

A Study of Ephesians 3

Review

Chapter 1

- Paul greets Christians at the church at Ephesus.
- Paul praises God for what He accomplished through Jesus Christ – (1) the adoption of all believers into the family of God and (2) all things, including the church, being united under the headship of Jesus Christ.
- Paul thanks God for the faith and love of the Ephesian Christians and prays that God will give them greater knowledge of God and all that He is accomplishing through Jesus.

Chapter 2

- Before Christ they were dead in their sins and controlled by their sinful minds and flesh as well as the “spirit” of this world.
- Because of God’s great love and grace, He sent Jesus Christ to make them alive again so that they might be the God’s workmanship, the church, and do the works that God has prepared for them.
- The first stage in God’s masterpiece is uniting the Gentiles with the Jews in the church as one body in Christ, the dwelling place of God.

Chapter 3

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Paul is about to pray, but before he does puts in a rather large parenthetical statement (verses 2-13). Here Paul will reveal God’s mystery.

In this chapter, Paul describes more the great work of God. He calls it a mystery.

Verse 1

Paul begins a thought here that he will complete in verse 14 – *For this reason, I bow my knee before the Father, ...* He identifies himself *as a prisoner of Christ Jesus*. Why is he identifying himself this way?

Verse 2

In verse 2, Paul refers to the *stewardship of God's grace*. The word *stewardship* refers to his office or position. *Of God's grace* refers to the mystery that God revealed to him. He is referring to his mission to the Gentiles, which will become clearer in the following verses.

Verse 3

Paul says the he received the mystery from God by (or according to) revelation. Two important words need to be defined here.

Mystery

Revelation

Verse 4

Paul refers to the mystery as the mystery of _____. How does this connect to what Paul has written about already in this letter?

Verses 5-6

In verse 5, Paul indicates that this is a new revelation given to the first-century apostles and prophets. What is the mystery of Christ according to verse 6?

Why is this a mystery?

Why is it so significant?

Verses 7-8a

Paul specifies the “stewardship” that he referenced earlier – to be a minister of the gospel. How does Paul show in these verses that this is the work of God? *There are 5 different ways.*

Verses 8b-9

What were the two jobs that Paul was given to fulfill this ministry?

What two groups were the recipient of Paul's ministry?

Verse 10

This verse gives the ultimate purpose of this mystery. There are three important parts to it:

- What will be revealed?
- Through whom will it be revealed?
- To whom will it be revealed?

Verse 10 gives us the ultimate purpose for the church. According to Paul in this letter, how will the church do this?

Verse 11

What does Paul remind the Ephesian Christians of here?

Verse 12

What do we have in Christ according to verse 12?

What does Paul mean by “boldness”? Why can we have boldness in Christ?

Verse 13

Paul has reminded them of how his mission to the Gentiles is connected to God’s overall plan for the church and all creation. He adds this clause *what I am suffering for you, which is your glory*. What does Paul mean when he connects his suffering (i.e., being imprisoned for 3-4 years) to their glory?

Reflection

How do we better fulfill the purpose that God has given the church?