

The background of the slide features a stone archway made of dark brown bricks. Inside the arch, a bright orange and yellow sun is setting or rising, with rays of light extending downwards. A small branch with red cherry blossoms is visible on the right side of the arch. Two birds are flying in the sky above the arch. The overall scene is set against a dark, hazy background with some distant hills and grass at the bottom.

God's Plan Was Always Centred in Christ

Ephesians 1:9

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

God's Plan Was Always Centred in Christ

God's plan was never random.

Jesus wasn't God's emergency response after everything went wrong.

The cross wasn't heaven's backup plan.

The church wasn't an idea God came up with halfway through the story.

From the beginning, God's purpose was **centred in Christ**.

Paul calls it: "**The mystery of his will.**"

Now, when we hear the word **mystery**, we often think of something confusing, hidden, or impossible to solve.

But in the New Testament, a mystery is usually something that was once hidden and has now been **revealed by God**.

It isn't a puzzle we solve through intelligence.

It is a truth God makes known through **revelation**.

And what has God revealed?

That His entire purpose for creation, redemption, Israel, the church, the nations, and the coming kingdom is **centred in Jesus Christ**.

So let's look at the verse behind the verse and see why Christ was never a side character in God's plan.

He was the **centre from the start**.

1. God Has Made His Mystery Known

Paul begins by saying: "**Having made known unto us the mystery of his will.**"

God has made something known.

That means the truth Paul is describing couldn't have been discovered merely by human reasoning.

We didn't work it out through philosophy.

We didn't uncover it by studying nature.

God revealed it.

First Corinthians 2:9 and 10 says:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

Human beings could see pieces of God's plan throughout the Old Testament.

- They saw promises.
- They saw sacrifices.
- They saw kings.
- They saw prophets.
- They saw covenants.
- They saw the temple.
- They saw Israel.
- They saw hints of a coming Messiah.

But they didn't yet see how all those pieces would come together in **Jesus Christ**.

Now God has made the mystery known.

The hidden purpose has been revealed.

2. What Does "Mystery" Mean?

The Greek word translated "**mystery**" refers to something previously concealed but now revealed by God.

It doesn't mean that the truth remains unknowable.

It means we could never have known it unless God chose to reveal it.

Paul uses this word several times when speaking about Christ.

Colossians 1:26 and 27 says:

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The mystery had been hidden.

Now it had been made manifest.

And what was at its centre?

Christ.

Not merely Christ near us.

Not merely Christ teaching us.

Paul says: "**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"

The mystery is deeply connected with **union with Christ**.

God's plan wasn't merely to improve humanity from a distance.

It was to bring people into Christ and Christ into them.

3. The Mystery Is God's Will

Paul calls it: "**The mystery of his will.**"

This isn't man's plan for reaching God.

It is **God's will** for bringing people to Himself.

Salvation began in the heart of God.

Ephesians 1 repeatedly shows God acting according to His own purpose.

Verse 4 says He chose us in Christ.

Verse 5 says He predestinated us according to the good pleasure of His will.

Verse 9 says He made known the mystery of His will.

Verse 11 says He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

The chapter is filled with God's intention.

God wasn't forced into redemption.

Jesus didn't persuade a reluctant Father to show mercy.

The Father sent the Son because salvation was **His will**.

John 6:38 says:

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Jesus came to carry out the Father's purpose.

The cross was not a tragic interruption of God's plan.

It was the **fulfilment** of it.

4. According to His Good Pleasure

Paul says God acted: "**According to his good pleasure.**"

That phrase tells us something important about God's heart.

God's purpose in Christ **pleased Him**.

He wasn't saving people reluctantly.

He wasn't annoyed that He had to show grace.

He wasn't pressured into mercy.

Redemption flowed from His **good pleasure**.

Luke 12:32 says:

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

It is the Father's good pleasure to give.

That doesn't mean salvation was easy or cheap.

It cost the blood of Christ.

But it means the plan came from God's own **gracious purpose**.

God desired to reveal His grace.

He desired to bring people into His family.

He desired to unite all things in Christ.

That was His **good pleasure**.

5. Christ Was Chosen Before the Foundation of the World

First Peter 1:19 and 20 says we were redeemed:

"With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world.

That means the cross wasn't God reacting in panic after Adam sinned.

God knew what redemption would cost.

The Lamb was in the purpose of God **before the world was made**.

Revelation 13:8 describes Jesus as:

"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The wording shows that the cross belongs to God's **eternal purpose**.

God wasn't surprised by human rebellion.

He wasn't forced to invent salvation after the damage had been done.

Christ stood at the centre of God's purpose **before creation began**.

6. Creation Was Made Through Christ and for Christ

Colossians 1:16 says:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible."

Then it says: "**All things were created by him, and for him.**"

Creation wasn't merely made through Christ.

It was made **for Christ**.

That means Jesus isn't simply the One who repairs creation after sin damages it.

Creation belonged to Him from the beginning.

Everything finds its purpose in Him.

John 1:3 says:

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Christ isn't a late arrival in the biblical story.

He is present at creation.

He is the Word through whom all things came into being.

Before Bethlehem

He was.

Before Abraham

He was.

Before Adam

He was.

Before the heavens and earth

He was.

7. The Promise Began in Genesis

After Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke to the serpent in Genesis 3:15:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."

God continued: "**It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**"

This is often called the **first promise of the gospel**.

The serpent would wound the coming seed, but the seed would crush the serpent.

Even in the first announcement of judgment, God gave a promise pointing toward Christ.

The rest of Scripture begins identifying the promised seed.

→ The seed would come through **Abraham**.

→ The seed would come through **Isaac**.

→ The seed would come through **Jacob**.

→ The seed would come through **Judah**.

→ The seed would come through **David**.

Galatians 3:16 says: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made."

Then Paul explains: "**And to thy seed, which is Christ.**"

The promise was always moving toward **Jesus**.

8. The Promise to Abraham Was About Christ

God told Abraham in Genesis 12:3:

"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

That promise was larger than Abraham's physical family.

God intended to bless **all nations**.

Galatians 3:8 says:

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham."

The **gospel was announced beforehand** in the promise to Abraham.

Verse 14 says: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ."

God's plan always included the nations.

Israel had a unique covenant role, but the final purpose was never limited to one ethnic group.

Through Christ, the blessing would reach the world.

The mystery wasn't that Gentiles could receive occasional mercy.

The mystery was that **Jews and Gentiles would be united together in one body through Christ**.

9. Israel's Story Pointed Toward Christ

God's dealings with Israel weren't disconnected events.



The exodus

pointed toward redemption.



The Passover lamb

pointed toward Christ.



The manna

pointed toward the true bread from heaven.



The rock in the wilderness

pointed toward Christ.



The tabernacle

pointed toward God dwelling among His people.



The sacrifices

pointed toward the cross.



The priesthood

pointed toward the great High Priest.



The kingship of David

pointed toward the Son of David.

First Corinthians 10:4 says Israel: "Did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Jesus was not artificially inserted into Israel's story later.

Israel's story was always moving toward Him.

10. The Law Pointed Toward Christ

Jesus said in John 5:46:

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."

That is an astonishing statement.

Moses wrote about Christ.

The law wasn't the final destination.

It pointed beyond itself.

Romans 10:4 says:

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The word "**end**" carries the idea of goal or intended destination.

Christ is where the law was leading.

Its commands

revealed righteousness.

Its sacrifices

revealed the need for atonement.

Its priesthood

revealed the need for mediation.

Its tabernacle

revealed the desire of God to dwell with humanity.

All of these find their **fulfilment in Christ.**

11. The Prophets Spoke of Christ

The prophets didn't merely predict isolated events.

They announced a **coming person**.

Isaiah spoke of a virgin conceiving and bearing a son. He spoke of a child called the mighty God and the Prince of Peace. He spoke of the servant wounded for our transgressions.

Micah spoke of a ruler coming from Bethlehem.

Jeremiah spoke of a righteous Branch from David.

Zechariah spoke of a king coming meekly, riding upon a donkey. He also spoke of one who would be pierced.

First Peter 1:10 and 11 says the prophets searched: "What, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify."

The **Spirit of Christ** was pointing them toward the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow.

They saw the promise, though not always the full shape of its fulfilment.

12. Jesus Said the Scriptures Were About Him

After His resurrection, Jesus spoke to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:27 says:

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

Later, Jesus said: "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Jesus identified Himself as the **centre of the Old Testament story**.

The law

spoke of Him.

The prophets

spoke of Him.

The Psalms

spoke of Him.

This doesn't mean every verse is secretly a direct prophecy about Jesus.

But the entire biblical story moves toward Him.

He is the promised seed. The true Passover Lamb. The greater Moses. The Son of David. The suffering servant. The true temple. The final sacrifice. The great High Priest. The promised King.

13. The Cross Was According to God's Determinate Counsel

Acts 2:23 says Jesus was:

"Delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

Human beings were responsible for crucifying Jesus.

Peter didn't excuse their actions.

But behind those human actions stood the **eternal purpose of God**.

Acts 4:27 and 28 says Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel gathered against Christ:

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

The cross involved human evil, yet God used it to accomplish His **saving purpose**.

God didn't cause people to become innocent when they acted wickedly.

He overruled their wickedness and brought redemption through it.

The darkest act in human history became the means of salvation.

That wasn't random.

It was the **purpose of God**.

14. The Mystery Includes Jews and Gentiles in One Body

Ephesians 3 explains the mystery more fully.

Paul says in Ephesians 3:4 that we may understand: "My knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

Then verse 6 explains:

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

The mystery includes **Gentiles becoming fellow heirs**.

They aren't second-class additions.

They aren't standing outside while Israel receives the real inheritance.

In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are brought together into **one body**.

Ephesians 2:14 says Christ:

"Hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."

The cross didn't merely reconcile individuals to God.

It created **one new people in Christ**.

15. The Mystery Is Christ in Us

Colossians 1:27 says:

"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

God's plan wasn't merely to place Christ before us as an example.

It was to place His life within us by the **Holy Spirit**.

Galatians 2:20 says: "**Christ liveth in me.**"

Jesus said in John 14:20: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

This is the heart of the mystery.

The believer is **in Christ**.

Christ is **in the believer**.

We share **His life**.

We receive **His Spirit**.

We become members of **His body**.

We participate in **His inheritance**.

God's plan isn't merely to make bad people behave more respectfully.

It is to **unite people with His Son**.

16. The Church Displays God's Wisdom

Ephesians 3:10 says God's purpose is:

"That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

The church is part of God's **revealed purpose**.

Through the church, God displays His wisdom to spiritual powers.

Think about that.

People from different nations, backgrounds, cultures, and histories are brought together in Christ.

Former enemies become family.

Sinners become saints.

Jews and Gentiles become one body.

The church isn't merely a weekly meeting.

It is a **living demonstration** that God's purpose in Christ is being fulfilled.

We may look at the church and notice all the problems.

And yes, there are plenty of them. Put people together for five minutes and somebody will move the chairs without asking.

But God looks at the church and sees the **body of Christ** through which His wisdom is being displayed.

17. All Things Will Be Gathered Together in Christ

The next verse, Ephesians 1:10, tells us where the mystery is heading.

God's purpose is:

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

Everything is moving toward Christ.

All things in heaven.

All things on earth.

Everything will finally be brought under His rightful headship.

Sin has produced fragmentation.

- Humanity is divided.
- Creation is groaning.
- Nations rage.
- Relationships break.
- Death separates.

But God's purpose is to **gather all things together in Christ**.

Christ isn't merely the centre of personal salvation.

He is the centre of God's purpose for the **entire creation**.

18. Christ Is the Head of Everything

Colossians 1:17 says:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Verse 18 says: "And he is the head of the body, the church."

Then it says: **"That in all things he might have the preeminence."**

The word **preeminence** means first place.

God's purpose is that Christ should have **first place in everything**.

First place in creation

First place in
redemption

First place in the
church

First place in resurrection

First place in the coming kingdom

Jesus isn't one important part of God's plan.

He is the **centre holding the entire plan together**.

19. God's Plan Gives Meaning to History

History can look chaotic.

Empires rise and fall.

Wars begin.

Leaders make terrible choices.

People suffer.

Nations appear powerful for a season and then disappear.

From our limited perspective, events can seem completely random.

But Scripture shows that **history is moving toward a God-appointed conclusion.**

Daniel 2:44 says:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

Revelation 11:15 says:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

History isn't moving endlessly in circles.

It is moving toward the **reign of Jesus Christ.**

God's plan will not fail.

20. God's Plan Gives Meaning to Our Lives

If all things are centred in Christ, then our lives only make sense when they are **centred in Christ**.

We often ask God to fit into our plans.

We create the life we want and then ask Jesus to bless it.

But discipleship means bringing our plans under His purpose.

Colossians 3:4 says: "**Christ, who is our life.**"

Not Christ who is a small part of our life.

Not Christ who helps us with the religious section of our life.

Christ is our life.

Our **identity** is in Him.

Our **purpose** is in Him.

Our **future** is in Him.

Our **inheritance** is in Him.

Our **service** is for Him.

Our **hope** is fixed upon Him.

21. God's Plan Was Motivated by Grace

We must remember where Paul places this mystery.

Ephesians 1 is a celebration of **grace**.

- God chose us in Christ.
- He adopted us through Christ.
- He accepted us in the beloved.
- He redeemed us through Christ's blood.
- He forgave our sins.
- He made known the mystery of His will.

All of this is: "**According to the riches of his grace.**"

God's purpose in Christ wasn't based upon our worthiness.

He didn't look into the future, notice how impressive we would become, and decide He simply had to include us.

He included us because **He is gracious**.

The plan displays **His glory**, not ours.

22. God's Plan Is Not Random

Sometimes our individual lives feel random.

Things happen that we didn't plan.

Doors close.

People disappoint us.

Circumstances change.

We don't always understand what God is doing.

Ephesians 1:9 doesn't promise that we will understand every event in our lives.

But it does show us that **God's ultimate purpose is not random.**

Romans 8:28 says:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The verse doesn't say every event is good.

Some events are painful and evil.

But God is able to work through all things according to **His purpose.**

And verse 29 shows that His purpose is to conform us: **"To the image of his Son."**

Even God's work within us is **Christ-centred.**

He is shaping us to become like Jesus.

23. Living Within God's Purpose

How should this truth change the way we live?

01

Stop treating Jesus as an addition to your life.

He isn't a helpful extra. He is the centre.

02

Read Scripture with Christ in view.

Ask how each promise, covenant, sacrifice, person, and pattern contributes to the biblical story that reaches its fulfilment in Him.

03

Bring your personal plans under God's purpose.

Instead of merely asking, "What do I want?" ask, "How can Christ be honoured through this?"

04

Trust God when life feels confusing.

You may not understand every detail, but you can know the direction of His purpose. Everything is moving toward Christ.

05

Give Jesus first place.

Colossians says that in all things He must have the preeminence. Not some things. All things.

Conclusion

Let's return to Ephesians 1:9:

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

God's plan was **not random**.

It wasn't created after humanity failed.

It wasn't patched together as history unfolded.

Before the foundation of the world, God's purpose was **centred in Christ**.

- Creation was made through Him and for Him.
- The promises pointed toward Him.
- The law prepared the way for Him.
- The sacrifices pictured Him.
- The prophets spoke of Him.
- The cross fulfilled God's saving purpose through Him.
- The church is His body.
- The believer is united with Him.
- History is moving toward His reign.
- And one day, all things will be gathered together under His headship.

Jesus isn't one part of God's plan.

Jesus is the centre of God's plan.

The mystery has now been made known.

God's good pleasure, God's will, and God's eternal purpose are all found in **Christ**.