

Ephesians 3

Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, The cause is the glorious work of the cross in making peace and bringing the gentiles neigh which has been previously explained in 2:14-22.

Ephesians 2:14-22 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

I Paul, the verb of which I Paul is the subject is not given until verse 14. Therefore all the intervening verses are all parenthetic.

At verse 14 Paul repeats the clause: For this cause and gives the verb.

Paul is writing this as a prisoner in Rome because of the hatred of the Jews against him and the gospel cf: Acts 21:27-22:23. Note Paul calls himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ not of Caesar, the Roman government or the Jews. It is all a matter of attitude and perspective.

Paul sees himself not just a prisoner with a chain but as Christ special apostle and very first missionary to the entire Gentile world.

Act 22:17-23 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

The dispensation or office of Paul apostleship cf:

Act 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Paul will again declare the mystery in V:6 but he had previously told them of this mystery in this epistle in chapter 1 & 2:

Ephesians 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Ephesians 2:12-13 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

The mystery he will declare in v:6 About the revelation he says:

Galatians 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

By what he had wrote in chapters 1 & 2 and by what he is writing now they can perceive his knowledge of this mystery.

Ephesians 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

The Old Testament Hebrew prophets had a glimpse of the Gentiles receiving salvation but they did not understand their own language as we do in light of the gospel of the glorious gospel of Christ.

But God had always desired the gentiles to be saved and He often gave a glimpse of the idea of gentile salvation in the gospel:

Genesis 22:15-18 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 26:3-4 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

Genesis 28:12-14 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Isaiah 42:6-7 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Ephesians 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The old wall is broken down both Jew and Gentile are heirs alike of the gospel. Both are fellow members and fellow partakers of the Church of Christ.

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Act 13:46-48 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

A minister to make known this mystery of God's gracious plan and purpose for the Gentiles. The gift being the office of apostle with all of it's accompanying signs and wonders of apostleship. Paul had the ability to give the supernatural gifts of the spirit cf: I Corinthians 12 & Acts 19:1 ff which were only conferred by the laying on of the apostles hands his hands cf: Acts 8:17-18 ff.

Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

A great trust was granted unto one so unworthy as he deems himself. Paul was always humbled by remembering that he had once been a persecutor of the Church cf:

I Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Philippians 3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

I Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

This grace so glorious and so full of blessedness to the world was the apostleship to the gentiles cf:

Galatians 2:7-8 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Ephesians 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

All men Jew as well as Gentile are to have fellowship in one body which is the Church of Christ. From before the beginning this was God's concept Who created all things by Christ the Word cf:

Hebrews 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Cf:

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

To the intent – this mystery was hidden through all the ages but is now revealed in order that the manifold over and over wisdom of God is made known by both preaching and announcing the gospel to all V:9 Jews, Gentiles and angelic beings both good and bad.

I Peter 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Ephesians 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

The one and only purpose that God in all ages and through all time purposed within Himself to save all by Jesus Christ our Lord.

II Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

I Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Ephesians 1:4-5 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Ephesians 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Both Jew and Gentile can come boldly to God. Notice the definite article the before faith it means the gospel the faith or the way the pure religion established by Jesus Christ. With out the revelation of Christ we would not know of God's love.

Ephesians 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Seeing that I Paul have revealed this mystery unto you, do not become discouraged at his suffering as a prisoner on account of the Gentiles. The plural tribulations shows that many tribulations came in his work as the apostle to the Gentiles. All the apostles suffered, the early Church suffered and you suffer; hence you are suffering in a work which makes you the special heirs of eternal glory.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

God is the fountain of all mercy and blessings. Paul now resumes his thought and gives the verb of V:1 by repeating the clause For this cause and giving the verb cf:

Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles

Ephesians 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The idea is the Father is the Father of all families of His children, whether Jew or Gentile on earth or in heaven. He is the Father in heaven to every believer of every race in the world and the world to come. All as far as creation is concerned derive their being from Him. Just like children from a parent all the saved are His spiritual children.

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Paul now states the things he prays for the brethren at Ephesus. According to the riches of his glory is in a degree which would correspond to His glory.

Strengthened – that is that their spirits might be strengthened by God’s Spirit and that they might be endowed with the might of spiritual gifts.

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

**This is the 2nd Petition: That they may lay hold of Christ by faith in the faith or gospel so that He will always be a present salvation in their hearts filled with love
cf:**

I Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Ephesians 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

Unless they were rooted and grounded in love and the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts it would be impossible for them to comprehend the exceeding riches of the love of Christ. This is the climax of the prayer the part that the other Petitions lead. Indeed from the beginning of the letter he had been declaring what love Christ has shown the Gentile world.

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

One of Paul’s paradoxes they could know something of the love of Christ but we can never fully comprehend the infinite cf:

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Can't you just see Paul dictating to his scribe and saying:

**Now to him that is able ... no that just does not explain it ...
Now to him that is able to do ... no that not enough ...
Now to him that is able to do exceeding ... no ...
Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly ... no ...
Now to him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly
Above all that we ask ... no ... more still ...
Now to him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly
Above all that we ask or think ...**

According to the power (kratos) that worketh (Greek energo ie: energize me Scottie) in us. (By the power of God's Son who sets at God's own right hand energizing us by His Spirit.

The Ephesians knew something of the mighty working of the Spirit of God and therefore His Divine power, but he wants them to understand God is able to do far above all we can conceive.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

We really can!

Remember when there was 40 of us when I began?

Now way over 150 are members here and we have buried upon hundreds and sent them to glory in these 17 years.

Remember when we were feeding 20 seventeen years ago?

Now over 2,000 meals a week are fed to the poor and homeless.

Remember when we leaped in faith to get an hour on the radio?

Now we have 3 hours each Sunday with 7 million souls in our broadcast area.

Remember when we started the internet ministry Dec. 2006 We had 695 hits and thought we were setting the world on fire?

Now we have 80-100 thousand hits a month and we broke a Million hits for the year this month.

Remember Last year we had a half a million hits to 36 countries.

Now this Year we had over a Million Hits to 57 countries all over God's earth.

With the Main Street Church of Christ we continue to fulfill the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

All the celestial luminaries and stars by the billions testify to His eternal power and might.

Psalm 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

All of nature and creation bears witness.

Psalm 19:3 [*There is*] no speech nor language, [*where*] their voice is not heard.

The Gospel of Christ testifies to His goodness and mercy.

Psalm 19:4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Line = rule or knowledge has gone out ...

“in them” Hebrew among them

“tabernacle” Hebrew a fixed place just as the sun is fixed and all the planets revolve around it He as a general is surrounded by His armies going out preaching the Gospel.

Psalm 19:5 Which [*is*] as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, [*and*] rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

“chamber” Hebrew meeh-up-patho from under his veil canopy with 4 poles

Psalm 19:6 His going forth [*is*] from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Just as the sun gives warmth, light and life to the earth the Gospel gives warmth, light and life to all who obey the truth

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD [*is*] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [*is*] sure, making wise the simple.8 The statutes of the LORD [*are*] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [*is*] pure, enlightening the eyes.9 The fear of the LORD [*is*] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [*are*] true [*and*] righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired [*are they*] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.⁶ 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: [*and*] in keeping of them [*there is*] great reward. 12 Who can understand [*his*] errors? cleanse thou me from secret [*faults*]. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous [*sins*]; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Literally in the Greek: Unto all the generations of the age of ages.

Throughout all the endless succession of ages, throughout all time.

Sources: KJV, theWord.com, B.W. Johnson, Clark and Coffman Commentaries