

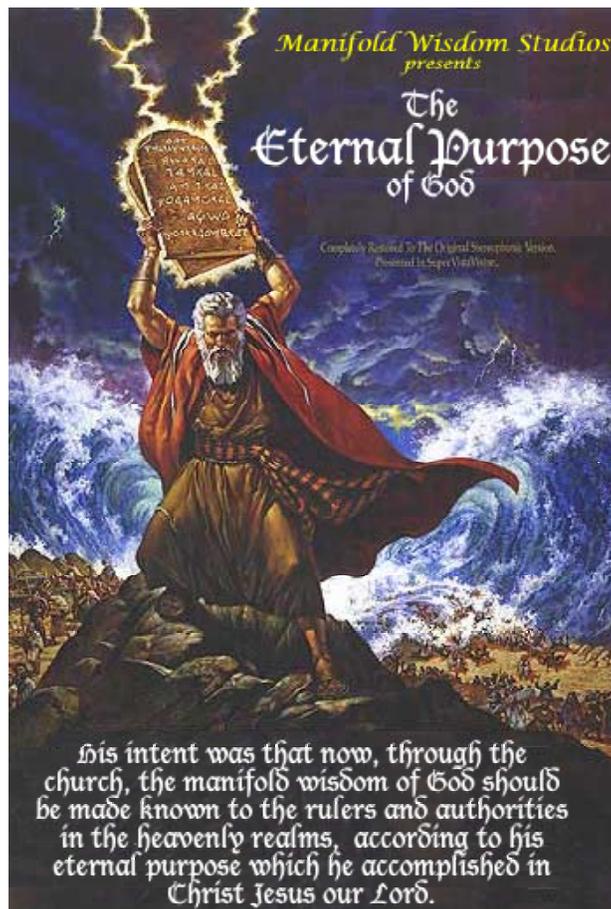
The Eternal Purpose of God

Ephesians 3:7-11 (KJV)

Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the *fellowship of the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to *the eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

According to Ephesians 3:7-11, Gods intent is to demonstrate His wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. Further, this demonstration is according to His eternal purpose, which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. God calls this demonstration “the mystery” and He puts Christ on center stage in the leading role. Co-starring with Christ is The Church (which is His body).

If God were in the movie business, His current release would be called “The Eternal Purpose of God” and He has called it a “mystery”. Perhaps the movie poster would look something like this:



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Since God calls His current release “the mystery”, here are some elements of a mystery that may help explain His eternal purpose.

Elements of a Mystery

- Crime/problem that needs solving
- Suspense or secrecy
- Evidence / Clues
- Suspects
- Good guys/bad guys

1) Crime/problem that needs solving

Rev 4:11 (KJV)

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Eph 1:9-10 (KJV)

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:

Gen 2:16-17 (KJV)

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Gen 3:1-6 (KJV)

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Rom 3:23 (KJV)

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rom 5:12 (KJV)

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Rom 6:23 (KJV)

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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2) Suspense or secrecy

Eph 3:1-5 (KJV)

- 1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
- 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
- 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
- 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
- 5 *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men*, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Col 1:25-26 (KJV)

- 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;
- 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

3) Evidence / Clues

Ephesians and Colossians tell us the body of truth called “the mystery” was hidden in God before the foundation of the world. Consequently, there is no evidence of it in scripture until Paul reveals it in Ephesians.

However, even though The Mystery and Christ’s role in the Eternal Purpose was a secret from the foundation of the world, the evidence concerning His coming begins in Genesis and occurs throughout the Old Testament.

Gen 3:14-15 (KJV)

- 14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:
- 15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Job 19:25 (KJV)

- 25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

Isa 7:14 (KJV)

- 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isa 9:6-7 (KJV)

- 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

4) Suspects

Isa 14:12-15 (KJV)

- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

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- 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
- 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Ezek 28:12-19 (KJV)

- 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
- 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.
- 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
- 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
- 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
- 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.
- 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.
- 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Gen 3:1-6 (KJV)

- 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

5) Good Guys / Bad Guys

Bad Guys:

Rev 12:3-4 (KJV)

- 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.
- 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Rev 12:7-10 (KJV)

- 7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
- 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
- 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
- 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

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Eph 2:11-12 (KJV)

- 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Good Guys:

Matt 17:5 (KJV)

- 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Mark 1:9-11 (KJV)

- 9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.
10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:
11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Col 1:19-20 (KJV)

- 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;
20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

1 Tim 2:5 (KJV)

- 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Eph 2:1-10 (KJV)

- 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.
10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

So, what is our role in the eternal purpose of God? We find many things written to us in the 7 mystery epistles (Eph, Phil, Col, 1 & 2 Tim, Titus, Philemon), yet we also find eternal truths throughout all of scripture, knowing that all scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instructions in righteousness. Here are some highlights:

Eph 2:10 (KJV)

- 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

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Eph 4:1-3 (KJV)

- 1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
- 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
- 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 5:2

- 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
(KJV)

Phil 3:13-17 (KJV)

- 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
- 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
- 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.
- 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.
- 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Col 1:10

- 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
(KJV)

2 Tim 2:15 (KJV)

- 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Tim 2:1-2 (KJV)

- 1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
- 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

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The Eternal Purpose – An Overview

Eph 3:9-11 (KJV)

- 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
- 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
- 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

1) The Edenic Dispensation (Innocence)

Gen. 1 – Gen 3

Ends with Adam's Fall

2) The Patriarchal Dispensation (Mankind as a Whole)

Gen 4 – Gen 11

Ends with Man's Rebellion (Tower of Babel)

3) Israel Dispensation (Under the Law)

Gen 12 – Acts 28

Ends with Israel's rejecting Messiah

Hidden in God and
not revealed until
after Acts 28:28
(Heavenly hope)

4) The Dispensation of Grace (**The Church of His Body**)

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,
1 & 2 Timothy, Phileman, Titus

Ends with "Out-Ressurrection" Phil 3:11

5) Israel Dispensation (Judgment)

Elijah's Return – Day of Christ

Rev 1 - Rev 19 - Day of the Lord

Ends with Tribulation Period - Rapture

The Earthly hope
of Israel

6) The Millennial Dispensation (Mankind as a Whole)

Rev. 20:1-6 (1,000 year reign) – Day of the Lord

Ends with Man's Rebellion & Satan loosed for a season

7) The Eternal Dispensation (Glory)

Rev 21 – Rev 22

Day of God (2 Peter 3:12) Forever & ever