

**FROM
ETERNITY
TO HERE**
FRANK VIOLA

REDISCOVERING THE AGELESS PURPOSE OF GOD

FROM ETERNITY TO HERE

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CHAPTER 1

THE HIDDEN ROMANCE OF THE BIBLE

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know.

—*Ephesians 1:18 NASB*

Before the beginning, she was there. She is the most elegant woman in the universe. She is as ancient as God. She existed before angels. Her origins reach further back than antiquity itself. Yet she is forever young.

The word *stunning* fails to adequately describe her. She is as beautiful as the face of God. She is beyond captivating. She is hypnotic and magnetic. Most of us have never imagined the glory that she carries. Just a glimpse of her matchless beauty could win your heart and possess your being. She is incurably attractive.

This woman defines *liberty*; she embodies *freedom*. And she was made for love.

She stands at the very heartbeat of God's eternal purpose. She is His highest passion. His holy obsession, even. She is the

purpose of the very creation wherein you and I stand. And your Lord is out-of-His-head in love with her.

Yet despite her beauty, she has been utterly neglected. She has been forgotten. And with rare exception, she has been veiled to most of us. Herein lies my motive in writing the first section of this book: *to give her center stage.*

God's Ultimate Passion

From the beginning, God has had a secret. Before time, the Almighty shrouded His high and holy purpose in a mystery. And He hid it in His Son. For ages, no one knew what that purpose was. It was deeply hidden in God. It was a secret—the secret of the ages (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:4–5, 9).

Adam walked with God, yet he didn't know the mystery. Abraham was the friend of God, yet he didn't know the mystery. Moses was the prophet of God, yet he didn't know the mystery. Neither did David, Isaiah, nor Jeremiah.

The mystery was not only veiled to mortals, it was hidden from angels as well. Gabriel and Michael didn't know it. Neither did Lucifer, nor his demonic hosts (1 Cor. 2:7–8; Eph. 3:9–10).

Why did God keep His purpose a secret for so long? Presumably because He didn't want His purpose to be thwarted prematurely. God's purpose embodies His dream, His passion, His very heartbeat. So He kept it veiled until the time became full.

Old Testament authors first proclaimed the sacred mystery in stories, types, pictures, and shadows. But although kings, prophets, and sages proclaimed it, they did not understand it.

And then one day, it happened. God pulled back the curtain and

revealed the secret. He chose a man named Paul of Tarsus to unveil it to the world (Col. 1:25–29; Eph. 3:1–11). In Paul’s letters, especially Ephesians and Colossians, the apostle speaks of this mystery with great fervor. He virtually exhausts human language to convey its incomparable depths and unfathomable heights. Paul, along with other apostles and prophets of Century One, were “stewards of the divine mystery” (1 Cor. 4:1; Col. 1:25–26; Eph. 3:2–9).

On the day that God lifted the curtain and let the secret out, His enemy froze with terror. Satan never saw, dreamed, nor thought that such a thing could be possible. Although God revealed His mystery in the first century, it remains a secret to many Christians today. The Holy Spirit must open the eyes of His people in every generation for them to grasp it. In this way, the great prayer of Paul in Ephesians 1:17–23 is still being answered.

The divine mystery has everything to do with the woman I spoke of earlier. This amazing lady fills the pages of Holy Scripture. She shows up at the very beginning of the Bible; she appears all throughout the middle; and she’s there at the very end. The Scriptures give us an exalted view of this woman along with her immaculate Husband. Each book of the Bible pulsates with her fragrance.

The Eternal Drama

In Genesis 1 and 2, the Bible opens up with a woman and a man. In Revelation 21 and 22, the Bible closes with a woman and a man. The Bible opens up with a wedding, and it ends with a wedding. It opens with a marriage, and it ends with a marriage. It opens with a boy and a girl, and it ends with a boy and a girl.

Your Bible is essentially a love story.

In fact, it's the greatest love story of all time. It is *the* classic romantic tale. Those who know me well can tell you that I'm a huge fan of love stories. My favorite movies are romantic films. These films have the power to evoke strong emotion, even pulling tears from the eyes of their viewers. Yet the most powerful love story that any human has ever crafted pales in comparison to the epic romance that runs throughout your Bible.

Please pay attention to this next sentence: Every love story that the minds of mortal men and women construct, every love story that has made its appearance in the pages of human history—whether fiction or nonfiction—is but a reflection, a pale image, a faint portrait, a scrambled version of the sacred romance of the ages.

God has authored the most incredible love story ever written. It is a story that has set the standard for all romantic literature to follow. Every great saga follows the story line of the hidden romance contained in Scripture. But none can trump it.

You and I were born into such a romance, the romance of the ages.

The heavenly romance that I've been speaking about begins in Genesis 2. Let us now revisit day seven of God's creation and watch the drama unfold.