

35:8-9) and of a Realm of Safety to be built (Isaiah 2:2-3).

After more centuries had gone by, John the Baptist came preaching repentance and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea in fulfillment of the prophecy:

Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.' (Mark 1:1-8)

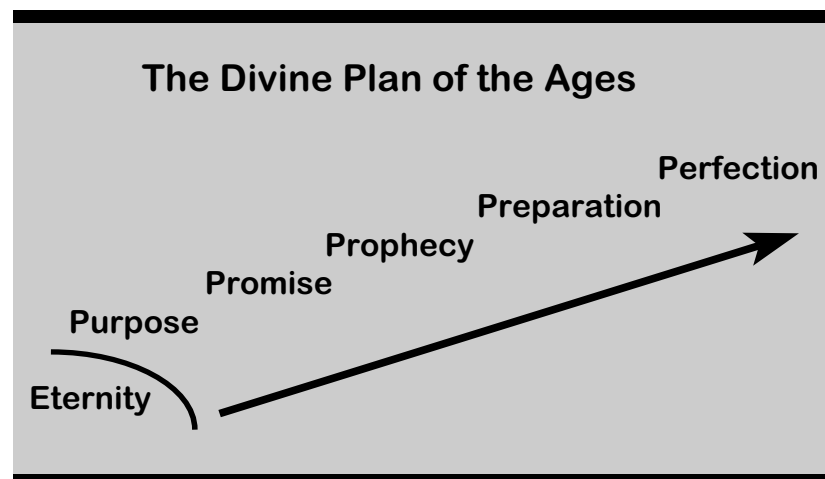
Thus, the plan entered the stage of **preparation**. All things were in readiness. Indeed,

after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.' (Mark 1:14-15).

Even the angels in heaven waited anxiously the revelation of the wonderful plan of the ages (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Then, “when the fullness of the time (the time foreordained by God) had come, God sent forth His Son.” (Galatians 4:4) He was the Savior prophesied before by Isaiah (Luke 1:30-33; 2:11). Salvation is only through Him (Acts 4:10-12). He is the fulness of God’s plan for man (Colossians 1:19). God’s eternal plan of human redemption had entered the phase of **perfection**, when the divine plan was brought to completion.

In God’s infinite wisdom, He used whole peoples and nations to prepare the world for “the fulness of the time.” The Romans helped prepare the world by developing a sense of the unity of mankind under universal law and by establishing the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace) whereby preachers of the gospel could travel to all parts of the Empire on Roman roads protected by Roman soldiers. The Greeks helped by giving people a common language, *Koine* (common) Greek, in which they could hear the Word and, negatively, by being at a low spiritual ebb, leaving a void for the gospel to fill. The Jews also helped by holding up the one true God to the world, by keeping alive the hopes of the Messiah (“Anointed,” promised Savior), by providing the Old Testament, which paved the way for God’s plan, by giving the pure morals of the Law of Moses, and by providing the synagogue as a place the Gospel could be preached. How glorious “the manifold wisdom of God” is shown to



be (Ephesians 3:10).

God also revealed a Way of Salvation, Christ Jesus (John 14:6), by the Gospel (Romans 1:16). Likewise, He built a Realm of Safety, in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10), His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). At last, In Christ Jesus the Savior, the promise to Abraham, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” is fulfilled (Galatians 3:8, 16). By faith in Christ and through baptism all people can become “Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:26-29) Indeed, the Way of Salvation is open to you; you are invited to enter the Realm of Safety (Revelation 22:17). Will you come?

Questions for Review

I. True/False

1. ____ The plan to put a man on the moon is greater than the divine plan of salvation.
2. ____ The three parts of the divine promise to Abraham were nation, land, and seed.
3. ____ The land promise ties the Old and New Testaments together.
4. ____ Isaiah prophesied a Savior to come, a way of salvation, and a realm of safety
5. ____ John the Baptist prepared the Way for Christ.

6. ____ The Greeks made no contribution to the fulfillment of the divine plan.
7. ____ The Jewish synagogue system helped in the spread of the gospel.
8. ____ The way of salvation is open to you.

II. Fill in the Blanks: List each stage of the divine plan of salvation in the proper order.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Matching

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. ____ Seed of Woman | A. when the divine plan was brought to completion |
| 2. ____ Bruise the Serpent's Head | B. the time predetermined by God |
| 3. ____ The Fulness of the Time | C. common Greek |
| 4. ____ Perfection | D. Anointed One, promised Savior |
| 5. ____ Pax Romana | E. destroy the power of Satan |
| 6. ____ Koine Greek | F. one born of a virgin |
| 7. ____ Messiah | G. Roman Peace |

Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson Two

The Divine Plan of the Ages

On July 20, 1969, Neil A. Armstrong, American astronaut, became the first human to set foot on the moon. The plan devised by scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to get him there was truly remarkable for its technical complexity and accuracy and is indeed a monument to the skill of American technology. Yet, the plan that God devised for the salvation of mankind is as much higher in grandeur than the program devised by NASA, or any other human scheme, "as the heavens are higher than the earth" (Isaiah 55:8-9). What is God's plan of salvation?

God's scheme of redemption first existed in **purpose** (Ephesians 3:8-12). That purpose was in the mind of God "from the beginning of the world" (verse 9), indeed, it is an "eternal purpose" (verse 11). Before there even was a man, an earth, moon or universe, in eternity before time, God purposed His plan for our salvation.

God created all things and set the first man and woman in the garden of Eden to keep it. But they sinned and fell. God was forced to bring curses upon them. But even with the curses grace was manifested as God promised that the seed of woman (one born of a virgin) would bruise the serpent's head i.e., destroy the power of Satan (Genesis 3:15). Thus, the scheme entered the state of **promise**.

After many centuries had passed, God appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, commanded him to depart from there to a country He would show him, and delivered to Abram a grand three part promise (Genesis 12:1-3, 7). The Lord pledged to make Abraham "a great nation" (verse 2), give his descendants the land of Canaan (verse 7), and through him to bless "all the families of the earth." (verse 3) When Abraham's descendants, Israel, were in Egypt, God fulfilled the first part of the promise by making them "a nation, great, mighty, and populous." (Deuteronomy 26:5) Under the leadership of Joshua Israel received in fulness the land of promise, for "All came to pass." (Joshua 21:43-45) But the spiritual promise, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," remained unfulfilled.

Then the plan entered the stage of **prophecy**, as prophets foretold the coming salvation. For example, Isaiah prophesied of a Savior to come (Isaiah 9:6-7), of a Way of Salvation to be revealed (Isaiah