

Studies in Ephesians

Lesson VI

TEXT: Ephesians 3:1-13 (NIV)

¹For 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.

¹⁰His 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,¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Paul's special calling (vv. 1-2)? How did God communicate this to him (vs. 3)?
2. In verses 1-2, Paul describes himself as the p_____ of C_____ and noted that God was administering his g_____ to the Gentiles through him. Can we describe ourselves in similar terms? What are the practical implications of these two concepts?
3. What is the "mystery of Christ" (vs. 4, cf. vs. 6) and why do you suppose it was not "made known to men in other generations" (vs. 5)?
4. How did Paul operate his ministry (vv. 7-9)? What can Christians in ministry today gain from adopting this same perspective?
5. What is God's master plan (vv. 10-11)?
6. How has humankind related to God throughout history? How should we approach God as participants in the New Covenant (vs. 12)?
7. Why would the Christians in Ephesus become discouraged by Paul's suffering (vs. 13a)? What did he mean when he said "my sufferings...are your glory" (vs. 13b)?