

Ephesians Part 7: God's Purpose and the Mystery of the Gospel *Ephesians 3:1-21*



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For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for 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 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.

Intro: "For this reason..." (What Reason?) - Ephesians 3:1 & 14

- Ephesians 3:1-13 is a personal parenthesis from Paul
- He starts by saying "For this reason...", but then talks about his personal ministry to the Gentiles, before resuming in v14 by again saying, "For this reason...", and diving into a prayer
- The "reason" he is referring to is found in chapter 2:11-22
 - Gentiles and Jews alike are now fellow citizens and members of the household of God

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1. The Stewardship of God's Grace (1-8)

*For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for 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, ...*

*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,*

- a. Paul was given a revelation from God, a 'mystery' to be revealed
- b. The mystery is that, in Christ Jesus through the gospel, the Gentiles are:

- ***fellow heirs***
- ***members of the same body***
- ***partakers of the promise***

- c. Paul is humbly aware of the grace of God in his ministry (v2,7,8)

- ***The stewardship of God's grace***
- ***I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace***
- ***To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ***

→ Paul understood that his message, ministry and gifts were all a direct result of God's grace – not his own strength or doing

- **Do you credit God's grace for good things in your life?**

2. God's eternal Purpose (8-13)

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,

- a. Paul's ministry is to reveal the plan of God's mystery (v9)
- b. God will display his multi-layered wisdom through the church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (v10)
 - The church is central to God's plan on earth and in heaven
- c. This is according to God's eternal purpose (v11)

- *...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

Ephesians 1:9-10

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3. For this reason...Paul prays... (14-21)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints

what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

*¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

a. Paul first prays for:

- *you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

- *So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*

b. Then Paul prays that:

- *you, being rooted and established in love, may have strength to comprehend...**what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of God's love]***

- *And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge*

- *That you may be filled with all the fullness of God*

Q: Do you comprehend how great God's love is for you?

4. Paul closes with a Benediction (Blessing) of Praise to God (20-21)

*²⁰ Now 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,***

²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- God is able to do "Exceeding abundantly above"(KJV) – Do you believe that?

- He works abundantly according to the power at work within us

Will you receive salvation in Jesus: a free gift of God, by faith?

- *Believe in Jesus, and His death and resurrection*

- *Repent of your sin and place your trust in Jesus*

- *Commit to Jesus as Lord of your life*

Psalm 103:11-12 *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

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Your Response

1. Thank God for all he has done for you. Meditate on the vastness of God's love.
2. Read Ephesians in your Bible. Use an accurate, readable translation such as the English Standard Version or the New Living Translation.
3. Believe in Jesus for forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Him.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus Romans 3:23-24

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Ephesians Series: God's Purposes for You in Christ

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|--------------------|--|
| January 8 | Part 1: Introduction to Ephesians |
| January 15 | Part 2: God's Blessings to You in Christ |
| January 22 | Part 3: A Prayer for Spiritual Knowledge |
| January 29 | Part 4: Dead in Sin, Alive in Christ |
| February 5 | Part 5: Saved by God's Amazing Grace |
| February 12 | Part 6: Peace through the Cross of Christ |
| February 19 | Family Day Special: The Rubber Chicken Company!
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| February 26 | Part 7: God's Purpose and the Mystery of the Gospel |

Questions for Reflection

1. What are the five problems that you have apart from the cross? (point #1b)
2. How is the law abolished in Jesus? How is it fulfilled in Jesus? (point #2b)
3. What three metaphors describe your identity, belonging and purpose in Christ? (Point 3abc)
4. Have you responded to the God's grace in faith and repentance, trusting in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins, and eternal life? Why not do so today?

2 Cor. 6:2b *now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

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