

Mystery

△ Eph 3:1-13

Intro

This section is to introduce Paul to the readers

What he has done

What he knows

and what his task is

It's an interpreted start

v3 begins and then is broken off

and v3 is picked up again at v14

next week

As if Paul is just remembering he may need an introduction

not only the Ephesus but also to all the other churches

As this letter was intended as a round robin to many churches

He also says that he is a prisoner

Not only is he a Roman prisoner

But he is a prisoner for Christ

Why?

The reason he was sent to Rome for judgement by the Emperor

Was that he spoke about the Gospel in Jerusalem

And especially the need for bringing the

And especially the need for bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles

△ Acts 22:17-22

And especially the need for bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles

△ Acts 22:17-22

¹⁷ “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

²¹ “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

²² The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

It is the fact that Paul was charged to bring the gospel to the Gentiles

That is such an offense, that they wanted to kill him

Forcing the Roman authorities to arrest him and then the whole Roman journey saga starts

Paul speaks about two privileges that Jesus has given him

According to God's grace

△ v2 and v7

1. The revelation given to Paul

³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation,

2. Servant or minister of the Gospel

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace

And these two we will look at later

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on

1. Mystery made known to Paul

△ v2-6

Word mystery is used three times

v3, v4 and v9

In current english it tends to have dark
connotations

But not so in Greek, where it is positive
knowledge

like a scientific discovery

Not secret but open to all

But in the Old Testament it was a
mystery

Hidden from Jews and Gentiles

What is the mystery?

Paul spoke about this in Chapter 2

Due to God's great love

We have been made alive with Christ

And by grace we have been saved through
faith

A gift of God

**The mystery is that we do not need to
earn it**

It is freely given to us

If we believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the
Son of God

Another part of the mystery is that
this is not only for the Jews but
also for the Gentiles

That Jews and Gentiles - i.e. the whole world

Are members of the same body

Fellow-heirs

Sharing in the promise in Christ Jesus

And the mystery becomes the Gospel

△ v6

The good news in Christ

For all to receive and build their lives upon

2. Ministry entrusted to him

△ v7-13

Intro

The Ministry has also been given to Paul as grace

As well that he can exercise it by his power

That is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit

Making known Christ's riches to the Gentiles

△ v8

Even though Paul regards himself as the least

He has been given this charge

What are those boundless riches?

△ Eph chapters 1-2

Resurrection from the death of sin

Victorious enthronement with Christ in the heavenlies

heavens

Reconciliation with God

Incorporation with Jewish believers in this new society

The end of hostility and the beginning of peace

Access to the Father through Christ and by the Spirit

Membership of Jesus' kingdom and household

Being an integral part of his dwelling place among people

These are only a foretaste of yet more riches to come

The riches of the glory of the inheritance which God will give on the last day

Unsearchable

Perhaps the best translation from Greek is 'infinite'

Boundless, too large to get into our minds

Perhaps that is why it is also a mystery, because of its infinite riches

Making known the mystery to all people

△ v9

Not only a repeat of v8: three differences:

Preaching of the Gospel = Announcing the Good News

In the form of bringing light

Unsearchable riches of Christ = The Plan of the Mystery

Centring on

Through Jesus Jews and Gentiles are reconciled and joint members of the household of God

In equal terms in the society of Christ

I.e. the birth of the Church vs the people of Israel

But extending the people of Israel

All people vs Jews and Gentiles

The difference between the two is diminishing as equal partners

But still recognising each others heritages

Making known God's wisdom to the cosmic powers

△ v10

The third task goes beyond people to the cosmic powers

A special emphasis in Ephesians

There is more than just God and people

There is the fallen Spiritual world

Satan and his angels

Conclusion

The Mystery is the birth of the Church

Both Jewish and Gentile - all People

The Body of Christ

The way that Christ is planning to bring salvation to all people

And you are part of it

The Church is:

The church is central to history

The Church is central to history

Since the Pentecost (the birth of the Church)

It has shaped societies and nations

and is executing according to God's plan

The church is central to the gospel

It is the means that the Gospel is preached
and handed out

The Church is central to Christian living

Our worship, our fellowship, our support,
our nourishment

And the way the bring Christian life into the
community

Yes the Church is flawed

And divided, and all the other issues

But it is still the way that God is
working in the world

And you are part of it!

It is not just a nice way to hear about
the Gospel and get to know nice people

It is hard work

It is a calling

Each one of us in different ways

But without us there is no local church

We are it

And this is quite a responsibility