



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion

Ephesians, Chapter 3 (verses 1-13)

Revelation of Mystery

Wednesdays
7.30-8.30PM

Messenger of Mystery (1-5): Why was Paul imprisoned? What title does Paul use for himself? What was Paul's dispensation? Who was Paul's teacher? What mystery was revealed? Why was it not revealed in the Old Testament?

Details of Mystery (6-7): What are the three elements of the mystery? How is the blessing of Church different from the OT blessings to Jews? When does Church age begin & end?

Paul's ministry (8-9): What was the secret of Paul's effective ministry? What were the areas of focus of Paul's ministry? What did he preach? What are the 'unsearchable riches of Christ'? What is the 'fellowship of the mystery'?

Purpose of the Mystery (10-13): To whom should the church reveal the mystery? What must be known by all? What is God's eternal purpose? What gives us Boldness and Access? What is Paul's perspective on his suffering?

Personal Reflection: *How do we respond to tribulations in life?*

5.12.21



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Personal Reflection: *How do we respond to tribulations in life?*

Paul seen as a Model Student & Sufferer

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Messenger of Mystery (1-5)

Why was Paul imprisoned? What title does Paul use for himself?

What was Paul's dispensation? Who was Paul's teacher?

What mystery was revealed? Why was it not revealed in the Old Testament?

Paul's imprisonment and title (1)

Paul's imprisonment

- Paul was imprisoned after being falsely accused of taking Trophimus, an Ephesian, into forbidden area of Temple (Acts 21:39-22:22)
- Imprisoned because of his ministry to gentiles

Paul's preferred title

- Prisoner for Christ (although prisoner of Rome)
- Our Titles in ministry (if any) should glorify God, not ourselves!
 - God's servant, commonly used in assemblies ... appropriate & preferred title

Paul's special dispensation (2,3)

Dispensation of Grace


- Paul is chosen by God as special vessel/messenger/steward to release the gospel and mysteries revealed to him (Acts 9:15, 13:47, 22:21, Galatians 2:2,8)
- A great honor that God chose **Paul** to take His message to gentiles. **Peter** primarily ministered among the Jews (in Acts)
- The **mission and the message** was given to Paul. Paul was only a **vessel**.
 - Same should be true in our ministry

Paul ... a model student (3)

Paul's Teachers

Before conversion (Hebrew scriptures): Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)

After conversion: I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by **revelation from Jesus Christ**. (Galatians 1:11-12, NIV)
Paul spent three years in Arabia (Galatians 1:15-20)



Who is
our
Teacher?

Mystery of Christ (4,5)

Not fully revealed in the Old Testament but **now revealed** by apostles and prophets (in church age) (also verse 9)

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but **now** is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (**Colossians 1:26,27**)

Details of Mystery (6-7)

What are the three elements of the mystery? How is the blessing of Church different from the OT blessings to Jews? When does Church age begin & end?

Mystery Details (6)

- ❑ Converted Gentiles will be **fellow heirs** (along with converted Jews)
- ❑ Gentiles will be **members of the same body**
- ❑ Gentiles will be **partakers of the promise** in Christ (all the promises in-Christ, including Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8), blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:10-14))

(From Ephesians 2:14-16) seen last week

Blessed Union of Jews & Gentiles

Jews and Gentiles made One ... By destroying the source of differences

- Broke middle wall of partition
- Enmity between Jews and Gentiles abolished
- Law as a source of enmity/superiority/righteousness removed
- Reconciled Jews & Gentiles unto God in one body (the church)

**Unity attained at the Cross. Cross becomes the new focal point,
not culture or traditions or law or geography, etc.**

Union lead to citizenship, adoption into family, membership to church

ONE IN CHRIST JESUS!

There is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus
(Galatians 3:28, NIV)

OT and NT blessings

Blessing of the **OT** (to Jews) and Blessings of the Church (**NT**)

- Israel's blessing – material (Deuteronomy 28)
 - Church's blessing – spiritual (Ephesians 1:3)
- Israel's calling – earthly nation, promised land of Canaan
 - Church's calling – heavenly bride, New Jerusalem

Church Age

Church **BEGAN** when the Holy Spirit descended
(Acts 2, I Corinthians 12:13)

&

ENDS with the Rapture
(I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:23-24,51-58)

Paul's ministry (8-9)

What was the secret of Paul's effective ministry?

What were the areas of focus of Paul's ministry? What did he preach?

What are the 'unsearchable riches of Christ'?

Paul's effective ministry (8)

Secret of success

- **Called** by God for ministry (Acts 9)
- **Humility** (least of all saints, 8 & chiefest of sinners, I Timothy 1:15)
- **Dependent** on God's grace and power (7, II Corinthians 12:9-10)

Areas of Focus in Paul's Ministry

- ☐ Preach the gospel (Theme: Unsearchable riches of Christ)
- ☐ Strengthen saints
- ☐ Assist local churches
- ☐ Epistles (Main Topics: Spiritual Blessings, Church, Practical insights)

Purpose of the *Mystery* (10-13)

To whom should the church reveal the mystery? What must be known by all?
What is God's eternal purpose? What gives us Boldness and Access? What is Paul's
perspective on his suffering?

Purpose of the mystery (10,11)

To reveal (through the church) the manifold wisdom of God to angelic beings in heavenly realms. Mystery was not revealed to angels

- What can we teach angels?
(possible topics ... the mystery of the church, God's plan in redeeming gentiles, God's plan in making sinner into a saint, God's plan in defeating sin/death/Satan at the cross)
- Eternal purpose accomplished through Christ at the cross


Approaching our Heavenly Father

- **Boldness** ... to speak without any fear
- **Access** ... entrance opened
- **Confidence** ... knowing He welcomes us and hears us
- Made possible through our faith in Christ

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”
(Hebrews 4:16)

Paul's perspective on suffering (13)

- **Long-term perspective** ... suffering is the path to glory
- **External perspective** ... it will bless others
- **Kingdom perspective** ... it will benefit the work of the Kingdom
- **Godly perspective** ... it is in God's will



**What is our
perspective
to pain?**

Hence Paul could write, we glory in Tribulations (**Romans 5:3**)