



Title: Ephesians – The Great Secret

Scripture: Ephesians 3:1-13

Date: 2/5/2023

Bible Version: NLT

BOTTOM LINE: As the church we get to be a part of something bigger than ourselves and help display God’s wonderful wisdom to a watching world.

Vs. 1

When I think of all this – All of what he wrote of in chapter 2 about the building up the church and how we are like bricks in God’s Holy House.

The prisoner of Christ Jesus – As a prisoner in Rome, he understood it served a purpose, he was there for Jesus.

For the benefit of you Gentiles – Paul’s mission was to preach salvation to everyone, he was known as the “Apostle to the Gentiles.”

Vs. 2

God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles – Paul and the other Apostles, were to steward or manage the responsibility of mystery in extending grace to the Gentiles.

Vs. 3

God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. – The word mystery in this context is a sacred secret, something hidden for a purpose.

Vs. 4

As you read... you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ – This letter would have been read aloud to the churches and Paul wanted them to fully understand the plan of Christ that had been revealed to him.

Vs. 5

God did not reveal it to previous generations – Those generations in the time of the Old Testament did not clearly understand this plan, it was not yet revealed.

but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets. – This was a divine revelation to the New Testament apostles; however it seems God used Paul specifically to reveal this secret.

Vs. 6

And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. – The Jews and Gentiles now have an equal share and are co-heirs in the riches of God.

Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. – The secret is that God would create a new entity, called the church. It would include Jews and Gentiles, in one body, fellow partakers in the coming blessings promised in God's Kingdom (Ephesians 2:15, Galatians 3:28, 2 Timothy 1:1).

Vs. 7

I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. – Paul considered himself a minister of the mystery, this service was by God's special favor and mighty power.

God made Paul a steward of "the mystery" with the responsibility of sharing it with the Gentiles. It was not enough to simply win them to Christ and form them into local assemblies. He was also to teach them their wonderful position in Christ as members of the body, sharing God's grace equally with the Jews. – Warren Wiersbe

Vs. 8

Though I am the least deserving of all God's people – Paul, once Saul, knew he had a past filled with hate and persecution towards Jesus followers.

he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ – He was undeserving of this call and was amazed by the grace of God to steward the gift of sharing the wonderful riches of Christ available to all.

Understanding the deep truths of God's Word does not give a man a big head; it gives him a broken and contrite heart. – Warren Wiersbe

Vs. 9

I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan – Paul's life work was to bring light to this secret plan; he understood it was God's plan and his purpose to spread the good news.

that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.
– God's plan was in place before the creation of the world.

This great truth — this mysterious plan— was hidden before it was revealed after the finished work of Jesus on the cross. This reinforces the idea that there is genuinely something new in the New Covenant, and that it is wrong to consider Israel simply the Old Testament Church and the Church the New Testament Israel. – David Guzik

Vs. 10

God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety – God's purpose in uniting Jews and Gentiles together in his church was to display his wonderful, diverse, and rich wisdom.

to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. –

These are angelic beings, both faithful and fallen, good and evil, they are receiving their understanding of God's great mystery by watching us, the church.

God's wisdom is made known to the world, including angelic beings, by the existence of a multi-ethnic church.

The church is to demonstrate to the spiritual world and the physical world what God's kingdom looks like. It is a demonstration to the angelic realm of God's manifold wisdom. It is a demonstration to Satan of God's victory and Satan's defeat. It is a demonstration to the world of what it looks like when heavenly values operate in history. - Tony Evans

Vs. 11

This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. – The redeeming work of Christ on the cross and the birth of the Church was not an after-thought, it was God's plan all along.

Vs. 12

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. – We have an all-access pass to the throne room of grace. The boldness comes from knowing that God sees you according to what Christ has done for you.

Vs. 13

So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. – Paul was encouraging the church in Ephesus, who were predominantly Gentiles, not to feel down or burdened because he is in jail for preaching to the Gentiles.

I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored. – Paul knew he was called to be a minister of this mystery, a champion of the gospel to the Gentiles, he knew there was purpose in the pain.

3D Guide

DO.

BOTTOM LINE: As the church we get to be a part of something bigger than ourselves and help display God's wonderful wisdom to a watching world.



1. What does this study reveal to you about God?
2. What does this study reveal to you about yourself?
3. Based on this, what changes do you need to make?
4. What is your prayer for today?



1. What is Paul's attitude toward his imprisonment?
2. Why does our conduct as a church matter?
3. Are you actively engaged in the mission of the church?
4. How can we encourage each other in suffering and struggles to look towards hope?



DO.

Anytime you read God's word you have to put things into perspective. You also have to realize that the terms, not words, have meanings. As a group re-read the scriptures that were studied. Try the Amplified Version and compare that to the NJKV, NIV, ESV, or NASB. Pick a few words and have a group member look that word up on blueletterbible.com or with their app.