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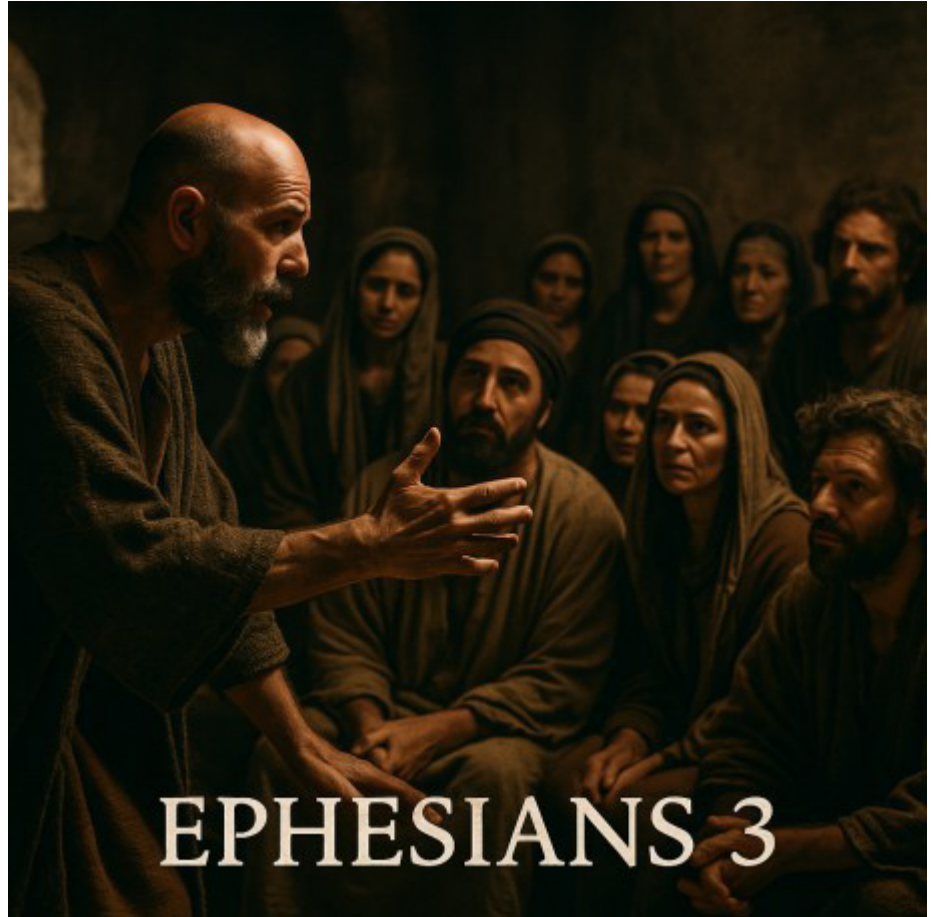
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By Dan Maines

Ephesians 3

Ephesians 3:1-2

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the administration of God's grace which was given to me for you.

† Paul identifies himself as a prisoner for Christ, showing his suffering was for the Gentiles' inclusion.

† His ministry is described as an administration of grace, a stewardship entrusted to him.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Ephesians 3) also praised Paul for his chains which were for the Gentiles' benefit.

Ephesians 3:3-4

That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before briefly. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.

† The mystery was revealed by divine revelation, not human reasoning.

† The mystery is Christ's uniting of Jew and Gentile in one body.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 3.3.3) emphasized Paul's writings as central to the revelation of the mystery.

Ephesians 3:5-6

Which in other generations was not made known to mankind, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

† The mystery was hidden in past generations but revealed in the Spirit.

† Gentiles are now fellow heirs, fellow members, and fellow partakers.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QSa 2.11-12) limited covenant blessings to Israel, but Paul reveals their fullness in Christ to all nations.

Ephesians 3:7-8

Of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me by the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

† Paul humbly calls himself the least of saints, yet entrusted with the greatest task.

† His mission is to proclaim Christ's unfathomable riches to the Gentiles.

† Origen (Homilies on Luke 32) highlighted Paul's humility as proof of divine grace working in him.

Ephesians 3:9-10

And to enlighten all people as to what the plan of the mystery is which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things, so that the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

† The church is the vessel of God's revealed wisdom.

† Rulers and authorities, both spiritual and earthly, witness God's plan fulfilled.

† Clement of Alexandria (Stromata 5.4) taught that the church's wisdom silenced even rulers and powers.

Ephesians 3:11-12

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

† God's eternal purpose is fulfilled in Christ, not postponed.

† Believers now enjoy boldness and confident access to God.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 39) declared that access to God was through Christ alone, not the Law.

Ephesians 3:13

Therefore I ask you not to become discouraged about my tribulations in your behalf, since they are your glory.

† Paul's suffering is for their benefit, bringing them glory.

† His chains testify to the reality of the gospel.

Ephesians 3:14-15

For this reason I bend my knees before the Father, from whom

every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

† Paul bows in reverence, showing dependence in prayer.

† God is the source of every family and order, uniting heaven and earth under His name.

Ephesians 3:16-17

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love.

† Strength is given by the Spirit in the inner person.

† Christ dwells in hearts by faith, rooting and grounding believers in love.

† The Shepherd of Hermas (Vision 3.13) spoke of the heart as God's dwelling place, aligned with Paul's teaching.

Ephesians 3:18-19

May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.

† Paul prays for comprehension of Christ's boundless love.

† Love surpasses knowledge, yet fills believers with God's fullness.

† Philo (On the Posterity of Cain 61) discussed the immeasurable nature of God's wisdom, here Paul applies it to Christ's love.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

- † God's power works within believers beyond imagination.
- † Glory belongs to Him in the church and in Christ forever.
- † Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 2.2) glorified God for His eternal work in Christ and the church.

How it applies to us today

- † Ephesians 3 reveals that Jew and Gentile are united in Christ as one body, heirs together of the promises.
- † The church displays God's wisdom to all powers, spiritual and earthly.
- † We are strengthened in the inner person by the Spirit, rooted in Christ's love, and filled with the fullness of God.
- † The fulfilled kingdom is here, and the church reflects God's eternal purpose already accomplished in Christ.

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

Source Index

- † Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians 3 - Paul's chains for Gentiles
- † Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3.3 - Paul's writings as revelation of the mystery
- † Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QSa 2.11-12 - covenant blessings limited to Israel
- † Origen, Homilies on Luke 32 - Paul's humility and grace
- † Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 5.4 - wisdom of the church
- † Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 39 - access to God through Christ
- † Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 3.13 - heart as God's dwelling place
- † Philo, On the Posterity of Cain 61 - immeasurable wisdom of God
- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.2 - God's eternal work in Christ

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