



In the first few verses in his letter to the Ephesian church, Paul began outlining crucial Christian doctrines of grace, mercy, adoption, and God's sovereign will. By verse eight, Paul begins pulling these doctrines together and explaining his God-given mission and purpose in writing this letter.

In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. [Eph 1:8-10](#) NASB

Here we see again that Paul, as he has done many times in the preceding verses, praises God's good character. God has ***all wisdom and insight*** and His ***intentions are kind***. This is a fundamental character trait of the Lord, and one that we must understand as we read and study Scripture. Everything God does is right, just, kind, loving and merciful. Even if we don't understand it or it looks bad to us, if God did it, it was according to His perfect and complete wisdom, insight and kind intentions.

We also see that in this wisdom and insight God made known to us the ***mystery of His will***. What exactly is this ***mystery***? For the answer we must look at the context of the paragraph, verses 3 through 10. And here we see that Paul is discussing the overarching sovereign will of God Almighty and His divine elective purpose in our salvation.

The reason behind God's choice may never be fully understood this side of heaven, but Paul is reiterating that God's will is the source of our salvation. As we've seen many times before, salvation is God's work - by Him, through Him, and for Him. This removes all the pride and boasting that one might claim in works aimed at maintaining their own salvation (which the misapplied legalism of Mosaic Law taught), and instead requires full reliance on God for the removal of sin, a genuine faith, and admission to paradise.

After confirming God's sovereignty once again, Paul then goes on to explain his God-given task in the Gospel (***an administration*** [or stewardship] ***suitable to the fullness of the times***). Paul, like the other apostles and prophets that came before him, was entrusted with heavenly mysteries and truths and given the privilege and responsibility of sharing them with the world.

Just as John the Baptist had the privilege of introducing Christ to the world, Paul was certainly blessed by Christ with great divine understanding, and given the honor of writing much of the New Testament, revealing and defending canons of the Christian faith, and bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles.

What are our takeaways from this passage? I see at least two. One, God gets all the credit all the time. Our salvation is all because of His work. And two, as a reminder to have full and



complete reliance on the Lord. This is one manifestation of our saving faith. While God is ultimately responsible for our salvation, we are responsible for our obedience within it. Has God asked me to do something and am I doing it in faithful submission? Now that I've been saved by grace through faith, what has God purposed for me to do? Is there an area of my life I have not surrendered fully to God, and if so, how is that impacting my faith and walk with Him?

Just as Paul was wholly obedient to his calling, we too must be obedient to ours. Only God can reveal what that is to each of us, so it's important that we seek it in prayer with humility, patience, and expectancy. It may not always lead to what the world would deem as a 'prosperous life' (Paul spent much of his ministry time in prison!), but there is truly nothing this world can offer that compares to the richness of being obedient to the beckon of our Master.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece