

**Eph. 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,  
Eph. 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:**

**Eph. 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,**

This chapter starts with Paul basically stating that he is in prison as a consequence of his commission from the Lord Jesus to minister to “you Gentiles.” The KJV wording for verses 2-3 is a bit hard; I like the wording from the CJB.

I assume that you have heard of the work God in his grace has given me to do for your benefit, and that it was by a revelation that this secret plan was made known to me. I have already written about it briefly, He is referencing the introductory verses in chapter one I believe. I think he is emphasizing the fact that the message he was declaring was revealed to him personally by Jesus Christ. Paul had missed out on the experience of relationship with Jesus during his three years of ministry, but he did not miss out on personal instruction.

**Eph. 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)**

**Eph. 3:5 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;**

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

Paul assumes that their knowledge of his direct revelation from the Lord would explain his thorough understanding of the previously unknown teaching that he and the other apostles and prophets are sharing. This teaching declared that God intended for the Gentiles to share in the covenant promises through faith in Christ Jesus just as surely as Jewish believers. Peter was given clearer understanding through special revelation from the Lord as well. (7/09) This revelation is recorded in Acts 10 in connection with a vision from God and being by God to deliver the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his family.

The Old Testament prophets had also declared that one day all nations would be blessed by God, but they didn’t really understand that it would bring them into covenant relationship with the Lord.

Is. 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Is. 56:7 ...for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

Mic. 4:2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Zech. 2:10-11 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people:

**Eph. 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.**

Paul counted it a privilege to be a servant of God in ministry to the Gentiles. He knew it was a privilege he didn't deserve; it was a gift of God's grace. He was also quick to acknowledge that it was only through the power of the Holy Spirit that his ministry was producing fruit.

**Eph. 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;**

Paul considered himself to be at the bottom of the list in comparison to others in the body of Christ. He was ever mindful of how ardently he had worked to persecute the members of the early church in an effort to eradicate it before it could get a good start. He is thrilled to have the opportunity to share with the Gentiles the good news of the wonderful blessings that could be theirs in Christ.

Those who have much to regret are often the most thankful for the opportunity to serve. I couldn't help but make a comparison to Peter. He too was very bold and committed when given the opportunity to make up for his shameful denial of the Savior. Frankly, the more I've grown in the Lord and in the understanding of "the unsearchable riches" that are mine in Christ, the more I cherish every opportunity He gives me to serve Him considering my past failures.

**Eph. 3:9 And to make all *men* see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**

**Eph. 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,**  
It was Paul's privilege to reveal the mystery of God's plan for fellowship between Jew and Gentile—a plan that God had in place from the beginning of creation. It was interesting to discover that all but one other translation that I read did not reference Jesus as the Creator and found that the commentaries note that this is not included in the oldest manuscripts. I am not qualified to take issue with their finding, but I do know that Paul includes this very truth in his letter to the Colossians.

Col. 1:16-19 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, *whether they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell....

It is very interesting to note from verse 10 that "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" are being educated about God's wisdom through His working in and through the *church*, a body comprised of all peoples and nations. I know I generally think of the angels and other spiritual beings as being quite

knowledgeable about God, but as created beings, they too are limited in knowledge and understanding. It seems that all of creation can be a source of learning more about and gaining better understanding of our Creator. The Greek for “manifold” states “complicated,” which I think is quite an understatement in reference to knowing and understanding God.

**Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

**Eph. 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.**

This revelation of Himself through His creation is part of the eternal purpose the Father planned to accomplish through His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. I don't even begin to understand God having an eternal purpose, since I can't really understand Him as an eternal being—without beginning or end. It is one of those things about which I hope to get at least more than a glimmer of understanding when I am with Him. Every person who places his faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior can boldly approach the Father on his own behalf.

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.  
We need no other priest than the Lord Jesus.

**Eph. 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.**

Paul is telling the Ephesian believers not to get discouraged over Paul's imprisonment. Paul considered it a privilege to suffer for the cause of Christ in ministry to the Gentiles.

2Cor. 12:9-10 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

“which is your glory” – I can understand this in more than one way.

- Paul's unwavering faith and commitment to minister even though imprisoned is cause for them to give praise and glory to God.
- Paul's example while in prison should serve to strengthen their faith which again is to God's glory as it is observed by the lost.
- The more Paul was willing to suffer on their behalf, the more they understood their value before God.
- And/Or something I can't see at this time.

**Eph. 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**Eph. 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

Paul now wants to tell the Ephesians that he lifts up prayers to the Father on their behalf in the name of Jesus, because it is only in Him that we have that privilege as part of the family of God.

I tend to think that “the whole family in heaven and earth” makes reference to all who are part of God’s Kingdom--angels and spirit beings as well as mankind.

**Eph. 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

Paul is always specific in his letters regarding how he prays for each body of believers. When he prefaces his prayer by asking for God’s answer to be “according to the riches of His glory,” he is making a statement about God’s unlimited resources. There is no prayer that He can’t answer and no need He can’t meet.

The first request Paul makes is that God will strengthen each member of this body of believers through His Spirit in the inner man, his heart and mind. This expresses his desire that they grow stronger in their desire and resolve to serve God in obedience.

**Eph. 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,**

**Eph. 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;**

**Eph. 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**

The next request seems to be referencing Paul’s desire that the faith each person *professes* is the faith he/she *possesses*. It could also express his desire that each one’s lifestyle reflects an awareness of Christ’s presence in their heart in the person of the Holy Spirit. This leads naturally to expressing his desire that each one is “rooted and grounded in love.” In other words, he wants each one to be firmly rooted in God’s love and using the fruit produced by that love to serve others.

Paul knows that those who are most eager to embrace (from the Greek for *comprehend*) the fullness of God’s love for His children will be the most effective and productive servants. Even as he asks for each believer to be able to embrace the fullness of God’s love through Christ, he acknowledges that our ability to understand God’s love is limited; we can’t possibly understand it. Still, his desire is for each believer to be filled (crammed full) with every bit that God has made available to His children.

This is an area of real challenge to me. I truly want to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s power at work in me. I want to have great faith that accomplishes great things for God.

**Eph. 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,**

**Eph. 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.**

As he closes his prayer, Paul gives praise and glory to God. He declares the truth that God is able to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”

through the Holy Spirit's empowerment. This statement assures me that God wants to grow my faith according to my prayer; I just need to learn to take leaps, not steps of faith as He leads me. It's a matter of learning not to fear (failure, shame or ridicule) but to act through His empowerment. My head understands what I need to do, and slowly but surely I am taking steps—but I want to be able to run!

Paul declares that the Father is glorified through His Son Christ Jesus and through the ministry and service of the church in His name.

“Amen” = so be it