

# Christian Students Association Bible Study

November 25, 2020

## The Stewardship (Eph. 3:1-2)

- 1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the Gentiles
- 2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

## The Revelation of the Mystery (Eph. 3: 3-6)

- 3 That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,
- 4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- 5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- 6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,

**Note for “for” in verse 1** – Chapters 1 and 2 cover the revelation of the church, and this chapter covers the constituting of the church. After unveiling in chs. 1 and 2 God’s blessings to the church and what the church is and how it is produced, the apostle began, from this chapter, to beseech the saints to walk according to his revelation in a way worthy of God’s calling. In order that the church might be constituted and realized in a practical, experiential way, he presented himself as a steward (v. 2), as one who had received grace (v. 2) and revelation (vv. 3, 5) and had become a minister of the high gospel, announcing the riches of Christ as the gospel for the producing of the church.

**Note for “prisoner” in verse 1** – The apostle Paul considered himself a prisoner of Christ. Apparently, he was confined in prison; actually, he was imprisoned in Christ. On the basis of such a status, the status in which he actually lived, he besought the saints. In releasing in chs. 1 and 2 the revelation of God’s mystery concerning the church, Paul assumed his status as an apostle of Christ through the will of God. That status was the basis of the authority of his revelation concerning the church. In beseeching the saints to walk worthily of God’s calling, he used his status as a prisoner of the Lord. His status as an apostle of Christ qualified him to release God’s revelation, whereas his status as a prisoner of the Lord spoke forth his walk in the Lord, by which he could inspire and beseech the saints to walk in the Lord as he did. If we enjoy Christ as our prison, we too will walk in the Lord for the constituting of the church.

**Note for “stewardship” in verse 2** – In Greek, the same word as economy in v. 9 and in 1:10. In relation to God, this word denotes God’s economy, God’s administration; in relation to the apostle, it denotes the stewardship (stewardship is used also in 1 Cor. 9:17). The stewardship of the grace is for the dispensing of the grace of God to His chosen people for the producing and building up of the church. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostle, who is a steward in God’s house, ministering Christ as God’s grace to God’s household.

**Note for “mystery” in verse 4** – The mystery of God in Col. 2:2 is Christ; the mystery of Christ here is the church. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.

Christ also is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ. This mystery is God's economy, which is to dispense Christ, as the embodiment of God, into God's chosen people in order to produce a Body to be the increase of God's embodiment in Christ, that God may have a corporate expression.

**Note for "fellow" in verse 6** - In God's New Testament economy the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated Gentiles and the believing Jews are fellow heirs of God, inheriting God. The saved Gentiles and the saved Jews are fellow members of the one Body of Christ as His unique expression. The Gentile believers and the Jewish believers are fellow partakers of God's promise given in the Old Testament, concerning all the blessings of God's New Testament economy. Being fellow heirs is related to the blessing of the household of God; being fellow members of the Body, to the blessing of the Body of Christ; and being fellow partakers of the promise, to the blessing of the promise of God, such as in Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 22:18; 28:14; and Isa. 9:6. Both the blessing of God's household and the blessing of Christ's Body are particular, whereas the blessing of God's promise is general, all-inclusive.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- What does the phrase "to me for you" imply?
- What is the meaning of the word stewardship? How does this apply to us?
- What is the mystery in verse 4?