

# The Mystery of the Wisdom of God

by Art Katz

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*The sermon explores the mystery of the wisdom of God, revealed through Paul's writings, and how it is demonstrated through the church's submission to God's eternal purpose.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 3:3

**Topics:** "The Role of the Church", "The Wisdom of God"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes that the mystery of God's wisdom is not for mere curiosity but is to be actively demonstrated through the church. He explains that this mystery reveals that Gentiles are now fellow heirs with Jewish believers in Christ, showcasing the manifold wisdom of God to the spiritual authorities. Katz argues that the church must embody this wisdom, which is contrary to worldly values, by living selflessly and trusting in God's provision, even in adversity. He illustrates this through the example of Elijah, who relied solely on God's word rather than visible circumstances. Ultimately, the church's authentic demonstration of God's wisdom is what will defeat the powers of darkness.

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## Transcript

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Paul is not interested in promulgating mystery in order that we should have our curiosity gratified, but in order that it might be administered and effectually fulfilled through the church and not just contemplated. ...that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now being revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel....(Ephesians 3:3-6) The mystery in verse 6 is that the 'body' is the already existing body of Jewish believers who never left the faith, who recognized and received the Messiah and who received the Holy Spirit that was promised them, but the mystery is that Gentiles can now be fellow heirs with them and fellow partakers with them in Messiah Jesus through the gospel.

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:8-10) Paul is now going to reveal the mystery for which reason all things were created.

This mystery has nothing to do with anything that we can recognize as being valid or relevant for the church. It has not even to do with the world or the benefits that men in the world will receive. It is one thing only, namely, a calculated demonstration to an invisible angelic order called the principalities and powers, and it must be made exclusively through the church, and it must be a manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God. It is totally other than anything that we might have taken for ourselves as the purpose for the church's being and this is also the reason that God has created all things.

There is a hint here of a primeval cosmic struggle or conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness that preceded even the creation of the world. The world was created in order that it might support an entity called the church that would bring this conflict to its final conclusion by something that only it alone can demonstrate, namely, the manifold wisdom of God. The church has languished for millennia long without an understanding of this and has therefore been the victim of these very powers of the air instead of being God's answer.

These verses indicate something that fulfills the satisfaction of God, a demonstration that He alone requires having nothing to do with any benefit that we would derive. This is exclusively for God and He does not even give us the reasons why. He requires and He thinks it important enough and not too extravagant to have created all things in order that this demonstration might be made, and it can only be made through the church. Whatever the manifold wisdom of God is, we know this much, it will be contrary in every point and particular to the wisdom of the gods of this world.

It is another wisdom, a heavenly wisdom and when the church can demonstrate it, the powers of the air, who have kept nations and races of men in bondage and subjection to false values, are finished. Where there is a church that can see through them and live independently of them and demonstrate true values, those powers have no further influence whatsoever. Whatever it was that constituted the wisdom of God at the Cross, it is the only thing in the end that will be calculated to defeat them.

Jesus inflicted the initial defeat at the Cross, for it was at the Cross that two systems of wisdom collided. Wisdom does not mean what we would ordinarily think it to mean. It is not wise sayings, but more like value systems or modes of being. One system was predicated on force, violence, threat, fear, intimidation and the terror of men to preserve themselves and to preserve their own survival as being the first law of life. The ability to lay down one's life and not to consider that one's life is dear to oneself is the wisdom of God.

One wisdom lives for itself, its own preservation and its own advantages, while God's wisdom lives for another. It is selfless and the wisdom of the Son of God, who never initiated anything in Himself for Himself but lived entirely for the gratification of His Father. This is contrary to nature and contrary to how we think man has to live. Everything that is resolved through violence is the wisdom of this world. That is the way the world has lived its life throughout history.

God's wisdom is to relinquish, to give up, to yield and to believe that there is something greater than death and, by that, not to fear death. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in

Christ Jesus our Lord.... (Ephesians 3:11) What kind of a church can there be that does not make as its first priority the taking to itself of God's eternal purpose. A church that does not live for the eternal purpose of God is not living. It is nothing more than a succession of mere services.

It has lost or never had this vital perspective as the reason for its being. A believer that has been gripped or apprehended by this understanding cannot possibly be bored. The magnitude of this eternal purpose and this demonstration is of such a kind that it cannot be made by mere individuals alone. It has got to be made by the entire church or not made at all. It requires an entire people freed from the influence of the principalities and the powers of the air, a people who are not insecure, fearful, living for themselves, who are gloriously freed from mammon, who are indifferent to shopping malls, who can have their car crunched in an accident and walk away smiling, who can suffer affliction and inexplicable things without coming undone and who can receive the stripping of their earthly goods with joy, knowing that they have in heaven a more enduring substance.

In fact, the only people who can fulfill this mystery are those who would be strangers, pilgrims and sojourners in the earth. They have risen above and beyond their national culture. They are not fearful, but gloriously free from intimidation and threat. They know that their security is not from the Government or their employer but from God, and if that should dry up, the Lord has alternative sources, and if it pleases Him not to provide for them, then they will prefer to die in faith than that they should subsist and prolong their bodily life by initiating out of ourselves some course of action.

When Elijah was at the brook Cherith and God commanded the ravens to feed him there in the drought that had been occasioned by his own word of judgment, you have a man submitted to the wisdom of God. It says that he watched the brook dry up, but he did not allow the visibly decreasing water supply, which is life, to affect his next move. He was not moved by things external or seen, but by the word of God only, and when the word came, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.

So he arose and went...' according to the word of the Lord. There must be a people on the earth in the last days who are not moved by circumstances nor by dwindling streams of supply, but only by the word of God, for that is the greater wisdom. It is a people who are free from fear, who will yet trust God, though He may slay them. The powers of the air are not impressed with our rallies, our music and our noise. They are only impressed with the same thing they saw both in Jesus and in Paul, namely, apostolic authenticity, the real thing, the truth.

Where they see the truth of God in the life of His people, they will retreat. They know whom to fear and whom to acknowledge. We are not to think that we can defeat them by turning up the amplifiers in our worship or by shouting them down. It is not noise that impresses them, but character. It is the truth of life where we really live, not the brave show that we put on when we think we have it all together, but what is true of us through and through. The wisdom of God was demonstrated at the Cross when the supreme Son of God relinquished the right to his own life and gave it up by the Eternal Spirit, who is the Spirit of sacrifice, without spot and without blemish unto God, without complaint and without answering His critics back.

He was a lamb who went silently to the slaughter. He was goaded by His own people to come down from the Cross before they would believe Him. He suffered that anguish for others while at the same time hearing their taunts and mocks, of a kind that when anything in you that is left that has to do with

self-justification and self-vindication rises up and says, "You dumb idiots! I am doing this for you! Don't you understand?" But instead He says, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'

It is another wisdom. Another wisdom was expressed contrary to and other than what the logic of the moment would have justified. Imagine an entire church like that who cannot be provoked, even by Jews, who will come to us in their most ungainly condition, frothing at the mouth, having been suddenly uprooted from their places of security and affluence, and find themselves pushed, prodded and driven through places they never would have chosen, and testing and mocking and saying that they do not like the facilities, etc.

Anything in you that would have been calculated to rise up in resentment at ingratitude will be tested. We will need to come to that place where we reveal God as He in fact is and not some self-conscious religious spirit of obligation, that says, 'I guess I have got to'. That will fail. Any Gentile who will act for the Jew in an indifference to what His own suffering might be, is demonstrating the wisdom of God. They will not only do so unbegrudgingly, but will do so and count it all privilege and honor, even and especially if they are required to suffer for it, knowing that they have in heaven an enduring and a greater reward. God supplies a greater wisdom, namely, His own character and His own life in order that it might become the very nature and character of His people.

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