

God's Secret Plan

- **The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed**

- **Ephesians 3:8**

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

- **3:9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, (**ESV**)

- It was eternally purposed in the mind of God:
 - Ephesians 3:10
His intent was that now,
 - through the church,
 - the manifold wisdom of God
 - should be made known
 - to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

- **Ephesians 3:11**
according to
 - **his eternal purpose**
 - **which he**
accomplished
- in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

- **“To the intent”** = **His reason**

- **“In order that now”**

- **The purpose is**

- A special kind of
manifestation

has been declared by Paul.

- In this one verse he explains:
 - Who sees it,
 - ‘Through whom’ they see it,
 - And exactly ‘what’ they see”

- “**Principalities and powers**
in the heavenly places”
 - The phrase
"heavenly places"
would rule out earthly governments
or the Jewish religious leaders.
- **Angels have longed to look into this plan**
(1Peter 1:12).
 - The only question is,
does this passage include
evil powers?
 - A question answered in
Philippians 6:12

- Philippians 6:11-12

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

- 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
 - but against the rulers,
 - against the authorities,
- against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
 - against the spiritual forces of evil
in the heavenly places.

(ESV)

- Life never conforms to the rosy idealism of our dreams, or to the romanticism of our songs.

- Our struggles lie deeper than we ordinarily think.

- The common view of our struggle has been that we are engaged in conflict *against flesh and blood*.

- But Paul says the battle **is not against flesh and blood;**
- It lies **deeper** than that.
- The basic problem is that this is a battle between **the kingdom of God** and **the kingdom of Satan,**
- And that **man** himself is the battlefield.

- **The good news** is that the devil, does have some "**blind spots**".
- God's plan was even **hidden** from the prince of darkness
- **Even the devil didn't know** what God was really up to. ¹¹

- The **church** is designed to be an object of **wonder** and **amazement** to heavenly beings of every station and rank.
 - **God's wisdom** has been seen and continues to be seen in His church upon the earth

- Paul did not say that
the wisdom of God
is seen in
imperfect human beings.
- It is seen in
the infinite plan of God
to take
imperfect human beings
and
convert them into saints!
(Romans 1:7)

- Our absurd stupidity
is made known
when we disregard
any aspect of His plan,
challenge His authority
in the church,
or question
His revelation of truth.

- God's wisdom is only seen in the church when we follow His plan.
- Human innovation, addition or subtraction, demonstrates our shortsightedness.
- Every aspect of the church reflects God's wisdom.
- Its organization, worship, and work.

- Every time a church departs from God's revelation it is refusing to listen to God's wisdom,
- If we love God and if we want to see Him get all the credit and the glory due His name,
- Then we will be content and happy to follow His revelation and only His revelation (John 14:15).

Matthew 5:16

**Even so let your light shine before men;
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**

- In redemption God is wiser than man.

- 1Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

- **For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.**

- **Mark writes:**

Mark 9:1

**the kingdom of God
come with power.**

- **Romans 1:16**

**I am not ashamed of the gospel,
because it is the power of God
for the salvation of everyone
who believes:**

- The Lord's church is a glorious church:

- Ephesians 5:27
a glorious church,

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

- We ask “How can that be when “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”

(Romans 3:23)

- The supreme problem of life

is:

- How can a man get into a right relationship with God?

- How can he feel at peace with God?

- **Rock Of Ages**
- Not the Labours of my Hands
- Can fulfil thy Law's demands:
- Could my Zeal no respite know,
- Could my Tears for ever flow,
- All for Sin could not atone:
 - **Thou must save,**
and Thou alone!

- The answer is found again in God's wisdom.
- Romans 3:24
Being justified freely
 - by his grace
- through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

- Paul uses a **metaphor** from the law courts which we call justification.
- This metaphor thinks of **man on trial before God.**
 - **If an innocent man** appears before a judge then to treat him as innocent **is to acquit him.**
 - Makes sense?

Right!

- But the point about a man's relationship to God is that he is utterly guilty,

- And yet God, in his amazing mercy, treats him, reckons him, accounts him as if he were innocent.

- That is what justification means.

- When Paul says that
"God justifies the ungodly"

(Romans 4:5)

- He means that God
treats the ungodly as if
he had been a good man.
- That is what shocked the
religious leaders of His day
to the core of their being.

- To them to treat the bad man as if he was good was the sign of a wicked judge.
- And they had scripture to back it up.
 - "*He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*" (Proverbs 17:15).
 - But Paul says that is precisely what God does.

- **Romans 3:25**

God sent Christ
to be our sacrifice.

- Christ offered
his life's blood,

- so that by faith in him
we could come to God.

(CEV)

- Throughout the eons of history there has been an effort of mankind to appease the gods.
- Sometimes, this was even done with human sacrifice.

- What is there in man, even from prehistoric times, that made him feel guilty?
- Somehow he needed to atone for his failure.
 - So Paul in Romans 3:25 uses the word “propitiation”.
- And what does that mean?

- It is a **verb** which **has to do with sacrifice.**
- Under the Levitical system, **when a man broke the law,** he brought to God a sacrifice.
- His aim was that the sacrifice should **turn aside the punishment** that should fall upon him.
- To restore the right relationship **he offered his sacrifice.**

- But it was human experience that an animal sacrifice failed entirely to do that.
- **You do not want sacrifices, or I would offer them; you are not pleased with burnt offerings. (Psalms 51:16 GNB)**

- **"With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?**
 - **Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?**
 - **Will the Lord be pleased
with thousands of rams,**
 - **with ten thousands of rivers of oil?**
 - **Shall I give my first-born
for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"**
- (Micah 6:6-7)**

- Instinctively men felt that, once they had sinned, the paraphernalia of earthly sacrifice could not put matters right.

- So we find Paul stating in

Romans 3:25:

God offered him,

(Jesus Christ)

so that by his blood

he should become the means

by which people's sins

are forgiven

- Then Paul says:
God did all this
because he is just,
- and accepts as just
all who believe and obey.
- This has been called
"the supreme paradox
of the gospel."

- **Romans 3:26**

**This was also
to demonstrate
his righteousness**

(Net)

- What is the heart and soul of all this?
- Paul is insisting that nothing we can ever do can win for us the forgiveness of God;
- Only what God has done for us can do that.

- Therefore the way to a right relationship with God lies, not in a frenzied, desperate, doomed attempt to win acquittal by our performance;
- It lies in the humble, penitent acceptance of the love and the grace which God offers us in Jesus Christ.
(**Ephesians 2:8**)

- It means that God is just
and accepts the sinner as a just man.
- The natural thing to say would be,
"God is just,
and, therefore, condemns
the sinner as a criminal."- Somehow, in that incredible,
miraculous grace
that Jesus came to bring to men,
he accepts the sinner,
not as a criminal,
but as a son whom he still loves.

(Luke 15)

- **Romans 9:23**

to show

his glorious goodness,

(Msg.)

- **Oh, give thanks to the Lord,
for He is good!
For His mercy
endures forever.**

(1 Chronicles 16:34)

- **Ephesians 3:8**

I am less than the least of all God's people; yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News about the infinite riches of Christ,

- **3:9 and of making all people see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect.**

- **God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, (**GNB**)₁**

- **Ephesians 3:10**

3:10 in order that at the present time, **by means of the church**, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.

● **3:11** God did this according to his eternal purpose, **which he achieved through** Christ Jesus our Lord.

(**GNB**)

- **Think On These Things**
 - Philippians 4:8

**Doors of the church
are open.**

Spirit & Bride Say

“Come”

Revelation 22:17