

Series "Our Riches In Christ"
"Mystery Solved"
Ephesians 3:1-13
Study-9

"The Mystery Solved;" God's Plan Through The Church That Both Jews And Gentiles (Non-Jews) are all included; become one through salvation!

Paul in our passage turns from them to himself. Paul now speaks from his heart as to his part in God's great plan of salvation.

Ephesians 3:1-13 – Paul gives an autobiography of his role to the Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:14-21 – Paul prays a second time for the Church.

Paul covers 2 specific areas:

- 1. God Had Given Paul A Revelation To A Mystery.**
- 2. God Had Commissioned Paul To Proclaim These Truths.**

Thought Of The Passage: "God Has Revealed His Truth. So, We Are To Proclaim That Truth, Being Willing To Suffer For The Truth."

1. Verses 1-7 – The Nature Of Paul's Ministry

2. Verses 8-13 – The Purpose Of Paul's Ministry

1. Verses 1-7 – The Nature Of Paul's Ministry:

Ephesians 3:1 – "For this reason" – What reason is Paul referring to? He is referring to Ephesians 2:11-22.

"I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus" – "Prisoner of Christ Jesus!" He was not a victim but a victor because his life was in the hands of God!

You look at the letters that Paul wrote during his imprisonment, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians.

"for the sake of you Gentiles—" – Paul was in prison because of the truths that Jesus Christ had revealed to him.

Verses 2-6 – Paul's Stewardship: Ephesians 3:2 – "stewardship" – or "dispensation" comes from 2 Greek words. The first means "house" and the second "law." We get our English word "economy;" we get "Law of the house," stewardship, management.

We are currently living in the "Dispensation of Grace" that God is desiring for people to come to Him; because the following dispensation will be the "Dispensation of Judgment," The wrath of God will be poured out on this Christ rejecting world. The dispensation that preceded "Dispensation of Grace," was the "Dispensation of Law."

Paul tells us in verse 6 what this "Dispensation" is – 1) Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. 2) Salvation for Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:3 – "revelation" – a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning things before unknown, to unveil, to uncover.

"mystery" – 3X in verses 3,4,9; this is one of Paul's favorite terms, "Mystery." Paul uses this term 17X in the NT.

"Mystery" in Scripture means "something once hidden or formerly unknown but now has been revealed through the Holy Spirit."

The "Mystery" was the bringing together of the Jews and Gentiles as one new man in a society called the Church. This was new news to the world.

Galatians 1:15-17

"I wrote before in brief." – Probably a reference to Ephesians 2:11-22 that Paul had just written to them.

Ephesians 3:4 – "understand my insight into the mystery of Christ," – "insight" – knowledge, reflective thought, natural insight.

Ephesians 3:5 – "other generations was not made known" – O.T. revealed that God wanted to bless the world through the Jews; that God wanted to save the Gentiles. But to what extent and where would they figure into God's great plan?

1. Jesus had spoken about the "Church," Matthew 16:16-19, 18:17
2. Jesus taught the concept of being in Christ (abiding), John 15:1-17
3. Jesus had taught that the Holy Spirit would open the Word, John 14:26, 16:13

"now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;" – The ministry of the holy – "set apart" apostles and prophets were to preach Jesus Christ.

O.T. Passage – Genesis 12:3

Isaiah 49:6

NT. Passage explains the Mystery – Acts 13:46-47

Galatians 3:8

Ephesians 3:6

He now explains again what the “Mystery of Christ” is. It is 3 parts:

- 1. Gentiles are fellow heirs** – When a person comes to Christ, they receive all of what Jesus has to offer. Blessings of Jews and Gentiles are the same in Christ.
- 2. Fellow members of the body** – This speaks of this union in Christ, where we strive for unity in the Church.
- 3. Fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

This “Mystery” of Jews and Gentiles together with the laying aside of the “Jewish Theocracy under God,” was to be replaced by a new dispensation called the Church.

Romans 11:13-15; James 1:22-25

Verse 7 – Paul’s Service: Ephesians 3:7 – “a minister” – “servant, one who waits on tables, one who is under another.”

Mark 10:45

“according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me,” – God had given him “the grace of the revelation.”

“according to the working” – “energy”; “of His power.” – word in English “dynamite, dynamic;” God does the work, as we yield to His Holy Spirit.

2. Verses 8-13 – The Purpose Of Paul’s Ministry:

Ephesians 3:8 – “To me, the very least of all saints,” – “least” – Literally, “less than least, leisters;” Paul – Latin meant “little, small.”

1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:15

Paul now tells of 3 parts to his commission:

- 1. Salvation Purpose** – “this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,”

“unfathomable riches of Christ,” – inexplorable, untraceable, inexhaustible, incalculable.

Ephesians 3:9

- 2. Theological Purpose** – Make known the mystery to all.

- 3. Ultimate Purpose** – Inform the angels, Verses 10-11.

Ephesians 3:10

1 Peter 1:12 – “things into which angels long to look.” – Literally, “stoop to look.” Hebrews 1:14 – ministering spirits to the Church.

Ephesians 3:11 – This mystery was planned by God and carried out by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:12 – “we have boldness” – literally “to speak all that is on one’s heart”

Ephesians 3:13 – That tribulation always comes before glory.

Application:

- 1. The Church Is Central To God.** It Is Not An Afterthought Of God. God Has Chosen To Work In These Last Days Through The Church. The Church – It Is Not Perfect But It Is God’s Plan.
- 2. The Church Is Central To The Gospel.** People Are Saved To Be Placed In The Church. They Are Saved To Become A Body, A Single Unit.
- 3. The Church Is Central To Christian Living.** Paul Was Suffering For The Truth Of The Church And Would Die For The Church. We Need To Pray And Work And Suffer To Make The Vision A Reality. “When We Take God For Our God, We Take His People For Our People”