

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 25 (#912205)
WEEK 5 (912345)
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P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-888-734-7707/ www.preceptsforlife.com

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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

TITLE: Program 25 – Understanding God’s Mystery

FRIDAY

OPEN

There’s nothing like Radio Theater. You’re listening to a drama and as you listen to that drama you’re not seeing what you see on television, but your imagination is taking you to something familiar or unfamiliar. I remember hearing as a child radio theater an “Inner Sanctum” as the door opened up my eyes would get wide. What was on the other side? Today we’re going to open a door to the mystery of God. What’s on the other side? We’ll see in a minute.

PART ONE

Today, Beloved, as we look at the book of Ephesians we’re going to look at a mystery, a mystery that has been revealed now with the coming of Paul the apostle Paul, but it had been hidden for millenniums. For 4000 years God

hid this mystery. But with the apostle Paul He’s going to reveal to us something that was in His heart, listen, before the foundation of the world. Well we want to go to the book of Ephesians chapter 3. We have now come to Ephesians chapter 3, but what I’m going to do is I’m going to segway us from 2 into 3 so that you can really appreciate what is happening in this portion of Scripture. Now as I do this I want you to remember that the Word of God originally written did not have chapters and it did not have verses. But those chapter divisions and those verses were put in much much later so that when we teach we can find that passage very very quickly and that’s what I love. And I love the way the New Inductive Study Bible is set up by verse rather than by paragraph so that you can find these verses quickly and because you have more room and you can mark them. Now if you don’t know what I’m talking about when I’m speaking of marking the text then I know that you’re a new comer to this program. We want to invite you to go to our website “preceptsforlife.com” and there download our free gift to you. Our free gift is a study guide on the book of Ephesians. And in that study guide you have the whole book of Ephesians printed out in the New American Standard version which is one of the most accurate versions from the Greek. Well when we come to chapter 3 Paul is saying in verse 1, **“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles -- if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.” (Ephesians 3:1-3)** As I told you today we’re going to look at that mystery. And what you need to do is you need to mark the occurrence of “mystery” in the book of Ephesians. Now it’s not there very many times as you’re going to see in just a minute, but it’s a very important word. The Greek word for mystery is “m-y-s-t-e-r-i-o-n,” “m-y-s-t-e-r-i-o-n” and you might want to write that right on your observation worksheet which is the text of Ephesians that you download or write it right in your Bible. But what I did is I put a black cloud

around it because it was darkened. It was something that was darkened and then I colored it purple on the inside because it was a divine mystery. So Paul is saying okay, he says **“For this reason I, Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ...,”** (Ephesians 3:1a) and then he talks about **“...that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery...,”** (3:3) of God. Well I want to take us back to chapter 2 and connect 2 and 3 so you can see the flow of it. And it’s important because what he’s telling you in chapter 2 has to do with the mystery only he hasn’t said, hey, it’s been a mystery. Now remember he’s talking to Gentiles. Remember those at Ephesus were Gentiles so they were strangers and they were aliens. They knew nothing about the covenants of promise. They didn’t have the Word of God. And so they were cut off from all these things. So they would not know that this was mystery that had not been revealed if Paul did not tell them. So let’s go back to Ephesians chapter 2. And he’s talking about how Christ broke down the enmity that separated the Jew from the Gentile. And He broke down that enmity which was the Law that divided them and He brought both near, Jew and Gentile in one body and made them one new man by their receiving Jesus Christ and by the blood of Christ being shed for their sins. So they were brought near by the blood of Christ. They were made into one new man. Now when they were made into one new man they were both given the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit came and lived inside of them. And when the Holy Spirit came and lived inside of them then the Holy Spirit in them gave them access to God the Father. The Holy Spirit is the ticket, it is the guarantee that you and I are going to live forever. It is the guarantee that we are children of God. It’s the guarantee that someday even this body this flesh this mortal is going to put on immortality. So the Holy Spirit then in us gives us access to God the Father. And he says and **“...through Him...,”** verse 18, **“...we both have...access in one Spirit to the Father. So then...,”** conclusion, **“...you are no longer strangers and aliens...,”** you’re no longer separate, **“...but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of**

God’s household.” (Ephesians 2:18-19) Now when he’s saying “...**you are fellow citizens with the saints...**,” I believe that he’s talking about the Jews because he calls them saints. You see this in Daniel chapter 7. Saints means “holy ones.” These are Jews that have believed in Jesus Christ so they are saints. So what he’s saying is you’re no longer a stranger, you’re no longer an alien, but now you are a fellow citizen. If you are a fellow citizen, then you belong to the same kingdom, you belong to the same government and so you are fellow citizens with the saints of God. I want you to go for just a minute to Philippians and Philippians chapter 3. In verse 20 it says, “**for our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body...**,” this physical body, “**...of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory....**” (Philippians 3:20-21a) In other words we’ll be like Jesus Christ in His resurrection. “**...By the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.**” (3:21b) In other words it is the (*roaring noise*), it is the power, it is the dunamis of God in Jesus that is going to take this body and going to resurrect it. Our citizenship is written in heaven and we’re waiting for Jesus who is going to come again and take us home so that we can be in the very presence of God the Father. Now when you go back then you understand that you are not fellow citizens with the saints, Jew, the saints and Gentiles, fellow citizens in one body. And he goes on to say you “**...are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.**” (Ephesians 2:19b-20) So he’s saying you’re part of a citizenship. You are part of a household. You are part of a building a divine holy organic structure that God is building. Now how did He build it? Well He started with the corner stone. Now the corner stone is the most important stone in the building. And the corner stone is laid and then two walls are attached to that corner stone which sets the whole building. So Jesus is the corner stone, then the foundation of that building is the apostles and the

prophets. The apostles are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the twelve apostles, minus Judas who defected and add in Paul who I believe was God’s twelfth choice, although they made another choice, the early apostles did. But you’ve got the apostles. The apostles were the “apostello,” a-p-o from stello sent with a message. So they were the messengers that were sent from God to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So it was the apostles and the prophets that went and proclaimed this truth that laid the foundation of this building. Now what’s this building made up of? Hey, it’s made up of you. It is made up of me. Watch what he says. He says, **“Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.” (Ephesians 2:20)** You know many times when they laid a corner stone for a building they put the builders or the architect’s name on that corner stone. Jesus is the architect. And it says, **“in whom...,”** now watch, Jesus is the corner stone, the foundation is the apostles and prophets, **“in whom...,”** in Jesus, **“...the whole building, being fitted together....” (2:21a)** “Being fitted together” is in the present tense and it means that there is a careful fitting together of these stones to build this building. You know if you ever go to Israel with us, and we go to Israel every year, and you go down on the tunnel tour and we go down with Esther who is just a very very precious friend of mine. She’s my Jewish sister. I mean, I mean we are like two peas in a pod. She’s a Jewish version and I’m a Gentile version. And we go down there and she takes us and shows us the building blocks for that temple foundation. They weigh absolutely tons. This is what Herod laid when he increased that temple mount area. It’s absolutely incredible. Every stone is fit together. And what he’s saying is hey, you are being fit together as a building. What does that mean and what does it have to do with the mystery? We’ll tell you when we come back.

PART TWO

Hey Holy Stone, welcome back. Let’s see what God is doing with you and what God is doing with me and what He’s doing with every single person that believes on Jesus Christ whether they’re a Jew and come to believe on Jesus Christ or they’re a Gentile, and a Gentile is anything that is not a Jew which includes the Muslims, which includes the Hindus. It includes everybody, okay. Let’s look at it. Go to Ephesians chapter 2 and it says, **“in whom...,”** verse 21, **“...the whole building, being fitted together....”** There was an art to laying stones. There was an art to making them fit together. He says, **“...is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.”** And growing is in the present tense. You’re being fitted together. You are growing into what? **“...A holy temple [of] the Lord.” (Ephesians 2:21)** But you know what’s so neat about that, what’s so neat is you’re not alone. What’s so neat is you are part of this glorious temple of God. And this glorious temple is His body. This glorious temple is the family of God. This glorious temple is this household of God that you make up along with every other believer. And the reason He has to put them in the present tense is because this building keeps growing and growing and growing. Every time a person comes to know Jesus Christ they’re put into that body. Last Tuesday they brought up this handsome young man and he wanted me to sign his Bible. He was so excited. He had a New Inductive Study Bible and he had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. I would say he was in his middle 20’s. But life had just changed. You could see the radiance. Well what was he? He was a stone. He was a stone that had been laid on that foundation. He was part of a holy temple. He’s part of the mystery of God. So he says, **“...growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together...,”** present tense again, **“...into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21b-22)** You see it’s the Spirit of God that does it all. It’s the Spirit of God that places you into the body. It is the Spirit of God

that gives you access as a citizen of God, as part of that new man into the very presence of God. So Paul goes on and says, **“For this reason I, Paul, [the prisoner of the Lord], the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.” (Ephesians 3:1)** In other words he’s saying I’m in prison because of my mission to you. He was in prison because he had been accused in that temple area of bringing a Gentile beyond the barrier of the dividing wall into the temple mount where only Jews were supposed to be. And so because of that and because of his ministry and because of his message and because of his association with the Gentiles, the Jews hated him. And the Jews didn’t like his message that Jesus had taken care of the enmity of the Law, that the Law had been replaced by the new covenant, the covenant of grace. And so they didn’t like Paul at all. And consequently they called for a trial. And Paul appealed to Rome. So Paul is writing from Rome as a prisoner. He’s sitting in chains writing this letter to those at Ephesus. And he says, **“...I, ...the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—if indeed you’ve heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given...me for you.” (Galatians 3:1-2)** Now he’s saying there is a stewardship here. There has been an assignment for me. And that word for “stewardship” is the same word that you saw in Ephesians chapter 1 when it says, the **“...administration... [of] the fullness of...times...,” (Ephesians 1:10a)** and it is the word “o-i-k-o-n-o-m-i-a.” God had a plan and we saw this from looking at the salvation of Paul, when he got saved in Acts chapter 9 and he’s referred to as Saul, He says [I’m going to send you to the Gentiles.] (Paraphrased, Acts 9:15) This was God’s plan. Peter was the apostle to the Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. And so he says, **“...you’ve heard of the stewardship....” (Ephesians 3:2a)** You’ve heard that this was my assignment as God administers, listen, the building up of the body of Christ, the building up of the church of Jesus Christ, the establishment of God’s household, the building of this holy temple. He says, **“that by revelation...,”** and he says I didn’t read this somewhere, but **“...by**

revelation...,” by unveiling, it says, “...there was made known to me....” (3:3a) God revealed a truth to me, “...the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.” (3:3b) Well now what has he been talking about? He’s been talking about this mystery. He just hasn’t defined it as a mystery. And you know what it is because if you listen he’s going to tell you exactly what the mystery is. He says, “...as I wrote before in brief.” (Ephesians 3:3) Verse 4: “By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.” (3:4) He says as you read what I have just written you can understand my understanding into the mystery of Christ. You know that I know what I’m talking about and you know this. You say, but what is the mystery? Well he’s going to tell them. He says, “...my insight into the mystery of Christ,” and you would mark “mystery” again, “which in other generations....” “In other generations” is a time phrase so you’d put a clock over “in.” “...In other generations was not made known to the sons of men...,” he says, “...as it has now...,” another time phrase, “...been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets...,” now watch, “...in the Spirit.” (3:4-5) It’s the Spirit that leads us and guides us into all truth. This is what Jesus said to His disciples when He was going away. He says, [it’s good for you that I go way, because if I don’t go away the Spirit can’t come. And when the Spirit comes the Spirit of truth He will reveal all things to you.] (Paraphrased, John 14:26) So the Holy Spirit is our teacher. He will reveal all truth. And so he goes on to say this, “which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific...,” and here’s the mystery, “...that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (3:5-6) “...In Christ Jesus through the gospel.” Now it’s the Spirit that connects you and me to the Father. And so what he’s saying here is this is the mystery. It’s what he’s been explaining. It’s what we have been studying. But he doesn’t tell the Gentiles that it was

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a mystery until this point. But he's telling them I want you to know you are part of an awesome awesome plan of God, a plan of God that He has kept as a mystery until this time. And this mystery could not happen until the first Gentile got saved and came into the body of Jesus Christ. And that is recorded for us and it happened 10 years after Pentecost. And it is recorded in Acts, (chapter 10) in the story of Cornelius who was the first Gentile to believe in Jesus Christ, to be part of this body. Oh Beloved, and God is building the body. So as you lead people to Christ you can say hey, you're part of a mystery that's been hidden through generations but revealed now. You're part of God's divine plan. Oh to know that I'm part of that mystery of that plan, how awesome. Live like it now.