

Eph 3 The Mystery of Christ

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

- ² if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
- ³ how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
- ⁴whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
- 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; ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 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.
- 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; 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: 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,
- ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
- ¹² in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.

The ultimate mystery of Christ

- ✓ Began at Gen 1:1
- ✓ God became man

1 Tim 3:16

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Phil 2:5-11

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What is the context of this "mystery of Christ"

What "mystery" did Paul understand that the others did not?

What was it that Paul wrote afore in a few words?

This lesson is to show that in both of Paul's ministries

He was the only one who understood the combining of the Jew and Gentile

Because "in Christ", no matter what the calling

No matter who the person

No matter how things were in the past

Faith is the important requirement

Eph 2:11-22 The Mystery of Christ In the context of what Paul is addressing

Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 for through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Col 1:20

²⁰ and, having made peace through the blood of his cross,
by him to (fully) reconcile (the) all things (every class of mankind) unto himself;
by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.
²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind
by wicked works, yet now hath he (fully) reconciled ²² in the body of his flesh
through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

The mystery of Christ that Paul is touching on here in Ephesians Is that, although Christ came through Israel, He is the Saviour of the Gentiles also.

Israel was to be a witness to the nations that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; But they failed miserably in that purpose by rejecting the Christ of God.

Before the death of Christ, the Jew and Gentile were not together as one.

By the shedding of His blood and death on the cross, Christ rearranged the standing of Israel and the Gentiles

Before His death on the cross

Matt 10:5 Go not into the way of the Gentiles,

Matt 15:24 I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matt 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine

Matt 15:26 It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

Acts 10:28 Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;

There are many prophesies in the OT about Gentiles (nations, heathen) As I read all the OT verses containing references to the Gentiles, the context puts these events in the yet future when God resumes his dealings with Israel; in the last days.

Isa 49:5-6 (About Messiah)

I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.*

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Matt 12:18-21 Jesus to the crowd about Himself

¹⁸ Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen (Isa 41:8); My Beloved, in Whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My spirit upon Him, and He shall shew judgment to the **Gentiles**. ¹⁹ He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. (Isa 42:1-3) ²¹ And in His name shall the **Gentiles** trust.

John 7:35

³⁴ Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find *Me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. ³⁵ Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him?

will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

³⁶ What *manner of* saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find *Me:* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

No Jew could teach the Gentiles

No. This is what Paul was appointed to do later.

Why did the Lord choose the apostle Paul?

He already had twelve apostles. Twelve is the number for governmental perfection. Judas Iscariot had to be replaced by Matthias because eleven signifies disorder. There were twelve tribes of Israel. When Joseph was given a double portion, Ephraim and Menasseh, there were thirteen tribes. Thirteen is the number that signifies rebellion. That became and remained the characteristic of the two kingdoms after David and Solomon.

Paul was chosen separate from the twelve, which may be a shocking discovery of many Christians. Ananias was told that Paul was to be a witness for Christ to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

The twelve were told **not** to go to the Gentile or Samaritans

Acts 4:27

⁷ For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, Whom thou hast anointed, both **Herod**, and **Pontius Pilate**, **with the Gentiles**, and the **people of Israel**, were gathered together, ²⁸ for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.

Paul was to be a witness to all these groups.

Whereas the twelve were limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and with a limited message of the kingdom.

But Paul was not the first to be sent to the Gentiles.

Acts 10:9-29, 34 Peter was sent to Cornelius at Caesarea

Acts 11:18 Elders

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Gal 2 (14 Years After)

Then fourteen years after (A.D. 37-51) I went up again to Jerusalem (third visit) with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. ² And I went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the **Gentiles**, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

⁷but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the **uncircumcision** was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; ⁸ (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the **Gentiles**:) ⁹ and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the **heathen**, and they unto the circumcision.

It appears that the apostles were glad to give this assignment to Paul and Barnabas. Although Paula and Barnabas were assigned this task in Acts 13:2 by the Holy Spirit, which was about 7 years earlier.

Acts 13:2 (A.D. 44)

² As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them".

Acts 15

⁶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; ⁹ and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Acts 15

¹³ And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 that the residue of men (faithful remnant) might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (Amos 9:11-12) ¹⁸ Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Remember, during the Acts period, the apostles thought that they were in the last days before Christ's return. We can see that by the quoting of the OT verses, the same idea was still in effect that the Gentiles would come to salvation in the end times or the last days.

Gal 3:6-9 (A.D. 52) Through faith

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. ⁷ Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. ⁸ And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the **heathen** through faith, preached before the gospel (announced glad news in advance) unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations (families) be blessed. (Gen 12:3) ⁹ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

From his first Epistle, Galatians, Paul explained the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Gal 3:26-29 Abraham's Seed

²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither **Jew nor Greek**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all **one** in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if ye be Christ's, then are ye **Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul: The Jew and Gentile were as one in this calling

Gal 5:6

⁶ For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **faith** which worketh by love.

1 Cor 12:13

¹² For as the **body is one**, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, **are one body**: so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be **Jews or Gentiles**, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many.

Rom 3:29

²⁹ Is He the God of the **Jews** only? is He not also of the **Gentiles**? Yes, of the Gentiles also: ³⁰ seeing it is one God, Which shall justify the circumcision **by faith**, and uncircumcision **through faith**.

Rom 9:22-24

What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on **the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory**, ²⁴ even us, whom He hath called, not of the **Jews** only, but also of the **Gentiles**?

Rom 10:12-13

¹² For there is no difference between the **Jew** and the **Greek**: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Rom 11:11-16 The Olive Tree

¹¹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the **Gentiles**, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

¹³ For I speak to you **Gentiles**, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the **Gentiles**, I magnify mine office: ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them* which are my flesh, and might save some of them. ¹⁵ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root be holy, so *are* the branches.

Rom 15:9-12

⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: ⁹ and that the **Gentiles** might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the **Gentiles**, and sing unto Thy name. (Ps 18:49) ¹⁰ And again he saith, Rejoice, ye **Gentiles**, with His people. (Deut 32:43) ¹¹ And again, Praise the Lord, all ye **Gentiles**; and laud Him, all ye people. (Ps 117:1) ¹² And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the **Gentiles**; in Him shall the **Gentiles** trust. (Isa 11:10)

Rom 15:15-16

¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶ that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the **Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the **Gentiles** might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

During the Acts period it was Paul who understood that the Gentiles were equally saved by faith in the shed blood of Jesus. God was not just reconciling the Jews to Himself through Christ, but the whole world.

Gal 6:15

¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (a new person)

2 Cor 5:17

¹⁷Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸ And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and Hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling **the world** unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;

Was this the "mystery" of the acts period?

Rom 1:1-6

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ² (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) ³ concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; ⁴ and declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: ⁵ by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: ⁶ among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Paul ended his Acts ministry on a mystery kept secret Just like he ended his post-Acts ministry

Rom 16:25

²⁵ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

This "mystery" could be that faith in Christ made the Gentile equal with Israel in their calling

But God, but now, now therefore, everything has changed.

Now that Israel is set aside and the kingdom is closed for now, what are people being saved from and to? How can we be joint heirs with Israel for a kingdom inheritance?

Now, in Christ, we are all considered equal people, **a new man**, apart from any covenant relationship of Israel with God.

As far as Christ is concerned there is no difference between races as far as faith. The Jews had priority during the Acts which they lost at the end of Acts. The Jews are nigh, and now the Gentiles are also nigh unto God in Christ.

The return of Christ for Israel was conditioned on Israel's national repentance and still is. That is still yet future.

All in Christ now are equal before God in a heavenly body.

Eph 3:3-6 Body of Christ

...how that by revelation he made known unto me **the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴ whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 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; ⁶ **that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:**

An equal concorporate body with each other in all aspects

According to the gospel of this present age

As far as the Gospels are concerned, it wasn't until John's Gospel after the end of the Acts, that the "world" was emphasized

WORLD = JEW + GENTILE

John 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 3:16 For God so **loved the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:17 but that the world through him might be saved.

John 4:42 and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

John 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

John 6:51 and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Acts 2	Peter Pentecost	Jerusalem	Jews only	Truth in the Scriptures
Acts 9	Saul converted	Damascus	Jews only	
Acts 10	Peter's vision	Caesarea	Gentiles only	
Acts 11	Saul & Barnabas	Antioch, Syr	Jews only	First called Christians
Acts 13	Barnabas & Saul	Antioch, Syr	Jews only	Holy Spirit Separated
Acts 13	Paul & Barnabas	Antioch, Pis	Jews/Gentiles	First Missionary Journey
Acts 15	Paul & Barnabas	Antioch, Syr	Jews/Gentiles	Disputation about salvation
Acts 15	Paul & Barnabas	Jerusalem	Council concerning Gentile requirements	
Acts 15	Paul & Barnabas	Antioch, Syr	Galatians 2 Peter confrontation/ Barnabas contention	
Acts 16	Paul & Silas	Antioch, Syr on	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	
Acts 18	Paul, Silas, Tim	Phil, Thes, Cor	Paul wrote Galatians concerning Gentiles (+ 1Th, 2Th, H)	
Acts 19	Paul et al	Eph, Gre, Mac,	Paul's Third Miss Jour Gentiles (1 Cor, 2 Cor , Romans)	

Acts Period

Jews only in Christ at Antioch, Syria = "Christians" = Judeo-Christian

"Christian" occurs only three times

Acts 11:26 And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

1 Pet 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed;

Paul never used the term "Christian"

Acts Period: New Creature

Jews/Gentiles in Christ = "New Creature" = Non-Judeo / Non-Gentile Body

Gal 3:26-28 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ **There is neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither **circumcision** availeth any thing, **nor uncircumcision**; but faith which worketh by love.

Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creature**.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if **any man** *be* in Christ, *he is* a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Rom 10:12 For there is **no difference between the Jew and the Greek**: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Truth Out of Place

The term "Christian" today is used for the "New Creature"

The "Church" now even considers itself the "New Israel"

This is ironic:

"Judeo-Christian" is used for the "Non-Jew / Non-Gentile (Acts) Body"

2 Pet 3:16 ... ¹⁵ And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶ as also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest **(twist)**, as *they do* also the other **scriptures**, unto their own destruction. **(TWIST SCRIPTURES)**

Post-Acts (Today)

Circumcision/Uncircumcision in Christ = "One New Man" Non-Judeo / Non-Gentile

Eph 2:11-18 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called **Uncircumcision** by that which is called the **Circumcision** in the flesh made by hands; ¹² that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³ but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He is our peace, Who **hath made both one**, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in Himself **of twain one new man**, so making peace; ¹⁶ and that He might **reconcile both unto God in one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷ and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸ for through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The mystery of Christ is that in Christ all (Jew and Gentile)

become equal and become a new entity

in their respective callings

Whether during the Acts callings

Or during the Post-Acts calling

Or in the last days

No other apostle wrote about this subject

The other Apostles were assigned to Israel They only saw one calling and hope

This is what Paul knew about Christ that the others did not know: Christ was not just the Saviour for Israel.

By the shed blood of Christ on the cross

All in Christ are made equal by faith

Whether Abraham's Seed

Or the Grafted Olive Tree

Or the Body of Christ



Eph 1:10

wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
 having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
 that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things (ta panta = every class of mankind) in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Eph 3:4,11

ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ...
...according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Paul wrote about these truths in the last doctrinal epistles in both of his ministries

Rom 16:25

²⁵ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Col 4:2-4

² Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; ³ withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

