Knowing Christ
A Study of Ephesians

The Church and the Eternal Purpose of God
Lesson 3
Ephesians 3

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 19, 2020
### Ephesians

**the Church of Jesus Christ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<td>salutation</td>
<td>Jews &amp; Gentiles</td>
<td>God’s revelation</td>
<td>general</td>
<td>spiritual warfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>individual</td>
<td>1-7 the mystery</td>
<td>the Christian walk</td>
<td>strength</td>
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<td>doxology</td>
<td>new life</td>
<td>of Christ</td>
<td>4:1-16</td>
<td>10-11</td>
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<td>3-6</td>
<td>past life</td>
<td>8-13 the ministry</td>
<td>the worthy walk</td>
<td>enemies</td>
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<td>present life</td>
<td>of the mystery</td>
<td>4:17-19</td>
<td>5:22-24</td>
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<td>the no longer walk</td>
<td>husbands</td>
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<td>prayer</td>
<td>4:20-32</td>
<td>5:25-33</td>
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<td>Jews &amp; Gentiles</td>
<td>14-19</td>
<td>the old and new walk</td>
<td>children</td>
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<td>15-23</td>
<td>corporate</td>
<td>Christ may dwell</td>
<td>5:1-6</td>
<td>6:1-3</td>
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<td>church life</td>
<td>in your hearts</td>
<td>the walk in love</td>
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<td>11-12 past life</td>
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<td>5:7-14</td>
<td>6:4</td>
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<td>13-22 present life</td>
<td>benevolence</td>
<td>the walk in truth</td>
<td>work walk</td>
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<td>20-21</td>
<td>5:15-21</td>
<td>servants</td>
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<td>6:5-8</td>
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**prison epistle 60**

**the function of the Church**

- **general**
  - the Christian walk
    - 4:1-16 the worthy walk
    - 4:17-19 the no longer walk
    - 4:20-32 the old and new walk
  - the walk in love
    - 5:1-6
  - the walk in truth
    - 5:7-14
  - the walk in wisdom
    - 5:15-21

- **specific**
  - family walk
    - wives
      - 5:22-24
    - husbands
      - 5:25-33
  - children
    - 6:1-3
  - fathers
    - 6:4
  - work walk
    - servants
      - 6:5-8
    - masters
      - 6:9

- **spiritual warfare**
  - strength
    - 10-11
  - enemies
    - 12
  - armor
    - 13-17
  - prayer
    - 18-20
Ephesians 1

- A letter from Paul to the faithful in Christ Jesus (1:1-2)
- A song of praise in one sentence (1:3-14)
  - Father – He chose and predestined us to the praise of the glory of His grace
  - Son – He redeemed us and revealed His eternal purpose in Himself to the praise of His glory
  - Spirit – He sealed (guarantees) our inheritance to the glory of God
- A prayer that the believers will fully know and participate in His glory
Ephesians 2

- The work of salvation in one sentence (2:1-10)
- The hopeless condition and future of the unbeliever
- The immensity of God’s mercy, love, grace, power, and kindness for sinners
- We are His workmanship in Christ Jesus – a gift of God
- We are part of unified work of God for Jews and Gentiles – a holy temple in Christ
Ephesians 3

- A prayer started, but delayed while Paul digresses (3:1)
- Paul’s explanation of his ministry in 3 sentences (3:2-13)
  - The mystery of Christ (3:2-7)
  - The administration of the mystery (3:8-12)
  - The glory of Paul’s ministry (3:13)
- Paul prays for the believers (3:14-21)
  - The power of the Spirit
  - The presence of Christ
  - The infinite supply and duration of the glory of God in the church
The Prisoner of Christ Jesus (3:1)

- The striking contrast between Paul's message and his circumstances
- Paul's call (Acts 9:15-16; 20, 22)
- Paul's arrest (Acts 22:21-22; 26:19-21)
- A prisoner of Christ Jesus for the glory of the believers
- Paul digresses to explain more about his ministry – the mystery and the administration
The Mystery of Christ (3:2-7)

- The revelation of the mystery of His will and a suitable administration (1:9-10)
- The secret counsel of God which is hidden from human reason or discovery
  - Ephesians 3:5 – not made known to previous generations
  - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2, 7-10 – predestined before time but hidden from men
  - Colossians 1:26 – hidden from past ages, but now revealed
  - Daniel 2, 4 – mysteries (dreams and prophecy) revealed to Daniel
  - Matthew 13:10-11, 35 - parables – mysteries of the Kingdom
  - Divine truth that is newly revealed in time
  - Isaiah 45:15 – “a God who hides Himself”
  - Deuteronomy 29:29 – “the secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us . . .”
The Mystery of Christ (3:2-7)

- Ephesians 3:6 – Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body through the Gospel
- Romans 11:25 – partial hardening of the Jews until fullness of the Gentiles has come in
- 1 Corinthians 15:51 – the resurrection and transformation of believers at Christ’s return
- Colossians 1:27 – Christ in you, the hope of glory
- Colossians 2:2 – God’s mystery is Christ
- Colossians 4:3 – the message of Christ “for which I have also been imprisoned”
- Ephesians 5:32 – the union of Christ and the Church
- Ephesians 6:19 – the mystery of the Gospel
- Revelation 10:7 – the mystery of the end of the age
- Paul’s message was the centrality of Christ (Acts 9:20, 22; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Ephesians 1:9-10)
- The Gospel ministry is proclamation of this mystery to a new generation
The Administration of the Mystery (3:8-12)

- Vine: The management of a household, or of household affairs
- Greek: *oikonomia* – literally house (*oiko*) law (*nomia*)
- Administration, Dispensation, Stewardship, Management, Plan
- Luke 16:2-4 – the unfaithful steward in the master’s house
- 1 Corinthians 9:17 – Paul’s ministry was “a stewardship entrusted to me”
- Colossians 1:25 – Paul was a minister according to the stewardship of God
- 1 Timothy 1:4 – focus on furthering the administration of God which is by faith
- Ephesians 1:10 – an administration suitable to the fullness of the times
- Ephesians 3:2 – the stewardship of God’s grace for the Gentiles
- Ephesians 3:9 – bring to light the administration of the mystery, previously hidden
The Administration of the Mystery (3:8-12)

- Our obligation to proclaim the administration of the mystery
  - The Gospel of Jesus Christ – the mystery of Christ
  - The organization of the Church – the administration of the mystery
- The manifold wisdom of God – the eternal purpose of God (3:10-11)
Christ’s Prisoner is the Gentiles’ Glory (3:13)

- Paul is “a prisoner for the sake of you Gentiles” (3:1)
- He is a prisoner for being a steward of the mystery of Christ
  - “. . . bear My name before the Gentiles” (Acts 9:15)
  - “. . . suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16)
- This is due to his union with Christ – a life entrusted to God (1 Peter 3:19)
Paul Prays for the Believers (3:12-21)

- “For this reason . . .” We are of God’s household; a dwelling of God in the Spirit
  - The whole family in heaven and earth derives its name from God
- “. . . to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man”
- “. . . for Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith”
- “. . . to comprehend the love of God with all the saints
- “. . . to be filled with the fullness of God.”
- Benediction:
  - God is able to do more than we can ask or think by His power within us
  - God will receive glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus forever
The Eternal Purpose of God

- The fullness of the times – the summing up of all things in Christ (1:10)
- The unveiling of the mystery of Christ – the fullness of God in the believer through faith
- An administration (plan; stewardship, management, dispensation) suitable to Christ
- The only means for the household of God to be to the praise of His glory
- For this reason . . . we pray to the Father as Paul demonstrated in his two prayers