

# Ephesians 1:9-10 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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Ephesians 1:9 He [made known](#) to us the [mystery](#) of His [will](#), [according](#) to His [kind intention which](#) He [purposed](#) in Him  
([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [gnorisas](#) ([AAPMSN](#)) [hemin to musterion tou thelmatos autou, kata ten eudokian autou en proetheto](#)  
([3SAMI](#)) [en auto](#)

BGT γνωρσας μντ μυστριον το θελματος ατο , κατ τν εδοκ αν ατο ν προθετο ν ατ

**Amplified:** Making known to us the mystery (secret) of His will (of His plan, of His purpose). [And it is this:] In accordance with His good pleasure (His merciful intention) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay** - This happened because he made known to us the once hidden but now revealed secret of his will, for so it was his good pleasure to do. ([Ephesians 1](#))

**NLT:** God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NLT (Revised) God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure.

**Phillips:** For God had allowed us to know the secret of his plan, and it is this: ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** having made known to us the mystery of His will according to that which seemed good to Him, which good thing He purposed in himself, ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** having made known to us the secret of His will, according to His good pleasure, that He purposed in Himself,

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

**ESV** making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

**NET** He did this when he revealed to us the secret of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,

**NIV** And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

**CSB** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He planned in Him

**NKJ** having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

**NRS** he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,

**NAB** he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him

**NJB** He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, according to his good pleasure which he determined beforehand in Christ,

**GWN** when he revealed the mystery of his plan to us. He had decided to do this through Christ.

**BBE** Having made clear to us the secret of his purpose, in agreement with the design which he had in mind, to put into his hands

HE MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL:

- Ep 1:17,18; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Matthew 13:11; Romans 16:25, 26, 27; 1Corinthians 2:10, 11, 12; Galatians 1:12,16; Colossians 1:26, 27, 28; 1Timothy 3:16
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**He made known** (1107) (**gnorizo**) means to cause information to be known by someone communicating things before unknown or reasserting things already known, in this case referring to spiritual insight and understanding. Paul is going to explain why God has done so much for us as He has just described. The aorist tense describes a definitive action effectually performed though not stating necessarily when.

Don't miss what Paul is saying here -- Believers have been taken into the secret councils of the Almighty. He has unfolded to us what He plans to do, what He is going to accomplish in the future. We have been told something of the details of this plan. This is incredible!

This **mystery** is only introduced in this section and then more fully explained in Ephesians 3 (see **notes** on Ephesians 3:3; 3:4; 3:5; 3:6). The mystery is summarized especially in Ephesians 3:6

to be specific, that the **Gentiles** are fellow heirs (with the **Jewish** believers) and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel

**To us** - The believers, the true Body of Christ, the Church.

**Mystery** (3466) (**musterion** [word study] from **mustes** = classic Gk of a person initiated into sacred mysteries) in classical Greek meant something secret, especially the secrets of the "mystery" religions communicated only to the "initiated" and by them to be kept untold! **Musterion** is used in the Apocryphal books of things hidden, e.g., the counsels of God. In contrast to this classical use, **musterion** as used in the New Testament is not mysterious or mystical but describes previously hidden truth now revealed by God (and in fact describes truth that can be known only through revelation mediated from God), especially some aspect of plan of salvation (such as Paul Jew + Gentile = church). That which was once hidden is now revealed and a secret out in the open. It does not convey the idea of something that we cannot take in or understand even when it is declared to us. It is notable that 10 of the 27 NT uses occur in 2 epistles, Ephesians and Colossians.

**Musterion** - 28x in 28v - Matt 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3f, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26f; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:9, 16; Rev 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7

**Eadie** - "The essential idea of **musterion**, whatever may be the application, is, something into the knowledge of which one must be initiated, ere he comprehend it. In such a passage as this, it is not something unknowable, but something unknown till fitting disclosure has been made of it; something long hid, but at length discovered to us by God, and therefore a matter of pure revelation. The mystery itself is unfolded in the following verse. It is not the gospel or salvation generally, but a special purpose of God in reference to His universe. And it is called the mystery of "His will" ([John Eadie Commentary on Ephesians](#))

**Cambridge Greek** - God's purpose for the world was the secret that He shared with His chosen. It is stated here in its widest scope. It is nothing less than the establishment or re-establishment of the whole creation in perfect harmony in the Christ. ([Cambridge Greek Testament](#))

Four of the 27 NT uses of **musterion** are found in this letter to the Ephesians, Eph 1:9 and...

**Ephesians 3:3**-note that by revelation there was made known to me the **mystery**, as I wrote before in brief.

**Ephesians 5:32**-note This **mystery** is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

**Ephesians 6:19**-note and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the **mystery** of the gospel,

**Mystery of His will** = the mystery touching on or concerning His will, not the mystery originating in His will.

**H C G Moule** says **musterion** is "always in N. T., a truth undiscoverable except by revelation; never necessarily (as our popular use of the word may suggest) a thing unintelligible, or perplexing, in itself. In Scripture a "mystery" may be a fact which, when revealed, we cannot understand in detail, though we can know it and act upon it; such a fact as that of 1 Cor. 15:51, where we have it revealed that an inconceivable change will take place, at the last day, in the bodily condition of the then living saints; a change quite beyond the inferences of reason and also beyond the reach of imagination. Or it may be, as here, something much more within our understanding. But in both cases it is a thing only to be known when revealed. What this "mystery" is will be seen just below."

**Expositor's Greek** - its distinctive sense in the NT is that of something once hidden and now revealed, a secret now open. In this

sense it is applied to the Divine plan of redemption as a whole (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26; 1 Tim. 3:9, 16, etc.), or to particular things belonging to that Divine plan—the inclusion of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25; Eph. 3:3, 9), the transformation of Christians alive on earth at Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:52), the union of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32). It does not convey the idea of something that we cannot take in or understand even when it is declared to us. It is peculiarly frequent in the kindred Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, ten out of the twenty-six or twenty-seven occurrences being found in them. Nor is it confined absolutely to the things of grace. Paul speaks also of the "mystery of lawlessness" (2Th 2:7). The redemption accomplished through Christ—this is the secret hidden for ages in the Divine Counsel and now revealed. This also is the truth, the disclosure of which to our understandings meant so large a gift of grace in the way of insight and spiritual discernment.

**Will** (2307) (**thelema**) describes a desire based upon the emotions. God's will or desire in making known the mystery comes from His heart of love, from His gracious disposition toward those who are by nature His enemies and hostile toward Him!

Not just any "will" but **His will**, the will of the all knowing, all wise God!

#### ACCORDING TO HIS KIND INTENTION WHICH HE PURPOSED IN HIM:

- Eph 1:11; 3:11; Job 23:13,14; Psalms 33:11; Isaiah 14:24, 25, 26, 27; 46:10,11; Jeremiah 2:29; Lam 3:37,38; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 13:48; Ro 8:28; 2Ti 1:9
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOD'S MOTIVE FOR TAKING US INTO HIS "SECRET COUNCILS"

**According to** - does not modify "the mystery of His will" which needs no further definition but to His making known this mystery. It was made known according to His kind intention. In other words, the making known of this secret to us after the silence of the ages had its ground and reason in nothing else than the gracious counsel or free purpose of God.

**Wuest** - The words "according to" are **kata**, the preposition meaning "down" and suggesting domination. This desire on God's part is dominated by His good pleasure (eudokia). ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**According to** (2596) (**kata**) means not out of but according to. If billionaire gives you \$10 it is out of his fortune (a portion) but if he gives a million dollars it is according to his riches (a proportion). His making known this mystery is in proportion to His kind intention.

**Expositor's Greek** - The opening of this secret to us after the silence of ages had its ground and reason in nothing else than the gracious counsel or free purpose of God.

**Kind intention** (2107) (**eudokía**) means His good will or pleasure. It refers to God's goodwill or good intent. The delight which God has in blessing saints is found in the fact that what He does for them is dictated by what is good for them.

**Wuest - Eudokia** "is made up of dokeō, "to seem, to be accounted." It is often used in the question, "What does it seem to you?" The word eu means "well, to be well off, to prosper." Thus eudokia means "that which seems good or well" to one. God's good pleasure, therefore, is not an arbitrary whim of a sovereign, but represents that which in the wisdom and love of God would contribute most to the well-being and blessing of the saints. The word means "will, choice, delight, pleasure, satisfaction." In the case of God, all these are dictated by what is good or well. Thus, the delight, pleasure, and satisfaction which God has in blessing the saints is found in the fact that what He does for them is dictated by what is good for them." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Which** (3739) refers to His **kind intention**. God's good pleasure is not an arbitrary whim of a sovereign, but represents that which in the wisdom and love of God would contribute most to the well-being and blessing of the saints.

**He purposed** (4388) (**protithemai** from **pró** =before, forth + **tithemi** =place) (**aorist tense**) means literally to set something before oneself and so conveys the idea of determining something - to intend, to plan, to purpose. It is only used **middle voice** in the NT which brings out the "reflexive" idea which can be translated with the pronoun "oneself" = to set before oneself. In the **middle voice** it therefore means to set before oneself and hence is what God, intends, purposes or plans. The eternal **purpose** of God is in view as the context demonstrates.

**Wuest** - The word "will" is the translation, not of **boule**, a desire based upon the reason, but **thelēma**, a desire based upon the emotions. God's will or desire here, comes from His heart of love. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume](#)

[1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**In Him** - "purposed in Him" - What Paul is saying is that the grand subject of the plan is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Expositors Greek** - "The purpose is God's own free determination, originating in His own gracious mind."

It is notable that the **KJV** has "in Himself" instead of "in Him" as though the antecedent were God the Father. Although this is possible, the notion of the verb set forth implies a plan that is carried out in history (cf. Ro 1:13; Ro 3:25) and thus more likely refers to Christ.

Ephesians 1:10 [with a view](#) to an [administration](#) *suitable to* the [fullness](#) of the [times](#), *that is*, the [summing up](#) of [all things in Christ](#), things in the [heavens](#) and things on the [earth](#). **In Him** (**NASB: Lockman**)

**Greek:** [eis oikonomian tou pleromatos ton kairon, anakephalaiosasthai \(AMN\) ta panta en to Christo, ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tes ges; en auto.](#)

**BGT** ε ς ο κ ο ν ο μ ι α ν τ ο π λ η ρ η μ α τ ο ς τ ν κ α ι ρ ν , ν α κ ε φ α λ α ι σ α σ θ α ι τ π ν τ α ν τ Χ ρ ι σ τ , τ π τ ο ς ο ρ α ν ο ς κ α τ π τ ς γ ς ν α τ .

**Amplified:** [He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay** - The secret was a purpose which he formed in his own mind before time began, so that the periods of time should be controlled and administered until they reached their full development, a development in which all things, in heaven and upon earth, are gathered into one in Jesus Christ. ([Ephesians 1](#))

**BBE** The ordering of the times when they are complete, so that all things might come to a head in Christ, the things in heaven and the things on the earth; in him, I say,

**CSB** for the administration of the days of fulfillment-- to bring everything together in the Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

**ESV** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

**GWN** He planned to bring all of history to its goal in Christ. Then Christ would be the head of everything in heaven and on earth.

**KJV** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

**NET** toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ-- the things in heaven and the things on earth.

**NIV** to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 11 **In him** we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

**NRS** as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,

**NAB** as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. 11 In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will,

**NJB** for him to act upon when the times had run their course: that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth. 11 And it is in him that we have received our heritage, marked out beforehand as we were, under the plan of the One who guides all things as he decides by his own will,

**NKJ** that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ,

both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him.

**NLT:** And this is his plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ-- everything in heaven and on earth. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT** (revised) And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ-- everything in heaven and on earth. 11 **Furthermore, because we are united with Christ**, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

**Phillips:** He purposes in his sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** with respect to an administration of the completion of the epochs of time to bring back again to their original state all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** in regard to the dispensation of the fulness of the times, to bring into one the whole in the Christ, both the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth -- in Him;

#### WITH A VIEW TO AN ADMINISTRATION SUITABLE TO THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES: eis oikonomian tou pleromatos ton kairon:

- Isaiah 2:2, 3, 4; Daniel 2:44; 9:24, 25, 26, 27; Amos 9:11; Micah 4:1,2; Malachi 3:1; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:2; 9:10; 11:40; 1 Peter 1:20
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**With a view** ([1519](#)) (**eis**) is a preposition that conveys the sense of motion toward something and thus in context indicates what direction the purpose just stated took.

**Guzik** has an interesting thought on administration - The idea behind the word dispensation also reflects a plan or a strategy. "The plan which the master of a family, or his steward, has established for the management of the family ... it signifies, also, a plan for the management of any sort of business." (Clarke) God's ultimate plan is to bring together—to ultimately resolve—all things in Christ, either through Jesus as a Savior or Jesus as a Judge; this will happen in the fullness of the times.

**Administration** ([3622](#)) (**oikonomia** from **oikos** = house + **némo** = manage, distribute) (Click study of related word oikonomos) in secular Greek referred literally to the management of a household by the **oikonomos**, the **steward** manages a house and is accountable to the owner (which even involved a presentation and examination of records, receipts, disbursements, cash on hand and the settlement of accounts - our English words "economy", "economic" are derived from **oikonomia** and this background helps one see some association). **Oikonomia** indicates the task given to responsible and faithful servants who were appointed over the economy or an area of responsibility in the household. Thus **oikonomia** stresses obligation, responsibility, and faithfulness of the servant to his master in carry out the entrusted task.

In the present context **oikonomia** is used to refer to the administration or "management" by God of a certain period of human history which Paul designates as "**the fulness of times**" when God gathers everything to Himself and sums it up in His Son, Christ Jesus.

**Oikonomia** 9 times in the NAS **NAS** = administration, 3; management, 3; stewardship, 3. -Luke 16:2, 16:3, 16:4; 1Co 9:17; Ephesians 1:10, 3:2, 3:9; Colossians 1:25; 1Ti 1:4. In KJV it is translated 4 times as dispensation.

That **oikonomia** relates to household management is shown especially in the use in Luke 16...

Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your **stewardship** (oikonomia), for you can no longer be steward (oikomeo).' 3 "And the **steward** (oikonomia) said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship (**oikonomia**) away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship (**oikonomia**), they will receive me into their homes.' (Luke 16:2-4+)

Paul uses **oikonomia** in a figurative sense (figurative because he is not managing a literal household) in Colossians 1:25 to describe his office as an apostle, who has been entrusted with a commission (see similar meaning in Ephesians 3:2+). **Oikonomia** thus referred to those who managed spiritual truths on God's behalf. In Titus Paul uses oikonomia with this meaning writing that...

the overseer must be above reproach as God's **steward** (oikonomia) not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain (Titus 1:7+)

**Detzler** adds that...Greek writers about the time of the New Testament used **oikonomia** to describe the job of a household manager. In practice Greek slaves often managed the homes of wealthy landowners. Later this term came to describe the general work of administration. In the New Testament, and later, under the church father Ignatius, the word took on a theological twist. It came to mean the plan of God for redeeming people (Ed note: See discussion of this nuance below). (Detzler, Wayne: New Testament Words in Today's Language)

**Oikonomia** also relates to general provision or arrangement. Here Paul uses oikonomia to suggest the administration or putting into effect of God's far-reaching redemptive plan

and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things ( Eph 3:9)

Paul uses **oikonomia** to describe God's sovereign order of salvation. Salvation is not a divine afterthought but on the contrary, salvation history derives from God's eternal "plan" or **oikonomia** of salvation "to unite all things" in Christ.

**Oikonomia** is also used in the NT to refer to the state of being arranged (an arrangement) and speaks of **order** (arrangement or disposition of people or things according to a particular sequence or method) or **plan**. Stated another way **oikonomia** refers to a plan which involves a set of arrangements. In Scripture this use of **oikonomia** refers to God's unique **plan** of salvation, His **arrangement** for redemption of sinful men. Specifically Paul uses **oikonomia** with this meaning to refer to the administration by God of a certain period of human history designated as "the fulness of times" when God gathers everything to Himself.

**NIDNTT** writes that in classic Greek **oikonomia** was "attested from Xenophon and Plato on, denoted primarily the management of a household, but was soon extended to the administration of the state (the title of one of Xenophon's books), and finally was used for every kind of activity which results from the holding of an office.

**TDNT** has this note on **oikonomia** writing that "In Greek, applying to household administration, this word has the sense of "direction," "provision," "administration." In the NT it means 1. the office of household administration, and discharge of this office (Lk. 16:2ff.). Paul applies the thought to the apostolic office (1 Cor. 9:17; Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2), which he holds by divine commission and in service to the churches. A second NT use is for the "divine plan" of salvation, its order and administration. This is the point in Eph. 1:10 and 3:9, and there is a hint of it in 3:2 and Col. 1:25.

**William Barclay** summarizes Paul's thought this way...Now Paul, in one sentence, drops his great thought. Up till now men had been living in a divided world. There was division between the beasts and men. There was division between the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the barbarian. All over the world there was strife and tension. Jesus came into the world to wipe out the divisions. That for Paul was the secret of God. It was God's purpose that all the many different strands and all the warring elements in this world should be gathered into one in Jesus Christ. Here we have another tremendous thought. Paul says that all history has been a working out of this process. **He says that through all the ages there has been an arranging and an administering of things** (Ed note: this description of God's arranging and administering is the essence of what **oikonomia** means) that this day of unity should come. ([Ephesians 1](#)) (Bolding added)

**F F Bruce** on the **fulness of the times**: "When the time is ripe for the consummation of his purpose, in his providential overruling of the course of the world, that consummation will be realized."

**Fullness** ([4138](#)) (**pleroma**) means a full measure with emphasis upon completeness. When is this time of completeness? Although note everyone would agree, it probably begins with Christ's Millennial reign when God fulfills His promises to Israel and is completed with the institution of New Earth described in Revelation 21:1 when He makes all things new.

Paul used **pleroma** in reference to Christ in Colossians writing that...

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the **fulness** (pleroma) to dwell in Him (Christ), (Col 1:19+)

For in Him (Christ) all the **fulness** (pleroma) of Deity dwells in bodily form, (Col 2:9+)

**Comment** - The Gnostics taught that Christ was kind of "halfway house" to God, a link in the chain with other better links on ahead. As Paul teaches the complete embodiment of God dwells permanently in Christ and will one day "come to a head".

**The times** (2540) (**kairos**) refers usually to a season or more specifically to a fixed and definite time possessing certain characteristics. For example, leaves change color in the Fall **season** and once that season has passed, the beautiful color change can no longer be seen.

**Vincent** - The **fulness of the times** is the moment when the successive ages of the gospel dispensation are completed. The meaning of the whole phrase, then, is: a dispensation characterized by the fulness of the times: set forth when the times are full.

#### THAT IS, THE SUMMING UP OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST: **anakephalaioasthai (AMN) ta panta en to Christō**

- Eph 1:22; 2:15; 3:15; Genesis 49:10; Matthew 25:32; 1Corinthians 3:22,23; 11:3; Philippians 2:9,10; Colossians 1:20; 3:11; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 5:9; 7:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 19:4, 5, 6
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### "DIVINE MATHEMATICS"

**Sum** refers to a quantity obtained by the addition of a group of numbers. In this context summing up describes God's supernatural bringing of all things to a head so to speak in Christ. In a word, History is His story. Jesus Christ is the chief subject and chief end of all human History. As **John MacArthur** says "History is written and directed by its Creator, who will see it through to the fulfillment of His own ultimate purpose—the summing up of all things in Christ. He designed His great plan in the ages past; He now sovereignly works it out according to His divine will; and in the fulness of the times He will complete and perfect it in His Son, in whom it will forever operate in righteous harmony and glorious newness along with all things in the heavens and things upon the earth. ([Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Ironside** - What is the mystery of His will? Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. Here, succinctly, clearly, in one brief verse, we have the summing up of the mystery of God's will. Everything is working on to this one near-at-hand, divine event toward which the whole creation moves, when God will head up everything in Christ. ([Notes](#))

**Wood** - When a column of figures was added up, the total was placed at the top. At the end of the age everything will be seen to add up to Christ. This recognition of his preeminence will ensure that the original harmony of the universe is restored (Ro8:18–21). The mission of Christ extends beyond the human race and assumes cosmic dimensions. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11)

**Spurgeon** comments "Everything that is in Christ shall be gathered in; all his chosen, all that the Father gave him, all that he hath redeemed by blood, all that he hath effectually brought into union with himself shall be gathered together in one. There shall be one flock under one Shepherd.

**Guzik** - The word for **gather together (summing up)** has the idea of "to unite" or "to sum up." It was used for the process of adding up a column of figures and putting the sum up at the top. Paul's idea is that God will make all things "add up" at the end, and right now He is in the process of coming to that final sum. This is the great resolution and deliverance that even the creation groans for (Romans 8:18–22), the day when every wrong will be righted and every matter resolved according to God's holy love and justice.

**Summing up** (346) (**anakephalaioimai** not from **kephale** = head but from **kephalaion** = summary or sum total) means to bring something to a head or bring together under one head or in literary terms under one heading. When a column of figures was added up, the total was placed at the top. In another illustration of the use of this word in secular literature we read of the summarizing of the argument of an orator as he would do at the close of his discourse. Here it means to sum up, to "head up" all things in Christ in orderly and harmonious completion. Christ is the center of the universe, which some day will be integrated into one harmonious whole. It conveys the idea that all things will be brought into meaningful relationship together under Christ. At the end of the age everything will be seen to add up to Christ. At present there is fragmentation and frustration. Things do not "add up." On that day, however, under Christ, everything will add up or rather be summed up in Christ. This recognition of Christ's preeminence will ensure that the original harmony of the universe is restored (see Ro 8:18-21). The mission of Christ extends beyond the human race and assumes cosmic dimensions. **Rienecker** adds "This is a rhetorical term used of the summing up of a speech or argument and hence of including a large number of separate details under one head."

Paul's use of **anakephalaioimai** in Romans is illustrative of the meaning...

For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL,

YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is **summed up** in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (See **note** Romans 13:9)

**Comment:** the **summation** of the Ten Commandments in the one rule "Love your neighbor as yourself"

Thus the command to "**love**" is the category heading & all the other commands are listed under love as part of it or expressions of it.

In context the Head is Christ for He is the goal of History ("*His-story*") which achieves its culmination in Him Alone! Paradise lost in Adam is Paradise regained in Christ to Whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess as LORD. Have you bowed while you still have breath to declare "My Lord and My God"? If not today could be the day of your salvation.

The **aoist tense** is a definite summing up at a point in time. The **middle voice** pictures God as the Initiator of this action of summing up all things in Christ for Himself. The infinitive mood expresses purpose.

**All things** ([3956](#)) (**pas**) (literally "the things") means all without exception, (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3) and includes the whole creation. Paul's point is that Christ will gather the entire universe (now corrupted by sin and the whole world lying in the power of the evil one, Satan, 1John 5:19) into unity (Heb 1:8ff). Everything in heaven and on earth will be subjected to (and thus be summed up in) Christ (1Cor 15:24, 25, 26, 27, 28)...

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus **EVERY** KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that **every** tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (See **notes** Philippians 2:9; 2:10; 2:11).

After the Millennium Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire forever (Rev 20:3,10). God will establish unity in Himself of all things that remain."

In ([1722](#)) (**en**) means in the sphere of, in this case in the sphere of Christ (see locative of sphere). In other words, after the one thousand year Messianic Kingdom, immediately follows the Great White Throne judgment at which time all the lost (those who never placed their faith in Messiah as Savior and Lord) are judged. At this time the cursed material universe is restored and saved men live on New Earth and endless ages begin. All things are thus summed up in (in the sphere of, the influence of) Christ.

**Christ** ([5547](#)) (**Christos** from **chrío** = anoint, consecrate to office) is the Anointed One, the Messiah. God will accomplish all restoration in and thru Christ and His atoning death on the Cross. He is the Head, the center around which God revolves everything He does relating to sin and salvation.

One of the "spiritual blessings" in Eph 1:3 is that God has in effect taken us into the secret place of plan for the world. He has made known to us the mystery of His will, how everything is summed up under the headship of Christ. The world thinks it's falling apart (in one sense of course it is - devolution, not evolution, [entropy](#) continuing), but in actual fact it is coming together moving toward the final summation of everything under the headship of Jesus Christ.

**In Christ** - the vital, organic, supernatural, mystical connection.

**John MacArthur** explains God's **administration** or "management" of the **fullness of times** as follows "God redeems men in order that He might gather everything to Himself. The time of that gathering will be the millennial kingdom (**see note**), which will be an **administration suitable to the fulness of the times** When the completion of history comes, the kingdom arrives, eternity begins again, and the new heaven and new earth are established, there will be a **summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. Jesus Christ is the goal of history, which finds its resolution in Him. The paradise lost in Adam is restored in Christ. ([Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** explains that in this passage "the great aim of that divine sovereign will, self-originated, full of loving-kindness to the world, is to manifest to all men what God is, that all men may know Him for what He is, and thereby be drawn back again, and grouped in peaceful unity round His Son, Jesus Christ. That is the intention which is deepest in the divine heart, the desire which God has most for every one of us...The philosophy of history lies there; and it is a true instinct that makes the cradle at Bethlehem the pivot around which the world's chronology revolves. For the deepest thing about all the ages on the further side of it is that they are 'Before Christ,' and the formative fact for all the ages after it is that they are Anno Domini... I take it that what the Apostle means here is that the purpose of God, which we have thus seen as sovereign, self-originated, having for its great aim the communication to all His creatures of the knowledge of Himself, and running through the ages, and binding them into a unity, **reaches its entire accomplishment** in the **Cradle**, and the **Cross**, and the **Throne of Jesus Christ our Lord**. He fulfils the divine intention. There is that one life, and in that life alone of humanity you have a character which is in entire sympathy with the divine mind, which is in full possession of the divine truth, which never diverges or deviates by a hair's-breadth from the divine will, which is the complete and perfect exponent to man of the divine heart and character; and that Christ is the fulfilment of all that God desired in the depths of



eternity, and the abysses of His being.

**Did He will that men should know Him?**

Christ has declared Him.

**Did He will that men should be drawn back to Him?**

Christ lifted on the Cross draws all men unto Him.

**Was it 'according to the good pleasure of His goodness' that we men should attain to the adoption of sons?**

By that Son we too became sons.

**Was it the purpose of His will that we should obtain an 'inheritance'?**

We obtain it in Jesus Christ, 'being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'

All that God willed to do is done. And when we look, on the one hand, up to that infinite purpose, and on the other, to the Cross, we hear from the dying Him, '**It is finished!**' (John 19:30) **The purpose of the ages is accomplished in Christ Jesus.** (Read full sermon) (Bolding added)

**Vance Havner** writes "Now, Christ is the Great Gatherer (KJV = gather together), and if we do not gather with Him He makes it plain that we scatter, we work against Him. The only way we can help Him gather is by winning souls and fishing for men. Mind you, if we are not engaged in some form of this great gathering we are not merely indifferent; we are not neutral. He made it plain that we are instruments of division and discord, that if we are not active with Him we are active against Him. No matter how much you may wave a Bible, if you are not gathering with Christ you are not merely wasting time, you are working against the only unifying force in all existence."

**THINGS IN THE HEAVENS AND THINGS ON THE EARTH. IN HIM: ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tes ges; en autō**

- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **CONSUMMATION OF CREATION IN CHRIST THE CREATOR!**

**Things in the heavens and things on the earth** - How fitting is the consummation is like a divine "bookend" for the creation, Genesis 1:1+ recording "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So the very Word Who spoke creation in to existence (Heb 11:3), will consummate it so to speak under His Headship (and Kingship in the Millennial Kingdom). Since all of creation was made by Him and is for His good pleasure (Revelation 4:11), the consummation of His plan is when everything and everyone is brought in line to glorify Him. By aligning ourselves with Him by faith, we become part of His perfect plan and purpose.

**Heavens** ([3772](#)) (**ouranos**) in the physical sense refers to the over-arching, all-embracing heaven beneath which is the earth and all that is therein. First heaven = the atmosphere. Third heaven = God's abode 2Cor 12:2-4 (Click note).

**Earth** ([1093](#)) (**ge**) means the earth in distinction from heaven.

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** writes that "The perfect harmony that will be restored will be harmony in man and between men. Harmony on the earth and in the brute creation! Harmony in heaven, and all under this blessed Lord Jesus Christ Who will be the head of all! Everything will again be united in Him. And wonder of wonders, marvelous beyond compare, when all this happens it will never be undone again. All will be re-united in Him to all eternity. That is the message; that is God's plan. That is the mystery which has been revealed unto us. ... These things are so marvelous that you will never hear anything greater, either in this world or the world to come." (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. : God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1:1 to 23 Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979)

**In Him** ([846](#)) (**autos**) fits more appropriately at the beginning of verse 11 than at the end of verse 10. But in either place the phrase clearly refers to Jesus Christ (v10), Who is the Source of our divine inheritance and the "Sum of Everything."

**All things in Him** - Be aware that Unitarian-universalists, liberals, some neo-orthodox, and other groups use this verse to support their belief that everyone will eventually be saved.

**Related Resources:**

- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What is Unitarian Universalism? | GotQuestions.org](#)
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**EPHESIANS 1:10**—Does Paul teach universalism when he says God will gather “all things in Christ”?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:10 that in “the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are under the earth—in Him.” Unitarian-universalists, liberals, some neo-orthodox, and other groups use this verse to support their belief that everyone will eventually be saved.

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** A careful examination of this verse reveals that Paul is speaking here only of believers, so, there is no support for universalism. The whole context is about those chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). The phrase “in Christ” is never used in Scripture of anyone but believers. That unbelievers are excluded is clear from the fact that Paul does not refer to those “under the earth” as he does elsewhere when speaking of the lost (Phil. 2:10). There is abundant evidence elsewhere in Paul (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7–9) and in the rest of Scripture that some will go to their eternal destiny without Christ (e.g., Matt. 25:31–46). (Geisler, N. L., & Rhodes, R. [When Cultists Ask: A Popular Handbook](#): Baker Books. 1997)

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**Did you know that...** Rhodes scholarships were originally designed by Cecil Rhodes as a means of reestablishing British hegemony over the earth. An unreconstructed imperialist, Rhodes envisioned all the world as British subjects. His will directed that his massive estate be used to expedite his dream, in particular recovering the United States for the Crown. Fortunately, the trustees of the estate revoked his political views and have awarded the scholarship to anyone who is academically qualified. While Cecil Rhodes had a dream and the resources to fulfill it, he had the wrong intention. God never decreed that the world should be British. He has decreed that not only humanity but the entire universe be brought to renewal through Jesus Christ. Since God has both the resources and the intention, his will shall be accomplished: Through Jesus Christ everything in heaven and on earth will be brought to complete unity. ([Hurley, V. Speaker's Sourcebook of New Illustrations Dallas: Word Publishers](#))

**Ironside** - In the future there will be another glorious economy, “The dispensation of the fulness of times.” That will be the last glorious age, which has been called ever since the dawn of the Christian era “the millennium” or “the reign of righteousness,” when,

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Isaac Watts

That final dispensation of blessing is not merely for this world, but Heaven and earth will be brought into wonderful unity, and heavenly saints and earthly saints will find their headship in Christ. ([Ref](#))