

Lesson 7, EPHESIANS 3:1-13

Imagine for a second that you are a Gentile Christian in the early years following the life and death of Jesus. Your life has been one of worshiping and fearing gods that would become angry and destroy you at any given moment. There never seemed to be enough sacrifice or worship to satisfy these ancient gods. Now through a man named Paul you hear of a living god, one that is not in the form of an idol but is represented by a man like yourself. A man named Jesus of Nazareth. This God is loving and wants nothing more than to give you peace and hope and fullness of life in a world of darkness, conflict, hopelessness, and trials.

But you are concerned. This man named Paul is in prison and you wonder about your faith. Is it real? Is Paul himself questioning his faith? This part of Ephesians is written to quell these fears of the early Christians in Ephesus.

1. To understand these verses more clearly, read verses 1 and 7; then go straight to verse 13. How would this realization affect a new Christian's attitude towards Paul's imprisonment? How do times of trials for us affect those who are witnesses of God's grace in our lives? Can you give an example?

2. Read verses 2-6. What is the mystery? What does Colossians 1:26,27; 2:2,3; Romans 11:25 and Revelation 10:7 say about the mystery of God?

3. Another part of the mystery of God seems to be in verses 9-11. What is that? See also Colossians 1:18-20.

Approaching a pagan god was done with trepidation and with sacrifices some of which were human. To approach the Living God of the Hebrews, a Jew needed to come with sacrifices, some of which were animal blood sacrifices. The thought on either of these individuals was “Is it enough?”, “Is it sufficient to satisfy the gods or God”?

4. What does verse 12 say about this? See also Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-24 and 2 Timothy 1:7. Is there something blocking your confidence in God and His grace and mercy? Write out a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give you the confidence in your Heavenly Father to navigate your life today.

Application: Are you living in a season where your faith in God’s plan is a witness to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms”? Ask the Lord Jesus to remind you of those times you have come through a trial believing in the goodness of God, and the angels have been struck by God’s glory living in you.

Prayer: God of all mysteries and wisdom, how can we even grasp the glories you have planned for those who love you and are called to your purposes on this earth. Give us freedom and confidence to lean into You during times of trouble and uncertainty. May our lives be a witness to your great love as we strive to live for Jesus Christ and for you. We ask this in Jesus’ name who lived and died so that your plan of drawing the entire world to you would be accomplished. Amen.