

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EPHESIANS 1:9,10 IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE LATTER DAYS

The apostle Peter writes and says that Paul wrote *“some things hard to understand...”* (2Pet 3:16). Well, I think the following is one of those passages which will need careful dissection:

*Eph 1:9,10 “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 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 upon the earth...”*

Scholars tell us that the verses 3 to 14 in the Greek is one long sentence, and certainly the whole passage moves continuously from one thought to the other without hardly giving any time to breath! What is Paul saying here? Before I even try to dissect this Scripture, I would first like to build a background of prophetic Scriptures.

I understand that in Southern Africa, and in the rest of the world, we are dealing with the breaking down of hope, as people have lost their way. Consequently it is vital that we establish an understanding of *God’s plans and purposes* as revealed in the Scriptures. From the above Scripture I see that God has, *“made known to us the mystery of His will...”* and He has done this because He really wants us to *know* what His will is.

Knowing what God is planning gives us *hope*, and in this study, I want to map out, according to the Scriptures, a part of this wonderful plan. So, let's start by laying a foundation from the Old Testament. (*There's that Old Testament again!*)

Dan 2:31-35 This passage is about a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had - of a great statue with a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, thigh of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron/clay mixture. The king wanted someone to interpret the dream for him; but refused to inform the wise men as to what the dream was. His instructions were firm - the wise men had to give him both the dream as well as its interpretation or face execution! It must have been quite hair-raising to work for such a king!

Daniel approaches the king and gives him the following interpretation. He tells the king that his dream pertains to the future; and describes present and future major world empires starting with *Babylon*, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the king. He, Nebuchadnezzar, was the *head of gold*. But *after him* would come *another kingdom*, inferior to him, and then *another* and *another*. Each of these empires he describes, we see from history, ruled the known world, and historically fits the empires of *Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome*.

The last one (Rome) would then break into pieces, with some strong and some weak parts to it. He does not describe any other world empire thereafter (*contrary to the teaching of some that we are heading for some One-World power*). However, Daniel describes *a small stone*, being cut out of the mountain as it were without hands, which then comes and strikes the statue on its feet, and the entire statue comes crumbling down, smashing into small pieces. The wind then

carries its dust away so that not a trace of it is found. The stone then grows into a great big mountain and *fills the earth with fruit*.

*That stone, is a description of the **kingdom of God**; and I see that he describes a **phenomenal growth of this kingdom**, until the kingdom **fills the entire earth with fruit!***

Let's compare this prophecy to some of Jesus' parables.

*Mat 13:31 "He presented another parable to them, saying, the Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but **when it is full grown**, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."*

What is this parable all about? Just like Daniel's prophecy, it is speaking about the *kingdom of God*, and just like Daniel, the *kingdom is growing*, and again just like Daniel, it *becomes larger than anything else around it*. In this parable, however, something else is added. Not only would the kingdom be great, but it would also be a *blessing to everything around*, (*"the birds of the air come and nest in its branches"*).

This tells me that as we are heading towards the end of time, there should be a phenomenal growth taking place in the kingdom of God! Let's see if other Scriptures substantiate this before we make conclusions too quickly. The very next parable tells us the same thing in different words:

Mat 13:33 "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal until all was leavened."

The three pecks (measures) of meal can be equated to the three groups of humanity - the Negroids (descendants of Ham), the Caucasians (descendants of Shem) and the Mongoloids (descendants of Japheth). The Kingdom of God is invested into all three groups until the whole is leavened - in other words until it is completely changed by the yeast. *The whole of humanity is changed by this yeast kingdom.*

Other passages present the kingdom as a field planted with good seed, which receive an early and latter rain, thus preparing for an eventual harvest. We see that this harvest is to be a great harvest, the latter rain representing a *great outpouring of the Spirit* in the latter days, just before the Second coming of Christ. The book of Revelation describes that harvest as a sea of people from every tribe and tongue and nation, uncountable, all having white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

We should note, however, that the parables also speak of the good seed and the bad seed. That indicates that there will be enemies of the kingdom which will refuse the wonderful message of grace. They will be enemies and fight against the truths we preach – and that has been abundantly clear through the ages. However, they will be destroyed, and the kingdom will rise triumphant.

Revelation 1:1 starts with the words, *"The revelation of Jesus Christ..."* It is not a book which complains about the terrible atrocities or *"power"* of the antichrist. It is a book about *Jesus*

– He is KING throughout the ages, and His Kingdom is victorious and massive.

What does this mean for you and me here in Southern Africa or any other place in the world for that matter? It means that we are prophetically in the time of the *yeast kingdom influencing the world for good; the growing harvest; the growing rock kingdom*. We can see this theme of the increasing of His kingdom repeated again and again in the Scriptures, as we follow it like a golden thread woven through the pages of Scripture, from the sowing of the first seeds in Genesis (*“In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” 12:3*) to the final fruit of the harvest in Revelation (*“The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” 11:15; and “The nations shall walk by its (New Jerusalem’s) light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.” 21:24*)

In this study I don’t really want to get too bogged down with all the many beautiful prophetic Scriptures which speak of this growing harvest. However, I do want to look at their significance for us today.

Paul tells us that, *“in the last days difficult times will come...” (2Tim 3)*. He does not tell Timothy not to worry about the difficult times because we are *“all going to be raptured out of it!”* No, he rather prepares him to face those difficult times head on. He encourages him to be solidly grounded on the Scriptures, (*vs15*), and then he makes this profound statement,

2Tim 3:16 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for correction, for training in righteousness;

3:17 *“that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped** for every good work.”*

What would the person want to be equipped for? Naturally to be able to cope with the pressures of the “*difficult times*” which he was explaining would come. The Scriptures do not suggest any kind of whipping away of the saints out of the problems. Rather, they teach over and over again, that God would strengthen us, guide us, help us, to stand **in** the evil day, to fight with spiritual weapons, and to gain victories - not through physical warfare, but rather through love, forgiveness, kindness, peace, mercy, etc - all the attributes of His kingdom. Jesus Himself said,

*John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you have tribulation**, but take courage, I have overcome the world.”*

So, what are we to do in this time of trouble - of tribulation? This is where Paul’s teaching of Ephesians comes in. Paul is talking here of the “*summing up of all things in Christ.*” *Eph 1:10.* He understands the theme of the Scriptures - that God is wanting world dominion. He had probably stood and listened to Peter’s sermon after the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful - where Peter had exhorted the people to:

*Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away; in order that **times of refreshing** may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you,*

3:20 “ whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”

Yes, Paul knew about those Scriptures from *Malachi* and *Haggai* and *Isaiah* and *Daniel*, which spoke about this *time of refreshing*, about the *Elijah ministry* - the *outpouring of His Holy Spirit* on all flesh, about the *growing harvest*, about the *growing stone kingdom*, about the *latter rain outpouring* - the *Word of God coming like the spring rain* watering the earth and *not returning void* without accomplishing God’s desire. Yes, he was well versed in these Scriptures, in this *“hope of Israel”*, and now he was adding some prophecies of his own, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Eph 1:10 “All things are to be summed up under the leadership and authority of Christ”, he said. That was *His will* - His *kind intention*, the *mysteries which for ages had been hidden*, but were *a secret no longer*.

But then he adds something else: He speaks of an *“administration”* which would be *“suitable to the times.”* Let’s look a bit more closely at those words. The translation I have taken this from is the NASV. The various translations seemingly translate this quite differently. The KJV speaks about a *“dispensation of the fullness of the times”*, and the NIV uses the phrase, *“a plan for the fullness of time”*. The Afrikaans version throws a bit more light of this phrase. It says, *“Om die volheid van die tye te reël”*.

Certainly, from these various translations I do not see a *haphazard stumbling onto the summing up of all things in Christ* in these *“fullness of the times.”* Rather I see a *careful planning*,

an *administration* organising the summing up process. The word "*dispensation*" has been wrongly understood to be a "*period of time.*" It is nothing of the sort. Just like a Chemist would use a "*dispenser*" to measure out specific quantities of medicine according to a predetermined plan or order, so a "*dispensation*" means a measuring out or specific orderly organisation of an event. Here our Afrikaans translation clarifies the picture with the word "*reël*", which is akin to our English word "*rule*" and is a military type of word which means to order or command.

It is just here where we (*the Ecclesia*) come in.

2Cor 5:20 "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

I believe we are called to this unique calling under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to bring things into order *under the authority of Christ*. We are His *ambassadors*, His *mouthpiece*, His *hands*, His *feet*, His *administration* through which He intends to *dispense or order or command all things* to come *into subjection to Him*. What an awesome responsibility!

Yet, amazingly, it is not in superiority or great strength that we come to this commanding position. It is rather in *weakness, and in humility*. Our strength to command comes from very carefully, step by step, *following of our Commander's orders* in abject *humility* and *total surrender* to our Great King's every command. It is as we *obediently* hang onto and *follow every Word* of life proceeding from His mouth and allow those same Words to *flow through our own mouths*, that we take up that powerful "*Sword of the Spirit*" with which we break the power

of the evil one, and snatch from his hand the souls which he has kept in bondage.

As we near the coming of the Lord, I believe the Scripture abundantly indicates that we should see a *great outpouring of the Holy Spirit* - a *rising up of God's people*. Isaiah calls to us in a shout of triumph:

Isa 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of YHWH has risen upon you.

*60:2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; But YHWH will **rise upon you**, and His glory will appear upon you.*

*60:3 "And nations will come to your light, and kings to the **brightness of your rising.**"*

Rise up, O people of God. Put away your worldly ambitions and lustful desires; and seek the Lord that you might live; and not only live, but be *"the salt of the earth"* - *"the light of the world"* (*Mat 5:13,14*). May YHWH God give you a *burning passion* for the *building of His kingdom here on earth*. May the turmoil you are going through only serve to make you more determined - spur you on to greater heights. May our Heavenly Father put an *unquenchable fire in your soul*.

With special love and passion for you all

Henry D Jackson