

The Manifold Wisdom of God

by Peter Masters

The sermon explores the manifold wisdom of God as revealed in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, emphasizing the unity of Jews and Gentiles and the significance of suffering for the gospel.

Duration: 49:29

Scripture: Ephesians 3:6

Topics: "Church Unity", "Gods Wisdom"

Description

This sermon delves into the deep wisdom of God revealed in the book of Ephesians, focusing on Paul's role as a prisoner for Christ and the mystery of Christ in believers. It emphasizes the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church, the commission given to believers to spread the gospel, and the demonstration of God's wisdom to the angelic host through the church's existence and work.

Transcript

We're looking today at the manifold wisdom of God referred to in this passage. Well, this is a glorious letter from Paul to the Ephesians, a congregation which he had pastored. Now it is a prison letter written from Rome 60-62 A.D. that is, and it is part still, we're considering the doctrinal part of the letter and shortly it moves into the practical, the behaviour, the applied stage of the letter.

But I come initially to the beginning of chapter three. For this cause, says Paul, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. And there's something precious here for us in every single verse.

For this cause, or as we might say, for this reason. Well, the apostle now is going to go into a great digression, though it's not fair to call it a digression because everything is so important and of course inspired by the spirit of the living God. But having said for this cause, for this reason, he will not really take that up again until verse 14.

For this cause, he reminds us of the opening words of the chapter, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So here is the great parenthesis from verse 1. For this cause, then I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation and so on, then he goes into this marvellous digression until coming back to the point.

Well, for what reason will Paul in due course pray? Well, because of all that he's set out in chapter 2, because of justification by faith, because of the salvation of the people at Ephesus, and because they've

been as Gentiles remarkably, amazingly woven into the church of Jesus Christ. And they're equal with any saved Jews. And that's going to be a great theme of these verses, that God has not merely brought the Gentiles into the Jewish order, but he has brought both Jews and Gentiles into something entirely new, into the international Jewish Gentile church of Jesus Christ.

And they have that equal spiritual standing and access to Christ. But look at these remarkable words. For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

Well, he was, of course, in human terms, a prisoner of the Roman authority. You could even say he was a prisoner of the Jews, because it was the hostile Jewish leaders that ever caused him to be arrested in the first place, because they were so antagonistic to his preaching, his justification by faith message, and of course, his preaching to Gentiles too, in due course. They were the cause of his arrest.

So would he not say, prisoner of the Jews, or prisoner of the Romans by whom he was held? But he doesn't. I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ. What a way of looking at life.

And of course, it was absolutely true. He had committed no crime. There was no cause for him to be arrested.

In fact, the Roman power had no power over him. He is telling us, had it been Christ's will, they would never have been able to take him. He would not be in prison at all.

It was only because Christ permitted it, in his ordering of affairs, he allowed this opposition by the Jewish leaders to lead to Paul's arrest. So he calls himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ. Not a word of complaint against those hostile Jews, or even the Romans.

He's the prisoner of Jesus Christ, under whose power he lives, and who he serves. And he's been imprisoned on behalf of the Gentiles. Why? One of the purposes of his imprisonment was to assist the mission to the Gentiles.

For two years, he was imprisoned in Caesarea, and now he's been approximately two years in Rome. Four years of his life. But you know, one of the tremendous effects that this had, was that it convinced Gentiles to whom he preached everywhere, that this was not a man who was doing this for gain.

There were so many different types of imposter around in those days, preaching all kinds of crazy religious things. And they grew rich on it. And they collected monies, and, well, Paul wasn't like that.

Here is a man who is a sufferer. Here is a man who is persecuted for all that he does, for us, in preaching to us. He's persecuted by his own people, the Jews.

He's imprisoned by the Roman authority. This is no charlatan, no rogue, no money maker. This makes a tremendous impression, that Christ's servant should suffer on their behalf, commends his message, region after region, knows this is this remarkable apostle of the Christian faith.

And he does this for us, at whatever cost. So he is, in every sense, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, who has permitted this. And it's a wonderful way to look at things.

Well, Paul was set before rulers due to his arrest. He had opportunities he would never otherwise have had, as you know. He had tremendous influence in Rome when he got there, from those who visited him, from the slaves, the members of Caesar's household, the guards who were sent to him, the effect, the

conversions, the near revival, running around the household of the authorities.

This was all very remarkable. But not only that, there are Christian preachers who are buckling under the threat of persecution, and they have become silenced and secretive. And that Paul should make such a stand encourages them, and challenges and convicts them.

And we read elsewhere that there's been a revival in the fervour of Christian missionary work and preaching, because Paul is putting them to shame by his readiness to suffer. And then, of course, the prison epistles come out of this, those great epistles written from Rome, from imprisonment. So God always knows what he's doing, and above all, Paul's genuineness shines forth.

Well, that's how we should look at life. Paul is a prisoner for Jesus Christ, but what are you? What's your occupation? You say to yourself, I am this vocation. I'm here for Jesus Christ.

I'm here for witness. I'm here to represent what God does in the life of converted people, and the message of eternity. I am a parent for Christ.

I am a sufferer, if that's the case, for Christ. And we hear Paul here, and we learn from him the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. And everyone should be challenged by words like this, because this is how we should live, and this is our attitude.

Not, oh, what that person did to me, or what that company I work for did to me, and how they deprived me of my certain promotion, and how they... That's not the life of the Christian. I'm here for Jesus Christ. Whatever my vocation, my suffering, whatever it is, I'm here to represent him, and show how believers react, and continue to be one who prays and represents the gospel wherever he has set me.

For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, and verse 2, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you would. If ye have heard. Well, of course they had heard.

He'd been their pastor even. The Ephesian believers knew all about Paul, and that he was the apostle to the Gentiles. So it's not a matter of if ye have heard, and really, the if in the days of our translators could be a taken for granted, if we don't use it in that way today.

But if ye have heard, the apostle means to say, and in more modern language, as you have heard, since you have heard of the special dispensation given to me to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. Let me read it like that. The if has lost this usage in our time.

As ye have heard of the dispensation, literally in the Greek, the stewardship, the administration of the grace, the mercy of God, which is given me to you would. They were mainly Gentiles in the church at Ephesus. And the apostle Paul says, I have a dispensation, a stewardship given me, a task to administer this gospel, particularly to Gentiles.

He also preached it to Jesus Jews, but his particular calling of God was to take it to the Gentile world. But look at this verse. Can you see the note of commission ringing out from here? The dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you would.

It's pregnant with the sense of a commission and a charge being given to him. And that's what drove him. That's what made him so utterly faithful to this task, so diligent.

God has given to me a charge. Well he had done, and in a remarkable way. But he's given a charge to all of us.

And we should see it in this way. You and I, we have a commission, a charge, to live for Jesus Christ, to make him known. If we could only see it that way, we'd be more diligent, we'd be more faithful, we would accept knocks and difficulties more readily.

We would be driven, men and women, for the Lord, for the gospel, with Christian priorities. Isn't it so? I'm not just a saved person, I am a commissioned person. And a solemn charge and task has been given to me to spread this message of grace.

So if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, this special stewardship, to spread mercy, which is given me to you would. And verse three, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words. Well of course, Paul was an apostle.

Some people think there are apostles today. Well in one sense, a strict literal sense of the word, everybody, every Christian is an apostle. Because an apostle simply means one who is sent.

But of course I refer to the use of the term apostle in the New Testament, by which it describes the twelve, of course Judas having been replaced, plus Paul. They were the apostles, that is to say they had special authority in the church of Jesus Christ. And they were instruments of revelation or given to authenticate revelation.

They had seen the resurrection, they were witnesses of the resurrected Lord. And they were given unique powers of healing and so on, in order to demonstrate to people that they truly were different as apostles. They were authenticated.

Now Paul speaks of his having knowledge by revelation. That's one of the signs of an apostle. That's why you can't have apostles today or since Bible times, since the times of revelation.

One of the signs of an apostle of course is that an apostle had been with the Lord, seen the Lord, been taught directly from the Lord, been commissioned by the Lord. These are all signs or among the signs of true apostles. The apostle Paul, he saw the Lord by vision, by God, by Christ appearing to him and commissioning him.

And he received his teaching not by having walked with Christ for three years, but he received it by revelation. And he is the last of the apostles. He tells us he's the one born out of due time.

And that is the only one born out of due time, after the apostles of Christ walking with him. So now in verse three, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery as I wrote afore in few words. Before I deal with the mystery, let's look at those words in brackets, as I wrote afore in few words.

These words have given rise to a lot of speculation. And people speak about a previous letter to the Ephesians which has now been lost. But these words most probably refer to the previous chapter.

In chapter two, from verse eleven on, part of the mystery is being spoken of. That the Gentiles had become with Jews equal in the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. And Paul is effectively saying in verse three, as I have just written in a few words, you can see my understanding in these things.

It refers to the previous chapter. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery. What is the mystery that's going to be referred to several times in this chapter? In verse three, in verse four, in verse nine, and indirectly in verse five also where something revealed, unveiled, is spoken of.

What is this mystery? Well it's twofold. It's this. And we know this from this epistle and from Colossians where it's spelled out in plain terms.

The mystery is Christ in you. The hope of glory. That's the first part of the mystery.

This wonderful mystery is that Christ would indwell by his spirit his people. That there would be the most intimate and glorious relationship with the living God. The mystery of Christ.

That Christ would come is foretold in the Old Testament. That there would be blessing, an intimate blessing with people was foretold also. But the character of the indwelling Christ, this was not explicitly spelled out.

And so this is something that was a mystery in this sense. It had to be revealed in New Testament times. It was there, but it was veiled in the Old Testament.

Now that's secret, just how Christ would save, exactly what he would do, how he would indwell his people, that secret is unveiled clearly in the New Testament. And once you've seen it, you can see it more clearly in the Old Testament also. That's the first part.

The walk with Christ, the son of the living God, by his spirit. And the second part is this. The Jews and Gentiles, as I mentioned earlier, would be one in the New Testament Church of Christ.

Absolutely equal in every sense. Now it was a mystery because, well, all the salvation of Christ is something which no one would ever have worked out, never have guessed. It's so wonderful, it's so unexpected, that God should save souls by grace alone.

It's in the Old Testament. But even then, people don't grasp it easily. It has to be spelled out.

I can't earn it, I can't deserve it. No. It's the free mercy of God.

It must come as a gift. And then there is the indwelling. And then there is the wonderful uplifting of the unrefined, coarse, polytheistic, Gentile world, that they would be equal with Satan.

And that's only a minority of the Jews. But I look at it here in this third and fourth verse. Verse 4, whereby when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

And verse 5, which in other ages, Old Testament days, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Now let me give you some examples of this. And I turn back to the book of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 11.

And I can deal briefly with this, but they're wonderful examples, because we've been considering some of them in a series of Bible studies recently. And I turn to Isaiah 11 and verse 9. In fact, perhaps I should read the whole passage from verse 6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. It says, Isaiah, there's a time coming when all these things will happen.

Some people say, oh, this must be some special age of the world, when animals will all be made docile, and a little child can play with them, like little furry pets. There must be some strange literal fulfillment coming. Well, that's not what the passage is about, and I'll explain in a moment.

Verse 7, and the cow and the bear shall feed together, just as the passage. The young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child, what an amazing thing, shall play on the whole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

When is this? When is this? Verse 10, and in that day, I Isaiah's special phrase, which refers to the coming of Christ, and the New Testament age, in that day there shall be a root of Jesse. You know what that is? Jesse, and then there's David, and then the great descendant Christ, which shall stand for an ensign of the people. To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.

It's speaking of the coming of Christ, and it's speaking of how Gentiles will seek him. So you see Gentile salvation is in the Old Testament, and here it is described in extraordinary terms, that ferocious animals and docile animals, the one would have torn to pieces the other, animals that could not live together will dwell together. Yes, it's so.

Nations that have been intensely hostile to each other, people in those nations will be saved, and their fierce patriotism will subside, and in the church of Jesus Christ, they will live together in peace and harmony and love, serving Christ. And the most docile, even the child, this is Jews and Gentiles, Assyrians and Israelites, all coming together. This is the language of prophecy.

This is how it works. Let me give you a simple illustration. You may remember me giving it before some time.

It's one I'm very fond of, and it has its origin in Northern Ireland, back in the days when everybody, not everybody, those who possessed these things, drove a horse and buggy, and motor cars were just on the horizon, the distant horizon, just beginning to come in. And the illustration is this. There was a wealthy farmer, and he said to his boy, when he turned ten or eleven, boy, if you never smoke, when you reach the age of twenty-one, I will give you your own horse and buggy.

And the boy was overwhelmed at the promise. The promise was firmly made, and he never forgot it. As it happened, he never smoked.

Of course, the promise hadn't been mentioned for some time, but when he was, on his twenty-first birthday, he got up in the morning, and he had a bedroom on the upper floor, front of the farmhouse, and he happened to draw the curtains, and what should he see on the drive outside, but a magnificent sedan car, gleaming, new, huge, by the age of the motor car, had dawned. Well, I'll tell you what he didn't do. He didn't rush down to his father at the breakfast table and say, Dad, you can't do this to me.

You promised a horse and buggy. What's this? Of course not. He would be crazy.

The promise was made in the age of the horse and buggy. The promise was fulfilled in the age of the motor car, or its early stages. And that's how prophecy works.

The prophecies of the Old Testament are cast in the language of the time, and they are fulfilled in the language of our time, many of them. The prophecies about Christ and the church were made in the language of the Old Testament church. They are fulfilled in the spiritual terms of the New Testament church.

So when you read of ferocious animals and docile animals lying down together, culminating in the promise that Christ will come, the root of Jesse, and the Gentiles will flock to him, don't you see? It's all those previously antagonistic peoples. Ah, but if the gospel reaches them and they're saved, then they sit down together and feed together as one in the church of Jesus Christ. And all the illustrations are fulfilled in a spiritual manner in this way.

You must grasp the language of prophecy. Don't think that bows and arrows are coming back, and shields and swords, and literal battles will be fought. These things are expressed in the language of the day and fulfilled in the spiritual language of the New Testament.

Some people, in spite of what the New Testament says, they think the Jews are going to rebuild the temple and go back to the old ways of worship. No, when in the language of prophecy a temple is going to be built, it refers to the church of Christ. It refers to him and how he will come and what he will do.

It is how prophecy works, dear friends, and never let that slip from your mind. Well let me look at one or two other scriptures very quickly. Chapter 19 of Isaiah, but I must pass over this fairly rapidly to get well into the chapter.

Chapter 19 and verse 18. In that day, that's the language again indicating the time of Christ. In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan and swear to the Lord of hosts.

One shall be called the city of destruction. In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. It shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts.

It says how they'll cry out to him. Verse 21, the Lord shall be shown to Egypt and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day and shall do sacrifice and oblation. Old Testament language you see for worship.

Yea, they shall perform a vow of vow unto the Lord and perform it. These are wonderful things. The prophet has been talking about how Egypt will be punished, but yet there's a day coming when there even will be salvation among Egyptians.

Five cities in the land. In other words, it won't be the whole land, it'll just be a portion of it, but Egyptians will be wonderfully saved and they'll turn to the Lord. And then Old Testament language, they'll make sacrifice, but no, of course, in New Testament times they'll worship Christ.

Without sacrifices, he is the sacrifice. They will believe in that. It's how prophecy works.

Look at chapter 19, verse 23. In that day, the day of Christ, shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. This is the prophecy that Gentiles will be brought into the church.

Not only will there be Egyptians, there'll be Assyrians too. Were they not ferocious enemies of Israel? Yes, but in the wonderful mercy of God, many are going to be saved. And look at verse 24.

Here's a great hint of the equality of Jews and Gentiles. In that day, shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people. He usually said that of Israel.

And Assyria, the work of my hand, and Israel, mine inheritance. Isn't that amazing? Isn't Isaiah saying it? When Christ comes, there will be no difference between Jews and Gentiles. Two lands, even her enemies, will be equal with Israel.

Third, third, third. This isn't a coalition, friends. We hear about coalitions, don't we? Where people are trying to work together who you really know are quite different deep down.

And if something went wrong and there was election tomorrow, they'd be fighting each other again. This isn't a coalition or a partnership. It's totally, identically the same.

Children of God in Christ. And that's what we read about in Ephesians chapter 3. And I go back to Ephesians 3 now. And this sixth verse, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Every Jew that is saved since Christ will come in by the gospel. Same way as you and I, as Gentiles. Every Gentile, fellow heirs, inheriting heaven in the same way, the same glories, the same wonderful future.

Look at Paul's words in verse 7. Whereof I was made a minister, this is of the gospel, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. These are tremendous things. You could go through every word.

Whereof I was made a minister. He didn't make himself. You remember how God dealt with Paul.

You remember how he brought him down. It was all God working on a stubborn, rebellious, self-righteous Jewish heart. God saved him and God commissioned him.

He was made a minister, a servant that is, according to the gift of the grace, undeserved, unmerited favor of God given unto him by the effectual working of his power. It's true of us, isn't it? How were you saved? We were reading of it in chapter 1 and chapter 2. It was the work of God. Subjectively to me it seemed that I came to the Lord by myself.

It seemed to me that once I heard their message, the time came when I saw my wickedness and sinfulness and my rebellion against God and my spiritual deadness and foolishness and I bowed the knee and called upon his name and believed in Jesus Christ, appealing to him for forgiveness and for salvation. But the reality was, even though it seemed as though it was my decision, and it was, yet behind my decision was a work of God in the heart, illuminating my soul, humbling me, bringing me to that point, or else I never would have yielded. I never would have been humbled.

I never would have repented. And every word of verse 7 equally applies to salvation as well as the call of God to his apostle, whereof I, by the gospel, I was made a Christian believer. According to the gift, it was a gift, of the grace, totally undeserved, mercy, unmerited mercy and favour of God, given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

And the more I realise that, the more indebted I will be to him and yield myself to his service. It is all from him. Look at the apostle in verse 8, unto me he says, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given.

Unto me, he's got in mind the fact that he was a persecutor of the church of Christ. He was so hostile. Oh, he drew people away to arrest and imprisonment and even to death.

How could it be that Christ would show mercy to him? 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 you can hear Paul saying as it were, and that's what I'm going to do. And if he sets me at liberty once again from this Roman prison, no matter what it costs, I am going to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles, once again, just as before.

Why, we read of William Ward, who was a member of this church years ago, beginning of the 19th century, when of course it gathered in a quite different building. And he went out to India to help William Carey. William Ward, you know the Seramportrio, he was a printer and he used this very verse, and wonderfully so.

He says, unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, he said, is this grace given, he changed one word, that I should print among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. And he did, and he was mightily used of God, but he did more than print. He became like the other two, a mighty preacher also.

And that's how we should behave. Unto me. Look back at your conversion, dear friends.

Look back at yourself. Remember your hardness of heart and your great pride. Remember how untouchable you might have been, or many of us were.

How shallow you probably were as a person. How trivial and earthly and materialistic. How against God.

Remember these things and be melted down. Don't repent of them all over again. You have repented and God has saved you, but when you think of them, yes, be melted and praise him and thank him, and then let it stir your indebtedness, how much you owe him.

That's what the apostle does. You can see his practice coming out here, unto me, who am less than the least of all saints. And verse 9, well the end of verse 8, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, the great treasures of Christ, all the mercy of Christ to me.

So much forgiveness for you and for me. There was so much to forgive. The unsearchable means cannot be traced, cannot be tracked, not by human sense.

You cannot calculate the treasures of Christ's mercy. So much forgiveness, so much love, so much patience towards us, so much light given to us, so many gifts and wonderful blessings and happiness and assurance, so many years rolling on into infinity, into the endless ages we shall have in eternal glory. So much the unsearchable, beyond all calculation, treasures, riches of Christ that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

If you've never come to Christ, what have you got friends? Do you have a big house? Is it well furnished? Do you have cars? Are you wealthy? Do you have a great career, a beautiful garden? Not many of us have these things. But do you have those things? They're nothing compared with the unsearchable riches

of Christ to know him. So what are you doing for him? What are your priorities? You must come to him, and once you've come to him, you must live for him.

Oh, there's too much comfort in our Christian homes, too much leisure, too much seeking out for ourselves. Let's live for him. You can see the Apostle's great heart speaking in all these verses.

Verse 9, and to many, make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, this secret, so revealed, the fellowship with Christ, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Well, I must come to conclusion, but I do want to make mention of verse 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. Let's just close with an explanation of this remarkable verse.

To the intent, in order that, we would say, in order that, now, unto the principalities and powers, the angels in heavenly places, I think there's no doubt that while principalities and powers can refer to evil angels, that here it refers exclusively to the good angels. You can't really exegete the passage with anything else in mind. Why is it that God saves? Why does he build up the church of Jesus Christ? Why has he brought Jew and Gentile and every other nationality come to that, into the church of Jesus Christ and made us all one with the same salvation and the same access to him? Why has he done these things? Well, one of the purposes, which is a glorious purpose, is given here, that the occupants of the eternal heavens, the angels, even up to the highest angel, who have never really understood this fallen world, they're inhabitants of heaven.

They watch us, they look upon us, they understand much, but they will see, and it will be established in heaven for all eternity, a magnificent demonstration carried out on earth. This demonstration will be something by which the church educates the angels. Can we educate angels? Yes, in this sense, that what they know in theory, that God is reconciling lost sinners to himself through Christ, that God is reconciling people who when unsaved were enemies of each other to each other when they become saved, and bringing nationalities together, Jew, Gentile and all others, that these things that the angels know in theory, they will marvel when they see it carried out in practice, the wise way, the wisdom of God, the way he works in hearts to achieve these things.

Why the present political scene is a handy illustration, and I make not one percent of a political point, but people of different views working to some extent and for a certain time together. But how much more profound to bring people who were so far apart and so unlike each other to be not simply those who work together, but those who are one in Christ Jesus, exactly the same in heart and mind. Why? This is a great jewel.

Look at the verse. To the intent, it's verse 10, that now, even now the demonstration is running until the principalities and powers of the angels in heaven might be made known by what is going on in people being saved in the church, the manifold wisdom of God. The manifold wisdom.

It's a magnificent term. Literally, it is the multi-colored wisdom. Our translators have called it the manifold wisdom.

The many-faceted is the sense they wanted of wisdom. But it's the multi-colored wisdom. Yes, it's like the most enormous glittering diamond, abnormally huge, magnificent, giving off all the colors of the spectrum.

It dazes, it amazes you. The multi-faceted wisdom of God. Look, says God to the angelic host who love him and adore him and know so much about him.

Look at the handiwork of Christ. Look at Christ. He is the multi-colored, multi-faceted jewel.

And look at his handiwork. Look at the wise way salvation is brought to pass by grace alone, by Christ's atoning death, by his mighty love and wisdom working together. The angels knew Christ was going to come and suffer but they never grasped how much he was ready to suffer for lost sinners.

The angels never knew just how far he would go, all the way to bearing the weight of our sin. They never knew how wonderful he would look when being humiliated and scorned and abused and how magnificent the divine character would be. And they never knew how Jews and Gentiles would be saved the same way and reconciled and love each other in Christ and all other nationalities also.

And they never knew how that particular evil man, whoever he may be or woman, would be humbled, illuminated, heart opened, brought to Christ. So what is going on in the church is the tremendous demonstration of God's wonderful wisdom and all his other attributes displayed in Christ. These are great things.

The wisdom of God, how we see it, the wisdom of God demonstrated in so many ways. It says Paul on one occasion that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but shortening in the power of God. The wisdom of God is seen in Christ, in redemption, in the way he works.

Not in the wisdom of man. I think of so many occasions. There's Bunyan, the pilgrim's progress.

There he is standing in, well, simple clothing, standing on an upturned box in a drafty barn. There are hundreds of people crammed in. There's no orchestra.

There's no choir of 5,000. There's no multi-decibel. There's nothing to impress people at a human level.

There's just a country preacher and there he preaches and the power of God comes down and people are saved and people come to Christ and it's a demonstration to the angels, the wisdom of God. There are no distractions. There's no human skill.

It's just a demonstration of how the word of God pierces the heart, opens the mind, humbles the sinner, convinces him, brings him to repentance. Noise, clamour, glorious things would conceal all that and we are a demonstration of the wisdom and indeed all the attributes and the power of God and how he's brought about salvation, how he works in hearts. So, I trust and I hope that we, like many other churches, will never adopt the paraphernalia and the gadgetry and the supposed power and wonder of modern ways in any shape or form because what are we? Through Christ, this 10th verse, through the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, by way of the church, the manifold, many faceted, wonderful, wonderful wisdom of God.

Oh Lord, we read, how manifold are thy works in thy wisdom, hast thou made them all. It's a tremendous passage, the glories of our God.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/peter-masters/the-manifold-wisdom-of-god/>

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