

Episode #1016 Ephesians 3 Part 1-The Chapter of God's Present Purpose

I. The purpose of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is to tell us what God's present purpose is in all His work today. This includes His work in the world and in the individual believer. Ephesians is the book of God's present purpose, the book of being "in Christ," and the book of God's grace.

II. I have called the book of Ephesians "the book of God's present purpose." Even more specifically, chapter 3 is the chapter of God's present purpose. We learn here what it is that God is doing today. What is God's primary work? What is He trying to accomplish in the world? Why does God act so secretly and silently today? Why does He not make Himself known? These questions are answered by the third chapter of Ephesians.

III. Ephesians 3:1-2. The Dispensation of the Grace of God.

- A. Verse 1. The word is not "cause," but Greek *charis*, which means "grace." Paul calls himself a "bound one of Christ Jesus." He was not talking about being a prisoner of Rome, but of Christ. It was not Paul's idea to set forth the truths in this chapter. It was not his choice to set aside Israel's special privileges and work with all nations equally. This was all God's doing. Paul starts a long parenthesis that deals with today.
- B. Verse 2. Paul assumes they have heard of this new administration of God from their own local apostles and prophets (verse 5). This is God's administration of grace.
 - 1. Dispensation = Greek *oikonomia* = house-law. Has to do with an administration, or the working out of one, a policy.
 - a. Not just with His house-Romans 16:23.
 - b. Not just God acting graciously-He has always done that!
 - 2. God's policy towards the earth today is to be gracious.

IV. What is Grace?

- A. Grace is God's desire to bless. It is His passion to deliver the sinful. It is His unlimited love in expression. It is His love and favor to the undeserving. It is His unrecompensed kindness and favor. It is God's love to His creatures who do not deserve His love.
- B. Grace is never withheld or lessened because of faults. Psalm 130:3. Romans 5:20. Grace cannot incur a debt, and is never the payment nor overpayment of a debt. Romans 4:4. Romans 11:6.
- C. Ephesians 4:32. The great truth of the dispensation of grace is that God is dealing graciously with us!

V. Conclusion: God's present purpose is He is currently demonstrating how gracious He is for all time to come. Grace is God's love and favor to the undeserving. God is acting today only and exclusively in grace.