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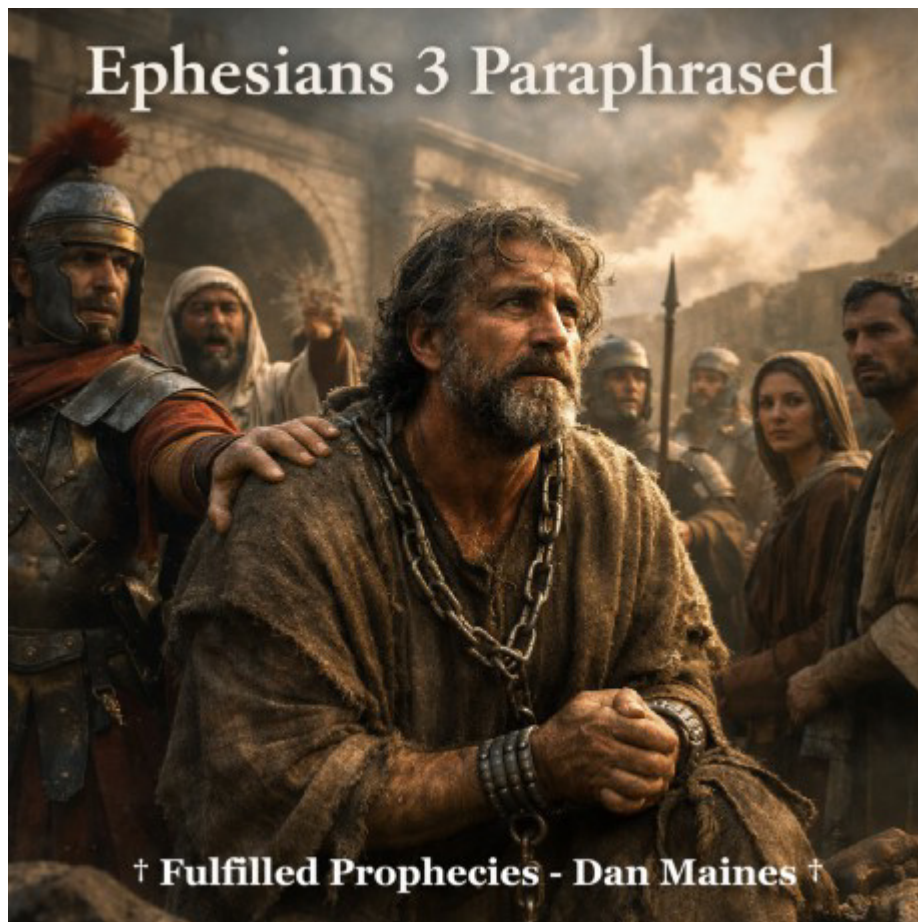
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Ephesians 3 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Ephesians 3 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul explains that what God once kept hidden has now been openly revealed through Christ, that both Jews and Gentiles are united in the same covenant family (Colossians 1:26-27).

† The mystery wasn't that Gentiles would be blessed, the prophets already spoke of that, the mystery was that they would share the same body in Christ (Isaiah 49:6).

† Early Christian writers such as Irenaeus explained that the church revealed God's long hidden plan for the nations through

Christ (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.16.6).

Ephesians 3:1

Because of this truth, I Paul am a prisoner because I serve Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.

† Paul's imprisonment happened because he preached that Gentiles were equal heirs in Christ, which angered many Jewish leaders (Acts 21:28-33).

† His chains were evidence that the gospel had moved beyond Israel and into the nations (Philippians 1:12-13).

† Eusebius recorded that Paul suffered imprisonment because he faithfully proclaimed the gospel among the Gentiles (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.22).

Ephesians 3:2

You have certainly heard about the responsibility God gave me to share His grace with you.

† Paul was specifically chosen to carry the message of Christ to the Gentile world (Acts 9:15).

† This mission was entrusted to him directly by Christ and not received from men (Galatians 1:11-12).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Paul was appointed as a teacher to the nations so they could know the truth of Christ (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 4.21).

Ephesians 3:3

God made the mystery known to me by revelation, just as I wrote briefly before.

† The gospel message wasn't invented by Paul but revealed by God Himself (Galatians 1:12).

† This revelation explained how the promises to Abraham would reach the nations (Genesis 12:3).

† Irenaeus taught that the apostles received divine revelation to make known God's hidden plan in Christ (Irenaeus, Against

Heresies 3.1.1).

Ephesians 3:4

When you read this, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.

† Paul's writings helped believers understand truths that had previously been hidden.

† The mystery centered on Christ bringing Jews and Gentiles together in one body (Ephesians 2:14-16).

† Early Christians preserved the apostolic writings because they explained the revealed truth of the gospel (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.24).

Ephesians 3:5

This mystery wasn't made known to people in earlier generations the way it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.

† The prophets spoke about Gentile blessing but didn't see the full picture of the united body of Christ (Isaiah 60:3).

† The Spirit revealed this fuller understanding to the apostles during the first century.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles received illumination from the Spirit to proclaim the deeper meaning of the gospel (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.7).

Ephesians 3:6

The mystery is this, the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

† Gentiles were no longer outsiders but equal participants in the covenant blessings (Ephesians 2:19).

† The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile had been removed through Christ (Ephesians 2:14).

† Irenaeus explained that Christ gathered all nations into one

people through faith (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.34.1).

Ephesians 3:7

I became a servant of this gospel by God's grace given to me through His power at work.

† Paul's ministry was not based on personal ability but on God's grace working through him (1 Corinthians 15:10).

† The gospel ministry was empowered by God's strength, not human wisdom.

† Eusebius recorded that Paul tirelessly served the gospel despite persecution and suffering (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.22).

Ephesians 3:8

Even though I am the least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to preach to the Gentiles the endless riches found in Christ.

† Paul humbly acknowledged his past persecution of the church (1 Timothy 1:13).

† Yet God chose him to reveal the riches of Christ to the nations.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that God's grace often works through those who once opposed the truth (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 2.9).

Ephesians 3:9

My task is to make clear to everyone the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.

† The gospel reveals God's long hidden purpose now fulfilled in Christ.

† What was hidden through the ages became fully revealed in the apostolic message.

† Irenaeus wrote that the incarnation of Christ revealed God's plan that had been hidden since the beginning (Irenaeus,

Against Heresies 3.11.8).

Ephesians 3:10

God's purpose is that now through the church His wisdom would be displayed to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

† The church reveals God's wisdom to both earthly and spiritual authorities.

† The unity of Jews and Gentiles demonstrates the power of God's redemptive plan.

† Early writers taught that the spread of the church showed the victory of Christ over spiritual powers (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 5.21.1).

Ephesians 3:11

This was according to the eternal purpose He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

† God's plan wasn't accidental but established before the ages (2 Timothy 1:9).

† Christ fulfilled the purpose God planned from the beginning.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that Christ revealed the eternal purpose of God to humanity (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 5.1).

Ephesians 3:12

Through Him we have boldness and confident access to God through faith in Him.

† Christ opened direct access to God for believers (Hebrews 4:16).

† This access wasn't limited to Israel but extended to all who believe.

† Early Christians taught that prayer and access to God were made possible through Christ alone (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 1.2).

Ephesians 3:13

So I ask you not to lose heart over my suffering for you, because it is for your glory.

† Paul's suffering advanced the gospel and strengthened believers.

† Persecution was often the cost of proclaiming the truth.

† Irenaeus wrote that suffering for the faith was considered an honor among early Christians (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.33.9).

Ephesians 3:14

Because of this, I kneel before the Father.

† Paul expresses humility and reverence in prayer.

† Prayer was central to the early Christian life and ministry.

† Clement of Alexandria emphasized prayer as the believer's continual connection with God (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 7.7).

Ephesians 3:15

From whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its name.

† God is the ultimate source of all life and authority.

† Every group of people ultimately traces its existence back to Him.

† Early Christian teachers saw this as evidence of God's universal authority over creation (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.2.4).

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that according to the riches of His glory He will strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being.

† Spiritual strength comes from the work of the Spirit within believers.

† This inner transformation empowers believers to live faithfully.

† Early Christian teachers often emphasized the Spirit's role in strengthening believers for faithful living (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.12).

Ephesians 3:17

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love.

† Faith allows Christ's presence to shape the believer's life.

† Love becomes the foundation of the Christian life.

† Irenaeus taught that love toward God and others was the central mark of true believers (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.12.2).

Ephesians 3:18

May you have the strength to understand with all the saints what is the width, length, height, and depth.

† The love and wisdom of Christ cannot be measured by human limits.

† Believers grow in understanding through fellowship and spiritual maturity.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the depth of God's truth unfolds as believers grow in faith (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 5.12).

Ephesians 3:19

And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

† Christ's love goes beyond human understanding.

† The goal of faith is spiritual fullness in relationship with God.

† Early Christian teachers often described this fullness as the maturity of believers in Christ (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.38.3).

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do far more than we ask or imagine

according to the power working within us.

† God's power working in believers accomplishes far more than human expectations.

† This power is the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).

† Eusebius wrote that the spread of Christianity across the world demonstrated the extraordinary power of God (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.3).

Ephesians 3:21

To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.

† All glory ultimately belongs to God through Christ.

† The church exists to reflect that glory across generations.

† Early Christians consistently ended prayers with praise to God through Christ (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 7.10).

Historical References

† Irenaeus explained that Christ united the nations into one people through the gospel (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.34).

† Eusebius documented the spread of the gospel through the apostles into the nations (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.22).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote extensively about the apostolic teaching that revealed God's hidden wisdom (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata).

How It Applies To Us Today

† The gospel reminds us that God's plan has always included people from every nation.

† Believers today are part of the same body that Paul described in the first century.

† Understanding this unity helps us see the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ.

Q and A Appendix

Q What is the mystery Paul describes in this chapter?

A The mystery is that Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of the same body in Christ (Ephesians 3:6).

Q Why was Paul imprisoned?

A Paul was imprisoned because he preached that Gentiles were included in the covenant blessings through Christ (Acts 21:28-33).

Q How was the mystery revealed?

A The mystery was revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5).

Q What role does the church play in God's plan?

A The church displays the wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities (Ephesians 3:10).

Q What is the ultimate goal of believers according to this chapter?

A Believers are to be filled with the fullness of God through the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:19).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Ephesians 3

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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