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## "THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS"

### Chapter Three

#### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THE CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the "mystery" so long hidden that is now revealed, and the role of the church
- 2) To examine Paul's prayer for the Ephesians' enablement, what it means for us today

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter Paul reminds his readers of God's grace that has been shown him regarding the revelation of the "mystery". By reading what he had written earlier, they would understand how the "mystery" pertained to Gentiles becoming fellow heirs in Christ, and Paul felt privileged to preach among the Gentiles what for ages had been hidden. Knowing that what he did was part of God's eternal purpose in Christ to make His manifold wisdom known by the church, he asked his brethren not to be discouraged by any tribulations he experienced on their behalf (1-13).

The chapter also contains Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians. He prays for their enablement, that the Father would strengthen them by His Spirit, that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith, that they be able to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, and so be filled with all the fullness of God. He concludes his prayer and this chapter by ascribing that glory be given to God in the church by Jesus Christ for all eternity (14-21).

#### OUTLINE

##### I. THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY (1-13)

###### **A. A MYSTERY ONCE HIDDEN, NOW REVEALED (1-7)**

1. Interrupting himself, Paul makes mention of God's grace (1-2)
  - a. A measure of grace given to him
  - b. Given for the benefit of his readers
2. That by revelation God made known to Paul the "mystery" (3-4)
  - a. Concerning which he wrote previously
  - b. Which as they read, they will understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ
3. A "mystery" once hidden, but now revealed (5)
  - a. In other ages it was not made known to men
  - b. But has now been revealed
    - 1) By the Spirit
    - 2) To God's holy apostles and prophets
4. The "mystery" involved the Gentiles (6)
  - a. That they should be fellow heirs, of the same body
  - b. That they should be partakers of God's promise through the gospel
5. Paul's role as a minister of this "mystery" was a gift from God (7)
  - a. A gift of God's grace

b. A gift given to him by the effective working of God's power

**B. PAUL'S TASK AS A MINISTER OF THIS "MYSTERY" (8-13)**

1. To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (8)
  - a. Even though he was "less than the least of all the saints"
  - b. Yet this grace was given to him
2. To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery (9-13)
  - a. Which from the beginning was hidden in God who created all things
  - b. But with the intention of now making God's wisdom known
    - 1) Made known by the church
    - 2) Made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places
  - c. According to God's eternal purpose which He fulfilled in Christ Jesus
    - 1) In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him
    - 2) For which Paul does not want them to lose heart over his tribulations in their behalf, which was for their glory

**II. PAUL'S SECOND PRAYER: FOR THEIR ENABLEMENT (14-21)**

**A. HIS INVOCATION (14-15)**

1. In view of God's grace to the Gentiles, Paul bows his knees in prayer (14a)
2. He addresses the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (14b-15)

**B. HIS PETITION (16-19)**

1. That they would be strengthened by the Spirit of God (16-17)
  - a. According to the riches of His glory
  - b. With might through His Spirit in the inner man
  - c. So Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith
2. That they might comprehend the love of Christ (18-19a)
  - a. Being rooted and grounded in love
  - b. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge
3. That they might be filled with all the fullness of God (19b)

**C. HIS DOXOLOGY (20-21)**

1. Glory to God, for what He is able to do! (20)
  - a. Able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think
  - b. According to the power that works in us
2. Glory to God, in the church! (21)
  - a. By Christ Jesus
  - b. Throughout all ages, world without end

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

**1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- The revelation of the mystery (1-13)
- Paul's second prayer: for their enablement (14-21)

**2) How does Paul identify himself as he begins this chapter? (1)**

- As the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles

- 3) **What dispensation, or measure, of grace was shown by God toward Paul? (2-3)**
  - That by revelation God made known to him the "mystery"
- 4) **What did Paul say we can have by reading what he had written? (3-4)**
  - We can understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ
- 5) **What does Paul reveal concerning the revelation of this mystery? (5)**
  - In other ages it was not made known, but has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets
- 6) **What is the "mystery" that has now been revealed? (6)**
  - That Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise through the gospel
- 7) **Though viewing himself as "less than the least of all the saints", what gracious task was given to Paul? (8-9)**
  - To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ
  - To make all see with is the fellowship of the mystery which was hidden from the beginning
- 8) **What was the intent for proclaiming the revelation of this mystery? (10)**
  - That the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to principalities and powers in the heavenly places
- 9) **According to what was all this being done? (11)**
  - The eternal purpose or plan which God accomplished in Christ Jesus
- 10) **What has Christ therefore made possible for us? (12)**
  - Boldness and access to God with confidence through faith in Him
- 11) **In view of God's grace given to Paul, what does he therefore ask? (14)**
  - For them not to lose heart over his tribulations on their behalf
- 12) **In Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians, for what does he ask? (14-19)**
  - That they would be strengthened by the Spirit of God
  - That they might comprehend the love of Christ
  - That they might be filled with all the fullness of God
- 13) **What does Paul say God is able to do? How? (20)**
  - Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think
  - According to the power that works in us
- 14) **In what entity does Paul seek to ascribe glory to God? How? For how long? (21)**
  - In the church
  - By Christ Jesus
  - Throughout all ages, world without end