

Eph 3:vs 8b-10 Manifold Mystery of God

God not only saved Paul, and made him a minister of the gospel, but has also provided the power through the Holy Spirit to carry out the ministry that he has been assigned. Paul now describes the content and activity of his ministry.

to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable wealth of Christ

to preach to the Gentiles

Paul has been appointed as the apostle to the Gentiles Rom 11:13 **13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Therefore insofar as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry** Even the other apostles recognized his ministry to the Gentiles, just as Peter was primarily called to speak to the Jews. In Acts 9:15 Jesus says **15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;** And he repeated this commission to Paul personally, as he relates in Acts 22:21 **21 And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'** ; Paul was called to preach the good news, that we can have a relationship with God through repentance and the forgiveness of sins made possible by Jesus' atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross.

the unfathomable wealth of Christ.

The word "wealth" lets us know that we participate in the overflowing riches of Jesus the Christ. We Gentiles get to participated in the riches of the Jewish Messiah which is "unsearchable" beyond all understanding, *unfathomable*, beyond our ability to investigate.

and to enlighten all what is the administration of the mystery which had been hidden for ages in God who created all things,"

"and to enlighten all."

Paul is trying to "to enlighten, illuminate, to bring to light the mystery of God. Paul explains the mystery in order to make sure that the Ephesians and us understand the mystery that is being disclosed. Paul is revealing to all who will believe, both Jews and Gentiles.

what is the administration of the mystery.

Since God has disclosed this mystery to Paul, he is the position of administering, caring for this mystery in terms of position or office of an administrator. His position is similar to when he instructs Timothy in 2 Tim 2:2 **The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**

which had been hidden.

The communication to humankind of God's secret or hidden plan was through the prophets who were caught up in visions and would see and hear from God. God chooses when, to whom and in what circumstances to reveal His mysteries.

In 1 Cor 2:7 the mystery, equated with the wisdom of God, is revealed as the crucified Christ who is the power of God for salvation. Because God has revealed it through the Spirit (2:10), all believers (not only the few) are able to understand it (1:21). In Col 1:26–27 the mystery which had been hidden and is now manifest to the saints is that Christ is among or in them, the hope of glory. Here there is no reference to the future, just the present reality for the believer. In 2:2–3 Paul reveals his desire that believers have full understanding and thus comprehend God's mystery, namely, Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. Again in Col 4:3 the mystery of Christ refers to the proclamation of Christ's salvation.

in order that [the manifold wisdom of God] might now be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms through the church."

It is amazing that God made known the mystery to heavenly rulers through the church rather than telling them directly. The purpose or result of his ministry, then, is that the mystery (manifold wisdom of God) be made known to angelic leaders by means of the church. God is using the church to

demonstrate the wisdom of His plan to those rulers and authorities in the heavenly places where angelic beings reside and operate, observing the human world.

The heavenlies is the place where both good and evil leaders reside and attempt to influence humans. Just as there are good and evil humans living together on earth, there are areas in the heavenly dimension from which good heavenly beings reside, and those in which evil heavenly beings reside. And a struggle between good and evil angels is portrayed in heaven and on earth (Dan 10:13, 20). So, part of our purpose as the church is to be a witness to the Angels, both good and bad, that God knows what He is doing—that His plan makes sense. God's wisdom should therefore be displayed by the Church, so that we are a good witness for Christ.

the manifold wisdom of God. The word wisdom refers to the true insight into known facts. The best wisdom is that which has been revealed by God, for this is the means by which one gains insight into the true nature of God's plan. The word manifold here means "many/various/rich colors" along side each other, woven, or embroidered. It is used to reference Joseph's coat of many colors (Gen 37:3). It has the idea of "most varied," or "(very) many sided." God, in his wisdom, has dealt with humankind in a variety of ways. Throughout the ages good angels have tried to decipher God's plan (1 Pet 1:12) but were unable to do so. No doubt, evil angels also had wanted to know God's plans in advance in order to frustrate them.

Through the church, the angelic leaders, both good and evil, gain knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God. It is a defeat for evil angels who would like to continue to engender animosity between Jews and Gentiles in order to frustrate the plan of God. The formation of the church is tangible evidence that the evil angelic leaders' power has been broken, demonstrating that all are subject to Christ.