

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**EPHESIANS 3****Ephesians 3**

Paul begins to explain that his being a prisoner was not to be discouraging but rather a means to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus and to have the opportunity to do God's Will while imprisoned. Amazing, isn't it? Paul, in a prison cell, did more than a million of those living in freedom by writing to and encouraging others and getting out the gospel. Your circumstances can be a place of blessing or burden and sometimes both.

For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you. (vv.1-2)

The word that is translated in many English versions as "dispensation" is the word *οικονομία, oikonomia, (oy-kon-om-ee'-ah)*. The Greek word "oikos" is the word for house. The Greek word "nomos" is the word for law/instruction. In this context and construction, it means the "law of the house or the Instructor of the House." We translate this into English as **Steward or Manager**. This is the form of the word where we get our word "economy." This is a Greek word, not an English word. In our modern-day parlance or word usage, we hear the word *economy*, and we think of money. That is acceptable, of course, but in its ancient etymology/root meaning and usage, the word has to do with the management of not just money but of the way something is managed. So, Paul is saying that God has called him, equipped him, and sent him to both Jews and Gentiles to proclaim this message.

The Apostle reminded the Ephesians that He was not one of the original twelve apostles but rather was chosen by the Lord Jesus Himself for a particular purpose. That purpose specifically was to understand and reveal "***the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.***" (Ephesians 3:5-7 ***Emphasis mine***)

The *μυστήριον, mustérion*, Phonetic spelling, and pronunciation key is **moos-tay'-ree-on**. A mystery is not as we use the word today. This Greek word Biblically meant *Something hidden in the heart and mind of God from ages past but now revealed to enlighten and accomplish His purposes*. The great mystery, according to verse six, "***that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.***" This is something that was unthinkable before this revelation by the Apostle Paul. God used Peter to initiate this in Acts 10, but He used Paul to explain it to everyone. All so that both Jew and Gentile, yes, all the earth, would understand that God "***...is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***" (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, You are more than our minds can contain or comprehend! Thank You for allowing us to live in this age when we have all the means at our disposal to get Your Word to the ends of the earth. Please enable us by Your grace to be faithful to speak, write, stand, and be counted in this sinful generation. Amen