

Manifold Wisdom

Ephesians 3:10

Introduction: Sometimes folks think that this verse says that the church is the manifold wisdom of God. This is not what is meant by this verse. This verse is plainly saying that the manifold wisdom of God is made known by the church. There is little doubt that all things that were done by God were geared toward a culmination in the church.

I. What Does Manifold Mean?

- A. Strong says it means “*much-variegated.*”
 - 1. This is the only time it is used in the New Testament.
 - 2. Euripedes used it of multicolored cloth and Eubulus of flowers.
- B. It is an adjective modifying “**wisdom of God.**”
 - 1. “*It means the greatly-diversified wisdom. It does not mean merely that there was great wisdom, but that the wisdom shown was diversified and varied; like changing, variegated colors. There was a ‘beautiful and well-ordered variety of dispensations’ towards that church, all of which tended to evince the wisdom of God. It is like a landscape, or a panoramic view passing before the mind, with a great variety of phases and aspects, all tending to excite admiration.*” (Barnes, p. 59).
 - 2. When one observes a beautiful sunset there are many factors that contribute to the beauty—scenery and landscape, the season of the year, the angle of the sun, the weather, the time of day, etc. So there are many facets of God’s wisdom that are revealed in the church.

II. The Church Is The Arena Of God’s Activity.

- A. Earlier Paul had mentioned how the “**mystery**” had now been “**revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets**” (**Eph. 3:3-5**).
- B. The continuation of this “**mystery**” had an “open end” to it.
 - 1. Over the decades the prophets had been curious about the end (**1 Peter 1:10-11**).
 - 2. The final end (or revelation) came in Christ and in the establishing of His church (**1 Peter 1:12**).
- C. Those to whom the manifold wisdom is revealed are spiritual beings (“**principalities and powers in heavenly places**”).
 - 1. “*The church becomes a mirror through which the bright ones of heaven see the glory of God. And in order to show them this glory, God committed the gospel to Paul*” (Beet, p. 319).

2. Thus, the church is where all of God's activities take place today. A multitude of spiritual beings are observing the culmination of the "**mystery**"—salvation for all.

III. What Are Some Aspects Of God's Wisdom Made Known By The Church?

- A. God's own Son died to redeem the church.
 1. The shed blood of Christ the price of redemption (**Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Eph. 5:25-27**).
 2. The central theme of the gospel (**1 Cor. 15:1-4, cf. Acts 2, et al**).
- B. The plan of salvation has its results in the church.
 1. This salvation is available to all.
 - a. To Jew and Gentile (**Rom. 1:16**).
 - b. For whosoever (**Gal. 3:28**).
 2. The saved are added by the Lord to the church (**Acts 2:47**).
- C. Mercy is extended to the church.
 1. Greatest evidence of mercy is in an act of pardon.
 - a. Example of Presidential pardon.
 - b. God has power to pardon sins.
 2. Those who are added to the church are forgiven of their sins (**Acts 2:38**).
 3. God is "**rich in mercy**" to us (**Eph 2:4**).
- D. The grace of God is evident in the church.
 1. Thayer defines graces as "*good-will, loving-kindness, favor . . . kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved.*"
 2. Those who are in Christ are the only heirs of the promise (**Gal. 3:29**).
 3. When Barnabas got to Antioch he saw the grace of God (**Acts 11:23**).
 - a. What did he see?
 - b. He saw how God was blessing the efforts of preaching the gospel (**Acts 11:19-20**).

Conclusion: As said before, the "**principalities and powers in heavenly places**" are observing what transpires in the church. When they look into the church and observe those therein, will they see you? Perhaps they will not. Why is that? Is it because you have not done what is necessary to be in the church? Why not change that today? Why not obey the gospel right now?