

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE CONTINUE TO EXPLORE PAUL'S DIVINELY-INSPIRED DETOUR.

▶▶ As noted, ~ in 3:1, ~ Paul begins to pray for the Ephesian believers, ~ then abruptly digresses, ~ or takes a detour, ~ that lasts through verse 13. ~ Resumes in vs. 14.

AS WE KNOW, ~ IN VERSES 1-6, ~ PAUL FOCUSED ON "THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST."

▶▶ If you recall, ~ in verse 6, ~ Paul said that it is through the gospel, ~ the good news that Christ Jesus has provided salvation for lost humanity, ~ and through the gospel alone, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that a person becomes "a fellow heir with all the saints, ~ a fellow member of the body of Christ, ~ and a fellow partaker of the blessings of salvation provided by Jesus."

PAUL'S MENTION OF "THE GOSPEL" IN VERSE 6 ~ THEN, ~ AS WE SAW, ~ LED HIM INTO a discussion of the gospel and his role in preaching it in verses 7-13.

▶▶ Basically, ~ he began in verse 7 by saying, ~ "and speaking of this gospel," ~ i.e., ~ the good news that Jesus has provided salvation for lost humanity, ~ He then goes on to speak about it and his role in preaching it. ~ Last time verses 7-8a.

TODAY, ~ WE WILL EXPLORE VERSES 8-10.

IN VERSES 8-9, ~ ¶¶

PAUL DEVELOPS MORE FULLY WHAT HE SAID IN VERSE 7.

▶▶ Remember, ~ in verse 7, ~ Paul said it was through the spiritual gift of apostleship, ~ a free and undeserved gift from Jesus, ~ that he became a preacher of this good news that Jesus has provided salvation for lost humanity."

▶▶ And then in verses 8-9, ~ Paul expands on this.

▷▷ Paul writes, ~ "To me, ~ though I am the very least of all the saints ~ [¶ comm.], ~ [to me] ~ this grace was given, ~ to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ~ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things."

↪↪ Basically, ~ he expands on verse 7 by explaining to us about two of the things that his preaching of the gospel, ~ or his preaching ministry, ~ entailed. ¶¶ 1/9

1st, ~ VERSE 8b, ~ HE SAYS THAT HIS PREACHING MINISTRY ENTAILED PREACHING "to the Gentiles ~ the unsearchable riches of Christ."

▶▶ The phrase "of Christ" refers to Jesus as being the source of "the unsearchable riches."

▷▷ I.e., ~ these "unsearchable riches" come from Jesus. ~ And the only way you can receive them from Jesus is through having saving faith in Him.

▶▶ Since Paul has been discussing many of the blessings that accompany salvation, ~ most likely this is what he referring to ~ by the phrase "the unsearchable riches" that come from Jesus.

▷▷ I.e., ~ one of the things his preaching ministry entailed was telling the Gentiles about "the unsearchable riches" from Jesus that accompany salvation. ~ So far in Eph.

THESE "RICHES," ~ OF COURSE, ~ ARE SPIRITUAL, ~ NOT WORLDLY, ~ RICHES, ~ AS Paul pointed out back in Eph. 1:3.

▶▶ And because this is so important for us to wrap our heads around, ~ it bears reviewing some of what we said there.

▶▶ In Eph. 1:3, ~ Paul wrote, ~ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ~ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

▶▶ With the use of these two terms, ~ "spiritual" and "heavenly," ~ Paul seems to be implying a very strong contrast with the present material world.

▶▶ It looks like Paul wants to really impress upon our hearts ~ that the blessings that God has given us ~ have nothing whatsoever to do with earthly physical blessings.

▶▶ What we have is far superior to ~ and infinitely more valuable than ~ all earthly material wealth combined.

▷▷ All earthly material wealth combined ~ can't match 1 iota of what Jesus has given us.

→→ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ think about this, ~ Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, ~ two of the wealthiest men in the world, ~ ↴↴

→→ have nothing compared to the riches that Jesus has given us.

▶▶ And when we truly focus on these spiritual blessings in the heavenly places that we have been given, ~ the more, ~ to quote the old hymn, ~ the more the things of earth will grow strangely dim. ↴↴ 2/9

▷▷ Another hymn writer expressed it this way: ~ "Riches I heed not, ~ nor man's empty praise, ~ Thou mine Inheritance, ~ now and always: ~ Thou and Thou only, ~ first in my heart, ~ High King of Heaven, ~ my Treasure Thou art."

▶▶ Also, ~ let's consider the fact that earthly material wealth can be fleeting.

▷▷ In Prov. 23:4-5, ~ Solomon warns us of this.

↳↳ He says ~ **NASB**, ~ "Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, ~ Cease from your consideration of it. ~ When you set your eyes on it, ~ it is gone. ~ For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle ~ that flies toward the heavens."

→→ Think about it

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ earthly wealth cannot follow us after death. ~ It is for this life only.

▷▷ The parable of the rich fool*

↳↳ ******"But God said to him, ~ 'Fool! ~ This night your soul is required of you, ~ and the things you have prepared, ~ whose will they be?'"

▷▷ In 1 Tim. 6:7, ~ Paul says, ~ "for we brought nothing into the world, ~ and we cannot take anything out of the world." ~ Hearse

▷▷ And take Asaph who wrote Ps. 73

▶▶ In contrast, ~ since our blessings are "spiritual" and "in the heavenly places," ~ they are eternal.

▷▷ As Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:16-18, ~ "So we do not lose heart. ~ Though our outer self is wasting away, ~ our inner self is being renewed day by day. ~ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ~ as we look not to the things that are seen ~ but to the things that are unseen. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ [Then Paul tells us why he looked, ~ and why we should look, ~ "not to the things that are seen ~ but to the things that are unseen."] ~ ~ ¶¶

→→ For the things that are seen ~ are transient ~ [i.e., ~ they will soon be gone], ~ but the things that are unseen ~ are eternal.

▷▷ And "the unsearchable riches" from Jesus that accompany salvation are part of these unseen things that are eternal. ¶¶ 3/9

A WORD OF CAUTION HERE, ~ JUST BECAUSE OUR RICHES THAT JESUS HAS GIVEN US are spiritual and in the heavenly places, ~ does not mean that none of them are physical.

▶▶ In 2 Pet. 3:13, ~ Peter writes, ~ "But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ~~ Physical

▶▶ In Rev. 21:2a, ~ John writes, ~ "And I saw the holy city, ~ new Jerusalem, ~ coming down out of heaven from God." ~~ Physical

▶▶ In Matt. 25:34, ~ Jesus, ~ speaking about the final judgment, ~ said, ~ "Then the King will say to those on his right, ~ 'Come, ~ you who are blessed by my Father, ~ inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" ~~ Physical . .

▶▶ And our resurrection bodies will be physical as evidenced by Jesus and taught by Paul.

▷▷ In Lk. 24:39, ~ Jesus, ~ after His resurrection, ~ said to the disciples, ~ "See my hands and my feet, ~ that it is I myself. ~~ Touch me, ~ and see. ~~ For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ~~ Physical

▷▷ And in Phil. 3:21, ~ Paul says that when Jesus returns, ~ He "will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, ~ by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

▶▶ So Jesus has given believers "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," ~ and many of them are definitely physical.

GETTING BACK TO VERSE 8b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT HIS PREACHING MINISTRY ENTAILED preaching "to the Gentiles ~ the unsearchable riches of Christ."

▶▶ Notice that Paul says the spiritual riches that accompany our salvation are "unsearchable."

▷▷ The idea here is that the spiritual riches that Jesus has given us are immeasurable, ~ boundless.

↪↪ There is absolutely no limit to the spiritual riches Jesus has given His people.

IN VERSE 9, ~ WE SEE A SECOND THING THAT PAUL'S PREACHING MINISTRY entailed.

▶▶ Paul says that it entailed bringing "to light ~ [or, ~ explaining] ~ for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in ~ [or, ~ by] ~ God who created all things."

▷▷ Though his primary ministry was to the Gentiles, ~ Paul notes here that he was responsible for preaching to Jews as well. ↵↵ 4/9

▶▶ Since the immediate context of [verses 7-13](#) speaks about the gospel, ~ "mystery" here in [verse 9](#) most likely refers to the plan of the gospel, ~ or, ~ we could say, ~ to God's plan of salvation.

▶▶ God's plan for redeeming mankind was a mystery, ~ "hidden for ages [by] God."

▷▷ As noted earlier in [chapter 3](#), ~ the word "mystery," ~ does not refer to a secret that God is unwilling to tell ~ or to something so obscure that it could not be understood even if told.

▷▷ In Scripture, ~ "mystery" refers in a general sense to God's gracious disclosure to his people ~ of something hidden by Him for a time, ~ that we could not possibly know unless He makes it known.

▷▷ Now, ~ again, ~ we should say that there may be hints about these things in the OT, ~ e.g., ~ gospel hinted at in the garden . . . ~ there may be hints in the OT, ~ but we could not fully know these things unless God makes them fully known.

▷▷ People in former generations didn't fully know God's plan of redemption. ~ It was hidden by God in ages past.

↪↪ And it was not made fully known, ~ nor could it be known, ~ until God the Holy Spirit revealed it, ~ which He did, ~ like He did with "the mystery of Christ," ~ through Jesus' "holy apostles and prophets."

▶▶ So, ~ the second thing that Paul's preaching ministry entailed was explaining God's plan of salvation to everyone.

▷▷ Notice, ~ no one is left out. ~ Salvation is not for a select few, ~ or a particular people group.

↪↪ In [Matt. 28:19a](#), ~ Jesus declares, ~ "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

↪↪ In [1 Tim. 2:4](#), ~ Paul writes that Jesus "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

→→ Peter ~ Ezekiel ~ Desire

↪↪ And [Rev. 5:9](#) tells us that Jesus "ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." ~ The invitation is for all who will come.

→→ And remember . . . no one beyond reach ↵ 5/9

NOW, ~ IT'S INTERESTING AT THE END OF VERSE 9 ~ THAT, ~ REGARDING GOD, ~ PAUL adds the phrase "who created all things."

▶▶ Paul's mention of this was probably to emphasize that the plan of salvation originated with God. ~ Paul wants us to know, ~ beyond a shadow of a doubt, ~ that the gospel finds its source in God, ~ and God alone.

▷▷ Paul drives this point home in Gal. 1:11-12.

↳↳ "For I would have you know, ~ brothers, ~ that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel ~ [i.e., ~ it does not find its origin in human beings]. ~ ~ ¶¶

→→ For I did not receive it from any man ~ [i.e., ~ he did not receive it from any human source], ~ nor was I taught it, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ ~ ["of" means "from." ~ ~ I.e., ~ Paul received the gospel that he preached from Jesus]."

▶▶ Also Paul's mention of God creating all things in the context of writing about the gospel ~ may imply that Paul was pointing out that the gospel was not God's plan B ~ after Adam and Eve sinned.

▷▷ We'll talk more about this next week, ~ so suffice it to say at this time, ~ God already had a plan of salvation in place when Adam and Eve fell.

IN VS 10, ~ PAUL LISTS PURPOSE FOR DOING WHAT HE SAID IN VV. 8b-9.

I.E., ~ A PURPOSE FOR TELLING THE GENTILES ABOUT THE IMMEASURABLE RICHES that come from Jesus ~ and for explaining the plan of the gospel to everyone.

▶▶ Paul says, ~ "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

▶▶ The phrase "through the church" means that the church is the instrument by which "the manifold wisdom of God" becomes known ~ "to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

▷▷ I.e., ~ each blood-bought believer is an object lesson of God's "manifold wisdom" for "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

▶▶ The word "manifold" means very many sided, ~ and may be a metaphor for infinite. ~ So, ~ each blood-bought believer is an object lesson of God's "infinite wisdom" for "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." ¶¶ 6/9

▶▶ Although God is infinitely wise in all areas, ~ in the immediate context, ~ it refers to His infinite wisdom displayed in His plan of salvation ~ and to giving immeasurable riches to those who are saved.

▷▷ To put it a little more briefly, ~ it refers to His infinite wisdom shown in bestowing grace upon lost humanity.

▶▶ Most likely, ~ then, ~ the idea here is that the purpose of telling the Gentiles about the immeasurable riches that come from Jesus ~ and for explaining God's plan of salvation to everyone, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is so that by means of the church, ~ i.e., ~ through those who have experienced salvation and have been given these immeasurable riches ~ ¶¶

↪↪ God's infinite wisdom displayed in bestowing grace on sinners becomes known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO THE IDENTITY OF THESE "RULERS AND AUTHORITIES ~ and of "the heavenly places."

"THE HEAVENLY PLACES" MOST LIKELY SIMPLY REFERS TO THE UNSEEN WORLD around us, ~ which includes both good and evil forces.

▶▶ As John Milton wrote in Paradise Lost, ~ "millions of unseen creatures walk the earth, ~ unseen both when we wake and when we sleep."

▷▷ Once again, ~ we are reminded of the much larger world that surrounds us but that we cannot see

AS FOR "THE RULERS AND AUTHORITIES," ~ BASED ON OTHER REFERENCES IN THE NT that link angels with looking into the gospel and our salvation, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ I would suggest that the holy angels are in view here in Eph. 3:10.

▷▷ I.e., ~ "by means of the church, ~ the infinite wisdom of God displayed in lavishing His grace on sinners ~ becomes known to His holy angels in this larger world that we cannot see at this time."

▶▶ God created the angels before He created the universe. ~ Job 38:7 tells that all the angels shouted for joy when God called the universe into existence.

▶▶ The angels had been contemplating the majesty and glory of God for centuries, ~ but had not learned something about their Creator until He brought church into existence. ¶¶ 7/9

▷▷ Only by observing the church can the angels come to an adequate comprehension of the grace of God. ~~ They look at the church to investigate God's awesome plan of redemption.

▶▶ Speaking of our salvation, ~ at the end of 1 Pet. 1:12, ~ Peter says, ~ NIV ~ "Even angels long to look into these things."

▷▷ The angels long to look into our salvation.

↳↳ "long" means a strong interest or craving. ~~ And the form of the verb that Peter uses shows an enduring effort.

↳↳ "look" means "to peer into from without." ~~ An illustration of this word would be John and then Mary stooping to look into Jesus' empty tomb, ~ as recorded in John 20.

↳↳ Peter pictures the angels as having a continual and strong desire to watch the unfolding drama of human redemption in order to understand it more fully.

▷▷ The fact that Peter uses a verb that means "to peer into from without" seems to imply that angels stand outside the redemptive realm, ~ and cannot understand it in terms of their own experience.

↳↳ This is plainly reinforced by Heb. 2:16, ~ "For surely it is not angels that he ~ [i.e., ~ Jesus] ~ helps, ~ but he helps the offspring of Abraham."

→→ Jesus became a man, ~ because His plan was to save human beings not angels.

↳↳ In point of fact, ~ Scripture seems to indicate that there is no redemption for fallen angels.

→→ In Matt. 25:41, ~ Jesus indicates that the lake of fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels."

→→ And in 2 Pet. 2:4, ~ Peter says that "God did not spare angels when they sinned, ~ but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment."

▶▶ No redemption for fallen angels

▷▷ . . . Lk. 12:48, ~ "From everyone who has been given much, ~ much will be required."

▶▶ And that is why the holy angels, ~ the angels that did not fall with Satan, ~ have a continual and strong desire to watch the unfolding drama of human redemption. ↴ 8/9

▷▷ This is why only by observing the church can the holy angels come to an adequate comprehension of God's grace.

↪↪ It is because they have never experienced the grace and power of God that turns sinners into saints.

▷▷ This fact, ~ that there is no redemption for fallen angels, ~ should make us even more grateful for our salvation, ~ because God could have easily done the same to us.

ONLY BY OBSERVING THE CHURCH, ~ I.E., ~ THE PEOPLE OF CHRIST JESUS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ can the angels come to an adequate comprehension of the infinite wisdom of God as seen in His awesome plan of redemption.

▶▶ Consequently, ~ we could say that the church is a massive university, ~ with each blood-bought believer a professor; ~ and the holy angels the students, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as they observe and learn about God's infinite wisdom from each believer's redemption and subsequent blessings from Jesus.

▶▶ In every blood-bought believer, ~ they see Calvary where the Creator died, ~ the righteous for the unrighteous.

▷▷ In the church, ~ they see the Incarnation, ~ where God the Son "became flesh and dwelt among us."

↪↪ In each follower of Christ Jesus, ~ they see the awesome power of God in transforming a sinner into the image of His beloved Son.

▶▶ How very much they must watch us. ~ How they must wonder at creatures once totally depraved, ~ now clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

▷▷ How very much they must rejoice when they see the awesome grace and power of God turn a sinner into a saint.

CONCLUSION.

▶▶ To God be the "glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, ~ forever and ever."

LET'S PRAY 9/9