

**Series: EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH EMPOWERED**

**Title:** The Plan and Purpose of the Church / The Church and Government

**Text:** Ephesians 3.1-13

**Date:** Oct 6, 2024

**THE MYSTERY OF GOD**

**Eph. 3:1-6**

*<sup>1</sup> For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— <sup>2</sup> assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

**The Mystery Given**

- You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you (v2) – The administration of this grace (the mystery) – The Church

**The Mystery Revealed v 3, 5**

- How the mystery was made known to me by revelation (v3)
- Has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. (v5)

**The Mystery Perceived**

- ...you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ (v4)

**The Mystery Defined**

- This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (v6)
- Okay – the mystery is that He has made ONE New Person, a Body that will be the dwelling place of god – a Holy Temple

The Mystery is that God has produced the One Body – the Church joined together by the blood of Jesus that all may be heirs, all may partake in the promise

**THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF THE MYSTERY**

**Eph. 3:7-13**

*<sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9</sup> and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,<sup>10</sup> so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.<sup>11</sup> This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.<sup>13</sup> So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

### **The Plan (v8)**

...To preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...

### **The Plan (v9)**

...To bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery...

This is the Plan for the Church

- To preach (speak out about) the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- To bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the Church.
  - (The ONE NEW PERSON)

### **The Purpose (v10)**

...Through the church the manifold wisdom of God ... be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

- ...according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord. (v11)

## **What or Who are the Rulers and Authorities in the Heavenly Places**

### **Principalities and Powers**

6 times in the Bible

- Refers to demonic forces that are working in the world and through the thrones and rulers of the earth as well as the societal systems that entice humanity away from God.
- Dan. 10 – Principality over Persia – an assignment over a geographic area and its people.

### **Thrones and Dominions**

#### **Col 1:16**

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

**We, The Church, have a purpose** – to declare the manifold wisdom of God: That God has made a way for mankind to become the household of God, and make it known to principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions (that which holds authority).

God has established authorities, yet they can become corrupt.

- Paul is going to address each area of authority in this letter

### **God Established the Family**

**Gen. 1:28**

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”*

- Yet members of the family can destroy the family, be it husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, or children
- The family is still established, but it is corrupted by members of the family
- We must declare the mystery of God that he is calling the members of the family to become part of the One person – His Body
  - **Bring it to light – proclaim it**

### **God Established the Church**

**1 Peter 2:5a**

*...you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,*

- Yet members of the church can destroy the church, be it pastors, elders, other leaders, or rude, cruel, judgmental, and sinful people in the church.
- The Bible even says that a church can be the synagogue of Satan
- Is the church nullified? NO ...but it can be corrupted.
- We must declare the mystery of God that he is calling the members of the church to become part of the One person – His Body.
  - **Bring it to light – proclaim it**

### **God Established Governments**

**Rom. 13:1**

*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*

- We must declare the mystery of God that he is calling the members of the nation and the government to become part of the One person – His Body
  - **Bring it to light – proclaim it**

## American Form of Government

God has established this government - a constitutional Republic  
...and the people are in charge of who represents them.

- American government is not a democracy –
  - The people elect representatives who represent the people.
  - The people are at the top tier in this government.
    - Of the people, by the people and for the people.
- If godly people will not rule the nation, the nation will be ruled by the ungodly.

### Proverbs 29:2

*When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.*

Therefore we, as the head or top of this government of the people, must speak and be engaged in the direction of this country.

### How? How to we proclaim, bring to light, make known?

Be a **visual** representative of His Body in this world

- Bring the light.

Be a **verbal** representative of His Body in this world

- Proclaim the truth.

Be a **voting** representative of His Body in this world

- Make manifest to the powers.

Only 41% of Bible believing, God fearing, Christ following believers vote.

I believe that if Jesus had been born in America or became a citizen of America through proper immigration that, because the way of a nation transpires by the proper governance of a nation, and that this country is a constitutional republic – He would have voted.

We, as the church, must bring light and our voice to the authorities (governing systems and representatives) by being involved in that voice – we must vote!

### Just a few words about voting

These thoughts are a compilation of several messages and books that have spoken to me in the last few weeks:

## What voting is not!

### Voting is not a Valentine

- Childhood – we feel an attraction, so we gave a valentine.
- First televised presidential debate
  - Nixon vs. John F Kennedy
  - Visually, a non-attractive man vs. an attractive man; makeup vs. no makeup.
  - It turned the vote.
- God told Samuel not to select a leader based upon the height or appearance of a man, but God would direct according to the heart of the person.
- So, we do not select on appearance, good vibes, age, gender, color of skin (be it brown or orange).
- Personalities will pass away, but policies last and have major impact.

### Voting is not sending a message

- Woman asks husband, if he had a wish, what would it be? He thinks for a moment and says that he would want something that will make something from zero into something that was 200 instantaneously... She bought him a scale.
  - You may think you are sending a message, but it may not be received.
  - In voting, you may think you are sending a message, but no one receives it.
    - Well, I am not going to vote – I do not like either candidate.
      - No one cares...they are not receiving your protest.
    - I am going to vote third party because I do not like this two-party system
      - No one cares – they are not listening – one of these two parties will win an election: local, state, and national.
    - Your message is not received.
- The goal is to make a difference – shine the light, proclaim what the Church is to proclaim, make known what is to be made known.

### Voting for a Selection is not a Sacrament

- A Sacrament is something holy that God has ordained for the church.
  - Communion, baptism
  - Voting is not a sacrament
- If you are looking for someone with no impurities...it will not happen.
  - Jesus is not on the ballot – get over it!
- The best we can do is select the best option available to vote for.
  - As Christians we are to promote the things of God, the truths of God, and to vote for candidates that most closely come to that goal.

**There are three types of leaders in Scripture. Some examples:**

## Josiah

- Righteous, promoted and celebrated righteousness
- Found and read the scriptures
- Called the people to abide by the Scriptures
- Removed all pagan idols, altars, and priests
- Repaired the temple
- Tore down all things that were idols and of Satan

## Ahab and Jezebel

- Unrighteous and promoted unrighteousness
- They celebrated unrighteous and perversion
  - In **Revelation 2:20** Jezebel's reputation lives on as Jesus speaks against the church at Thyatira:
    - *"But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."*
- Lifted up worship to other gods
- Defiled the temple
- Reinstated child sacrifice
- Persecuted the followers of God – killing the prophets and closing down or desecrating the places of worship
- *"Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33).*

## Jehu (2 Kings 9-10)

- Struck down the followers and practices of Ahab and brought justice
- Removes the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal
- He did great good in the land
- But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart.
  - He allowed the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan to remain

Everyone longs for a Josiah – a rare thing.

- But rarely is a Josiah on the ballot.

No God-follower (member of the household of God) can vote for an Ahab and Jezebel.

- Promoting a celebration of evil, perversion, immorality, things counter to the creation of God, child sacrifice.

So, you must choose a Jehu!

- Imperfect, but closer to what God desires for a nation to move toward...
- What the Church is called to do.

We must make manifest (**Bring it to light – proclaim**) the mystery of God to the family, to the church, and to the government.

This is the Purpose of the Church.