

EPHESIANS 3

1-7: Paul's apostolic ministry to disclose "the mystery"

1 ¶ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles--

Captive, under the control of a captor

1st ref to Paul's imprisonment (notes fr Ryrie Eph Intro)

Prison Letters, 1st Roman Imprisonment: Ephesians (3:1), Philippians (1:7), Colossians (4:10), Philemon (1:9) – 2 yrs in rented house w/Praetorian Guard (Ac 28:30)

Prison Letter, 2nd Roman Imprisonment: 2Timothy (1:8)

Paul understood he was chosen to preach to the Gentiles, and to suffer...

Ac 9:15 But the Lord said to him [Ananias in Damascus], "Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name *before Gentiles*, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 "For I will show him how many things *he must suffer* for My name's sake."

2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Dispensing (grace)... - LIT: To give, distribute, hand out... in a personal way; CONTRAST: Broadcast impersonally Specifically given to Paul to, in turn, share with "all men" – as spoken by Ananias of Damascus...

Ac 22:14 "Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 'For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

IOW: Not directly understood through "study" (though confirmable and consistent w/God's word)

Eph 1:9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.

4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

IOW: "Ephesians" is given that we might understand Paul's knowledge & disclosure of "the mystery (v6)"

5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

To Paul (as mentioned, v3) and to Peter...

Ac 11:17 "If therefore God gave them [Gentiles / Cornelius] the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I [Peter] that I could withstand God?" 18 When they [Apostles & Brethren in Judea] heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Gentiles are fellow heirs w/ "the apostles and prophets (v5)"

Eph 2:16 That He might *reconcile them both to God in one body* through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

God's power... 1) effective 2) works

8-13: The benefits and consequences of Paul's ministry

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Not 'false humility', but a genuine knowledge/understanding of himself, BC (persecutor) & AD (Ro 7:24 wretched) Paul later regarded himself "chief of sinners"...

1Ti 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

Pt 1 of Paul's preaching (Pt 2 = v9): Christ's riches & its limitlessness

JFB: "whose treasures can never be fully explored"

9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

Pt 2 of Paul's preaching (Pt 1 = v8): Christ's fellowship [unity/body], for both the Jew & Gentile

10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

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God's wisdom is not singular, but has "many-folds", like the pages of a book that awaits reading

These discoveries of/by the church are, in turn, disclosed to the heavenly realm

11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

The ministry of Jesus and His purpose is eternal

1) originated in eternity past 2) effective for eternity present 2) remains applicable for eternity future

12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

"Boldness and access" to appear before Him

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you [Gentiles] who once were far off [separated by "walls" of the Law and of the Temple Courts] have been brought near [to the Holy of Holies / Mercy Seat] by the blood of Christ.

Mr 15:37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. 38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Emphasizes that the "boldness & access" is because of His work, in which we trust, not our own efforts

Isa 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

KJV: "Faint not" – IMPL: A heart that stops beating, and life that ceases to continue

IOW: Keep living, despite the tribulations that came to Paul because of preaching God's truth/revelation

Paul's "tribulations" (incl'g imprisonment) are acceptable to him because the message is for the Gentile's glory

14-21 Paul's intercessory prayer

14 ¶ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul's intercession, because they could "lose heart (v13)"

NOTE: Prayer is verbal, yet the body can be 'moved' (ie bow, prostrate, lift hands) to match the Spirit

The "structure" of prayer: TO the Father, THROUGH the Son, Inspired BY the Spirit

15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The whole family has the same name = paternal relationship (like a last name)

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

LIT: To give, as with a charitable gift

To give from the vast riches of His "unsearchable (v8 can never be fully explored)" storehouse of glory!

6 Prayer Points (v16-19):

1) "To be strengthened... with might... through His Spirit... in the inner man"

Inner might is to be more prized than outer might

Samson would have been better w/ inner strength than outer strength

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

2) "Christ dwell in your hearts"

dwell (2730. katoikeo, kat-oy-keh'-o) = to house permanently, reside

3) "Root and grounded in love"

Ps 1:3 He [whose delight is in the law of the LORD] shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--

4) "Comprehend... with all the saints (inclusive, collective; not private)... the width/length/depth/height"

IOW: The full dimensions (comprehensive comprehension) of His love (v17 & v19)

"Width" – world-wide, embracing all (JFB)

"Length" – extending through all ages (JFB)

"Depth" – profound wisdom which no creature can fathom (JFB)

"Height" – beyond the reach of any foe to deprive (JFB)

19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

5) "Know the love of Christ... which passes knowledge" – IOW: To know His infinite love... and beyond!

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6) "Filled with all the fullness of God" – IOW: That His vast fullness would dwell within

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

He's worthy to be glorified (v21)... because of all that He is (detailed in the balance of this verse)

"Exceedingly abundantly above" = above³

Verbal AND inward considerations

"His Spirit in the inner man" (v16)

21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The Church is to glorify God (*presently*)...

AND to *all* generations, *forever*, (and even more) *ever*