

## Ephesians Chapter 3 verses 8 thru 12

### Rhema Bible Study

#### Verse 8

“to me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles.” Paul does not call himself the least but less than the least of all saints. It was unthinkable to Paul that after persecuting the saints he would now be made one of the Lord’s chosen to preach the gospel. Paul’s success greatly humbled him. He considered it an honor and privilege to preach the word of God. Preachers ought to grow in grace, for their very calling places them at a great advantage, since they are bound to search the Scriptures, and to be much in prayer. The ancient Greek word translated “**preach**” literally means “to announce good news.” Paul’s *preaching* was simply the announcement of the good news of what God has done in Jesus.

Every Christian has unsearchable riches in Christ, or you could say the spiritual riches connected with Christ that are continuing to be revealed.

*Question...what comes to mind when you think of unsearchable riches?*

#### Verse 9

“and to make all people 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.” The mystery that had been hidden has now been uncovered. The plan of God which called for Jesus to pay for our sins on the cross and which would save all who receive Christ was conceived by God before the foundation of the world. In other words, God knew that man of his own free will would choose sin. Before he created anything, God knew that to save man from his just wrath, he would have to become a man himself and pay for man’s sins with his own death. He knew all that and yet he still created us.

God isn't hard to figure out; he is impossible to figure out and that's because the bible says God's ways are not man's ways. God created us even though he knew he would have to redeem us. He did it for the sake of those who would come to Christ and therefore would enjoy eternity on the new earth in their resurrected body.

*Question...do you believe the church existed from the beginning of creation?*

Verse 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.” Principality's and powers refer to angels—those of the heavenly realms. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here we see the angelic hosts being shown the wisdom and purpose of God in the plan of salvation through Christ. Angels, both holy and unholy, witness the glory of God and the preeminence of Christ above all creatures in the church, those who are saved and preserved by His power. Angels are smart, but they don't know everything, consequently God is using the church to teach angels about, mercy, and forgiveness.

Angels knew all about the power of God. They always knew that God is everywhere at the same time. They always knew that God knows everything about everything. But they didn't understand God's mercy and his forgiveness and that's because mercy and forgiveness were unheard of among the angels. They didn't even know the terms existed. But the cross teaches the angels about the mercy and forgiveness of God. After seeing how God's plan of salvation maintained his justice and yet brought about the forgiveness of sinful man the angels understood God's forgiveness and mercy and his great wisdom.

Verse 11

“according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” What has been hidden in God has now been made known. God's eternal purpose to save mankind, which becomes visible in the church, was not some last-minute thought on His part. The scheme of redemption in all of history is focused in and through Jesus Christ and His church. God had an eternal plan that would fulfill his eternal purpose. His eternal purpose was to save sinners from hell. But he kept his eternal plan concerning how he would do that a secret from everyone including the angels for thousands of years.

The angels always knew that God was just and holy so they figured that God would have to eventually send sinful man to hell along with the devil and his

demons. They figured that the entire human race would burn in hell along with the demons because after all God cannot simply overlook sin and what applies to demons must apply to sinful mankind as well. The angels never dreamed that God had a secret plan to save souls. They never dreamed that God himself would become a man and die to pay for man's sin. The angels must have been shocked to see the eternal son of God leave heaven and become an embryo in the womb of Mary. What in the world is he doing that for; what's going on?

## Verse 12

“in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” Christians have boldness and confidence before God. Of course, boldness does not mean reckless. Boldness does not mean brashness. And confidence does not mean arrogance. The Biblical definition of boldness before God is the ability to come into his presence without fear of being destroyed on the spot. Boldness certainly doesn't mean, as some suggest, that we can be demanding in our prayers, that we can approach the throne of God pounding our fist and insisting that God do things our way. Boldness before God means you come into his presence without fear. However, you do it with humility and with respect which is what our creator deserves.

It is an awesome privilege to be able to approach God with freedom and confidence. Thanks to Jesus we can come directly into God's presence through prayer. We know we will be welcome because we are His children.

*Question...boldness does not mean reckless - what does this mean?*

*Question...boldness does not mean brashness—what does this mean?*

*Question...confidence does not mean arrogance—what does this mean?*