

Hidden Mystery

Ephesians 3:1-10

End ch 2 Paul tells that the Gentiles are no longer strangers & aliens to the promises of God, w/o hope in the world but now brought near to God thru the blood of Jesus Christ. Plus the wall of separation between Jew & Gentile is torn down so that we are one in Christ, together, partakers of Gods promises—having entrance into household of God-His holy temple.

Paul is a man who prays precisely & ministers specifically-declaring all that God has for those who believe—blessings & riches that are ours in Christ.

Spurgeon 'There is a general kind of praying which fails for lack of precision. It is as if a regiment of soldiers should fire off their guns anywhere. Possible somebody would be killed but the majority of the enemy would be missed'

Ministry like prayer can miss its effectiveness if it lacks precision-trying to do all things instead of the things God has called us to do.

Paul's message is Gods mystery vs 3, 9--the messenger of the **mystery**; the ministry of the **mystery** & the message of the **mystery**. Mystery-not who-done-it, **riddle** to figure out, but **sacred secret**--one time hidden-now revealed

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Messenger of this mystery is Paul—a **prisoner** of Christ Jesus-writing from Roman prison awaiting trial before Caesar Nero—**released, rearrested & martyred**. In prison because preaching to Gentiles **Acts 22**. **All those who live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**—don't be surprised when you make difference for the K of G that the same happen to you. **A servant is not greater than his master...Jn 15:20 Blessed when men revile you and speak all manner of evil against you...Mt 5:11 Woe to you when all men speak well of you...Lk 6:26 Bill biggest deceiver on NS**

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Paul didn't see himself a prisoner of Rome or Nero but of Christ. A life given over to Jesus will see circumstances differently. They will see things in light of God's sovereignty & eternal purposes. **Joseph** *'what you meant for evil God meant for good...Gen 50:20* **Mordecai**-Haman. **Paul** **Phil 1:12-14**

God's purposes will always win out when we walk w/ Him. Paul never sees himself as a victim but always victorious in Christ...*all things work together for good...Rm 8:28* **Paulus-little-Latin** sees himself as *least of all saints vs 8.*

Disciples *whose greatest?* Jesus corrects--**Lu 9:48**. **Moses**-meekest--
somebody, nobody a body

Alexander MacClaren 'To efface oneself is one of the preachers first duties. The herald should be lost in his message'

Hudson Taylor eloquently introduced by moderator in Australia 'our illustrious guest--Dear friends I'm the little servant of an illustrious Master'

4 And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

Ministry of the **mystery**--How did Paul know about the mystery? God chose him to carry it out **Rom 11:13** *But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.*

Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. Paul's ministry was controversial, Gentiles despised by Jews, **Dogs-fodder for fires of hell**—Paul in trouble w/ organized religion of day-Judaism—**Hippies in Jesus movement w/ Chuck**. Paul as a Pharisee, before salvation persecuted the church

Acts 22:4 *"And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons-- 26:9-11 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having*

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received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

The ministry was hidden in the OT even though scripture hinted at it—
God included Gentiles when He blessed Abraham...

Genesis 12:3 *And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth (both Jew & Gentile) shall be blessed."*

In book of Isaiah includes Gentiles in God's plan of salvation.

Isaiah 49:6 *(God the Father speaking to God the Son-messiah) "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 make You a light (John 8:12) of the nations (goyim-Gentile nations) so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

Peter writes of this mystery **1Pet 1:12** *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look into.*

6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Message of the **mystery**—Gentiles are heirs-*sons & daughters of God* on same level as Jews—both joint-heirs in Christ—The cross says all people are accepted by God & one new person **2:15** in Christ Jesus, all partakers of promises of God.

Mystery to angels, principalities & power are not omniscience (all knowing) but are created beings & curious to know, look into God's eternal plan.

Gods *manifold* wisdom unknown by *rulers, authorities in heaven*. These

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created being aware of Gods power in creation, His love, mercy & grace but the mystery hidden from them.

Some see God's plan as foolishness *ICor 1:18,19 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL confound/nullify.* *Manifold wisdom* multi-faceted, variegated, many colored-- suggests uniqueness & variety of God working His plan of salvation—some like **Jonah** go to the depth of hell before they cry out to God others like **Lydia** hear God's word & simply opens her heart.

What did evil spirits & Satan learn—he knows the bible but not the Gods *mystery*—Satan a murderer & liar by nature—his strategy to keep people apart at odds, hating each other. But Gods mystery brings them together in harmony and oneness. Contrast to the devil. Sacred secret now known to us & we carry Gods good news to a fragmented world telling of God's love & forgiveness that He saves and is coming again to set up His kingdom & we will reign & rule w/ Him one in Christ Jesus Rev 20:6

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