



**WHO IN THE WORLD
DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?**

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS

The Mystery of Christ

Ephesians 3:1-13

Review of Ephesians 1-2

“The purpose of Ephesians is to promote a love for one another that has the love of God and Christ as its basis.”



Harold Hoehner,
Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary

Ephesians 1

Greeting (v. 1-2)

The blessings of the believer (v. 3-14)

Paul's prayer (v. 15-23)

Ephesians 2

- 1. Our Past Plight (v. 1-5)**
- 2. God's Present Provision (v. 6-9)**
- 3. The Purpose of His Plan (v. 10)**

1. the reminder of Gentile separation from Israel and thereby separation from God (vv. 11–12)
2. the work of Christ to unite these estranged Gentiles with the OT and newly emerging NT saints in a new creation (vv. 13–18)
3. the new, united church is growing into a new creation temple and household (vv. 19–22).

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 3:1-13

⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Ephesians 3:1-13

¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Ephesians 3:1-13

“Mystery, in Scripture, refers to the understanding of formerly hidden knowledge that was revealed by God to his people. Aspects of God’s mysterious working in the world are now understood or comprehensible to the people of God.”

Lexham Theological Wordbook

“...they are constituent portions of the body of Christ; as nearly related to him, and as much partakers of his life as their Jewish brethren. The hand is not in the body by permission of the eye, nor the eye by permission of the hand. Neither is the Gentile in the church by courtesy of the Jews, nor the Jew by courtesy of the Gentiles. They are one body.”



Charles Hodge,
A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians

“The promise is the promise of redemption; the promise made to our first parents, repeated to Abraham, and which forms the burden of all the Old Testament predictions.”



Charles Hodge,
A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians

29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:29

1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)
2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Ephesians 3:7

1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)
2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)
 - a. Qualification of a Servant

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Ephesians 3:8

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 Corinthians 15:9

⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Ephesians 3:8

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

1 Timothy 1:15

“That is quite a progression in his self-awareness, from a proud, self-righteous Pharisee to the foremost of sinners. Only a person of genuine humility would describe himself in such terms.”



Jerry Bridges

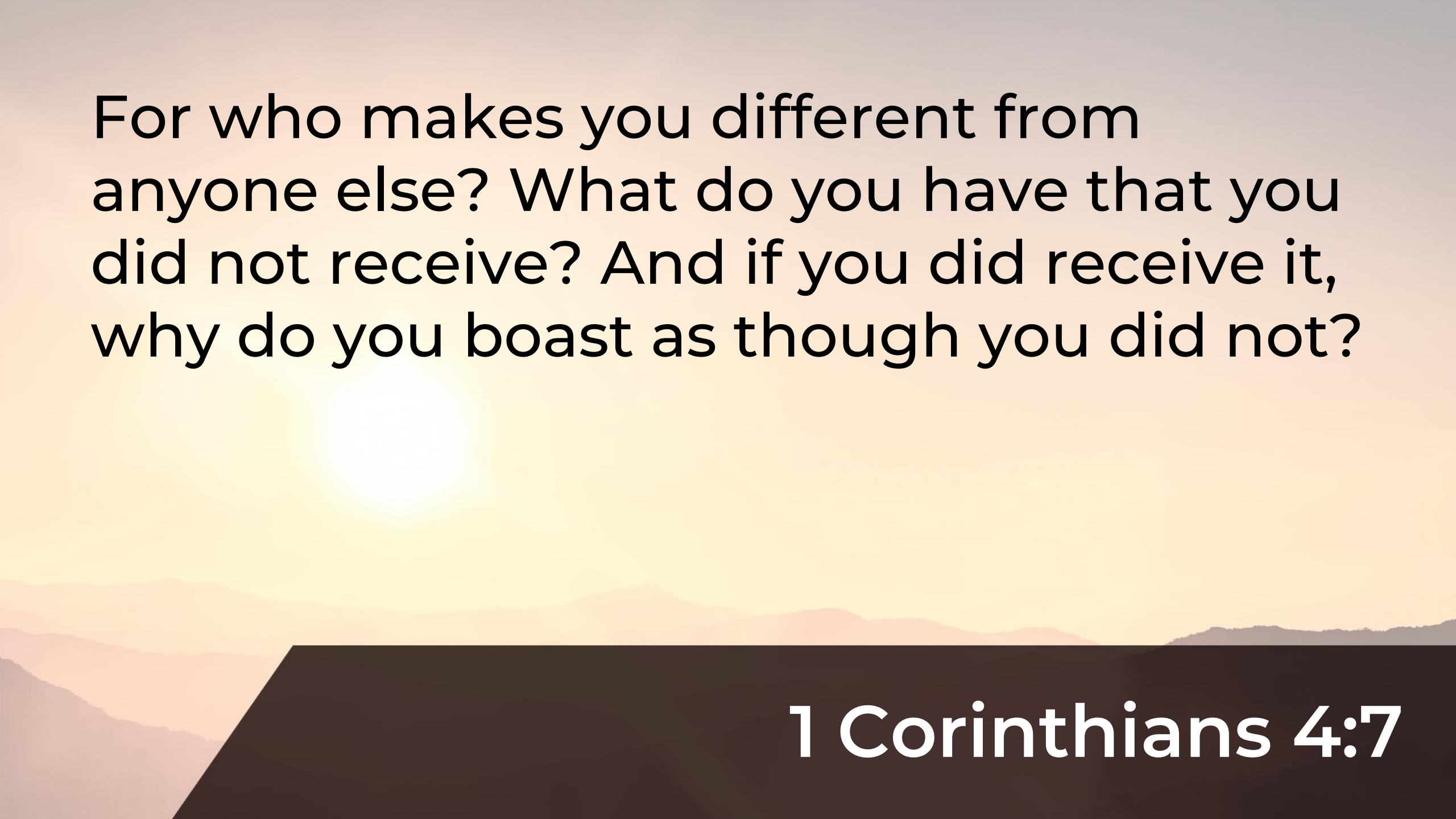
Ephesians 3:2 “...God’s grace that was given to me for you...”

Ephesians 3:7 “the gift of God’s grace given me...”

Ephesians 3:8 “...this grace was given me...”

Humility

- 1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)**
- 2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)**
 - a. Qualifications of a Servant**
 - b. The Work of a Servant**



For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

1 Corinthians 4:7

He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

John 7:18

1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)
2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)
3. The Mission of the Mystery (10-13)

1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)
2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)
3. The Mission of the Mystery (10-13)
 - a. God's purpose

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!

Romans 11:33

²⁸ ...his understanding no one can
fathom. (Isa. 40.28)

⁵ ...how profound your thoughts! (Ps. 92.5)

⁵ ...his understanding has no limit.
(Ps. 147.5)

“It is remarkable that God purposed to make known his manifold wisdom, the mystery, to heavenly rulers through the church rather than telling them directly.”



Harold Hoehner,
Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary

- 1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)**
- 2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)**
- 3. The Mission of the Mystery (10-13)**
 - a. God's purpose**
 - b. Two applications from Paul**

- 1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)**
- 2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)**
- 3. The Mission of the Mystery (10-13)**
 - a. God's purpose**
 - b. Two applications from Paul**
 - Access to God**

⁵ For there is one God
and one mediator
between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus...

1 Timothy 2:5

- 1. The Meaning of the Mystery (1-6)**
- 2. The Minister of the Mystery (7-9)**
- 3. The Mission of the Mystery (10-13)**
 - a. God's purpose**
 - b. Two applications from Paul**
 - Access to God**
 - Don't be discouraged by suffering**

In the present context, the point is that if Paul had never carried out his ministry of the mystery to the Ephesians, he would not have been in prison and the Ephesians would never have been introduced to Christ.



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In other words, his imprisonment is tangible evidence that he preached the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles and in particular to the Ephesians. Hence, his imprisonment is their glory and should not cause them grief.



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