

"God is never surprised; never caught off guard; never frustrated by unexpected developments. God does as He pleases and that which pleases Him is always for His glory and our good."
—Jerry Bridges

06-Nov-26

According to the Foreknowledge of God

Despite his wisdom and wealth, King Solomon lived life hard and learned much from his mistakes. He shared some of those insights in the book of Ecclesiastes, where he writes that, in a life lived "under the sun"—that is, life apart from God—time and chance happen to all men (Ecclesiastes 9:11). But for the people of God, things work differently. With their eyes focused on Him, God's people recognize His sovereign control over the circumstances of their lives. Our Creator, a great planner, works by a divine blueprint, and His elect play a significant role in it. As Acts 15:18 declares, "Known to God from eternity are all His works."

God also had a blueprint for the Tabernacle in the wilderness. To prepare for its construction, God allowed the newly freed Israelites to plunder the Egyptians as they left Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36). Once they reached Mount Sinai, God commanded Moses to gather materials from the people to fashion the Tabernacle of Meeting so He might dwell among them (Exodus 25:1-8).

Over the next six chapters, God gave detailed instructions related to its construction. He desired everything to be perfect, as it would be the focal

point of Israelite worship and religious life. Each piece of its furnishings, each curtain, each post—everything—is exhaustively described in its materials, dimensions, and placement. God warns Moses, "See to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40).

"Pattern" is the translation of the Hebrew word *tabnith* (*Strong's* #8403), which appears twenty times in the Old Testament. It conveys the idea of a blueprint or detailed design. Here, it refers to the God-given blueprint for the Tabernacle, shown to Moses atop Mount Sinai.

Later, God also used a blueprint for the Temple in Jerusalem. King David instructed Solomon about building the Temple in I Chronicles 28, giving him plans (verse 11) detailing not only how to build the physical edifice but also how to organize the priests and Levites (verse 13). The chapter also describes how David laid aside immense quantities of gold and silver for all the Temple's "articles used in every kind of service" (verse 14). Finally, he said, "All this . . . the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans" (verse 19). Again, the word for the divinely bestowed "plans" is *tabnith*, blueprints.

These historical examples make what is written in Hebrews 8:1-2, 5 more understandable:

> Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. . . . Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

The two Old Testament examples testify to God's character. He designed and built the earthly Tabernacle and Temple of God to represent the true Tabernacle, the throne room of our God in heaven. Our Father is organized; He plans and designs before He builds. To illustrate the scale of God's vast understanding and power, Psalm 147:4-5 says that He counts each of the trillions of stars in the universe, and even has a name for every single one!

In I Corinthians 3:9-15, Paul compares the community of Christian believers first to a field, then to a building—"you are God's building." The Greek word for "you" is plural here, so Paul refers to the entire church, not individuals. He explains that church members have personal and corporate responsibilities, saying that God's servants are His fellow workers. We could say God's people are His handpicked team, assembled to do His work.

In Ephesians 2:19-20, Paul notes that the church of God is "built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." The apostle encourages each of his fellow Christians to build on that foundation with gold, silver, and precious stones, materials that endure when tested by the fire of trials (I Corinthians 3:12-13).

But there is more! In I Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul writes specifically that the church is God's Temple:

> Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Instead of using the more general term indicating the entire Temple and its grounds (*heiron*, *Strong's* #2411), he calls God's people the *naos* (*Strong's* #3485), which refers primarily to the inner sanctuary, the holy place. This usage heightens the sense of the holiness of God's people and their nearness to God.

As with Solomon's Temple (I Kings 6:7), God is shaping and finishing us off-site. God's elect are living stones (I Peter 2:5), shaped in this world so that when God is ready, they will fit together perfectly, just as He designed them to.

Remember those blueprints and plans. That we are in God's church today is not a coincidence. Ephesians 1:4 asserts that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." He continues in verse 5, saying that God "predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good

pleasure of His will." In Romans 8, after speaking about this spiritual adoption as sons and heirs (verses 15-17), Paul goes further, affirming that He also predestined the called "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (verse 29).

God is doing the same with His church today as He did in planning and building the Tabernacle and Temple. Every individual among God's elect is in those plans. Before the foundation of the world, He planned to call each of us into His Family, for each is necessary, a vital part of the work God is doing and will do in eternity.

Consider what that means in terms of how that works. In my personal example, God went to great lengths to bring my parents together: My aunt introduced my father to her sister-in-law, and she, in turn, introduced my dad to her best friend, who became my mother.

We can take it back farther. My grandparents came from at least three different European nations that lie hundreds of miles apart. If they had never met, I simply would not be who I am! If God so carefully planned for me to be in His church since before the foundation of the world, He had to have planned for my ancestors to meet. He did the same with each of us!

It gets mind-boggling. Genealogy experts say that going back just ten generations gives each person the potential for 1,024 ancestors. However, if we go back twenty generations, that number explodes to just over 2,000,000 ancestors! In God's providential foresight, did He plan for each of those couples to meet as well? Now that is planning!

We do not know how involved God has been in each of our lives or how much time and effort He has put into our calling. Yet we know He does not make mistakes, and He will do His utmost to ensure that we do not fail to take our places in His Temple.

However, each of us has a choice. God's predestination to be called is wonderful, but if we did not have a choice in the matter, personal faith would not matter. It would simply be a divine decree. But He tells us to choose eternal life. His sovereign choice is to include us in His Family, but He gives each person the responsibility to respond in faith.

We should take David's encouragement of Solomon in building the Temple to heart:

> Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. (I Chronicles 28:20)

God's Plan involves our cooperation, but He will neither fail us nor forsake us. He has plans for His spiritual Temple, and those plans involve us. Every one of us is needed. So, by word and deed, let us take up the work with devotion, not deviating from God's blueprint but building on the sure foundation with gold, silver, and precious stones.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

God's Spiritual House
by Ronny H. Graham

This sermon reflects on life direction and spiritual calling, using the speaker's personal story—abandoning dreams like basketball or certain careers due to faith—as a backdrop to emphasize that God ultimately guides each person's path. Centered on I Peter 2:1-9, it teaches that believers are uniquely chosen as "living stones," forming a spiritual house and serving as a holy and royal priesthood with direct access to God through Jesus Christ. The message stresses the rarity and significance of this calling, urging believers to actively build their spiritual lives by rejecting sin and practicing righteousness, not just avoiding wrongdoing but doing good. Drawing parallels to the Old Testament priesthood and the strict holiness required to approach God, it highlights the privilege and responsibility Christians now have to live pure, obedient lives. We should recognize our purpose, embrace our role in God's plan, and continually strive to become a dwelling place worthy of Him.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Growing to Perfection
by Charles Whitaker

Charles Whitaker shows that spiritual growth mimics our physical growth to maturity. If we continue in the process, we will "grow into" our potential as God's children.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study
The next Bible Study (Friday 06-Nov-26) will be **Jesus' Pre-Existence**, given by **Richard T. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the CGG homepage from **6:00 pm Friday** (EST) and all day Saturday.

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