

Text: Eph 3.8-13

I've been working a bit slowly through Ephesians 3, but I realized with Christmas and New Years Day falling on the next two Wednesdays, I wanted to get us to the end of the section we are working on Ephesians 3. So we will be a bit in "hurry up" mode tonight.

A quick review of where we are:

Ephesians 2:

1. Verses 1-10: The work of God in Saving Men (individual salvation)
2. Verses 11-22: The Work of God in Creating a New Order
 - a. 11-13: The work in the Gentiles (drawing near)
 - b. 14-18: The work of peacemaking (breaking the wall)
 - c. 19-22: The work of church building (building with living stones)

Ephesians 3:

1. Verses 1-13: Paul's stewardship of the mystery to the Gentiles
 - a. 1-3: The Mission Placed upon Paul
 - b. 4-7: The Mystery Revealed to Paul

Tonight, it is vv. 8-13, which makes up 3 sentences in the NAU, although sentence divisions in English are not inspired:

Stewardship of Grace (3): The Manifestation Delivered by Paul

Let's read Eph 3.1-13 again.

We will work our way through by pointing out various key points and connections in the text to get a good picture of what Paul is saying.

- "To me" picks up the "to me" of v. 7; "this grace" points to "the gift of God's grace" in v. 7
1. How do we define "this grace"? (8) [two parts]

"to preach to the Gentiles" and "to bring to light the admin of the mystery"
 2. There is a textual variant in v. 9: "administration" NAU vs. "fellowship" KJV. Administration could also be translated "dispensation," "program," or "plan."

a. What are the unfathomable riches of Christ?

The gospel

b. What is the administration (program, plan) of the mystery?

The Church Age

3. What does Paul mean by “for ages has been hidden”? (9)

This wasn't known in the Old Testament

4. What does “God who created all things” suggest? (9)

That God had this plan in mind from creation

5. “So that” implies purpose – what was God’s purpose in hiding this plan? (10)

That the plan might be made known now (by Paul and the apostles)

6. What is the thing that makes God’s plan known? (10)

The church [that is, the new body, made up of Jews and Gentiles]

7. To whom is God’s plan made known? (10)

To the angels (good and bad) who reside in the “heavenlies” – spiritual realms

8. What is “this” in v. 11?

This making known of the mystery (the church)

9. What is the “eternal purpose” in v. 11?

The accomplishment of salvation “carried out in Christ Jesus”

10. Who are “we” in v. 12, and what do “we” have?

We are Jewish and Gentile believers in the church who have direct access to God through Christ

11. What is the “therefore” there for? (13) [trick question]

The therefore points all the way back to the “if” in v. 2: “if the stewardship of God’s grace was given to me ... I ask you not to lose heart”

“These readers were not to be discouraged over a system of religion which caused such calamities to happen to its spokesmen, but, rather to

hold to it because this religion had so many benefits for them [Ba]. They should not desert such a great cause merely because its spokesman was imprisoned [Can].”¹

12. How can Paul’s tribulations be for their glory? (13)

“His sufferings were for their gain and glory. If Paul had not dispensed to the Gentiles the stewardship of God’s grace, then Jews would not have been hostile to him and he would not have been imprisoned. His preaching brought salvation to the Gentiles, but it incurred the wrath of many Jews on him. However, many others became members of the church, Christ’s body, and this was their glory.”²

¹ Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, 234.

² Hoehner, “Ephesians in BKCNT,” 630–31.