

Crack the Case

Ephesians 3:8-11

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I. Mystery v.8-9

a. Preach to the Gentiles

- i. Unfathomable - not to be tracked out, *inscrutable, incomprehensible*, of God's ways **Ro 11:33**.
- ii. Riches of Christ - Paul was to disclose publicly *to everyone*, not just the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 3:2) this stewardship of God's sacred secret (vv. 3-4, 6). This secret had been **hidden in God** (cf. v. 5), the Creator of the universe. Even before creating **all things** God had in mind this wonderful truth as part of His eternal plan (cf. 1:4, 11).

b. Bring the Light

- i. Bring in Light -in imagery of the heavenly light that is granted the 'enlightened one *to enlighten everyone about God's private/mysterious plan Eph 3:9*
- ii. Administration - Paul applies the idea of administration to the office of an apostle *I have been entrusted with a commission/task*
 1. Mystery - Eph, for which (as well as for Col) **1:9, 3:4, 6:19** in acceptance of the gentiles as Christians **3:3ff, 9ff**.
 - a. A unique *great mystery* is revealed **5:32**, where the relation Christ and the Christian community or church is
 - b. showed that human knowledge cannot possibly anticipate what God has planned, but God has revealed this mystery to believers. A major aspect of this revealed mystery is the way in which the faithful will be brought into the presence of God:
 - c. Ephesians opens with a series of statements about God's purpose in history culminating in the universal headship of Christ (1:10). These statements include such terms as "chose," "destined," "will," "purpose," "plan," and "counsel." This is clearly the range of ideas associated with the word "mystery" in ancient Jewish writings and these ideas shed light on Paul's use of the summary expression "And he made known to us the mystery of his will"
 - d. Part of God's purpose was to form a body of believers, reconciled to himself and to each other through the cross (Eph 2:14-18). In this body, Jewish and gentile believers have been made "members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus," a new phase of God's revealed plan, which Paul here calls a "mystery" (3:6). As noted above, Paul himself has a responsibility to

minister the truth of this “mystery” faithfully (vv 2–5; cf. 1 Cor 4:1–5).

- e. As in Ephesians, the church is the locus for the working out of God’s mystery, “which is Christ in you [i.e., among you believers], the hope of glory” (v 27). This Christ is proclaimed in wisdom, so that believers may reach mature completion in him
- 2. Hidden in God- **to keep from being known, *keep secret***
- 3. Created all things

II. The Big Reveal v.10

a. Manifold Wisdom of God

- i. Manifold - **Manifold - to being diversified, (*very*) *many*-Through the church** The wonderful body of Christ described in chapter 2.
- ii. The “manifold wisdom of God” does not refer to redemption as such but rather to the new relationship between believing Jews and Gentiles in one body.
- iii. Wisdom- measures intended to bring salvation to the believers **Ro 11:33** God’s depth of wisdom); **Eph 3:10**
 - 1. The wisdom of God—which is relevant to all mankind, for God’s wisdom concerns human beings—was to be revealed to the world as a whole through the life and ministry of the church (Eph 3:10)
 - 2. In wisdom terminology Col. 1:9 and Eph. 1:8 describe steady growth in the Christian knowledge of faith.
 - 3. In both v. 8f. and v. 11f. the context demands that this wisdom of God be understood as the divine plan of salvation which has been fulfilled with the common entry of both Jews and Gentiles into Jesus Christ. Its revelation is by the Church in which Jews and Gentiles are united but which is depicted here as a heavenly entity made known to the cosmic principalities and powers.

b. Made Known

- i. Through Church -**the global community of Christians, (*universal*)**
 - 1. The medium by which this wisdom is communicated is **the church**
 - 2. That is, God had visited his creation, had called out of both Judaism and the gentile world a new people, empowered by his Spirit to be present in the world, sharing the good news (gospel) of his radical, unconditional love for his creation (Eph 2:11–22)

vv verses

cf. compare

i.e. that is

v verse

v. verse.

v. verse.

3. It is this recognition that allows Paul to call this new gentile-Jewish community, this new creation, “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:15, 16). In this new community the traditional barriers of race, social standing, and sex—barriers that divided people from one another and categorized them into inferior and superior classes—are seen to be shattered: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28)
- ii. To the Rulers and Authorities
 1. Rulers- the recipients are the angelic hosts “in the heavenly realms” (cf. Eph. 1:3). These “rulers and authorities” refer to both good and evil angels as seen in 6:12 (cf. 1:21). As the angelic hosts witness the church, they must admit that having Jews and Gentiles in one body is evidence of God’s wisdom.
 2. Authorities - But since other references make clear that for Ephesians the spiritual powers are evil forces who need to be subjected (cf. 2:2; 6:12), the notion of making known in relation to them has greater affinities with a passage such as 1 Pet 3:19–22, where the victory of Christ over such adversaries is proclaimed to them
 - a. The writer’s thought is, therefore, best understood as being that by her very existence as a new humanity, in which the major division of the first century world has been overcome, the Church reveals God’s secret in action and heralds to the hostile heavenly powers the overcoming of cosmic divisions with their defeat
 - b. The mystery is disclosed in the Church and through her is being made known to these very powers that their malign régime, particularly over that part of humanity, the Gentile world, thought to be especially under their sway, has come to an end.
 3. In the Heavens

III. Before Time v.11

- a. Eternal Purpose - of time to come which, if it has no end, is also known as *eternity* (so commonly “According to the purpose (1:11) of the ages.” God’s purpose runs on through the ages. “Through the ages one eternal purpose runs.
- b. Carried in Christ