

## Contra Mundum

### The Great Mystery

Ephesians 3:1-13

March 22, 2015

Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation... **-Ephesians 3:2**

#### I. PAUL—PRISONER OF CHRIST JESUS

- Paul is defined, and therefore confined, by his relationship with Jesus (vs. 1; 1 Cor. 9:15-18; 15:9-11).

#### II. REVEALED MYSTERIES

- Paul has been made a steward of great mysteries (vs. 2, 4, 5, 9).
- These mysteries were once unknown, or at least hidden, and are now revealed through the apostles, via the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 11:25; 16:25; Col. 1:26).
- The mystery? God has united all peoples under the banner of the gospel of Jesus Christ (vs. 6).

#### III. PAUL'S PRIVILEGE

1. To be a minister of the gospel (vs. 7).
2. To be given grace by the gift of God's power (vs. 7).
3. To preach to Gentiles the riches of Christ (vs. 8).
4. To make known a mystery kept hidden by God (vs. 9).
5. To suffer for the gospel, God's glory, and people (vs. 13).

#### IV. GOD'S PURPOSE

- That his manifold wisdom might be displayed in the heavenly realms through the church (vs. 10).
- This has been God's plan all along (vs. 11).
- To provide access to him with freedom and confidence (Eph. 2:18; 3:12).

**KNOW:** God has revealed to us a great mystery. This mystery is that God has united men and women from every background in the church, the body of Christ, which reveals the wisdom and eternal purpose of God.

**DO:** Love the church of Jesus Christ.

#### Suggested Reading:

*Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized Religion*, by Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck

#### Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

##### Please read Ephesians 3:1-13

1. What do you think about Paul's claim to receiving revealed mysteries via "revelation?" How do we know? What if others told you they also received revelations (e.g., Joseph Smith)?
2. How do we test claims to revelation?
3. Is all this talk about unity in the church necessary? Have we grown past this stuff in the 21st century in America? Do we still see vestiges of racism, sexism, etc. in churches today?
4. Talk more about God using the church to display his wisdom to the heavenly beings. Is this weird? Completely beyond our ability to understand? Enlightening?
5. What's an application point for us in this passage? How does this help us as followers of Christ?