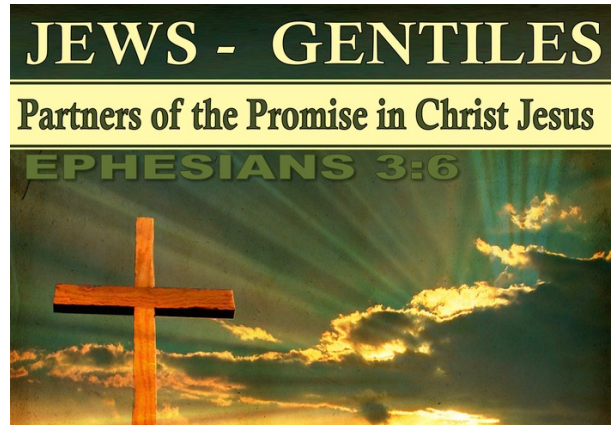


**THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**  
**“We Are His Workmanship”**

Date: 8-25-24 Lesson: 16

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**THE TEXT - (Ephesians 3:1-12)**

- (1) For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for **Christ Jesus** on behalf of you Gentiles—  
(2) assuming that you have heard of **the stewardship of God's grace** that was given to me for you,  
(3) how **the mystery** was made known to me **by revelation**, as I have written briefly.

**(Ac 23:18,23; 28:16,30; Rom 11:25; 16:25,26; 1 Cor 2:10; 4:1,2; Gal 1:12,16; Col 1:25,26; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:9,10; Titus 1:7; Rev 10:17)**

- (4) When you read this, you can perceive my insight into **the mystery of Christ**,  
(5) 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**.

**(Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 11:6; Eph 2:20; 4:11; Col 4:16; 1 Th 5:27; 1 Tim 4:13)**

- (6) **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**.  
(7) 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**.

**(Ezek 47:22; Rom 8:17; 12:3; 15:9-16; 1 Cor 3:5; 15:3; Gal 3:28,29; Col 1:23-29)**

- (8) 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**,  
(9) and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of **the mystery hidden for ages in God** who created all things,  
(10) so that through the church **the manifold wisdom of God** might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

**(Ac 8:1-3; 9:15; 26:18; Rom 2:4; 11:33; 1 Cor 2:7; 15:9; Gal 1:13-16; Col 1:26; 2:10,15; Tim 1:15; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 4:11)**

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- (11) This was according to **the eternal purpose** that he has realized in **Christ Jesus our Lord**,  
(12) **in whom** we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith **in him**.

(Mk 11:22; Jn 14:6,7; 2 Cor 3:4; Php 2:11; 3:9;  
Heb 3:14; 4:16; 10:19,35; 1 Jn 2:28; 3:21; 4:17;

## STUDY HELPS

This term “**mystery**” is taken at this point in an absolute sense, indicating that which is unknown, but not in the ordinary sense in terms of the “figurative” or “literal” meaning, as when, for example, we speak of the “mystical sense,” where there is one meaning on the surface and another in the depth. But **this is a mystery** in the absolute sense, because it is hidden to all, namely, that the fullness of the Gentiles is going to come in while certain Jews fall. He says the same thing elsewhere, as in Rom. 16:25: “**According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages.**” And also in Col. 1:26.

<sup>1</sup> Luther, M. (1999). [\*Luther's works, vol. 25: Lectures on Romans\*](#). (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 25, p. 431). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

*This is My covenant*, “when I shall remove their sins.” This is the covenant, says Paul, that there will be a **Redeemer** of the people Israel. After the blindness of Israel He will, so to speak, be a new **Redeemer**. “Then you will come from Zion.” This coming is not said of a new advent of a new **Messiah**, but of a spiritual coming, of which Paul speaks to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:14). This is the intent of the text:

*My Spirit and My words shall not depart*. He is saying this of the spiritual coming which will always abide and prevail for the purpose of turning away evil. This is the nature of the covenant, that “the **Spirit and My Word**” will endure forever. Thus Paul and the prophet agree. This is Paul’s argument: The Gentiles must not despise the Jews, because **God** can reinstate them, **since the Spirit of the Lord and the Word of the Lord** will remain in the world, and by them **God** can reclaim some. As long as **the Word** remains, **God** can always save people through this means.

Who knows the potential of that nation? There might be more and better Christians in their midst than in ours. For though not all Jews will be converted, some persons will be. This is **the mystery of Israel**, that the remnant is to be converted. Not all Israelites **are the seed of God**. But this fall and apostasy did not happen simply for the purpose of destroying the Jews and saving the Gentiles. Hence no one has cause to boast of his election.

Therefore Paul and the apostles are expressing **mysteries**, though they cement general texts together and apply them to serve their own purpose. The apostle is here not speaking of the passion **of Christ** but rather of the function of the passion **of Christ**, which is in **the Word**. It is through the preaching of **the Gospel** that we receive the forgiveness of sins. Thus Paul in this discussion was at pains to show how the Jews have been rejected and, at the same time, some are saved.

*And He will come*, that is, through **the office of the Spirit and preaching**, not through the physical coming to **Zion as Redeemer**. To the extent **that God** delivers, He does so through the Word. Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah provided deliverance through **the Word**. This is **God’s general redemption**. This is a general statement which Paul applies specifically<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luther, M. (1999). [\*Luther's works, vol. 17: Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66\*](#). (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 17, pp. 307–308). Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

## LIFE APPLICATION:

“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.”

How do these words encourage us to share the Gospel with our Jewish and Gentile friends?