

5/29/22

The Messenger Of The Gospel

Eph. 3:1-2

Paul the apostle is in awe over and overwhelmed by all that God has done for the Gentiles, so he prepares to break out in prayer for the Ephesians once again.

1. The first prayer of Paul was that they 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. The second prayer of Paul will be that they avail themselves of the power of the Spirit trusting God for all things beyond their own abilities. Eph. 3:14-21

Some commentators say Paul gets side-tracked and goes off on a tangent when he states the word "Gentiles". vs. 1

1. And that what we have from verse 2-13 is a digression, a very long parenthesis.

2. So they say you can go right from verse one to verse fourteen and flow right into Paul's prayer.

3. But Paul is writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this so called digression cannot be attributed to human distraction, but rather to Divine direction as Paul gives to the Ephesians important information about himself.

1. The messenger of the gospel. vs. 1-7

2. The ministry of the gospel. vs. 8-13

Paul presents three pictures of himself as the messenger of the gospel. vs. 1-7

1. A prisoner. vs. 1

2. A steward. vs. 2-6

3. A servant. vs. 7

We want to look at Paul the messenger of the gospel, which is characterized by three things: Eph. 3:1-2

I. The anticipation of Paul. vs. 1a-b

II. The situation of Paul. vs. 1c

III. The administration of Paul. vs. 2

I. The anticipation of Paul. vs. 1a-b

A. The apostle Paul revealed he was going to pray.
* "For this reason."

1. Paul says, "For this reason".

a. Literally, "for this cause".

b. Or because of what I just stated.

2. Paul is referring to the previous section.

Eph. 2:19-22

a. That the Gentiles were no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. vs. 19

b. That the Gentiles had been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*. vs. 20

c. That the Gentiles and Jews in Christ as the whole building were being joined

together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord. vs. 21

- d.** That the Gentiles and Jews in Christ were also being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. vs. 22
- 3.** The phrase ‘For this reason’ is to be connected with a verb according to Greek grammar. Lenski
 - a.** The verb is not in verse one.
 - b.** The phrase, For this reason “Tautou charin” is repeated again after the long parenthesis from verse 2-13.
 - c.** This is where the verb is supplied, “For this reason I bow my knees.” vs. 14
 - 1)** The word bow “kampto”, means to bend, synonymous with prayer.
 - 2)** The attitude behind is in honor and respect to a superior, in this case to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. vs. 14
- B.** The apostle Paul revealed His love for them. vs. 1a-b
 - * “I, Paul.”
 - 1.** The phrase “I Paul” is emphatic in the Greek.
 - a.** The same one who had who had been their Pastor for about three years had been gone about five years by this time, but still loved them and cared for them.

- b.** The same one that called himself “an apostle by the will of God”, in the opening of the epistle, but did not let it go to his head. Eph. 1:1a-b
- c.** The same one who already has given thanks to God the Father for them. Eph. 1:16-17
- 2.** The name Paul as we have noted comes from the Latin meaning small or little.
 - a.** The derivative is a verb “pauo” means pause, stop, restrain, to come to an end.
 - 1)** Paul has been described by some as short, bowl legged with a unibrow.
 - 2)** Yet there is no mention of his height or features in Scripture.
 - b.** The Roman name Paul we have stated is a beautiful reality of what happened to him on the Damascus rode. Acts 9
 - 1)** He was so big before his own eyes, as the Pharisee of Pharisees making havoc of the church. Acts 8:3
 - 2)** He was brought to his knees, seeing his sinfulness before God, “trembling and astonished, and said, “Lord what do You want me to do?” Acts 9:6
 - 3)** The amazing thing is that even though Paul indicates himself to be the writer, there are those who deny it. Eph. 1:1; 3:1
- 3.** The Hebrew name of Paul prior to his conversion was Saul.

- a. The name Saul in Hebrew means ask, inquire or request.
- b. What an incredible combination of his two names, in view of God's call on his life, "Ask, little one".
- c. John the Baptist said, "I must decrease, and He must increase". Jn. 3:30

Illustration

The people of Israel had rejected God as their King and asked for an earthly king, Saul. Samuel revealed their wickedness, so they asked him to pray for them. Samuel said, "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to **pray** for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." 1Sam. 12:23

Application

1. Prayer is commanded by Jesus.
 - a. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray". Lk. 18:1b
 - b. Paul said, "That we are to pray without ceasing", a total dependency. 1Thess. 5:17
2. Prayer keeps us from losing heart especially today.
 - a. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not lose heart". Lk. 18:1b
 - * Reverse it, if we faint, it is because we are not praying.
 - b. Paul says, "Paying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this

end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6:18

* Payer will open our eyes, in order that we not trust or be deceived by what we see!

3. Prayer protects us against anxiety, particularly with all the lies, mis-information and indoctrination to comply without questioning anything.

- a. Jesus said we are not to worry about the things of life but to learn from the birds and lilies of the field that if God provides for them daily, how much more for us. Matt. 6:25-34

* The birds and lilies of the field are used to teach us to depend on God.

- b. Paul taught we are to be anxious for nothing, but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving are to make our request known to God. Phil. 4:6

* All is to be brought to God in prayer!

- c. Paul declared the result of prayer is the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:7

* The purchase of this building was not very logical nor the building of the gymnasium, but God directed us and His peace was very evident!

4. Prayer is in order to see God work.

- a. God told Jeremiah, "Call on Me and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things which you know not." Jer. 33:3

* Our confidence and direction is to be of and in God alone!

b. Jesus said, “Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to His harvest.” Matt. 9:38

* God will speak to us in prayer!

The anticipation of Paul was prayer!

II. The situation of Paul. vs. 1c

A. The apostle Paul saw and called himself a specific kind of prisoner.

* “the prisoner of Christ Jesus.”

1. Paul was constantly being undermined by the Judaizes and persecuted for preaching the gospel.
 - a. At Philippi Paul was thrown in jail with Silas.
 - b. At Thessalonica he was chased out.
 - c. At Berea he had to flee and escorted to Athens.
 - d. The Lord appeared to Paul at Corinth and told him to not be afraid, to speak boldly, no one would hurt him: for God had many in the city to save. Acts 18:9-10
 - e. At Jerusalem He was nearly killed by the Jews.
2. Paul never called himself a prisoner of Rome or Nero, but of Jesus His Lord. Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phile. 1:1, 9

a. He saw himself as a prisoner of Christ by appointment for the furtherance of the gospel, saying some of the Pretorium Guard had been saved. Phil. 1:12-21

c. He was visited in prison by the Lord after his arrest at Jerusalem to assure him he would see Rome as a testimony for Him. Acts 23:11

d. He brought a run-away slave named Onesimus to Christ while in prison, writing to Philemon he called himself the “aged and now prisoner of Jesus Christ” and Onesimus a “my fellow prisoner in Christ”. Phile. 1:9-10, 23

e. Paul was commissioned an apostle to the Gentiles and called himself an apostle to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:13; 15:15-16; Gal. 2:8-9; 1Tim. 2:7; 2Tim. 1:11

B. The apostle Paul wrote the epistle of Ephesians from prison.

1. The occasion was that there was some false teaching at Colossae.
 - a. Epaphras the Pastor of Colossae came to Paul at Rome when he was in prison to tell him of the heresy that Jesus was not sufficiency for salvation, at which time he also wrote Ephesus. Col. 1:7
 - b. Onesimus the run-away slave had also been saved by Paul and he sent him back

to his master Philemon with a letter by the hand of Tychicus. Col. 4:7-9

* Paul's imprisonment allowed him to receive visitors. Acts 28:30-31

2. Paul wrote four epistles from prison, Christological, dealing with the work and person of Jesus, called "the prison epistles".
 - a. Ephesians depicts the body of Christ, Jew and Gentile one in Christ seated in the heavenlies, Christ the head of the church.
 - b. Philippians gives us the consecration of the believer to the service of Christ which is the joy of life in Christ.
 - c. Colossians presents Christ as the preeminent One and Godhead bodily in whom we are complete.
 - d. Philemon portrays the one lost sheep and who is brought back by love and grace.

C. The apostle Paul saw himself as the prisoner of Christ for a particular group of people.

* "for you Gentiles."

1. Paul was not saying he was in jail because of the Gentiles, as if they were at fault for his imprisonment.
 - a. He is saying he was a prisoner of Christ for their benefit.
 - b. He has just told them of their oneness, Jew and Gentile one in Christ, one body, one church. Eph. 2:11-16; 3:6; 4:1-3

* Gentiles included Scythian, Barbarian without any distinction or inferiority.

c. He is about to pray that they yield to the Spirit of God for the good of their lives.

* The believers are seen as blessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:5; 3:10; 6:12

2. Paul knew he was in prison having been accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple area. Acts 21-25
 - a. Paul had been accused of teaching the Jews who were among the Gentile to forsake Moses, that they ought not to circumcise their children nor walk according to the customs.
 - b. So James and the elders asked Paul to sponsor four men in their vows to silence the rumors and acknowledged that the decree sent to the Gentiles that exempted them from the law.
 - c. Seven days after Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple and stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, supposing he had defiled the Temple having brought Trophimus the Ephesian into the Temple because they had seen them both together in the city, so they tried to kill Paul.
 - d. News of the violence reached the garrison and soldiers and centurions rescued Paul.

- e. Paul was permitted to speak from the stairs to the crowd after he spoke to the commander in Greek, informing him he was a Jew from Tarsus.
- f. Paul then addressed the Jew in Hebrew and they became silent as he told them about his Jewish home, training by Gamaliel, that he was a Pharisee, had persecuted the Way to the death as far as Damascus, binding them in chains to punish them.
- g. He told them about his blinding encounter and conversion on the Damascus Road and his commission through Ananias.
- h. That he returned to Jerusalem and the Lord appeared to him and told him to leave Jerusalem for the Jews would not receive his testimony.
- i. Paul reminded the Lord that they knew his reputation of persecuting Christians, even putting Stephen to death.
- j. Then Paul said Jesus sent him to the Gentiles and the crowd went crazy and wanted to kill Paul, saying he was not fit to live.
- k. Paul was going to be examined under scourging, but he revealed his Roman citizenship, so they imprisoned him at Jerusalem.

- l. Paul nephew revealed a plot to kill Paul, so they transferred him to Caesarea on the Mediterranean.
- m. The Jews and Tertullus the orator went to accuse Paul without success, Felix and Drusilla heard the gospel, but left Paul in prison for two years, as a political scapegoat.
- n. Festus, the new governor wanting to favor the Jews asked Paul if he was willing to go up to Jerusalem to be tried, so Paul appealed to Caesar.
- o. Then Agrippa and Bernice visited Festus and heard Paul's case at Festus' request and Paul laid a heavy gospel witness on them.
- p. Herod told Paul, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" Acts 25:24
- q. "Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian. And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." Acts 25:28-29

Illustration

We hear of those Christians in Iran in prison for their faith, we have spoken to some and they consider it a privilege to go to prison, their faith is amazing.

Application

1. We as American Christians still have the freedom to preach the gospel.
 - a. But we see and hear the diligent attempts to oppress and remove our First Amendment right of free speech and religion by social-Marxist progressive liberals, just as Gov. Newsome closed all churches in California at the start of Covet without authority, breaking the law and was overturned.
 - b. This also includes the Universities, the news-media, our politicians who see God, Christians, conservative, veterans and patriots as enemies.
 - c. The writing is on the wall, as we have seen America being transformed radically in since May 15, 2008 when our vote to affirm marriage is to be between a man and a woman was overturned, twice by the Supreme Court.
 - * Paul said, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.” Eph. 5:15-17
2. We have to remember that this world is evil and headed towards a one world Global mind-set that will be headed by the Anti-Christ, we are seeing the dress-rehearsal, you can read about it in Karl Schwab’s book, Covet-19, Great Reset, the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

- a. The WEF is mostly known for its annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, a mountain resort in the eastern Alps region of Switzerland. To discuss, plan and execute the improvement of the state of the world by engaging woke corporations, political, academic and leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas, at the exclusion of patriotism to be replaced by Globalism.
- b. Speakers like Bill Gates, George Soros and is attended by Rick Warren, calling those at Davos his friends.
- c. Markham White said, “You will own nothing and you will be happy”, as part of the Great Reset to take place in 2030.
 - a. We are pilgrims and sojourners. Heb. 11:13; 1Pet. 2:11
 - b. We have been delivered from the power of **darkness** and conveyed into the **kingdom** of the Son of His love. Col. 1:13
3. The believers in every generation have always been looking for the Lord’s return and have paid the price for their faith, persecution, imprisonment, even death.
 - * Paul told the Corinthians, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things

which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” 2Cor. 4:16-18

The situation of Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ!

III. The administration of Paul. vs. 2

- A.** The apostle Paul affirmed they knew about his stewardship in the gospel. vs. 2
 * “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God.”
- 1.** Paul by saying, “if indeed” does not imply an doubt whatsoever about having heard.
 - a.** The phrase, if indeed “eige”, means inasmuch and could be translated “since”, affirming the fact of hearing.
 - b.** Verse 2-7 is one long sentence.
 - 2.** Paul is saying, “I know you have heard”.
 - a.** The word heard “akouo”, its root means to be endowed with the faculty to hear.
 - 1)** The plain meaning is to attend to or consider what is or has been said.
 - 2)** The tense is the indicative aorist active, the simple past fact that they heard and the ongoing hearing of it in the present.
 - b.** The apostle had been gone about five years at this point.
 - 1)** There were those who had been there when Paul was their pastor and heard for themselves.

- 2)** Some had come to Christ since Paul’s departure who heard it from others.
 - 3)** Some of you were at the founding of the church from a Bible study in 1980 in Alhambra, you heard and saw all God did.
 - 4)** Those of you who came after, have heard it from those who were there.
- 3.** Paul had been entrusted with the office of steward. vs. 2
- a.** The word dispensation “aikonomia”, is a compound word.
 - 1)** The word “oikos”, a house.
 - 2)** The word “nomos”, law.
 - b.** The word means a management, oversight or stewardship. Col. 1:25
 - 1)** The word was used by Paul for the fulfillment of the church age. Eph. 1:10
 - 2)** The word in our text is used for the steward who was wasting his rich master’s goods to give an account of himself. Lk. 16:1, 3, 4
 - c.** The responsibility of Paul was to be a faithful steward of God.
 - 1)** As a steward nothing belonged to him, all had been given to him by God.
 - 2)** As a steward he was responsible to dispense, manage and multiply what God gave him.

4. Paul had been called and entrusted with the management and administration of the grace of God.
- a. The grace of God is synonymous with the gospel of salvation.
- 1) “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the **gospel** of the **grace** of God.” Acts 20:24
 - 2) “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the **grace** of Christ, to a different **gospel**.” Gal. 1:6
 - 3) “just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the **gospel**, you all are partakers with me of **grace**.” Phil. 1:7
- b. The word grace “charis” means unmerited favor, with the idea of beauty.
- 1) Grace was the common Greek greeting and appears twelve times in the epistle. Eph.1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8, 4:7, 29; 6:24
 - 2) Grace conveys beauty and charm, giving joy to the hearer and the beholder. Wuest

- 3) Grace is undeserved, without claim or expectancy by which we are saved. Eph. 2:8-9
 - 4) Grace is an act that is beyond the ordinary course that is expected.
 - 5) Grace is the ever flowing and constant supply of God to the believer. Eph. 3:20
 - 6) The word in it’s classical meaning is “thankfulness” and translated “thankworthy” and “acceptable”. Rom. 6:17; 2Cor. 8:16
 - 7) Grace is extended to all sinners for God died for the ungodly, His enemies. Rom. 5:8-10
- B.** Paul the apostle confirmed that his stewardship in the gospel of grace was for the Gentiles. vs. 2
* “which was given to me for you.”
1. This office of great responsibility had been given to Paul at his conversion.
 - a. The word given “didomi” means to bestow, granted or supplied.
 - b. The word is a participle aorist passive, a fact in the past, literally, “having been given”.

* “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before **Gentiles**, kings, and the children of Israel.” Acts 9:15

2. This office given to Paul was for the benefit and blessing of the Gentiles.
 - a. To be saved by grace through faith, apart from the law.
 - b. To be made one with God through His Son Jesus Christ.
 - c. To be endowed with the Holy Spirit to be able to live their new life in Christ.

Illustration

Paul is the best illustration, “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Eph. 6:18-20

Application

1. Each of us are stewards of the gospel of grace.
 - * “Now then, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” 2Cor. 5:20
2. Each of us know by experience that not all people are happy to hear the gospel of grace.
 - * Paul says, “Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of

Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?” 2Cor. 2:14-16

2. Each of us as stewards know the urgency of the time regarding the gospel of grace.
 - * Paul told the Romans, “And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” Rom. 13:11-12

The administration of Paul was the gospel of grace for the Gentiles!

We have looked at Paul the messenger of the gospel, which is characterized by three things:

- I. The anticipation of Paul was prayer!
- II. The situation of Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ!
- III. The administration of Paul was the gospel of grace for the Gentiles!