

Ephesians 3:1-9. *We are heirs together.*

Since people outside of Israel [eth-known, εθνων, Gentiles, nations] are no longer separated from the Lord Our God, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of those formerly separate from Israel say this—

- ✓ Surely you've heard about the administration [οικονομίαν] of God's gift that was given to me for you. In other words, the mystery that was made known to me by God's revelation (you know, the one I have already written to you about briefly).
- ✓ In reading this, you will therefore be able to comprehend my insight into the mystery of the Christ. Now this mystery was not revealed to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by Holy Spirit to apostles and prophets. And just what is this mystery?

*Through the good news to the peoples outside of Israel, they are now heirs together with Israel—members of one body, sharing together the announced promise [summons] found *ev* Christ Jesus.*

- ✓ I became a servant [de-ah-kon-os] of this good news by God's gift by means of His working power. Even though I'm less than the least of God's people, this gift was given me—to evangelize [εὐαγγελίσασθαι, 2097] people beyond Israel. I seek to make known to all the incomprehensible [ἀνεξιχνίαστος, “not able to trace the steps of,” 421] riches of the Christ.
- ✓ I seek to shed light [φωτίσαι, 5461] to everyone the administration [οικονομίαν] of this revealing, a mystery which for ages past was hidden in the Lord God, the God who created all things.

- Q What is the “mystery of the Christ?” What is so revolutionary about this “mystery?”
- Q To what extent were people outside of Israel (Gentiles) separated from God before Christ? Was there any soteriological assurance, or even hope?
- Q Why was Saul/Paul always “hammering” on the unity of Jews & Gentiles within the church?
- Q What makes the “riches of the Christ” so incomprehensible?
- Q What manifestations of the Lord God's power affected and effected Saul/Paul to become a diakonos (servant)?
- Q Why did the Lord God “keep hidden” this great mystery, for ages past no less?

EPHESIANS 3:1-9

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

²Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This mystery 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.

⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Ephesians 3:10-13. Wisdom Revelation.

God's purpose was that now via Christ's body, the church, the called out, the varied wisdom of God should be revealed.

To whom? To the rulers and authorities in even heavenly realms, according to God's eternal purpose, a purpose in which He fulfilled via Christ Jesus our Sovereign.

It is *en* Christ Jesus and through our trust *en* Christ Jesus that we are allowed and

called to approach the Father, not only free from fear, but full of confidence as well.

So what? I ask you, therefore, do not be discouraged because I am suffering for you—these tribulations in which you can glorify.

EPHESIANS 3:10-13

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 which 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.



- Q What makes the wisdom⁷ of the Lord Our God so colorful, multi-faceted, unexpected? Examples? [intracellular paths, rules about sexual purity, slavery (1 Timothy 1:10)]
- Q Just who are these “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms?”
- Q What stops us from approaching the God of the Universe with confidence and without fear? Who stopped Moses from seeing the Lord God and what reason was given? [Exodus 33:20] Why can we now “see the face of God” and survive, if not thrive?

⁷4182 *polypoikilos* (an adjective, derived from 4183 /*polys*, "much in number, many" and 4164 /*poikilos*, "many diverse manifestations") – properly, *ultra-diverse*, with multitudinous expressions (facets). See <https://biblehub.com/greek/4182.htm>

A Note on the Meaning of “Heavenly Realms”⁸

heavenly realms. Occurs five times in Ephesians, emphasizing Paul's perception that in the exaltation of Christ (His resurrection and enthronement at Father God's right hand) and in the Christian's union with the exalted Christ ultimate issues are involved—issues that pertain to the divine realm and that in the final analysis are worked out in and from that realm.

At stake are Yahweh's eternal eschatological purpose (3:11) and the titanic conflict between Yahweh and the powerful spiritual forces arrayed against Yahweh—a purpose and a conflict that come to focus in the history of redemption. Here (v. 3) Paul asserts that, through their union with the exalted Christ, Christians have already been made beneficiaries of every spiritual blessing that belongs to and comes from the heavenly realm. In vv. 20-22, he proclaims the Christ's exaltation to that realm and His elevation over all other powers and titles so that He rules over all for the sake of His church, i.e., His body.

According to 2:6, those who have been “made alive with the Christ” share in the Christ's exaltation and enthronement in heaven. Thus (3:11) by the gathering of Gentiles and Jews into one body of the Christ (the church), Yahweh triumphantly displays His “manifold wisdom” to the “rulers and authorities” in the heavenly realm. As a result, the spiritual struggle of the saints here and now is not so much against “flesh and blood” as against the great spiritual forces that war against Yahweh in heaven (6:12).

⁸Adapted and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV, © 1996.