

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
“THE MYSTERY OF GRACE”
(EPHESIANS 3:1-13)
MARCH 18, 2007

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 3:6, “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.”

INTRODUCTION

A characteristic of many people is that they enjoy a good mystery. Our curious nature and desire to figure things out seems to naturally intrigue many of us. In the section of scripture we are studying this week (Ephesians 3:1-13), Paul talks about the “mystery of grace” which God chose to reveal through Christ. This “divine secret” was only partially revealed in ages past and God has chosen in His sovereignty to manifest it through the church. Paul states that the mystery was made known to him by revelation and he is privileged to be a steward of these important truths. The mystery Paul refers to is that God’s love and grace has now been extended to all men through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel message Paul proclaims is that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and members of the same body with the Jews. Through our study, we want to investigate what Paul says about this mystery and better understand this amazing and glorious gift that God has extended to all men through Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Read Ephesians 3:1, 7-8. What do these verses reveal to us concerning Paul’s attitude toward his ministry? What did he mean by the statement, “the prisoner of Christ Jesus.” What does his attitude teach us about service to God?

2. In Ephesians 3:3-6, Paul speaks of the mystery that God had made known to him. What is this mystery? Why is this significant to all men?

3. According to Ephesians 3:10-11, what purpose does God have for the church? How does this purpose for the church “mesh” with God’s overall purpose in Christ described in Ephesians 1:9-10?

4. What does the phrase, “we have boldness and access with confidence” mean to you? (Ephesians 3:12) How do we have these attributes? What are we to do with them?

5. In Ephesians 3:13, Paul tells these believers to not lose heart over his tribulations. Why were Paul’s tribulations a “glory for the Gentiles”?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. In Ephesians 3:8, Paul describes himself as “less than the least of all God’s people.” In this statement, Paul conveys that without God’s strength and sufficiency, he could not accomplish any of His plans and purposes. In what ways do we limit God’s work in our lives? What do we need to do in our lives to reflect Paul’s humble and committed attitude?

2. In what specific ways do you see God’s love and power in your life and in the life of your church?

3. According to Ephesians 3:12, what are the conditions and attitudes we should have in approaching God in prayer? How should these truths impact your personal prayer life? What can you do today in order to make your prayer life more meaningful?

GOING DEEPER

Read 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 and 2 Corinthians 11:24-29. Based on these verses, summarize the suffering which Paul refers to in Ephesians 3:13. In spite of this intense suffering, what was Paul's attitude? How does this encourage you in your walk with Christ today?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Those are the two mysteries which the Apostle tells us he has been given to preach; the general mystery, the mystery of Christ, and the particular mystery that God's purpose is now manifest and in operation in the Church; and that the Church is the final form of this purpose until it is completed. Jew and Gentile are in Christ together, are sharing God's blessings now, and shall share the benefits of the everlasting and eternal glory. They shall wonder and be amazed to all eternity at the grace of God that ever made it possible, that ever brought us in, and that made us and the Jews together fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of such a blessed hope.

“The Unsearchable Riches of Christ,” D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
STUDY EIGHT – “THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S GRACE”
EPHESIANS 3:1-13

CONNECT 20 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Question:

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “church”?
2. Think of 2-3 adjectives which summarize your attitude and experience in the church? How has the church personally impacted your life?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) 5 MINUTES

Ephesians 3:6, “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING 30 MINUTES

1. With a thankful and grateful heart, offer up praise to the Lord for fulfilling His purposes for man through Christ and the church.
2. Pray specifically for our church and the direction the Lord is leading us in the future. Pray for our leaders to be humble men who seek God’s will for our church with all their heart. That our congregation would offer up their lives as “living sacrifices to the Lord” and be His light to this community and beyond.
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your group.