

Thursday, June 11, 2020 ▫ Read Ephesians 3:1–6

Questions from the Scripture text: Whose prisoner does the apostle call himself in v1? For whom? How does the apostle describe his call to be apostle to the Gentiles (v2)? What did God make known to the apostle (v3)? How did God make it known to him? How does he expect the Ephesians to learn it (v4)? When was the mystery of Christ not made known to whom (v5a)? And by Whom has it now been made known to whom (v5)? Who would be heirs (v6)? With whom and of what? Of what would they be partakers? Through What?

This passage brings up (again, cf. 1:9) the mystery of the gospel—not a spooky secret that we have to figure out, but rather a deep truth that we can only know by God’s revealing it to us.

It is this glorious mystery is what is going to provoke the apostle first to prayer in v14, and then to exhortation in 4:1, ff. The apostle begins to say, “for this reason,” and he will pick up that line of thought again in v14 with “I bow my knees...” And the apostle begins to say, “I, the prisoner of Christ Jesus,” which he will pick up again in 4:1 with, “beseech you to walk.

But before he gets to those things, he is going to reflect upon how marvelous it is that he even knows this mystery, can pray this prayer, and can make these exhortations. In these six verses, he presents to us himself as the writer of the mystery, all (and especially Gentile) believers as the receivers of the mystery, the Spirit as the revealer of the mystery, and Christ as the revealed One in the mystery.

Paul is the writer of the mystery. How glorious! At one point, his life-mission was to make into his prisoner anyone who honored Christ as Lord. Now, he is content to be made a prisoner for the sake of Christ (v1), who is his Lord. At one point, he despised the Gentiles as worthless. Now, he preaches the gospel by which the Lord gathers them in as His treasured people. What glorious grace God has shown to Paul!

And the Gentiles are the receivers of the mystery. God is now telling them with full clarity what He had previously told only in darker shadows even to the Jews. Paul wrote briefly of it in 1:9, but now he is opening up this wonderful truth that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, even the Gentiles are of the same body, and even the Gentiles are partakers of the promise. What God began to promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 has turned out to be a glorious blessing indeed upon all the nations!

Further, the apostle tells us of **the Spirit, Who is the Revealer** of this mystery that he is writing and the Gentiles receiving. It is God the Spirit Who has revealed the mystery to the apostle (v3) and God the Spirit Who has revealed the mystery to the other apostles and prophets (v5), and by implication God the Spirit Who is revealing the mystery through what Paul is writing (v3). Paul knew that his letters, which were to be read in the churches just as the other Old Testament writings, were Spirit-inspired Scripture. What a glorious thing it is to have our copies of the written Word of God, the revelation of the mystery of God, by the very Spirit of God!

Finally, the apostle writes of **Him who is revealed in the mystery**. Many focus on the Gentiles as the “content” of the mystery. And it is a wonderful discovery that the Spirit here makes to us of just how abundant is the world-wide international spread of God’s redemption in the gospel age. But, the mystery itself is the mystery *of Christ* (v4)—that the promise is partaken of *in Christ* through the gospel (v6). In this sense, the mystery is something new and glorious to the Jews, even as much as to the Gentiles. God Himself has become our Redeemer; God Himself is the cornerstone of His own temple, having become a Man in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, it is by virtue of the fact that salvation comes through union with Christ that we become “fellow heirs, of the same body.” Salvation is through Christ, Who is God in the flesh, come to unite us to Himself, in Himself. Hallelujah!

No wonder that, before getting on to how this makes him pray, and how this calls for us to live, the apostle first spends a little time, urging us to remember and reflect upon the glorious mystery of the gospel!

Why is it amazing that your people (whomever they are) would be included in the church? Who is speaking to you when you read the Bible, or hear it truly preached? In Whom are you redeemed?

Suggested songs: ARP87 “The Lord’s Foundation” or TPH87A “Zion, Founded on the Mountains”