

**3** For this reason I, Paul, a **prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles**—<sup>2</sup> assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> how the mystery was made known to me **by revelation**, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that the **Gentiles** are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and **partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel**. <sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I was made a **minister** according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, **to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ**, <sup>9</sup> and to bring to light for everyone what is the **plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God**, who created all things, <sup>10</sup> so that through the **church** the **manifold wisdom of God** might now be **made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places**. <sup>11</sup> This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. <sup>13</sup> So I ask you **not to lose heart** over what I am suffering for you, which is **your glory**.

For This reason...what reason? To answer this question we will need to look at what Paul said in the previous few verses.

### **Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, 8-10,19-20 (ESV)**

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins, <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Paul is talking to the Gentile origin Christians in the church at Ephesus.

In Chapter 2, Paul already laid out the foundation for the gospel. He lays out the entire path of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles and reminds both groups of the need to be part of the 'household of God' or the 'family of God' (vs19). Being made a member of God's family or the household of God was an act of mercy shown (Mercy is not getting what we deserve, being Spiritually dead in sin, in verse 4 But God being rich in mercy because of His agape love for us...we deserve the Wrath of God, but instead we got the agape love of God, Grace is getting what we DO NOT deserve) and God showed us grace by sending Jesus to die in our place (grace, getting what we don't deserve...we get saved from His wrath AND on top of that He makes us part of His family...all acts of grace).

Vs 1 For this reason...After defining what the good news of the gospel is (chapter 2), Paul reminds the believers at Ephesus that he is a prisoner for their sake! But then again in verse 13, he ends the paragraph by encouraging them to not lose heart or be disheartened because this life is perfectly in God's plan and will bring them Glory.

Being a prisoner of Christ has negative connotations, but notice how Paul pivots and changes perspective by declaring that God has given him a steward's job. In other words, Paul is a servant of God entrusted with an important task!

But before giving Paul the steward's task, God had to prepare Paul.

How did God prepare Paul? By revelation. By revealing to Paul the mystery of the Messiah! Which is that Gentiles TOO would be saved and become members of God's family (v6).

This mystery was NOT made known in previous generations (v5), but has been revealed now to not just Paul, but to other apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.

**Our God is a communicator. He will first prepare us and then give us tasks to do.**

In the life of Paul, the preparation phase was the revelation of the mystery of the Messiah that Gentiles too will be saved and become members of God's family or household.

Was God's revelation to Paul (and the Apostles), that 'Gentiles can be saved too', unique, or do we see hints of this plan prior to this clear revelation to Paul, elsewhere in the Bible?

**Acts 2:38-39** (NLT)

38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> This promise is to you, to your children, and **to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.**"

Remember the times Jesus heals and proclaims gospel of repentance to several non-Jews

Centurion at Capernaum (Luke 7:1)

Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt 15:21)

John 3:16 (so loved the world, whoever believes)

But what about the Old Testament? Is there any mention or examples of salvation for the Gentiles in the Old Testament?

Some examples of salvation for non-Jews include:

Promise to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15)

Abraham (Gen 12:3)

The examples of Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, and possibly even Nebuchadnezzar.

But does God specifically say in words that He wants Gentiles to be saved?

Psalm 22:27 (NLT)

The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to Him.

All the families of the nations will bow down (or worship) before Him.

This is written by David and here it refers to a future event that has not yet happened where the whole earth will Worship the one True God. God is

very much interested the whole earth acknowledge and return or turn to Him and be saved.

Isaiah 56:3;6-7 (ESV)

3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say,

“The Lord will surely separate me from His people”;.....

6“**And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be His servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—**

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for **all** peoples.”

The foreigner or Gentile is most welcome in the presence of the Lord. In fact, Jesus quoted the last part of this paragraph when He overturned the money exchange tables in the Temple

That ‘Gentiles can be saved too’, is present throughout the Old Testament and was clarified when Jesus came to this earth the first time.

We just saw that prior to Paul being used by God, Paul had to be prepared by God. God prepared Paul by revealing to him the mystery of the Gospel which is that salvation is for the Gentiles too!

How do ‘revelations’ occur from God through His Holy Spirit today? Or are revelations from God finished with the writing of the last Book in the Bible?

If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then we have our answer based on how God revealed His mysteries in the past.

What examples do we have in the Bible about how God reveals something to certain individuals?

Dreams (Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel), Visions, Strangers (Philip and the Eunuch – Acts 8:26-40), family members (Pontus Pilate’s wife), but primarily through His Word

How do we know if the dream or vision or word we receive from people is really from God speaking to us? We must check it against His Word in the Bible. We need to ourselves have a relationship with God in order to be able to ask Him to confirm His revelations to us.

Do revelations occur today? Of course they do!

The word Revelation comes to us from the Latin apocalypsis, which itself is copied from Greek apokálypsis, which simply means – to uncover, to unhide, to reveal.

So an Apocalypse is simply finding something that is in plain sight but somehow hidden. It's time we re-claim this word and have God apocalypse His will for our lives.

Moodle example.

God wants us to ask Him to tell us what to do in our Christian life and walk, because He is in the business of saving ALL peoples.

### **Ephesians 3:7-13**

So once God prepared Paul, He made Paul a steward or minister of the Gospel. Someone who receives and delivers the Good News.

Where do we fit into 'the mystery hidden for ages'- God's plan of Salvation? For Paul this ministry was preaching (vs 8).

How can we Minister? Is direct preaching the only way? How can we minister or serve in God's Kingdom building process?

### **1 John 3:16-18 (NLT)**

16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion —how can God's love be in that person? 18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

But there is a warning here, notice how it says ‘show truth by our actions’. I am the way, **the truth** and the life said Jesus, so when we do actions or deeds, these are supposed to show or reflect Jesus.

There are plenty of people who have compassion on this earth, there are plenty of people who donate time, money and energy to various charities or good causes. In return, they get tax discounts, wall plaques and gold medals! If our actions don’t show and reflect Jesus and the mystery of the gospel, then all we will have in our hands are cheap imitation gold trinkets inscribed with our names. And when we pass away, these get thrown away in the trash heap! Nothing of value here on earth or in the Kingdom of God.

## **All my actions must reflect Jesus**

### **James 2:14-18**

14 What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? 15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

17 So you see, *faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.*

18 Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my *faith by my good deeds.*”

There is a danger of getting to do works alone, because it’s easier than waiting on God to direct our works!

## **All my actions must be driven by faith in God’s plan for my life.**

Example of JB and neighbor spat

Here is another Word on ministering with our actions:

### **1 Corinthians 10:23; 31-32**

23 “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Paul is reminding us that in the freedom we have to do various deeds or actions, we have to keep our focus on the Big Picture...which is the mystery of the Gospel of the Messiah that has now be un-hidden, apocalysped which is that ‘God wants to save both Jews and Gentiles’, ALL types of people. With this in focus, even ordinary tasks like eating, drinking, and whatever we do, take on a very important role in our life.

Paul encourages us to do EVERYTHING for the glory of God.

Whether it’s is mowing my yard, or wearing my favorite jeans, I am supposed to do things in such a way as to bring no offence and to do so that others might be saved.

Look at verses 9 and 10. Paul is saying while we are doing what we are supposed to be doing in the Kingdom building process, God does something as well. God uses the church (not the building, but the individuals in the church) to display His wisdom to the unseen rulers in the Spiritual realm.

What does that mean? Who are these ‘rulers in heavenly places unseen’? Firstly there are the angels working together with God to bring about His plan and purpose.

Secondly there are angles working against God, but who are still being used to bring about His plan and purpose! We call them demons, agents of Satan, principalities and powers of darkness.

Both of these Spiritual rulers are watching the church. For all these rulers are already in the presence of God. They get to ‘see’ God. So they do not experience faith!

The church on the other hand operates entirely on faith in Jesus Christ!  
Therefore we, 'the church' are the Wisdom of God in full display!

As sinful as we are in human flesh, Jesus' death did NOT nullify our free will, but rather enabled our will to want to hold fast to Him.

This battle of the will (whether to do my own or be owned by God) is played out everyday in our lives for the entire Spiritual realm to witness.

On one hand, when the church overcomes demonic influences, the demons are amazed and enraged and come after us in more fury. On the other hand, when we as individuals and as a church take a stand to bear witness of Jesus in our lives, God sends His angels to help us.

And that's why Paul ends the paragraph (vs 20) with

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.  
Amen.

Dear Christian, you are being prepared for Good works. Ask God and He will reveal or apocalypse to you the things He wants you to do, He will give you answers and solutions for your current struggles. Because according to the promise here...He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think!

The question is are we asking Him, are we thinking about His plan for our lives and how we fit into His plan for His Kingdom. Are we meditating on His Word daily? Are we eagerly waiting to hear Him communicate to us? Is His power, the power of His Holy Spirit at work in us? Do we invite His Spirit to work in us, to cleanse us, purify us so that we might be of use to Him?

So whether we eat or drink, whatever we do, let us do EVERYTHING to the Glory of God.

**God plan of salvation includes both Jews and Gentiles.**

**God reveals His plan for us individually through His Holy Spirit in His Word  
Our lives must fit into God's plan, if we want our works to matter for eternity**