

Eph 3.8-13 The Eternal Purpose of God on Display

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[0 : 0 0] If you please take up your coffees of the Word of God and turn to the book of Ephesians, continuing in our series of Ephesians, and we are on Ephesians chapter 3.

Now you'll notice that Ephesians chapter 3 starts off by saying, for this reason.

So this section of verses 1 to 13 speak of Paul's stewardship, and it is for this reason. So he's linking it to that which has been contained in chapter 2.

So for what reason is that? Namely, a unified new creation built together into a habitation of God through the Spirit. So we see God's way of salvation through the covenant of grace.

Chapter 1, we saw God's purpose of salvation, the covenant of redemption, and it's being worked out in time in chapter 2 through the covenant of grace, where dead, lost sinners are being made alive by the grace of God.

[1 : 1 7] There's a before and after picture where a dividing wall has been broken down, and Jews and Gentiles united together, reconciled horizontally and reconciled vertically as a unified new creation, and then the building up of the household of God or the spiritual temple, which is the dwelling place of God.

So for this reason, and then we have chapter 3. So we'll read all of chapter 3. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to me for you, how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that how the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him.

Therefore, I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulation for you, which is your glory. For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

[4 : 27] Amen. Lord, again, we thank you for your word. And as we seek to sit under your word this morning, we pray that you would illuminate your word to us and give us a spiritual understanding.

Our inner understanding and knowledge and wisdom is inadequate, Lord. And although by reason we can understand things about you, we ask that you would grant us spiritual wisdom to understand deep truths about who you are and about your marvelous works.

So Lord, I pray that you would edify and equip and encourage the saints this morning. We thank you for your word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. So here in our text, our text specifically this morning is verses 8 to 13. And in our text, what we see is God's eternal purpose in Christ, the wisdom of God, was once a mystery, but now revealed, and a cosmic spectacle.

So I'll say that again. God's eternal purpose in Christ, the wisdom of God, was once a mystery, but now revealed in a cosmic spectacle. So as such, we will look at three particular heads from this passage, first being weak and empty jars, the second being the wisdom of God, and the third being a cosmic spectacle.

[5 : 58] So first of all, weak and empty jars. Now, remembering the context of what we're reading is that of Paul's apostolic ministry, his stewardship.

And as Paul explains his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles, we see and understand that God uses weak instruments.

Paul starts off by saying, less than the least of all the saints. Now, mind you, granted, this was nearly 2,000 years ago, and Paul didn't know me, so that title was available to him.

But I am even less still. But that's not the point, is it? The point here is that God uses weak instruments. Isaiah 66, verse 2 says, But on this one will I look, on him who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word.

So again, God uses weak instruments. Take, for example, in the Old Testament, the book of Judges, Gideon. When God called Gideon, he was hiding, he was trembling, and he was timid.

[7 : 19] And Gideon himself said that his clan was the weakest in Manasseh, and Gideon claimed that he was the weakest of his clan. But the Lord was with him.

God called the weakest man from the weakest clan, but the Lord was with him. Judges 6, 12-15. God uses weak and disadvantaged instruments to demonstrate his power.

In the case of Gideon, Gideon was the weakest man from the weakest clan. He was timid and trembling when God called him. And when God used him, even still, he whittled down the number of men to such a small amount that it would not be a demonstration that it was by their strength, but by the power of God.

In Judges 7, 2, the Lord said to Gideon, the people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, my own hand has saved me.

So God shows his power through our weakness. Continue in reading the story of Gideon for the details, which also includes bread that came down and turned things upside down, and the 300 men with trumpets, empty jars, and torches.

[8 : 37] You see there is here a picture of Christ in the church, Christ who is the bread that comes down from heaven and turns the world upside down and uses weak men through the trumpeting of the gospel message in their lives as weak jars being broken, light shines forth as torches and darkness.

Back to Paul. Paul says, less than the least of all the saints. So when Paul makes this assertion that he's the least of all the saints, he's less than the least of all the saints, his assertion is not unwarranted.

He persecuted the church of Christ before his conversion. So if God can save and use Saul of Tarsus, then there is hope for all of us to be used by God to glorify his name.

God uses empty jars, the very least of all the saints, to magnify the marvel of the grace of God. 2 Corinthians 12 tells us, But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.

[10 : 04] For when I am weak, then I am strong. So back to verse 8 in our text. Verse 8, he goes on to say, This grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Now, the unsearchable riches or the unfathomable riches in Christ are riches not of earthly or of human proportions, but riches of cosmic proportions.

It is true wealth. It is the riches of God's goodness. Isaiah 33, 6 says, And he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is Zion's treasure. Then also in Colossians 2, 3, it says that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now notice these treasures of wisdom and knowledge and fear of the Lord are blessings. These are not things that the human corrupt nature contains.

[11 : 10] We within ourselves do not have this wisdom and knowledge and fear of the Lord, but it is by the riches and the wealth in Christ, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is unsearchable or unfathomable as God himself cannot be fully fathomed.

We read in the Athanasian Creed that God is incomprehensible. For the riches of Christ to be unfathomable and unsearchable as God himself cannot be fully fathomed, we must understand and acknowledge and guard against that we have an inclination to want to relate to something in order to understand it or we want to be able to imagine it to be able to understand it, but we cannot relate to God, we cannot relate to the divine essence, we cannot imagine God in the extent of who he is, so we cannot, according to our inclination, imagine God or relate to God.

The depths of who God is and the depths of the riches of God is unfathomable and unsearchable and Christ being the second person of the God or second person of God is incomprehensible, unfathomable and unsearchable.

Now what does unsearchable mean when it says the unsearchable riches of Christ? Unsearchable means there is no quota, no cap, no end or no bottom.

[12 : 53] It doesn't mean that it is limited but we can't find it, it means that there is no limit, there is no quota, there is no end, there is no bottom.

Job 11, 7 says, can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? And in Romans 11, 33, O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.

Now this is important to recognize because some will attempt or some will repel the very discussion of who God is because they will say that because God is incomprehensible, we ought not to even try.

However, this assertion that we ought not to try to contemplate God because he is incomprehensible is unwarranted. God is indeed incomprehensible.

We cannot comprehend the depths of who God is. However, he has revealed enough about himself that we may account for who God is and apprehend him, resulting in contemplating his excellencies and communing with the true God and not toying with idolatry.

[14 : 14] God wants us to contemplate his excellencies and his wondrous works. God wants us to contemplate his essence and perfections and attributes as he has revealed that to us through his word.

So through what he has revealed to us, we cannot fully comprehend the depths of who God is, but we can account for who God is and apprehend him and contemplate his excellencies and goodness.

So what about believing in just a generic God? Is it enough to say, I acknowledge that there is a God and that that God created all things and that he is the God?

Is that sufficient? Is that a sufficient understanding? Is that a sufficient apprehension of who God is? Is this a saving knowledge of God? As someone will repel the discussion of God because he's incomprehensible, what is the result of not accounting for who God is according to who he has revealed himself to be through his word?

So what about just believing in a generic God? Do we have to know exactly who he is? Do we have to know that he's one God subsisting in three persons?

[15 : 23] Do we have to know that God is eternal? Do we have to know these things about God that he has revealed about himself? Or is it not good enough to just have the title God floating around untethered to reality in our minds?

Can we just say God is God and that's enough? That brings us to our next point. God's word makes clear his eternal purpose in Christ who is the wisdom of God.

God's word makes clear his eternal purpose in Christ who is the wisdom of God. So our second point is the wisdom of God. Now back in our text you'll see in verse 9 it says to make all see or to enlighten to bring to light to dispel darkness by the proclamation of revelation namely for conversion out of darkness into marvelous light.

to make known the cosmic plan of God which was once a mystery but is now revealed. So if you'll notice in our text in verse 9 it says all to make all see all being Jew and Gentile the world without distinction a unified new creation the unfathomable riches imparted through Christ to make all see the unfathomable riches imparted through Christ Christ being the material cause and the father we see is the efficient cause.

Now for every effect there is a cause we all exist and we were all caused to exist so we all came into existence by something that caused our existence so that which brought us into existence must have existed before us as an uncaused being and that is God God is uncaused the uncaused being caused all of creation to come into existence and that is when we consider the essence of God and the three persons of God God this is the essence of God the one God that brought all things into existence that is uncaused but when we consider that of salvation the eternal purpose of the father we would consider the father to be the efficient cause and the son to be the material cause so God's way of working out his eternal purpose

[18 : 20] God who is uncaused who is eternal who has caused all things to exist God's way of working out his eternal purpose eternal being transcendent of time God in eternity decreed all things so outside of time uncaused by time or creation God decreed all things God decreed his holy will then we have the covenant of redemption that which we see in chapter one where there is an inter trinitarian eternal pact where the son would be the mediator to God and the father promises the elect to the son and that being the names written in the lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world and then we have God's way of working out his eternal purpose the immensity of love mercy and wisdom because this coming from the very decree of

God not reactionary but in eternity before the foundation of the world which shows us the immensity of God's love and some might have a tendency to want to portray the father as being the wrathful and holy and righteous one and God the son being the merciful and gracious and loving one which causes a division of the divine nature when we read the confession the second London confession of faith in chapter two paragraph one it speaks of the attributes or the perfections of God and these are all things that are proper of the essence of God and the essence of God of course is the one God so the father attributes the perfections of God the son the attributes the perfections of God the spirit the attributes and perfections of God undivided equal co-equal in the perfections of God so just as the father is love so the son is love so the spirit is love and it's not that because

God acts in ways that are loving that makes him love but rather God is love itself and as such all that he does is an expression of his love the father is the fountainhead and the source of love so God's way of working out his eternal purpose hidden from eternity in God in our text in verse 9 it says hidden from eternity in God but is hidden concealed remember from our last sermon it was once concealed once a mystery hidden from eternity that is God's eternal purpose from eternity is not reactionary as God is not bound by time and God is not does not suffer under creation that creation causes God but rather God in eternity is pure act and from eternity has decreed and covenanted and his eternal purpose has been hidden from eternity!

in God furthermore it is in God as the first God that is ordained before the world so again all that exists is caused to exist God was not caused to exist God is self sufficient and eternal so God is uncaused and God causes all of us to exist so God is the first cause ordained before the world was even brought into existence as the first cause hidden from eternity in God from eternity in God who created all things through Jesus Christ this is a big statement it's easy to read over such a small statement and move on without grasping the implications of all that is said in this but what I've been speaking about so far about eternity and before the foundation of the world and God causing all things and

God being uncaused it can be heavy thoughts but it's all leading up to something in our text that's very important so hang with me and follow along from eternity in God who created all things through Jesus Christ now before we touch on that text let me read to you Hebrews 1 1-3 long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom also he created the world he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature and he upholds the universe by the word of his power so Christ who is the word of God through Christ God speaks it is also through Christ whom also he created the world this is pretty significant and you can see the connection with our text where it says from eternity in

[23 : 31] God who created all things through Jesus Christ if Jesus Christ was created 2000 years ago how could Christ create the world but yet there's more to it in our text created all things through Jesus Christ so in this text as well as in Hebrews we have apostolic interpretation of the creation account with the agent of creation being identified as the son as Christ the agent of creation is the eternal and essential word of the father again in Hebrews 1 we see apostolic interpretation of the creation account with the agent of creation being the son or the word the word also being God spoke to in these last days God has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom also he created the world the agent of creation is the eternal and essential word of the father

Christ creating the world is also accounted for in other verses to name a few John 1 3 Colossians 1 16 Hebrews 1 2 and Ephesians 3 9 which is within our text this morning but Christ creating the world this is important is not as a means or instrument or inferior cause or as a second cause so in other words God the father did not use Jesus or use Christ as an instrument or as a second cause to create the world rather but by him as eternal wisdom by the son as eternal wisdom co-joined cooperation and equal cause or co-equal creator divine efficient infinite power eternal being truly God so again what we read about the Athanasian's Creed what we know about the divine essence of the father is also about the divine essence of the son because it is one

God one essence undivided co-equal creator divine efficient infinite power eternal being truly God this is speaking of the son the son uncreated and not a second cause or not an instrument or an inferior cause we have multiple texts through scripture that speak of the divinity of Christ for example and particular names or attributes given to him for example in Proverbs 8 22 it speaks of Christ being eternal wisdom in Isaiah 9 6 it speaks of Christ being mighty God father of eternity in Revelation 1 8 11 it speaks of Christ as alpha and omega in Hebrews 1 8 to 12 speaks of Christ being creator unchanging and eternal and in Hebrews 1 3 it speaks of

Christ upholding all things by his power and in Revelation 11 17 it speaks of Christ as the Lord God almighty the one who is and who was and who is to come so when we think of the implications of this and what our text tells us from eternity and God who created all things through Christ for all things to be created through Christ Christ had to exist being uncreated as fully God before all things so when we consider Christ before beginning that is the divinity eternity and omnipotence of Christ there are multiple false teachings!

that would paint a picture of who God is so again going back to that question can we just say there is a God and we don't have to account for what God reveals himself to be who he is can we just say there's a God well what about the Arians they claim to believe in the God of the Bible what about Sabelian isms or the Sossinians or all the anti Trinitarians Christ was created or Christ wasn't eternally divine whatever it may be or that God is just one God and one person who takes on different modes at different times what about all of these views who claim to hold to belief in the God of the Bible what does our text tell us about Christ what do we need to know about who Christ is so Christ before the beginning being the divinity the eternity the omnipotence of Christ are also the self existence of

[28 : 25] Christ as God so again in our confession in chapter 2 verse 1 when it speaks of the attributes or the characters or the perfections of God it speaks of the self existence of God and Jesus Christ being God is self existent in his divine nature so the divinity eternity and omnipotence of Christ Christ before the beginning from our text we can see and take the implication that Christ was before the beginning in the beginning creation came into existence through Christ beginning is the start of time time is the measure of finite beings so if anything was created before the beginning so in the beginning let's say we have the start of a timeline right at the beginning that's the beginning and thus is the start or the beginning of finite things or of creation that which is created and time on that timeline is the measure of finite beings so what about before that initial increment on the timeline before the beginning if you will time would have began with that creation right because time is the measure of finite beings and creation is that which is finite so the beginning if something was created before the beginning time would have began at the creation of that it would be a different beginning a pre beginning the beginning before the beginning so if anything was created before the beginning time would have begun would have taken its beginning from the existence of that creation.

Therefore, that which existed before time, existed before all finite beings, and existed before any creation, and consequently was not created, did not begin to be, and is from eternity.

The second person of the Trinity is not created, but truly God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. As such, the second person of the Trinity is God.

Truly God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, self-existent. Now, when we think about the Trinity, and what Scripture tells us about it, and as that which we read this morning in the Athanasian Creed, the first of the three parts, we understand that the Trinity is of an undivided essence.

Trinity and unity, unity and Trinity. This, in a sense, is a mystery, because again, we can't relate to it. It is something we account for from Scripture.

[31 : 35] But it's important to make these distinctions. Undivided in essence. These distinctions help us from falling into heresy, into idolatry, into thinking of a God which is other than the true God.

So, undivided essence is all the persons of the Trinity, the same essence. One God. One God, undivided. It's not that the Father is a third of the divine essence, and the Son is a third of the divine essence.

Or it's not that parts of the divine essence belong to the Father, and parts of the divine essence. No, it's undivided essence. One God. So, all of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to them belong all of the divine essence.

It is undivided essence. Therefore, every work of God, which we might read and see from Scripture how the work is attributed to a person of the Godhead, yet every work of God is from the undivided essence.

We call this inseparable operations. Whether it be creation, whether it be redemption, whether it be sanctification, whether it be glorification, creation, providence, every work of God is done by the undivided essence, because the essence isn't divided up into the persons.

[33 : 00] It is one God. So we don't want to fall into the tendency of thinking, oh, something's attributed to the Father, so that is the section of God. That's that. No, it's an undivided essence.

Every person has the undivided essence of the Godhead. But yet, as we see in our text, external operations find their terminus in particular persons, or appropriations.

So a particular work might be attributed to a person of the Trinity. Again, this doesn't separate the divine essence. Every single work that we read of in Scripture, none of it is done to the exclusion of a person of the Trinity.

It is undivided essence and inseparable operations. However, for example, in our text, from eternity, God who created all things through Jesus Christ. Now, some particular appropriations that we might hear, for example, as you may have heard, creation being attributed to the Father, redemption attributed to the Son, and sanctification attributed to the Holy Spirit.

While these things are true, none of them are done to the exclusion of the other persons of the Trinity. Because while creation may be attributed to the Father, because of the relations being the Father, the beginning of the relation, and the creation being the beginning of creation, yet it is not done to the exclusion of the Son or the Spirit.

[34 : 36] In fact, we see from our very text, and in Hebrews 1, that we have apostolic interpretation of the creation account with the agent of creation being the Son, the Word of God. So creation, although it can be attributed to the Father, is not to the exclusion of the Son, because both the Father and the Son are God, and everything that God does is God, and God is undivided.

An undivided essence of God. But, these operations find their terminus in particular persons, that we might also prevent from falling off the other side.

The other side being that it's one God and one person. So, we can see that it's not just one God, one person, it's one God, three persons, or three subsistences, and that we can understand who God is, and taste who God is, through how certain works are attributed to God, that we might comprehend the true God, and not a God of my own imagination, or after my own image.

So that I might comprehend the true God. Trinity and unity, unity and trinity. So what has been concealed as a mystery, is now made known, and on display, as a cosmic spectacle.

This brings us to our third point, which is, a cosmic spectacle. If you notice in our text, particularly in verse 10, 10 to 12, it tells us something.

[36 : 22] So I'm going to ask a number of questions, and then we're going to see what that, what the text tells us about those questions. Here's the questions we're going to ask. What is revealed, or what is made known?

To whom is it directed? According to what design? How is that purpose accomplished? What does God use to exhibit his purpose?

And what is the church's privilege? So, and if you remember when we started, what this whole passage, what this text is about, is about God's eternal purpose in Christ.

The wisdom of God was once a mystery, but now revealed in a cosmic spectacle. So in regards to it being a cosmic spectacle, let's see what our text says to answer those questions.

So starting in verse 10, what is revealed, or what is made known? The manifold wisdom of God. Next question, to whom is the manifold wisdom of God directed?

[37 : 22] You'll see in verse 10, it says, the rulers and authorities, or the principalities and powers. So the manifold wisdom of God is directed to the principalities and powers according to what design?

Verse 11, according to God's eternal purpose, or his predetermination. How is this purpose then accomplished?

It is accomplished or realized in Christ Jesus our Lord. What does God use to exhibit his purpose? See in verse 10, made known by the church.

And what is the church's privilege? You see in verse 12, boldness and access with confidence. That's kind of some short form, rapid fire questions and answers.

Now let's unfold it. Regards to a cosmic spectacle. We see that God's eternal purpose is accomplished or realized in Christ.

[38 : 28] Christ being the word or the son who is the wisdom of God through whom all things were created. Earlier I referenced Proverbs 8.

Proverbs 8, 22 to 23 and 35 to 36, a portion of it says, the Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his act of old. Ages ago I was set up at the first before the beginning of the earth.

For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. But he who fails to find me injures himself. All who hate me love death.

So before the beginning of the earth, what existed? God. No other, no creation. No creation existed before the beginning of the earth. It was just God. Christ as wisdom is a claim about Christ as the true source of enlightenment.

Hebrews 1, 2. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his son through whom also he created the world. Christ, eternal wisdom, through whom God created the world is the source of enlightenment.

[39 : 43] So accomplished or realized in Christ the word or son who is the wisdom of God through whom all things were created.

John Calvin wrote that the living word is the name of the wisdom ever dwelling with God and by which all oracles and prophecies were inspired.

Paul, an apostle of Christ, by his office, by his apostolic office, received direct revelation from Jesus Christ concerning the purpose of redemption and the revelation of the union and fellowship of Gentile and Jew or all nations as reconciled partakers of the promises of redemption by means of the gospel.

Paul's ministry was to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ, the eternal divine purpose of redemption. And as a result, the wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers.

This eternal purpose is executed in Christ and we, the redeemed, have access to God. So two points from that. First one being realized in Christ.

[40 : 59] What's realized in Christ is Christ fulfilling the eternal purpose of the covenant of redemption. That which we read of in chapter one of the Father electing, the Son redeeming and being sealed in the Spirit and the inter-Trinitarian pact of the work of redemption and the Son as the mediator.

This is realized in Christ. The eternal purpose of the covenant of redemption with the Father as the source or author bringing to completion through the Son. Secondly, being realized in Christ and that the church be built up and become the manifestation of God's wisdom.

I'll read that again. That the church be built up and become the manifestation of God's wisdom. How is this so? They, the church, give witness to the vindication of God's wisdom.

And that is as a looking glass or as a mirror or as a theater. And let me explain. When I say the church as a theater, I don't mean the church being theatrical as in the church putting on dramas and puppets and ponies, but rather the church as a theater as in what it displays.

So if you remember in our call to worship in the reading of Psalm 19, creation is a theater and how it displays God's wisdom and power and eternity.

[42 : 30] So the creation as a theater so also the church is a theater and it displays God's love, mercy, and grace. The manifold wisdom of God. His manifold wisdom.

So the church, a theater to whom? The church is a theater that displays the manifold wisdom of God. The church is a theater to whom?

1 Peter 1.12 says, things which angels longed to look. Things which angels longed to look now revealed and displayed and now made known to principalities and powers.

In our text it said that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Now on this portion of our text John Trapp in his commentary explains this is the very angels look intently look intently into as the cherubim in the temple did into the mercy seat and are much amused and amazed thereat.

They see then that man's salvation by Christ is a plot of God's own devising. So John Trapp connects what this verse is speaking to back to the cherubim in the temple.

[43 : 54] Now if you remember after the fall when Adam and Eve could not enter Eden which was a temple sanctuary it was guarded a barrier was in place and it was guarded by cherubim.

So because of sin sinful fallen mankind did not have access to God in a temple sanctuary setting. And then later in the tabernacle in the temple we have in the holy of holies what do we see there?

On the mercy seat is the cherubim looking intently at the mercy seat looking at when we consider the larger picture there in the holy of holies only on the day of atonement could the high priest enter the holy holies and Trapp connects the angels there looking intently onto the mercy seat to what is now revealed in Christ Jesus.

This the very angels look intently into as the cherubim in the temple did into the mercy seat and are much amused and amazed thereat. They see then that man's salvation by Christ is a plot of God's own devising things which angels long to look.

So what is it specifically that they're looking at that they long to look at as it pertains to the mercy seat as it pertains to atonement and high priest access to the holy of holies access which is guarded because of a barrier.

[45 : 32] What is it specifically? What is it specifically about this mercy seat? Psalm 24 8-10 Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty the Lord mighty in battle lift up your heads O gates and lift them up O ancient doors that the king of glory may come in.

Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts He is the king of glory Selah. And in Isaiah 9-6 For to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace Christ being very God and eternal is the king of glory.

So realized in Christ the universal church brings God's wisdom to expression. The wisdom of God's eternal purpose in Christ his purpose to unify all things in Christ the universal church both Jew and Gentile all the nations of the world live and worship as one harmonious entity a unified new creation in harmony with God and in harmony with one another.

This brings believers much assurance because as our text tells us we have boldness and access with confidence.

This is a display to principalities and powers things which angels longed to look that which was guarded access we have boldness and access with confidence.

[47 : 19] Verse 12 says in whom by being engrafted and united to Christ we are not self-represented we do not have access or boldness and access with confidence by being self-represented or by pleading our own merit but by being engrafted and united to Christ.

takes his people and leads them into the Father's presence. John 16 33 says I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace in the world you will have tribulation but take heart I have overcome the world in Christ in whom in Christ Hebrews 4 16 let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us the time of need in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence and thirdly Romans 5 2 through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence true peace draws men to God we come to God as children to a father communion with God by faith and you'll notice in verse 12 of the text it says through our faith in him or through faith in him now faith is the instrument by which we embrace

Jesus Christ faith is the instrument by which we embrace Jesus Christ by which we receive and rest upon him faith is not the material cause of justification remember Christ is the material cause of justification faith does not merit or procure a right standing before a holy and just God rather it is the instrument faith is the instrument by which we embrace Jesus Christ and that being a gift from God as we saw Ephesians 2 8-10 faith is the instrument by which we lay hold of Christ who is the material cause of our justification Christ is the cause of our justification our merit does not sorry our faith does not merit or procure a right standing before God Christ does and our faith is the instrument by which we lay hold of Christ Christ takes his people and leads them into the

Father's presence therefore in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence now we've considered Trinity and unity unity and Trinity and how particular things are attributed to persons of the Trinity but it is all inseparable operations of the one God and then we've considered faith as the instrument by which we lay hold of Christ to put in other words Richard Muller wrote the outward work of conferring faith is thus common to the three persons but it is ascribed peculiarly to the spirit so that according to the distribution of the work of grace among the divine persons the Father ordained grace for the elect the Son purchased it and the Holy Ghost applies and dispenses it in conclusion we consider the wisdom of

God God is not wise because he does what is wise rather God is wisdom itself so because God is wisdom all that he does is wise there's an outworking of his wisdom and because God is infinite all that God does is infinitely wise now the second person of the Trinity the Son or the Word or the wisdom of God being very God and all the perfections of God the wisdom of God is eternal and uncreated and through whom all things were created and all things are upheld the wisdom of God is made manifest to the principalities and powers by the church this was the eternal purpose of God from eternity accomplished in Christ who is the wisdom of God so bringing it all together

[52 : 03] Christ's satisfaction of the wrath of God by his suffering and death in our place means that us sinners who need substitution atonement as well as those who crucified Christ are all likewise created through Christ and are all likewise upheld by Christ so we who sin against God were created by Christ and are upheld by Christ those who crucified Christ were created by Christ through Christ and upheld by Christ Christ being the wisdom of God the manifold wisdom of God is made manifest and vindicated by the working out of God's infinitely wise purpose of redemption that we are experiencing in time everything that we experience is according to the wisdom of God and as such the church displays it to the principalities and powers do not lose heart enduring affliction is not grounds for depression but glory our text verses 8 to 13 to me who am less than the least of all the saints this grace was given that

I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mercy which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in Christ who created all things through Jesus Christ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulation for you which is your glory our great God Lord you who are eternal and infinite wise loving gracious we thank you and praise you for your work of redemption which is your purpose from eternity that as it is being worked out in time we who are your creatures are experiencing it in time and as we do and as we learn from your word

I pray that you would give us a spiritual wisdom and illuminate our understanding and I pray that you would cause us to grow in how we behold your majesty and glory and as such we would indeed contemplate your excellencies as trinity and unity and unity and trinity and that we would indeed worship you for your works you who are an infinite eternal and almighty God that you are saving dead lost sinners and it is all for your glory so Lord all that we experience I pray that you would help us to not lose heart but indeed to praise you to worship you and to trust you in all these things pray this in Jesus name amen we'll stand and sing