

Text: Eph. 3:1 “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles...”

Intro: The “reason” is the mystery now made known in Christ, there is no longer Jew or Gentile, the two are made one—**Eph. 2:14–15** “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.” Paul continues in **Eph. 3:5–6** “as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”

—**The Very Wisdom of God** (v. 10)

—The “wisdom of God” before hand was hidden even from “the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,” (**Eph 3:10**).

—The “the principalities and powers” are heavenly angels (not fallen angels) who now “made known by the church” (**Eph. 3:10**) see the “the manifold wisdom of God” (**Eph. 3:10**).

—Most often in the New Testament these the principalities and powers refer to evil demonic powers.

—Here we see the angelic hosts being shown the wisdom and purpose of God in the plan of salvation through Christ.

—Peter writes **1Peter 1:12** “It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”

—The heavenly angels learn about human salvation through the Church.

—Based on **Deut. 33:2** “He said: “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.” (The KJV “he came with ten thousands of saints” the Hebrew word is שׂוֹמְרֵי קָדוֹשׁ “sanctified ones”).

—The Jews interpreted this to mean that the Law was given through the mediation of angels; an interpretation that Stephen gives in **Acts 7:53** “you who

have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”

—Paul also gives the same understanding in *Gal. 3:19* “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

—Finally the writer of Hebrews gives us the same understanding—*Heb. 2:2–3* “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.”

—The New Testament writers use this interpretation of *Deut 33:2* to show the temporary nature of the Law, until the Greater revelation was given *Eph. 3:11* “according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

—From the very moment of eternity past God the Father’s purpose was always to redeem the world through Jesus Who is the Creative Agent—“God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (*Eph. 3:9*) (Jesus is both Creator and Savior)

—The Wisdom Revealed is “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,” (*Eph. 3:6*)

—Why is this important to understand?

—Paul’s Mission

—*Eph. 3:8* “To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

—Paul’s greatest desire is that we Gentiles would grasp in some way these “unsearchable riches of Christ.”

—He prays “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,” (*Eph. 3:14–16*).

—The magnitude of all that is accomplished in Jesus is too large to understand with the human mind, this must be known “*through His Spirit in the inner man.*”

—*Faith is the foundation*—“*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*” (Eph. 3:17)—Paul is talking about *maintaining faith*, a faith that holds firm to Jesus no matter what comes in this life.

—*Love is the anchor*—“*being rooted and grounded in love,*” (Eph. 3:17)

—To be “*rooted*” is to have a firm connection, *knowing the depth of His love, nothing can shake you*—*Psalms 1:3* “He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.”

—To be “*grounded*” is to be properly prepared; in the building trade this is called “*sight work*” getting the ground ready to build; good “*sight work*” begins in the Word—*Psa. 119:9* “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”

—*Knowing beyond knowledge*—“*That you... may be able to comprehend* (lay hold of or grasp) with all the saints *what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge*” (Eph. 3:18–19)

—It is essential to our lives as Christians, that we know we are loved in Christ.

—This is the Christian sense of identity, *above all we are loved.*

—His love for us has no measure it is a love without “*width and length and depth and height*”.

—It is “*wide*” enough to reach the whole world and beyond (1:9-10, 20).

—It is “*long*” enough to stretch from eternity to eternity (1:4-6, 18; 3:9).

—It is “*high*” enough to raise both Gentiles and Jews to heavenly places in Christ Jesus (1:13; 2:6).

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—It is “***deep***” enough to rescue people from sin’s degradation and even from the grip of Satan himself (***2:1-5; 6:11-12***).

—It is love that “***passes knowledge***” even while Paul prays that we would know it, he confesses it is beyond knowledge; the word “***passes***” means to overshoot.

—The way we know His love is to view it from the Cross.

—We also keep in view the eternal hope Jesus has given us.

—***Filled with God’s Fullness***—“that you may be filled ***with all the fullness of God***.” (***Eph. 3:19***)

—The only way to understand this phrase, is to understand it from the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

—***John 7:38*** “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘***Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water***.’”

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