

The Mysterious Household of God

October 1, 2023 ▪ Brad Manley

What is the mystery?

How was the mystery made known?

What does the mystery mean for us?

Ephesians 2:19-3:6

^{2:19} So then you are no longer strangers and aliens but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

^{3:1} For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² 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. ⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: What's something new that you recently learned?

Read and Discuss: Ephesians 2:19-3:6

1. In verse 19, Paul speaks to how the hostility between Jews and Gentiles has been removed. How do the images that Paul uses in 2:19-22 serve to illustrate the unity all believers have with one another? Why might Paul have chosen to emphasize this truth at that time? Why might it be important for us to remember this truth today?
2. According to verse 2:22, we are being "built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." How should this concept shape how we view ourselves in relation to the church? How should it affect how we view other believers in the church?
3. Ephesians 3:6 gives some additional descriptions of the community of believers. Explain how each of these phrases is meant to add to both our intellectual and emotional sense of connection with other believers.
4. Because of the specific revelation Paul received (*Galatians 1:11-17*), he could make known this previously unknown truth that in Jesus, believing Jews and Gentiles would be united in one body. Why do you think God waited until this point in time to reveal this? (*See Galatians 4:4-5.*)
5. Why might the church have been slow to accept Gentile believers? Are you honestly comfortable with Jesus saving all kinds of people and including them in His church? Explain.
6. Paul speaks of Gentiles being partakers of the promise (3:6). To what promise do you think Paul might be referring? (*See 2:12; Galatians 3:15-29*) How are you spiritually and emotionally affected by knowing you are included in the promise of God?

Apply: What are some factors that cause disunity and division within the Church? What are some practical steps we can take to work toward fostering the type of unity that Paul describes here?

Pray: Spend time praying for the unity of the church—that those who feel like outsiders would feel included and that those who resist unity would come to delight in it as God does.