

## EPHESIANS 3

### The Mystery

#### Ephesians 3:1 For this reason.... WHAT REASON?

- We need to back up a little and see the reason...
- **Ephesians 2:19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but **fellow citizens** with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, 21 in whom the whole building, **being fitted together**, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 **in whom you also are being built together** for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Paul says that the Church is one... Both Jew and Gentiles are one! Fellow Citizens... Fitted together... Built together... In Paul's trade of tent making – SEWN together!

#### FOR THIS REASON...

I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

- IE, The Jews who were unhappy about the Gentiles becoming a part of the New Church had conspired against Paul and had him arrested for violating the rules of the Temple – A CHARGE HE WAS INNOCENT OF.
- Paul DID NOT call himself a prisoner of Rome... He knew in his heart that it was the Lord who had orchestrated this trial; It was the Lord who had led him to this prison cell; It was the Lord who inspired him to write these letters that 2000 years later seem “ripped from the headlines...”
- Paul was no prisoner of men! He... was a prisoner of Jesus Christ – and PROUD to be!

...**the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—**

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

- I have a message for you Gentiles... FROM God! And... I think you're going to like it!

### **THE MESSAGE...**

3 how that **by revelation** He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, **(CH 1:10)** 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other **PAST** 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:

- In the Old Testament – in many places – it had been prophesied that Gentiles would be folded into the Family of God.
- BUT... The Jews , like Jonah, had hoped that they would NOT have to be witness to it!
- How many of us would like to be used by the Lord?, LIFT YOUR HANDS... In the city of Kyiv Ukraine... This was like Paul's assignment.
- The Jewish Christians in the first Church considered the Gentiles to be on the level of dogs, pigs, lepers if you will.
- Imagine if your daughter or grand-daughter announced that she felt called to go and minister to the Taliban...

### **THE MYSTERY...**

6 that the Gentiles should be **fellow heirs**, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister (**Pastor; Waiter**) according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

- One of the best parts of being a Pastor is preparing the spiritual meal that is served by teaching and preaching.
- We who are lucky enough to be full time get to start reading and studying on Monday for what we will share on Sunday...
- Paul felt privileged to have his call. SO DO I!

**HE SAYS...**

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, **(So much for self-esteem teaching, right?)** that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, **(IE, the riches never run out)** 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;

- LISTEN... All things were created through Jesus Christ...
- When “Let there be light” was commanded – Jesus was there!
- Let there be land and sea – Jesus was there!
- Let there be galaxies... Let there be stars... Let there be planets... Let there be shooting stars... Let there be rainbows... WHO WAS THERE?

**GOD... created all things through Jesus Christ.**

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*, **(Angels)** 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have **boldness and access** with confidence through faith in Him.

- Listen to these truths in the **NLT** – “God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence.”
- CCSV – This is really amazing... God is revealing to His church things that the ancient prophets had NO IDEA of... **(IE, The church age)**
  - He didn’t tell Adam about this – that Gentiles would be equal with God’s chosen... He didn’t tell Abraham, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekial... or even Daniel. He told Daniel, “Write this down – and then lock it up...” When was Daniel’s prophecy unlocked? When Daniel’s descendants showed up in the Christmas story...
  - God didn’t even tell **the last Old Testament prophet** about

this... His name was John the Baptizer. AND... When he complained to Jesus from prison – Jesus told him to try and keep his head... The Kingdom was here – for both the Jews and the Gentiles...

### **FROM PRISON PAUL WRITES...**

13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. **(IE, be honored)**

- A.W. Tozer was right when he said that before God can use a man greatly, He must allow him to be hurt deeply. Why? Because the old adage is true: People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care.
- I hope I can have a good attitude when it is MY TURN to take one for the team too. Paul was such a good example to us. He suffered and rejoiced while he suffered.

### **PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH**

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

- ALL OF US – Jew and Gentile... Old and young... Male and female... Black and white and all of the colors in the song, “Jesus loves the little children.”
  - I love that we will have no hyphens in heaven...
  - We will be, and already are – ONE FAMILY!

### **SO... BE A FAMILY...**

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

- **COURSON** - So many have knowledge in their heads, but it hasn't dropped eighteen inches into their hearts.

How does that happen?

Through prayer.”

**Isaiah 40:28** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, And to *those who have* no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

### **...STRENGTHENED...**

17 that Christ may dwell (**Be at home**) in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- When you see green Vineyards and orchards thriving in the desert you know that something has been provided in order to ground and root those plants and trees – What is it? H2O.
- When I see you going through an awful ordeal, but notice too that you are keeping your faith, keeping your joy, keeping your love for the Lord... I know that something has been provided in order to ground and root your faith in Jesus. Who is it? The Holy Spirit.
- He has made Himself at home in your heart...

### **GROUNDING AND ROOTED YOU...**

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Deep and wide... We used to teach this song to our children: "There's a fountain flowing deep and wide..."
- ON THOSE DAYS when you "Don't know what you're going to do..." It is OK... His love passes all knowledge... He's got you!

***PAUL PRAYS FOR US...***

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