

## Episode #3-01 Ephesians 3 Part 2: God's Current Work

I. The purpose of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is to tell us what God's present purpose is in all His work today. This includes His work in the world and in the individual believer. Ephesians is the book of God's present purpose, the book of being "in Christ," and the book of God's grace.

II. In Ephesians 3:6, Paul reveals a secret to us that was never revealed in any of God's revelations before: that God works today with all nations jointly and equally. Israel no longer has the privileged place. The United States has no priority either. No nation has priority in the sight of God. Any person from any nation can come to faith in Him, and therefore be "in Christ."

III. Ephesians 3:7. Paul became a dispenser of this secret.

A. He was the only one to write it down in the Word of God, the Bible.

B. It was not Paul's decision to reveal this secret, but God's. Paul could only dispense it.

C. He became a dispenser in accord with the gift of God's grace which granted him this privilege. It was His powerful operation through Paul that allowed him to reveal this.

IV. Ephesians 3:8. God's grace given to Paul.

A. Less than the least of all God's set-apart ones. Why would Paul say this of himself? Compare I Corinthians 15:9. Because he persecuted the ekklesia of God before Christ called him on the road to Damascus.

B. The grace he was given was to herald among the nations the good/right message of the untraceable and unsearchable wealth of Christ.

1. Christ pours the gifts of His grace on the world as a great stream of wealth flowing down to us. However, these riches are all given to us in secret, so that no one can trace them back and prove that they came to God at all.

2. God's secret policy could leave us with the idea that God is not doing anything at all for us, if we did not realize it from the book of Ephesians.

3. All our riches from God today are unsearchable. They will not always be!

4. See Colossians 3:3. Christ too is hidden to the world, as are those who are "in Christ." Someday, however, He will be revealed to all, and we believers will be revealed at the same time as well.

V. Ephesians 3:9. Paul's job was to enlighten all as to God's secret administration.

A. God's policy today is always to act in secret. John 20:29.

B. This fits with His gracious administration. The best grace is always done in secret.

C. You will never be able to prove in a court of law any good thing God did for you. You might know through faith and the reality of God in your life, but you cannot prove it.

D. This all started at Acts 28:28, the great dividing line.

E. God's past eons were the past times He flowed out to His prophets and spokesmen revealing His truth. Never once in any previous Bible book did God reveal this secret.

VI. One more truth about God's current work: not in Ephesians, but in I Timothy 1:4. God's administration today is "in faith."

A. Edifying (*oikodomia*) is a corruption of *oikonomia*, the word for administration.

B. When God acts only in grace and secretly, faith is what He requires of His people. We can only respond to Him through faith. We believe without seeing: John 20:29. Therefore faith is highly exalted today.

VII. Ephesians 3:10. God's work now is for the heavenly beings.

- A. Compare Ephesians 2:7. In the future, all beings, including earthly ones, will know about God's grace because of His gracious work today. Yet now that work is completely hidden on earth, so only the heavenly rulers are really seeing it.
- B. This is all through Christ. If we are ekklesia, out-called ones, it is only because He is God's Outcalled One. Through Christ, these rulers get to know these truths.

VIII. Ephesians 3:11. God's work today is all in accord with His outflowing purpose.

- A. An eon is that which flows, either flowing out or flowing down. When God works, revealing truth, bringing about good, exerting His power, etc., He is flowing out.
- B. "The eon" in Scripture is the kingdom of God. This is His purpose.
- C. This secret dispensation of grace is in accord with this. When God's future eons come, His grace will be known to men and angels far better than it ever could have been if this dispensation had not taken place. His future purposes are made in Christ.

IX. Conclusion: God works today always graciously, and always in secret. This results in believers who have believed without seeing, and are most blessed. Our lives are hidden with Christ in God, but will not always be hidden. We are shut up to respond to God by faith, and it is faith that He requires of us. God's work reveals truth now to heavenly beings, but in the future all will know about God's wisdom because of His work today. His work is in accord with what has always been His purpose: the kingdom of God. Praise God for His current work!