



"THROUGH THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN"

EPHESIANS 3:1-13, PART 1

Prior to praying that his readers spiritually comprehend his teaching, Paul endeavors to explain his teaching;

ROMANS 12:2

...be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

LUKE 24:25-31

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he *interpreted* to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself...*And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him...*

Paul's ministry to the Churches: the ministry of teaching the Word and prayer;

ACTS 6:4

But we will devote ourselves to *prayer* and to the *ministry of the word*.

God desires to be known;

COLOSSIANS 1:15

He is the image of the *invisible God*, the firstborn of all creation.

ROMANS 1:20

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been *clearly perceived*, ever since the creation of the world...

PSALM 19:1-4

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge...

ISAIAH 43:10

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD...

The mystery now revealed: The believing Gentiles are equal;

EPHESIANS 1:9-10

...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, *to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth*.

Gentiles would be blessed;

GENESIS 12:2-3

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

GENESIS 22:17-18

"I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and *in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.*"

GENESIS 26:4

I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. *And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...*

GENESIS 28:14

Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and *in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

Gentiles would bless God;

PSALM 72:17

...May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!

The Messiah would bring salvation to the Gentiles;

ISAIAH 49:6

he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; *I will make you as a light for the nations*, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

ISAIAH 60:1-3

...And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

AMOS 9:11-12

"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old...and *all the nations who are called by my name*," declares the LORD who does this.

God would pour His Spirit into Gentiles as well;

JOEL 2:28

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that *I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...*"

This mystery remained unrevealed until the time of Christ;

ROMANS 16:25-26

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of *the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed* and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations...

1 CORINTHIANS 2:7-8

But we impart a *secret and hidden wisdom of God*, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. *None of the rulers of this age understood this*, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

TITUS 1:2-3

...in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

HEBREWS 1:1-2

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but *in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...*

1 PETER 1:19-20

...but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake

of you...

The most offense aspect of the Gospel of a New Humanity;

ACTS 22:21-22

And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

ACTS 10:34-35

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that *God shows no partiality...*

JOHN 17:20-21

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, *that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

GALATIANS 3:26-28

...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Through this mystery, the wisdom of God is made known to all—especially the enemies of God;

COLOSSIANS 2:15 (see also Ephesians 1:19-22)

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Following Christ is not a private experience. Being put into Christ necessarily means being put into His Body. There is no other option.

If your view of being put into Christ is primarily on the individual level, you will—to one degree or another—regard the Church as an optional addition. To think in these terms of the Church is to completely misunderstand what it means to be in Christ.

If the 'togetherness' of the New Humanity is the clearest and most powerful expression of our life in Christ, then 'being together' is takes on new importance, for it is in our 'togetherness' that we display Christ.

Questions for Midweek

We often think of the need for Christians to gather (**Hebrews 10:25**) as a need that is primarily focused inwardly, viz. to fulfil a personal need or for the health of the Church. However, **3:9-11** teaches us that *the world* also needs to see the Church gather. Have you before considered that the Church owes a debt to the world to gather together in love and unity? How might this connect together with **Romans 1:14-15**? In what way do we fail the world around us by neglecting to gather together in oneness? What effect do we have on the world when we gather *without oneness*?

Meditate upon the monumental level of racial hatred that the gospel overcame in the first century, and consider the hatred that is prevalent in our contemporary setting. Is the New Humanity in Christ widely seen as THE answer to hatred and strife? Why do you think that the gospel of a New Humanity in Christ is regularly neglected and overlooked as the answer to a fallen society's problems? How can the Church effectively present Christ and the New Humanity in Christ as the only answer to the societal problems of our day? What are some Scriptural examples that come to mind?

Consider a friend or loved-one in your life who believes the common misconception of our day—*I can be a Christian while not being part of a Church*. How would you imagine that friend or loved-one would explain or understand **Ephesians 2:4-3:21**? How can we lovingly help them to come to Paul's understanding of true life in Christ, and how that life is found in and expressed through the New Humanity (ie: the Church)?

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