

Ephesians 3:1-6

It is fairly common for the Bible student to find the main truth of an epistle encapsulated in a verse or passage within the book. I would argue that the “theme verse” for Ephesians may well be 3:6. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to exalt Christ and unify the truth by reminding the reader (Jew and Gentile) of their shared heritage in Christ. Paul says that this is a “mystery”. What does this mean? The term mystery is not used in the sense of an unsolved conundrum or crime. Instead, the term is used to denote a truth that was once hidden but has now been revealed. In this case, the truth is that God has come to unite all people in Christ. Whereas the Old Testament (and covenant) alluded to this plan, the particulars and accomplishment of God’s stated desire to bless “all nations through Abraham” (see Genesis 12) has now been revealed in Christ. Today, we will see that this mystery has profound implications for the church.

1. Christ unites us as family
 - a. There are two terms that Paul uses in verse 6 to demonstrate this truth
 - b. First, he tells us that Jews and Gentiles are “fellow heirs”
 - i. The term “heir” simply means those who are due to inherit something
 - ii. When modified by the term “fellow” (which is one Greek term), we come to the conclusion that Christ has made possible for all people to inherit God’s blessings in Him
 - iii. This effectively destroys any other claim to blessing
 1. Our claim to inheritance is not rooted in nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status or any other temporal identifier
 2. Instead, we are blessed by faith in Christ alone
 3. This little phrase “fellow heirs” illuminates the truth quite nicely when we examine other places it is used in the New Testament
 - a. The term appears 4 times
 - i. In Hebrews 11:9 we learn that Isaac and Jacob were “fellow heirs” with Abraham
 - ii. In 1 Peter 3:7 we learn that wives are “fellow heirs” with their husbands
 - iii. The point in both cases is that these individuals are united (by covenant) such that their combined stake in the blessing promised is equally valid
 4. In the same way that Isaac and Jacob had right to the covenant promise given to Abraham and that wives have right to the same promise as their husbands, so Gentiles have just as much cause for expectation, in Christ, as Jews
 5. There is no greater inheritance coming for the Jew, there is Christ who is maker of all and the One who blesses all
 - c. Second, we learn that Jews and Gentiles are united in the same body
 - i. This is a theme that we will unpack more as we continue on in Ephesians but it is important to note that this body is unified, it is one
 - ii. There is no distinction in significance nor dual affiliation!

1. Some people like to argue that God's purposes of salvation are somehow distinct
 2. That God saves the "church" (typically denoting mostly Gentiles) in one way and that God has plans to save the "Jews" in another respect
 3. Paul reminds us that there is one body which is full of all who are saved
 4. There is one name given amongst men by which we must be saved (one could say by which we become heirs or join the body) and that name is Christ... for Jews and Gentiles
- d. Because both Jew and Gentile find their hope of blessing and unity with God in Christ, the mystery of God's plan to bless all nations is revealed in Jesus and He becomes the means whereby we are united to God and to one another
- i. Those who deny Christ have no claim to God's blessing
 - ii. Those who embrace Christ have every reason to expect God's saving power to glorify them
2. Christ unites us through the Gospel
- a. Notice here that Paul says we are partakers (co-heirs, united to the body) of the promise in Christ THROUGH THE GOSPEL
 - b. What does this mean?
 - i. It means that the Good News of Christ crucified is what atones for every heirs sins, breathes life into every member of the body and causes us to awaken to a living hope
 - ii. There is no other message than Christ crucified and resurrected that will save and bless a man
 - iii. There is no "second way" and there is no greater promise or reality than Jesus
 - c. The church that fixates on the commonalities of its members (all sinners, all in need of grace, all believing in the same Savior, all hoping for the same return, all expecting the same blessings in Him) is a church that can move past the incidental division that causes hostility but has been broken down in Jesus
 - d. If a brother believes in Jesus, whatever other characteristics (ethnicity, nationality, etc.) that might separate me from him is trivial compared to the beauty and worth of what unites us
 - e. Paul was commissioned by God to declare this message and we exist to share it in our day as well!