



EPHESIANS



Lesson 4: Chapter 3

Outline of Ephesians 3

- Part 1: Paul's Explanation of His Ministry (Eph 3:1–12).
- Part 2: Paul's Intercession for the Saints (Eph 3:13–21).



Eph. 3:1] *For this cause* I Paul, the **prisoner of Jesus Christ for you **Gentiles**,**

When Paul says “*For this cause*” in Ephesians 3:1, he starts a thought but pauses it until verse 14. Everything in between (verses 2-13) is a big side note where he explains a mystery, the Church. Paul is showing that the Church age is like a pause in God's plan with Israel, a special time (dispensation) when Gentiles and Jews are brought together in Christ before God resumes His dealings with Israel again.

The first thing we note is that Paul calls himself a “*prisoner*” and that he connects his imprisonment to the Gentiles! (Cf. Acts 22). Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem and was making his defense to his people. They listened to him until he got to the word “*Gentiles*,” and then a riot broke loose! (Acts 22:21).

The relationship of Gentiles to Jews was even a problem among the early Jewish believers, as Acts 10 and 15 reveal. What had brought him to Rome, what had made him appeal to Caesar, was his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; indeed, the immediate occasion of his arrest at Jerusalem was the suspicion that he had taken Trophimus, an Ephesian, one of themselves, into the temple (Acts 21:29).



Eph. 3:2] *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace* of God which is given me to you-ward:

“**If**”: A delicate reminder... Again, “...**dispensation**” (oikonomia) is a widely misunderstood and maligned word. God's principles do not change; however, His methods of dealing with mankind do change over the course of history during certain time periods.

The “*dispensation of the grace*” has become synonymous with the “Church Age,” or commonly shortened to the “Age of Grace.” This time period, from the creation of the Church until the Rapture of the Church (Tribulation beginning), is a time of stewardship of God's grace afforded to us by Jesus' death on the cross.



“Distinguish the ages and the Scriptures harmonize.” —Augustine



We briefly talked about dispensations in Ephesians Lesson 2, page 7. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy:



Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

Paul is telling Timothy to “rightly divide” or segment (subdivide, partition) the Word into proper time periods. The same Greek word (oikonomia) is used. Please note: Christ was a “dispensationalist”: Isa 61:1,2; Lk 4:16-21.

Dispensations [ref: Scofield]

- 1) Innocence; Gen 1:28. → End: Fall of Man.
- 2) Conscience; Moral Responsibility; Gen 3:7. → End: Flood.
- 3) Human Government; Gen 8:15. → End: Babel.
- 4) Promise—Abraham; Gen 12:1f. → End: Bondage in Egypt.
- 5) Law—Moses; Ex 19:1. → End: Captivity in Babylon (or to John?).
- 6) Church—(“Grace”); Acts 2:1. → End: World worship of Antichrist.
- 7) Kingdom; Rev 20. → End: Satan’s Rebellion.



Classic Dispensations

The “*dispensation of the grace*” has become synonymous with the “Church Age,” or commonly shortened to the “Age of Grace.” However, each dispensation did involve the Grace of God as the basis of salvation. It was after Jesus’ atoning work on the Cross that the Grace of God became of paramount importance during the Church Age. Examples in the Old Testament of sacrifice, such as Abel and Abraham, simply pointed forward in time to the ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, which exemplified God’s grace (Jn 1:29).

Grace

- 1) **As to the one chosen:** Paul’s undeserved favor in being selected for such a high privilege.
- 2) **As to the contents of the message:** God’s free and unmerited kindness.
- 3) **As to the recipients:** The Gentiles were quite unworthy people to be so favored.



Eph. 3:3] *How that by revelation he made known unto me the **mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

“...*mystery*”, this term in the Greek (musterion) is a little different from the word we use in English. It means a sacred divine secret, hitherto unknown up till now, but being revealed. A humanly unknowable, and now divinely revealed secret. Previous Allusions (Eph 1:9-14, 22-23; 2:11-22). | The Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom on the Earth) is always 12, the Kingdom of God is always 7.

The Kingdom of Heaven “Twelves”	
12 Tribes	12 Kingdom Mysteries
12 Apostles Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30	12,000 sealed from each of the 12 Tribes (Rev 7)
12 Kingdom of Heaven Parables	
New Jerusalem (Rev 21): 12 gates, 12 foundation stones, 12,000 furlongs	

12 Kingdom Parables

- 1) Sower and the Seed Mt 13:18-23
- 2) Tares and Wheat Mt 13:24-30
- 3) Mustard Seed Mt 13:31-32
- 4) Woman and Leaven Mt 13:33
- 5) Treasure in the Field Mt 13:34
- 6) Pearl of Great Price Mt 13:45-46

- 7) Dragnet Mt 13:47-50
- 8) Forgiveness of Debts Mt 18:23-35
- 9) Latecomers equally paid Mt 20:1-16
- 10) Guests at Marriage Feast Mt 22:1-14
- 11) Ten Virgins Mt 25:1-13
- 12) Stewardship of Talents Mt 25:14-30

12 Kingdom Mysteries

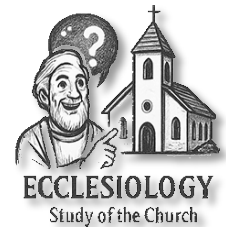
- 1) Mystery of the Kingdom of God (Lk 8:10; Mk 4:11); kept secret (Rom. 16:25; Col 1:26; Eph 3:3,5; 1 Cor 4:1; 2 Cor 12:1-5; Gal 1:11-12)
- 2) Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 13:11)
- 3) Mystery of Manifestation in the Flesh (1 Tim 3:16)
- 4) Mystery of Salvation by Faith (Eph 3:19; Rom 16:25,26; 1 Tim 3:9)
- 5) Mystery of the Ultimate Unity (Eph 1:9)
- 6) Mystery of Gentiles in the same Body (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:3)
- 7) Mystery of the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:10; Eph 2:6; 1 Cor 6:17; cf. Col 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3)
- 8) The Mystery of the Harpazo (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:12-18; OT: Isa 26:19-21; Ps 27:5; (Cf. Pavilions: Ps 18:11; 31:20; Jer 43:10)
- 9) The Mystery of Iniquity (2 Thess 2:6-12)
- 10) Mystery of the Seven Churches (Rev 1:20)
- 11) Mystery of Israel's Blindness (Lk 19:42-44; Rom 11:25)
- 12) Mystery Babylon (Counterfeit Kingdom); Rev 17, 18 (Cf. Gen 10:10, 1st mention)

Mysteries Finished: Rev 10:7



Ecclesiology

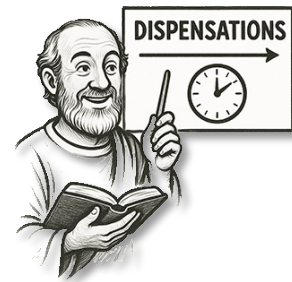
The whole field we are studying in the Epistle to the Ephesians is ecclesiology, or the study of The Church. Paul's theme is Christ and the church, the eternal plan of God to gather together all things in Christ Jesus. The letter begins in eternity past and carries us to eternity future! In every sense, Ephesians is Paul's greatest word on the church, teaching us what the church is in the mind of God, and what it ought to be in practice before the eyes of men.



A New Dispensation


In the Old Testament, God revealed through prophecy His plan for the people of Israel: that He would establish them in their Kingdom when they received their Messiah, and then, through Israel, He would convert the Gentiles. God offered them the Kingdom:

- ① Through the ministry of John the Baptist (Mt 3:2)
 - whom the Jews permitted to be slain.
- ② Through Christ's ministry (Mt 4:12-17)
 - whom the Jews asked to be slain, and
- ③ Through the apostles and Stephen (Acts 2-7),
 - whom the Jews themselves actually killed (Acts 7:54-60).



Three offers of the Kingdom were made to Israel, but the nation rejected each of them. They had rejected the Father, who had sent John, the Son, and the Spirit, who was energizing the witnessing apostles. With the death of Stephen, the offers of the Kingdom ceased temporarily during the Church age; the message went out to the Samaritans and the Gentiles (Acts 8 & 10); and, in the meantime, Paul was saved miraculously (Acts 9).

What Is the Mystery?

- 
- That Jews and Gentiles could be saved was known to the Twelve disciples (Jn 10:4, 6).
 - God used the unusual Peter and the sheet analogy (kill and eat) in Acts 10 to highlight the fact that he was opening the door to the Gentiles in a different way.
 - Paul was a prisoner for this very reason. Paul also mentioned the “mystery” (Rom 16:25, 26; 1 Cor 2:7).
 - The Lord Himself mentions this mystery in Matt. 13:10-17, 35, but it was something that was even hidden from angels (v.10; 1 Pet 1:12).
 - How does this differ from OT knowledge that Gentiles were to be blessed?
 - The past plan was that Israel was to be restored to a covenant relationship and the Gentiles brought to a place of special blessing through them.

That brings us to **the Church**: God calling out a people for the heavens to be the Body and Bride of His Son throughout the ages to come, and **through whom He will administer the affairs of the redeemed universe**. Israel gets the land; the Church gets the Universe.



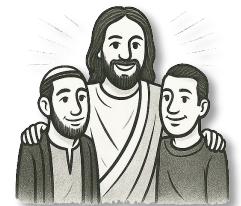
Eph. 3:5] *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

Paul is telling us that the concept of the mystery of the Church was not made known in other ages: thus, not in the OT (Rom 16:25; Col 1:26; cf. Mt 13:35). None of this was either in the OT or the coming kingdom. The OT predicted the call of Gentiles (Isa 11:10; 42:6; 49:6; 55:6-7; 60:3; Zech 2:11; Mal 1:11) ...**but not as fellow members of the body**.



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

“...*fellowheirs*”, Paul already had mentioned the concept, but now he explains the tremendous impact of this “*sacred secret*” (Eph 1:10; 2:11, 22). This is the most complete definition of the church that we have. Fellow members of One body: No distance or disadvantage now (Eph 4:4). Fellow partakers of the promise: Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8; Gal 3:14).



The Mystery

Here in v. 6, Paul states the mystery clearly: that believing Gentiles and Jews are one body in Christ. This mystery had not been made known before this time, but now God had revealed it to His apostles and NT prophets by the Spirit. Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles, and his message was that of grace. Paul's special task was to share the truth of the one body, the mystery of the church (Rom 16:25,26; Col 1:26,27; 4:3,4; Eph 6:19).



Let's clarify something regarding the word "*church*." Paul is not referring to the local organization or a building. He is referring to the mystical church, the universal body of believers led by the Spirit.



But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. Gal. 2:7

To say that the twelve apostles from the beginning understood the mystery of the church is to deny Paul's inspired words here. Even Peter had to have a vision from heaven in Acts 10 before he would go to the Gentiles. The truth of the one body was given to Paul, and its significance dawned gradually upon the early church. Both Peter and Paul had the same message, although it was to two different groups of people (Acts 4:12; 16:31).

The Kingdom

- Israel was blessed as the head of nations (Isa 60:12).
- Gentiles blessed through Israel (Isa 60:3; 61:6; Zech 8:23):
 - Adam to Abraham (~2000 years) only Gentiles.
 - Abraham to Christ (~2000 years) Jews and Gentiles.
 - Christ to the Rapture (~2000 years) Jews, Gentiles, & the Church (1 Cor 10:32).
 - After Rapture: During the Tribulation, back to Jews and Gentiles.

Calling

- **Israel:** Temporal blessings in earthly places (Deut 28).
 - God's chosen earthly people (Amos 9:13-15).
 - God has not negated His promises to Israel (Rom 11:1-12).
- **Church:** Spiritual blessings in heavenlies (Eph 1:3).
 - Heavenly Bride of Christ (Rev 21:9-11, 22-23).

What About The Millennium?

- Most churches have no grasp of the millennium, usually treated as an allegory (see covenant theology on the next page).
- Israel to be blessed under the rule of Christ (Hos 3:5).
- Church will reign with Him over the entire universe (Eph 1:22-23).
- God's program today is not the "headship of Israel" but the headship of Christ over His Church (Deut 28:1-13).
- We are under a different "stewardship" from that of Moses and the prophets, and we must be careful not to confuse what God has clarified.
- The Church is not the same as Israel; the Church is not the same as the Kingdom.
- It is a unique fellowship, the most privileged body of believers we read about in the Bible!



The Church

- ✓ It came into being after ascension (Acts 2).
- ✓ Formed by baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).
- ✓ Completed at the rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:23, 51-52).
- ✓ Lord's revelation (Mt 13): His seven letters (Rev 2 & 3; cf. Paul's seven churches...).

"Covenant Theology"

I will briefly touch on a peculiar belief known as Covenant Theology. Most pastors and most denominational churches (those churches that have their heritage from the Reformation) embrace a theological concept called Covenant Theology. What is strange about Covenant Theology is that its name does not describe the teaching. They deny that the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants are unconditional commitments by God.



In the Davidic covenant, for example, God made unconditional promises to David, and the Millennium is the fulfillment of those promises.

Groups that ignore this clear-cut statement of Paul, that the Church is not a revelation of the Old Testament, and treat the Church as a continuation (or replacement) of Israel, are known as "covenant" theologians. This replacement doctrine is called replacement theology or Supersessionism and is a heresy. This view originated with Augustine, following the allegorizations of Origen, and was the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, carried over to (and overlooked by) the Reformation.

People who were raised in Covenant Theology, even if they read their Bible, are usually totally ignorant of the Book of Revelation, which is unfortunate because it gives us a roadmap for the future. In Revelation Chapter 4, the church is removed (raptured). In verse 4 we see the 24 elders:



*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the **seats** I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. Rev. 4:4*



24 Elders

The 24 elders are prominently featured in the Book of Revelation, beginning with Rev. 4:4. Your understanding of Revelation is dependent on who these 24 elders represent. The word "seats" (thronos) means seats that are assigned to kings or judges.

The number 24 comes from 1 Chr 24:1-19, where King David divides the priesthood into 24 courses (sections). The 24 elders represent a completed group (1 Chr 24). They **cannot** be Tribulation Believers (Rev 7:13-14, see below), angels (Rev 7:11, see next page), or the Nation of Israel (Rev 7 & 12).

They are not Tribulation Saints...



And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 7:13,14

They are not angels...



And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Rev. 7:11

Angels are not numbered, crowned, or enthroned. The elders from Rev. 4:4 are distinguished from the angels (Rev 5:8-11; 7:11).

The 24 Elders

Elders (presbuteros) in the New Testament are the highest officials in the church; representative of the whole church (Titus 1:5; Acts 15:6; 20:28; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Cf. Dan 7:13,14: no 24 elders: Eph 3.3-7!). Their distinguishing characteristics:

- ✓ Thrones (Rev 3:21).
- ✓ White Raiment (Rev 3:25).
- ✓ Crowns of Gold (Rev 2:10; 3:11).
- ✓ Song of Redeemed (Rev 5:9,10).
- ✓ called "Elders," "Kings & Priests" (Rev 5:10).



24 Dispensational Gaps

Throughout scripture, we see 'implied' dispensational gaps. These are gaps in time or shifts in God's administration.

Dispensational Gaps			
Book	Where	Book	Where
1) Genesis 1	vv. 1,2	13) Micah 5	vv. 2,3
2) Psalm 22	vv. 21,22	14) Hab. 2	vv. 13,14
3) Psalm 118	Middle of V. 22	15) Zeph. 9	vv. 7,8
4) Isaiah 9:6	After first clause	16) Zech. 10	vv. 9,10
5) Isaiah 53	Middle of v. 10	17) Matt. 10	middle of v. 23
6) Isaiah 61	Middle of v. 2	18) Matt. 12	middle of v. 20
7) Lam. 4	vv. 21,22	19) Luke 1	vv. 31, 32
8) Daniel 9	vv. 26, 27	20) Luke 4	vv. 18-20
9) Daniel 11	vv. 20,21	21) Luke 21	middle of v. 24
10) Hosea 2	vv. 13,14	22) John 1	vv. 5,6
11) Hosea 3	vv. 4,5	23) 1 Peter 1	middle of v. 11
12) Amos 9	vv. 10, 11	24) Rev. 12	vv. 5,6



Scholars have found 24: the same number as the number of the Redeemed in Rev 4, 5.



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.*

"...I was made a minister": vv. 7-9 describe Paul's own ministry, which is the Church. "Minister" (diakonos) means deacon, or servant. "...working" (energeia) means "energy". "...power" (dunamis), means "dynamic" ["dynamite"]. Paul has already mentioned that the mighty resurrection power of Christ is available to us for daily life and service! (Eph 1:19-23; 3:20; 4:16).



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**;*

In the phrase *"...less than the least of all saints,"* Paul uses a comparative of a superlative, which shows there is no feigned humility (1 Cor 15:9). He calls himself the *"Chief of sinners"* (1 Tim 1:12-15) and remembers the persecutions he was involved with (Acts 9:4; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6). Understanding the deep truths of God's Word does not give a man a big head; it gives him a broken and contrite heart (Isa 6:5). Paul (Paulus) means "little" in Latin.

Again, the phrase *"...preach among the Gentiles"* refers to that Paul was given a special commission to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:47; 22:21; Gal 2:2,8).

"...unsearchable riches" literally means "untraceable riches" in the Greek. You cannot detect the mystery of the one body in the OT Scriptures; it was a mystery hidden in Christ.



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.*

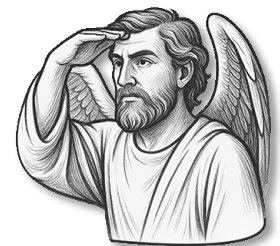
Paul is saying that God gave him the job of helping everyone understand a mystery that had been hidden since the beginning of time—the plan to bring both Jews and Gentiles together into one family called the Church. This wasn't a new idea to God; it was part of His plan all along, but He kept it secret until the right time. And Paul reminds us that the Creator of everything, Jesus Christ Himself, is the One carrying out that plan. But why was it hidden?



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,*

At least one reason God kept it hidden was to reveal His manifold wisdom to the angelic hosts of heaven (1 Pet 1:10-12). In other words, to teach the angels. They learn the wisdom of God by watching what God is doing with and through us.

- ✓ They rejoice at the repentance of one lost sinner (Lk 15:10)
- ✓ they watch activities of local churches (1 Cor 11:10)
- ✓ we are a spectacle to them (1 Cor 4:9).



However, men may scorn the salvation of Christ and all that belongs to it; the highest intelligences regard it with profound interest.

The word *"...manifold"* (polupoikilos) means a variegated cloth or flowers. It conveys the intricate beauty of an embroidered pattern; Cf. Gen 37:3...yet foolishness to the unsaved (1 Cor 1:18-31).

The precise line of thought is this: **God from eternity had a purpose to put Jew and Gentile on precisely the same footing, but concealed it for many ages, until he revealed it in the apostolic age, when he appointed Paul his minister to announce it.**



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

"...the eternal purpose": The Church is not a divine afterthought because the Jews rejected the Kingdom; it is part of God's eternal purpose in Christ. To ignore this truth is to sin against the Father who planned it, the Son whose death made it possible, and the Spirit who today seeks to work in our lives to accomplish what God has planned.

God's foreknowledge and counter-strategy: ❶ incarnation; death; ❷ resurrection; ❸ ascension; and ❹ the glorification of Christ.

Satan knows the Scriptures; by keeping His program for the church hidden, God prevented Satan from hindering the plan. Satan took Christ to the cross, and by so doing sealed his own doom! It is tragic today when we see pastors and churches wandering about aimlessly in their ministries because they do not understand God's purpose for the church in this age. If they would move beyond the message of Acts 1-6 and into that of Ephesians and Colossians, they would not be wasting time, talent, and money "building the kingdom" but instead would be building the church.



- How God has sent heaven's best for the earth's worst.
- How God has redeemed His enemies at enormous cost.
- How God has conquered them by love,
- and prepared them as a Bride for His Son.

And they see that through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, more glory has come to God and more blessing has come to believing Jews and Gentiles than if sin had never been allowed to enter. God has been vindicated; Christ has been exalted; Satan has been defeated; and the Church has been enthroned in Christ to share His glory.



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

What are the consequences? To have access to the Throne of God. Boldly, without being scolded (James 1:5).



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

A very delicate and touching request, that they would not be too much distressed by what he was suffering for them; cf. Epaphroditus (Phil 2:26).

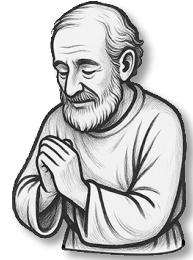


Eph. 3:14] *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

"For this cause I bow my knees", this begins the Second Prayer in this Epistle (Eph 3:14-21). Prayer #1 was for enlightenment (Eph 1:15-23), and prayer #2 is for Enablement. (Continues from v.1) Paul is saying, "I want you to get your hands on your wealth, realize how vast it is, and start to use it." He went to God in prayer that these great truths might become realities in the lives of believers (cf. Chapters 4 - 6).

Prayer

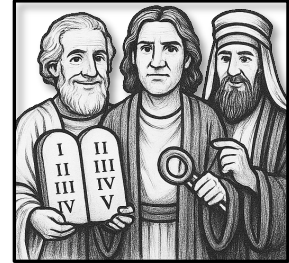
There is something special about being on your knees...but note—no special posture required: Abraham stood praying for Sodom (Gen 18:22); Solomon stood at the dedication (1 Kgs 8:22); David sat before the Lord (1 Chr 17:16); Jesus fell on His face at Gethsemane (Mt 26:39). It's the posture of the soul that is important. He does address his prayer to the Father (Jn 16:23).



Brevity

Have you noticed that Biblical prayers are often brief?

- Moses' great prayer for Israel (3 verses).
- Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 verse).
- Nehemiah's great prayer (7 verses).
- Jesus' prayer in John 17 can be read in 5 minutes...



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

"...the whole family in heaven and earth": There is no such thing in Scripture as the "Universal Fatherhood of God" that saves all men (Universalism): *"Ye must be born again"* (Jn 3:7). Believers are "sons of God" by rebirth (1 Jn 3:1-2; Jn 1:11-12). There are four petitions in Paul's prayer—each one is sequential; each one leads into the next one: Strength, Depth, Apprehension, Fullness.



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.*

"according to," not *"out of"*: in proportion, not just a portion!

"Strength" - The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence of salvation (Rom 8:9), but the power of the Spirit is enablement for mature, stable, intelligent Christians (Acts 1:8). Jesus performed His ministry on the earth in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:1,14; Acts 10:38). [There are 59 references to the Spirit in the Book of Acts, 1/4 of the total in the NT.]



"...the inner man": Notice that all of Paul's prison prayers (Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12, and these) deal with the spiritual condition of the inner man, and not with the material needs of the body. The outer man is passing away...daily (2 Cor 4:16).

Inner Man

The inner man of the lost sinner is dead, but it comes alive when Christ is invited in (Eph 2:1). What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit empower the inner man? Our spiritual faculties are controlled by God, and we are exercising them and growing in the Word (Heb 5:12-14).

The *"Inner man"* can →

"see" (Ps 119:18)	"cleansed" (Ps 51:7)
"hear" (Mt 13:9)	"washed" by the Word (Eph 5:26)
"taste" (Ps 34:8)	"fed" (Mt 4:4)
"feel" (Acts 17:27)	"renewed daily" (2 Cor 4:16)
"exercised" (1 Tim 4:7-8)	



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

Three pictures in three verbs: “**Dwell**”: “**Rooted**”; and “**Grounded**.”

“**Dwell**” = to settle down and feel at home (cf. Oaks of Mamre Gen 18). The Lord did not feel at home at Lot’s house! (Does He feel at home in yours?) The Lord did not come to us as a temporary visitor, but a permanent resident, with unrestricted access to your life...

“**Rooted**” = A tree must get its roots deep into the soil if it to have nourishment and stability (Ps 1:1-3; Cf. Jer 17:5-8).

“**Grounded**” = is an architectural term meaning sound foundations. The storm that blows reveals the strength of the roots, or the soundness of the foundation (Mt 7:24-29).

The Trinity in the previous four verses: **Father** (v.14); **Holy Spirit** (v.16); **Son** (v.17).
A bigger surprise is coming...



Eph. 3:12] *May be able to **comprehend with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

“...comprehend” should read “*apprehend*,” meaning to lay hold of; both stem from the Latin (prehendere), “to grasp.” The word is used to describe a monkey’s prehensile tail, able to cling to a tree limb, etc. For humans, it is possible to understand something, but not really make it your own; we don’t mentally ‘grasp’ it.

The phrase “...with all saints” means that without the others (Bible Study, friends, etc.), our comprehension is incomplete. Truths often emerge from within a small group...

- the **breadth** (*platos*): breadth; suggesting great extent.
- and **length** (*mekos*): length.
- and **depth** (*bathos*): depth, height; deep things of God.
- and **height** (*hupsos*): height; of place (heaven); of rank.



Paul wants us to live in all four dimensions:

Breadth: The world ~ John 3:16	Breadth: Extent of His Grace ~ Eph 2:11-18
Length: 1 Cor 13:8	Length: Eternity to Eternity ~ Eph 1:4, 2:7
Depth: The Cross ~ Phil 2:8ff	Depth: Pit; our predicament ~ Eph 2:1-5
Height: Heavenlies ~ 1 John 3	Height: Joint heirs with the ruler of the universe ~ Eph 2:6ff



Eph. 3:13] ***But now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

“*But now...*” is a wonderful reversal. This parallels (cf. v.4) a new class, neither Jew nor Gentile (1 Cor 10:32). A prelude for Chapter 3. Verse 13 sums up the Gentiles’ condition in two words: “far off.” While the problem of sinners in general (vv. 1–10) was spiritual death, the problem of the Gentiles in particular was spiritual distance from God and His blessings. Note in the Gospels that whenever Christ helped a Gentile, He did it at a distance (Mt 8:5-13; 15:22-28).



Eph. 3:14] *And to know the love of Christ, **which passeth knowledge**, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Is there a paradox here? Some scholars think so. How can we know that “*which passeth knowledge*”? It would be something like a baby’s confidence in its parent’s arms.

“...fulness of God”: Can one even imagine being filled with the “fulness of God”?! (Col 2:9,10). The means is the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18); the measure is God Himself (Eph 4:11-16). Paul will have more to say about “fulness” later; we’ll explore more then (Eph 5:18-21).



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,*

Another of Paul’s Greek “pyramid” sentences: “Able...to do.. Translates the potential to the actual...We ask...or think:

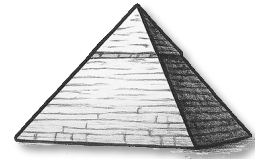


...all that we ask or think

...above all that we ask or think

...abundantly above all that we ask or think

...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...”



You can get a glimpse here of how Greek can contain more information in one sentence than English can convey in several sentences. Paul seems to want to use every word possible to convey to us the vastness of God’s Power as found in Jesus Christ. Again, note the Trinitarian emphasis in this benediction: Paul prays to the Father concerning the indwelling Spirit, made available through the Son.



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

Praise (Psalm 148). Paul’s concern is that God’s power is active in your life. Get your hands on your spiritual wealth by opening your heart to the Holy Spirit and praying for strength for the inner man...for new depth of love...for spiritual apprehension...and for spiritual fullness.

Next Lesson: Read Chapter 4. Chapters 1-3 covered doctrine. Chapters 4-6 cover duties.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER THREE

H C H A R A G E S A U D N E M A	ABLE	FAITH
T E H E E S U P H F A R W E D B	ACCESS	FAMILY
R E D U S P I D T O U S S E T L	AFORE	GLORY
A B L E R R E R D R S U D S L E	AGES	GOSPEL
E N C R I C K A A E A R I N G L	AMEN	GRANT
A C E T I T H E E C U R E R E S	BODY	HEARD
A D D R E S S H R E H O A W R Y	BREADTH	HEIGHT
G O D E S I R E B C A N T I O N	CAUSE	HEIRS
B O T H O L Y T D E T A E R C P	CHRIST	HOLY
M U S T A R D H O U S H E A R D	CHURCH	JESUS
B Y S P A C E G R A T E H A S P	CREATED	LENGTH
A R L S E H V I M A J T O T E H	DEPTH	LOVE
B O X I T L O E S T G E H I L T	DESIRE	MIGHT
I L E P M O L H E N S G S E M I	DWELL	POWERS
E G E E S A P S E V I L S U S A	EARTH	SPIRIT
S D T N I A F L A M Y D O B S F	FAINT	SAME