

6/5/22

The Ministry Of The Gospel
Eph. 3:8-10

Paul was over-joyed by all God had done for the Gentiles and was ready to break out in prayer for the Ephesians once again.

1. Paul prayed they might comprehend the riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints and the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them. Eph. 1:16-23
2. Paul will pray again that they avail themselves of the power of the Spirit, in the inner man, trusting God for all things beyond their own abilities. Eph. 3:14-21

We have stated Paul Inspired by the Spirit reveal gave important facts about himself, the messenger of the gospel. Eph. 3:1-7

* Presenting himself by three metaphors.

1. A prisoner. vs. 1
2. A steward. vs. 2-6
3. A servant. vs. 7

Paul now deals with the "ministry of the gospel", focusing on the content of the gospel. Eph. 3:8-13

* Remember verse 2-13 is one long sentence in Greek!

The ministry of the gospel for Paul is characterized by three things: Eph. 3:8-10

- I. The evangelizing of the Gentiles. vs. 8

- II. The unveiling of oneness to Jew and Gentile. vs. 9
- III. The enlightening of the angels about the oneness of Jew and Gentile. vs. 10

I. The evangelizing of the Gentiles. vs. 8

- A. The apostle Paul declared his humble high privilege in ministry. vs. 8a
 - * "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints."
1. Paul was genuinely shocked over and astonished at the grace of God.
 - a. He stated, to me "emoi", which is emphatic in Greek showing this verse is in opposition to the previous one. vs. 8a
 - b. In verse 7 the phrase to me "moi" deals with the grace imparted by the effectual working of God's power, not any ability or merit of his own.
 - c. In verse 8 the phrase to me "emoi" deals with the astonishment that God would call him to preach the gospel.
2. Paul stated his insignificance among the saints. vs. 8b
 - * "who am least of the least of all the saints."
- a. The Greek Scholars say the phrase is a unique combination of comparative and superlative.

- 1) The phrase “elachistotero”, literally means the “more least”, found only this one time.
 - 2) This is not false humility, but outright genuine humility.
- b. The comparative and superlative is to “all the saints”.
- 1) Paul considered himself the least of all believers in Christ.
 - 2) Paul was not speaking about his spiritual qualification or ineffectiveness in the gospel, for he just stated the grace given him was by the effective working of God’s power as a minister. vs. 7
3. The perspective of being the least of all the saints has to rest in his life before Christ, even though it is not stated.
- a. Paul approved the stoning of Stephen, as they laid his clothes at his feet. Acts 7:58
 - b. Paul told Agrippa, “This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in **prison**, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them*. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to **blaspheme**; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.” Acts 26:1011

- c. Paul said he persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. Gal. 1:13
 - d. Paul said, “I am chief of sinners.” 1Tim. 1:15
* I do not believe Paul lived under condemnation, yet realized the significance of what he had done!
 - e. Paul declared his apostleship was not inferior to the other apostles, “For I am the **least** of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. 1Cor. 15:9-10
 - f. “I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I **behind** the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.” 2Cor. 12:11
- B.** The apostle Paul declared his credentials for his earthly commissioned ministry. vs. 8b-c
* “this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

1. The confirmation is stated, “this grace was given” points back to “the gift of the grace of God” in verse 7. vs. 8b
 - a. To qualify Paul for ministry.
 - b. To enable Paul in ministry.
2. The commission was specific to “preach among the Gentiles.” vs. 8c
 - a. The word preach “euaggelizo”, means to bring good news or glad tidings in order to be saved.
 - 1) We get the word evangelism from it.
 - 2) The word is used for the preaching of Jesus to Gentile and Jew after He rose from the dead. Eph. 2:16
 - 3) “But the Lord said to him (Ananias), “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” Acts 9:15
 - 3) The majority of those saved in the first century were Gentiles, not Jews, they are the exception.
 - b. The emphasis of the Greek grammar is on “Gentiles”, to do this for the Gentiles, Paul was their special appointed apostle.
 - 1) At the council at Jerusalem, “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 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the

- apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles).” Gal. 2:7-8
- 2) To the Romans, “For I speak to you **Gentiles**; inasmuch as I am an **apostle** to the **Gentiles**, I magnify my ministry.” Rom. 11:13
 - 3) To Timothy, “for which I was appointed a preacher and an **apostle**-- I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying--a teacher of the **Gentiles** in faith and truth.” 1Tim. 2:7
 - 4) To Timothy again, “to which I was appointed a preacher, an **apostle**, and a teacher of the **Gentiles**.” 2Tim. 1:11
3. The content is declared to be the “unsearchable riches of Christ”.
 - a. The word unsearchable “anexichniastos”, means what cannot be searched out, comprehended or untraceable. Job 5:9; 9:10
 - 1) The word appears only one other time in the New Testament, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How **unsearchable** *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out! Rom. 11:33
 - 2) The word is synonymous with the word “mystery of Christ”. Eph. 3:4, 9

- b. The unsearchable riches of Christ have to do with His person and prophetic office.
 - 1) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, yet without sin. Matt. 1:20
 - 2) Jesus is God born of a virgin, Who became man, Immanuel. Matt. 1:23
 - 3) Jesus is the Last Adam. 1Cor. 15:45
 - 4) Jesus died in our place and paid the price for our sins. 2Cor. 5:21; 1Jn. 2:2
 - 5) Jesus is the only way to God. Jn. 14:6
 - 6) Jesus alone forgives sins. Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Eph. 1:7, 18; Col. 1:14
 - 7) Jesus is the only Savior and mediator. Jn. 4:24; 1Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15

Illustration

Paul illustrates our first point clearly, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 2Cor. 4:5-7

Application

1. The very clear teaching of the late Pastor Chuck Smith about the ministry was that it is one of highest privilege that no one could merit and is to be carried out with a heart of a servant.

- a. He constantly taught about serving and caring for the people of God and not exalting oneself over people.
 - b. He exposed by name those who fleeced and deceived the flock of God for money, instead of feeding them the word of God.
 - c. He was always open for God to raise up, call, anoint and send individuals to preach the gospel to sinners without a siminary degree.
 - d. He warned the Pastors always about false teaching and becoming hirelings.
 - * “Son of man, prophesy against the **shepherds** of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the **shepherds**: “Woe to the **shepherds** of Israel who **feed** themselves! Should not the **shepherds feed** the flocks?” Ezk. 34:2
2. The most valuable content that is printed on paper or e-books is the Bible, for the gospel of Jesus Christ that declares:
- a. Men, women and children are lost, dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1-2
 - b. Men, women are under the wrath of God. Jn. 3:36
 - c. God loves the world of lost humanity that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Jn. 3:16
 - d. God has chose the preaching of the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, foolishness to

those perishing, but the saved the power of God. Rom. 1:16-17; 1Cor. 1:18

The ministry of Paul meant the evangelizing of the Gentiles!

II. The unveiling of oneness to Jew and Gentile. vs. 9

- A. The apostle Paul declared his responsibility was to reveal Jew and Gentile were one body. vs. 9a
* “and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery.”
1. Paul was to make known to the Jew and Gentile the same message.
 - a. The phrase to make see “pjotisai” means to cast light upon.
 - 1) The aorist active makes it affective.
 - 2) This being the work of the Holy Spirit to the hearer, Paul being the mere instrument.
 - 3) Satan blinds, the Holy Spirit illuminates. 2Cor. 4:4; Eph. 1:18
 - 3) Jesus is the true light that lights every man that comes into the world, He said, “I am the light of the world.” Jn. 1:9; 8:12
 - b. The implication is that it was present in the Scriptures, but veiled til the prophetic fulfillment, as will be clearly stated next.

- 1) Paul did not preach from a New Testament Bible.
 - 2) Paul preached from the Old Testament Scriptures.
- c. The ones needing to be enlightened were all “pantas”.
- 1) Anyone and everyone.
 - 2) The people fall into two categories, the unsaved Jew and Gentile.
2. Paul was to make known that Jew and Gentile were one “in Christ”.
- a. This is what is indicated by the phrase “the fellowship of the mystery”.
 - 1) The word fellowship “koinonia”, means association, participation, community, complete oneness.
 - 2) The term mystery “musterion” from “muo” to shut the mouth and means something hidden or secret and was used for the secret initiation rights to pagan religions.
 - * The term is used always in the New Testament for previously hidden things, but now made known.
 - b. This message was foreign and offensive to the Jews, who considered the Gentiles as unclean, created by God to fuel the fires of hell.
 - 1) This message of Jew and Gentile being one “in Christ” was opposed by the Jews at the First Church council as

we have noted, but James, Peter and Paul exposed them to be unscriptural, so letters were sent to the Gentiles to not be troubled by Jews teaching they had to be under the law and circumcised to be saved. Acts 15

- 2) This message marked Paul as a traitor unworthy to live by the mob of Jews in the temple. Acts 22:22

B. The apostle Paul declared his responsibility to reveal that this fellowship of the mystery of Jew and Gentile being one body was the eternal plan of God. vs. 9b

- * “which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.”
1. The economy of grace and dispensation which Paul was called to administer was part of God’s plan and purpose from the beginning of the ages or time. Eph. 3:2-4
 - a. It was not an after thought.
 - b. It was not plan B, due to Israel’s rejection of Jesus.
 2. The origin of the plan and purpose had “been hidden in God”.
 - a. The phrase indicates the sovereign mind, will, counsel and plan of God.
 - 1) The word hidden “apolrupto”, means to keep secret or concealed in its

clarity and understanding till the appointed time.

- 2) Paul said, “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: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.” Eph. 3:5-6
 * Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72; 87; Is. 11:10; 43:19; 49:6; 54:1-3; 60:1-3; Hosea. 1:10; Amos 9:11; Mal. 1:11
 - b. The word “God” refers to the Father.
 - 1) The distinction between two persons cannot be missed “in God” and “Through Jesus Christ”.
 - 2) God the Father is said to be the One who created all things, through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - 3) There is no contradiction for all three persons of the Godhead are God and were involved in the creation. Gen. 1:1-2; Col. 1:16
 - 4) The name Jesus and the title Christ, verifies the Incarnation of God, Who became man. Jn. 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:5-11
3. This mystery “hidden in God” that Jew and Gentile have the same access to God, accepted the same way and comprise the

new community of God's redeem "in Christ", "His Church", "His Bride", no longer Jew or Gentile, is clearly known.

- a. Paul told the Gentiles, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." Eph. 2:13-16
- b. Paul reminded the Gentile, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." Eph. 2:19-22
- c. The plan of God was in affect, "if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the

grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 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: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." Eph. 3:2-6; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26

Illustration

The understanding of Jew and Gentiles being one in Christ is like the unveiling a statute to be seen clearly!

Application

1. There are many Jews still having their eyes blinded from seeing Jesus as their Messiah in the Scriptures.
 - a. Paul wept over it. Rom. 9:1-5
 - b. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same **veil** remains un-lifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the **veil** is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a **veil** lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the **veil** is taken away." 2Cor. 3:14-16

2. There are many in the church today that are allowing so many cultural things to divide them, instead of understanding their oneness in Christ.
- By their race, black, brown, white, yellow or red.
 - By the feminist, homosexual or transgender progressive worldview.
 - By the indoctrination of not dividing over doctrine, but simply to be united in love!
* “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the **doctrine** which you learned, and avoid them.” Rom. 16:17

The ministry of Paul dealt with the unveiling of oneness to Jew and Gentile!

III. The enlightening of the angels about the oneness of Jew and Gentile. vs. 10

- A. The apostle Paul revealed that angels do not know everything.
- Angels are not eternal they had a beginning and were created by God.
* “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” Ps. 33:6
 - The angels were created before the creation of the heavens and earth.
* “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! waters above the heavens!

- Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For He commanded and they were created.” Ps. 148:2, 5
- The number of angels is innumerable.
 - Daniel seeing the throne of God says, “A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.” Dan. 7:10
 - Hebrews says innumerable company “urias” meaning ten thousand times ten thousand, which would be 100 million, in other words, without number. Heb. 12:22
 - Paul says, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him”. Col. 1:16
 - Angels are spirit beings having no physical bodies or form.
 - “Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire to the heirs of salvation, in service to God.” Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7, 14
* Yet are described with physical features, as wings, feet, faces, etc.
 - Angels appeared to Abraham, then Lot at Sodom. Gen. 18-19

- c. The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. Ps. 34:7
 - d. “Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.” Zech. 4:1
 - e. The angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph about Mary’s pregnancy. Matt. 1:20
 - f. Some have entertained angels unawares. Heb. 13:2
- B.** The apostle Paul revealed that God had in mind for angels to witness the wisdom of God about the Jew and Gentile in real time.
- * “to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*.”
1. Paul gave the intentional purpose of the will of God.
 - a. The phrase, to the intent “hina” introduces a purpose clause.
 - b. The time is “now”, during the dispensation of grace, during the fellowship of the mystery.
 2. Paul indicated what God wanted to make known, “the manifold wisdom of God”.
 - a. The word manifold “polupoikilos”, meaning the variegated, multicolored, only this time in the New Testament.

- 1) The idea is the diversified wisdom of God that is awe-inspiring.
 - 2) In this case how God worked out the plan for Jew and Gentile to be one body, one new man. Eph. 2:15
- b.** The word wisdom “Sophia” is the ability to come to a final conclusion based on facts, knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the information.
- 1) God’s wisdom is to perfection.
 - 2) This aspect of God’s wisdom in our text was merely one of many.
- c.** The phrase, might be made known “gnorizo”, means to make known, with no doubt. Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 5, 10; 6:19, 21
- * The verb placed first and the subject “wisdom” last makes both emphatic in the Greek. Lenski
3. Paul identified the channel God chose to use, the church.
 - a. Church “ekklesia”, those called out of darkness into the Kingdom of God.
 - b. Comprised of Jew and Gentile, brothers and sisters without hostility, justified and forgiven in Christ.
 4. Paul introduces the audience, “to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places”, the good angels.
 - a. Principality “arche”, means a first one or leader.

- 1) Both were used by the Gnostics to teach angel hierarchy.
 - 2) Both also for men in the highest offices and position in the world.
 - 3) The word is used first order of angels, good or evil. Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 6:12
- b. Power “exousia”, means delegated authority.
- 1) Those men who are under the authority of other me and used for government. Rom. 13:1-2
 - 2) This would include angels good or evil. Eph. 1:21; 6:12
- c. Peter says angels desired to look into and see what God had planned. 1Pet. 1:10-12
- 1) We are told that angels rejoice over one sinner in heaven. Lk. 15:10
 - 2) The apostles were spectacles to angels, the world and men. 1Cor. 4:9
- d. The phrase, in the heavenly “espouranios”, literally heveanlies, plural, referring to the spatial realm of the unseen world of spiritual reality, supreme over all the earth below.
- 2) The word “places” in italic means it is not in the original Greek, but inserted to complete the thought.

Paul said to the men on the ship, “For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, `Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.” Acts 27:23-24

Application

1. The good and bad angels resulted from a spiritual rebellion in heaven. Is. 14:12-14; Ezk. 28:11-18
 - a. The good angels serve God and are faithful and loyal to Him.
 - b. The bad angels serve Satan and are faithful and loyal to him.
 - * “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Eph. 6:12
2. There are various classes of angels.
 - a. Regular angels. Heb. 1:14
 - b. Cherubim appear first in the Garden of Eden, the ark and God’s throne. Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:19-20; Ezk. 1:5-6
 - c. Seraphim are found only in the book of Isaiah. Is. 6:1-2
 - * In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six

Illustration

wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. Is. 6:1-2

- d. There are archangels, Michael is the only one called an archangel, who contended with Satan over the body of Moses. Jude 1:9

3. Are you in awe at the wisdom of God as He unfolds it?

- a. In your life.
- b. In the life of others.
- c. In the life of the church.
- d. In the live world affairs.

* Listen to the response of Paul for the ability of God to save sinners, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!” Rom. 11:33

The ministry of Paul resulted in the enlightening of the angels about the oneness of Jew and Gentile!

Conclusion

This was the ministry of the gospel for Paul.

- I. The evangelizing of the Gentiles!
- II. The unveiling of oneness to Jew and Gentile!
- III. The enlightening of the angels about the oneness of Jew and Gentile!