VERSEQUEST MINISTRIES

FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES

VQ

THE MYSTERY REVEALED TO PAUL

Seven Layers of the Dispensation of Grace and the One New Body Revealed in Paul's Ministry

KING JAMES BIBLE

A free study for families, churches, and individual readers

NOVEMBER 15, 2026

VERSEQUEST FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES

About This Study

The Mystery Revealed to Paul is a study in what God says was committed, revealed, hidden, and then made known through the apostolic ministry of Paul. Ephesians 3 does not present the mystery as a religious curiosity. It presents a stewardship of grace, a revelation concerning Christ, Gentile fellowheirship, one body, and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

This study follows the seven movements in the family curriculum and develops them into one connected lesson. Every main and supporting King James Bible passage is printed in full. Read the Scripture first, then the comments. The comments serve the Bible; they never replace its authority.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> God entrusted Paul with a distinct stewardship in which truth previously hidden was revealed: believing Jews and Gentiles are fellowheirs and members of one body in Christ, sharing spiritual blessings and a heavenly hope through the gospel.

THE SEVEN-MOVEMENT STUDY MAP

1. Paul Received a Distinct Stewardship

2. The Mystery Came by Revelation

3. The Mystery Was Hidden in Other Ages

4. Gentile Believers Are Fellowheirs

5. Jew and Gentile Form One Body

6. The Church Shares the Promise in Christ by the Gospel

7. The Mystery Magnifies Christ's Unsearchable Riches

HOW TO USE IT

Begin with Ephesians 3:1-9. Work through one principle at a time, reading all three supporting passages aloud. Discuss the family question, write observations, and close by stating one truth about Christ and His Church that you must remember.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

The Mystery Is Revealed to Magnify Christ

The strength of this study is allowing Paul to define his own stewardship, revelation, and mystery from the Scriptures.

The word mystery can sound mysterious in the modern sense - something vague, secretive, or speculative. Paul uses it more precisely. He describes truth that had been hidden and was then revealed by God. The mystery is not an invitation to invent hidden meanings in every verse. It is a reason to pay careful attention when inspired Scripture tells us what was formerly hidden and what has now been made known.

Ephesians 3 places Paul in the middle of that disclosure. He calls himself "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles," speaks of "the dispensation of the grace of God" given to him, and says the mystery was made known "by revelation." The chapter then identifies a central feature: Gentiles are fellowheirs, "of the same body," and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel.

That revelation must be held together with the rest of the Bible. The previous study established that God has not cancelled His promises to Israel. This lesson now establishes the Church's distinct one-body truth. Right division refuses to make those doctrines compete. God can preserve Israel's prophetic promises and, during the present dispensation, form one body in Christ from believing Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's distinct ministry also does not make Paul the Saviour. The message magnifies Jesus Christ. Paul says his grace was to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Christ is the head of the body, the One in whom believers are blessed, the One whose blood makes the far-off nigh, and the One in whom the hope of glory is found.

The goal of this study is therefore not to produce pride in possessing a doctrinal label. First Corinthians 4 says stewards must be faithful. If God has revealed truth, the proper response is humble stewardship: believe it, teach it honestly, and let it lead us into a larger view of Christ.

> **A USEFUL REMINDER**
>
> Pauline distinctives do not create a different Jesus or a second Saviour. The distinction concerns the stewardship, revelation, one-body truth, and Church doctrine Scripture says were committed and made known through Paul.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

MAIN PASSAGE

Ephesians 3:1-9

Paul describes the dispensation of grace, the revelation of the mystery, the one body, and his commission to preach Christ's unsearchable riches.

Ephesians 3:1-9 (KJV)

The pattern passage

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Notice the movement. Paul begins with a stewardship given for the Gentiles, explains that the mystery came by revelation, says it was not made known in other ages as it is now revealed, identifies Gentiles as fellowheirs and members of the same body, and then points to the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The passage does not make the mystery an end in itself. Paul was made a minister by grace so that the truth would be preached and the fellowship of the mystery made known. Revelation produces responsibility.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 1 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

1. Paul Received a Distinct Stewardship

Paul did not invent his ministry or appoint himself. Scripture presents a dispensation committed to him for the benefit of the Church and the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 9:17 (KJV)

A dispensation of the gospel was committed unto Paul.

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

Colossians 1:24-25 (KJV)

Paul was made a minister according to the dispensation given him for the Church.

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:
25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Galatians 2:7-9 (KJV)

The apostles recognized Paul's special commission toward the Gentiles.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;
8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)
9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 1 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

A Stewardship Received, Not Invented

Ephesians 3 begins with Paul identifying himself as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. He then speaks of "the dispensation of the grace of God" given to him to-ward them. The word dispensation emphasizes a stewardship - something entrusted by God to be administered faithfully. Paul did not discover a clever system of theology and then attach Christ to it. He received a divine commission.

First Corinthians 9:17 uses the same stewardship language: "a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." Colossians 1:25 likewise says Paul was made a minister according to the dispensation given him "for you, to fulfil the word of God." These statements make his ministry more than personal preference. God placed a responsibility in his hands, and the churches were expected to understand what had been committed to him.

Galatians 2 adds historical confirmation. James, Cephas, and John recognized the grace given to Paul and the sphere of his Gentile ministry. That does not require us to imagine rival Saviours or competing ways of salvation. It does require us to take Paul's own words about his commission seriously. Right division recognizes both the continuity of the one Lord Jesus Christ and the distinctive stewardship Scripture says was given to Paul.

For the family, the practical lesson is that doctrine should come from revelation God has given, not from religious tradition or personality. We do not honor Paul by making him the centre; we honor Christ by receiving the stewardship Christ entrusted to His apostle and reading it as Scripture.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Why does it matter that Paul describes his ministry as a dispensation committed to him rather than a message he invented?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

A distinct stewardship raises the next question: how did Paul receive the truth he was responsible to preach? Scripture answers: by revelation.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 2 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

2. The Mystery Came by Revelation

Paul repeatedly says that the message committed to him was received by revelation of Jesus Christ, not borrowed from human teachers.

Galatians 1:11-12 (KJV)

Paul received the gospel he preached by revelation of Jesus Christ.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.
12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:1-7 (KJV)

Paul received an abundance of revelations from the Lord.

1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.
2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.
3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)
4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.
6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.
7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Romans 16:25-26 (KJV)

The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the mystery was made manifest by revelation.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,
26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 2 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

Revelation Establishes the Authority of the Message

Galatians 1 draws a firm line between divine revelation and human instruction. Paul says the gospel he preached was "not after man." He neither received it from man nor was taught it by man; it came "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." That statement protects the apostolic message from being reduced to one religious opinion among many.

Second Corinthians 12 shows that revelation was a major feature of Paul's apostolic experience. He speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord" and of "the abundance of the revelations." Yet the passage also guards against spiritual pride. Paul was not permitted to turn revelation into self-exaltation. The messenger was still a servant, and the glory remained Christ's.

Romans 16:25-26 joins revelation directly to the mystery. Paul speaks of the preaching of Jesus Christ "according to the revelation of the mystery." This does not make Christ a different Christ. It means that God disclosed truth about Christ and His present work that required revelation at the appointed time.

The family should therefore learn to distinguish between inspired revelation and later speculation. We possess the apostolic revelation in Scripture. Our task is not to hunt for secret experiences beyond the Bible but to read, understand, and obey what God has already made known.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

How does Paul's repeated claim of revelation protect the Church from treating doctrine as merely human opinion?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

If the mystery had to be revealed, Scripture next explains why: it had been hidden in other ages.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 3 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

3. The Mystery Was Hidden in Other Ages

The mystery was not simply difficult to notice. Paul says it had been hidden and was made manifest at the appointed time.

Colossians 1:26 (KJV)

The mystery was hid from ages and generations but is now made manifest to the saints.

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Ephesians 3:9 (KJV)

The mystery had been hid in God from the beginning of the world.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 (KJV)

God's hidden wisdom was unknown to the rulers who crucified Christ.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:
8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 3 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

Hidden Means Hidden Until God Made It Known

Colossians 1:26 uses unusually strong language: the mystery "hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." Ephesians 3:9 says it had been "hid in God" from the beginning of the world. Those phrases should control our definition. A mystery in Paul is not merely a puzzle that clever readers could have solved centuries earlier; it is truth God chose to reveal in His time.

This matters when reading prophecy. The Old Testament truly reveals Christ, His sufferings, His kingdom, Israel's covenants, and many other great truths. Yet Paul still says something was hidden. Right division does not force later revelation backward until every distinction disappears. It allows earlier Scripture to mean what it said and later revelation to add what God says was newly made known.

First Corinthians 2:7-8 shows another side of hidden wisdom. The rulers of this world did not understand the divine purpose; had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. God's wisdom was not defeated by human ignorance. The cross became the very ground upon which the riches now revealed in Christ could be proclaimed.

A healthy family Bible study therefore asks two questions at once: What had God already revealed? And what does the New Testament say was later made known? That habit prevents us from flattening the Bible into one undifferentiated set of instructions.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What is the difference between a truth being difficult to understand and Paul saying it was actually hidden until God revealed it?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

The hidden mystery is not abstract. Ephesians 3 identifies a central feature: believing Gentiles are fellowheirs and of the same body.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 4 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

4. Gentile Believers Are Fellowheirs

Those once far off from Israel's covenant privileges are brought nigh in Christ and share a new spiritual standing by the gospel.

Ephesians 2:12-13 (KJV)

Those once strangers from Israel's covenants are made nigh by Christ's blood.

12 That at that time ye 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:
13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Romans 8:16-17 (KJV)

Children of God are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Galatians 3:28 (KJV)

In Christ, believing Jew and Gentile share equal spiritual standing.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 4 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

Far Off, Now Made Nigh in Christ

Ephesians 2 carefully describes the former Gentile condition: without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. Paul does not rewrite that past by pretending Gentiles had always possessed Israel's covenant position. He announces something better: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 3 calls these believers "fellowheirs." Romans 8 explains the inheritance language from another angle. Those who are children of God are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The ground of the inheritance is union with Christ, not natural descent, circumcision, or adoption into Israel's national identity.

Galatians 3:28 expresses the equality of spiritual standing in Christ. Jew and Greek do not have different levels of access to God within the body. Bond and free, male and female likewise stand before God in Christ without a superior saving status. The verse does not erase every earthly distinction or every biblical role; it declares the equal standing of believers in Christ.

This is one reason the mystery is so glorious. Gentiles are not merely tolerated at the edge of blessing. In Christ they are fellowheirs, brought nigh by His blood, and given a standing no human pedigree could purchase.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

According to Ephesians 2, what changed the Gentile believer's position from "far off" to "made nigh"?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

Fellowheirs are not gathered into two spiritual bodies. The next principle shows Jew and Gentile joined by one Spirit into one body.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 5 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

5. Jew and Gentile Form One Body

The mystery reveals a new spiritual unity in Christ: one body created through the cross and entered by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (KJV)

By one Spirit all believers are baptized into one body.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.
13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Ephesians 2:14-16 (KJV)

The cross makes believing Jews and Gentiles one new man and reconciles both in one body.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Colossians 3:10-11 (KJV)

Within the new man, Christ is all and in all.

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 5 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

One New Man, One Body, One Spirit

First Corinthians 12:13 states the unity plainly: "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The verse names Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, then places all believers in the same body by the action of the Spirit. This spiritual baptism is not a human ceremony that one group performs for another; it is God's work placing believers into Christ's body.

Ephesians 2 explains what the cross accomplished between believing Jews and Gentiles. Christ "hath made both one" and created "one new man." The wording is important. The Gentile is not merely placed under Israel as a second-class member, and the Jew is not told to become a Gentile. Both are reconciled unto God "in one body by the cross."

Colossians 3 calls believers to live according to the new man in which Christ is all and in all. National, social, and cultural distinctions do not determine rank before God in the body. Christ becomes the centre, head, life, and common identity of His people.

At the same time, this one-body truth should not be misused to erase every other biblical distinction. The previous study showed that Israel's prophetic promises still stand. Right division lets both truths remain intact: one spiritual body in Christ today, and God's faithfulness to promises He made to Israel.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

How does the phrase "one new man" protect us from making the Church merely an extension of either Jew or Gentile identity?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

The one body receives a distinct sphere of blessing and hope in Christ. Paul next emphasizes the promise and life believers possess through the gospel.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 6 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

6. The Church Shares the Promise in Christ by the Gospel

The Church's blessings are centered in Christ, spiritual in character, and connected to a promise of life established before the world began.

Ephesians 1:3 (KJV)

The Church's blessings are spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

2 Timothy 1:1 (KJV)

Paul's apostleship is according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

Titus 1:2 (KJV)

The hope of eternal life rests on God's promise before the world began.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 6 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

A Promise Centered in Christ and Life

Ephesians 3 says Gentiles are "partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." That wording keeps the promise centered exactly where Paul centers it: in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 then describes the Church's blessings as "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The present body has a rich, distinctly Christ-centered inheritance.

Second Timothy 1:1 speaks of "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." Titus 1:2 reaches still farther back and speaks of eternal life promised "before the world began." These statements give the Church a hope grounded not in human achievement or national privilege but in the eternal purpose and truthfulness of God.

This helps maintain an important distinction after the previous lesson on Israel. Israel has stated national, covenant, and prophetic promises that God will keep. The Church is not impoverished because those promises remain Israel's. In Christ the Church has spiritual blessings, heavenly standing, eternal life, and an inheritance so rich that Paul repeatedly describes it in terms of grace and glory.

The practical effect should be contentment and worship. Believers do not need to seize another people's promises in order to feel blessed. We can receive the promises Scripture directly gives us in Christ and praise God for the riches of grace already bestowed.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Why is it important to let the Church's blessings be described by Paul's own words rather than borrowing every promise addressed elsewhere?

CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PRINCIPLE

Those blessings lead to the final movement: the mystery does not diminish Christ; it displays the unsearchable riches, power, headship, and glory found in Him.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 7 OF 7 / SCRIPTURE READING

7. The Mystery Magnifies Christ's Unsearchable Riches

The goal of the mystery is not fascination with a system. It is a larger view of Christ, His riches, His headship, and faithful stewardship of what God has revealed.

Colossians 1:27 (KJV)

The revealed riches include Christ in believers, the hope of glory.

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Ephesians 1:18-23 (KJV)

Christ's power, headship, and inheritance are displayed in relation to His body.

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own 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 world, but also in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (KJV)

Those entrusted with God's mysteries must be found faithful stewards.

1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PRINCIPLE 7 OF 7 / CONNECTED TEACHING

The Mystery Ends in Christ, Not in Pride

Paul describes his commission as preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ." That phrase protects the study from becoming a fascination with charts, labels, or personalities. The mystery is precious because it reveals more of Christ's purpose, riches, and relationship to His body. If our study of Paul makes Christ smaller, we have missed Paul's own emphasis.

Colossians 1:27 summarizes the glory in a sentence: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Ephesians 1 then lifts the eyes of the believer toward the risen Christ, seated far above every principality and power, with all things under His feet, and given as head over all things to the Church, "which is his body." The mystery magnifies His supremacy.

First Corinthians 4 adds responsibility. Ministers are "stewards of the mysteries of God," and the requirement is faithfulness. Truth entrusted is not truth for boasting. It must be handled honestly, taught carefully, and lived humbly. A steward does not own the treasure; he is accountable to the One who entrusted it.

The family should finish this lesson with Christ at the centre. Paul received a stewardship, the mystery came by revelation, it had been hidden, Gentiles became fellowheirs, Jew and Gentile form one body, the Church shares promise in Christ, and every layer displays the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

How can we study the mystery in a way that makes Christ greater rather than making ourselves proud of what we know?

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Seven Layers, One Revealed Purpose in Christ

The power of the study is seeing the order rather than isolating Paul's individual statements from one another.

Put the seven principles side by side and Ephesians 3 becomes a coherent map. Paul received a stewardship; the mystery came by revelation; it had been hidden in other ages; Gentile believers became fellowheirs; believing Jew and Gentile form one body; the Church shares promise and spiritual blessing in Christ by the gospel; and the whole revelation magnifies the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The sequence protects the Bible from two opposite errors. One error treats every age and audience as though God never revealed anything distinctive. The other error turns distinctions into division from Christ Himself. Paul avoids both. He insists on the revelation entrusted to him while keeping Christ, the gospel, grace, and the cross at the centre.

The mystery also explains why the Church cannot simply be reduced to national Israel. Ephesians 2 says Gentiles were once aliens from Israel's commonwealth and strangers from the covenants of promise, yet are now made nigh by Christ's blood. God creates "one new man" and reconciles both unto Himself in one body. New creation language matters.

At the same time, one-body truth does not require the cancellation of Israel's prophetic future. The Bible is large enough for both. The more carefully we distinguish what God has said, the more consistently we can believe all of it.

THE SEVEN-MOVEMENT MYSTERY MAP

STEWARDSHIP - Paul received a dispensation committed by God.
REVELATION - The mystery came by revelation of Jesus Christ.
HIDDEN - The mystery had been hid from ages and generations.
FELLOWHEIRS - Gentile believers are made nigh and share inheritance in Christ.
ONE BODY - Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God in one body by the cross.
PROMISE - The Church possesses spiritual blessing and life in Christ by the gospel.
CHRIST - The mystery displays Christ's unsearchable riches and requires faithful stewardship.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

FAMILY APPLICATION

Read, Remember, Practice

Use these questions to turn dispensational distinction into careful Bible reading, humility, and faithfulness.

1. Stewardship
What does Paul mean when he says a dispensation was committed unto him?

2. Revelation
Why must revealed doctrine be received as God's truth rather than treated as one religious opinion?

3. Hidden Truth
What does it mean that the mystery was "hid" and later "made manifest"?

4. Fellowheirs
What changed the former Gentile condition described in Ephesians 2:12?

5. One Body
How does the cross create one new man without making the Church identical with national Israel?

6. Promise in Christ
What blessings does Paul specifically describe as belonging to believers in Christ?

7. Faithful Stewardship
How can learning dispensational truth make us more humble and more faithful rather than proud?

FAMILY CLOSE

What truth from this study must we believe, remember, and practice this week?

A SIMPLE FAMILY STUDY GUIDE

Seven Questions for Reading Paul's Mystery Carefully

Use these questions whenever you study passages about Paul's stewardship, the mystery, Jew and Gentile, or the body of Christ.

WHO RECEIVED THE STEWARDSHIP?

Notice when Paul identifies something as committed, given, or entrusted to him.

HOW WAS IT MADE KNOWN?

Distinguish revelation from human tradition. Ask whether Scripture says a truth was newly made manifest.

WAS IT PREVIOUSLY REVEALED OR HIDDEN?

Let words such as hid, mystery, now revealed, and other ages keep their natural force.

WHO IS BEING JOINED?

Observe the movement from Jew and Gentile to one new man and one body in Christ.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S STANDING?

Look for Paul's language of heavenly places, spiritual blessings, life, inheritance, and union with Christ.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO ISRAEL?

Do not use Church truth to cancel Israel's stated prophetic promises, and do not use Israel's promises to erase the one-body mystery.

DOES THE STUDY MAGNIFY CHRIST?

The purpose is the unsearchable riches of Christ. If a system produces pride or shifts the centre away from Him, return to the text.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

FINAL REMINDER

Make All Men See the Fellowship of the Mystery

The study ends where Ephesians 3 points: revelation becomes stewardship, and stewardship should magnify Christ.

Ephesians 3:8-9 (KJV)

Paul's commission points to Christ's riches and the fellowship of the mystery

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Paul never presents the revelation given to him as a reason to glorify Paul. He calls himself "less than the least of all saints" and immediately describes grace given to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The messenger is small; Christ is inexhaustibly rich.

The mystery gives the Church a clear identity. Believing Jews and Gentiles are fellowheirs and members of one body. They are reconciled to God by the cross, blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and given a hope of glory centered in Christ.

The doctrine also gives the family a method for Bible study. Pay attention to what God says was hidden, what He says was revealed, to whom a stewardship was committed, and what He says about the people involved. Right division is not cutting verses out of the Bible; it is allowing every part of the Bible to remain where God placed it.

Finally, remember the responsibility of a steward. First Corinthians 4:2 says, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Truth understood should become truth guarded, taught, and lived with humility.

FOR FURTHER FAMILY STUDY

Read Ephesians 2:11-3:12 during the week. Mark every occurrence of Gentiles, both, one, body, mystery, dispensation, revelation, and Christ. Then explain in your own words what was formerly true of the Gentiles, what God has now done in Christ, and what Paul says was revealed.

FAMILY CLOSE

How does the revelation of the mystery increase our appreciation for Jesus Christ and the grace God has given the Church?

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION

PERSONAL AND FAMILY NOTES

Write What the Word of God Shows You

Use this page for Scripture observations, questions, cross-references, doctrinal distinctions, and practical applications.

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES / APPLICATION