

**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**)<sub>1</sub>**

- **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**