

Connection to Ephesians 3

Jewish people of the first century would have been shocked to consider worshipping together with Gentiles and being one body of believers with them. Paul explained that this unity of Jews and Gentiles was a mystery that was hidden in the past but was revealed to the apostles and to Paul, and should now be proclaimed to everyone.

Introduction/Opening

Most people love a good mystery. We like trying to figure out “who-dun-it” or if we know “who-dun-it” we like the suspense of waiting to see if, when, or how the bad guy is going to get caught. Another kind of mystery is the kind of reality or event that just defies explanation. We just shrug our shoulders and say, “That’s a mystery!” and then we leave it at that. The mystery that we are dealing with here in Ephesians chapter three is *not like* either one of those. It is not something that needs to be solved nor is it some interesting but unexplainable event that we can just shrug our shoulders about and walk away from. This is a mystery only in the sense that at one time it had not been revealed by God and now it has been. We now have the responsibility to pay attention to what has been revealed and respond accordingly.

Outline

1. The Mystery of the Church (Eph. 3:1-6)
 - a) The content: the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, partners in the promise alongside Jewish believers
 - B) The source: made known by revelation
 - i) Understood by reading Paul and the other apostles
 - ii) Revealed to them by the Spirit
 - iii) Declared in the Gospel

2. The Ministry of the Church (Eph. 3:7-11)
 - a) Serving by God’s power
 - b) Proclaiming the riches of Christ
 - c) Shedding light on the mystery
 - d) Making known God’s multi-faceted wisdom
 - Through the church
 - To the rulers in the heavens
 - According to God’s eternal purpose
 - Accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord

3. The Mentality of the Church (Eph. 3:12-13)
 - a) Union leads to boldness
 - b) Faith leads to confident access
 - c) Afflictions lead to glory

Conclusion

Are you one of the heirs to the riches of Christ? God wants that for you! The mystery of the church is that what Christ Jesus accomplished He did so for anyone who will believe in Him. You can be a member of the same body, a partner in the same promise. If we accept this mystery, then we also have the great honor of being part of the ministry of sharing this message with others, with a God-given boldness, confidence, and courage. The mystery has now been revealed. The only question left to answer is what will you do with this truth, how will you respond?

Brian Law serves as the pastor of Eastside Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. A graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div., Th.M.), he has also pastored churches in Kentucky, Illinois, and in his home state of Missouri. He and his wife, Amy, have two daughters and sons-in-law, Lauren (Daniel) and Whitney (Wes).