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### Ephesians 3

Paul has been telling the Ephesians about all the spiritual blessings they have “in Christ Jesus” and prayed for the illumination of the Holy Spirit to recognize this wealth by God’s love. Eph. 1

1. Wealth beyond their imagination.
2. An inheritance that is undeserved
3. Riches that cannot be measured.

Then Paul went on to tell the Ephesians the miracle of God’s salvation as he explained vividly the condition of their past life and how the grace of God had transformed them into one body, Jew and Gentile. Eph. 2

Now Paul wants to focus on the revelation of the gospel and the petition for the enablement of the believer. Eph. 3

\* This is the last chapter of the doctrinal section, the wealth of the believer by the love of God.

1. Paul, the messenger of the gospel. Eph. 3:1-7
2. Paul's ministry of the gospel. Eph. 3:8-12
3. Paul’s sufferings for the gospel. Eph. 3:13, 1
4. Paul's intercession for the recipients of the gospel. Eph. 3:14-21

\* This is Paul’s second prayer. Eph. 1:15-23

#### **3:1-7 Paul the messenger of the gospel.**

**3:1** Paul’s intention to pray for the Ephesians.

- 1) The phrase “for this reason” looks back to what Paul had just revealed about God regarding the Gentiles to make them part of the family of God by grace. 2:19-22
- 2) The phrase equally looks forward to his prayer in verse fourteen, after his digression about the gospel message. vs. 2-13
- 3) Paul declares himself to be a prisoner of Christ, not of Nero or Rome. Eph. 4:1; 6:20; Col. 4:18; Phil. 1:7, 13, 14, 16; Phile. 10, 13  
\* Paul always considered himself a “dulos” a bond servant
- 4) Paul was a prisoner due to his call to the Gentiles as he had been arrested in the temple, being accused of bringing Gentiles in, we are told Trophimus. Acts 21:14, 21, 28
  - a) He calls himself the apostle of the Gentiles. Rom. 11:13
  - b) A teacher of Gentiles. 1Tim. 2:7

**3:2** Paul’s digression prior to his prayer dealing with himself as the messenger of the gospel.

- 1) Paul gets side-tracked, purposely not because he is a scatter brain.

- 2) The expression “If indeed you have heard” is the affirmative “since you have heard”.
- 3) He tells the Ephesian of the dispensation of the grace of God given to him for the Gentiles.
  - a) The word dispensation is made up of two words “oikos” which means house
  - b) The other word is “nomos” which means law.
  - c) Together they mean a management The administration and strategy “given” to him for the implementation of the grace of God.
  - d) Grace being synonymous with his office as a preacher and teacher through the gospel. Eph. 2:5, 8

**3:3** Paul received his call by revelation directly from God.

- 1) The revelation “apocalupsis” means laying bare. Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17, 18; Gal. 1:11-17; 2:8
- 2) The mystery refers to the gospel of grace. Col. 1:26-27; 4:1-2
  - a) Something kept secret, but now made known, the gospel that Jew and Gentile were to be one.
  - b) There is the mystery of the rapture, 1Cor. 15

- c) There is the mystery of iniquity. 2 Thess. 2
- d) There is the mystery of godliness. 1Tim. 3
- 3) The apostle handwritten already in few words inn this letter. Eph. 2:11-22; 1:9-10; Col. 1:9; 2:2

**3:4** The whole intent of Paul was that they understand God’s plan of grace.

- 1) The word understand “noeo” simply means to receive into the mind or perceive, possible only by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) The word knowledge “sunesis” means a running together, the critical understanding and apprehension to give insight.
  - \* The combination of assimilation and accommodation, resulting in insightful wisdom and clarity of mind and heart!

**3:5** The gospel was for a particular time.

- 1) The mystery of Christ to bring about Jew and Gentile as one in what is know as the bride of Christ, the church was never seen or imagined.
  - a) This was not know by the sons of men, the Jews, obscure from time and people.

- b) Revealed by the Spirit to His Holy apostles and prophets, the contrast is between the Old Testament and the New. Eph. 2:20
- 2) That the Gentiles were to be saved was known, but the Jew though it would be through proselytizing.
  - \* This is the mystery explained in verse three!
- 3) It was veiled in its fullness of clarity, even as Jesus sent His disciples to the Jews at first not the gentiles. Matt. 10:5
- 4) Jesus told the woman of Samaria, “The is coming and now is...” Jn. 4:23
  - a) It was unveiled in the fullness of Christ. Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26; 1Cor. 2:7; Is. 11:10; 42:6; 43:19, 21; 49:1; 60:3; Zach. 2:11; Mal. 1:11
  - b) God told Abraham in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Gen. 12:3
  - c) James affirmed that the prophet of old and the apostle of the new were in agreement and the Holy Spirit was in agreement. Acts 15

**3:6** The message was revolutionary.

- 1) That the Gentile should be fellow heirs of the same body.

- 2) That the Gentile be partakers of the promise of Christ through the gospel. Eph. 2:13-18
  - \* Paul says, “Is he the God of the Jews only?” Rom. 3:29
- 3) Jesus said that He had other sheep which were not of this fold, the Jews. Jn. 10:16; Gal. 3:14
- 4) Paul declares, “Give no offense neither to the Jew, Gentile or church of God.” 1Cor. 10:32

**3:7** The enabling of Paul for ministry.

- 1) He became a minister “deacon” one who serves, a waiter on tables, referring back to verse two.
- 2) He became this according to the gift of grace given. (handiwork, 2:10)
- 3) He knew that it was by the effective working of God’s power. Eph. 1:19
  - \* The word working “energeia” of His power “dynamis”. Eph. 1:19-20

**3:8-13** Paul's ministry of the gospel.

**3:8** Paul’s perspective of himself.

- 1) He said he was less than the least “elachistotero” of all the saints, literally the lesser or more least.
  - \* Perhaps a play on words regarding his name Paul, little one?

- a) He calls himself the least of apostles. 1Cor. 15:8-9; 2Cor. 12:11
- b) He calls himself the chief of sinners. 1Tim. 1:15
- 2) He was given this grace in order to enable him to fulfill his calling, to preach “euangelisasthai”, to announce good news among the Gentiles. Eph. 2:17
  - a) Preaching is warning every man. Col. 1:28
  - b) Paul here uses the good news to indicate the unsearchable “anexichniastos” riches of Christ to the believer, that which cannot be traced out.
  - c) The phrase appears only two times in the New Testament. Rom. 11:33; LXX Job 5:9; 9:10; 34:24
  - d) The word riches “Ploutos” of the fourteen times it is found in the New Testament, five are in Ephesians. Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Col. 2:3

**3:9** The description of the unsearchable riches in Christ.

- 1) To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery.
  - a) The word see “photisai” means to bring to light, make plain and clear,, that no one be in darkness anymore.

- b) The word fellowship “koinonia” means partnership, oneness, etc.
- c) The mystery “mysterion” that which was previously hidden in God, the salvation of the Gentiles. Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:25-27
- d) Who created all things through Christ. Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:1-2
- 2) The Jews read the fulfilment of the New Testament with a veil over their eyes. 2Cor. 3:14

**3:10** The secondary purpose regards the angels in heaven.

- 1) That God’s manifold wisdom might be made know to the angel by the church.
  - a) The multi-color wisdom of God, that which was previously hidden, the salvation of the Gentile, Jew and Gentile one now revealed to the angels. Eph. 2:16, 19; 3:6
- 2) These are good angels not bad ones, angels are seeing God's manifold wisdom of how he redeemed man through the daily life of the church. 1Cor. 2:5-8
- 3) Angeles desired to look into, stoop down literally. 1Pet. 1:12
  - \* Paul had angels appear to him as well as the Lord. Acts 18:9-10; 27:23-25

**3:11** The display of God's eternal purpose in Christ to the angels. Eph. 1:11

- 1) They are not all knowing.
- 2) They are not as privileged as the church.

**3:12** The benefits of the believer in Christ. 1:18

- 1) Boldness "parrhesia" freedom of speech, in Christ.
- 2) Access to God.
- 3) Confidence through faith in Him, one Spirit. Eph. 6:19; 2:18; Heb. 4:14-16

**3:13** Paul's concern for the Ephesians care for him in prison.

- 1) This is the conclusion of what precedes, that he is a prisoner of Jesus for the eternal purposes of God regarding the church. vs. 1; Col. 1:24; 2Tim. 2:10
- 2) I ask you not to lose heart or faint "enkakein", which means to become good for nothing by losing courage. Lk. 18:1; 2Cor. 4:1, 16
- 3) My tribulation which means pressure, anguish and persecution.
  - a) Jesus called Paul to suffer for His name's sake... Acts 9:15-16
  - b) Paul declared it was for furtherance of gospel. Phil. 4:22; 1Cor. 4: 2 Cor. 11:1-3; Phil. 3:1-11

4) Resulting in their glory or their benefit in Christ.

**3:14-21** Paul's ministry of intercession for the gospel recipients.

**3:14** Paul resumes his intention to pray for the Ephesians.

\* Paul's second prayer. Eph. 3:14-21

- 1) The verse look back to verse one.
  - a) The firsts prayer was for illumination
  - b) The second prayer is for enablement and empowerment through God's love.
- 2) The position is kneeling, a position of humility and reverence seeking the will of God.
  - a) There are many physical postures of prayer in the Scriptures but the most important position is of our hearts.
  - b) Solomon prayed standing and ended up sitting with his arms stretched out. 1Kings 8
- 3) The Father is the source of our salvation and the One we are to go to in Jesus name. Jn. 16:23; Eph. 2:18

**3:15** God is the Father of the church family.

- 1) Those born again in Christ, not the universal fatherhood of all living.

2) In heaven and earth, the church universal. Eph. 1:10

**3:16** The request of Paul.

1) To be strengthened “krataiothenai” the opposite of becoming faint and loosing heart in verse thirteen, the inner man.

2Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10

a) According to the riches of His glory.  
Eph. 1:6, 17; 2:4, 7

b) Through the might of His Spirit. 1:19-20, 5:18

**3:17** The purpose and result.

2) Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith dwell

a) To settle down, feel at home rooted

b) To be rooted like a tree for nourishment and dependency. Ps. 1:1-3

c) To be grounded as the foundation of building, resulting in stability.

d) The word is agape love agape, towards God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

1)) knowledge without love is nothing. 1Cor. 13:1-3

2)) The ongoing practice day to day.  
Gal. 4:19

**3:18** The goal of Paul is that the believer grasp the magnitude of God’s love for the sinner.

1) To comprehend, grasp the unconditional love of God for the sinner, in order to tap into the unlimited resources of God’s love for our fellowman!

a) The width, to cover Jew and Gentile

b) The length, to cover all eternity.

c) The depth, to cover the worst of sins.

d) The height, to cover all of humanity!

**3:19** The ability beyond our own.

3) To know the love of Christ for us, to know “ginosko” by experience.

a) That he died while we were sinner.

b) Surpasses knowledge, our abilities to grasp it potential or how it is possible!

4) To be filled with the fullness of God, **unto** the full capacity in Christ for people. Eph. 4:13; Col. 2:9-10

**3:20** How it is possible.

1) This the climax of Paul’s prayer, the doxology.

2) Here is the key, to all that has been prayed for and all that follows for the practical section in chapter 4-6, the walk of the believer in the love of God, it is unto Him that is able, not us!

- 3) The exceedingly, abundantly, above all describes the sufficiency of God. 1Thess. 3:10, 5:13
- a) All that we can ask for, for He is not only our Father but able to do.
  - b) All that we can think or consider, He is not limited by our limitation nor confined to our small mind.
- \* Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 1:3; 2:1-4; Phil. 4:6-7, 13

**3:21** The glory belongs to God alone.

\* The benediction.

- 1) To Him be glory, to the Father. Eph. 1:6, 12, 14
- 2) In the church, Jew and gentile, the called out people of God.
- 3) By Jesus Christ, the redeemer and mediator of man.
- 4) Forever and ever, no one will ever be able to claim any glory for anything.
- 5) Amen, so be it, verily.