

The Mystery

I, like a lot of people, love a good mystery. Reading a story where the solution to the mystery is not revealed until the very end is fascinating to me. From Turow to Grisham, Irving to Martini, I love them all.

The greatest story ever told is a mystery. At least that's the way one of the people close to the story described it. And, as with all mysteries, we don't know who "done it" until the writer chooses to reveal it. The story involves the reconciliation of mankind to God. The Author is God through His Holy Spirit, and I'll go ahead and tell you who done it—Jesus Christ. The observer is Paul, and in sixteen different places in the New Testament, he calls the redemption process a "mystery" – one that he had a huge part in revealing to all of us.

Man is God's greatest creation. He wanted love and obedience from us, yet He got just the opposite. Still, God wanted to reconcile man to Himself, and He put together a plan so that we could reconcile us to Him. His purpose was for us to live eternally with Him. So just how was He going to go about doing that? You might answer: "It's a mystery to me!" and you'd be right. How is God going to take sinful man and save him in spite of himself? Paul provides the answer to the mystery.

Paul, in **Ephesians 1:3ff** tells us this about God:

1. He is worthy of our praise
2. He has pronounced numerous blessings on us
3. He chose us to be blameless and holy
4. He put together a way for us to be his "adopted" children because it's what he wanted to do because of his great love for us
5. He redeemed us with the blood of His son in spite of the fact we don't deserve it

Paul then goes on to say: "**He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which he purposed in Christ...**"

Regardless of the fact we are sinful people, God chose "**according to His good pleasure**" to redeem us by sacrificing the one thing that was most dear to Him—His son. Now, how many of you, writing the same story, would have ended it this way? I know if I were in the same situation, there'd be no "mystery" at all—everyone would have died a horrible death and been lost eternally—that'll serve 'em right! But, in spite of that, God revealed His mystery of redemption to all of us.

Here are several other passages that speak to the mystery of reconciliation:

Ephesians 3:6: "**This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel (that is, ALL people) members together of one body, and sharers together in it promise in Christ Jesus.**" Paul later tells us that God's intent was that "**through the church**" we would learn what we needed to do to be saved. His "**eternal purpose**" was accomplished "**in Christ Jesus**" and our faith in His sacrifice allows us to "**approach God with freedom and confidence.**"

Colossians 1:27: "**God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious**

riches if this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Colossians 2:2: “...know the mystery of God,namely Christ...”

Space doesn't allow for all the references, but let me urge you to read especially **1 Timothy 3:16**. God has revealed the mystery through the gospel. That mystery involves the redemption of mankind by bringing us all together in faith to Jesus Christ. Jesus' death as a sinless human did what nothing else could do: make us one again with God as heirs to the promise of life eternal. And if that is not the greatest mystery ever conceived, I have no idea