

# THE IDENTITY OF THE OVERCOMING CHURCH: UNDERSTANDING OUR CALLING AND THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

Houses of Light Church • May 3-4, 2025 • Pastor Netz Gómez

**Ephe. 3:1**

**'For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles' (ESV)**

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. Paul has just said in **vs.2:11-22** that we Gentiles are no longer foreigners but fellow citizens with the people of Israel. We share in the covenants of promise and are now members of God's family, and we are His temple. And Paul explains to them that this is why he was in prison for his ministry to them, and also why he prays for them.

B. This was probably a bombshell for the Ephesians: This great apostle of God of Jewish origin was in prison for his ministry to us Gentiles? And then Paul pauses for twelve verses to explain that his life and ministry are about building up the Gentiles, so they shouldn't feel discouraged..

**Efe. 3:13 "So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory."**

C. We understand that Paul felt that his suffering for them could make them feel guilty or discouraged, but he tells them that this suffering was an honor for them, it was God who had entrusted him with suffering for them.

**Efe. 3:2-3 y 8 "assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly... 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."**

D. They wouldn't be discouraged if they understood that Paul had a stewardship and it was "of the grace of God." It wasn't something horrible he had been forced into; rather, it should make them feel honored because God was bringing the Gentiles into the glorious inheritance; such is the grace of God that calls us to serve Him.

**Rom. 11:13 "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,"**

E. Aside from all the glorious truths contained in these texts, one question we can ask ourselves is how much we value our calling? Paul honored his ministry, and each of us has an assignment from God in the family, the church, and the community that we should not underestimate because it plays a key role in God's plan.

F. Another reflection this passage leads us to, is how Paul's ministry led him to spend time in prison, but he was not discouraged, but rather encouraged the believers. **In our service to God, we may experience difficulties, but we**

must not allow that to discourage us or distract us from continuing to fulfill the calling God has given us.

## II. THE MYSTERY THAT GOD ENTRUSTED TO PAUL

*Ephe. 3:3 y 5 "...how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly (Ephe. 1:8-10; 2:11-22)... <sup>s</sup> [the mystery] which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."*

- A. Paul knew that his task as a steward was to bring light for the good of the Gentiles; the mystery that had been hidden for centuries and that God had now made known to the apostles through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, as he had just written.

*Ephe. 3:6 "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."*

- B. This is what the apostle Paul has repeated and what we have spoken about, which is a glorious proclamation worth emphasizing. Our inclusion in the covenants of promise, in the body as heirs through Christ.

*Ephe. 2:12-13 "...remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*

- C. It is in Jesus and by His blood that covers our sins through the gospel that we Gentiles are now included in the body, the inheritance and the promise and precisely for that reason Paul "bow his knees in prayer" and in v.14 closes the parenthesis and begins his glorious apostolic prayer for them.

*Ephe. 3:14 "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father"*

- D. The reason for the place that we Gentiles have together with the holy people led Paul to pray and that kind of cry that should be there in us when we contend in prayer for this generation before the return of Christ.

## III. THE TOTAL REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

*Efe. 3:5 "which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."*

- A. It is worth pointing out that God had indeed prophesied in the Old Testament the mystery of including the Gentiles but not with the clarity that came to us through the work of Christ and the ministry of Paul.

*Gen. 12:2-3 "And I will make of you [Abram] a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

Is. 49:6 *"he [The Lord] says: "It is too light a thing that you [Jesus] should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

- B. These promises indicated that God's mercy toward Israel would be extended to the nations, but the revelation of this mystery was made known through the apostle Paul by the revelation of the Holy Spirit; in his letters, he explains how God fulfilled this plan.

Gal. 3:8-9 *"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."*

- C. No one before him had had the clarity and precision that Paul had on fundamental aspects of the covenants, promises and plans of God in Christ for the Gentiles.

#### IV. CHRISTIANS MUST READ WELL

Efe. 3:3-4 *"how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ."*

- A. This text describes a very important sequence:

1. It all begins with a mystery in God's mind.
2. He reveals it to the apostles and prophets.
3. Then the apostles wrote it down in the gospels and letters.
4. We read it.
5. We pray for revelation.

Efe. 1:17-18 *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might."*

- a) Paul prays that God will give us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation that will enable us to understand what we read. It's not just reading; we need hearts illuminated by the Spirit so that we can have spiritual perception of God's mind.

6. This leads to the praise of the glory of God.

Efe. 1:6, 12 y 14 *"to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved... 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.... 14 ...[Holy Spirit] who is the*

*guarantee[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

- B. Everything is revealed to us through this process so that it becomes praise to God. This is the goal: a life that worships Him in spirit and in truth. This is one of the most important reasons why we teach our children to read so that they may know God and worship Him.
- C. We desire that all nations may have the Bible and that we raise up generation after generation of those who can read to take in all these passages of the Bible and understand what the authors meant so that they may understand their meaning and praise God. May they not be puzzled by something they do not understand, but may the Holy Spirit enlighten their hearts so that they may perceive God's heart in such a way that they may live for His glory.
- D. Never be content until you are growing in your ability to read and understand the parables, the prophecies, the psalms, and grasp the way the authors thought and believed so that you may gain the riches of understanding that will make you someone who lives a life that worships God.

#### V. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is your calling, and how much do you value it?
- 2. What is the mystery God entrusted to Paul, and why is it important to us?
- 3. As you read the Bible, are you receiving revelation that leads you to worship? Explain.

#### THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. On May 19th, a new term begins in our schools, now with updated content, a renewed teaching method, and under a new name and vision: HOUSES OF LIGHT TRAINING CENTER "ROOTED," with a focus on training believers to become wise, mature, and skilled disciples for ministry, both inside and outside the church.
- 2. We invite you to HAVAH, a night of ministry for women of all ages. May 30th, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. There will be times of worship and intercession for our homes and families. Free event. Register at [www.heartbeat.la](http://www.heartbeat.la)

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