

## Ephesians 3.1-21

New English Translation Bible 2019

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [-omitted]

### Working Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians

I. Greeting 1:1-2	E Ephesus
II. Praise 1.3-14	P Praise
III. Prayer 1:15-23	H Hope
IV. Teaching 2:1 – 3:21	E Edification
V. Exhortation 4:1-32	S Spiritual life
VI. Warning 5:1-21	I Instruction
VII. Counsel 5:22 – 6:9	A Attitudes
VIII. Spiritual warfare 6:10-20	N Negotiation
IX. Closing 6:21-23	S Salutation

### Structure of Ephesians 3.1-21

- A Reason to pray 1-7
  - New Testament revelation 4-7
- B Parenthesis: Paul's gospel 8-13
  - A message for Gentiles 8
  - A message for angels 10
  - God's eternal purpose 11
  - A request 13
- C Intercessory prayer 14-19
- D Worship 20-21

### Reason to pray (1 ... 13)

***1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ [–Jesus] for the sake of you Gentiles 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 [–that] by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I wrote before briefly.***

Query: For what reason? (Chapter 2? 'that', 3:3)

Query: What is the main clause? See 3:14.

Query: Who could or can get a revelation from God?

Digression: Common in ancient writings. Here verses 1-13 provide reasons for the prayer in verse 14.

Prisoner: Followers of an imprisoned leader became suspect of sedition.

Steward: A household manager, often a slave or freedman, with great responsibility and with prestige in a wealthy home.

If indeed: To provoke careful thought.

Mystery: Hidden truth that God is now making known, as in Daniel 2:19.

Query: Is every revelation a flawless word from God?

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### New Testament revelation

**4** *When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ*  
**5** *(which was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles [~ones] and prophets by the Spirit), ...*

Mystery: Define 'mystery' from this passage.

Query: Why say 'as' (manner) instead of 'but' (opposite).

Grammar: 'his apostles and prophets' = a unique class of individuals.

### Who could or can get a revelation from God?

1 First Testament speaking prophets 1 Kings 13:1

2 First Testament writing prophets 1 Pet 1:12

3 First century individuals Matt 16:17; Luke 2:26

4 Messiah Jesus Rev 1:1

5 New Testament apostles Eph 3:5

6 New Testament prophets Eph 3:5

7 New Testament Scriptures 2 Pet 3:16

Everything else remains more or less true to revealed Scripture. 1 Cor 14:37

### Gentiles are fellow heirs

**6** *namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. 7 I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the exercise of his power.*

Query: Gentiles are fellows with whom else?

Query: What do God's grace and power enable us to become? Rich? Successful? Powerful? Respected?

Query: Who exercised God's power to get his gift?

### Gentiles in God's secret plan

**8** *To me—less than the least of all the saints — this grace was given, to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ 9 and to enlighten [—every- one] about God's secret plan — the mystery that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things.*

Query: What made Paul least among 'the saints'? 1 Cor 15:9

Query: What did the prophets not know about future salvation for Gentiles?

Query: All what things?

## Ephesians 3.1-21

### A few riches we receive from the Messiah

- | Past:   | Present:   | Future:  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Born again.</li><li>● Delivered from Satan.</li><li>● Made holy to God.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Know truth about Jesus.</li><li>● Access to the Father</li><li>● Fruit and gifts of the Spirit</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Resurrection</li><li>● Rewards</li><li>● Rule over nations</li></ul> |

### Bad news for ruling angels

***10 The purpose of this enlightenment is that through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God should now be disclosed to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms.***

Query: Who are these 'rulers and authorities'?

Query: What do spirit rulers learn from Gentiles being in the church?

Disclosed: Compare 1 Cor. 2:8.

Query: What is to become of the spirits that rule over Gentile nations?

### New Testament terms for political spirits

- "rulers" (archontōn or archōn)
  - "principalities" (archē)
  - "authorities" (exousia)
  - "powers" (dynamis)
  - "lords"; "dominions"/ (kyrios; kyriotēs)
  - "thrones" (thronos)
  - "world rulers" (kosmokratōr)
- Godless national leaders unwittingly follow the dictates of unseen spirits.

### God's eternal purpose

***11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access to God by way of Christ's faithfulness.***

Query: What purpose? Eph 1:10

Query: What shall we do with access to God?

Query: Literally, 'through the faith of him'. Does that mean our faith in Jesus? Loyalty to Jesus? Or Jesus' faithfulness to God?

### A legitimate request

**13 For this reason I ask you not to lose heart [*~grow weary*] because of what I am suffering for you [*~us*], which is your glory.**

Query: What was Paul suffering?

Query: How was that of benefit to others?

Query: In what sense was it for their 'glory'?

Had Paul not suffered to defend his mission to Gentiles, then many would not have become destined for glory.

### Intercessory prayer

**14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven [*~heavens*] and on earth is named. 16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he will grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, ...**

Query: What does it mean 'to name every family'?

Query: 'In heaven and on earth'?

Query: How are we changed when strengthened with power through his Spirit in our inner person?

### Strengthened with power in our inner person

**'The Lord is my strength and [*-my*] might [*~song*], and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him'. Exodus 15:2 NRSVue**

Some Hebrew mss, Samaritan, Latin = 'my'. *zimrah* Homonyms: 1 melody, 2 strength. With 'my' = strength in Isa 12:2 and Psa 118:14. Conjecture: original 'my' a yod suffix followed by the initial yod on Yah was lost. עזי וזמרת[י] יה *'zy wzmrt[y] yh*.

### Prayer with purpose

**17 that Christ will dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 18 you will be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you [*~he*] will be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

Dwell: (*katoikeô*) settle down and stay.

Query: Our love for Christ, or his love for us? Or a Christ-like love?

Query: What is the ultimate Christian experience?

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### Christian worship

***20 Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do [–far] beyond all that we ask or think, 21 to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

Query: When will God start applying his power?

Query: What more could we ask? Think?

Church: The new divine council.

Generations: (genea) 1 race, kind. 2 generation, contemporaries, 3 age [cohort], 4 family history. BDAG

Which meaning best fits this context?

### The Divine Council

- ‘The whole heavenly creation —you must not be seduced to worship and serve them, for the LORD your God has assigned them to all the [nations] of the world’. Deuteronomy 4:19
- ‘The Most High gave the nations their inheritance ... according to the number of the heavenly assembly’. Deuteronomy 32:8
- ‘God stands in the assembly of El; in the midst of the gods he renders judgment’. Psalm 82:1

### For next time

1. Let us read a chapter of Ephesians each day in versions that you trust.
2. Let us study Ephesians 4:1-16, preparing comments and queries for discussion.