

# Chapter Three

## 1 For this reason I, Paul, —

How far back should we go? The first two chapters were a unit. Chapter One speaking of every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Chapter Two driving home how bleak and hopeless things were before Christ came. Now in Christ we are all saved, part of the covenants and with hope. Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone. The pronoun “*this reason*” does just that. It takes all that has just been said making it the foundation and basis of the new topic.

*houtos, haute, touto* this ... The demonstrative pron., with its 1,391 occurrences, occupies twelfth position on the list of most frequently used words in the NT. *houtos* designates **that which the one speaking or writing sees before him or her**. In contrast, (the much less frequent) *ekeinós* points to that which is further away; ...” (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT:3778)

*houtos, haute, touto*, 1. this one, visibly present here... 2. The neuter *touto* a. **refers to what precedes...auto touto for this very cause... ek touto for this reason... from this, i.e. hereby, by this note... it refers to the substance of the preceding discourse...** b. **it prepares the reader or hearer and renders him attentive to what follows**, which thus gets special weight... c. *kai touto, and this, and that too, and indeed, especially...* d. *tauta, of this sort, such, spoken contemptuously of men,...*” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 467, 3778)

The term added for emphasis is a derivative of the word that is often translated grace. It carries the scent of favor and pleasure, but often means little more than a preposition: “*on account of*” or “*for the sake of*”

*chárin accusative of the substantive, cháris* ... used absolutely; properly, **in favor of, for lite pleasure of: ... like the Latin abl. gratia, it takes on completely the nature of a preposition**, and is joined to the genitive, for, **on account of, for the sake of; Gal 3:19 Tim 5:14; Titus 1:11; Jude 16; toutou charin , on this account, for this cause, Eph 3:1 ... Eph 3:14 ... for which cause, Luke 7:47; ...**” (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:5484)

Clearly there is something powerful about the preceding discourse that leads him to draw this conclusion. But instead of explaining exactly what the conclusion is he breaks away to speak even more fully about the incredible favor and blessing God had given to them (and to us).

The dash in all translations is important and must not be overlooked. “*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles —*”. A careful look at 3:1-14 makes it clear that the dash is because he doesn't tell them what the conclusion was. If one reads through it a few times, find the subject that Paul was pointing to. What should be placed in the blank space? “*For this cause I Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, — ... \_\_\_\_\_?*” While some want to attribute some human reason, that is not the answer. Every word that Paul wrote was inspired. There were no lapses or any other human flaw or weakness. Paul wrote this because it is how God wanted it to be written.

He wanted to impress on them that something should follow all that has just been said. Yet in order to fully make this possible the Holy Spirit wants a few more facts to be understood to make the privileges God has given to them even more impressive.

In verse fourteen he repeats the same phrase again, then gives the purpose.

*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles ... For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, Eph 3:1, 14-16*

It is all leading toward this prayer which is placed in the middle of the book. This is the only time in the NT that Paul or any other writer does this. Most are at the beginning of the book and some at the end, but this extensive prayer in the middle of the book is unique.

### the prisoner of Christ Jesus

Paul uses this phrase several times in his prison epistles and also in His final letter 2Timothy. A prisoner is someone who is bound and in a jail or at least confined. Paul spent two whole years as a prisoner in Rome. He was bound with a chain, but was allowed to live in a rented house with a soldier who guarded him, but had complete freedom.

*Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. 30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. Acts 28:16, 30-31*

*desmios* an adjective, primarily denotes “**binding, bound,**” then, as a noun, “**the person bound, a captive, prisoner**” (akin to *deo*, “to bind”), (from Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1198)

*desmios* (1198), **prisoner** ... *desmos* (1199) **chain; imprisonment** ... *desmos* ... 18 occurrences in the NT ... 2. **The root *desm-* has the basic meaning “bind.”** *desmos* means, in the first place, chain, and was used since Homer (Il. vi.507; Od. xiii.100; cf. Herodotus iii.145; Plato Lg. ix.864 e), always in the literal and concrete sense

of the word. The demoniac of Gerasa, like Samson (Judg 15:13 f.), repeatedly broke the fetters that bound him (Luke 8:29). ... Together with Silas, Paul lies in chains at Philippi (Acts 16:26). ... **desmios prisoner occurs in the NT 16 times.** ... The **crowd beseeches Pilate to release "a prisoner named Barabbas"** as part of the Passover amnesty (Mark 15:6-14 par.). Acts 16:25 reports the nocturnal **prayer and praise of Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi and observes that "the prisoners were listening to them."** ... 4. *desmos* and *desmios* signify in Paul's Prison Epistles ... that the apostle is a *desmios Christou iesou* (Philem 1,9; generally without an art.), **the prisoner (Eph 3:1) of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles "in the Lord."** ... (Exegetical Dictionary NT: 1198; NT:1199)

The Holy Spirit wanted it clearly understood that Paul was a prisoner only because of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what He said through Peter.

*If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1Pet. 4:14-16*

Paul was suffering as a Christian. He was the prisoner of Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ's prisoner. While Rome was holding him, it was Paul's faith in Jesus and desire to work with the Gentiles that had brought it about. We get a better insight into this in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

*As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. Gal. 6:12-14*

This was why they persecuted Paul in every city after he began preaching to the Gentiles. The persecution came because Paul stood with and for the Gentiles. They were Christians separate and apart from the law of Moses. The very nature of Paul's imprisonment makes this clear.

*Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." Acts 21:27-29*

The charges against Paul were directly related to his position as apostle for the Gentiles.

*But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Gal. 2:7-10*

Everything Paul was enduring was directly tied to being the apostle for the Gentiles. NKJV

*For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Rom. 11:13-15*

## for you Gentiles—

There are many prepositions that can be translated "for." This one is often used to emphasize *advantage* and *benefit*. It's meaning is over and above and it pictures someone standing over or bending over someone to shield or defend. Jesus had given it to Paul and he had zealously taken that role.

*"hyper... 2. i.q. Lat. pro, for, i. e. for one's safety, for one's advantage or benefit, (one who does a thing for another, is conceived of as standing or bending 'over' the one whom he would shield or defend... )... to be for one i.e. to be on one's side, to favor and further one's cause... after the idea of suffering, dying, giving up life, etc.;...of Christ dying to procure salvation for his own,... of Christ undergoing death for man's salvation,... of God giving up his Son..." (Thayer, 638-640; 5228)*

*"hyper ... A. with genitive, I. of Place, over, above: 1. a state of rest, 2. in a state of motion, over, across, 3. over, beyond, II. metaph., from the notion of standing over to protect, for, for defence of, in behalf of, to fight for one's country, etc. 2. for the sake of a person or thing, 3. c. inf. for the purpose of, 4. for, instead of, in the name of, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 5228)*

Paul is a prisoner because of he stand for the Gentiles. He was their advocate and their champion.

*false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Gal. 2:4-5*

Paul had spent much of his life preaching and teaching Gentiles. Because of his zeal for them, all of the Jewish unbelievers and many Jewish Christians also had formed the opinion that Paul had completely lost his love for his nation. The gift which he gathered for the poor Jewish saints was not only to relieve their needs, but also in some measure to heal the breach between the Jewish and Gentile Christian. He had brought the gift to Jerusalem though he knew it would cost him his liberty and possibly his life because he desperately wanted the Gentile gift to be accepted by the Jews. His imprisonment came as a direct result of his going to Jerusalem with the alms for the poor. If he had not gone, the Jews may not of accepted the gift, but he would certainly not have

been imprisoned. These Ephesians would know this quite well.

## 2 if indeed you have heard

Instead of beginning his prayer right here, he wants them to see just how gracious and kind God was to them. He appointed them a champion. Not only in Jesus, but while he lived Paul. They may or may not have heard this in its fulness, but it is an amazing thing God did through Paul. The term "if" is used many times in questions and to state conditions.

"ei... is **first a conditional particle, if...**; secondly, an interrogative particle, *whether...* I ei conditional... is connected, according to the variety of conditions, with various tenses and moods; viz. 1. with the Indicative of all tenses, **when anything is simply and generally assumed to be, or to be done, or to have been done, or to be about to be...**" (Thayer, p. 169-172; 1487).

By adding "indeed" (only 5 times in the NT) to "if," the Spirit gives special emphasis and prominence to this statement.

ge an enclitic particle. **Serves to strengthen or render more emphatic the word to which it is appended** by placing it in opposition to other words and thus fixing the attention upon it; ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary NT:1065)

ge It **indicates that the meaning of the word to which it belongs has special prominence**, and therefore that that **word is to be distinguished from the rest of the sentence and uttered with greater emphasis.** (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:1065)

The Spirit allows Paul's emotions to flow through these two words. **"IF INDEED!!"** should be read with prominence in the mind. It is emphasized strongly. These were the same Ephesians that he had taught daily in the school of Tyrannus for the space of two years and endured the riot where he despaired even of life.

*For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, 2Cor. 1:8-9*

These are the also the Ephesians whose elders had come to Miletus where he warned them that he was going to Jerusalem where bonds and afflictions abide him.

*And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:22-24*

Surely they knew why he was a prisoner and would not faint at the mention of his bonds(3:13).

## of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

The term "dispensation" is better translated in the modern versions as stewardship. A steward is someone who is appointed to watch over and make certain that the wishes and needs of the owner are met. This is how it was used by Jesus in one of his parables

*He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' Lk. 16:1-2*

The word is generally used of someone's house, but it is what Pharaoh did with Joseph when he set him over the entire process of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine.

*oikonomia, ... In Greek, ... The term relates primarily to household administration, and applies generally to "direction," "administration," "provision." ... In the LXX ... This advice commended itself to Pharaoh just as much as the interpretation of the dream, and he charged him with the whole execution of the matter In the NT ... first means 1. the office of household administration and the discharge of this office: Luke 16:2 ... Cor 9:17: He is entrusted with an office; he does not preach the Gospel of his own accord; he does what he has to do ..." (Kittel, TWDNT, NT:3622)*

Paul is speaking of the stewardship God entrusted to him.

*For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. 1Cor. 9:16-18*

Jesus had appeared to him and it was later revealed to him that God had chosen him from his mother's womb to this position. At the very beginning when Jesus selected him for the office it was made very clear what his stewardship would be.

*But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15-16*

*"Then he said, "The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 "For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. Acts 22:14-15*

*"But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 "I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:17-18*

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, Gal. 1:15-16*

Just as God had appeared to Moses and expected him to be faithful in everything He asked him to do, and Jesus had been faithful in all God expected him to do, Paul wanted to be faithful the same manner.

*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. Heb. 3:1-3*

Although this stewardship had landed him in prison, with many tribulations and sorrows already past, Paul could honestly say that to him it was an act of grace. Paul had been the chief of sinners, seeking to overthrow God's eternal purpose. God had chosen him to suffer many things, but to still be a part of that eternal purpose. It was an act of grace on God's part and it was received with thankfulness as a great favor.

*"charis... grace; Latin gratia: I. outward grace or favour (as we say well or ill favoured), grace, loveliness, Hom., etc.; II. grace or favour felt, whether on the part of the Doer or the Receiver: 1. on the part of the Doer, grace, graciousness, kindness, goodwill, ... for or towards one, ... 2. on the part of the Receiver, the sense of favour received, thankfulness, thanks, gratitude, ... for a thing, ... to acknowledge a sense of favour, feel grateful, ... to feel gratitude to one for a thing, ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT: 5485)*

It may seem like a strange term to use to describe prison, beatings, deprivation and loss, but Paul used it with sincerity and gratitude. Let him explain for himself.

*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1Tim. 1:12-17*

When Paul spoke of being a prisoner in behalf of Christ and the Gentiles, he wanted everyone to understand that this was a joyful and wonderful thing for him. These are words of praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonderful grace that had given him such an active role in the kingdom of God. This will be the theme of the section. Paul wanted all the brethren to be as pleased as he was at his present circumstances.

### **3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery**

The gist of this stewardship and administration is summed up in "how that." this is the "the substance or contents" of that stewardship. It is "the reason why anything is said to be or to be done." This is the "marker" that "identifies" and explains.

*"hoti... I. the substance or contents (of a statement), that; 1. joined to verbs of saying and declaring... II the reason why anything is said to be or to be done, because, since, for that, for, (a causal conjunct. ...)... a. it is added to a speaker's words to show what ground he gives for his opinion;... b. hoti makes reference to some word or words that precede or immediately follow it..." (Thayer p 458-460; 3754)*

*"hoti ... markers of identificational and explanatory clauses - 'that, namely, that is, namely that.' ... 'this is the judgment, namely, that the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light' John 3:19; 'this is the witness; namely, that God has given us eternal life' 1Jn. 5:11. 'no one has greater love than this; namely, that he gives his life on behalf of his friends' John 15:13;" (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:3754)*

His stewardship is summed up in the phrase "by revelation." The preposition "by" is often used to show a relationship or the proportion of one thing to another. His stewardship is according to and in conformity to the revelations given to him by the Holy Spirit.

*"kata,... with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of..." (Thayer Greek Lexicon, NT:2596)*

This is the greatest thing God did for Paul and what puts him up to the same level as Moses. Paul wrote almost half the NT Scriptures. God used him as a steward. Both to take out the gospel to the lost, and then to edify and build them up by writing all those letters. We learned through the sad fate of Judas and Balaam, that this stewardship is by choice and can be rejected. Paul was deeply

concerned that he fulfill in every way this stewardship given to him.

Revelation means about the same thing in Greek as it does in English. It takes something that has been covered or hidden and uncovers and reveals it.

*apokalupsis* lit., "an uncovering, unveiling" (*apo*, "from," *kalupto*, "to hide, cover"), denotes "a revelation, (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:602),

*apokaluptō apokalupsis* (figurative extensions of meaning of *apokaluptō* and *apokalupsis* 'to uncover, to take out of hiding,' not occurring in the NT) to **cause something to be fully known** - 'to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:602)

While some men have the opportunity to reveal and uncover the secrets of the material creation unlocking the ability to use electricity or other amazing things, Paul was given the opportunity to reveal and uncover secrets that had been hidden since the foundation of the world. No one had ever known what God revealed to Paul. No one had ever had this information given to them through the long ages of human existence. Paul had been blessed with the responsibility to reveal it for God. In all NT Epistles written by Paul, he was blessed with the right to reveal these things to all men. What an honor God had bestowed upon him, and Paul was very aware of it.

Prior to the time that Paul was given the revelation to uncover and reveal them, they had been a mystery. Mystery also means about the same thing in English as it does in Greek, except its development came from a different source. In English we use the word mystery to describe a genre of books in which the secret is not revealed until the last chapter. But once revealed it still stays in the genre of a mystery, but it is not longer a mystery to us.

The Greek term came from the philosophers who portrayed their learning as mysteries and by initiating them into those mysteries, they became enlightened. The NT takes a middle approach. There was no way for any man to know the things God had kept secret. But once the Holy Spirit revealed them, they were not mysterious or difficult to understand.

"*musterion* ... primarily that which is known to the *mustes*, "the initiated" (from *mueo*) , "to initiate into the mysteries"; cf. Phil. 4:12, *mueomai*, "I have learned the secret," RV). In the NT it denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:3466)

"*musterion*,... In class. Grk. **a hidden thing, secret, mystery**... in the Scriptures 1. *a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding*... 2. *a hidden purpose of counsel; secret will*: of men... of God... **the secret counsel which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly, ... In the N.T. God's plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed**..." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:3466)

It was something that was impossible to learn without the Holy Spirit. No eye, ear, or imagination entering the heart of man could bring these things into our consciousness.

*But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Cor. 2:9-13*

It was not a mystery in the normal sense that English speaking people use the term. It was not something mysterious, or hard to be understood, it was something that was hidden and kept a secret. Until revealed it would remain a mystery, after it was revealed, it would no longer be a mystery. It was clear and easy to understand. This mystery had been revealed and made known to Paul.

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith. Rom. 16:25-26*

*We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, (even) the (wisdom) that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: 8 which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. 10 But unto us god revealed (them) through the spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1Cor. 2:9-10*

*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 And he answered and said unto them, unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. ... 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not. .... Mt.13:10-11; 16-17*

whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God, 26 (even) **the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, 27 to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Col 1:25-27**

whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God, 26 (even) **the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, 27 to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this MYSTERY among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Col. 1:25-27**

**to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2:2-3**

And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. 1 Tim 3:16**

### (as I have briefly written already,

"As" is a word of proportion and degree. We can compare what he has already written in this letter with this revelation of the mystery and clearly see things that had not been made known before.

**"kathos,...1. according as, just as, even as:** in the first member of a comparison:...2. **according as i.e. in proportion as, in the degree that...**3. **since, seeing that, agreeably to the fact that.**" (Thayer, p. 314; 2531).

While "already" can refer to things that were written long ago or just recently, the term "**briefly**" limits it. While they could be speaking of all his letters, "**briefly**" limits it.

**prographō write beforehand/earlier; note ahead; write out publicly ...** There are four occurrences in the NT. The literary meaning in Eph 3:3: "as I have written to you above/before," in reference to earlier statements in the same letter ... pass. in Rom 15:4: "whatever was written in former days" .. Jude 4: noted beforehand, entered into lists, ..." (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:4270)

Paul is clearly referring to things already written in this epistle. Some look for another epistle, but the term "briefly" would easily encompass the things written in the first two chapters. He has written it in brief with few words. This is a small quantity. So it perfectly fits with what he has already written in this letter.

**"oligos... little, small, few,** of number, multitude, quantity, or size: joined to nouns... of time, **short:** ... of degree or intensity, **light, slight... in brief, briefly...**" (Thayer, p. 443; 3641)

**oligos... a relatively small quantity** - 'little, small amount.' ... **'take a little wine** to help your digestion' 1 Tim 5:23; 'he knows **he has only a little time**' Rev 12:12; ... **oligos ... pertaining to a relatively brief extent of time** - 'a little while, for a little while, a short time, brief, briefly.' 'you think you will make me a Christian in a short time' Acts 26:28. 'I have written you briefly' 1 Peter 5:12. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3641)

He has not written very much on this theme in this epistle, but he has written enough to give the general idea. The Gentiles have been:

1. Brought near by the blood of Christ. 2:13
2. Made one with the Jews. 2:14
3. Preached to of peace. 2:17
4. Given access by one Spirit to the Father. 2:18
5. Made no longer strangers and foreigners, Eph 2:19
6. Made fellow citizens with the saints Eph 2:19
7. Made members of the household of God, Eph 2:19
8. Made a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Eph 2:22

Although written of only in brief, he says nearly everything there is to say about them. Galatians and Romans may say it more fully, but the essence of the revealed mystery of the Gentiles made equal and both brought to the Father by means of the blood of Jesus Christ is clearly developed though in but few words.

### 4 by which, when you read,

Anyone can move toward and reach after Paul's understanding by reading what he has written. This term builds the bridge between Paul's writings and his knowledge and understanding gained by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Anyone can move toward this goal by reading.

**"pros** a preposition,... I with the accusative, **to towards...** denoting direction towards a thing, or position and state looking towards a thing... 1. of **the goal or limit towards which a movement is directed...** 2. It is used of **close proximity** -- the idea of direction, though not entirely lost, being more or less weakened;... 3. of relation or reference to any person or thing;... b. of **the relation or close connection entered (or to be entered) into by one person with another...**" (Thayer, p 541-543; 4314)

**pros** with gen.: to the advantage of, for; with dat.: at, by, with; with acc.: **to, toward, against; with reference to...** **Direction or inclination toward something or someone is usually indicated by pros with the acc. This meaning occurs over 700 times in the NT (VKGNT II, 691) and in all the NT writings except Jude. ... 2.a) Usually pros refers to the location toward which something is moving or at which something already is:** 1) **Movement toward a geographical location, a thing, or a person:** Matt 2:12: "not to return to Herod"; Mark 1:33, after a pf. pass. partic.: "gathered together about/before the door"; after a subst. in Eph 2:18; 1 Thess 1:9;... (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:4314)

By using this term, he strongly emphasized the goal of his writing! It is to give to all the same understanding he himself possessed. This is a wonderful promise and clear explanation of the power of the inspired word. Those who were not inspired could have the same understanding as the one who was inspired simply by reading.

Reading is more than just looking at words on a page. This term infers a learning again, or an accurate perception. It can mean public and private reading. While in English comprehension is a secondary element, in Greek comprehension is the central point. In reading one gains an exact understanding and accurate recognition of what has been read. When studying the Scriptures this is especially important.

*anaginōskō* ... from *aná* (303), an emphatic, and *ginōskō* (1097), to know. **To perceive accurately. Later it came to mean to recognize.** In Attic Gr., it **usually meant to read and always so in the NT and the Sept.** The consequential meaning is **to know by reading** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:314)

*anaginosko* primarily, **"to know certainly, to know again, recognize"** (*ana*, "again," *ginosko*, "to know"), is **used of "reading" written characters**, e. g., Matt 12:3,5; 21:16; 24:15; **of the private "reading" of Scripture**, Acts 8:28,30,32; **of the public "reading" of Scripture**, Luke 4:16; Acts 13:27; 15:21; 2 Cor 3:15; Col 4:16 (thrice); 1 Thess 5:27; Rev 1:3. ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:314),

*anaginōskō* in Greek means **"to know exactly" or "to recognise,"** and for the most part it is used with the sense of reading or public reading ... In the NT *anaginōskein* is used of the reading of a letter (Acts 15:31; 23:34; 2 Cor 1:13; 3:2; Eph 3:4) and esp. of public reading in the congregation (1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16). In John 19:20 it is used of reading the title on the cross. ... (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:314)

Those who just casually read Scripture and think that is all that is required must heed Peter's warning about the need for discernment and understanding.

*and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are **some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 2Pet. 3:15-17***

Paul said much the same thing to Timothy.

***Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2Tim, 2:15-16***

No one casually reading the Scriptures and reading in whatever their fancy might see at any given moment is a sure way to destruction. Careful and exact reading with an attempt to understand exactly what is written will bring about a wonderful blessing, the blessing of true understanding.

### **you may understand my knowledge**

This is not the verb of being or a wish or hope. It is a word for power, especially achieving power. The Holy Spirit uses this term to emphasize the power of reading and hearing.

*dúnamis*, fem. noun from *dúnamai* (1410), to be able. **Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem *dúna-* have the meaning of being able, capable.** It may even mean to will. **Contrast *ischús* (2479) which stresses the factuality of the ability, not necessarily the accomplishment.** ... Spoken of intrinsic power, either physical or moral, ... (C) **Spoken of God, the Messiah, the great power of God, meaning His almighty energy** ... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1411)

*dunamis* ... words deriving from the stem *duna* - all have the basic meaning of "being able," of "capacity" in virtue of an ability; in contrast to *ischu* -, which stresses the factuality of the ability, the stress falls on being able. ... *dunamis* ... **here means potency** in contrast to *energeia* or *entelexeia*. As **potency it is "possibility," "capacity," "ability."** ... (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:1411)

Several passages in the Bible elaborate on this.

*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 **So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isa. 55:10-11***

*So then **faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17***

*If **you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jn. 8:31-32***

*Whoever transgresses and **does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 2Jn. 9-10***

Those who beware how they hear, giving diligence to rightly divide will be able and have the power to perceive Paul's understanding. God's word is designed to do what He wants it to accomplish.

The goal is knowledge, perception or understanding.

*noéō, from *noús* (3563), the mind. To perceive, observe. To perceive with thought coming into consciousness as distinct from the perception of senses. To mark, understand, apprehend, discern. (I) To perceive, understand, comprehend, used in an absolute sense (Matt 16:9; Mark 8:17); with the heart (John 12:40); ..." Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3539)*

*noeō* know, understand 1. The verb, which refers to **the proper understanding of a matter, is found 14 times and is synonymous with (*epi-ginōskō* and *suniémi*)** ... 2. In a striking usage, *noeō* refers to **insight into the overall aim of a writing.** Readers are **addressed directly and urged to understand** (not just contemplate or consider) the entire work (Mark 13:14 par. Matt 24:15). In contrast, the narrative audience fails to understand

(noted earlier in Mark 7:18 par. Matt 15:17 and Mark 8:17 par. Matt 16:9,11). In the same way the reader of Eph 3:4 should perceptively understand the insight of the author into the plan of salvation therein recorded ..."  
Exegetical Dictionary NT:3539)

They can perceive it with the mind and understand what it means. With a careful reading of Paul's writings on this mystery (or any other for that matter), a child of God is capable of understanding and comprehending it. They do not have to twist it. The twisting comes when untaught and unstable people carelessly read without seeking to fully understand its meaning. There is no excuse for not properly understanding Paul's words. All are capable and able to do so.

Paul's knowledge is a word only used 7 times in the NT. It is a special term combining facts with comprehension and understanding. Homer used it of two rivers running together and that perfectly describes the idea of facts and information coming into the mind and the subsequent comprehension, understanding and intelligence that must arise with it.

*súnēsis*, fem. noun from *suniémi* (4920), to **comprehend, reason out. Comprehension, perception, understanding.** The word denotes **the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them ...**" (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4907)

*sunesis* akin to *suniemi*, "**to set together, to understand**," denotes (a) "**the understanding, the mind or intelligence**," Mark 12:33; (b) "**understanding, reflective thought**," Luke 2:47; 1 Cor 1:19, RV, "prudence", Eph 3:4, ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4907),

"*sunesis*,... 1 **a running together, a flowing together: of two rivers**, Homer ... 2. a. ... **understanding**... b. the understanding, i. e. **the mind so far forth as it understands.**" (Thayer, p. 604; 4907)

This is a very picturesque Greek term. When two rivers flow together they merge into one. In that merging both are made more powerful and larger. This is the beautiful word picture of how a mystery is taken into the mind, worked upon and mastered. In English we say that we have put 2 and 2 together. In Greek they said that two rivers have flowed together. Again the basic idea is that new facts flow into the mind and merge with the existing one until they are a whole. This is understanding. When new facts are merged with old and all comes together into a richer and fuller understanding of both. Paul would take his existing understanding of the Old Testament revelation, add to that the mysteries God was revealing to him through the Holy Spirit, and work with them both until they flowed together and he understood them both in a better light. A good example of this is seen in Jesus working with the those he met after His resurrection.

*And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32*

This leads to a wonderful conclusion which the children of God are allowed to draw for what is true of this mystery is true of all mysteries.

1. Paul was given all truth by revelation John 16:13 Eph 3:3
  2. We can understand what Paul did by reading his writings Eph 3:4
- Conclusion: We can understand all truth by carefully reading the word.

### **in the mystery of Christ),**

Does Paul here broaden out the term "mystery" as he did in 1:9-10?

*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him. Eph. 1:9-10*

Is he still only speaking of the Gentiles being made fellow partakers? It could be understood either way. God would reveal all mysteries with equal clarity and therefore 3:3-4 would apply to them. Yet he does refer back only to that one truth and though he has diverged greatly, it is here that the main point he is trying to make regarding his imprisonment and blessings he feels toward it. I leave to the reader to decide for himself.

### **Eph. 3:5-9**

**5 which in other ages (generations ASV NASB ESV) was not made known to the sons of men,**

The "*mystery of Christ*" was not made known to other generations of men. For many thousands of years and many generations of man, God's plans had been kept in secret. He gave some hints in the messianic prophecies of the prophets, but not enough for them to understand. Though they sought and searched diligently, it was revealed to them that the revelations of what they were given was for the time of the apostles.

**Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which**

angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

Paul had already been allowed to write Gal. 1&2 Th. 1&2 Cor. Rom. Eph. Phil. Col. Philm. and was still to write 1&2 Tim. and Titus. 13 books were written by Paul. What a great honor had been given and he felt it and wanted them to feel it. It plays a large part in the praise and adoration that has been delayed until the end of this chapter.

While the KJV/NKJV chose to translate this "ages," generations fits just as well and is more accurate to the word since this is not "aion." What the Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul had not revealed them to any previous generations.

**genea connected with *ginomai*, "to become," primarily signifies "a begetting, or birth"; hence, that which has been begotten, a family; or successive members of a genealogy, Matt 1:17, or of a race of people, possessed of similar characteristics, pursuits, etc., (of a bad character) Matt 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 16:8; Acts 2:40; or of the whole multitude of men living at the same time, Matt 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 1:48; 21:32; Phil 2:15, and especially of those of the Jewish race living at the same period, Matt 11:16, etc. Transferred from people to the time in which they lived, the word came to mean "an age," i. e., a period ordinarily occupied by each successive generation, say, of thirty or forty years, Acts 14:16; 15:21; Eph 3:5; Col 1:26; see also, e. g., Gen 15:16. In Eph 3:21 genea is combined with aion in a remarkable phrase in a doxology: "Unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations for ever and ever (wrongly in KJV 'all ages, world without end')." **The word genea is to be distinguished from aion, as not denoting a period of unlimited duration.** (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:1074)**

What is implied here is plainly stated in other Scriptures. The mystery of the gospel had been kept secret since before the creation. It had been meticulously planned and prepared, but had been kept secret from the beginning until the moment the apostles and prophets began to reveal it. It was left until the fulness of time to fully reveal the mystery which had been kept silent in the mind of God.

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith-- Rom 16:25-26*

*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, 2Tim 1:9-10*

*the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. Col. 1:26-27*

*the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 1Pet. 1:19-21*

*Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Mt. 25:34*

*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, Eph. 1:4-5*

*in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, Titus 1:2-3*

It had been a secret and a mystery because it had not been made known or revealed. God had not yet announced and communicated it. It could not be discovered or known until the moment God chose to do so.

*gnorizo ... , signifies (a) "to come to know, discover, know," Phil 1:22, "I wot (not)," i. e., "I know not," "I have not come to know" ... 2 Cor 8:1, "we make known (to you) ... (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1107)*

*gnorizo... The verb appears in the NT in 25 passages, ... 2. In the NT the word is used most frequently to mean announce, make known publicly or explicitly, and at times communicate in a solemn way (Luke 2:15,17; John 15:15; 17:26 bis; Rom 9:22,23; 16:26; 2 Peter 1:16). In all of these passages the vb. refers to revelation of the salvation from God that comes through Jesus Christ. ( Exegetical Dictionary NT:1107)*

**as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:**

It had always been God's intention to reveal all truth. Jesus had promised His apostles on His final night here on the earth that this would be the case.

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Jn. 14:26*

*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn. 16:12-13*

Jesus had also spoken of the prophets God would also send along with the apostles.

*Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, Lk. 11:49-51*

It would be to both the apostles and the prophets who were appointed by the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostle's hands. Even to this day we are enlightened by both apostles

(Matthew, John, Paul, and Peter) and prophets (Mark, Luke, James and Jude) and whoever wrote Hebrews. Jesus promised they would be guided into all truth and they were:

*3 as His divine power **has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 2Pet. 1:3***

*3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3***

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim. 3:16-17***

During their lifetime, it was all revealed and made known. What had been covered was uncovered, what was hidden was taken out of hiding, the veil had been removed and all was made clear manifested and disclosed.

*apokaluptō apokalupsis (figurative extensions of meaning of apokaluptō and apokalupsis 'to uncover, to take out of hiding,' not occurring in the NT) to **cause something to be fully known** - 'to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:602)*

*“apokalupto... 1. prop. **to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to disclose, make bare...** 2. Metaph. **to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown;** a. pass. of any method whatever by which something before unknown becomes evident... e. pass. of persons, previously concealed, making their appearance in public... “ (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, NT:601)*

From the Scriptures above, it is evident that God has not withheld any knowledge that man was entitled and needed to know. All things that pertain unto life and godliness, that the man of God may be complete furnished completely unto every good work. The faith has once for all been delivered unto the saints. All God's children in each subsequent generation have to do is carefully read with the desire to know exactly what was revealed, and they can have the same understanding in these things as the holy apostles and prophets of the first century held. This is obviously why we are built upon the apostles and prophets why they are among the gifts Christ gave to the church.

*Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, Eph. 2:19-21***

*And **He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. 4:11-12***

*And **God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 1Cor. 12:28***

Because these two offices were appointed in the church, we are all equipped to do the work of ministry and have been built on the foundation they laid and became part of. We are now blessed to see what other generations have never seen.

*But **blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Mt. 13:16-17***

*Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "**Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; 24 "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it. Lk. 10:23***

## **6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs,**

This is not the only thing in the mystery that had been revealed to them, but it is the one thing The Holy Spirit through Paul wanted to emphasized here. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. It was because he was the apostle to the Gentiles that he had been imprisoned. Ephesians had been written to show these Gentiles that they were no second class citizens in any way. He had already described this in the previous chapter.

*11 once **Gentiles in the flesh** — who are called **Uncircumcision** by what is called the **Circumcision made in the flesh by hands** — 12 that **at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ... 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Eph. 2:11-12, 19***

This is what God had begun to reveal through Peter and the other apostles and the prophets about the Gentiles beginning in Acts 10.

*Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that **God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Acts 10:34-36***

*"Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 **Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I***

**will set it up; 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. Acts 15:13-17**

What he had written briefly in the previous chapter is now completed. Gentiles are fellow heirs with Jews, just as Isaac and Jacob were with Abraham and Christians are with Jesus in His glory.

**sunkleronomos "a joint-heir, co-inheritor" (sun, "with," kleros, "a lot," and nemomai, "to possess" especially of an inheritance). ... "is used of Isaac and Jacob as participants with Abraham in the promises of God, Heb 11:9; of husband and wife who are also united in Christ, 1 Peter 3:7; of Gentiles who believe, as participants in the gospel with Jews who believe, Eph 3:6; and of all believers as prospective participants with Christ in His glory, as recompense for their participation in His sufferings, Rom 8:17." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4789)**

**of the same body,**

What had been a chasm so wide that no Jew could have imagined how it could be closed had been closed by Jesus on the cross and now they were completely equal members of the same body.

**sússōmos, adjective from sún (4862), altogether, and sōma (4983), body. United in one body, i.e., members of the body of Christ (Eph 3:6). sōma is used elsewhere of the Church... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4954)**

**and partakers of His promise**

All that the promise meant to Israel was now shared with Gentiles. There is nothing in all that God had promised His people while they were only Jews of the tribes of Israel that had not been given to the Gentiles.

**summétochos, adjective from sún (4862), together with, and métochos (3353), a partaker. Partaking with, as a subst., a joint partaker (Eph 3:6; 5:7). ... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4830)**

This was a promise dating all the way back to the first time it was given.

**Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Gen 12:1-3**

When Christ blessed all the nations of the earth according to this promise He blessed the Jewish nation right along with the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, and every other nation. All become equal partakers of the promise through obedience to the gospel .

**in Christ through the gospel,**

The Holy Spirit continues to tie everything back to those who are in Christ. Only through this relationship with Jesus can any of the spiritual blessings be given. (Eph. 1:3). Whether Jew or Gentile, if one is in Christ, then he is a fellow heir, fellow member and fellow partaker. The Holy Spirit adds an additional thought. One's connection and relationship with Christ can only be gained through the gospel. If one is not obedient to the gospel which Paul and the other apostles preached, then they cannot be in Christ.

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Rom. 1:16-17**

**7 of which I became a minister**

There were several words the Spirit could have used to describe Paul's office. He chooses the same word used for civil government.

**For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Rom 13:4**

This is the word that is used for the deacon. This is a servant who advances the interests of others.

**"diakonos,... one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; 1. univ.: of the servant of a king... of those who advance others' interests even at the sacrifice of their own;... of one who does what promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church ..." (Thayer, 138; NT: 1249)**

**The original frame of reference for the use of the entire word group of the diakon- stem in secular Greek was that of table service. The basic meaning of the verb, correspondingly, was wait on tables. ... The word group is distinct from other terms that are related in meaning in that it "has the special quality of indicating very personally the service rendered to another" (Beyer 81). Especially noteworthy is the difference in meaning between douleuo and diakoneo with the word groups belonging to each. The doul- words express a relationship of dependence and the subordination of the doulos to the kurios. diakoneo and its cognates, on the other hand, express much more strongly the idea of service on behalf of someone. (Exegetical Dictionary NT:1247)**

Paul saw himself and the Holy Spirit confirmed it, that he was a servant who had been appointed to serve in behalf of the gospel to bring the Gentiles into full fellowship with Israel. The Jews hated

him for doing this, and it was for this reason he was in prison. All of the terrible things the Jews had done to Paul through his life was because of this ministry. But Paul never felt anything but gratitude and considered it a gift of grace from God.

### according to the gift of the grace of God given to me

By using the preposition “*according to*” (*kata*) he ties his ministry to a gift of grace and to God’s great power. Without these Paul would never have been able to do what he has done. This is a free gift with the emphasis on how little the recipient deserved it. It wasn’t tied to anything on the part of one who received such a gift. This word is only used in the NT for gifts that only God can give because they are spiritual in nature or are the spiritual gifts described in 1Cor. 12.

*dōrea*: ... noun from *dídōmi* (1325), to give. A free gift with emphasis on its gratuitous character. Used in the NT of a spiritual or supernatural gift ...” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 1431)

God's grace was great indeed to take the steps which He took to send Jesus to Paul on that road to Damascus.

### by the effective working of His power.

Although changed to *by*, it is still the same *kata* as the previous phrase. Is this the power used to bring Paul into the gospel as an apostle or is it the power that Paul has used to work as an apostle. Both are true, but which one fits to context? From the next verse where he said he was “*less than the least of all saints*”, it seems he is still speaking of his own conversion and the power it took to bring it about. Although we may not be able to answer this question, it is not that important as they are both true and are linked together.

The power of God observed in the material creation was also revealed in Jesus’ miracles, resurrection and fulfilled prophecy. It was revealed on the road to Damascus in the shining light and in the discussion with Jesus. It was also revealed in all the miracles and inspiration that was given to Paul. All of this manifested two things. First, the “*effective working*” and second “*His power*.” English has taken this word for all that we call energy. This refers to all that God does that manifests His energy and activity. The creation of the sun and the energy it manifests. The power to create seeds and rain that the energy it manifests in all the crops and fruits. The power to raise Jesus from the dead and the energy it manifests.

*enérgeia*; fem. noun from *energés* (1756), at work, operative, active. Energy, the being at work, operation, efficiency, active power. In Eph 1:19, according to the efficiency, active exhibition of His power in raising up Jesus. See Eph 3:7; 4:16; Col 1:29. Especially power as exhibited in mighty works, miracles, e.g., of God (Phil 3:21; Col 2:12); of Satan (2 Thess 2:9).” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1753)

“*energeo, energiea, energema, energes* ... is found in the sense of “activity” or “energy”... It derives from *energós* (which itself derives from *en ergo einai*) and denotes intr. “to be at work,” “to act or start to act,” and trans. “to set at work”, to effect.”...” (Kittel Vol 2 p 652-654)

God wrought a great act both of power and of grace in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on that road to Damascus, healing his blindness and giving him the inspiration of the Spirit whereby he could be the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul truly appreciated this gift and never forgot what he was without it. I Cor 15:9; Eph 3:8

Along with this energy is His power. This word has more to do with ability and capability. We have not seen all that God can and is able to do. It is far about our ability to comprehend.

*dunamis* “power,” (a) used relatively, denotes “inherent ability, capability, ability to perform anything,” e. g., Matt 25:15, “ability”; Acts 3:12, “power”; 2 Thess 1:7, ... (b) used absolutely, denotes (1) “power to work, to carry something into effect,” e. g., Luke 24:49; (2) “power in action,” (from Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:1411),

*dúnamis*, fem. noun from *dúnamai* (1410), to be able. Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem *dúna-* have the meaning of being able, capable. It may even mean to will. Contrast *ischús* (2479) which stresses the factuality of the ability, not necessarily the accomplishment. ... Spoken of intrinsic power, either physical or moral, ... (C) Spoken of God, the Messiah, the great power of God, meaning His almighty energy ... Eph 1:19; ... it implies the greatness, omnipotence, and majesty of God ... With the gen. phrase “of God” it expresses the source, i.e., power imparted from God (1 Cor 2:5; 2 Cor 6:7). Spoken of Jesus as exercising the power to heal ... Spoken of miraculous power, “the mighty power of signs and wonders” (a.t.) means the power of working miracles (Rom 15:19, explained by the power of the Spirit in the next clause; see Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12; 2 Thess 2:9). ... (E) Spoken of the essential power, true nature or reality of something... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1411)

### 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints,

As Paul opened his heart more and more to the Ephesians and all future disciples, his feelings and attitudes become clearer. He revealed by inspiration the intense conflict he feels within. He is so grateful to God for His grace, energy and power that allowed him to be an apostle. But at the same time he still feels so strongly about the accomplishments of his own life. He manifests the “*poor in spirit*” and “*mourning*” Jesus described in the sermon on the Mount. Even after all these years as

his life is drawing to a close. He stills feels less than the least of all the saints.

This is much stronger than what he had said to the Corinthians about 10 years earlier.

*Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1Cor. 15:8-10*

He is not speaking about what he had done as an apostle. His unworthiness had to do with what he had done before. The fact that he had persecuted the church left him in such anguish. It could not be fixed or changed. The people who had been killed or who had fallen away because of him could never be forgotten. The remorse and regret with which Paul viewed his past must have been very profound. He uses similar terms in another letter.

But this passage is much stronger. He takes a word that is used for the least, the smallest, and the littlest, and then makes it lower than the lowest or the least of the least. He takes a superlative for the smallest and the least and then makes that the superlative of even smaller and even least.

*elachistóteros*; adjective, **an unusual comparative formed from the superlative *eláchistos* (1646), least. Less than the least, far less, far inferior** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1647)

*elachistos* "least," is a superlative degree formed from the word *elachus*, "little," the place of which was taken by *mikros* (the comparative degree being *elasson*, "less"); it is used of (a) **size**, James 3:4; (b) **amount; of the management of affairs**, Luke 16:10 (twice), 19:17, "**very little**"; (c) **importance**, 1 Cor 6:2, "**smallest (matters)**"; (d) **authority of commandments**, Matt 5:19; (e) **estimation, as to persons**, Matt 5:19 (2 nd part); 25:40,45; 15:9; **as to a town**, Matt 2:6; **as to activities or operations**, Luke 12:26; 1 Cor 4:3, "**a very small thing**." ... *elachistóteros* ... a comparative degree formed from No. 1, is used in Eph 3:8, "less than the least." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1646-1647)

It is not difficult to understand the meaning. What is difficult to understand is why Paul felt like this. At least he explained his attitude toward the apostles. He doesn't explain about the saints. He was baptized, his sins were washed away, he knew God had removed and forgotten them. This feeling did not dim his joy or remove his confidence.

But it kept him humble. In spite of all he had done, he knew that without God's grace and mercy it didn't matter. He had forever lost his attitude that he was self-made or that his abilities had in any way enhanced his stature. That could never happen. All his abilities were given by God. All his opportunities were also given by God. He had done things that he felt such great sorrow for having done.

In both of these passages the same idea is brought out. Paul never forgot what kind of man he had been prior to the revealing of Christ to him on the road to Damascus. There is an obvious parallel between what Paul did with the Gentiles in chapter 2 and what he himself is doing now. He too can look back to what he was prior to Christ entering his life and shudder. Imagine what those three days without sight must have been like for Paul:

*5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." 6 So he, **trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"** And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts. 9:5-6*

He was astonished and began to tremble when he was told that the great being he was witnessing was actually Jesus whom he had been persecuting. The emotional shock to his system must have been beyond words. The "OH NO!" that must have entered his mind! Though God in mercy forgave him of all that he had done and gave him the right to be an apostle, he never forgot what he had done and what God had done for him. He speaks of this also to Timothy must later in his life.

*12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.** 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. 1Tim. 1:12-16*

Paul was not exaggerating to Timothy. Although ignorant of what he was doing, he was in fact a chief of sinners. What he was seeking to do was eradicate the church of Jesus Christ. He was insolent which refers to his cruelty in treating these people. The book of Acts is very expressive of Paul's dealings with the church and the saints prior to his conversion.

*3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Acts 8:3*

*Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Acts 9:1-2*

*Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your*

**saints in Jerusalem. Acts 9:13**

**"I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5 "as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. Acts 22:4-5**

**"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 "This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 "And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. 12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, Acts 26:9-12**

From the above scriptures the following composite can be put together. Saul made havoc of the church in Jerusalem after the death of Stephen by laying hands on men and women and casting them into prison. In doing this he scattered the entire church in Jerusalem. After the church in Jerusalem was destroyed, Saul continued to breath threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. He could not get these people out of his mind. He himself admits that he was exceedingly enraged against them. He punished them in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme Jesus Christ. If they would not do this then he would cast his vote that they be put to death. He even went to foreign cities to bring them back in chains to Jerusalem to either face death or blasphemy. Truly no blacker picture could be painted against any man. Yet this is only a summary of the evil of the man. Imagine the things that some of the saints could have told about how they treated their parents or their spouses or their children. How he tortured them with the agonizing decision of losing their lives or losing their faith. Paul never gave himself the luxury of putting this out of his mind. He used it to endure the hardships and sacrifices that his office brought upon him.

Though lengthy, I believe this information is vital to our understanding of the apostle Paul, the things that made him what he was, and his meaning in the scripture before us. When Paul says he is less than the least of all the saints, he is not exaggerating.

The term "least" describes something that is the smallest it can be, the least it can be whether in size, amount, importance, authority or excellence. Hence Paul was the greatest of the least, the highest of the lowest. Less than the very least, lower than the very lowest. He felt that he was not even worthy of being compared favorably with the very lowest of them. Yet God had given him a wonderful gift and made him, less than the least, an apostle. This is the grace he speaks of in the next verse.

### **this grace was given,**

Paul considered it one of the greatest gifts of grace that God could have bestowed upon him to allow him the chance to serve him in the capacity of an apostle to the Gentiles. It was not just his own salvation and God's forgiveness of all the sins listed above that moved his heart in gratitude and appreciation, but the opportunity to preach to the Gentiles and the subsequent trials, heartaches and sacrifices it brought into his life. The opportunity to serve and give God glory and praise.

This is certainly a different perspective to Paul's being in jail as a prisoner of Christ. Far from being bitter or angry, Paul was pleased to have been given such a blessing and honor.

### **that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,**

This is not just preaching. It is the preaching of the good news.

*euaggelizo ... euáγγελος (n.f.), bringing good news, which is from eu (2095), good, well, and aggélō (n.f.), to proclaim, tell. To evangelize, proclaim the good news, preach the gospel. ..."* (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT: 2097)

*euangelizomai . This word means "to proclaim good news" (1 Kings 1:42). In view of 1 Kings 1:42 the basic sense might seem to be simply "to deliver a message," but the stem itself contains the element of joy, so that announcing a victory is a common use and the messenger views himself as the bearer of good tidings ...* (Kittel, TDWNT NT 2097)

*eú; adverb ... (n.f.), good, brave, noble. Well, good. (I) Particularly with verbs, "that it may be well with thee," that you may be prosperous ... (II) In commendations as "Well done!" (Matt 25:21); followed by a noun and an adj. (Matt 25:23), "Well done, servant, a good one" (a.t.). See Luke 19:17. ... (III) Used extensively as a prefix to comp. verbs with the meaning of well, good, and hence often used as an intens., e.g., eulogéō (2127), to eulogize, bless; eukairía (2120), good or appropriate opportunity. ..."* (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2095)

This preaching of the good news among the Gentiles was all based on the unsearchable riches of Christ. Paul calls the gospel the "unsearchable riches of Christ." These are "riches" that are beyond the ability to search out and understand. These are riches that are the high point on any scale. Wealth on its grandest scale. This word is often joined to spiritual blessings in Christ. There is the riches of ... Rom 2:4, "of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering"; Eph 3:16, "of His glory"

Rom 11:33, of His wisdom and knowledge; Eph 1:7 and 2:7, "of His grace"; 1:18, "of the glory of His inheritance in the saints".

*"ploutos... a high point on any scale and having the implication of value as well as abundance - 'great, abundant, abundantly, greatly, extremely.' ... 'his very great grace' Eph. 1:7. ... indicates the extent of the doxa (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:4149)*

*ploutos ... is used in the singular (I) of material "riches," used evilly, Matt 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14; 1 Tim 6:17; James 5:2; Rev 18:17; (II) of spiritual and moral "riches," (a) possessed by God and exercised towards men, Rom 2:4, "of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering"; 9:23 and Eph 3:16, "of His glory" (i. e., of its manifestation in grace towards believers); Rom 11:33, of His wisdom and knowledge; Eph 1:7 and 2:7, "of His grace"; 1:18, "of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"; 3:8, "of Christ"; Phil 4:19, "in glory in Christ Jesus," RV; Col 1:27, "of the glory of this mystery... Christ in you, the hope of glory"; (b) to be ascribed to Christ, Rev 5:12; (c) of the effects of the gospel upon the Gentiles, Rom 11:12 (twice); (d) of the full assurance of understanding in regard to the mystery of God, even Christ, Col 2:2, RV; (e) of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor 8:2 (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4149)*

The riches of these spitual blessings are unsearchable because the wealth of Christ Himself who has given them is also unsearchable.

*anexichniastōs ... a, negative, n, euphonic, ex (ek), "out," and an adjectival form akin to ichneuo, "to trace out" (ichnos, "a footprint, a track"), is translated "unsearchable" in Eph 3:8, of the riches of Christ; in Rom 11:33, "past tracing out," of the ways of the Lord..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:421)*

*anexichniastōs; ... adjective from the priv. a (1), without, and exichniázō (n.f.), to explore. Impossible to be traced out, untraceable, unsearchable (Rom 11:33; Eph 3:8; Sept.: Job 5:9; 9:10; 34:24). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:421)*

The gospel Paul preached to the Gentiles is the incomprehensible and untraceable riches which Christ offers. The first 2 Chapters of Ephesians are only a summary of the many spiritual blessings which God has blessed saint with in Christ. The wealth of these blessings can only dimly comprehended. They are in reality unsearchable. They cannot be fully traced out. It is impossible to know all of them. We have more than we can ever even know. Any sacrifice which preaching and offering this to others might bring upon Paul or any other Christian ought to be willingly taken.

**that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,**

This is not just the preaching of the herald (*kerusso*), found in "*preach the word*" (2Tim. 4:2) but the proclamation of the good message. Paul was sent forth to proclaim to the Gentiles that God still loved them, He had made provisions to save them from the sins and offer an opportunity to come back into fellowship with Him.

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The incomprehensible nature of what Christ did for us by leaving heaven and living a perfect life in the midst of the temptation of Satan who hated and sought to destroy Him and the mission he had been sent to accomplish. Then, after living that perfect life, to be willing to go to the cross suffering the shame, and anguish to rescue us from Satan and restore us to God.

*10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ... 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. 2:10, 14-16*

But that is only one side of the riches of Christ. In the first chapter, the Holy Spirit reveal a portion of the "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" that He purchased for us. The wealth, riches, abundance and magnificence of what He has made possible will not be fully understood until we are in our new body, our new heavens and earth, in the city whose builder and maker is God. We simply need to understand that they are unsearchable, impossible to trace out, and incapable of being explored.

*anexichniástos ... a, negative, n, euphonic, ex (ek), "out," and an adjectival form akin to ichneuo, "to trace out" (ichnos, "a footprint, a track"), is translated "unsearchable" in Eph 3:8, of the riches of Christ; in Rom 11:33, "past tracing out," of the ways of the Lord..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:421)*

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The good news Paul preached to the Gentiles is the beginning of a journey into the untraceable riches which Christ offers. Any sacrifice which preaching and offering this to others might bring upon Paul or any other Christian ought to be willingly taken.

## 9 and to make all see

In addition to offering them the good news about the unsearchable wealth Christ has for them, Paul was also commissioned to bring into the light, enlighten, and illuminate things that had been hidden since before the creation of the heavens and the earth.

*"photizo... 1. intransitive to give light, to shine... 2. transitive a. properly to enlighten, light up, illumine... b. to bring to light, render evident... c. by a use only biblical and ecclesiastical to enlighten spiritually, imbue with saving knowledge..." (Thayer,., p. 663; 5461).*

*photizo from phos, "light," (a), used intransitively, signifies "to give light, shine," Rev 22:5; (b), used transitively, "to enlighten, illumine," is rendered "enlighten" in Eph 1:18, metaphorically of spiritual "enlightenment"; so John 1:9, i. e., "lighting every man" (by reason of His coming); Eph 3:9, "to make (all men) see" (RV marg., "to bring to light"); Heb 6:4, "were enlightened"; 10:32, RV, "enlightened," KJV, "illuminated." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5461)*

This is the obligation and the duty that was laid upon Paul when Jesus appeared to him. Jesus appeared "to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you" and "open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

*So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Acts 26:15-18*

Paul understood the nature of this call and spoke of it later.

*For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 1Cor. 9:16-17*

Yet what had been given to him as a stewardship and a dispensation was now the passion and goal of his entire life. What an amazing opportunity God had given to Paul. He took it seriously and worked as diligently as he possibly could.

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1Cor. 15:10*

He sought to help them leave behind the ignorance, darkness and spiritual blindness which had closed their minds to the truth.

## what is the fellowship (dispensation ASV administration NAS) of the mystery,

Though there is a textual difference between the Textus Receptus and Nestle Aland, two things are clear. First, there is no doubt that the evidence for "dispensation" over "fellowship" is overwhelming. Second, the words are so closely aligned that we would come to the same doctrinal conclusion.

There is an obvious fellowship between a steward and the owner. A fellowship that was broken in the parable of the unjust steward makes no difference. The definitions of the two terms overlap so much that there is no little practical difference between them. This is made clear in the parable of the unjust steward where this word is used twice.

*He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that **this man was wasting his goods**. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? **Give an account of your stewardship, (oikonomia) for you can no longer be steward.**' 3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For **my master is taking the stewardship (oikonomia) away** from me. Lk. 16:1-2*

While stewardship is the work of the steward, this word takes it one step further. Paul only has a small part in the scope of this administration and dispensation. While Paul made it known it is vastly higher and more comprehensive than what Paul himself was over. This is the dispensation and administration of the fullness of the times! Spanning eternity and beginning after Jesus died on the cross. Paul's role in this dispensation was to help set it up and make it known.

*that in **the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. Eph 1:10***

*oikonomia, fem. noun from oikonoméō (3621), to be a manager of a household. The **position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or of property, either one's own or another's** (Luke 16:2; Sept.: Isa 22:19); **a spiritual dispensation, management, or economy** (1 Cor 9:17; Eph 1:10; 3:2; Col 1:25). The "dispensation of God"... Active, **the administrative activity of the owner or of the steward; pass., that which is administered, the administration or dispensation of the fullness of times** (Eph 1:10)...." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3622)*

*"oikonomia,... the management of a house-hold or of household affairs; specifically, **the management, oversight, administration, of other's property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship**: Lk. 16:2-4; hence the word is transferred by Paul in a theocratic sense to the office (duty) intrusted to him by God (the lord and master) of proclaiming to men the blessings of the gospel, 1 Cor. 9:17;... **the office of administrator (stewardship) intrusted by God, Col 1:25... univ. administration, dispensation...**" (Thayer, p. 440; 3622)*

**which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden (which for ages hath been hid ASV)**

The "beginning of the ages" is a single Greek term which is defined:

*aiōn ... (I) Age, **an indefinitely long period or lapse of time, perpetuity, ever, forever, eternity.** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:165)*

*"aion...1. age (Latin aevum, which is ... a human lifetime ... 2. **an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity, ...** Hence, in the N. T. used: ... **forever**, Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:613*

*aiōn ... **In its primary, it signifies time, short or long, in its unbroken duration; ... essentially time as the condition under which all created things exist, and the measure of their existence; signifying time, ...**" (Trench's Synonyms NT:2889)*

Because of the ambiguity of the term and since it is in the plural, the NKJ translators took it one step further than ASV. The Holy Spirit had already spoken of this as "before the foundation of the world" in 1:4 and "other ages" in 2:5. These things have been in God's mind before the creation of this present age, they have been in his mind and hidden away further back than man can even comprehend.

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, Rom 16:25-26***

*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, 2Tim. 1:9-10***

Before it was revealed through the gospel entrusted to Paul and the other apostles, it had been kept hidden.

*However, **we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."** 1Cor. 2:6-9*

*attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to **the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2:2-3***

It was concealed and kept hidden from all.

*apokruptō, from apó (575), from, away, and kruptō (2928), to hide. To hide away, conceal. Trans., the money (Matt 25:18). Metaphorically, to hide, not to reveal, followed by apó with the gen. of person (Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21); used in an absolute sense (1 Cor 2:7; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26;) (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:613)*

*apokrupto "to conceal from, to keep secret" (apo, "from," and kruptō "to cover, conceal, keep secret" (Eng., "crypt," "cryptic," etc.), is used metaphorically, in Luke 10:21, of truths "hidden" from the wise and prudent and*

revealed to babes; 1 Cor 2:7, of God's wisdom; Eph 3:9, of the mystery of the unsearchable riches of Christ, revealed through the gospel Col 1:26, of the mystery associated with the preceding. ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:613),

It is truly a unique blessing which God had offered to Paul as an apostle. It is such an honor and privilege to have access to this wisdom.

## In God

There are some interesting questions that can't be answered. If it was hidden in God, then who knew? It is clear that man didn't, but what about the angels, what about the principalities and powers in the heavenly places? What about Word? The angels clearly didn't know.

*things which angels desire to look into. 1 Peter 1:10*

*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. Mt. 24:36*

*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mk. 13:32*

## who created all things (through Jesus Christ)

All translations with the exception of the KJV/NKJV do not have "through Jesus Christ." There is no reason why it would have been left off, but one reason why it might have been added.

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. Col. 1:15-16*

Thus both translations are doctrinally sound, and both translations perfectly fit the context. If only God is under consideration then it fits with the idea that all the plans for the material and the spiritual were from Him.

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. Rom. 11:33-36*

If we add through Jesus Christ, then he is preparing for the means by which all these plans were realized.

*according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. 3:11-12*

## 10 to the intent that now

The term "intent" is placed here to connect the thoughts of the previous verse to this one. Paul had been given the gift of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles and give the opportunity to all men to see the administration and dispensation of the mystery that had been hidden in God since the beginning of the ages. This is the reason, intent and purpose. All that God had asked Paul to do had been done "to the intent that," "to the end that," and "in order that" the things revealed in this passage might come into fruition and fulfillment.

*hina; conjunction. That, so that, for the purpose of, construed usually with a subjunctive, seldom with the optative, often with the indicative marking the end, purpose. Also used to indicate the cause for, or on account of which anything is done. Can be translated, "to the end that," "in order that it might [or may] be." It may also be used simply to indicate a happening, event or result of anything, or that in which the action terminates. ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2443)*

*"hina... I. An adverb of place,... a. where; in what place. b. in what place; whither... II a final conjunction (for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention) denoting purpose and end: to the intent that; to the end that, in order that;... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;... (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)*

It was God's will that all men be enlightened to the mystery He had hidden because the time had finally come and the plan had been fulfilled and brought into being. God chose Paul to be the instrument through which all this would be accomplished "from his mother's womb." Paul, nor any man had any part in this choice. God had separated him and providentially prepared him for this work. When the time came, the gospel was given to him directly by revelation. He received nothing from man.

*1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), ... 11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. .... 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, Gal 1:1, 11-12, 15-16*

The awe, amazement and reverence in which we ought to hold his words is made clear here. God chose him to reveal these things and we should be amazed that God would give such a wonderful blessing to a man.

## the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church

Subject	Verb	Method/Means	For the Benefit and Personal Interest
<i>the manifold wisdom of God</i>	<i>be made known</i>	<i>by the church</i>	<i>to the principalities and powers in the heavenly</i>

The word order in the original language is seen in the ASV translation below. The NKJV/ASV put it into the order it would be read in English with the subject (*wisdom*) first and the verb (*made known*) second. Thirdly they put the method and means (*through the church*) by which the wisdom will be made known. Lastly and with great amazement and astonishment on the part of all who read this passage, it was done for the benefit and personal interest (*dative*) of (*principalities and powers in the heavenly places*). The ESV and AMP change it to put the method and means first, then the subject second, then the verb and finally those for whom it would benefit.

(1) <i>made known</i>	(2) <i>principalities and powers</i>	(3) <i>through the church</i>	(4) <i>manifold wisdom of God</i>	ASV
(4) <i>manifold wisdom</i>	(2) <i>be made known</i>	(3) <i>by the church</i>	(1) <i>principalities and powers</i>	NKJV/NAS
(3) <i>through the church</i>	(4) <i>manifold wisdom</i>	(2) <i>made known</i>	(1) <i>rulers and authorities</i>	ESV/AMP

God's wisdom towers far above anything that those who He created can comprehend as Job found when He was questioned by God.

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! Rom. 11:33**

But nothing in this material creation is complex enough to use as a true model that reveals the fullness of that wisdom. The word "*manifold*" captures the goal of seeing the full vista of God's wisdom. But as a compound word, it too is complex and must be carefully considered. It's root term describes things that are many-colored and things that are diversified, various. When the adjective much is added to it, it makes it far more abundant and plenteous. It adds weight, force, intensity, and size.

*"polupoikilos... (polus and poikilos); 1. much-variegated; marked with a great variety of colors: of cloth or a painting;... 2. much varied, manifold... manifesting itself in a great variety of forms..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4182).*

*"poikilos ... many-colored, spotted, mottled, pied, dappled, of leopards, fawns, Hom., etc. II. of robes, wrought in various colours, brodered, ... III. metaph. changeful, various, diversified, manifold, Aesch., Plat.:- (Liddell and Scott, Greek Lexicon. NT:4164)*

*"polus,... much used a. Of multitude, number, many numerous, great... abundant, plenteous... b. with nouns denoting an action an emotion, a state, which can be said to have as it were measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition, much l. q. great, strong, intense, large... c. of time much, long..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4183)*

Beginning with many-sided, multi-colored or multi-faceted we might begin with a diamond that has been cut into multitudes of facets and reflects light in every possible way. But with "*polus*," it isn't just any diamond, it is a superlative diamond in size and measure. But a diamond cannot hold the magnitude of the rainbow which also breaks down light into all its forms and nuances. Every color God has placed into light can be discerned in the rainbow. It reveals light in a way no one could ever have imagined until the see it.

This is what God sought to do with His wisdom. The greater the problem and the more amazing the solution, the higher the wisdom becomes and can be demonstrated. "*wise management as shown in forming the best plans and selecting the best means, including the idea of sound judgment and good sense.*"

*sophia ... is properly wisdom. It denotes mental excellence in the highest and fullest sense, expressing an attitude as well as an act of the mind. It comprehends knowledge and implies goodness, including the striving after the highest ends, as well as the using of the best means for their attainment. It is never ascribed to any one but God and good men, except in a plainly ironical sense. ...." (Berry's Synonyms NT:5428)*

*sophía, fem. noun from sophós (4680), wise. Wisdom, skill, tact, expertise in any art. In the NT, it refers to wisdom: ... (I) Skill in the affairs of life, practical wisdom, wise management as shown in forming the best plans and selecting the best means, including the idea of sound judgment and good sense (Acts 6:3; 7:10: Col 1:28; 3:16; 4:5)..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4678)*

When God envisioned creating man as in His image and likeness, He also foresaw the terrible damage that would be wrought if this freewill being chose to sin. As He considered it from every side, He understood the terrible damage it would create, but He also saw the solution that would resolve it and make it though it had never been. He then envisioned every aspect of the gospel and the price of the incarnation and death of the Word after He became flesh.

### be made known

This is a very specialized word only used a few times (25) in the NT. It refers to those moments when God chose to make known and communicate in a solemn way something that had not been known before. God intended to do this with His wisdom.

*gnōrizō*... **make known, reveal; know** ... The verb **appears in the NT in 25 passages**, including 2 occurrences in the Luke ... (2:15,17), 3 in John (15:15; 17:26 bis), and in Acts 2:28 and 7:13 ... **The other appearances all belong to Paul and to the Pauline sphere of influence. Ephesians and Colossians**, along with John, make special use of this word in order to give prominence to the character of the Christian message as revelation (Rom 9:22,23; 16:26; 1 Cor 12:3; 15:1; 2 Cor 8:1; Gal 1:11; Phil 1:22; 4:6; then Col 1:27; 4:7,9; Eph 1:9; 3:3,5,10; 6:19,21; 2 Peter 1:16). ... 2. **In the NT the word is used most frequently to mean announce, make known publicly or explicitly, and at times communicate in a solemn way** (Luke 2:15,17; John 15:15; 17:26 bis; Rom 9:22,23; 16:26; 2 Peter 1:16). **In all of these passages the vb. refers to revelation of the salvation from God that comes through Jesus Christ.** ( Exegetical Dictionary NT:1107)

## through the church

All of this culminated in the greatest example of God's intense and magnificent multifaceted and multicolored wisdom: the church. By using "*dia*," there can be no doubt that it was through the church as the means or instrument that the manifold wisdom was revealed. The church was the agent by means of and through which God's manifold wisdom could be fully and completely seen.

*dia*... A. with the *genitive*: **through**... III. of the **Means or Instrument by which anything is effected**; because what is done by means of a person or thing seems to pass as it were through the same... 2. of the **instrument used to accomplish a thing; or the instrumental cause in the stricter sense**:... *by the service, the intervention of, by means of, with the help of*... 3. with the *gen. of a thing* *dia* is used to denote the manner in which a thing is done, or the formal cause... (Thayer, 132-135; 1223)

*dia*, preposition governing Genitive and Accusative ... **radical sense, through**. A. With genitive I. of **Place or Space**: 1. of motion **in a line, through, right through**, ... III. **Causal, through, by** 1. **of the Agent, by** the mouth of messengers, ... 2. **of the Instrument or Means, ...** (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 1223)

*dia* ... A. *dia* with Genitive ... 1. **Spatial**: "through," "through ... to," ... 4. **Instrumental**: a. with genitive of cause: **"by means of," "with," "through"**; b. with genitive of person: "through the mediation of...." (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:1223)

The manifold wisdom of God, the many sided multifaceted wisdom which God possesses demands a very special masterpiece to fully exhibit itself. But this was not for man. Man is not in the position to understand the complex nature of the damage he had done. Nor can man fully appreciate the amazing things that God was willing to do to bring this about. After this age is complete and these things are all accomplished man will finally see it, but then it will be too late.

God wanted all His servants in the church to understand just how much wisdom and insight have been expended to make the church possible and to make it as powerful and functional as it is. So He takes us out of the earthly realm and more fully introduces us to the heavenly realm. To a spiritual being, the church is seen in its full glory. They see the church as the greatest thing with which to gauge God's wisdom. It is His greatest masterpiece! Far greater than any one other thing He created in the physical realm or all of it combined.

## to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

It is very important that we fully understand the nature both of the principalities and powers and where they are located in the heavenly places.

Principalities is a word things that have the primacy, authority, sovereignty and ability to exercise power. Those who exercise such rule have been given this name. Sadly, we know very little about this authority and power. We know they exist but not much more.

*archē* ... **occurs 55 times in the NT... archē always signifies 'primacy'** (Delling 479), whether a) **of time**: beginning (origin), b) **of place**: **point of origin or departure**, or c) of **rank**: **power, dominion, kingdom, office**. ... a) Where it is used in the temporal sense of **the point at which something begins**, this point can be thought of as included in the temporal process or as prior, external to, and unaffected by it, i.e., as the origin or principium. b) In a spatial sense the *archē* in the scene in Acts 10:11; 11:5 are the corners of the sheet. c) The meaning which has regard to rank — **authority, sovereignty, or exercise of power**, whether in a neutral or in a personal sense — is made more precise on the basis of each specific context in which the word stands. ... f: **the sphere of one's authority or rule - 'sphere of authority, limit of one's rule.'** ... 'the angels who did not stay within the sphere of their rule' Jude 6. (Exegetical Dictionary NT:746)

*archē* "**beginning, government, rule,**" is used of ... **beings who exercise rule, called "principalities"**: (a) of holy angels, Eph 3:10, the church in its formation being to them the great expression of "the manifold (or "much-varied") wisdom of God"; Col 1:16; (b) of evil angels, Rom 8:38; Col 2:15, ... **In Jude 6, RV, it signifies, not the first estate of fallen angels (as KJV), but their authoritative power, "their own" indicating that which had been assigned to them by God, which they left**, aspiring to prohibited conditions. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:746)

Powers is another general term that is applied to a specific group. They have delegated authority and to the degree that that authority has been delegated they rule with the power of authority.

*exousia*... **power** 1. **power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission**... 2. **physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endue, which he either possess or exercises**... 3. **the power of authority (influence) and of right... delegated authority**... 4. **the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed)...one who possess authority; ... the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates; used in**

the plur. of a certain class of angels..." (Thayer, p. 225; 1849)

*exousía*, fem. noun from *éxesti* (1832), it is permissible, allowed. Permission, authority, right, liberty, power to do something (Acts 26:12). As *éxesti* denies the presence of a hindrance, it may be used either of the capability or the right to do a certain action. The words *éxesti* and *exousía* combine the two ideas of right and might. As far as right, authority, or capability is concerned, it involves ability, power, strength (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1849)

For these principalities and power their use in Scripture is far more instructive than the definitions of the terms. These are beings who possess great power and rule. While they exist in this realm on a limited basis, it is in the heavenly realm that we must focus. These are beings joined with angels, and exist in the age to come. Satan is one of these powers along with the spiritual host of wickedness, it is clear that these are a special class of beings in the heavenly realms, made up of both the wicked and the godly.

## Principalities and Powers

*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:38-39*

*which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. Eph. 1:20-21*

*in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, Eph. 2:2*

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph. 6:12*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Col. 1:15-17*

*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. Col. 2:9-10*

*And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col. 2:14-15*

*epouranios, "heavenly," what pertains to, or is in, heaven (epi, in the sense of "pertaining to," not here, "above"), has meanings corresponding to some of the meanings of ouranos, A, No. 1. It is used (a) of God the Father, Matt 18:35; (b) of the place where Christ "sitteth at the right hand of God" (i. e., in a position of divine authority), Eph 1:20; and of the present position of believers in relationship to Christ, 2:6; where they possess "every spiritual blessing," 1:3; (c) of Christ as "the Second Man," and all those who are related to Him spiritually, 1 Cor 15:48; (d) of those whose sphere of activity or existence is above, or in contrast to that of earth, of "principalities and powers," Eph 3:10; of "spiritual hosts of wickedness," 6:12, RV, "in heavenly places," for KJV, "in high places"; (e) of the Holy Spirit, Heb 6:4; ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:2032)*

Once again it is from the verses and not so much from the definitions that we get the full scope of its meaning. After looking a many of these verses it is evident that it refers to things that are in heaven, exist in heaven, or will exist in heaven.

## In the Heavens

*If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? Jn. 3:12*

*As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 1Cor. 15:48-49*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Eph. 1:3*

*which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Eph. 1:20-21*

*and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2:6-7*

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph. 6:12*

*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, Phil. 2:10-11*

who serve **the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." Heb. 8:5-6

Therefore it was necessary that **the copies of the things in the heavens** should be purified with these, but **the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.** Heb 9:23

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. Heb. 11:16

There are clues in the scriptures that there is some degree of authority among the angelic beings. Michael and Gabriel are the only ones mentioned. Michael seems to have the most authority.

*"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and **behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me**, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Dan. 10:13*

*"But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. **(No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.** Dan. 10:21*

*And the angel answered and said to him, **"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.** Lk. 1:19*

*And **the angels who did not keep their proper domain (principality ASV), but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;** Jude 6-7*

*Yet **Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil**, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 1:9*

*And war broke out in heaven: **Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,** Rev. 12:7*

With these passages coupled with the one above, I believe it is safe to conclude that Paul speaks of angels here. He is certainly not thinking about men when he speaks of rulers being impressed with God's wisdom through the church. That only leaves spiritual beings. The question about whether this includes both evil and good principalities has been debated down through the centuries. They are listed as being in the heavenly places. When Christ openly triumphed over them they saw His wisdom and power but it is doubtful it brought any glory to Him.

Paul considers it a great privilege to be a part of this. No amount of suffering or deprivation could in any way hinder him. He is a man with a cause worth fighting for. He is a part of the great revealing of the manifold wisdom of God to the heavenly beings. His role is to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. It is a worthy occupation and no one should feel sorry for Paul.

Eph. 3:11-16

*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Eph. 3:10*

## Synopsis:

In the previous class we learned that there is much more to the church than what we see in this life. There were goals and plans for this to affect the heavenly realm just as it did ours. While the purpose of the church here is to bring salvation and help men grow back into the image and likeness of God, it serves an equally important purpose in heaven. The angelic hosts in the heavenly places also saw the church Jesus built and bought. As they looked at the church from every angle they continued to see more and more nuances, facets and colors of God's wisdom. Every aspect of the church brought more and more respect, awe and reverence to them as they saw the wisdom it reflected.

## 11 according to the eternal purpose

The enormity of the statements of the previous verse are strengthened further. Not only did God plan the church for the purpose of revealing His wisdom to the angels, but this church also took an important place in God's eternal purpose. All of this was "according to" this eternal purpose. It was "**according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard.**" (Thayer NT:2596). Everything that Paul was doing and everything that the Ephesians were doing in the church was all in fulfillment and agreeable to what God had purposed and planned. As revelation about his purpose unfolds we see that it is focused on the sinners God called through the gospel to be conformed to the image of His Son. This purpose and grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to **those who are called according to His purpose.** 29 **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.** 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Rom. 8:28-30*

*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,** 10 but has now been revealed*

by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, 2Tim. 1:9-10

A purpose is a plan that came as a result of God's will. Before time began, God had laid out a specific set of goals and the plans to reach them. From the way that this world views the church today, one would think it had only a minor role, but that is far from the truth.

*próthesis*, feminine noun from **protíthēmi (4388) to purpose or plan A setting forth, presentation, an exposition, determination, plan, or will. It involves purpose, resolve, and design. A placing in view or openly displaying something. A thought or purpose** (Acts 11:23; 27:13). **When used of the purpose of God, it exclusively refers to salvation** (2 Tim 1:9). Therefore, in Rom 8:28, "those who are the called according to his purpose," ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4286)

*próthesis*, **There are 12 occurrences in the NT.** Mark 2:26 par. **Matt 12:4/Luke 6:4 speaks of "the bread of the presence" (literally "bread of the presentation")** Elsewhere **prothesis means intention, resolve:** ... in Rom 8:28 refers to God's **purpose/deed** in the sense of a divine decision for salvation that transcends history ... , Exegetical Dictionary NT: 4286)

For the church to have been planned from eternity with the express purpose of saving man and revealing His wisdom, it is a vital part of it. Since this was God's purpose we need to make it our purpose. If God wants the church to show His wisdom then we need to keep our wisdom out of it entirely. The only way we can help God is to keep the church as pure and sound as is possible.

What God had planned, He has accomplished. What we plan must be to help Him in His plan not block Him by adding out own wisdom to His.

**which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,**

"Accomplished" comes from the root term produce, construct, form or fashion. It is the end result of an action and plan or the product that is produced from an effort. God brought into being everything He had planned and purposed.

*poieo...* **I. to make** ... 1. ... a. with the names of the things made, **to produce, construct, form, fashion,** etc. ... **to create produce:** of God, as the **author** of all things... b. joined to nouns denoting a state or condition, it signifies **to be the author or, to cause** ... **II to do** ... i.e. to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind... *poieo* signifies **to carry out, to execute...** (Thayer, p. 524-527; NT:4160)

The plan or course of action which God chose to bring into being was all accomplished in Christ. God chose Jesus Christ our Lord to be the one who executed and brought all that God had planned. From the moment Jesus left heaven until He returned it was His determined and fixed purpose to fulfill God's purpose.

*Therefore, when coming into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure." 7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me — To do Your will, O God."* Heb. 10:5-7

**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work** Jn. 4:34

**I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.** Jn. 5:30

**For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.** Jn. 6:37-39

He also expected and demanded that we have the same fixed and single minded purpose.

*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*** Mt. 7:21

This passage explains all this. By doing the Father's will we will also be helping God accomplish His eternal purpose. Those who introduce their own will into the church create an alloy of God's wisdom and our own. This will never accomplish God's eternal purpose and we should reject any desire on our part to make such changes. This is the very reason God rejected Saul and took David.

*And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, **'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'*** Acts 13:22

**12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence**

Since the church was the culmination of God's eternal purpose, and through obedience to the gospel we are now in Christ and an integral part of that plan, it is only fitting that we feel confident in that position. When we are seeking to do the will of the Father and keep the church in its pristine purity as revealed in the Scriptures, we have the right to feel boldness. This is a boldness that arises because we are in Christ. There is still nothing within ourselves that would justify boldness and confidence, but because it was all centered on Christ and we are now in Christ we can have this joyous confidence that God will save us.

*parrésia*, ... (NT:3954) ... **openness, publicness, candor; (joyous) confidence** *parrésiazomai* (NT:3955) **speak openly/freely; gain courage** ... *parrésia* occurs 31 times in the NT, ... **refers properly to one's freedom to say anything** ... and thence to straightforwardness and openness in speech. In the Greek realm this word group occurs above all among political authors. ***parrésia* is virtually the equivalent of the "freedom (of speech)"** of free citizens in the Attic democracy ... **In Jewish texts, *parrésia* (with 12 occurrences in the LXX, *parrésiazomai* with 5) acquires new and unique significance** ... **Just as God leads those delivered from**

**bondage "in freedom/with raised heads" Lev 26:13)... so also does the righteous person and the person accepted by God have "freedom, confidence, and joyous trust" ... 3. a) In about half (about 22) of the NT occurrences of both vb. and noun, they refer to publicness or openness of speech and action (® b, c). In the other occurrences the element of candor and confidence in God predominates ... Exegetical Dictionary NT:3954)**

**parresia from pas, "all," rthesis, "speech" denotes (a), primarily, "freedom of speech, unreservedness of utterance," Acts 4:29,31; 2 Cor 3:12; 7:4; Philem 8; ... (b) "the absence of fear in speaking boldly; hence, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, without any connection necessarily with speech"; the RV has "boldness" in the following; Acts 4:13; Eph 3:12; 1 Tim 3:13; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19,35; 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14;..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:3954).**

Along with this joyful sense of boldness and courage we also have "access with confidence." Like Paul, we know there are things in our lives that make us feel "less than the least of all the saints." But through the grace and mercy of God and through a good understanding of His plan to redeem us, we have access. This is a word that also describes the means. We have access because we have been led and brought into the presence of God through the Jesus and the church which is His body.

**"prosagoge... lit., "a leading or bringing into the presence of" (pros, "to," ago, "to lead"), denotes "access," with which is associated the thought of freedom to enter through the assistance or favor of another. It is used three times, (a) Rom 5:2, of the "access" which we have by faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ, into grace; (b) Eph 2:18, of our "access" in one Spirit through Christ, unto the Father; (c) Eph 3:12, (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT: 4318)**

**Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. Jn. 14:6**

This is one of the "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. It is based on God's own verified assurances. It is not in us, it is in God who gives the mercy

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Rom. 5:8-11**

### **access with confidence through faith in Him.**

This access is full with confidence through our faith. We have learned to trust, feel confident because we have been persuaded by our faith.

**pepoithésis, ... peithō, trust, confidence (R. V.), reliance:..." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:4006)**

**pepoithésis ... fem. noun from peithō (3982), to persuade. Trust, confidence ..." (CWSD NT: 4006)**

This is one of the most important things Paul said about Abraham.

**He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:20-25**

Just as Abraham never wavered through unbelief, Christians also must not waver in unbelief. These are God's promises and we through (*dia* - with the *genitive: through...* III. of the **Means or Instrument by which anything is effected;**... 2. of the **instrument used to accomplish a thing:** must believe.

**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God Rom. 5:1-2**

### **13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart**

What Paul began in verse one he is finally ready to express. But in between, he has recorded all the amazing things God had used him for that more than made up for a few years in prison.

**For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — Eph 3:1**

He now draws the conclusion with an emphatic marker of result. This inference ought to be self-evident. Paul has shown abundant reasons why they should not do what he has requested here.

**dió; conjunction from *diá* (1223), for, and the neuter relative pron. *ho* from *hós* (3739), which. For which, wherefore, therefore ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1352)**

**"*dió, dioper, relatively emphatic markers of result, usually denoting the fact that the inference is self-evident - 'therefore, for this reason, for this very reason, so then.* 'therefore, that field was called Field of Blood' Matt 27:8; ... 'for this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God' Luke 1:35. ... 'therefore, if meat causes offense to my fellow believer, I will never eat meat' 1 Cor 8:13; ..." (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1352)**

With all that as background, what a minor inconvenience is Paul's imprisonment. How could anyone faint or grow fearful over what is happening to him. It is certainly not an indication or reflection upon God's wisdom or lack of power. One would have to be looking somewhere else to see that. The term "lose heart" is defined a strong word for a coward or one who has become fainthearted and despondent.

*ekkakéō*, from *ek* (1537), out of, or an intens., and *kakós* (2556), bad. To turn out to be a coward, to lose one's courage. In the NT, generally, to be fainthearted, to faint or despond in view of trial, difficulty. Intrans. (2 Cor 4:1,16; Eph 3:13). In the sense of to be remiss or slothful in duty (Luke 18:1; Gal 6:9; 2 Thess 3:13). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1573)

*egkakeō* ... b: to lose one's motivation to accomplish some valid goal - 'to become discouraged, to lose heart, to give up.' ... 'don't be discouraged in doing good' 2 Thess 3:13; ... 'as I suffer difficulties on your behalf, I ask you not to give up' Eph 3:13. ..." (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:1457)

Remember what he told those in Philippi about those in Rome.

*But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Phil. 1:12-14*

No one could become discouraged over Paul's fate once they knew the information he gave above!  
**at my tribulations for you,**

Paul does not minimize what has happened to him. It has indeed been tribulations since Caesarea. There had been moments where he was crushed, compressed and squeezed. He had endured trouble.

*thlipsis* ... to crush, press, compress, squeeze, which is from ... *thláo* (n.f.), to break. Tribulation, trouble, affliction. (l) In a figurative manner, pressure from evils, affliction, distress (2 Cor 2:4; Phil 1:16); of a woman in travail (John 16:21). Often as a metonym for evils by which one is pressed, i.e., affliction, distress, calamity (Matt 13:21; Acts 7:10,11; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 1:4; Heb 10:33). ... In three of the four occurrences in the NT, *stenochœria* is associated with *thlipsis* (Rom 2:9; 8:35; 2 Cor 6:4). *thlipsis* ... refers more to being crushed while *stenochœria* ... refers more to narrowness of room or discomfort. Tribulation may affect either body or mind or both. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2347)

Luke did not record the deprivations and troubles Paul had endured after Jerusalem. There he had been beaten and attempted to be killed then threatened with scourging only avoided because he was a Roman. After that, the two years in Caesarea and the years in Rome are left alone. Only this one passage gives us a little insight into what happened.

**which is your glory.**

All of this will end in the glory and honor to both the Jews and the Gentiles at the judgment bar of God. Beginning with a well done good and faithful servant, with a glorified body to enter into a beautiful home to spend eternity in. There is nothing to be fearful or discouraged about and a multitude of things to bow to God in praise adoration and thanksgiving. Introduction:

In the introductory comments to Chapter Three, it was pointed out that Paul began a thought in verse one in order to prick their interest and then went off on a lengthy explanation of his apostleship and how he viewed it. Though some feel that Paul was overcome with this thought and changed the subject, I feel that it was by design. Paul knew these brethren. He had worked with them on a daily basis for over two years. He started the thought, and then broke from it for one important piece of information which they are presently unaware of. He wants them to give God glory. He wants them to view God as worthy of all praise, honor, and thanksgiving. In this book Paul has placed God in a glowing light:

1. God is to be glorified because of all the spiritual blessings he has given us in Christ(1:3-14)!
2. He is to be glorified because He gave His saints hope, made them His inheritance, and gave them power(1:15-23)!
3. He is to be glorified because though dead in sin, now by grace all in Christ are alive(2:1-10)!
4. He is to be glorified because though the Gentiles had no hope, no God, and no spiritual blessings, now, in Christ, they had everything(2:11-22)!

The only dark spot on all the above is Paul's imprisonment. How could God allow one of his chosen messengers to be so treated? How could Paul stand to be in prison? How did Paul feel about this? This is what 3:1-13 is about. Paul viewed his apostleship as a great gift from God. He did not mind in the least the troubles and heartaches it caused him. The Ephesians already knew much of this. He is simply reminding them, and all other readers of it here.

Paul often makes known his prayers to those for whom he prays. He was not fearful of losing his petition because he knew his motive. It was not out of self glory or seeking the praise of men, which would indeed have nullified them(Mt 6:1-18). They are revealed both here and in 1:15-23 to help them. Hopefully they would make his prayer their own, or at the very least become aware of how

important the things Paul prayed for truly were.

#### 14 For this reason

All of the above should be inserted here. In using this phrase He stresses that in order to fully appreciate what follows the intellectual and emotional response to the four points listed above should be regained.

*touto... the neuter touto a. Refers to what precedes... for this very cause... for this reason... it refers to the substance of the preceding discourse... b. it prepares the reader or hearer and renders him attentive to what follows, which thus gets special weight..." dia touto. . ."* (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:3778)

*charin accusative of the substantive, charis ... used absolutely; properly, in favor of, for lite pleasure of: ... like the Latin abl. gratia, it takes on completely the nature of a preposition, and is joined to the genitive, for, on account of, for the sake of; Gal 3:19 Tim 5:14; Titus 1:11; Jude 16; toutou charin , on this account, for this cause, Eph 3:1 ... Eph 3:14 ... for which cause, Luke 7:47; ..."* (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:5484)

As these things are studied and read about in detail, it brings wonder, awe, thanksgiving, praise, and respect into the heart of the reader. These things are necessary if what Paul is about to say is to be properly understood.

#### I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Although he does not actually express the term prayer here, it is obvious that it is this which he refers to. The terms "bow the knee" are to reveal the highest reverence respecty and worship.

*kamptō* is found only in combination with *gonu –gonata*, and in this connection it is used as object (Rom 11:4; Eph 3:14) and intransitive with *gonu* as subject (Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10). ... *kamptein gonu – gonata* is the **gesture of full inner submission in worship to the one before whom we bow the knee**. Thus in Rom 14:11 **bowing the knee is linked with confession within the context of a judgment scene**, and in Phil 2:10 it again accompanies **confession with reference to the worship of the exalted kurios Jesus** ... at Eph 3:14 the formula "*kamptō ta gonata pros ton theon* is a solemn description of the attitude of submission to God in prayer. ... Paul takes both formulae from the LXX. We see this at Rom 14:11, where he is quoting almost verbatim from Isa 45:23. ..." (Kittel, TDWNT NT:2578)

This is an idiom which most Christians, even today, are very familiar with. It carries the idea not only of literally bowing one's knees, but more importantly holding religious veneration and worship toward God in one's heart. Bowing the knees to manifest honor and respect toward him. When Paul considered the four points above in all their fullness, it prompted this response in him. This gives us insight into his emotional makeup and also helps us understand his thinking and his motivation. When he wrote these things it moved him. When we read these things, does it move us?

As always, Paul's devotion and honor are directed to God the Father. He does not leave Jesus out, but he never directs his worship directly toward him. It was the Father's will that brought all this into being. Certainly Jesus deserves our praise and thanks, but it is the Father who set it all in motion, it is the Father who designed and planned it.

#### 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The term "whole" is defined:

"*pas* ... I. adjectivally, and 1. with anarthrous nouns; a. **any, every one(sc. of the class denoted by the noun annexed to PAS);... all or any of the class indicated**... b. *any and every, of every kind, ...* (Thayer, NT:3956).

Two possible translations present themselves here. The KJV, NKJ and NIV translate it "the whole," while the ASV RSV and NASB translate it with "every." Though both are grammatically sound, "every" is not really a Scriptural concept when it comes to the church. It is not every family, but one family.

*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:27-29*

Paul stresses the unity of both Jew and Gentile. They are no longer a separate people. It is now the whole family. Every does not stress the unity so well. There is only one body and one God and Father(4:4-7), "the whole" is therefore more appropriate than "every."

When one looks at God as the Father from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, it simply adds another reason to praise and honor God. It accords with Jesus' request that when we pray we always hallow the name of our Father in heaven. Most of the prayers in the Bible fulfill this in the address. They often address God in a manner that shows the emotions in their heart at the time of the prayer. Consider the passages below as representative of this idea.

*23 "Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: 24 "O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? Deut. 3:23-24*

*6 and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to*

**withstand You?** 7 "Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 2Chron. 20:6-7

5 And I said: "**I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, Neh. 1:5**

**O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. Isaiah 25:1**

And they prayed and said, "You, **O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen Acts 1:24**

24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "**Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, Acts 4:24**

It appears that Paul is addressing God in a similar manner here. God is the great one who united of both Jew and Gentile. He who removed the middle wall of partition and made both one. He from whom now the whole family in heaven(those already dead) and on earth is named.

### **16 that He would grant you,**

Paul is seeking a gift that can only be given by God. This is a petition and an intercession where Paul is seeking something from God for those who are receiving this letter. It is evident that we also ought to be praying such things for ourselves and for our brethren.

"DIDOMI... to give... A. absolutely and generally... B. In construction... I **to give something to some one**, - in various senses; 1. **of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow; give as a gift...** 2. **to grant, give to one asking, let have...** 3. **to supply, furnish, necessary things...** 4. to give over, deliver, ... 5. to give what is due or obligatory, to pay: wages or reward... 6. DIDOMI is joined with nouns denoting an act or an effect..." (Thayer, p. 145-147; 1325)

### **Ephesians 3:16-19**

*For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

### **16 that He would grant you,**

In the midst of the constant prayers Paul had revealed in the first chapter he added this.

*Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: Eph. 1:15-16*

He sought a gift for them that can only God could give. This is both a petition and an intercession. It doesn't appear that this is something specific in Ephesus. This is something every Christian needs everywhere. This is a gift God can give to any Christian and ought to be a part of our own prayers. The term "*grant*" is a general term for giving a gift that will bring benefits and advantages to the recipient.

"*didomi*... give ... 1. With approximately 416 occurrences, ***didōmi* is the ninth most frequent verb** in the NT. ... is the most common expression for the procedure whereby a **subject deliberately transfers something to someone** or something **so that it becomes available to the recipient**. ... 4. **God is mentioned directly as the giver in 104 passages**, ... 5. **In 68 instances Jesus Christ is the giver:** (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:1325)

"*didomi*... to give... A. absolutely and generally... B. In construction... I **to give something to some one**, - in various senses; 1. **of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow; give as a gift...** 2. **to grant, give to one asking, let have...** 3. **to supply, furnish, necessary things...** 4. to give over, deliver, ... 5. to give what is due or obligatory, to pay: wages or reward..." (Thayer, p. 145-147; 1325)

### **according to the riches of His glory,**

The value of the gift is often based on the means of the giver. Those who are poor or weak can give gifts showing love and respect, but have limited ability as to the value of the gift itself. All gifts are like that. The gifts God can give are unlimited because the means He has to give them is limitless. With "*kata - proportion and equivalence*" he equates the value of the gift to the "*riches of His glory*." There are several words for riches, and this one is the greatest. This is a wealth that is the high point on any scale. No matter what others might have, God rises above it in both value and in abundance.

"*ploutos*,... **riches, wealth**; a. prop. and absol. **abundance of external possessions...** b. univ. *fullness, abundance, plenitude* ..." (Thayer, p. 519; 4149)

*ploutos* ... **a high point on any scale and having the implication of value as well as abundance - 'great, abundant, abundantly, greatly, extremely.'** ..." (Lou & Nida, from Greek-English Lexicon NT:4149)

This is the fifth time the term wealth has been used in this book in reference to various aspects of His power. Here it is the riches of His glory.

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of His grace Eph. 1:7-8***

*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, Eph. 1:18***

that in the ages to come He might show **the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** Eph. 2:7

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, **that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,** Eph. 3:8-9

that He would grant you, **according to the riches of His glory,** Eph. 3:16

Since glory refers to “**divine and heavenly radiance**,” to “**the loftiness and majesty of God**,” and to “**divine power**.” This wealth of glory gives God more than enough power to grant this request.

*doxa* ... Found already in Homer and Herodotus, this word has in all non-biblical Greek a **basic meaning which reflects its link with *dokeo*, namely, "what one thinks," "opinion."** This takes two forms: a. from *dokeo*, "I think," "the opinion which I have"; b. from *dokeo* "I count as," "the opinion which others have of me." .... **Even a cursory survey of the position in the NT reveals a totally different picture. The old meaning a., "opinion," has disappeared completely.** There is not a single example in either the NT or the post-apostolic fathers. ... The meaning b., "repute" or "honour," is still found: ... There has been added the meaning c., "radiance," "glory," which is not found in secular Greek ... **In the NT, however, the word is used for the most part in a sense for which there is no Greek analogy whatever** and of which there is only an isolated example in Philo. That is to say, it denotes "**divine and heavenly radiance**," **the "loftiness and majesty" of God, and even the "being of God" and His world.** ... In the NT, as in the LXX, the meanings "divine honour," "divine splendour," "divine power" and "visible divine radiance" are fluid, and can only be distinguished artificially. In content, however, there is always expressed the divine mode of being, though with varying emphasis on the element of visibility ..." (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:1391)

Through the eyes of faith, we can see our God with glory, majesty and unlimited power. Through that power and glory we too can let our requests be known to God realizing that He has to power the love and the mercy to make that happen if it is in our best interestes.

The magnificence and excellence of God is veiled and can only be seen through the eyes of faith. God's splendor and brightness, preeminence and majesty are beyond us. Yet though man cannot grasp and comprehend it fully, Paul can still use it as a pivotal point in this pray. To the degree that God has a wealth of such glory, to that degree, Paul pleads with God to answer his prayer.

### **to be strengthened with might**

Paul had petitioned and interceded for them, asking that they might be granted strength. The word means exactly the same thing in Greek as it does in English. The power within to do what needs to be done. The strength to accomplish what God has asked us to do.

*krataioō* ... only Biblical and ecclesiastical, for the classic *kratunō*; ... **to strengthen, make strong** ... passive to **be made strong, to increase in strength, to grow strong:** Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT 2901)

To their own native strength is added the might and the power to do more. What we can do through our own strength added to what we can do through the power of God's word and the power of God's providence. This power is broken down into several different facets. This is the word for power that gives ability and potency. Essentially it gives us an increase in what we can accomplish.

*dunamis* ... words deriving from **the stem *duna* - all have the basic meaning of "being able," of "capacity" in virtue of an ability;** in contrast to *ischu* -, which stresses the factuality of the ability, the stress falls on being able. ... *dunamis* ... **here means potency** in contrast to *energeia* or *entelexeia*. As **potency it is "possibility," "capacity," "ability."** ... (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:1411)

*dúnamis*, fem. noun from ***dúnamai* (1410), to be able. Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem *dúna-* have the meaning of being able, capable.** It may even mean to will. **Contrast *ischús* (2479) which stresses the factuality of the ability, not necessarily the accomplishment.** ... Spoken of intrinsic power, either physical or moral, ... (C) **Spoken of God, the Messiah, the great power of God, meaning His almighty energy** ... Eph 1:19; ... it implies the **greatness, omnipotence, and majesty of God** ... With the gen. phrase "of God" it **expresses the source, i.e., power imparted from God** (1 Cor 2:5; 2 Cor 6:7). Spoken of Jesus as exercising the power to heal ... **Spoken of miraculous power, "the mighty power of signs and wonders" (a.t.) means the power of working miracles** (Rom 15:19, explained by the power of the Spirit in the next clause; see Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12; 2 Thess 2:9). ... (E) **Spoken of the essential power, true nature or reality of something...** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1411)

All the tasks that God has given to man always come with the ability and strength to do it. What Paul seeks is not impossible, but it is difficult and it will require more power than we have to accomplish it. Jesus strengthened many with might when He healed the blind, giving them the strength to see or when He made the lame and paralyzed to walk again. Each was strengthened with might, and when Jesus completed the miracle, they were able to see, capable of walking, strong enough to move their body. This is the essence of this term. Paul then revealed exactly how God will do this.

### **through His Spirit**

The Holy Spirit will be the means and instrument (*dia*) by which this will be accomplished. This fits perfectly with Jesus' words to His apostles before His death. They too were too weak at that time for Him to reveal all that they needed to know. But when the Holy Spirit came, he guided them slowly over a period of many years into all the truth.

*"I still have many things to say to you, but **you cannot bear them now**. 13 However, **when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn. 16:12-13*

The strength the Holy Spirit gave to them did not overwhelm them or make them invincible. It gave them the ability to comprehend and understand and then through promises and truth motivated and gave them the power and strength to move on and progress. It would be through Him that these things would be accomplished.

These are things that are beyond our comprehension. The Holy Spirit is the power that gives the word of God its strength. There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit is the means through which the inward man of each Christian is strengthened with might. The point of difficulty is in how this is done. Some things are simple and easy to understand. The Holy Spirit will abide with Christians forever. He will continue to do for disciples what Jesus did while He was here. He will reveal everything and nothing will be withheld.

*"And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever**-- 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom **the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him**; but you know Him, for **He dwells with you and will be in you**. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Jn. 14:16-18*

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you**. Jn. 14:26*

Paul has already described the most prominent and obvious means by which the Holy Spirit works.

*how that **by revelation He made known to me the mystery** (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, **when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**), Eph. 3:3-4*

Instead of the laying on of the apostles hands and the direct working of the Holy Spirit, the same thing was accomplished through their own reading of that which the Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul. This is the most common method by which the Holy Spirit strengthens with might in the inner man. This harmonizes perfectly with the final piece of armor each Christian must put on to be able to stand in the strength of God's might, "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*" Eph. 6:17-18

If this was the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, how can we explain Acts 20:21-23 where Paul warned them that even some of their elders would depart and then seek to lead others from the truth. How also do we explain the writing of the epistle to the Ephesians in Rev 2 which condemned them and warned them if they do not come back to their first love their identity as a church of the Lord will be removed.

Yet the Holy Spirit does have the power while working through the word to also intervene in ways that we do not understand because it has not fully been revealed.

*Likewise **the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses**. For **we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because **He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God**. Rom. 8:26-27*

Which one Paul prays for here is impossible to determine. He told both the Romans and the Ephesians to look to His sword (the word of God) for that strength.

*For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Rom. 1:16*

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, **the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe**. 1Th. 2:13*

Paul is praying for more so we can pray for more, but as in all other prayers so with this one we have to allow God to work this out in ways we cannot understand or comprehend.

### **in the inner man,**

No one can see this strengthening. It is not on the outside. It is within the core of our being that can only be seen by the works we do. The inner man is our eternal soul made in the image and likeness of God.

*esō within, inside (adverb) ... 1. a) In the local sense **esō in response to the question "where?" corresponds to the preposition en: within, inside**, with a certain emphasis: in a (closed) room (Jn. 20:26 ... Acts 5:23 [and 5:22 D]). **The innermost room of a building is signified by esōteros**, with an emphasis on inaccessibility or security: Acts 16:24: "**the inner prison**"; Heb 6:19, "**the inner area behind the curtain**" = the holy of holies of the [heavenly] temple. ... b) **Where it is used to indicate direction of movement, esō strengthens or replaces the preposition eis** Mark 14:54 ... Matt 26:58: **Peter follows "right into the inner part of the building"**; Mark 15:16: **Jesus is led "further inside the palace"** ... 3. In a sociological sense **the contrast between oi esō and oi exo designates the demarcation between a "group" to which one belongs (here: the Christian community) and the (outside) world** 1 Cor 5:12; ... Exegetical Dictionary NT:2080*

*ésō; adverb from eis (1519), in, into, with a gen. Into, in, within. ... (I) Used in an absolute sense meaning*

**in, within, implying motion** (Matt 26:58; Mark 14:54; 15:16) ... (II) **Of place meaning within** (John 20:26; Acts 5:23; Sept.: Gen 39:11). With the article prefixed it assumes the role of an adjective *ho êsō anthrōpos* [3588], the; [444], man), i.e., **the inner man, mind, soul or spirit of man** (Rom 7:22; Eph 3:16). **As used by Paul, the inner man means the mind or soul considered as being renewed and strengthened by the Holy Spirit** (cf. 2 Cor 4:16). ... " (Complete WS Dictionary: NT:2080)

This is a strengthening that is most important to the Christian. The strength that will impact our eternal soul and spirit.

### **17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;**

The strength the Holy Spirit will supply will bring about Christ dwelling in our heart through faith. This helps clarify some of what was said above since faith comes by hearing the word of God, the Holy Spirit will be using that word to bring that prayer into being.

*katoikéō*, from *katá* (2596), an intens., and *oikéō* (3611), to dwell. Reside (I) A certain, **fixed and durable dwelling, as distinguished from *paroikéō* (3939), to sojourn, dwell in a place temporarily**. To dwell in, inhabit a house or place (Matt 2:23; 4:13; Acts 7:4). ... (II) Metaphorically of God, with en (1722), in (Acts 7:48; 17:24; Sept.: Ps 2:4 Ps 9:11 )..." (Complete WS Dictionary: NT:2730).

*katoikéō*, *kata*, "down," and *oikéō*, "to dwell" (from *oikos*, "a house"), **"to inhabit as one's abode,"** ... the most frequent verb with this meaning, properly signifies **"to settle down in a dwelling, to dwell fixedly in a place."** Besides its literal sense, it is used of (a) **the "indwelling" of the totality of the attributes and powers of the Godhead in Christ, Col 1:19; 2:9;** (b) **the "indwelling" of Christ in the hearts of believers ("may make a home in your hearts"), Eph 3:17; ...** (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:2730),

This is the goal and destination of Paul's prayer. He seeks Christ to dwell and settle in their hearts by faith. This is an indwelling in which each Christian has full control. If Christ only dwells in our heart to the degree and depth of our faith, then it is our own efforts (*faith comes by hearing the word of God* – Rom. 10:17) that allow Him to be there and our own efforts can also remove Him. This is an indwelling where by faith, we want Jesus to control and lead us. But it is a willing and voluntary indwelling where as long as we want and seek Him there He will remain.

When through a deepening faith, a Christian completely gives their life over to Jesus Christ, then and only then can we say with Paul: *"it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me* (Gal 2:20)," then Christ is dwelling in our hearts by faith. When we reach the point where Christ is making all our decisions by faith, then we will have this strength.

### **that you, being rooted and grounded**

These two figures come from the stability of a tree and the stability of a building. A tree is made firm through its roots.

*rhizoō* **cause to take root**; pass.: be **rooted or firmly established** In the NT only pass. pf. partic., used fig.: Eph 3:17; , **"being rooted in love"** ... Col 2:7: ... **"rooted and built up in him** [Christ, as foundation]" (Exegetical Dictionary; NT:4492)

*rhizoo* "to cause to take root," is used metaphorically in the passive voice in Eph 3:17, of being "rooted" in love; Col 2:7, in Christ, i. e., in the sense of being firmly planted, or established. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:4492),

*"rhizoō... to cause to strike root, to strengthen with roots; ... trop to render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded..."* (Thayer, p. 563; 4492)

A building is made stable through its foundation.

*"themelion* NT:2310 **foundation, basis** ... *"themelios* NT:2310 **foundation, basis** ... *"themelioō* NT:2311 **found, establish** ... In the Gospels both substantive and verb are always literal. In the parable of the house on the rock (Matt 7:21-27 par. Luke 6:46-49), which concludes the Sermon on the Mount and illustrates metaphorically the contrast between (only) hearing and (also) doing, ... In Heb 11:10 and Rev 21:14,19 is used **of the foundations of the heavenly city and the twelve (so Rev 21:14) foundation stones of the heavenly city**, In 1 Tim 6:19 *themelion* is used of **the foundation for the future that one can gather through good works**. In Heb 6:1 it is the foundational teaching. According to Eph 3:17 the addressees are grounded in love; according to Col 1:23 they continue, firmly grounded in faith; **according to 1 Peter 5:10 God establishes the believers:** (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:2310)

*themelioō* signifies **"to lay the foundation of, to found"** (akin to *themelios*, "a foundation"; from *tithemi*, "to put"), and is rendered **"grounded"** in Eph 3:17, said of the condition of believers with reference to the love of Christ; in Col 1:23, of their continuance in the faith." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:2311)

In the Sermon on the Mount it is our doing the words of Jesus that is the foundation of rock. Here, it is the love.

### **in love,**

As one studies the Scriptures seeking for stability, three things stand out.

1 Our faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for and the evidence (conviction) of things not seen (Heb 11:1).

Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. Heb 11:1 NKJV  
Now faith is **assurance** of (things) hoped for, a **conviction** of things not seen. Heb 11:1 ASV

## 2 Our hope in God's promises

*For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Rom 8:24-25*

*Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb. 6:17-18*

## 3 Our love for God and our neighbor. This love is the greatest, towering above both faith and hope in its ability to keep us firm, fixed and steadfast.

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but **the greatest of these is love.** 1Cor. 13:13*

*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.**' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' 40 **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**" Mt. 22:36-40*

*Beloved, let us love one another, for **love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1Jn. 4:7-11*

The permanence and essence of *agape-love* is set forth in the words "God is love." Nothing greater could be said about it. It is the foundation of the Law of Moses and greater than faith and hope, but it's eternal nature is seen in "God is love."

There is no better definition of this term than the one the Holy Spirit gave:

*Love **suffers long** and is **kind**; love does **NOT envy**; love does **NOT parade itself**, is **NOT puffed up**; 5 does **NOT behave rudely**, does **NOT seek its own**, is **NOT provoked**, **thinks NO evil**; 6 does **NOT rejoice in iniquity**, but **rejoices in the truth**; 7 **bears all things**, **believes all things**, **hopes all things**, **endures all things**. 8 Love never fails. 1Cor. 13:4-8*

If we can root and ground ourselves here, we will be as stable fixed and established as is possible. We will also place ourselves into the position of comprehending and understanding what will continue to be unattainable until we root and ground ourselves here.

### 18 may be able to comprehend

When a Christian has done the things necessary to be "*strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man*," which has led to "*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*" and "*being rooted and grounded in love*," strength and ability follow.

This is the only time in the NT where this word is used to describe the extent of the ability these three things will bring to us. It is the strongest word available to describe the competency, wisdom, knowledge and understanding that these three things will enhance within us.

*exischúsō, from ek (1537), an intensive, and ischúō (2480), to be strong, able. To be in full strength, fully able, followed by the infinitive (Eph 3:18). It is the strongest word available to indicate strength or ability, a comp., and stronger than ischúō, which in turn is stronger than dúnamai (1410), to be able, have power, or dúnamōō (1412) used trans. meaning to make strong..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1840)*

The point here is simple. Many courses in college cannot be taken until the prerequisites necessary to give on the strength and capacity to understand have been completed. Christ's love exceeds the ability of worldly men to comprehend. Even Christians will find it difficult to find the strength and might to strive to grasp it. But as the Holy Spirit strengthens our inner man through our study and mastery of the Scriptures He gives us insight when "*by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

*But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who **by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.** Heb 5:14*

These same Scriptures that bring knowledge also allow Jesus to dwell in our hearts by faith. Our faith in the Scriptures not only allows us to believe, but it also gives us the strength to understand Jesus and of equal importance to be transformed into the same image.

*But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor 3:18*

These two things bring to our comprehension the fulness of *agape-love*. As we learn, our hearts are led back to this foundation of the divine nature we lost because of the selfishness of sin. Slowly but absolutely, our own hearts begin to take root and built on that foundation we find ourselves with the strength to take this final step.

*exischúsō ... to be completely capable of doing or experiencing something - 'to be completely able, to be fully able. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1840)*

What was impossible is now within our grasp. We have the power and ability to begin this final goal

that will first increase our adoration praise and worship and secondly give us the next step in our own growth and maturity. We can grasp and seize this knowledge. We can find and attain it.

*katalambanō* ... **kata** originally "from above to below," hence completely, so that *katalambanō* is a strengthening of the simple form. Active "to seize," "to grasp" ... 'To grasp,' "truly to understand' ..." (Kittle, TDWNT, NT: 2638)

*katalambánō*, from *katá* (2596), an intensive, and *lambánō* (2983), to take. To apprehend, attain, obtain, find. ... (I) To lay hold of, **seize, with eagerness, suddenness** (John 8:3,4). ... (II) In **allusion to the public games, to obtain the prize with the idea of eager and strenuous exertion, to grasp, seize upon** (Rom 9:30; 1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:12,...) (Complete Word Study Dictionary NT:2638)

To take hold of something mentally, to grasp it and therefore understand it and learn it is the essence of this term. There are things even in the realm of human study which take great strength of mind to be able to grasp and understand. The minds of most people are not strong enough to comprehend how a computer makes numbers from positive and negative charges on a chip that can make words and functions. In the same way the minds of most Christians cannot comprehend what could lead Jesus to leave heaven, come to earth to suffer and die for His enemies and sinners.

### **with all the saints**

This clause strikes me as an admonition for each one of us to lift one another up this great ladder or stairway. While one may grasp one piece of this mighty puzzle by sharing it with another they might be able to grasp another aspect. Then, each one comparing either the length and breadth or the height or depth of it. As each gains a deeper insight, it opens the door to taking another step toward this destination.

Like the relay runner who cannot run an entire mile quickly but can run 1/4 mile very quickly and who then passes it on to another who also runs quickly and in turn passes to another who passes to another and thus the mile is run more rapidly than any one man could ever do. So here each one of us seeks to grasp it and then shares it with others.

### **what is the width and length and depth and height--**

Every object and every branch of learning consists of these four terms. Just as a warehouse or place to manufacture goods is grasped and understood by these things so also are comprehension. These four terms mean exactly the same thing in Greek as they do in English. They reveal the extent and magnitude. By taking *agape* - love from every aspect and considering it as filling up a container with depth, width, height and length will give one some idea of its magnitude. Of all the things in existence in this age, *agape-love* appears to be the biggest in scope, content and benefits.

This is the difference between *gnosis* (learning facts) and *epi-gnosis* (taking those facts and making applications to ones personal life).

### **19 to know the love of Christ**

We must not lose sight of all the things that are necessary to reach this point. Knowing the love of Christ can only be gleaned in this way. The more we have become rooted and grounded in this love, the better able we will be to identify it in Christ. Knowledge must move from the known into the unknown. If we do not yet understand *agape-love*, we will never be able to understand it in Christ. Intelligent comprehension can only come to those who have some basis upon which to understand it.

*ginosko*... the **intelligent comprehension of an object or matter**, whether this **comes for the first time, or comes afresh**, into the consideration of the one who grasps it ("to come to know," "to experience," "to perceive [again]") or whether it is already present ("to perceive"). (Kittel NT 1097)

*ginoskō* ... 1097 **know; understand**, *gnōsis* NT:1108 **recognition; knowledge** *gnōstos*, 1110 **known; knowable** ... *ginoskō* appears a total of 222 times in the NT, *gnōsis* appears 29 times... **One learns or comes to know a fact from information; it becomes (is) known** (Mt 6:3; 12:15... ["he knew" = "he learned/perceived"; Lk. 1:4; 7:37; 24:18... "that you may know," i.e., see]; Phil 4:5 ...) (Exegetical Dictionary NT:1097; 1108)

Children learn the basic foundations of reading writing and math and then spend the rest of their time in school using these basics to understand all other forms of knowledge. This is also true for the Christian. First the basics of faith hope and love and then the rest of the NT filling out those things.

### **which passes knowledge;**

When we enter a subject that surpasses knowledge it means that this will be a never ending study. Each year will bring more and more and we will never reach fulness because it will always exceed what we have presently learned. It will always "exceed extraordinarily" our present knowledge. I

*hyperballō*, *hyperbolé*, ... **a degree which exceeds extraordinarily a point on an implied or overt scale of extent** - 'extraordinary, extreme, supreme, far more, much greater, to a far greater degree.' 'the

**extraordinary greatness of his grace'** Eph 2:7. In this expression in Eph 2:7, both *hyperballon* and *ploutos* serve as expressions of degree; *hyperballon* indicates an implied comparison, while *ploutos* suggests not only a high degree of something, but also value. ...; 'the extraordinary power belongs to God' 2 Cor 4:7; 'I persecuted the church to an extreme degree' Gal 1:13; 'glory ... beyond all comparison' 2 Cor 4:17; 'I show you a far better way' 1 Cor 12:31. ..." (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:5235)

The difference here is that we know that this love passes all of our ability to comprehend it. We get glimpses and vistas, then they slip away and we grope again seeking to find the top of the bottom. Yet Christ's love passes knowledge. All the facts and information available to us are not enough for us to reach this goal. As the noun from the same root as the verb, it means essentially the same thing.

*gnōsis*, fem. noun from *ginosko* (1097), to know. Knowledge... (I) **The power of knowing, intelligence, comprehension ...** (II) **Subjectively** spoken of **what one knows, knowledge ...** (III) **Objectively** spoken of **what is [can be *akh*] known, the object of knowledge, generally knowledge, doctrine, science** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1108)

*gnōsis* ... **the content of what is known** - 'knowledge, what is known.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT 1108)

Thus before we begin, the Holy Spirit has revealed that it is ok that we never fully grasp and master it. It is not possible, so we take Paul's attitude toward such things.

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:12-14*

The problem centers on how high Christ was in heaven and how low He had to go to bring about our salvation. This is part of the height and depth as we see revealed in Philipians.

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Phil 2:5-8 (NASU)*

The Lord's supper each first day of the week is designed to bring these things ever more fully into our minds and heart.

The length and breadth would consist of all the things He did while here to sacrifice Himself for the best interests (*agape-love*) of others. At the foot washing He lowered Himself to help them in their understanding and taught them by this example the breadth and depth of this love.

*Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ... Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, Jn. 13:1, 3*

*So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Jn. 13:12-15*

His applications make it clear that this is not head knowledge to be believed and understood alone. But knowledge to be applied and submitted to.

This is a challenge to see how far we can go in understanding it! We will not reach it, but that only makes the challenge greater. It can never be exhausted. The deeper we go into it the deeper it becomes. As we add the things He endured from those He tried to teach, the persecution, mocking and scorn. The physical abuse on the cross. The compass and extent expands further and will continue to do so until we are no longer living.

**that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

This is the greatest goal (*hina - purpose intent reason*) offered in the Scriptures. To be filled with the fullness of God is also above our comprehension, but it becomes possible at the end of the path of comprehending the love of Christ.

*"pleroo, ...1. to make full, to fill, to fill up... to fill to the full... to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally...2. to render full, i. e. to complete; a. prop. to fill up to the top...so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim,... b. to perfect, consummate... bb. to make complete in every particular; to render perfect... c. to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize; a. of matters of duty, to perform, execute ... bb of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish; ... hh universally and absolutely, to fulfill, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment ..." (Thayer, p. 517-518; 4137).*

*"pléroō ... fill completely, fulfill, bring to completion, realize ... occurs 87 times in the NT and is esp. prominent in Luke (9 occurrences in the Gospel, 16 in Acts). It occurs 16 times in Matthew, 15 in John, 13 in Paul, 3 times in Mark, ... is a causative verb from the stem of plérés and means basically fill or make full in a purely spatial sense ... The spatial meaning is relatively infrequent in the NT (e.g., Matt 13:48, of a net; Acts 2:2, of a house). ... pléroō first acquires its real theological importance in metaphorical usage ... One fulfills the law and its*

**demands, realizes it, or fulfills Scripture or its word.** “*pléroō* is usually passive in these cases and always passive when it is used of the end of an era (e.g., Acts 7:30: “**when forty years had passed**”). Mark 1:15 uses it in a qualitative sense: “**the time is fulfilled**” ...” (Exegetical Dictionary NT:4137)

Our quest to comprehend love, not only gives us the greater ability to be filled with love, but more far more than that! It will lead to being filled with all the fullness of God. This is one of the greatest statements made in the Bible about the value and greatness of love. The progression is clear:

- (1) strengthened in the inner man through His Spirit
- (2) Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;
- (3) that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- (4) comprehend width and length and depth and height
- (5) know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;
- (6) that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Since love is the basis and reason for every command in the Law of Moses. Since love is greater than faith and hope. Since God is love, it is no great thing to say that when we fully understand the love of Christ we will also be filled with all the fullness of God.

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Mt. 22:36-40*

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1Cor. 13:13*

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ... 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1Jn. 4:7-11, 16*

The comprehensive nature of this filling is set forth in the term “*fulness*.” Those Christians who set their goal of knowing the love of Christ will end with the “*fulness of God*.” The fulness of God takes in everything. “*full number, full measure, fullness, completeness, totality*.” After something is filled to the brim it manifests fulness.

*plerōma* a total quantity, with emphasis upon completeness - 'full number, full measure, fullness, completeness, totality.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:4138)

*pleroma* stands for the result of the action expressed in *pleroo*, "to fill." It is used to signify (a) "that which has been completed, the complement, fullness," ... (words terminating in *-ma* are frequently concrete in character; cf. *dikaiōma* in Rom 5:18, act of righteousness); (b) "that which fills up," Mt 9:16; Mark 2:21 ... (C) "a filling up, fulfillment," Rom 13:10, of the fulfilling of the Law..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4138)

So what is the Holy Spirit revealing here? Is He saying that the image and likeness of God that we lost in the selfishness of sin can be fully restored through our knowledge of the love of Christ? It appears that may be the case.

## 20 Now to Him who is able to do

Paul began the prayer by bowing His knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and he ends it with these words of praise and adoration. Not only is the love of Christ beyond our ability to comprehend, so also is God's ability and power. God is able! He has the achieving power to accomplish anything.

Word order in Greek often has no meaning, but here it appears to emphasize the power more fully. “*Now unto Him who is able exceeding all to do, abundantly above that we ask or think.*”

unto him 3588 _ΙΩ	Now 1161 _δε	that is able 1410 δυναμένω	above 5228 _υπερ	all 3956 _παντα	to do 4160 _ποιησαι
exceedingly abundantly 5240a _υπερεκπερισσου	that 3739 _ων	we ask 154 _αι τουμεθα	or 2228 _η	think, 3539 _νοουμεν	according to 2596 _kata

When the word *dunamis* is used of God it is another word of omnipotence, for this is no limit to His almighty energy, power and ability.

*dúnamis*, fem. noun from *dúnamai* (1410), to be able. Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem *dúna-* have the meaning of being able, capable. It may even mean to will. Contrast *ischús* (2479) which stresses the factuality of the ability, not necessarily the accomplishment. ... Spoken of intrinsic power, either physical or moral, ... (C) Spoken of God, the Messiah, the great power of God, meaning His almighty energy ... Eph 1:19; ... it implies the greatness, omnipotence, and majesty of God ... With the gen. phrase "of God" it expresses the source, i.e., power imparted from God (1 Cor 2:5; 2 Cor 6:7). Spoken of Jesus as exercising the power to heal ... Spoken of miraculous power, "the mighty power of signs and wonders" (a.t.) means the power of working miracles (Rom 15:19, explained by the power of the Spirit

in the next clause; see Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12; 2 Thess 2:9). ... (E) **Spoken of the essential power, true nature or reality of something...** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1411)

The Spirit broadens out the power by stating that it is a power that allows Him to make and to do. All that exists in the material realm reveals the achieving power of God to make and do all that He planned. All the miracles and interventions we have witnessed in the Scriptures is also an example of God's power to do. Opening the Red Sea, raising people from the dead, the sun standing still of Joshua, healing Naaman's leprosy. Jesus used that power to perform all of His miracles. He walked on water, feed 5000, made the blind see and the paralyzed walk. We know nothing of the spiritual realm, but we see His power in our redemption and salvation.

*"poieo... I. to make ... 1. ... a. with the names of the things made, to produce, construct, form, fashion, etc. ... to create produce: of God, as the author of all things... b. joined to nouns denoting a state or condition, it signifies to be the author or, to cause ... II to do ... i.e. to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind... poieo signifies to carry out, to execute..."* (Thayer, p. 524-527; NT:4160)

But is that all? Have we seen the very limits of God's power in these things? Our awe and reverence at the majesty of God is now broadened as we learn all that we have seen is nothing compared to what God is capable of doing.

It exceeds our ability to comprehend or imagine. Paul now speaks of God in his capacity to accomplish anything he might desire. What is God capable of? Like the love of Christ Paul will now inform us that it too exceeds the limits our ability of our own minds to even comprehend. He begins with a superlative and then adds to them one after another.

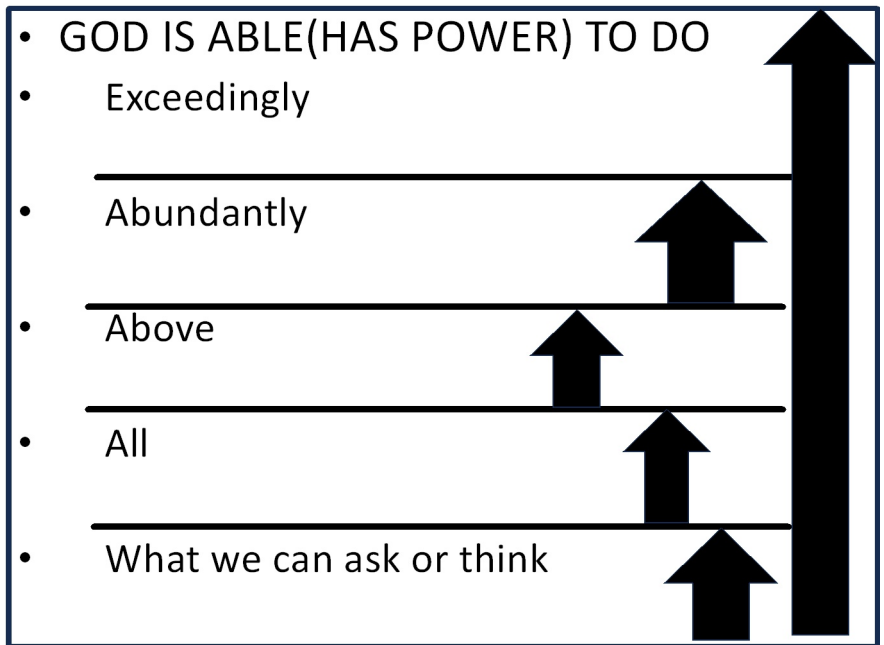
**exceedingly abundantly**

This comes from a compound Greek word that combined means, "*beyond all measure,*" "*considerable excess above what is expected,*" "*emphasizes excessive degree,*"

*huperekperissou ... quite beyond all measure ...* (Exegetical Dictionary NT:5240a)

*huperekperissou ... : an extraordinary degree, involving a considerable excess over what would be expected ... primarily in emphasizing the excessive degree) - "extreme, extremely, to an extreme degree, to a very great degree..."* (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:5240a)

*huperekperissou... 1), adverb (Vulgate (in Eph 3:20) superabundanter), superabundantly; beyond measure; exceedingly; ...* (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:5240a)



This word emphasizes that if we could actually see its extend, we would be amazed beyond belief. It extends beyond anything we could use as a measurement.

Yet the Holy Spirit is able to force us to see it as even higher when He adds "*above*"

**above**

The excessive degree doesn't even begin until we have exhausted everything we could imagine. This power is already above, beyond and away over all that we can imagine.

*"huper... with the GENITIVE; 1. prop. of place, i.e. of position, situation, extension: over, above, beyond, across. In this sense it does not occur in the N. T.; but there it always, though joined to other classes of words, has a tropical signification derived from its original meaning... II with the accusative... over, beyond, away over; more than; 1. prop. of the place "over" or "beyond"... 2. metaph. of the measure or degree exceeded... III in composition huper denotes 1. over, above, beyond... 2. excess of measure, more than..."* (Thayer's Greek Lexicon; NT: 5228)

Hence not only it is superabundantly beyond measure over and above and beyond that! It is far more exceedingly great and it is over and above it even more.

**all that we ask or think,**

No matter what we could ask and no matter how great our imagination, when we have completely

exhausted all that we can ask or think, His power is above that and not only above that but exceedingly abundantly above it.

There is nothing we can comprehend that God might be capable of doing in our own mind that God in fact could not accomplish. God is capable of doing it because He has power and ability beyond anything that we could even begin to comprehend. Our minds are not strong enough to go any further as far as God can go. When our minds have reached as far as they can go, God power and might go further, but not just further, abundantly further, but not just abundantly further, exceedingly abundantly further but not even just that but exceedingly abundantly and abundantly exceedingly above that further!

### according to the power that works in us,

Even though we cannot grasp the full extent, we know that it is this very power that is working for us. The power in the Word, in Prayer, in Providence, are all in proportion to and according to the measure of the inexhaustible power of God.

*"kata,... with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of..." (Thayer Greek Lexicon, NT:2596)*

This power, though it exceeds our minds in a way and can barely be understood, is working for us and in us even now. Thus on the one side of the balance is God's immeasurable power and the other side is our power. There is no difference in the amount of power, only in what it is required to do for each Christian.

The power in the word is expressed, but it too stems from this same power.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Rom. 1:16-17*

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 1Th. 2:13-14*

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12-13*

The power of prayer and providence are also fully revealed.

*The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Jas. 5:16*

*For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6*

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28*

This power works in us through all these means and perhaps others as well.

*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Heb. 1:14*

While there is little doubt that it is the Word of God that brings this power to us and has the most power to move our will, create faith and bring salvation. But would must not minimize the power of prayer, providence and even angels. All of this combines to give us some concept of how that power now works in us. This is the power that "surrounds, equips, furnishes, assists, and acts." This is the power that has become "the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished."

*"en...a preposition taking the dative after it;... Eng. in, on, at, with, by among. I LOCALLY; 1. of Place proper; a. in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space... 5. used of that with which a person is surrounded, equipped, furnished, assisted, or acts... d. of the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished, owing to the influence of the Hebr. prep... much more common in the sacred writ. than in the prof... where we say with, by means of, by(through)..." (Thayer, p. 209-212; 1722)*

A new word is introduced to round out our concept of power. It is the energy that operates affects aids and is actively working in the lives of the saints.

*"energeo", ...1. intrans. to be operative, be at work, put forth power: ... to work for one, aid one,...2. to effect... 3. Mid., ... to display one's activity, show one's self operative..." (Thayer, p. 215 1754).*

*"energeo, energeia, energema, energes ... is found in the sense of "activity" or "energy"... It derives from energos (which itself derives from en ergo eina) and denotes intransitively, "to be at work," "to act or start to act," and transitively "to set at work", to effect."..." (Kittel Vol 2 p. 652-654)*

## 21 to Him be glory

As Paul completes his doctrinal section of the book, he ends it as he began. Giving God the glory,

honor and praise.

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ ... 5 according to the good pleasure of His will, **6 to the praise of the glory of His grace**, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. ... 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be **to the praise of His glory**. ... 14 until the redemption of the purchased possession, **to the praise of His glory**. ... Eph. 1:3, 6, 12, 14

This glory praise, adoration has been a theme in the Scriptures. At the end it is really all we have to give to God. Everything else is a gift from Him, but to praise Him or our own freewill is a truly blessed gift.

*I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.* Ps. 9:1-2

**Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!** 7 For God is the King of all the earth; **Sing praises with understanding.** Ps. 47:6-7 6

**Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.** 3 Say to God, "**How awesome are Your works!** Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. 4 **All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name.**" Ps. 66:2-4

**Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!** 2 **Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:** 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Ps. 103:1-5

All the days in the life of a faithful Christian should be filled with awe wonder and astonishment at how great God's love really is. About how blessed we really are, and about how wonderful the future is for the child of God. God has done so many wonderful and blessed things which each of us ought to ponder and meditate upon from time to time. A heart filled with genuine praise will be the reward for such an hour of meditation.

### **in the church and in Christ Jesus**

This is the third time the Holy Spirit has spoken of the church and the sixth time He has mentioned being in Christ.

*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head over all things to the church**, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* Eph. 1:22-23

*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be **made known by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,* Eph. 3:10-12

*To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful **in Christ Jesus:*** Eph. 1:1

*blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**,* Eph. 1:3-4

*made us sit together in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**,* Eph. 2:6-7

*For we are His workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** for good works,* Eph. 2:10

*But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.* Eph. 2:13

The church looks at God's people as those who have been called out (ekklesia) of the darkness and despair of this world.

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;** 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.* 1Pet. 2:9-10

### **to all generations,**

Every generation has the opportunity to be called out into the church and to enter Christ. It is all for the praise and adoration of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Throughout all the generations of men, this will be God's plan and it is one of the strongest reasons why we can never add a single word to His plan.

*If anyone speaks, let him **speak as the oracles of God**. If anyone ministers, let him do it as **with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.** Amen.* 1Pet. 4:11

### **forever and ever.**

Even into eternity this will continue, it will only be those who are in Christ who will be given the honor and blessing to dwell with God and continue to give him the honor and the praise.

*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 **that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*** Eph. 2:4-8

**Amen.** So be it.