

## Ephesians 3:7-10

The mystery of the Gospel has proven to be astounding to those who are called by God to comprehend its precepts. Indeed, we have already seen that the idea of unity and community by faith in Christ alone was challenging for the Jews and Gentiles to comprehend. The mystery of God's redeeming purpose in uniting men and women from every tribe, tongue and nation offended every cultural sensibility of the day and it still proves difficult today. Nevertheless, there is a greater purpose in revealing this mystery as we will see today.

1. The cosmic implications of the Gospel
  - a. Verse 10 has proven to be a bit deep for many Bible students over the years
  - b. What does God mean when He inspires Paul to write that the church makes known the wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places?
  - c. I believe Henry Morris gets it correct when he writes, "This verse yields an amazing brief insight into God's purposes with respect to His angelic creation, both the holy angels and the fallen angels who have followed Satan in his age-long rebellion against God. They are intently observing and learning about God, His nature and His purposes, through His work of creating and redeeming men and women, whom He had created in His image (Job 1:3-2:10; 1Pe 1:12; Heb 12:1). Thus the church--the vast body of redeemed individuals, past and present--is serving as an instructor of angels"
    - i. The point that is being made is that the unification and blessing of all mankind causes both men and angels to marvel!
    - ii. God's redemptive plan is otherworldly and demands explanation
2. The opportunity for believers today
  - a. If you think about it, the world longs for the solution that only the Gospel can bring
  - b. Our planet is embroiled in all kinds of controversies, many of them are national and/or cultural in nature
    - i. The endless conflicts in the Middle East boil down to religious and ideological disagreements which are steeped in national sensibilities and cultural absolutes
    - ii. Every world leader of consequence has attempted to bring peace but it seems hopeless... and in many ways, it is!
  - c. We all long for the walls of hostility to be broken but we don't have a sledgehammer big enough to topple it
  - d. What in the world can be done? The answer is so out of this world (literally) and so unanticipated that even the angelic beings need to look on to learn how it works
    - i. God's plan of unification did not terminate on negotiation or diplomacy, God's plan of reconciliation was predicated on dealing with the very source of our hostility

- ii. While culture and ethnicity might seem to create discord, the truth is actually deeper than surface level actions or traditions
- iii. The real problem with mankind is a sinful heart that seeks to dominate and alienate all who appear to be threats or have disparate interests
- iv. The result is a world that is full of men and women who distrust and hate their brother
  - 1. If this kind of circumstance is ever going to improve, there must be a heart level transformation and some mechanism for dealing with the guilt that arises from our transgression
  - 2. Who would atone for our sins and change us so that we can live in peace?
  - 3. The answer is found only in Christ
    - a. Jesus died to atone for our sins
    - b. He rose to announce a new, transformed life made available to all who believe
    - c. This is the ground of the mystery of God's plan to bless all nations by uniting us in allegiance and affection for Christ, atoning for sins that need to be punished and giving us new life and purpose
- v. Who could imagine such a solution? Apparently, not even the angels grasped God's plan!
- vi. This means that the church of Paul's day served as the instructor for more than mere mortals
  - 1. The picture here is one of the richest in all the Bible... even the angels see the effects of what Christ has done in astonishment
- e. Do the angels look at our church with the same level of approval and amazement? I hope so!
- f. I pray that Christ will continue to so radically transform our body that all can see that He truly has blessed us beyond measure!