

**THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY
IS FOR THEIR STRENGTHENING AND TO GOD'S GLORY**

Summary of what we will learn: These verses are both an intercession (prayer) and a doxology (praise). The Ephesians mourn over Paul's arrest and perhaps doubt God's love for him and them in a world where Jew & Gentile are divided and pagan religions seem to win the day. So Paul prays that the Father whom they gained at Baptism would strengthen these children by the power of the Holy Spirit whom they were given at baptism with the end result that this new church and new believers would gain a deep root, a strong foundation, in the love Christ has for them. In this way their knowledge of such love will preserve them and they will glorify God eternally.

Ephesians 3:14-21 - ¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father [*of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3)*], ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you (1) to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner *Man*, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (2) ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

V. 14

For this reason – what reason?

I bow my knees – what is the significance of 'kneeling' in Paul's day?

Dr. Winger: "To bend the knee before the true God is to acknowledge his sovereignty over the one who bends the knee...Such worshipful acknowledgment is at best an act of faith (Ps. 95:6), but the majesty of God will compel all creation to bend the knee on the Last Day (Is 45:23; Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10)...Whereas Jews traditionally stood to pray, like a subject who has been granted audience with a king on his throne, kneeling for prayer was common enough, displaying an attitude of grief, repentance, agony, despair, unworthiness, intensity, or profound awe...Paul's act of bending his knees may be interpreted as either worship or intercession—or both...the doxology (3:20-21) suggests Paul prays on his knees out of humble awe before the majesty of God unveiled by the revelation of the mystery" (of the Gospel for the Gentiles which he has been called to proclaim).

V. 14-15

before the *Father* [*of our Lord Jesus Christ*] from whom every *family*...is named *Pater* ... *Patria*
A Greek pun (word-play) that is now under attack even in the human sense, let alone attacking God!

Dr. Winger: "The word *patria*, 'family,' is derived etymologically from *pater*, 'father,' for it refers to a group of people descended from a common ancestor. The play on words in Greek cannot be reproduced in English. But there is more than a pun at work—Paul is not simply saying that *patria* comes from *Pater*, **but that families derive their identity from their father.**"

And how is it that we are *named* from this Father? And why is that important?

Dr. Winger: “God gives his children not just a name but *his* name. When Jesus, the Son of God, teaches his brothers and sisters to call upon God as their Father, he teaches that we are truly children of God; it is not just a metaphor. We have received from him the Triune name into which the sacramental water placed us (Mt 28:19), and through that name a new identity. Families come into being through birth. The Christian’s new birth comes through water and the Spirit; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (Jn 3:5-6). We are what our new Parent is.”

every family in heaven(!) and on earth – are there families in heaven?

V. 16-19

that...he may grant you – this marks the petition, the intercession, what Paul is praying for. And to what aspect or attribute of God is Paul appealing?

What are the two things Paul asks God to grant? (hint: look for my markings 1 & 2)

1. that the Ephesians _____
2. that the Ephesians _____

Paul explains and elaborates on each of these two requests:

1. What kind of strengthening?

What will this strengthening by the power of the Spirit *accomplish*? See verses 17-18

2. What does it mean to “know the love of Christ”?

What will this knowledge of the love of Christ accomplish?

V. 20-21 – The Doxology

Just as the prayer was Trinitarian, the Doxology is as well:

“To *Him* (the Father) who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power (of the Holy Spirit, v.16) at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in/through Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Reflect on how comforting it is that God “is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think”
How would He do that?

Paul finishes the doxology with the call for God to be glorified (locational) *in the Church*, and (as a means) through Christ Jesus who dwells in us with love, strengthening us by the Spirit to do the work of glorifying God.
