

Ephesians

Chapter 3:1-13

March 20, 1994

Ephesians 3:1-13

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles~

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

Paul clearly realized that the blessings of fruitfulness from his ministry were from the hand of God but also that the trials were dispensed by God for His glory and for the benefit of the Gentiles.

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

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:

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 according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

Jesus revealed to Paul understanding of a mystery. (Galatians 1:11-17) A mystery is something that is not fully understood as opposed to something that isn't known at all. The old testament is filled with verses looking forward to the coming messiah and the inclusion of the world, that is, not just the Jews into the covenant God made with Abraham. Notice that the scripture says that this mystery "...was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed..." There were hints of revelation given to the sons of men but not in the way that it has been revealed now. The prophets had hints of the glory of that which they prophesied but they longed to know these things. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Genesis 12:3	Psalms 65:2	Isaiah 2:2-5	Isaiah 45:22-24	Isaiah 60:3-5	Daniel 2:44-45	
Genesis 12:5	Psalms 65:5	Isaiah 11:1-10	Isaiah 49:1	Isaiah 60:8-14	Daniel 7:13-14	
<u>Genesis 22:18</u>	Psalms 66:4	Isaiah 18:7	Isaiah 49:5-6	Isaiah 65:1	Hosea 2:23	Zechariah 8:1-23
Genesis 49:10	Psalms 68:31-32	Isaiah 24:16	Isaiah 49:18-23	Isaiah 66:7-23	Joel 2:28-32	Zechariah 9:1
Deut 32:21	Psalms 72:1-20	Isaiah 35:1-10	Isaiah 54:1-3	Jeremiah 3:17	Amos 9:11-12	Zechariah 9:9-17
Psalms 2:8	Psalms 86:9	Isaiah 40:4-11	Isaiah 55:5	Jeremiah 4:2	Micah 4:3-4	Zechariah 14:8-21
Psalms 22:27-31	Psalms 102:15	Isaiah 42:1-12	Isaiah 56:3	<u>Jeremiah 16:19-21</u>	Haggai 2:7	Malachi 1:11
Psalms 46:4	Psalms 102:18-22	Isaiah 45:6	Isaiah 56:6-8	Ezekiel 47:3-5	Zechariah 2:10-11	
Psalms 46:10	Psalms 145:10-11	Isaiah 45:8	Isaiah 60:1	Daniel 2:35	Zechariah 6:15	

Paul's role as a minister to the Gentiles was obviously according to the mind of God and not of Paul. Paul's background on a fleshly level would have made him preeminently qualified to preach to the Jews. This role was made possible not by Paul agreeing with God's wisdom but rather by the effective working of His power.

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Although Paul plainly knew that his sins had been forgiven, he still remembered his previous behavior and understood how awful it was.

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;

Paul teaches that God hid this understanding in Himself from the beginning of time.

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,

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.

All that goes on within God's Church is according to His purpose and for His glory.

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

Paul provides the Ephesians with a wonderful application of his teaching. Because God has saved you by His grace and He purposed in Himself to include the Gentiles in the covenant from the beginning of time, do not despair as if Paul's current trials were somehow outside of the wisdom of God.