

The Book of Ephesians

Chapter 3

Review

- Written by Paul around 60 A.D. while he was imprisoned in Rome (see Acts 28:30-31)
- Can be divided into two sections
 - The Blessings for Christians – Doctrinal – Chapters 1-3
 - The Behavior of Christians – Practical – Chapters 4-6
- In Chapter 1 we saw the blessings of God in our salvation (1:3-14) and Paul's prayer of thanksgiving (1:15-23). In Chapter 2 we saw the blessings of the new creation (2:1-10) and of the new unity (2:11-22)

Chapter 3

I. The Mystery of the Gentiles – vs. 1-13

- vs. 1 – For this cause – refers to 2:19, the fact that Gentiles are united in Christ with the Jews.
- vs. 3 - Remember that a “mystery” is not something to be figured out, it is the plan of God that was hidden but now revealed.
- vs. 3-4 – Paul mentions writing something before. Some believe this a previous letter, perhaps even the one written to the Colossians. It could more simply refer to what he has already written in this letter (especially 1:9-12).
- vs. 5-6 -This mystery, that the Gentiles had a part in the Kingdom of God, is hinted at in the Old Testament. Examples: Genesis 12:3, Zechariah 14:16
- vs. 8 – Unto me – Paul was chosen by God to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). To him God revealed (vs. 3) the details of the mystery of the Gentiles.
 - Though Peter opened the Gospel door to the Gentiles (Acts 10), his ministry remained largely to the Jews
- vs. 8-13 – A few wonderful highlights of the preaching the Gospel:
 - Least of the saints – the message is greater than the messenger
 - Grace given – the message's power
 - Make all men see – the message's target
 - Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places – the message even reaches the angelic realm
 - By the church – also proclaiming the message
 - Purpose – God's will and plan in the message
 - Boldness – the messenger is emboldened by Christ

- Tribulations – the high cost of the message is worth paying

II. Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Strength – vs. 14-21

- What is the reason for Paul's outburst of prayer? The content of the prayer makes me believe it is that the Ephesian believers would "faint not" (vs. 14)
- vs. 15 – whole family – further reiterating that Gentile and Jew are made equal members in God's family.
- The petitions of this prayer for the Ephesian believers:
 - vs. 16 – strengthened by the Spirit
 - vs. 17 – Christ filling their hearts
 - 1. note – we see the Trinity in this prayer – Father, Spirit, Christ.
 - vs. 17-19 – know and understand the love of Christ that they are established on
 - vs. 19 – filled (or overwhelmed) by the limitless God
- Paul ends with one of his most splendid flourishes found in his writings:
 - vs. 20 – praise God for exceeding our prayers and expectations
 - vs. 20 – praise God for the power of the Gospel working in us
 - vs. 21 – the church giving God the glory forevermore
 - 1. Question: how can the church give Him glory forever if the church does not exist in some form forever?