

The Secret Made Simple

Ephesians 3:1-6: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

In these verses Paul mentions the word mystery or secret 3 times. He also mentions the word gentile 3 times, because the mystery or secret of Ephesians 3:6 is a mystery about Gentile salvation and their relationship with Jews in the church. It's called the mystery of Christ in verse 4 and it pertains to the gentiles Paul was an apostle of.

Even though the mystery of Christ pertains to Gentiles it does not pertain to all Gentiles. It pertains to a certain group of Gentiles singled out by the Lord himself. They are identified in Ephesians 2:11-12 which says;

Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

The mystery of Ephesians 3:6 pertains to Gentiles who were uncircumcised, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, who were without hope and without God and Christ in the world. They are also called heathen gentiles in Galatians 1:15-16. This is important to note, because prior to Acts 10 Peter and the twelve apostles ministered to Gentiles, but they were not like these in Ephesians 2:11-12. They were circumcised Gentiles who had become religious proselytes to Judaism and kept the Law of Moses. Please read Acts 2:10.

The mystery of Ephesians 3:6 does not pertain to Gentiles who became Jewish proselytes like those in Acts 2:10. It pertains to the kind of Gentiles found in Ephesians 2:11-12. Prior to Acts 10 it was unlawful for anyone to go to them and is why it took a special vision from God to get Peter to go to Cornelius.

What is the mystery about these gentiles Paul describes in Ephesians 2:11-12 and Galatians 1:15-16? The best way to teach someone the truth is by telling them what you are going to say and then say it and then tell them what you said. I will tell you ahead of time what the mystery of Eph. 3:6 is. The mystery of Ephesians 3:6 is that Gentiles are now fellow heirs with the Jews, members of the same body with the Jews, partakers of the promise God made to the gentiles in Genesis 22:18 according to Galatians 3:8. But how? ***In Christ by the gospel***, that is by faith alone in the gospel without becoming Jewish proselytes, without blessing the seed of Abraham, without keeping the law, and without circumcision. And the mystery is that in the church Gentiles are equal to Jewish believers in every way. There is total equality between Jews and Gentiles in the church. They are joint heirs with one another.

This was a mystery to the prophets in time past. Verse 9 says it was a mystery hid in God from the beginning of the world and Paul and ALL the other apostles came to see this mystery by the divine revelation of the Spirit according to verse Ephesians 3:5.

There are three promises of the mystery. They are major promises but they are simple to understand;

(a) That the Gentiles should be Fellowheirs

Fellowheirs are fellows who have the same inheritance. The fellows who now share in the same inheritance are Jew and Gentile believers such as those Paul describes in Ephesians 2:16-19:

16 And that he (God) might reconcile both (Jew and gentiles) unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, (gentiles) and to them that were nigh. (Jews)

18 For through him we both (Jew and gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye (gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, (Jews) and of the household of God;

In these verses we can plainly see the union that now exists between Jew and gentile believers. They are now fellowcitizens and fellowheirs with one another to the same inheritance. What is the inheritance? The only inheritance in the Bible; the kingdom of God. When God saved Paul in Acts 9 he sent him to preach this inheritance to the gentiles.

Act 26:17-18: Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (The gentiles received an inheritance among the Jews who were already sanctified by faith)

Ephesians 5:5

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Colossians 1:12-13

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

1 Thessalonians 2:12: That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5: So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

The inheritance of all believers, Jew or gentile, is in the coming glorious kingdom of God. Many dispensationalists are quick to say the kingdom belongs to Israel only, but not anymore! Gentiles like us now have an inheritance in the kingdom of God with the Jews to whom it was originally promised. In time past the kingdom of God was the private inheritance of the Jews only, but part of the mystery is that Gentiles like us who were aliens from Israel now share in their inheritance in the kingdom of God. God has given us a place in his glorious kingdom in the future along with believing Jews. That is why it says we are now fellowheirs with them.

(b) That the Gentiles should be members of the same body.

Ephesians 3:6 declares the mystery is that Gentiles are now members of the same body or church with the Jews they are fellow heirs with. We not only share the same inheritance with them, but we are also members of the same body or church with them. In the book of Ephesians God says we are made nigh to them in 2:13, fellow citizens with them in 2:19, fellowheirs with them in 3:6, one body with them in 2:16 and of the same body with them in 3:6. And notice it says the **same body**, not a different body or church. There is one church and all Jews and gentiles are members of it.

This should clarify a misconception some people have about the church. If you ask most Christians what the mystery is they say, it's the church. But it is not the church. According to Ephesians 3:6 the mystery is how uncircumcised Gentiles like us are made members of the same body or church with the Jews and how we now share in their inheritance in the kingdom of God. These Jews are those who first trusted in Christ in Eph. 1:12, who are called the commonwealth of Israel in Eph.2:12 and the Israel of God in Gal.6:16 and the election of grace in Romans 11:5 and they include the twelve apostles and all their Jewish converts. It's truly amazing to hear gentiles today say that the 12 apostles are not a part of the church the body of Christ, when in fact they were in it before the door was opened to the gentiles! We are members of the same body or church with them.

The fact Christ would build a church which he would call his body and be its head, was never a mystery. He foretold he would build such a church in Matthew 16:18 and he built it and became its first member and head when he was raised from the dead and sat down at God's right hand according to Ephesians 1:19-23 and Colossians 1:18. In the beginning of his church it

was made up of circumcised Jews who are called the Israel of God in Gal. 6:16. And contrary to what some dispensationalists say, the church he built is his body. Consider this: The early Jewish saints were in Christ, Christ was in them and they were one in Christ which is precisely why the church is called the body of Christ. Please read John 14:20, John 17:11, 21-23. The mystery is not the church. The mystery is that uncircumcised Gentiles have become members of the church Christ built with the Jews who were already in it before them. (Remember it says ***the same body.***)

(c) That the Gentiles should become partakers of his promise.

What is this promise and who made it? It's the promise that God made in Genesis 22:18 to justify heathen gentiles through the seed of Abraham who is Christ according to Galatians 3:8. (Paul defines the promise of Genesis 22:18)

But how did uncircumcised Gentiles like us become fellow heirs to the same inheritance of the Jews? How did we become members of the same body or church with the Jews? And how did heathen Gentiles become partakers of the promise God made in Genesis 22:18 to justify the heathen? If we can find out ***how***, we can find out ***why*** all this was a mystery.

The answer

Ephesians 3:6 says; ***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.***

Do you see the answer? The answer is: ***In Christ by the Gospel.***

The mystery is that the Gentiles are now fellowheirs with the Jews to an inheritance in the kingdom of God, members of the same body or church with them and partakers of the promise of Genesis 22:18 of justification: ***in Christ by the gospel.*** And when Paul says, by the gospel, he means ***by grace through faith alone in the gospel without becoming Jewish proselytes, without blessing Israel, without circumcision and without keeping the law.***

The most important part of the mystery

Christ and the Gospel are the most important parts of the mystery. His death on the cross made the blessings of the mystery possible for us gentiles, because his death abolished the law that stood as a middle wall of partition between us and the Jews for so many years. Eph.2:14-15 says;

For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentiles) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man.

The problem was the Law and circumcision

The law and circumcision stood as a middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles for many years. The Jews had the law and circumcision and the Gentiles had neither. The law and circumcision forbade the Jews from having any relationship or fellowship with the Gentiles which is why Peter said in Acts 10:28 that it was; ***unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation.*** The middle wall of partition is clearly seen in this verse. As long as the law stood as a middle wall of partition, Ephesians 3:6 was not possible. It kept Gentiles like us on the outside looking in. It took the death of Christ on the cross to abolish the law so the blessings of Ephesians 3:6 could become a reality to us Gentiles. And now that the law has been taken out of the way, uncircumcised Gentiles can now be reconciled together in the same body or church with the Jews and share in their inheritance in the kingdom of God. We also became partakers of their spiritual promises according to Romans 15:27 such as those mentioned in Ephesians; the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph.1:3) the New Covenant of promise (Eph.2:12-3) the kingdom of God (Eph.5:5) and the promise of eternal life (Titus 1:2) and many more.

The mystery is about a certain group of people. It is about uncircumcised Gentiles. The mystery is about an inheritance. An inheritance in the kingdom of God that Gentiles now share with the Jews. The mystery is about the church Christ built called the body of Christ. The mystery is not the church itself, but how Gentiles like us got into it. The mystery is about the promise God made to heathen Gentiles in Genesis 22:18. The mystery is how Gentiles like us became partakers of all these blessings. It is in Christ by the gospel we become partakers of all these blessings. Christ's death abolished the law which barred us from these blessings for so many years. And the mystery is, we now partake of all these blessings and more, by faith alone in the gospel without works of any kind. Dear friend it's just that simple.

