** *“MYSTERY OF THE AGES!”***

#  Ephesians Chapter 3

**Introduction: Let us define a *“Biblical mystery”* – According to the Nelson’s Bible Dictionary, “*A mystery is the hidden, eternal plan of God that is being revealed to God's people in accordance with His plan.”***

**In the *New Testament*, *mystery* refers to a secret that is revealed by God to His servants through His Spirit. As such, it is an "open secret."**

***Mystery* occurs three times in the Gospels. Jesus told His disciples, *"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God"* (Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).**

**Jesus explained the *mystery of God's kingdom* to His disciples. But to others He declared, *"All things come in parables"* (Mark 4:11).**

**Most of the occurrences of the word *mystery* are in the Pauline Epistles. Mystery refers to the revelation of God's plan of salvation as that plan focuses in Christ. The gospel itself is a *"mystery which was kept secret since the world began"* (Romans 16:25).**

**This *mystery* was revealed by God through the *prophetic Scriptures* to Paul and the church (1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3).**

***Mystery* also refers to the *future resurrection of Christians* (1 Corinthians 15:51), *the summing up of all things in Christ* (Ephesians 1:9), *the inclusion of Gentiles in the church (*Ephesians 3:3-9), the *future salvation of Israel* (Romans 11:25), the *phenomenon of lawlessness* (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and *the godliness of Christ* (1 Timothy 3:16).**

***> Mystery #1 – (v1-7) THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST!***

**(v1) *Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles* (Paul, the prisoner - Acts chapters 21 – 28).**

**(v2) The word *“dispensation”* means *stewardship*, Paul was a steward of the *grace of God.* (Eph. 2:8-9)**

**(v3-6) Paul had previously, briefly revealed the “*mystery of Christ”* in Ephesians 1:7-10.**

**(v7) Paul was *a minister according to the gift of the grace of God by the effective working of His power.***

***-* There are three key points regarding our MINISTRY (service) to God:**

**(1) a *minister* speaks of being a *servant*; one who *disciples in life, deed and word*;**

**(2) and it is all by *His GRACE;***

**(3) by the effective *WORKING* (Gk. – *energeia* – energy) of His *POWER* (Gk. - *dunamis* – the ability to do, dynamic). Paul recognizes that his *work* (energy) and *power* (abilities) come from God.**

***> Mystery #2 - (v8-12) THE MYSTERY OF GOD!***

**- In the *MYSTERY OF GOD* Paul preaches three dynamic concepts:**

**#1- (v8) *To preach among the Gentiles the* *UNSERARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST* – Colossians 1:27 - *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

**#2 – (v9) *To make all see what is the FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY* - Colossians 2:2-3 - *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

**#3 – (v10-12) *To the intent that the MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places –***

**1 Timothy 3:16 - *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.***

**1 Peter 1:10-12 - *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.***

**Luke 15:10 - *Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."***

***> Mystery #3 - (v13-21) THE MYSTERY OF THE SPIRIT!***

**In verses 13-21 we find an incredible prayer, led by the Holy Spirit for the body of Christ, of which we will do well to emulate.**

**(v13) Paul was a prisoner in Rome as he encourages the believers to *“not lose heart”* because of his current state; *“lose heart”* (Gk. *engkakeoo*) means literally, *to turn out "a coward," or to lose one's courage; then to be fainthearted.***

**(v14-15) When was the last time you *bowed your knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*? Please remember it is not necessarily the position of the body, but rather an honest and humble heart. However, it is good to bow the knee, only if you can get back up.**

**- A good example of the *SINNER’S PRAYER* is found in Luke 18:9-13. A *PRAYER WARRIOR’S* heart is found in Daniel 6:10-28. Whereas Paul’s prayer is a *FAITH BUILDING PRAYER* for his fellow saints.**

***~ OBSERVE AND PRACTICE “5 POWER POINTS OF PRAYER!”:***

**(v16) *POWER POINT #1 -* *“to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” -* The word *strengthened* is *krataioo* in Greek - meaning *to empower*, *to increase in vigor*.**

**Whereas the word *might* is *dunamis* (Gk.) - speaking of ability*, strength, miraculous power*. Remember Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:19-20 - *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* How? Through prayer power!**

**(v17a) *POWER POINT #2* - *“that Christ may dwell (settle down, feel at home) in your hearts through faith”***

**- Jesus said in John 15:5-8 - *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”***

**(v17b) *POWER POINT #3 -* *“that you being rooted* (like a tree – Psalm 1) *and grounded* (a strong foundation – Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27 - *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."* *in love* (Gk. – *“agapee”* – 1 Cor. 13:4-8)**

**(v18-19) *POWER POINT #4 -* *“to comprehend and know the love of Christ and to be filled with all the fullness of God” - “to comprehend”* (Gk. – *katalambano*) *to take eagerly, i.e., seize, possess*.**

***“TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST*” - John 13:1 *- Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.***

**John 15:11-14 - *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.***

**What does it mean to be *filled with the fullness of God*? That is to be filled and overflowing with God’s grace, mercy, compassion, peace, joy, wisdom, knowledge, truth, holiness, power, faith, hope and love!**

**(v20-21) *POWER POINT #5 -* Meditate on and memorize verses 20-21. Awesome!**

**(Read Hebrews Chapter 11 (a roll call of the heroes of faith, study the Gospels, the Book of Acts and realize that God can do the same in YOU and through YOU for His glory, honor and praise!)**

**“*GO4GOD!”***