

Lesson 5

Read Ephesians chapter 3

Paul the prisoner

In verse 1, Paul begins "For this reason...." No doubt he is referring to chapter two where he described how Jews and Gentiles are now united in Christ and are jointly part of God's household, of which Christ is the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets are the foundation.

1. Paul now describes himself as what? (vs. 1b)

The prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of you Gentiles.

*Paul was literally in prison at this time, probably in Rome. (2 Tim 1:16 & 17)
For more insight into Paul's prison experience, read Phil. 1:12-18. Acts 21:15 through Acts 28:30 gives the entire history of this period.*

A mystery revealed

2. Next, Paul shifts to a treatise on his own calling about being an apostle specifically sent to the Gentiles. What is his concern expressed in vs. 13?

He was afraid that they would be discouraged because of his suffering for them.

3. Paul was a unique individual with a unique ministry at a unique time in history. The death and resurrection of Christ gave birth to the church, the bride of Christ, the combined believers of all nationalities. God chose Paul specifically to evangelize and train these new believers. Read Gal. 1:11-24. How was Paul instructed about all of these new spiritual truths? (vs. 12)

He received it by revelation from Christ - probably when he was in Arabia for 3 years (or Damascus?) vs. 17 & 18

4. How does Paul describe these new truths in Eph. 3:3?

A mystery made known to him by revelation

5. In Eph. 3:5, Paul explains that a mystery in Scripture is something that has been previously hidden, but is now being revealed. What is the mystery that Paul is discussing in this passage? (vs. 6)

That through the gospel the Gentiles can now be fellow heirs together with Israel and sharers of the promise in Christ.

6. Look back to verse 5 and notice who this has been revealed to and how it was done.

By the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets

7. According to verse 7, how did Paul receive this ministry?

A gift of God's grace through His power

8. Compare Ephesians 3:8 with I Tim 1:13-17. Why did Paul feel unworthy to have this ministry? How does he describe himself?

Less than the least of all God's people & the worst of all sinners

9. From verse 8b and 9a, what specific ministry had God assigned to Paul?

To preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make this mystery plain to everyone

10. God was now using the church to reveal His previously concealed plan (mystery) to whom? verse 10 and also I Peter 1:10-12.

Rulers & authorities in the heavenly realms
I Peter - prophets didn't understand when they spoke - even angels wondered

11. Because of the working of His plan, what do believers now have according to Ephesians 3:12?

We can now approach God with freedom & confidence

12. Paul doesn't want the Ephesians to be discouraged because of his suffering. What good purpose does he see for his trials in verse 13?

It is for their glory

13. Again, in verse 14, Paul begins "for this reason". This again takes us back to the mystery that has been revealed about the Jews and Gentiles now being one in Christ and about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles who are now being saved. What is Paul's response to this in verse 14?

He kneels before the Father

Praying for others

14. Let's take a closer look at Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21

Who was he praying for? (vs. 16) [the Ephesians](#)

How are God's riches described? (vs. 16) [glorious](#)

What does he ask for them? (vs. 16) [strength with His power through the Spirit](#)

Why does he desire this for them? (vs. 17, 18 & 19a)

[So that Christ would dwell in their hearts and that they would be rooted and established in love & have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge](#)

What would be the result of this? (vs. 19b) [They would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God](#)

15. When you pray for others, what do you usually pray for?

[Health, help with problems, wisdom](#)

16. Read II Cor. 4:16-18. It is important and totally appropriate to pray for physical needs, but what do these verses remind us about?

[Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all - we need to fix our eyes on eternal things](#)

17. According to Ephesians 3:19, what is even more important than physical well-being in a Christian's life?

[To know God's love that surpasses knowledge and be filled to the measure of the fullness of God.](#)

18. Consider the people that you regularly pray for. Will you take this as a reminder and a challenge to pray for their spiritual needs and their growth in Christ?

[Yes](#)

19. What is the glorious truth presented in verse 20?

[God is able to do more than all we ask or imagine according to His power that is at work in us.](#)

20. When we consider all of the great and awesome truths that we have seen in this chapter, what should also be true? (vs. 21)

We should give God glory

21. Reread the following verses and make a list of the spiritual blessings that all believers have. Please notice that none of these things have to be earned. They are not reserved for the super- spiritual saints. These are things that every believer has from the moment they put their faith in Christ for salvation.

1:3 We have every spiritual blessing in Christ

1:4 We've been chosen to be holy and blameless in His sight

1:5 We've been adopted as children

1:6 He has freely given us His grace

1:7&8 We have redemption and forgiveness of sins

1:9 He made known to us the mystery of His will

1:11 We were chosen and predestined

1:13&14 Sealed by the Holy Spirit

2:1-5 We were dead in our transgressions but now we are alive

2:6 Raised up with Christ & seated with Him in heaven

2:7 In the future, He will show us the incomparable riches of His grace

2:8&9 Saved through faith

2:10 Created to do good works

2:12&13 Brought near to God by the blood of Christ

2:14-16 Reconciled to God through the cross

2:18 We have access to the Father

2:19-21 No longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God's people and members of His household

3:12 We can approach God with freedom and confidence

3:20&21 His power is at work in us

Based on these staggering truths, what is his plea to believers? (4:1b)

To live a life worthy of our calling

In the next lesson, we'll begin to explore how to walk in a manner worthy of our calling.