

Passage: Ephesians 3:1-7

Title: The Flood of Grace

Summary: We see in our passage today the word “dispensation, (Greek: oikonomia ), it is where we get our word “Economy” . A lot of people struggle with this word, and theologians come up with books upon books to explain it, but it simply means a “set order of how things work.” God saying I’m setting the order of how things are going to work and nothing can change it. Satan, evilness, terrorism, prosperity, will not change my plan, or how I run my plan, and it will all happen in the “fullness of time, on my timetable (remember 1:10). Paul will show in these verses that the fullness of time has come, and the church is now in the period “of the grace of God.”

### Overview/Outline of the Book of Ephesians

We continue on our great adventure as we begin this study through the Book of Ephesians, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, and sometimes word-by-word. This Book takes us into breathtaking views of the greatest Christian doctrines and promises, and why it has been heralded the Swiss Alps of the New Testament.

The Book of Ephesians has a prebuilt outline to it:

- Doctrine (chapters 1-3)
- Duty (chapter 4-6)

*Doctrine* - is, “who is God”, “what has He done for us”, and “what does He think of us”.

*Duty* - is “what does He want us to do”, and “what can I ask of Him to do it (for He doesn’t ask us to do anything that He will not help us, empower us, to accomplish it”. Along with that will come, “what we need to be on guard of”.

\*\*\*\*We have to know who were re in Christ, the security of our position in Him, before we can walk victoriously, and battle spiritually. \*\*\*\*

Regarding that, Ephesians has a most interesting and wonderful order to it in verb tenses such as, seated, walking, and being steadfast.

- Chapter 2 – We are “Seated” with Christ in heaven
- Chapter 4 – We are called to “Walk” worthy of the calling
- Chapter 6 – We are called to “Stand” against the enemy and his ways.

*Ephesians 2:6–7 (NKJV)*<sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

*Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV)*<sup>1</sup> I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

*Ephesians 6:14 (NKJV)*<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Doctrine & Duty - This outline is nothing new to us, as every time we open this Bible here at CCAAC, we always ask these same 5 question. And..... apply what we learn, and what the Lord speaks to our heart as we study this treasure....

### Today’s Passage

**Ephesians 3:1–7 (NKJV)**<sup>1</sup> For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup> if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, <sup>4</sup> by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), <sup>5</sup> 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: <sup>6</sup> that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, <sup>7</sup> of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

### Overview

The title of our passage today is “The Flood of Grace”. We see in our passage today the word “dispensation”.

- **Dispensation** (oikonomia), is where we get our word “Economy”. A lot of people struggle with this word, and theologians come up with books upon books to explain it, but it simply means a “set order of how things work.” God saying I’m setting the order of how things are going to work and nothing can change it. Satan, evilness, terrorism, prosperity, will not change my plan, or how I run my plan, and it will all happen in the “fullness of time, on my timetable (remember 1:10). Paul will show in these verses that the fullness of time has come, and the church is now in the period “of the grace of God.”

*Ephesians 1:7–10 (NKJV)* <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

### **3P’s of the Passage**

#### Person

- Fellow Heirs of Promises of God

#### Position

- Secured Through the Gospel
- Of the Same Body
- On the Solid Foundation of the Word of God

#### Promise

- The Dispensation (flood) of Grace
- Partakers of the Promises of God

### **The Word of God in Our Hand Today**

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

*Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)* <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

### **In Every Study**

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

*Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)* <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

### **Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—**

#### **The Cause Changed Paul’s Life & the World Forever**

For this reason/cause: the cause is that the Gentiles and Jews are one. This cause changed Paul’s life, and the world forever.

Paul was a prisoner because he believed in God’s new program of uniting Jews and gentiles into one body, the church. In Acts 21, Paul was arrested for what they thought was bringing Gentiles into the temple. Paul tried to defend himself by giving his personal testimony, the crowd listened to him until he said the word “Gentiles” and then they rioted. The rest of the book of Acts explains how Paul got from Jerusalem to Rome as a prisoner.

*Acts 21:26–33 (NKJV)* <sup>26</sup> Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them. <sup>27</sup> Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, <sup>28</sup> crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” <sup>29</sup> (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the

city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)<sup>30</sup> And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.<sup>31</sup> Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.<sup>32</sup> He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.<sup>33</sup> Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done.

### **Paul's Life of Riots / Franklin Graham**

I love Paul's passion, and so passionate was Paul that many places he went his teaching and preaching caused riots. He caused a riot in Ephesus when he preached Christ, He starts a riot here, He goes places and gets run out town, he gets stoned with rocks, but the man just gets up and keeps going. You cant stop a man/woman who are convinced of the Gospel. I admire what I am seeing this very month with Franklin Graham the son of the late Billy Graham, as he has been run out of town literally in Liverpool England for his speaking the Word of God. After that two other cities joined in banning him from using the public venue to bring the Festival of Hope. The LGBT group pressured the leaders of the city to bar him because of he supports the Biblical position of what the Bible says regarding homosexuality. But mark my words, the Festival of Hope will go on, somewhere, somehow, they will find another place to host the Festivals there in England. In the end they will thank all those who opposed and raised up against the Festival of Hope for the free advertising, as many will come who want to hear the message of Hope, the flood of grace, the message of forgiveness for any who would receive it, and the promise of the power to live in freedom and power that God promises to all who come.

### **This Raises 2 Questions for Each of Us**

Paul a prisoner of the Lord and notice it says for you as he's speaking to the Gentiles, Paul said he was willing to be a prisoner of the Lord for the Lord and for these people. And so that would bring us to two questions as we would look at such a verse

1. and that is are we willing to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ
2. and if so, for who?

So Paul is in prison. Now, this isn't the horrible prison pit yet that he writes. He's under house arrest right now. He hasn't made his way into the prison pit. Again, he's under house arrest, but nonetheless, his freedom has been taken. He cannot go and do as he wants. He's not free to move about the region. He's not free to do mission trips as he chooses. He's under the total control of the Roman government. And that has come about because of the false accusations that have come against him for breaking the religious laws of Israel, which we saw in the last study.

God had broken down those middle walls, but the religious people still had them up. And Paul was accused of violation, of bringing non-Jewish men into the temple. But the truth be told in that account of acts, they were Jewish men. So Paul is twice free and right in that these men were Jewish men. But that wouldn't have mattered technically because God had broken down the wall. So Paul could find himself in prison saying, "This is totally unjust and unfair. I'm totally innocent of all charges and totally innocent before the Lord."

### **Paul Doesn't See Himself as Prisoner of Rome – But of Jesus Christ**

But regardless, Paul doesn't see himself a prisoner of Rome. He doesn't see himself a prisoner of the Jewish state, but of Jesus Christ. He sees the Lord Jesus had put him in this prison, this situation, these chains that bind him. So how about you? Do you find yourself in a tough place today, a difficult situation, and you feel bound and chained maybe by no fault of your own or wrong of your own, but are you willing right now to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ? To be in that position so that he may be glorified in you, through you, onto someone else's life for their betterment and for them to see the glory of God.

We truly have a key of victorious Christian living, especially in a fallen world. You see, when we say

*Who controls your situation will determine how much your situation controls you.*

I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I'm a welder of Jesus Christ, not the manager that I desired to be. I am a children's worker for Jesus Christ, not the missionary that I had desired to be. I am a husband of Jesus Christ.

I am the wife of Jesus Christ. I am the son, the daughter of Jesus Christ. Can you bring yourself into that place where you see the situation? This is where Christ has me, and I am going to take that and accept it and I'm going to live for the glory of God in that and for them.

### **Notice – the “For You”**

Notice it says for you, Paul says, speaking of the Gentiles, "I am a prisoner by Jesus Christ for you," and he has no complaints about it. Who controls your situation will clearly determine how much your situation controls you, but the question for you, how about you when it comes to the for you? Are you willing for you or do you want to pick and select who the for you is? We may say, yes, I will be a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I love you Jesus. It would be an honor to be your prisoner until God shows us who our for you is. Then we go, them? They're so selfish, they're so ungrateful. Do you know what they have said to me about how they have treated me? And then that can really change, that can bring us that we will really find out what type of prisoner we truly are.

*Who controls your situation will determine how much your situation controls you.*

It's a yielding. It's a trusting to the Lord. If this is who you made me a prisoner of Jesus Christ, if this is who the for you is, okay, I will do that because I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I'm not a prisoner of my situation.

And if it is a difficult for you, whoever that person may be, then you add on to the Lord. Now help me fulfill this calling. I believe this is a calling that you've given me to be the prisoner in this situation. If you would, the bounding in the chains of it, and I believe there's always a yielding before the fulfilling. There won't be a fulfilling and a satisfaction and a satisfying of who God has put us in place to reach if we're not willing to yield, for some people just want to endure and get through, but that's not yielding. It's a whole different story. When we yield and we lay down our rights and our wants and our desires and say, "Here I am Lord, have your way."

But with the yielding, trust me, Christian comes a feeling. When God finds willing, yielding vessels to flow through, he flows through them. God flows through you. The same God who walked on water, the same God who broke the loaves and the fish, the same God who raised the dead and the same God who rose from the dead will flow through you. But the yielding must come first.

And see this, we read verse one and we go, wow, that's a lot of yielding. Paul's going to be put in prison to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. But let me make my point. When the yielding comes, then the feeling comes and there's a supernatural flow of the Lord through anyone who willingly yields and allows God to flow through them. And my case in point is right here before you, chapter one and chapter two. Look at all the glory that God revealed and has told us. And it came because he was willing to yield himself and God found the yielding man and a willing man and he became a man that God could flow through.

### **So “The 2 Questions” / I Pray Spirit is Working on Your Heart**

So that brings me back to my two questions. Who are you willing to yield to? Who are you willing to yield for? Are you willing to yield to Jesus Christ to be his prisoner and are you willing to yield to whoever he makes the for you to be regardless who that may be.

I pray the spirit is working in your heart right now. As he speaking to you about your situation and you've been struggling about being a prisoner of Jesus Christ, especially to that person who you don't believe deserves it, maybe they've mistreated you, whatever it may be. I pray the spirit is speaking to you right now and moving in your heart to see the glory of being the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

### **Richard Wurmbrand / Not How Much we Can Endure – But How Much Can we Love**

Richard Wurmbrand spent 14 years in a brutal Romanian prison. He was not under house arrest. He was beaten, he was tortured and he even has written a book. Tortured for Christ is when he left that prison his bodied was mangled and beaten even to his days. He couldn't wear shoes because they would take his shoes off, tie him to a rack, and beat his feet with a pole, with a bat and brutalize him. But he said something

that only recently have I heard for the first time. He said, "It's not how much you can endure. It's how much you can love." And that's a deep statement because we can believe that enduring and just enduring the situation and not losing our witness and not become bitter and resentful or being critical with our attitudes. We can think that is something. And that could be true to a point until you hear Richard Wurmbrand and says, "It's not how much you can endure. It's how much you can love."

And even as his captors tortured him, every time he would pray, they would beat him. And they came in one day, saw him praying and said, "You've lost everything. You've lost your job, your home, your wife, your children. You're in this prison. What could you possibly have left the pray for?" To which he answered, "You," as he prayed for his torturers. That spoke the volume and depths of love. It's not how much you can endure, it's how much you can love, and you may be enduring and getting through, but there's a whole other thing whenever you can actually start to love. Are you willing to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ for whoever God has put in front of you to be the prisoner for?

### **Never Does He Say Woe is Me**

Paul isn't upset with what he doesn't have, the so-called limitation that is put upon him. For the sake of the Gentiles, Paul gladly allows himself to be chained. And not only does he allow it, he rejoices in it. Not only does he rejoice in it, he thrives in it. All through this letter, you will read nowhere where Paul was being critical and where Paul was saying, "Woe is me, this isn't fair." No, he is looking at this as a true honor and a blessing to be a prisoner of Christ for the Gentiles. In fact, in verse 13 he's going to go on to say, "Don't lose heart at my tribulation." He's saying, don't feel sorry for me. We see Paul living in just power and glory of being made a prisoner for Christ.

[\*Ephesians 3:13 \(NKJV\)\*](#)<sup>13</sup> *Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

**Ephesians 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,**

### **I Love the Sound of "Dispensation"**

Verse two, the dispensation of grace - I love the sound of that phrase. It sounds like a fountain, an ocean of overflowing grace. And all of grace and mercy, it flows from the heart of God. It all comes from the source, which is love. Love is the method of operation, the way that God operates and it's always through love and the manifestation of love is mercy and grace.

### **Dispensation = Set Order**

- **Dispensation** (oikonomia), is where we get our word "Economy". A lot of people struggle with this word, and theologians come up with books upon books to explain it, but it simply means a "set order of how things work." God saying I'm setting the order of how things are going to work and nothing can change it. Satan, evilness, terrorism, prosperity, will not change my plan, or how I run my plan, and it will all happen in the "fullness of time, on my timetable (remember 1:10). Paul will show in these verses that the fullness of time has come, and the church is now in the period "of the grace of God."

This period of grace is freedom; we can Let Go, and Let God. How wonderful to live in these days of grace. There are no doubts, no need for second-guessing, the view is clear from the cross. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV) *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Sadly, not everyone receives this grace, Mankind has a tendency to say I don't need God.

- If we could just get the right party in office, then everything would be great, we wouldn't need a spiritual revival but a political revolution.

- Or if we could improve our environment then everybody would live in peace. If I could just get away from my weird parents, then I'd be ok, they are the problem. I am a victim of being raised wrong and abused, if I had good parents then I'd be happy.

- Then others say I can't believe this whole faith deal, if I could see Him touch him, hear him, then I would believe.

So God says I have given you all these over the ages, and have shown you that even when you have these things, you still won't be happy; it will only be a personal relationship with me that will make you happy. So he marches us through these periods of dispensations in the Bible.

**#1 Dispensation of Innocence:** *(from creation to fall)*. They say, "you see if I just didn't have lousy parents I wouldn't be so messed up". Well Adam was made perfectly and had no parental influence, except by God the father. People can't blame their parents, Adam and Eve had the perfect parent and they still chose to sin. In Ezekiel 18:2, *God said I want this proverb no more heard in the land, our fathers ate sour grapes so my teeth are on edge* - in other words don't blame your family for past problems, if you are grinding your teeth it is your problem. Our generation and culture needs to understand this. Quit the blame shifting, trying to excuse their actions because of the parents. It is one of the leading defense cases now, murders and rapists are trying to claim dysfunctional family caused their horrible behavior. Adam and Eve represented you and me, and proved man will mess up, even in a perfect environment- because we are sinners.

And parents, quit beating yourself up, saying and wishing you had been a better parent. We all wish we would have been better parents, had done some things differently. But ultimately, our children became their own person, and made their own decisions. Adam and Eve had the greatest and most perfect parent, and still chose wrong. So too, even if you had been perfect, in the end it is still their choice as to whether they chose to follow and obey the Lord or not. So set yourself free today, and see Adam and Eve, and the perfect parent, still didn't keep them from going wayward.

**#2 Dispensation of Conscience:** *(from fall to flood)*. They say, "If we can just do what is right in our own sight, then everything will be alright. Live and let live. Do what is right for you, and I'll do what is right for me and we will all get along". Look what happened when everybody followed his or her own conscience. They became so vile, sex with fallen angels (demonic spirits), etc, the world was so perverted, only Noah was righteous.

*(Genesis 6:5-6 NKJV) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. God had to flood the earth and start over.*

**#3. Dispensation of Government:** *(from flood to Babel)*. They say, "the government will make everything right". Babel was a government works program. Lets all pull together, become one, and we can achieve anything, and everything will be great.

*(Genesis 11:3-4) And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top [may reach] unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*

They said, "We will ascend up into heaven built with bricks and mortar. The mortar was made from asphalt, but in those times the word was "slime" (how fitting as we see so much corporation in our government).

Their government works program couldn't get them into heaven and they ended up being dispersed throughout the world.

**#4 Dispensation of Promise (Vision):** *(from Abraham to Exodus)*. They say, "If I just had a vision, something to look forward to, if I could just get out of this mess, then everything would be ok. If I could just have a fresh start". How many times I have seen women with this vision, "if only I can change my body, then my husband would love me, or men would notice me, then I'd be happy." But vision doesn't go as planned, for what they find out is that it doesn't bring them closer to God, but into the world. Men have their same; whether it be hair on their head, six pack abs, a sports car. Whatever it is, they find that their vision takes them away from the Lord, and into a bondage.

God gave Abraham a promise/vision that was passed down the line.

*(Genesis 15:1 NKJV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

*(Genesis 15:7 NKJV) Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."*

*(Genesis 15:5 NKJV) Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

*(Genesis 15:18 NKJV) On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates;*

But somehow with this great vision promised, the next generation begins to fail, and so on, and so on. Abraham's son Isaac was promised the same vision, but he plans on passing this blessing on to the next son Esau based off of food (Genesis 27:4); but the younger son Jacob steals the blessing from his brother by tricking the aged Isaac (Genesis 27:19); Jacob favors his son Joseph over the other brothers, so they in turn sell him into slavery in Egypt.

The whole family ended up going down to Egypt. We had just read that they were promised land **from the river of Egypt**, not in Egypt. They never did see their vision come to pass, instead they ended up baking bricks in Egypt for 400 years of bondage.

*(Genesis 15:13 NKJV) Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years."*

**#5 Dispensation of the Law:** *(from Exodus to Calvary - The law was given).* They say, "If we just had some rules to live by, some do's and don'ts." The problem with the law was that man couldn't do it, he couldn't keep them. People think if I can just get the 7 habits of effective people and get that down. If I can just get the "how to's" from the "who's who", I would be happy and successful. So people read this book and listen to that tape, the problem is it might be good stuff, but we just can't do it. We see history repeat itself over and over. Israel does well, then they fail, they do well, and then they fail. They go from the mighty kingdom under David and Solomon, to being captives to the Babylonians. They go from rebuilding their nation and city after the Babylonian captivity to being under Roman rule.

The law is good but we are sinners and just can't do it. The law was to show us how short we fall from God's standard, and the need we have for Him.

*(Galatians 3:24-25 NKJV) Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

**#6 Dispensation of Grace:** *(the one Paul is speaking about here – Grace; from Calvary to the Rapture).* We realize that it isn't living in innocence, or our conscience, or government, nor a vision thing, or rules and regulations – but just grace. I love you, I died for you, I rose again, if you will just embrace me by faith, confess your need for me, you will be saved. Just as Moses was a mediator who brought the Word of God to the people, so the promised Prophet would be the Mediator who would bring God's Word to the people. A mediator is necessary because of the fact that God is infinite, and man is finite. Man cannot understand or comprehend the infinite God.

Because I Am Filled with Sin and Iniquity, I Cannot Approach God Who Is Absolutely Holy and Pure.

So, I Need A Mediator. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy that there is only one God and one Mediator between God and man, and that is the man Christ Jesus. He can touch God because He is God. He can touch me because He became man. And now through Him I can touch God.

*1 Timothy 2:3-6 (NKJV) <sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

This period goes from the resurrection of Christ all the way until the next period – The Tribulation

**#7 Dispensation of Tribulation: (7 year Tribulation Period).** They say, "I'm not going to believe something I can't see". During the Tribulation people will see and still not believe. In Revelation 6- 19, angels fly across the earth proclaiming the gospel (Rev 14:6-7), the moon turns to blood (Rev 6:12), the rivers and seas turn to blood (Rev 16:3-7), the two witnesses rise from the dead (Rev 11:11-14)..... talk about seeing it, yet people still won't believe. After seeing all this, people cry out to the mountains - fall on me (Rev 6:12). They will not cry out to the Master, the Rock of Ages. The whole idea of seeing before you believe is false. God says believe it and then you'll see it. You believe in me, and it will be amazing what you see.

**#8 Dispensation of Millennial Kingdom: (The 1,000-year period).** People say, "if I could just live in a good environment. If we didn't have pollution and disease, and crime, well then, we would be happy and content, and live in harmony." The world will have 1000 years of perfection, the lion shall lie down with the lamb, with no more sickness or wars. Things will be right and fabulous, the environment will be right, yet people still won't believe. At the end of the 1000-year millennial reign, there is a rebellion against God. 1000 years of perfection, yet still people rebel against God

You can go through the Bible, and see all the various scenarios. Innocence, conscience, government, vision, rules, seeing it, right environment ..... Yet people still don't come to the Lord. All the excuses are still just excuses. The only answer is Jesus Christ, through grace.

**Ephesians 3:3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,**

#### **Mystery means – Once Hidden**

The word mystery has nothing to do with things eerie. It means a "sacred secret, once hidden but now revealed to God's people. A mystery is something that could not be understood unless the Holy Spirit revealed it to us. God revealed to Paul this mystery that the Jew and Gentile shall be His body which He will dwell in. The Jew and Gentile were at such enmity with one another the thought of being friends would blow their minds, but throw in that they will be so close that they will be one, they would have a mind meltdown trying to grasp that.....but the greatest revelation, the greatest mystery for all man is that God would no longer dwell in the temple made with hands, but in the hearts of all men and women who would receive Him - ---only through the Holy Spirit could man ever be able to grasp such a wonderful thing, our natural minds can't comprehend such things.

God had to bring the Jew and Gentile together as one, cause He is only building one temple, but He is using many living stones fitted together to comprise it.

**Ephesians 3:4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), Ephesians 3:5 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:**

#### **Paul Great Student – But Needed Holy Spirit to Understand**

*Verse 4 - understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), - Paul was taught by Gamaliel, ancient writings tell us he was the greatest teacher of his time. Paul was well studied in the Old Testament writings.*

*(Acts 22:3 NKJV) "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

Notice again, my knowledge: It wasn't until the Holy Spirit filled Paul that he could see what the Old Testament prophets were talking about. Here are verses Paul would have read over and over asking himself what do they mean, never realizing they all pertained to God calling the Gentiles through the Messiah. All these verses are Messianic prophecies. Isaiah was written about 700-750 years before Christ came.

*(Isaiah 11:10 NKJV) "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."*

*(Isaiah 42:1 NKJV) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*

*(Isaiah 42:6 NKJV) "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,*

*(Isaiah 49:6 NKJV) Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"*

*(Isaiah 60:3 NKJV) The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.*

### **Paul Pondered – Then Holy Spirit Revealed**

Paul must have pondered these verses as a Pharisee, and then boom.....the Holy Spirit opened them up to him, and He said “wow”, I can’t keep this to myself.

*John 14:26 (NKJV) <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

### **My Story**

I used to do Street Ministry on Orange Blossom Trail (OBT) in Orlando, Florida. I would sit out front of an abandoned Psychic House (now a crack house) and told people I can tell them their future. They couldn’t resist, they would have to stop and listen. I would quote **(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.** At one time the Bible and the plan of salvation was a mystery to me, I couldn’t understand what John 3:16 meant, but then one day God revealed the mystery to me through the Holy Spirit, and I see it clearly now. John 3:16, and so many other Scriptures I couldn’t understand, now I can see them, and know the truths in them.

*John 3:16–17 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

### **We Are Not Too Different from Paul**

We aren’t so much different than Paul than we think, we have the same opportunity to tell people this great mystery that they do not understand, that will blow their mind. A message that will change us and the world.....forever. The Dispensation of Grace, what a great time to be alive, and living for Jesus.

### **Ephesians 3:6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,**

#### **Fellow Heirs**

The person is fellow heirs. That's what's being spoken here in first Peter 2:9, what the Gentiles become is what had been the promise to the nation of Israel.

*1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

### **We Are Not Too Different from Paul**

We aren’t so much different than Paul than we think, we have the same opportunity to tell people this great mystery that they do not understand, that will blow their mind. A message that will change us and the world.....forever. The Dispensation of Grace, what a great time to be alive, and living for Jesus.

### **3P’s of the Passage**

#### **Person**

- Fellow Heirs of Promises of God

#### **Position**

- Secured Through the Gospel
- Of the Same Body

- On the Solid Foundation of the Word of God

#### Promise

- The Dispensation (flood) of Grace
- Partakers of the Promises of God

#### **The Word of God in Our Hand Today**

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

*Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

#### **In Every Study**

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

*Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*