

THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD

Ephesians 3:1-13

Key Verse: 3:10

“His 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...”

1. What does “For this reason” refer to? (1a; 2:19-22) How did Paul identify himself and why? (1b; Ac 9:15-16) What was given to Paul, and for whom? (2) What does “the administration¹ of God’s grace” mean? (3) How did Paul administer it? (1 Cor 15:3a)
2. How many times is the word “mystery”² repeated in this passage? (3,4,6,9) How was this mystery revealed, and to whom? (3,5,9) Why was this mystery, which had now been revealed, not been made known previously? (1:10; Ro 16:25-26; Gal 4:4)
3. Read verse 6. What specific contents of the mystery are mentioned here? Note the repetition of “together.” What is the significance of this? What is the meaning of “heirs...with Israel,” “members...of one body,” and “sharers...in the promise in Christ Jesus”? How is this mystery being realized in our time, and especially in our ministry?
4. How did Paul become a servant of the gospel? (7) What was the gift of God’s grace given to Paul? (8-9) What does “the boundless riches of Christ” tell us about the nature of the gospel? What do the words “I am less than the least,” and “make plain to everyone,” reveal about Paul’s attitude in preaching the gospel?

¹ “Administration,” (*“oy-kon-om-ee'-ah,”[Gr]*, from which the English word “economy” is derived) means “stewardship.”

² “Mystery” (*“moos-tay'-ree-on,”[Gr]*) means a hidden thing or a secret. Paul does not use it to mean something dark, obscure or incomprehensible; it refers to a truth undiscoverable by human reason alone, which has now become open to everyone.

5. Read verses 10-11. What is God's intention through the church? How does God reveal his manifold³ wisdom practically through the church? (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11) What implications does this have for the church in our time?
6. What great privileges do we have in Christ? (12) What characterizes our relationship with God? How can Paul's suffering be an encouragement to the Ephesians and us? (13)

³ "Manifold" ("*pol-oo-poy'-kil-os*" [*Gr*]) means "much variegated, marked with a great variety of colors, of cloth or a painting."