

Ephesians 3:9

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The Christ was always God's plan. God always planned to have a redeemed people. And he always intended his son to be the rescuer.

To bring to light to bring to understanding for who for everyone. So God is not a secretive God, who only wants certain people to know about him who only wants to he wants to kind of protect information about him so that not not everybody knows about him. God wants to be revealed. And he has charged Paul to tell everyone to bring to light to all people, this revelation this unsearchable riches that are available in Christ, so as to bring to light for everyone. What is he to bring to light? What is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God? So there's a mystery. We talked about the mystery a couple of weeks ago. The mystery in this context, it will the mystery in the New Testament, remember, is something that God has revealed something that we couldn't have known, but something that God has shown to us revealed to us. And in this context, the mystery is the mystery of the church. The mystery of the oneness of Christ how, how these believing Gentiles and believing Jews who were former enemies are now not just friends, but now they are one in Christ. They are brothers and sisters in Christ, they are joint heirs in Christ. So this mystery, Paul says, I have been charged, I've been given the grace to preach to bring the the unsearchable riches of Christ to bring to light, everyone what is the plan of the mystery? So there's the mystery. And there's the plan of the mystery. Now this word plan is the same word we saw it just last week is the word for stewardship or stewarding. So the stewarding of the mystery. That word stewarding the speaks of, of something that's somebody else's possession, or somebody else's affairs or somebody else's schedule, and you are charged with managing somebody else's things or time or schedule or affairs. So the stewarding or the plan of the mystery. So the mystery is the mystery of the church, the oneness, this new humanity in Christ. And Paul wants to preach this unsearchable riches of Christ so that this brings to light for everyone. What is this plan for the mystery and the mystery, Paul says, was hidden for ages in God who created all things. So this mystery was hidden. It's no longer hidden, because God has revealed it to Paul and the apostles. And Paul is writing this to the church. So this was hidden for ages. But now it's been revealed. And what's revealed is that there is this plan for the church that has existed for eternity. Let's, let's reference this with verse 11, just down below, this was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus, our Lord. So this, there's this eternal plan. This stewarding of the mystery, this managing of the mystery that God kept hidden for a time, but now has revealed, it's been revealed. And what's revealed is this new humanity, this one is this nature of the church, this reality of the church that has now been revealed to the world. And Paul seeks to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, that are found in the church, in relationship to Christ, in redemption and conversion, and is found all of these riches, this unsearchable riches of Christ. And so Paul says, this plan that has existed for ages, we didn't really know about this until God shown this, that God has revealed this. So God has always had this plan is called an eternal plan. He's always had this plan. And it has not been completely revealed. Now it has been revealed. And now that it has been revealed, it shows that this plan has existed for all eternity, and it involves the entire world. So the Israelites, the ancient Israelites understood that God had a plan for them, that God was working in their nation, that God was directing the affairs of their people, they always understood that they weren't just sort of wandering around aimlessly that God was in control of them as a people.

But what they didn't understand was that God was not only in control of all people, but working all civilizations, all all peoples, according to His plan. This is what Paul now understands. This is what Paul now sees and is revealing that God has had this eternal

plan in which all of his creation is part of this plan. All of those who have ever existed, every civilization, every humanity, everything that's ever existed. is part of God's grand and glorious plan that has now been revealed. Now, that doesn't mean that Paul's saying that God has revealed everything about how he's working out, this people over here and this event over here and this world happening over here, and this crisis over here doesn't mean that God has revealed all the details. What it means is that God has not only been working together in his people to bring his plan about, he's been working together in all people. He's been bringing all of this together. And he will culminate all of this, eventually, in the culmination, the apex the realization of his eternal plan. Look up with me. In chapter one, verse nine and 10, chapter one, verse nine, making known to us the mystery of his will, Paul, still, he's been on the same theme since chapter one making known to us the mystery of his will, according to His purpose, which is set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time. So this plan will come to completion at the end of time, this plan for the fullness of time, and the plan is to unite all things in him things in heaven and things on earth. Now, that doesn't mean that at the end of time, all people will be saved, and all people will be converted, and everybody will be in heaven. What that means is, every single person who's ever lived, is part of the plan of God. God has this ultimate plan. That's always been his plan. And Paul calls it the eternal plan of God in Christ. And so Christ has always been the plan of God, God has always desired, a redeemed people. Jesus Christ is not a reaction to our sin. Our sin didn't cause God to say, Okay, now let me send Jesus. Jesus was always the plan. The Christ was always God's plan. God always planned to have a redeemed people. And he always intended his son to be the rescuer, the Redeemer that would be sent to redeem His people. And all of humanity, all of civilization has a part to play in this plan. And God has been working this together since he first created Adam and Eve. And he will continue working this until Paul says, the fullness of time when all of this is brought to completion. And so this is what Paul's saying, What an incredible thing to come to the realization that all things have been working together in the plan of God. He says here in verse nine, and to bring to life for everyone, what is the plan of the mystery of for ages in God, who created all things? So why did Paul throw in that who created all things, he threw that in there to remind us, everything that exists God created. And so everything that exists, is working in his plan. God didn't create some things that are sort of way out here in left field, and His plan is over here. And he's seeking His glory through his church over here. And this is how God's working in Oh, there's these people groups over here, or this thing over here. And that's sort of external to God's plan. Paul says, He created all things. And all things because they are created by God are working into his plan. And that means things that God created in this the physical realm. And as we'll see, in just a moment, things that God created in the spiritual realm, all of these things are part of this ultimate plan of God. Now, this plan of God was put into place before the foundation of the world. We learned that back in chapter one, verse three, and four. But in another sense, this plan of God was really put into place when you think, at the arrival of Jesus, Jesus's arrival on Earth was really in a real sense, the moment at which this plan really began to all be worked together. Because Jesus comes and he is incarnated, he arrives on Earth and Bethlehem and then he grows up and he begins his, his adult ministry. And he begins by proclaiming something, remember what he proclaimed,

Repent, for the kingdom of God has come. And he meant that. And when he said, The kingdom of God has come, he wasn't saying, I'm here to put into place some things that will eventually one day bring the kingdom of God. Jesus meant just what he said, The kingdom of God has come. As he will say, in other places, the kingdom of God is among you. It's here. So there is a sense in which the kingdom of God is not yet completely fulfilled. We look forward to that. But upon Jesus's arrival, the kingdom was instituted in a real way. Now Jesus arrived, and he says things like Repent, for the kingdom of God is near or the kingdom of God is here. And then he begins doing things to demonstrate just what he was saying. And we call those things, miracles. And so as he's going around teaching and changing people's lives, but he's also doing these miracles, these miracles are all this demonstration, that the kingdom of God is now here. And so as Jesus is doing these miracles, one of the things he wants to do is illustrate what has just changed since he arrived. Because what just changed when he arrived was that somebody who basically had a free for all had been displaced from their position of power, you think I'm talking about the enemy, the enemy, in a real sense, just had sort of free rein, and was, to some degree, just allowed to do things in humanity and, and civilizations. And Jesus shows up and says, Enough of that. The light has now come into the world. And because the light has come into the world, things are different now. And so as Jesus is performing these miracles, one of the things he's trying to teach is that now that the light is here, there's a new sheriff in town, there's a new authority, the kingdom of God has arrived. And so one of the places that really illustrate this, well, they will look at your notes here, Matthew, chapter 12. In Matthew chapter 12, the context of Matthew chapter 12, is Jesus comes upon a man who, oftentimes in his ministry, he would come across these people who were possessed of demons. And so that is given to us in the scriptures, not to say that this wasn't a real man that was really possessed. But he was he was a real person really possessed by a demon. But in another sense, he is an illustration for us. God put this illustration in our scriptures to show us in a physical way, what just happened with the arrival of Jesus, and the kingdom of God coming. So this demon possessed man is the illustration of what

Satan run amok. Satan having all control, that's what happens. This man is possessed of a demon. It says in the passage here, look at verse 22, then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute. So here's this man possessed by a demon, and the demon has made him unable to see and unable to speak, we know the demon was doing that, because when Jesus cast out the demon, he will be able to see and he'll be able to speak. So this demon has run amok, and has invaded the life of this person, and is controlling this person in a dark and demonic way. And this is an illustration of a fallen world prior to the arrival of the kingdom of God. So this demon oppress man who was blinded me it was brought to him to Jesus, and Jesus healed him. Or in other words, He cast out the demon, so that the man spoke and saw. So the effects of the dark force the dark, demonic force that was oppressing him, that demonic force, that demonic presence is cast out, and then the effects of that demonic presence, also leave the person he's now able to see he's able to speak, we see this repeatedly in the gospels, that when the demons cast out the ailment that the demon was causing also ceases, so the demon is cast out. And the man spoken. So now verse 24, but when the Pharisees heard it, they said, Oh, it's only by beallsville, the prince of demons that this man casts out demons. So here's these Pharisees, they see this. Jesus has arrived, the kingdom of God is here. And Jesus is demonstrating what the kingdom of God is here to do by casting out the powerful demonic forces. And the Pharisees come and they say, Oh, we know what's going on here. This is the power of darkness at work here. So Jesus, as he is the light, he is the kingdom of God. And the Pharisees SEE the kingdom of God and they say, well, now

that's really the kingdom of darkness really doing that. And Jesus answers to say, just how stupid of a thing that was. He says, that's just nonsensical. Jesus knowing their thoughts, verse 25, knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand is sort of Satan casts out Satan. He's divided against himself. How will his kingdom sting Jesus says, You just defeated your own argument, to say that Satan that the forces of evil are here to cast out the forces of evil. That doesn't even make sense Then Jesus goes on to say this, verse 28. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come. If the dark, evil, demonic forces are cast out, then that means the kingdom of God is here. The kingdom of God has come. Now, verse 29, now he's going to tell a parable, to further teach it to further illustrate what he just demonstrated with the miracle, verse 29? Or how can someone in a strong man's house and plunder his goods? Unless he first binds the strong man, then indeed, he may plunder his house. So there's two strong men in the parable. There's a strong man, and there's a stronger man. And Jesus says, How can you? How can you plunder strong man's house unless you first a stronger man binds the strong man and binding him? Then Jesus says, Well, now, you may plunder his house, you see the connection. And you see why Jesus told that parable. Jesus just plundered the strong man's house. Jesus just plundered Satan's house. Jesus, who is the strong man, just bound the strong man, and threw them out and then plundered his house, meaning he claimed this man, for the kingdom of light. And this is what Jesus means by saying the kingdom of God is now here. There has been a long time that the forces of evil and the forces forces of darkness have just run amok.

And Jesus says that time is over. The kingdom of God is now here, the strong man is now here, to bind the forces of evil, throw them out and plunder his house. And so the plan of God really got put into place with the arrival of Jesus with the arrival of the strong man who says no more, no more will the forces of darkness have free rein on my creation, I'm going to bind them, and I'm going to cast them out. So this plan of God that has been revealed, Paul understands that Paul sees it, the new humanity is the expression of that kingdom of God, that is the kingdom of God on earth. This is initiated or begun with the arrival of Jesus with the arrival of the kingdom of light and with the binding up and throwing out and strong man, Satan, and as demonic forces. So the question that we ask and try to answer is, well, what does that mean? We are living in the same age right now. This is we call this the Church Age. is Satan right now bound? Or is Satan free? When he you think is Satan bound or Satan free? We would say that because passages they call him like the god of this age, or this, the prince of the power of the air, seem to say to us that he just sort of has free reign. Let me suggest to us that the Scriptures teach us Satan is not free, at least not in the sense of God's Church. Satan cannot touch God's Church. Satan cannot touch a child of God. Satan is the strong man that wasn't the strongest that has been bound and cast out. And now he cannot lay a finger on God's people, or neither can he? Can he stop the advancing of God's kingdom? Think of Jesus's words at the end of Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 28, Jesus says, we all know this passage, we know it as the Great Commission, All authority. Now Jesus didn't say most authority, All authority, All authority has been given to me. In Heaven only. in heaven and on earth, all authority, not will be given has been given his mind, all authority, heaven, earth, all of it his mind. Now, what's the implication of that complete authority being given to Jesus? Therefore go and make disciples Baptizing them in name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things that I've commanded. And I'm with you always. You see the implication? Because all authority is mine. And because the Kingdom of God has come, and because the strong man has is bound Satan and cast him out. He cannot stop my church. That's why Jesus says the gates of hell will not prevail against my

church. Saying, in a real sense, is free, like Peter says, he's like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Now, what that means is, he is given a certain free rein to cause or at least in his mind, cause havoc and trouble. But everything that Satan does, can only listen to this carefully. Everything that Satan does to the church can only strengthen it can only grow it, Satan cannot touch God's church. Jesus says, it's mine. Nobody's taking it from me. Nobody's taken it out of my hand. There there is no power, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. That's the expression of the greatest conceivable power, is there some sort of a force or power greater than the gates of hell outside of God, Jesus is the greatest of all powers can't touch my church. That's the age that we live in. Satan, in all of his conniving, he can cause tremendous problems and those who are not God's people. Yes, he can tempt to sin, he can. He can play stumbling blocks and people's lives. But when it comes to a child of God, he cannot touch you. Think of the story of Job.

Remember how in story of Job what Satan does is serves God's purpose. And God grants Satan permission to do certain things, because God is going to use those things to ultimately strengthen and preserve his child. That is who we are here in the church age. We are living that. And I know that sometimes it seems so discouraging that all the things are happening in our world and in politics and current events in our nation, can be so discouraging. But if we believe our scriptures, we are living in a glorious time. In which same as far as his interactions with the child of God with the Church of God, he has been defined, and declawed think of him as being on this unbreakable leash held by God and, and at times, God might give him a long leash, kind of like those, you see people with those little retractable leashes and sometimes their dog can go way out, sometimes set God may give satan a long leash with his people. But ultimately, he's powerless. He can do nothing to us. Why? Because the light has come, and the kingdom of God has come. And Jesus has promised us the gates of hell will never prevail against the kingdom of light. So this is the plan that Paul is speaking of this, this ultimate plan that will be realized in the next life. Astra Beck puts it this way, is like an embryonic form in the church. So that's a good way to think of it, the new heavens and the new earth. The church is like the embryonic form of those new heavens and new earth and in our embryonic form. God says to us, you are mine. And nothing will touch you. That will not serve my good purpose in your life.