

Episode #1020 Ephesians 3 Part 5-Joint, Joint Joint; Equal, Equal, Equal

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. In Ephesians 3:1-3, we were discussing the dispensation of the grace of God: a time when God displays the riches of His grace in an administration of total grace, unmixed with any judgment. God is not taking away suffering and evil, but is adding the gifts and riches of His grace to the world. We discussed the word *mysterion*, suggesting it has been mistranslated, and ought to be translated secret. The truths God calls secret have been hidden before, but now have been revealed and can be understood.

III. Ephesians 3:3. Paul had already written of this mystery briefly in Ephesians 1:7-11. He doesn't say what the mystery is yet, so we must continue to find out.

IV. Ephesians 3:4. He wants them to know what he already knows. He wants this for their own good, not because he wants them to think how smart he is. This secret is related to Christ. In other words, it has to do with His work today.

V. Ephesians 3:5. This secret is now revealed, whereas in other generations it was not revealed.

A. The word "generations" is the Greek *genea*.

1. We specialize "generations" to mean only generations of people. But it is part of a family of words along with "generate" and "generator." That which is generated is a generation, so it does not just refer to people.

2. Isaiah 53:8. This does not mean Christ died before He could have kids, so no one could go around telling people what children He had. It is talking about the truth He generated. Even though He died, there were people to declare the truths He generated: His apostles!

3. So here, in other generations means other times God has generated truth. You will not find this secret in any book of the Old Testament. You will not find it in any book written during the Acts period.

B. God's holy apostles and prophets now know this secret. Paul was not the only one to know it, though he was the only one to write it. The apostles and prophets of the Acts period were also given this secret to pass on to believers locally.

VI. Ephesians 3:6. What the mystery is.

A. In Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, the nations (not Gentiles!) are now three "joint's": joint heirs, joint bodies, and joint partakers. These three words all have a common prefix in Greek, *sun-*, meaning joint or equal.

B. This is true now, but not in the past. What exactly was new and previously unrevealed about this?

1. Psalm 72:17. All nations would call Christ blessed.

2. Jeremiah 4:2. All nations benefit from the LORD.

3. Genesis 26:4. It was always revealed that nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

C. That all nations would be blessed was never a secret. The secret was that they would all be blessed jointly or equally.

1. To be an heir means to enjoy a portion. No nation has any portion from God that any other nation does not have (including Israel).

2. A body is the substance or essence of a thing. All nations are now on an equal footing before God.
3. Any person from any nation can now partake of the promise in Christ Jesus through faith in the gospel, the good message God gives us for salvation.

D. In the past, Israel was the primary nation, and every other nation could expect to receive blessings that flowed through Israel first. See Romans 11:13-21. This was true in the Acts period. Yet now it is not true. Now all nations are equal. Anyone from any nation and any national background can come to Christ and stand on equal footing before Him with anyone from any other nation. Praise God for this secret!

VII. Conclusion: Paul reveals a secret to us that was never revealed in any of God's revelations before: that God works today with all nations jointly and equally. Every nation is joint, joint joint; equal, equal, equal with every other nation. Neither Israel, the United States, nor any other nation has priority in the sight of God. Any person from any nation can come to faith in Him. Praise God for His grace that allows all people to be "in Christ!"