

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 3:3b-7
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 49
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INTRO: In the last message we began to look at Paul's second digression from sharing his prayers for the Ephesians. In sharing his prayers for them, when he was reminded of the marvel of the salvation of the Gentiles he took time to speak of it. And so it took us through chapter 2.

Then in chapter 3 he set out once more to share of his prayers for them, and once more his thoughts were interrupted. This time the thought that caught him was how the Lord had some years ago revealed something to him that had never been known from the foundation of the world. That was the mystery of the Church. When Paul got saved, one would think that he would have remained with the Apostles to get trained by them. But instead the Lord removed him from them, led him out to a place by himself, and there He trained him Himself. And there, I believe, God revealed the mystery of the Church to him. We will see this later.

We considered the meaning of what a mystery is. It is that which only the initiated understand. The longer I preach and teach the greater the wonder of the Church becomes to me. There is the universal Church. But it has no central city or country here on earth. There are no preferred customers. There is no head, such as a pope or a bishop over all the others. The capital city of the Church is in heaven and the leader is in heaven.

And on earth is this simple operation that has two offices; pastor and deacon. Contrary to the NAR it is not apostles and prophets that are the main offices in the local church. It is pastors and deacons. I do not find a church board in the NT. I used to have a Baptist pastor friend. He did not have much use for Mennonites. But we became friends and we had discussions about church boards. And one day he said, "You are right." Now I am not saying a church cannot have a board. I am saying I do not find it in the NT.

And as long as you have godly pastors, who look after the spiritual aspects of the church, and godly deacons who look after the physical aspects, this system works anywhere in the world. It works in any culture. It works in any country. It

works anywhere. God's greatest work on earth is now not centered in a country with a capital city where the headquarters are. It is in operation in local churches scattered throughout the world.

Let me say again, the true church is not made up of professing Christians and real Christians. There are no nominal Christians in the church. You find them in the local churches all over, but they are not part of the true Church. There are only truly born again people in the true Church. Today, the vast majority of professing Christians are not part of the true church and that number is growing in so called evangelical churches.

Now, in the previous message we looked at the recipient of this mystery and that is the apostle Paul. We had looked at the first part of verse 3, which says, "how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery". We considered the words 'revelation' and 'mystery'. This morning we go on to Ephesians 3:3b to look at the history of this mystery.

b. The history of the mystery (3:3b-7)

So I have called this point the history of the mystery. Let us begin by reading verses 3:1-5. Remember we had covered verses 1-3a in the previous message:

- 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,*
- 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:*

Before we look at verses 3b-4, let me mention a matter to you.

Lloyd Jones says the mystery mentioned in verse 4 is different from the mystery mentioned in verse 3. I do not think that is correct. I think they refer to the same thing, and the mystery is the doctrine of the Church. I read one commentator who said, "The Epistle to the Ephesians is the capital seat of the doctrine of the Church." I had not thought of that before, but I believe that is correct and that is what the mystery is all about. It is Jew and Gentile coming together in one body for the present age which began at Pentecost and will end at the catching up of the Church.

We begin then in verse 3b. Note first that verses 3b-4 are placed in brackets in the NKJV. I believe that this is correct. He has just mentioned the mystery, and then he inserts verses 3b-4.

So let us consider first the words, "...as I wrote before in a few words..." Scholars are not agreed to when or what writing Paul is referring to. Some, like Calvin for instance, think he is referring to some epistle he had written earlier. I think he is referring to what he wrote earlier in the letter we are studying. Turn to Ephesians 1. We'll go to verses 7-10:

- 7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*
- 8 *which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,*
- 9 *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,*

10 *that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*

In our verse Paul said he had written of this mystery earlier briefly, and this is earlier and it is brief. And in this passage he mentions as well the dispensation of the fullness of the times.

That brings us then to verse 5. In this verse Paul says this of the history of the mystery:

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:*

Consider first the words, 'in other ages'. We have spoken of dispensations. Now we have the term 'ages'. In a large sense, I think all of time can be divided into two ages. Listen to Matthew 12:32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come." The KJV translates this as 'this world and the world to come.' The word translated *world* is not the word for *world*. The word for world in the NT is *kosmos*. Here it is the word *aiwn*, which means an age.

So what are these two ages? In my understanding, the first age is from eternity past until the beginning of the millennium. The second age is from the beginning of the millennium into eternity future.

Now those two ages may be divided up into further ages. For example, a generation may be referred to as an age. Turn to Revelation 14.

When the NT speaks of eternity future
it speaks of it like this in
Revelation 14:11:

11 *"And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever;
and they have no rest day or night,
who worship the beast and his image,
and whoever receives the mark of his
name."*

When it says, "forever and ever" it literally says, 'into the
ages of the ages.' So, as I
understand it, the age to come is
divided into smaller ages as well.
What that tells me is that life will
not forever be exactly the same. It
will change from age to age.

And now, when Paul speaks of the past ages, that means at no
time in the past has this mystery
ever been made known. It was not
revealed to the sons of men, which
means it was not revealed to the
prophets of the OT in the past. And
when we are done with the revelation
of this mystery and you know what it
is, the next time you read through
the OT see if you find it anywhere.

Now note the words, 'not made known' and 'revealed' in verse 5.
Something made known is something
revealed. In ages past, the mystery
here revealed was not made known. But
now the Lord revealed it to Paul. Now
when did the Lord reveal these things
to Paul? Well, turn to Galatians 1.
In writing to the Galatians Paul
informs the Galatians about something
very interesting. Paul was very
concerned for the Galatians. In a
very short time since they professed
Christ, they were turning away from
the Gospel. There were those who were
preaching a different Gospel than the
one he had preached to them. He was

very hard on those who preached another Gospel and then he shared with the Galatians how he received the Gospel in the first place and we begin in verse 11:

11 *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*

12 *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

13 *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.*

14 *And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,*

16 *to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,*

17 *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.*

Now it seems that after Paul's conversion, for some time he left Israel and went to Arabia. One would think that when Paul got saved he would have gone to the Apostles of Christ and would have been taught by them. But he did not get his learning from other men, but it seems the Lord Himself taught him.

Let me add something here. Paul, like some Jewish believers today, had a thorough knowledge of

the OT. When they become Christians, they often have more knowledge right at the beginning than many Christians have after being Christians for years. Paul was steeped in OT knowledge when he met Christ on the Damascus road. When he was in Arabia, the Lord opened up a whole new understanding in Paul. Things like the catching up of the Church and many other things would have been entirely new to even him.

Now we learn, as we read on, that he was there for some three years. Verse 18:

18 *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.*

19 *But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.*

20 *(Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)*

21 *Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.*

22 *And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.*

23 *But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."*

24 *And they glorified God in me.*

I believe that when Paul was in Arabia, the Lord revealed to him that which he teaches the Ephesians about the mystery in our chapter.

Turn now to 2 Corinthians 12. Paul speaks of an experience as if it was someone else so that he does not appear that he is boasting. So look at verse 1:

1 *It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:*

Notice that he says, "I will come to visions and revelations, and these are from the Lord." Now the word 'revelations' is 'apokalupsis'. It is the noun form of the verb 'revealed' in our passage in Ephesians. It is the uncovering of things not otherwise knowable. Verse 2:

2 *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.*

3 *And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—*

4 *how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

5 *Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.*

It is said that this letter was written somewhere between 53 and 57 AD. It is likely he was converted between 33 and 36 AD. If we take 36 as the date of conversion, and 53 the date of this letter, we have 17 years. Because of possible discrepancies of years, it is not impossible that Paul is speaking of the same time here.

Let me read verse 5 in Ephesians 3 once more to note another matter. He says of this revelation that it is that:

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:

Now note carefully that it does not say that this was not revealed at all earlier. But it was not revealed 'as it has now been revealed'. Replacement theology people might say, "Well, look at these dispensationalists. They think the OT says nothing about this. But look at what the OT says about the fact that the Gentiles will be brought in." Then they might say, "If they would only look at a passage like Galatians 3:8 they wouldn't say such things. It clearly says, 'And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.'"

It does talk about the Gentiles being saved, but it tells us nothing about the Church. My challenge to any replacement theology person or amillennialist is find me an unmistakable reference in the OT to the Church, and there is no such thing.

What is true is exactly what Paul says here, and that is that it was not revealed, and here are the key words, 'as it has now been revealed'. When the Lord revealed this to Paul the Lord said that it had not been made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed, and that is precisely right.

Listen to what the OT did see:

Psalm 18:49 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name.

Psalm 117:1-2:

1 Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!
2 For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth
of the LORD endures forever. Praise
the LORD!

Isaiah 56:6-7:

6 "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the
LORD, to serve Him, And to love the
name of the LORD, to be His
servants—Everyone who keeps from
defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast
My covenant—
7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them
joyful in My house of prayer. Their
burnt offerings and their sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar; For My
house shall be called a house of
prayer for all nations."

Isaiah 49:6:

6 Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be
My Servant To raise up the tribes of
Jacob, And to restore the preserved
ones of Israel; I will also give You
as a light to the Gentiles, That You
should be My salvation to the ends of
the earth.'

But those prophecies will also be true in the tribulation. They
could not know in the OT that they
also include the Church age. But we
will see that what was revealed to
Paul was a much fuller revelation
than what had been revealed to the
prophets of the OT. Note now the last
words of 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:

Now we note further that the Lord made this revelation known to His holy Apostles and prophets. I mentioned in another message the modern NAR movement; the New Apostolic Reformation. Go back to Galatians 1 once more. I read an interesting note by Jones the other day and my attention was drawn to what Galatians 1:1 says. Paul said here:

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

Paul was an apostle, and he is careful here to let them know that it was not from men, nor was it through men. His apostleship came through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.

I have told you that the name 'Paul' means, anyone remember? It means 'little one.' But before he became a little one he was called 'Saul'. That is a Hebrew name that means, 'asked for from God.' He might have been little in stature but he was a big man. Listen to what he was in his own words:

4 ... If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

He was not a little one, he was a big one. And then he was

struck down on the Damascus road, as he was heading out to apprehend Christians. But when Christ struck him down, he became Paul, the little one. So he says in verse 7:

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

And later he says that all his worldly achievements became to him like a pile of manure. And when he became a little one, he became an Apostle with a capital A. You see, the NAR apostles, for the most part, are not even sent ones. If they were, they would be missionaries. They would be apostles with a small a.

It is to the NT writers that the Lord made the great truth of this revelation known in a much more complete sense.

It is clear to me that when it speaks of those Apostles who are also called the foundation of the Church, it is the 12 Apostles. But when it speaks of these prophets, who are they? I think it refers to the writers of the NT. And who are they? Well, some of the writers were also Apostles. So we begin with Matthew and John. These are both apostles and prophets in that they wrote Scripture.

But Mark and Luke are not Apostles. It is also most likely that Luke is a Gentile and if so he is the only Gentile who wrote Scripture. So here we have two prophets. Luke also wrote the book of Acts. Then Paul wrote numerous epistles, and he was both an Apostle and a prophet. Then there were James and Jude, also prophets but not Apostles. Then we have Peter, who was both an Apostle and a prophet. Now I may not be right

but I think these are referred to as the apostles and prophets.

c. The content of the mystery (3:6)

That brings us now to consider what this great revelation is that the Lord revealed or uncovered to Paul. We find it in verse 6 like this:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

What is this great uncovering, this great revelation? It is the revelation of the Church! It is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body as the Jews. The Church is an amazing thing! The local church provides an amazing social unit, though the primary function is to look after the spiritual needs of people by edifying them spiritually. It works in any culture, any climate, and any locality. It is very simple yet it works anywhere.

In recent years the atheist has seen some of the value of church, and so they started something like church for atheists.

Let me read to you from an article from the BBC. It says:

An "atheist church" in North London is proving a big hit with non-believers. Does it feel a bit like a new religion?

Not many sermons include the message that we are all going to die and there is no afterlife.

But the Sunday Assembly is no ordinary church service.

Launched last month, as a gathering for non-believers, it is, in the words of master of ceremonies Sanderson Jones, "part foot-stomping show, part atheist church, all celebration of life".

A congregation of more than 300 crowded into the shell of a deconsecrated church to join the celebration on Sunday morning.

Instead of hymns, the non-faithful get to their feet to sing along to Stevie Wonder and Queen songs.

There is a reading from Alice in Wonderland and a power-point presentation from a particle physicist, Dr Harry Cliff, who explains the origins of antimatter theory.

It feels like a stand-up comedy show. Jones and co-founder Pippa Evans trade banter and whip the crowd up like the veterans of the stand-up circuit that they are.

But there are more serious moments.

The theme of the morning is "wonder" - a reaction, explains Jones, to criticism that atheists lack a sense of it.

So we bow our heads for two minutes of contemplation about the miracle of life and, in his closing sermon, Jones speaks about how the death of his mother influenced his own spiritual journey and determination to get the most out of every second,

aware that life is all too brief and nothing comes after it.

The audience - overwhelmingly young, white and middle class - appear excited to be part of something new and speak of the void they felt on a Sunday morning when they decided to abandon their Christian faith. Few actively identify themselves as atheists.

"It's a nice excuse to get together and have a bit of a community spirit but without the religion aspect," says Jess Bonham, a photographer.

"It's not a church, it's a congregation of unreligious people."

Now listen very carefully to this:

Another attendee, Gintare Karalyte, says: "I think people need that sense of connectedness because everyone is so singular right now, and to be part of something, and to feel like you are part of something. That's what people are craving in the world."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21319945>

Well, all of that speaks of something very dangerous for Christians. Church can become mostly a social thing, and for many it is just that. Nominal Christians come because of this need expressed by non-Christians. But for true Christians, church provides this social aspect, but also much more. A true church provides a place where people are challenged to grow spiritually and to deal with sin. If

that does not happen, it is not a true church.

Well, church provides something very important. In the OT the Jews had the temple and three times in the year they all got together. They would spend at least a week together in two of those times.

Then during the rest of the year, they had synagogues where they gathered. When the Church was born in Acts 2, the whole economy of God changed and the Church took the place of what Israel had experienced as a nation before. The Church was a world-wide thing, not something practiced in one nation.

The Church has no country. It has no city. It has no central place on earth at all. The citizenship of true Christians is in heaven. Their leader is in heaven. That is why it is called the kingdom of heaven. It is run from heaven.

Now what the atheist admitted was craved by people all over the world is provided by the Church. But, and it is a very big 'but', what many experience in church is exactly what the atheist experiences when they gather. These are nominal Christians, of whom there are very many. For them, it is a social event. It is socially fulfilling. But many Christians do not get the real purpose of the Church. It must go beyond social to true spirituality. It is for body, soul and spirit.

Consider for a moment the complexities of the running of a country and you see all the

infrastructure required, and all the different positions required for ministers. Then consider the nation of Israel under the old economy; and all the social and religious laws required to run the nation and the temple.

Then consider the Church, and the simplicity is most amazing! There are two official positions; pastors and deacons. The pastor's task is to take care of spiritual matters and the deacon's task is to take care of the finances and physical matters.

There is one building. Now there are variously gifted people within that body, but that is how simple it is.

Then consider this. This system will work in any culture, in any country, in any locality anywhere in the world. It does not need to be restructured, depending on circumstances. It is very simple. It is most amazing.

Now notice in our verse that in the Church Gentiles should be fellow heirs. Fellow heirs with whom? With the Jews! This is the mystery! They become joint participants with the Jews in this new work. I have said many times the Church is God's greatest work on earth in the last 2,000 years!

Now notice what verse 6 again. It says:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body,

Gentiles, these are those who were without God and without hope in the world. They were the uncircumcision, they were without Christ, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, they were strangers from the covenants of

promise, they were without hope and without God in the world. And now they are fellow heirs of the same body. This is the body of Christ. This is the Church, of which Christ is the head!

Furthermore, verse 6 says they were:

6 ...partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Through the Gospel, through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, they became partakers with the Jews of the promise in Christ. They have become God's children. They are the circumcision made in the heart. They are together with Christ. They are fellow heirs of the covenants of promise made in the OT. They now have hope. They now have a personal relationship with God. They are joined together with the believing Jews in one body, the Church! How incredible is all this! No wonder Paul got side-tracked and deviated from his subject here!

d. The minister of the mystery (3:7)

So we want to look at the minister of this great mystery in verse 7. Regarding this mystery Paul says:

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.

The Lord chose to make the Apostle Paul the steward of the dispensation of the grace of God. Why did God choose Paul? Why not Peter, whom He sent to the Gentiles first of all? Go to Galatians 2. We saw earlier that after 3 years in Arabia Paul went back to Jerusalem and he spent 15 days with the Apostle Peter.

He tells us this in Galatians 1.

Now in Galatians 2, we come to an interesting account. Verse 1:

1 *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.*

2 *And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.*

3 *Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*

4 *And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),*

5 *to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

6 *But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.*

7 *But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter*

8 *(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),*

9 *and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been*

given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

10 *They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

11 *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;*

12 *for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.*

13 *And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*

14 *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"*

The latecomer apostle withstood the first Pope, don't take the Pope part too seriously. You see, even Peter was not inspired never mind those who claim to be his successors as does the present Pope. There is no succession of heads of the Church, just like there is no succession of Apostles.

However, we get some idea why God did not choose Peter for this. He was weak and Paul was strong. So Paul became the steward of the dispensation of the grace of God. What is amazing is that the Apostles did not teach Paul. God had chosen to reveal things to Paul and he taught them. Verse 2 said:

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

And in our verse now in Ephesians, Paul says he became a minister of the mystery. Now what is a minister? The word in our passage is *diakonos*, from which we get the word 'deacon'. So was Paul a deacon? No. A deacon serves. Some think because Pheobe in Romans 16 is referred to as a *diakonos*, therefore the NT had women deacons. No, she was a servant. Just like there are the 12 official apostles, and there are sent ones, or apostles who are not of the twelve; so there are those who serve in various capacities, but they are not official deacons.

Let me quote Jones here because I have thought of this so often and reading him reminded me of this. He writes, "Others think of a minister as a man who organize games and pleasant entertainments for young people; one who visits and has a pleasant cup of tea with older people. Such conceptions of the Christina minister have become far too current" (3:53) end quote. If you read novels or watch western movies, you get some ideas of a minister that have nothing to do with a true minister. Ministry is centered around the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not giving candies to kids.

You see, Paul served the Gospel to those in need. Just like the deacons served the widows in the book of Acts with their needs of food, so Paul served the Lord by serving the Gospel. He was a minister of the

mystery.

Now he says in verse 7 that he:

*became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God
given to me by the effective working
of His power.*

Why did God choose Paul and not Peter or one of the others? Paul was gifted for this. A gift is something that is given. If you or I have a gift, it is not because we are better than others. It is because God has given that to us. When we are not gifted, no amount of training or wanting can make us able. Many can improve, but it is always a pain or a strain. Any time you have any group of people you have various gifts present. We all have a gift of some kind.

Now notice how Paul received this gift. It was given him by the effective working of God's power. Now the word translated *effective working* is *energeia*. You can tell we get our word *energy* from it. Here is one thing that can give you an indication what you are gifted for. When it takes more energy than you have, you are probably not gifted for that. That is not always true. One may not desire spiritual things and then doing such things takes a lot of energy we don't seem to have simply because we are not living Spirit filled lives. But when you desire to live godly this is a very good indicator.

For example, if you were asked to do a special number, and just thinking about it drains you; good sign you are not gifted to sing. That would be me. But if you are gifted to sing, and you were asked to do a

special number, you would probably be excited and energized!

Well, the energizing power of God worked in Paul in this gift of ministering the Gospel. He mentions this energy several times in this epistle but we are out of time and I'll only mention the references.

When he says, 'according to the working of His might power' in 1:19 the word *working* is our word. The energy of His mighty power. In verse 20 it is the word 'worked', when God worked in Christ and raised Him from the dead. What kind of energy does that take? Then we have the word once more in 4:16. It is that which knits the Church together and causes growth in the Church.

CONCL: So we conclude for now. We have looked at the second half of verse 3 through verse 7. Here Paul tells us that God revealed, uncovered the knowledge of the mystery to him. I have proposed this took place in Arabia. This was a knowledge that had never before been revealed as it had now been revealed. And what was that great revelation? The revelation of how God would operate in the next 2,000 years. It is the revelation of the Church. It is the revelation of creating one body out of two people groups; the Jews and the Gentiles. It is the revelation of that which is now still in progress, but which we believe is now at the very brink of closing. And when that happens, the seventieth week of Daniel will begin and this world will be plunged into a darkness never known before, and which will never be known again.

And Paul became the minister of this mystery, this dispensation of the Church age.