

Ephesians 3 The Mystery of the One New Man in Christ. (21 verses)

1) Because he preached Jesus to Gentiles, Paul is a prisoner.

v. 1 **For this reason** I, Paul, the **prisoner of Christ Jesus** for the sake of you Gentiles.

2) Paul's mystery is that the Messiah came to save both Jews and Gentiles.

v. 2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the **mystery** (**note: of the admission of the Gentiles**) made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, 5 which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been **revealed by the Spirit** to God's holy apostles and prophets.

3) We share the promises of Christ together with faithful Jewish people.

v. 6 This **mystery** (*His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two.* Eph 2:15b.) **is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body**, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. 7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Note: This “mystery,” introduced in Eph 2:14-16, is that Jesus has reconciled us to God and made us into One New Humanity, consisting of redeemed Jews and Gentiles.

- 1. Gentile People** (from Adam)
- 2. Jewish People** (from Abraham and Moses)
- 3. One New Humanity** (born from **Jesus and Holy Spirit**)

The term translated “*mystery*” was used in mystery cults and elsewhere, but the main background for Paul’s use of the term is in Dan 2:1-49 and in Jewish writings (especially the Dead Sea Scrolls) that follow Daniel. There it means especially God’s plan for history, encoded in the Scriptures but understandable only to the wise or to those with the Spirit’s insight. **Because most of Judaism believed that full-fledged prophets had ceased after the Old Testament prophets died, Paul’s claim that God has now actively unveiled his truth through “apostles and prophets” would underline for his hearers the uniqueness of the Christian claim.** *IVP Bible Background Commentary*

4) Paul's “Gospel” was grace for salvation through Jesus for Gentiles and Jews.

v. 8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, **this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ**, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this **mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God**, who created all things.

5) What was God's mysterious plan?

v. 10 His intent was that now, **through the church**, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the **heavenly realms**, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in **Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God** with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Note: This is another passage where Paul speaks of the Church being with Jesus in "heavenly realms," which alludes directly to Psalm 110.

6) There is one absolute spiritual Father in Heaven and on Earth.

v. 14 For this reason I kneel before **the Father**, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

7) Paul's "Apostolic Prayer" for you and me is that Christ would dwell in us.

v. 16 **I pray** that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his **Spirit in your inner being**, 17 so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**. And **I pray that you, being rooted and established in love**, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, **to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ**, 19 and **to know this love** that surpasses knowledge—that you may be **filled to the measure of all the fullness of God**.

8) Bless the Lord at all times.

v. 20 **Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us**, 21 **to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus** throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 4 Unity found only in Jesus is our objective. (32 verses)

1) Even though it's God's will, it takes effort to live in the unity of the Spirit.

v. 1 As a **prisoner for the Lord**, then, I urge you to **live a life worthy of the calling you have received**. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace.

2) One Body, One Spirit, One Lord God means the Church should be in unity.

v. 4 There is **one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God** and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

3) What happened when Jesus ascended into Heaven?

v. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "**When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.**" 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower,

earthly regions? 10 He who descended is **the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.**)

Psalm 68:18 When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious— that you, LORD God, might dwell there.

”Paul adapts the text of **Psa 68:18**, as ancient expounders of Scripture often did, to make his point (a later targum of the Psalms rewords it the same way he does). This psalm refers to God’s “going up” at Mount Sinai, as Jewish interpreters recognized, and Paul applies the principle of God’s arising to Jesus. (In some Jewish traditions, Moses ascended all the way to heaven to receive the law; if Paul or any of his readers knew such traditions, it would make the application of this psalm to Jesus all the more vivid. But it is questionable how widely known this tradition was in Paul’s day.) **Paul’s point is in harmony with the image of the psalm, although he changed its language; once a conqueror had received tribute and plunder from the defeated, he distributed most of these spoils to his soldiers (as here).**” *IVP Bible Background Commentary*

4) Christ “gave” five functions often referred to as the Five-Fold Ministry Gifts.

v. 11 So Christ himself **gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,**

Apostles

Prophets

Evangelists

Pastors

Teachers

5) The purpose for which they are given.

v. 12 **to equip his people for works of service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 **until (“Until” we all reach unity and become mature...)** **we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

6) Spiritual gifts are given for the Body of Christ, not just for the recipients.

v. 16 From him **the whole body**, joined and held together by **every supporting ligament**, grows and builds itself up in love, as **each part** does its work. 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. 20 That, however, is not

the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

7) Put off your old ways and learn to live righteously in Jesus.

v. 22 You were taught, with regard to **your former way of life**, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for **we are all members of one body**.

8) Be passionate for Jesus, don't intentionally sin and watch your mouth.

v. 26 "**In your anger do not sin**": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and **do not give the devil a foothold**. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 **Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths**, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

9) "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit," is a warning for us not protection for Him.

v. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Isaiah 63:10 Yet they rebelled and **grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.**

Heb 3:7 So, as **the Holy Spirit says**: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, 9 where **your ancestors tested and tried me**, though for forty years they saw what I did. 10 **That is why I was angry with that generation**; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' 11 **So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'**"

10) Some of the things that grieve the Holy Spirit and some that please Him.

v. 31 Get rid of all **bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice**. 32 **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other**, just as in Christ **God forgave you**.

Ephesians 5 Household Codes with deeper meanings. (33 verses)

1) "Just as God loved us, we must follow His loving example.

v. 1 **Follow God's example**, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and **walk in the way of love**, just as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us** as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

2) Immorality and dirty jokes are prohibited for believers.

v. 3 But among you **there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed**, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 **Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking**, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: **No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

3) We must live as children of light.

v. 7 **Therefore do not be partners with them.** 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Live as children of light** 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and **find out what pleases the Lord.** 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But **everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.** 14 **This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."** 15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

4) Why is drunk on wine mentioned versus being filled with the Holy Spirit?

v. 18 **Do not get drunk on wine**, which leads to debauchery. **Instead, be filled with the Spirit**, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5) Godly standards with guidelines for every member of a Christian family.

1) Rules for everyone in the family.

v. 21 **Submit to one another** out of reverence for Christ.

2) Rules for Christian wives in dealing with their own husbands.

v. 22 **Wives**, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

3) Rules for Christian husbands in dealing with their own wife.

v. 25 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other

blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own **bodies**. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own **body**, but they feed and care for their **body**, just as Christ does the church— 30 **for we are members of his body**.

Notice the difference and the impossibly high standard for husbands.

Notice the many references to the word “body.”

6) Paul’s “profound mystery” is about Christ and the Church.

Note: There are 27 NT Verses that use “mystery,” but only 1 “profound mystery.”

v. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become **one flesh (*one body*)**." 32 **This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.**

Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be **one flesh (*one body*)**. JPS

Note: The “profound mystery” is that human marriage typifies the intended relationship between Jesus and His Bride/Church. Perfect human marriage is a parable of what our relationship with Jesus is similar to.

Ephesians 6 Household Codes continued from 5:21-6:9 (24 verses)

1) Rules for Christian children in relating to their parents.

v. 1 **Children, obey your parents** in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "**Honor your father and mother**"—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

2) Rules for interaction between Christian fathers and their children.

v. 4 **Fathers**, do not exasperate your **children**; instead, **bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord**.

3) Rules for interaction between Christian slaves and their Christian masters.

v. 5 **Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ**. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but **as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart**. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 9 And **masters, treat your slaves in the same way**. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Question: Is this an affirmation of the institution of slavery?

My opinion is that God allowed many things that weren't His original plan.

One example is the eating of meat. It's clear that we didn't eat meat until after the flood and animals won't eat meat in the Messianic Kingdom.

Gen 9:3 Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. **Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.**

Isa 65:25 **The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox,** and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Another example is divorce. Essentially, Moses allowed it but Jesus said God never intended it. God allowed it through the Law of Moses it because men's hearts were hard.

Matt 19:8 Jesus replied, "**Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard.** But it was not this way from the beginning."

Slavery was allowed, but not condoned. In my view, God was essentially saying, "since mankind has developed a system of slavery, they must learn to treat each other as brothers in Christ before they will do away with it permanently."

4) Final exhortations begin with a call for perseverance in our faith.

v. 10 Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in his mighty power.

5) Put on God's "Relationship Armor" so you can stand up to the devil's plans.

v. 11 **Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.**

6) Who are our spiritual enemies and can we cast all of them out? (Psalm 110)

v. 12 For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against **the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

7) What does it mean that we are to "put the full armor of God?"

v. 13 Therefore **put on the full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to **stand**. 14 **Stand firm** then, with **the belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with **the breastplate of righteousness** in place, 15 and with **your feet fitted** with the readiness that comes from **the gospel of peace**. 16 In addition to all this, take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take **the helmet of salvation** and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

“In the day of battle, Roman soldiers were to **stand their ground**, not retreat. **As long as they stood together on a flat, open field and did not break ranks, their legions were considered virtually invincible.**” *IVP Bible Background Commentary*

Belt of Truth	Eph 6:14
Breastplate of Righteousness	Eph 6:14, Ps 132:9, Isa 59:17
Breastplate of Faith and Love	1 Thes 5:8
The Gospel of Peace	Eph 6:15
Shield of Faith	Eph 6:16, Ps 91:4
Helmet of Salvation	Eph 6:17, 1 Thes 5:8, Isa 59:17
Sword of The Spirit	Eph 6:17, Heb 4:12
Garments of Fine Linen	Rev 19:8
Garments of Praise	Is 61:3
Garments of Salvation	Is 61:10, 2 Chron. 6:41, Ps 132:16
Garments of Vengeance	Is 59:17, Is 63:1-4
Robe of Justice	Job 29:14
Robe of Righteousness	Is 61:10, Ps 132:9, Rev 19:8
Robe Dipped in Blood	Rev 19:13, Is 63:1-3
Cloak of Zeal	Is 59:17
Turban of Justice	Job 29:14

8) Paul's directs us to pray and continue praying in the Spirit.

v. 18 And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions **with all kinds of prayers and requests**. With this in mind, be alert and always **keep on praying** for all the Lord's people.

9) He makes a wonderful request for personal prayer for himself.

v. 19 **Pray also for me**, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known **the mystery of the gospel**, 20 for which **I am an ambassador in chains**. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

10) He commends Tychicus, who probably delivered and interpreted the letter.

v. 21 **Tychicus**, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, **will tell you everything**, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. 22 **I am sending him to you** for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

11) He closes with blessings and farewell.

v. 23 **Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. 24 **Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ** with an undying love.