

] The Mystery of His Will [

Ephesians 1:8 – 1:11

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~ Our Spiritual Safari study in Ephesians is not moving very quickly in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. We're currently recuperating from major surgery, and from receiving near-fatally potent doses of medication; all prescribed Personally by our Great Physician. And, since we have survived such radical procedures, we are alive to consume the crème de la crème of Scripture in this report. However, if we eat too much, too fast, it will make us sick. We have to take just enough truth in these next several reports of the epistle to the Ephesians to be able to fully enjoy its gastronomic goodness without becoming a Biblical glutton; because that's never good, either. Frankly, that could cause our spiritual cancer to recur, too; and we don't want that. Proper spiritual digestion is critical for a well-balanced understanding and knowledge of Holy Writ. Remember, John said, *"... I ate the scroll, and it was sweet in my mouth but bitter in my belly."* Well, it will be that anyways; so, I'm serving things up judiciously and intentionally in small quantities — as slowly as a ten course French meal — in order to avoid becoming utterly nauseated.

The first chapter of Ephesians reveals how God the Father chose us as the church body of the Lord Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world; and predestinated us according to the pleasure of His good will. That's a mouthful — and a mind full! It also includes the *method* of payment by which Christ Jesus paid for the body of the church. In our last report, we carefully considered the way in which we have been purchased and redeemed by the shedding of His Blood. That was a tremendous and wonderful lesson; and if you haven't read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so now. We examined completely the way in which God's forgiveness and man's forgiveness are two totally different things. We also learned how the price has been paid in order to save you and me from the slavery of sin in Satan's spiritual land of Egypt. God brought us out of that, and He has forgiven us for the rebellion and disobedience that placed us down there in the first place. That was all done because God set us free;

and He is going to give us the opportunity now to be involved in His service. This is the establishment of a personal relationship of our free will.

There is a hymn that sings, *"I gave, I gave My life for you; what hast thou done for Me?"* Well, that's heresy. We can throw that hymn in the garbage can where it belongs; because the very word for redemption used in this passage means Jesus never asked any of us for anything in return. When God saves us by grace, it doesn't place us further in debt to Him. Of course we're supposed to serve Him, but that service is on an entirely different basis than owing. The relationship is purely love – and no other motive. Jesus said, *"if you Love Me keep My commandments."* Jesus never said that we are to keep His commands because He died for us. *If you love God*, then He wants your service; if you don't love Him, then He doesn't even want you around, my beloved. I hear a whole of talk about being commitment to Christ; unfortunately, you and I have very little to commit – in fact, we don't have *anything* God wants or can use. God wants to give us a new heart; and He wants to live through us. Actually, we don't even live for Christ – He died for us – He was raised for our justification; it's all His work — and it totally excludes everything about us. Once we realize all of that, then we will serve the Lord Jesus Christ freely forever — properly, correctly and completely....

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

~ So, God has revealed the *"mystery of His will."* The word *"mystery"* is not what most of us think of as a mystery, though – it's *not* a "who-dunit." Agatha Christie, Conan Doyle, and Sherlock Holmes can only dream of aspiring to this profound level of writing. God is now revealing a truth that, until this time, He has not previously revealed. Further, this is something that can in no way be discovered by human agency, thought, or intellectual

willpower. It is also something that is concealed in a man by God until the proper and correct time. And that's where "*dispensation*" comes in. Most people treat "*dispensation*" as a dirty word, and most so-called Bible teachers actually hate the word in theology – but here it is – in the Bible. That means it's a Bible word.

Some Bible teachers won't even use the word "*dispensation*;" and that makes me wonder how they teach this section of Scripture. Well, "*dispensation*" is not a time word, friends; it means that something has been revealed by God without all of the details being disclosed. "*Dispensation*" is translated several ways in the Bible, too; it is called a "*stewardship*," an "*order*" and an "*administration*," – but here it is very definitely a *dispensation*.

The English transliteration of "*dispensation*" is the word "*economy*." An economy is a system of doing things; it can be domestic or political — and that, when used in the Biblical sense, my friends, means it is the way God does things. God had Adam and the patriarchs in different economies than those He had with Israel. God had the nation Israel, at this time, under an altogether different arrangement than He has you and me today. God never changed. He changed *US*. Don't miss that, friends. I am sure that even the most ardent post-millennialist and amillennialist understands this basic tenet of truth – even if they won't be honest about it – and they never are. Well, frankly, the Bible doesn't even make sense without the dispensation of law and grace – although the only method of salvation that God has ever had is grace. Technically, only the *approach* to grace has been changed. That is definitely a mystery.

By the way, just as a quick side note: there are eleven mysteries in Scripture: (1) the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven (2) the Mystery of Israel's blind condition during this age (3) the mystery of the translation of living saints at the end of this age (4) the mystery of the New Testament church as one body composed of Jew and Gentile (5) the Mystery of the church as the bride of Christ (6) the mystery of the indwelling and indwelling of Christ in believers (7) the mystery of God even Christ; that is, Christ as the incarnate fulness of the Godhead embodiment in Whom all the divine wisdom and understanding of mankind exists (8) the mystery of the

processes by which the likeness of God is restored to man (9) the mystery of iniquity (10) the mystery of the seven stars and (11) the mystery of Babylon. See, God hasn't told us everything there is to know, my beloved. I'm sure you have many questions for God – I know I do.

Well, the Bible does have the answers *BUT* learning the Bible takes a very, very, very long time, friends; because God doesn't just drop a doctorate degree's worth of wisdom, judgment, and discernment in our laps with just a few little Bible lessons. You can forget that. If you really want the answers to life's questions, you're going to have to execute some serious Bible study. I am horrifically amused by those who have only been saved three, five or maybe seven years or so – and then attempt to teach the Bible as if they're a Th.D fundamental conservative scholar who graduated Magna Cum Laude from the finest institution God has made available. They're usually the ones who say something like, "*I don't need any man to teach me*" and "*I don't need an education to teach the Bible.*" Well, let me say this kindly: you're laughable — not to mention ignorant — and when you speak like that, you only reveal your jejune unlearned condition. Prophecy alone will take a *MINIMUM* of ten years educated, sincere, *DAILY, DAILY, DAILY*, proper, correct and complete Bible study — or you're not going to learn it properly, correctly and complete — because that would be impossible. I know you likely think that's not true – and you have a right to be wrong.

The "*wisdom and prudence*" in verse eight is part of a sentence that comprises verse nine, also. When separated into a single verse, it forms a dangling participle; because it is to be used to modify the noun "*mystery*" – here, it plays a role similar to an adjective or an adverb, and is nonfinite. So, try it like this: "*...having made known unto us the mystery of His will in all wisdom and all prudence.*" I, personally, think it should be translated that way. The mystery revealed is that which is only revealed according to all wisdom and prudence. Learning the Word of God is not some little A, B, C course in some mundane subject, friends. Frankly, it is beyond us – *ALL* of us.

Now, I also understand that many individuals are trying to get out what they call the "*simple Gospel*;" and I thank the Lord and rejoice in and for

those people. I see many using phrases and struggling to iterate sound doctrine, that could only have been picked up in one place — Scripture. As most of you know, I try to keep this as simple as I possibly can. These reports are intentionally written on an eighth-grade reading level. They may seem very long, but any middle school student should be able to read and understand these reports in about twenty minutes or so. However, there are certain times when the depths and the heights of the wisdom of God simply cannot be probed; and that necessarily requires any responsible teacher to bring all the mental acumen they can muster to the table! However, even at those times, I shudder when I see the intellect write prose they don't even understand. There is a very definite balance to be struck.

God does all of this and reveals the Pleroma of all things to us in the fulness of time. Everything will be brought under the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ. The day is coming when *all things* will be placed in subjection under His feet. We cannot see that today because we are under an altogether different dispensation — under a different *economy* of dispensation! Every knee is going to bow, and every tongue will confess Christ as God one day — and that includes man, every animal, all that is in Heaven and on earth — and even that which doesn't have a knee or a tongue — are going to bow and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Almighty! Everything is moving in that direction as I type this report and as you read it.

The fact that we have redemption in Christ, and we have a church today, means *THAT* is that which has been revealed to us, my friends. Heaven and earth just happen to be out of tune with each other today. This so-called Spiritual Safari makes an attempt to put the hand of the reader into the Hand of God Almighty — and I realize how inadequate I am at doing that, too, by the way — no need telling me, again. Even so, this expedition through the entire Word of God is all about our Foundation of wisdom, our Rock, and our Fortress, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself — and nothing else. Christ will be glorified forevermore ~

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

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