

FAITH—THE HUMAN SIDE OF GOD’S PLAN

By Keith Greer

We’ve discussed the part God plays in His plan of pardon, but is that the end of the story—all from God and nothing from me? Sadly, this is exactly what the majority of religious people believe. God did it all, and there’s nothing left for us to do but ask for and accept salvation. It sounds comforting, but there’s one problem—the plan doesn’t work without our participation.

Service. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* {Romans 12:1,2} One must allow God’s word to mold his life and character. It’s a constant process. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”* {1 Corinthians 15:58} It’s not a forced decision; it must be voluntary. *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”* {Romans 6:16} The last lesson Jesus taught His disciples concerned their duty to be servants to others {John 13:1-12}. Unless one has the heart of a servant He cannot be His disciple. We must be willing to serve. How do we accomplish this goal?

Submission. Mankind must choose to submit to Christ and resist the devil. How can we resist the devil? *“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’* {James 4:6,7} Only when men will bend their will to submit to the will of God by conforming their lives to His teachings can God lead them to salvation. We must accept God’s terms of pardon: *Hear* {Romans 10:17}; *Believe* {Hebrews 11:6}; *Repent* {Acts 17:30}; *Confess* {Romans 10:9,10}; *Be Baptized* {Colossians 2:11-13}. No, we don’t deserve God’s grace and mercy. We cannot merit or earn it {Luke 17:10}. But by submitting to His Divine will and authority, we can receive grace and pardon from a merciful, loving God. God provided the means that His grace and mercy can be enjoyed and received by the sinner. Yet, He forces no one. Each person must make a this choice by surrendering their will to follow Him in ever thing He commands—period!

Sinner. Each person must see his true condition without Christ—LOST! *“That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”* {Ephesians 2:12} This is the sad state of every sinner in the world. While we were still dead in our sins, Christ died for us {Romans 5:8}. The Scriptures spell out His earthly mission—to seek and save the lost {Luke 19:10}. Mankind had no remedy or means of receiving pardon based on his own wisdom or work. He needed God’s help. The DIVINE part of the plan provided God’s help. In the HUMAN SIDE, we receive it. God can save no one until they come to the understanding that their sin has separated them from their Creator, *Isaiah 59:1,2*. How does man come to understand the need for his salvation from the burden and guilt of sin? By the word of God, that we previously discussed and acceptance of the terms of pardon offered by a merciful and gracious God.

Dear readers, this is exactly what God determined before the foundation of the world. Please examine the Biblical record. Do you see a time when God did not demand His children's obedience to His instructions? In all three Biblical periods—Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian—man has played a part in God's plans. The sinner's only hope of regaining a relationship with God beyond the grave is accepting His plan of pardon. Understand this vital point—to achieve the designed goal, you must accept both parts of God's eternal plan. He did His part; are we ready to accept and do ours? ***