

**Title:** The “Mystery” Revealed**Passage:** Ephesians 3:1-13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which 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. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of 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. To 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, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

**Context:**

Book of Ephesians

- Ch 1: wealth and blessing God has poured out to His people
- Ch 2: what God did in individuals throughout all the nations (from death to life, spiritually) and bringing about reconciliation to each other.

Ch 3, Verse 1

- precursor to prayer to verse 14
- verses 1-12: Paul's detour as to why he is in chains

**Overview:**

- I. What is the spiritual mystery?
- II. How is this spiritual mystery revealed?
- III. How should this mystery be shared?

**I. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL MYSTERY?**

- Answer: Gentiles are fellow heirs to God's promises, fellow members of the same body with Jews, and fellow partakers in the Gospel.

Ephesians 3:6

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Word: “mystery”

- used repeatedly in passage (14 times)
- Greek meaning = special insight or knowledge
  - Christian mysteries = though beyond human discovery, they have been revealed to the apostles through the Holy Spirit

- Until Christ, people thought they needed to be Jews (following Old Testament laws) first before partaking in the blessings of God

### ***Why was this “mystery” so significant?***

Acts 21:27-28 (people were so against Paul for his preaching to kill him)

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”

Acts 22:21

And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

- Paul’s explained God’s revelation that the Gospel includes the Gentiles

“Fellow heirs” = “heirs together in the same body”

- Heir
  - See Romans 4 (God’s promise to Abraham)
  - See Galatians 3:29 (Extends God’s promise to all)

Galatians 3:29

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

- Heir of what?
  - Part of God’s body
  - Union of Jews and Gentiles as we are all sinners who came to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are all marching towards the same eternal home and partakers in the promise of Christ

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

## **II. HOW IS THIS SPIRITUAL MYSTERY REVEALED?**

- Answer: By revelation from God Himself

Ephesians 3:11

This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

- Acts 10 (Peter’s dream where God affirmed his calling to the Gentiles)

Acts 10:11-16

and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

### Acts 10:34-35

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

- Acts 15 (church recognized God's work among Gentiles)

### Acts 15:19

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God,

## **III. HOW SHOULD THIS MYSTERY BE SHARED?**

- Answer: By preaching the Gospel both individually and through the church

### Ephesians 3:9-10

and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

- People can see Christ through our lives.

### Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

### Ephesians 3:13

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

- Paul was in prison and he was willing to continue to suffer for Christ's sake because he recognized the great need for the world to know Christ.
- God has revealed The Answer (the Gospel of Christ) to the problems of the world. There is hope in Jesus Christ, the most amazing message!
- Question: What are you doing with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
  - You are either a Sender or a Goer
  - The mission field is everywhere around us, not only across the sea but also across the street.
  - Concerned about how others might react?

### Matthew 10:28

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- Trust in God how other people will respond

### 1 Corinthians 3:7

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

### Romans 10:14

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?