

## Ephesians Chapter 3 Summary

In this chapter Paul reminds his readers of God's grace that has been shown him regarding the revelation of the "mystery". By reading what he had written earlier, they would understand how the "mystery" pertained to Gentiles becoming fellow heirs in Christ, and Paul felt privileged to preach among the Gentiles what for ages had been hidden. Knowing that what he did was part of God's eternal purpose in Christ to make His manifold wisdom known by the church, he asked his brethren not to be discouraged by any tribulations he experienced on their behalf

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The imprisonment Paul described was his first Roman imprisonment, which took place between approximately AD 60 and 62. During this time, Paul was under house arrest while awaiting trial. Despite the confinement, for two full years he was able to freely preach the gospel to all who came to him. As a result, even some among Caesar's household came to faith (Philippians 4:22). In addition, during this time, Paul wrote four letters which are now part of the New Testament: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and this letter to the Ephesians. Presumably, his imprisonment allowed him to write even more letters which did not become part of the Bible.

The chapter also contains Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians. He prays for their enablement, that the Father would strengthen them by His Spirit, that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith, that they be able to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, and so be filled with all the fullness of God. He concludes his prayer and this chapter by ascribing that glory be given to God in the church by Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Paul intended that all who long for Christ-like maturity would receive this writing. Enclosed within the Book of Ephesians is the discipline needed to develop into true children of God. Furthermore, a study in Ephesians will help to fortify and to establish the believer so he can fulfill the purpose and calling God has given. The aim of this epistle is to confirm and to equip a maturing church. It presents a balanced view of the body of Christ and its importance in God's economy.

Even though he was under arrest, Paul maintained his firm belief that God was in control of all that happened to him.

Question...do circumstances make you wonder if God has lost control of this world?

Question...Paul makes it known that he is a prisoner for Christ – what does that mean for us today- are any of us prisoners for Christ?

### **Verses 1 through 7...**

Verse 1—For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

I think Paul wants us to see the irony in the fact that before he was in Christ, he used to put Christians in prison, Now, because he is an apostle to the Gentiles, he finds himself in prison. Paul takes delight in being a prisoner for Christ.

Verse 2 – If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you. ***Do you detect sarcasm in that statement??*** Paul knows many of these Ephesians as he has been ministering to them for over five years. Grace brought down the division between Jews and Gentiles who are both fellow partakers of grace, on equal footing before God. If you have been brought into God's family through the blood of Christ, the color of your skin doesn't matter. Regardless of your race, you get the same spiritual DNA given to every other believer. We have the same Father. There are no insignificant people in God's army.

Verse 3—How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery. Paul always insists that his apostleship to the Gentiles and his knowledge of the revealed mystery did not come from human origin.

Verse 4 – By which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Paul wrote to be understood and also to let us know what he wrote was by divine revelation. Paul was humbled to be given the revelation that brought Jews and Gentiles together.

Question – does revelation automatically come through the power of the Holy Spirit?

Question—do you need revelation to understand the bible?

Verse 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. Previous generations did not have the revelation but it was given to the apostles and prophets. The word 'mystery' too often conjures up thoughts of a riddle, or something mysterious... magical or some impenetrable dark secret that must be worked out mathematically, linguistically or by some scientific, metaphysical or philosophical means. But every use of this word: 'mystery' in Scripture simply means something that was previously concealed in the past but which is now presently revealed.

Verse 6 – That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel. This is not to say that no one, not even prophets like Moses, Isaiah, etc., knew anything about the future blessings in which the Gentiles would share. In fact, the Old Testament writers did know about it and referred to it over and over. What they did not know was that the old theocracy would be abolished and in its place the church of Christ would be established and in this body the Gentiles and Jews would be on equal footing before God.

Verse 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. Paul's gift was one of grace. He became a Christian by obeying the gospel like everyone else; but he became an apostle and minister of the gospel by the power of God. God was working in and through Paul. Paul deserved none of the credit even with his great natural knowledge.