

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Cheer Up - You're On Display!

Ephesians 3:1-13

¹ Cheer up. You're on display!

While stationed in Germany I was able to provide facilities for the Covenant Players European Headquarters. They are a Christian drama company which, at that time, had a contract with the military to support chaplain ministries throughout Europe. My family became very close to the headquarters' staff.

Out of appreciation for our efforts, when we returned to the United States, our family was invited as special guests to view the Covenant Players summer showcase. As part of their training the most experienced actors would put on dramas for the rest of the company. Displaying their best actors and dramas demonstrated to the rest of us, "This is how it's done!" ²

God put Job on display to His heavenly hosts. ¹ He was pleased with Job's righteous lifestyle and wanted everyone to observe it.

¹ Job 1:6-8 - One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come

He does the same for us Christians. God enjoys displaying His children before His heavenly hosts. ³ First Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 24, **Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.** ⁴ Again, in Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 1, **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.** ⁵

If God showcases you as His child, shouldn't you behave yourself as Christ-like as you can?

Our scripture today is Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 1 through 13. ⁶

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was

from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ²

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In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ³ 8

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for

² vs 1-3.

³ vs 4-6.

ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.⁴ 9

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.⁵

This concept of God displaying His children is explained in these verses.

First . . . 10

⁴ vs 7-9.

⁵ vs 10-13.

I. What is This Mystery?

What is this mystery? ¹¹

From Galatians, chapter 4 ⁶ we discover it was hidden until a specific time in history. ¹²

The word **Mystery**, ⁷ in verses 4 and 5 of our scripture today, means that only the initiated, or “perfected” ones, could know what it is. The people in that day understood this.

Ancient Greek society had “mystery” cults; religious groups like the Masons. The formulas, rites and ceremonies were practiced only for the group members. They were not revealed to the public. ¹³ But in verse 5 ⁸ the mystery here is revealed by God to the

⁶ Galatians 4:1-5 - What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

⁷ μυστήριον.

⁸ Ephesians 3:4-5 - . . . you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.

apostles and prophets of the New Testament. It is now fully available to us! ¹⁴

Why? ¹⁵ The world of New Testament times was religiously polytheistic; there was a particular god for every situation. So the mystery of the Christ, the Son of God, coming into the world might be questioned with, “The son of which god?”

An environment had to exist from which God could become a man! Only Israel, at this time, could be that environment. Then, the church, coming out of the Jewish arena, became the environment through which the gospel message could be proclaimed! ¹⁶

So, what’s the mystery? **Lord Jesus Himself!** Colossians, chapter 2, verse 2, **My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ!** ¹⁷

God would become a man and live a perfect life. ¹⁸
Then, in verse 11, ⁹ Jesus would, then, die on the
cross to redeem us from our sin which would fulfill
the mystery of the ages. ¹⁹

This is summed up in First Timothy, chapter 3, verse
16, **Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is
great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the
Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the
nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in
glory.** ²⁰

The gospel, the word of God, is the vehicle through
which this mystery is made known. Colossians,
chapter 4, verse 3, **And pray for us, too, that God may
open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim
the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.** ²¹

⁹ Ephesians 3:11 - . . . according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in
Christ Jesus our Lord.

The good news of this mystery, according to verse 6,¹⁰ is that **Gentiles (non-Jews) could also be saved!**

So that's the mystery! ²²

II. How Does God Benefit from the Mystery?

How does God benefit from the mystery? ²³

Verse 10 ¹¹ tells us that **God gets to showcase you** before the authorities in the heavenly realms! ²⁴

God showcased Job. **“Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”** ¹² ²⁵ Could God say the same thing of you? He wants to! ²⁶

¹⁰ Ephesians 3:6 - This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

¹¹ Ephesians 3:10 - His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms . . .

¹² Job 1:8.

God is proud of you when you exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. ¹³

“Look Gabriel! See that group from the church inspiring Juliet and her family in Wednesday evening.”

“Look Michael! See the Women’s Ministry singing to those shut-ins.”

“Look Satan! See those two Christian mechanics fixing their neighbor’s car so they can drive to work.”

That’s how God benefits! ²⁷

III. How Do You Benefit from the Mystery?

How do you benefit from the mystery? ²⁸

You can understand this mystery. The world can’t! First Corinthians, chapter 2, verses 7 and 8 says, **No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory**

¹³ Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ²⁹

Verse 4 ¹⁴ tells us that **you are the initiated**, the “perfected”. ¹⁵ This mystery was revealed to you! The more complete, or mature, you become, the more God can showcase you. ³⁰

Then, verse 6 ¹⁶ tells us **you are heirs of God**, members of His body and sharers of His promises! ³¹

The best the world can come up with for life is evolution and humanism. Eternal life for them is hell!

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You have the secret of life, God’s Holy Spirit. Eternal life for you is heaven! ³³

¹⁴ Ephesians 3:4 - In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ . . .

¹⁵ Colossians 1:28 - We proclaim him . . . so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

¹⁶ Ephesians 3:6 - This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Verse 10 ¹⁷ says **you can proclaim the mystery** through the church to the world! ³⁴

You proclaim it best by exhibiting Lord Jesus in your behavior. Colossians, chapter 1, verse 27, **To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** ³⁵

Notice the result in Romans, chapter 16, verses 25 and 26, **Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him . . .** This mystery, presented by you, will lead people to the obedience of faith! ³⁶

¹⁷ Ephesians 3:10 - His intent was that now, through the church, **the manifold wisdom of God should be made known . . .**

What is this saying? You need growth in Christ to be your priority of life! Develop His fruit. Live His life before others!

After all; you're on display!

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