

THE MYSTERY OF PAUL'S APOSTOLIC MANDATE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST FOR THE GENTILES

Summary of what we will learn: Paul encourages the Ephesians once again, that his present imprisonment is not to their shame but to their glory because it highlights the Will of God to have His Gospel preached to the Gentiles for their salvation. It is this very Gospel that Paul has been called to proclaim. In Christ Jesus the mystery is revealed and God's eternal purpose is set forth- the Gentiles are co-heirs with Israel.

Ephesians 3:1-13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—² assuming that you have heard of the **STEWARDSHIP** of God's grace that was given to me for you,³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,⁵ 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.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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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,⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the ~~plan~~ stewardship of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

How, where, and why is Paul a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles?

Gospel Stewardship – How does God get His Grace to you?

Dr. Winger- “This perspective on his ministry is best encapsulated by the characteristic Ephesian word *oikonomia*, ‘stewardship’ or ‘household administration’ (3:2; also 1:10; 3:9). The steward holds the authority of his master in administering the goods of the household—this is one side of the equation. The faithful steward does only what he is told. The one responsible for his actions, however, is always the master himself—this is the other side of the equation.”

What is this “mystery” that he keeps going on about?

Where has Paul “written briefly” about this “mystery made known to him by revelation”?

Verse 6 – ESV misses a repetition-

How does Paul describe his calling as an Apostle and Minister?

Verses 7-9 show how humbly Paul views himself while at the same time how privileged he is to be a preacher of the Gospel, especially to Gentiles.

Who *else* is the Will of God to save being made known to in v. 10?

Dr. Winger- “Because of the triumph of Christ and his exaltation to the right hand of God, there is no doubt that God’s forces have won the victory. This victory is ‘now’ (3:10) being ‘made known,’ though until the second coming, skirmishes will continue (6:10-17). This revelation takes place through apostolic proclamation, which not only announces salvation to the Gentiles but also makes the victory known to the combatants in the spiritual realm. Primarily this is a fear-inspiring announcement to the forces of evil that their rout has been accomplished (cf. 1 Pet 3:19-22), even though these spiritual forces continue to attack as if they could win (Eph 6:12).”

How is this spiritual victory made known *through the Church*? Dr. Winger answers, “As Paul’s preaching delivers the Gentiles into God’s hands, their very existence as a growing, living, and united church serves as testimony to the evil spiritual forces that their authority over this earth and this age is at an end (cf. 2:2) and to the good angels that their side has won the battle... The visible unity of Gentiles and Jews through one Baptism in this church (cf. Jn 17:21), which with Christ has been raised into the heavenly places (Eph 2:6), signals the failure of the devil’s plan to divide.”

Dr. Stoeckhardt – “Think of it, what an important comprehensive call and duty this is which God assigned to Paul, the least of all saints! Remember, however, that all ministers of the Gospel, all true Christian preachers of the Word of God, inasmuch as they speak the same message of salvation as Paul, do thereby also become participants in this great work of the Apostle to the Gentiles, each, of course, in his own way and his own measure. It is through this very work of preaching the Gospel that from this ungodly world the Church of Christ, the *Una Sancta*, is gathered, the people of God are created, the purpose of the creation of the world is realized, the holy angels are moved and stimulated unto the praise of God, and the eternal counsel and will of God is brought to successful execution.”