

God's plans A, B, and C for us; The firstborn #1 of 2

Hi all,

Did you know God's original plan was NOT to use the Levites as the priests? The Levites as priests was not even His 'Plan B', they were actually His "Plan C".

How He made the move from His original "Plan A" to "Plan B" and then to "Plan C" provides insight into our "Plan B's and "Plan C's" of life. Many have thought they are letting God down because they feel they are living in Plan C, but as I'll show with Israel, plan C can quickly become His new plan A!

What if He is so good and saw so far ahead that He can adjust His plan A for us to plan B and then plan C, and then make plan B or C His new plan A? Sounds complicated, but it isn't. Let's start with His 'Plan A' for Israel.

The original Plan A

In Exodus 4: 22-23 Moses is standing before Christ* at the burning bush, who identifies Himself as the I AM. He tells Moses to tell Pharaoh to let Israel go, for "Israel is my son, even my firstborn, and if you don't let him go, I will kill your son, even your firstborn."

(*In John 8: 58 Jesus stated He is the I AM. Get my series "I AM; Who Jesus is and where He came from" if interested in learning more.)

The whole nation of Israel is His firstborn. That means every man, woman, and child to the Lord, was considered His firstborn. Think of how amazing that was for them to hear!

In those days the firstborn received double the inheritance* while the rest of the children received less if anything. The firstborn was being trained for inheriting the family business, and had the right to use the family name representing the father in business. (You can see direct parallels to us being trained, using the family name, etc) *Deuteronomy 21: 17

Every man, woman, and child was the firstborn son in the heavenly Father's eyes, with all the rights and privileges of a firstborn son before Him - even if in the natural they were not firstborn nor male in their family.

Even if child #8 was a girl in a 10 child family, meaning they would not have the inheritance of the firstborn in their family, in God's family they were a firstborn and therefore able to receive God's full inheritance for themselves. It meant that every little girl who would grow up with perhaps limited rights and training in that culture, was to God His firstborn as a son. Spiritually, she would grow up to have all the rights and privileges of a firstborn son with God. He elevated all to firstborn sonship.

Being God's firstborn meant Israel as a nation would have rights and privileges that no other nation would have. They were to spread the knowledge of God and His ways to the nations of the earth; they became His chosen people, His firstborn son.

But not just Israel

Even though the whole nation of Israel is God's firstborn, He went a step further.

In Exodus 13: 2-15 just after the original Passover in which the blood of the innocent lamb protected Israel and their firstborn children while the firstborn of Egypt died, God issued further instructions.

He said because of the blood of the lamb which He had ultimately provided for each person, covered them during the judgement on Egypt's gods*, He now owned the firstborn male child. He had bought the firstborn with a price**, so they were legally His. *Numbers 33:4, **Exodus 13: 2-15, I Corinthians 6: 20

This is why, as seen in Numbers 18:15, it says the firstborn must be either bought back from the Lord with a specific offering, or that child is to be dedicated to serving Him in temple ministry.

This is what Hannah was doing in I Samuel 1: 11 when she vowed if God gave her a son he would be His - she would not redeem (buy him back) him, it was enough for her that she would have a son. That

is why Samuel grew up in the temple with Eli the high priest. Hannah kept her promise and did not buy Samuel back.

Mary and Joseph are similarly buying back the baby Jesus in Luke 2: 22-24 - otherwise He would have been like Samuel and become a priest. But Mary and Joseph chose to buy Him back from the Father instead, and He grew up a carpenter's son.

It is for this reason the Lord told Israel in Exodus 19: 6 when they came to the holy mountain, that they were all to be a "kingdom of priests unto me, a holy nation." A kingdom of priests. Not kings & priests, but a kingdom **of** priests.

Because Israel was God's firstborn son He had a choice to make. The firstborn either had to be bought back from the Lord or dedicated to God's service. The whole nation of Israel was His, and He chose NOT to give them to 'secular' work, but said the whole firstborn nation would be His priests - a kingdom of priests unto Him alone.

And so God's Plan A was for the whole nation, His firstborn, to serve Him in ministry...and that's where we will pick it up next week. Until then, blessings,
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God's plans A, B, and C #2: What were Plans B&C?

Hi all,

Last week we saw how Israel was God's firstborn son: Every man, woman, and child He considered to be His firstborn.

And in Exodus 19: 6 we read: "And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

Plan A was for the whole of the nation to be priests to Him. They even replied in v8: "All the things the Lord has spoken to us, we will do." How many of us have made a similar pledge upon receiving what we understood to be God's Plan A for our lives?

And then life happens.

They were called to be a kingdom of priests, serving Him in the ministry, the whole nation. Being a nation they had farmers, ranchers, shepherds, manufacturers, shop keepers and everything else a nation has in terms of how its citizens earn a living. But they were all priests to God. They were all equally priests to the Lord, yet had different functions - same for us today.

That means what they did for a living was irrelevant to them 'being in the ministry' as a nation of priests. How they earned a living didn't change their status as a kingdom of priests to God, for their lives were defined by the spiritual truth they were God's firstborn and a kingdom of priests. The same with us today. Christ is in us, we carry Him wherever we go, whatever we do. How you earn or earned a living is irrelevant to your spiritual status. There is no sacred versus secular for us: All is sacred. All you own, all you work at, all is sacred for Christ is in you.

Plan B, the firstborn

In addition to the whole nation being a kingdom of priests, the Lord claimed the firstborn children of Israel to be His own, for He bought them at Passover. The blood of an innocent lamb that He had ultimately provided was the purchase price, allowing Him to pass over their firstborn, so now He owned them.

I shared how they could buy back their firstborn, as Joseph and Mary did with Jesus. Or they could let the child grow up and serve the Lord in the temple as Hannah did with Samuel. It was their choice as parents and there was no right or wrong, it was just their decision. He owned the firstborn, but allowed parents to buy the child back. Most did buy back their firstborn.

His intent was that each firstborn would earn a living as a priest. The whole nation was a kingdom of priests, but some of them, the firstborn children, were supposed to earn their living in the temple. But

the nation was an unruly bunch, and you know the story of how they started rebelling against the Lord and Moses just after leaving Egypt.

For the purposes of making the point, we'll call choosing the firstborn children Plan B. If not Plan A with the whole nation serving Him, then if He dealt with smaller numbers, the firstborn kids, maybe THEN because each family would have had someone in the ministry, the nation would serve God.

Enter Plan C

Plan A of the whole nation being a kingdom of priests wasn't working for Him, and neither was Plan B. So the Lord switched from taking all the firstborns of Israel for service in the temple, to the Levites. Perhaps He thought narrowing it down to the family of Moses and Aaron would assure Him a holy and dedicated family to serve in the temple. We don't know the reasoning, but He adjusted. We read of this decision in Numbers 8: 17-19:

"For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast; on the day I killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them aside for myself. **And I have taken the Levites to myself instead of the firstborn of the children of Israel.** I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, to make an atonement for the children of Israel..."

And that is how we ended up with the tribe of Levi becoming a tribe of priests. Plan A was for the whole nation. Plan B was the firstborn, Plan C was Aaron's family.

But the Father goes full circle

Both Revelation 1: 6 and 5: 10 say of Jesus: "He has made us a kingdom (of) priests to God His Father..."

You see, the Father got His way. He now has a kingdom of priests in you and I. No more designated family, no more firstborn to serve Him. He went back to His original intent at Exodus 19: 6: "You will be a kingdom of priests unto me, and be holy." That is what He accomplished in Christ.

The Father's flexibility

I could close by linking more New Testament truths beyond Revelation 1: 5 and 5: 10, but my point has really been to show how the Father does have a plan A, B, and even plan C. We aren't taught that in church, but we know it to be true in our own lives. We've all vowed Plan A as Israel did, then life happened and we find ourselves in Plan B, C, or even Z.

Even Romans 12: 1-3 speaks of making our body a living sacrifice as we undergo a metamorphosis by the renewing of our mind to His ways and thoughts, so that we may discover God's good, acceptable, and perfect will in our lives. Life proves finding His perfect will is in fact a life-long process, oftentimes hit and miss.

We need to consider that where we are right now, right this moment, is God's perfect will for us

For today, we must do what He wants, whatever is set before us, He would have us do the right thing. That may be getting up and going to work, demonstrating the fruit of the spirit/Spirit to coworkers, being a peacemaker and the spiritual salt that preserves and seasons the office atmosphere. It may be fixing things around the house, visiting a sick loved one, etc. Whatever is before you today, that is His will for you to tackle today.

Right now lay all the questions aside and realize today, this moment, you are in the Lord's perfect will. It matters not if you think you are in Plan C or Z. If you consider today His will for you, you will seek Him to see what He wants. If you hold onto the idea you are on Plan C and boo hoo you missed God and boo hoo what does He think of you, and boo hoo you can't do anything for Him - you will stay in the rut you presently occupy.

Today, this is the day of salvation. Today, this is His perfect will for you. Today, this is the day to grow a bit more Christlike in character. The fact you are still breathing tells us He has most certainly adjusted His Plans A, B, and C for us - today is His perfect will. He has adjusted, and will continue to adjust our lives as we walk with Him.

But no more looking in the rear view mirror to see where you missed it. Today even if you are on Plan Z, He has adjusted and continues to work with you, show you things, grow you. Christ is still in you in spite of all your mistakes, still the hope of glory. Walk in that truth and put one foot in front of the other with confidence and assurance; He isn't done with you yet!

Related subject next week, until then, blessings,
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Final thoughts: Jesus is God's Firstborn from the dead

Hi all,

The last 2 weeks I shared God's Plans A, B, and C for Israel as His firstborn, and today a follow up to that: Jesus as the Father's firstborn.

When we see the phrase 'firstborn' in reference to Jesus in the NT, it is directly followed by, or understood to be followed by, 'from the dead'.

Colossians 1: 18 says it this way: "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence." He is the first one raised from the dead, the first of millions of us who will one day be born from the dead with glorified bodies, even as He.

What does firstborn from the dead mean?

When Jesus left heaven to be conceived in Mary's womb as the Son of Man, it changed not only His relationship with the Father, but within Himself as well. When Philippians 2: 7-8 states "...and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man", it demonstrates this was a forever change. He is still a man (Man).

When He was resurrected, He was resurrected as a man, in a human body. He has a glorified body or as Paul said, celestial*, made with heavenly material. Romans 6: 4 says He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father - bright light of the Father's glory infused life into His dead earth body's cells and transformed them into heavenly material. *1 Corinthians 15: 39-50

Can you imagine the change between Father and Son when Jesus ascended to heaven as a man, the first man born from the dead? We are told in James 1: 13 that God the Father is not tempted, tested, nor tried by evil, and neither does He tempt, test, or try people with evil. Why isn't He tempted, tested or tried by Satan? Because He doesn't have a human body.

Jesus however, has a human body. The Father doesn't know what it is to be tired, to sweat, to have to use the toilet, to be limited to 1 place at 1 time. Jesus knows all these things, having experienced them personally. He is the firstborn from the dead, a man (Man), and the first of millions to be born from the dead in similar fashion.

We are the 'many brethren'

Romans 8: 29 calls Jesus the first born from the dead: "For whom He did foreknow, He also predetermined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." We are the 'many brethren.'

Note: To predetermine by knowing ahead of time who would choose Him and who would not, does not infringe on free will. As we in like manner do; if we know what a situation will be ahead of time, we make preparation based on what we know. Same thing with the Father God. Those He knew ahead of time would be saved if given the opportunity, allowed Him to move to provide salvation for them.

The NT writers were so aware that Jesus was the firstborn from the dead, that we read in Hebrews 12: 23: "But you have come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. And to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (mature, complete)."

Firstfruits

A nearly synonymous term is 'firstfruits', which define the first offering to the Lord, the first and best of the crop, which goes to God. The Lord is the firstborn, the firstfruit from the dead: "And now has Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of those who sleep (have died)." I Corinthians 15: 20

"But everyone in their own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterward those that are Christ's at His coming."
v23

"Of His own free will He birthed us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creation." James 1: 18

Romans 8: 23: "And not only they, but we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is to say the redemption of the body."

Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, and we are the firstfruits of His creation. The firstfruits were offered to the Lord, so we are intended to live our lives as a sacrifice to the Lord, which as Paul said in Romans 12: 1-3, is our reasonable service. Now you know why. Amazing Grace, for we are in Him, and He in us. What a glorious future awaits! New subject next week, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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