the eternal plan of God," may we believers in Christ accept our existence as being invaluable because of how GOD views us and thus be highly motivated to live uprightly in view of our wonderful eternal destiny with the Lord and our coming accountability to Him!