



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Mystery Revealed

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Tom McCullough/PO Box 503, Granville, Ohio 43023/tom.mccullough@capitolcom.org /www.capitolcom.org/ohio

The setting is a Roman prison (60-62 A.D.) and Paul is addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Ephesus where he was a pastor for several years. In this letter, Paul counters the false teachings that had started to plague the church and additionally provides encouragement and instruction in sound doctrine. Paul shares that the church is one body of believers in Christ Jesus and is His temple. In this third chapter of Ephesians (3:1-13), Paul describes the mystery of the church including the knowledge, timing, nature and reason of this mystery.

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, (Eph. 3:1-4 NASB)

Paul became knowledgeable of the mystery of the church through a revelation (apokalupis – Gk. revealing, uncovering, unveiling, disclosing) from God (Acts 22). Paul shares that he was a prisoner of Christ. While Paul reminds them that he was in prison not because any crime that he committed, but rather because he was obedience to Christ Jesus by sharing or preaching God’s Word to the Gentiles. Paul knows firsthand that following God’s calling will cause tribulation. Paul was not only given a specific revelation, but he was also given a specific stewardship (dispensation). That stewardship is one of God’s grace, available to all; Jew and Gentile.

When was the mystery made known?

.. which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ... (vv. 5-6)

Paul shares the timing and nature of the mystery, the one body of believers, Jews and Gentile believers, the church as one body in Christ Jesus. The church had not been revealed in the Old Testament and was solely revealed in the New Testament. God reveals this mystery first to Paul and subsequently to His apostles and other NT prophets through the Spirit. How does Paul view his role?

... of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; (vv. 7-9)

Paul views himself as a humble pastor and not worthy by his merits nor will, yet worthy by God’s gift of grace and according to God will and power. Paul views his task to share/preach of God’s grace, mercy and light to Gentiles, a group of people once far off but now brought near. However, for what reason?

... so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. (vv. 10-13)

God’s wisdom would be made known through the church and would serve as an exhibit or taught to the angelic beings. God’s eternal purpose to be known through the church, Jew and Gentile - one body of believers in Christ Jesus, was not known to Satan or and other angels prior to this revelation to Paul. Angels are learning about God’s grace through the church. The focus of this eternal plan and our ability to be bold and confident was fulfilled and is being completed by our faith in Christ Jesus our Savior, Mediator and Lord. Lastly, Paul asked the church not to worry about him because he is willing to suffer for his good and their glory.

For Your Consideration:

- Have you experienced tribulation due to your faithfulness to God’s will in your life?
- Are you learning more about the grace, mercy, wisdom and nature of God through His Word and the one body of believers in Christ Jesus, the church?
- Are you attempting to be a ‘good exhibit’ of the church?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS (SESSION OR HEARING DAYS) AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44

STATE STAFF AND LOBBYIST: WEDNESDAYS AT 12:10PM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44