

*Paul's Mystery: Part 1 of 2
Flying through Ephesians*

Ephesians 3:1–7, 13

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INTRODUCTION

Review of the Exposition:

- 1:3–14 Gentile believers should praise the Father for what the Trinity did for Jews first
- 1:15–23 Paul [a Jewish believer] thankfully prays for the enlightened Ephesian Gentile believers that they would know their calling in hope, their rich inheritance, & how powerfully the Father works for believers w/ His power that raised & seated Christ
- 2:1–10 Despite Jews & Gentiles being dead, God made alive, raised, & seated them together w/ Christ (saving these dead people by grace through faith so that they cannot boast but that His created artifact—the Church— would do the good works He prepared)
- 2:11–13 These now alive Gentiles are to remember their former alienated state and that they are now near to God
- 2:14–22 Christ effected peace between alienated Jews & Gentiles when he made both one & broke down the dividing Law & He reconciled both to God, so Gentiles are no longer aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints, having been built (along w/ Jews) into a holy temple that is God's habitation—the Church.

New Exposition

Ephesians 3:1 **For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus** for you Gentiles—

3:14 **For this reason I** bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

4:1 **I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord**, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called

What is going on in Ephesians 3?

Ephesians 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation (e.g., dispensing) of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Older dispensationalists often called the Church Age *the Dispensation of Grace*. However, it does not make sense for Paul to say: “God gave the Church Age to me so I could give it to you.” Rather, God dispensed grace to Paul so that he might share Grace with them.

What does Paul mean here by the term *grace*?

Therefore I ask (if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you)
that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory

Ephesians 3:3–4 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

Paul previously wrote briefly about the mystery in Ephesians 1:9–12

Ephesians 3:5 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:

A mystery is a truth not previously revealed

Although God had not revealed it before, He always intended to do so

the holy apostles of Him and (holy) prophets (of Him)

Ephesians 3:6–7 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 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.

It was no mystery that Gentiles would be saved

The mystery is that Gentiles would have high level administrative roles in the kingdom

Fellow heirs (*sun*klēronoma) = *sun* + *klēronoma*,
of the same body (*sun*ssōma) = *sun* + *sōma*,
and fellow partakers (*sun*metocha) = *sun* + *metocha*

English analogy *syn* + *thetic* = *synthetic*, but *syn* + *metry* = *symmetry*

Summary

Paul, Christ's prisoner [prays for the Ephesian Gentiles], assuming that they remembered that God had given Paul a grace gift, specifically, God had revealed the previously unrevealed mystery which (if they read what he wrote earlier about the mystery) they could understand it, namely that Gentiles should be fellow inheritors, of the same body and fellow-partakers of Christ's promise through the gospel

Application