

Mystery Revealed Ephesians Part 14

*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.*

- Ephesians 3:1-13

The prophet Habakkuk says; “For the revelation awaits an appointed time” (2:3). Just like the quarterback who waits for the perfect timing to throw the pass, our Heavenly Father waited for the perfect timing to reveal his plan for the Gentiles. Paul says to the Galatians, “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). So Jesus comes in the fullness of time, not to abolish the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17) but to fulfill it, first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles.

In this part of Ephesians, Paul talks about something that is at the very heart of his mission. I'll sum it up. God the Father had chosen him, of all people, to take the message of the gospel (the good news about Jesus) to the Gentiles. This good news was a mystery that was made known to him by revelation (v 3). The mystery is this: through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body (Paul calls that body the church - v 10) and sharers together in the promises of God in Christ Jesus (v 6). In him (Jesus) and through faith in him we all may approach God with freedom and confidence (v 12).

This news is not new to you. By now you have come to Christ and realize that you are included in all the promises that he made to Israel and all the promises that he made when he walked the earth. I hope you do. You also know that you have 24/7 access to God your Father and that you can come before him with freedom and confidence. But do you remember the price that Jesus paid for your inclusion? He left heaven for you. Is it too mind-boggling to know that the baby in the manger was the Son of God? Jesus grew and lived a sinless life even under the constant attack of the chief of demons. He fought for truth and did not waver even under the constant verbal slander of the Pharisees. He died a horrific brutal death by those he came to save. He paid the price for your inclusion and access to your Father.

Did you know that Paul paid a great price to bring the good news to the Gentiles? He writes this letter from prison where he is being held because of the persecution of the Jews. When Paul entered a city to preach the good news he always went to the Jews first. Do not think they received this message

with gladness. Take a little time to read II Corinthians 11: 16-33. Why were the Jews so angry with Paul? Wasn't it a good thing for the Gentiles to be included in the promises? Wasn't it good news that the Father sent Jesus to redeem all people? I will not get into all the OT scriptures that support what I'm going to say, but from the time of Moses, association with Gentiles was forbidden. There were many laws about this in the Theocracy of Israel. To give you the bottom line, Gentiles were despised by Israelites. They were considered pigs. Jewish people who did not have contempt for Gentiles were ostracized. Now bring Paul into this racial contempt, preaching the good news that the Gentiles now had the same God, the same promises, the same rights as heirs and were part of an even better plan of access to God where the Temple was no longer needed. The Jews hated this message and the messenger!

Can I just say in closing that revelation has a price? Are you grateful for Jesus? Are you grateful for Paul? Are you grateful for those who brought the gospel to you and still do? You can show your gratitude by bringing the mystery that has been revealed to you to those who have yet to hear the good news? It would make your messenger very happy!