

Ephesians. The Identity of the Church that Overcomes.

Part 11: The mystery of the gospel revealed! — Jews and Gentiles can be One

Houses of Light Church • September 1, 2024 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

Focus: Ephesians 1:11-13

Review:

Last time we talked about how our Heavenly Father, by His will and good purpose, works everything so that His plan for the history of the universe is completely fulfilled, although we still have a part to play, and the beautiful thing is that even that part is Him working in us (Hebrews 13:21). The sovereignty of God gives us great security and confidence that our inheritance is secure and all of this is for His glory and praise.

I. A mystery revealed: Jews and Gentiles have the same inheritance

“...so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...” Ephesians 1:12–13a

- A. Paul is talking about the 2 people groups God brought together through the gospel in this verse: his people (which are the “we” in this verse), the Jews, and the Gentiles he is writing to in Ephesus (which are the “you also” in this verse). The great mystery God revealed to him is this: In Christ, gentiles are grafted into the story of God’s chosen people that began with the Jews. He will continue to unpack this truth in the next part of the letter:

“Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:11-13

"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.” Ephesians 3:6

- B. Paul, as a messianic Jew describes his inheritance and then tells the gentile believers, “You are fellow heirs.” This is the inheritance we received! It’s not anything new, but rather it is woven into the story of God and His chosen people. This is the plan God is accomplishing through the sovereignty of His will. Jews and gentiles get to participate in a joint inheritance through the work of Jesus Christ. He is the One who brings us together — this is the point of the great first sentence of Ephesians (from vs. 3 to 14)!

II. The gospel of salvation

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...” Ephesians 1:13

- A. Paul is telling them that first the Jews heard the gospel and the Gentiles are now also hearing it. This gospel is the good news of salvation—the forgiveness of sins that is in Christ when anyone puts their faith in Him and repents. The only thing that can send a person to hell is unforgiven sin, which he explains in chapter 2:

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” Ephesians 2:1-3

- B. *“among whom we all once walked”* — Both Jews and gentiles were dead in our trespasses and sins, but in Christ both groups can be saved from the wrath of God by His grace. By the blood of Jesus the hostility between God and man — as well as hostility between people groups — is removed! Now we can all be reconciled and have peace with God and with each other! Paul explains this in Ephesians 2:16-17:

“...that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.” Ephesians 2:15b-17
This is the message Paul was entrusted with sharing, and he asks the believers to pray that he would continue to proclaim it boldly:

“...and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...” Ephesians 6:19 — At the time of the early church, the reality of reconciliation between Jew and gentile combined with God reconciliation with humanity was unheard of — it was a completely revolutionary truth!

III. How do we participate in this glorious reality?

“you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” Ephesians 1:13b

A. By believing in Jesus and receiving His word!

1. Paul calls the gospel “the word of truth,” which is Jesus — He is the Truth (John 14:6). He unpacks this truth in Ephesians 4: *“assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus...”* (v. 21)
2. When we believe in the word of Truth, which is Jesus, our hearts are transformed. Where we didn't know how to have love or understanding before, now we have access to Him who can knit us together in love and give us access to the riches of our inheritance: *“...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...” Colossians 2:2-3*

- B. This is why there is so much power of sharing the gospel— it is only by receiving this transformative messages that anyone gets to receive this inheritance and participate in this glorious unity! Jew or gentile, whatever nation we are from, we are not saved by our virtue or our ethnicity, we are saved when we believe the message of the gospel. Paul and the apostles say this in their letters:

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17

“...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you.” 1 Peter 1:23, 25

- C. We have been entrusted with this message, just as Paul was, and we are invited to **preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.**

“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...” Ephesians 3:8

IV. The Holy Spirit is our guarantee

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14

- A. From the context of Scripture we can know that it was the Father who sealed us with the Holy Spirit. In this passage we see the Trinity, the Father sealed us in Christ with the Holy Spirit and this is another of the blessings with which we have been blessed”
- “And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 1:21-22*
- B. This was not just for Jews but also for Gentiles. Those who have heard the gospel and believed in Christ have all been sealed with the Holy Spirit, who was promised since the days of the Old Testament:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” Joel 2:28-29 (see also: Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 11:19, and Zechariah 12:10)

C. What is the significance of being sealed?

In the days of Esther (when much of Israel was in exile) a decree had been made that would destroy the Jewish nation. When the king of Persia learned what happened, he said this: *“But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked.” (Esther 8:8)*

Notice: **something or someone that has the seal of the King cannot be revoked**, it is a mark that certifies us. It is a permanent validation and security. Believers who receive the seal of God because we were chosen and redeemed are marked by the Holy Spirit, which is the pledge or downpayment of all the inheritance that is prepared for us. We have the assurance that it will bring us to the final redemption because the Holy Spirit, who is from God himself, is already giving us the first part.

“He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 5:5

He will finish what He started in us and the Holy Spirit is proof that He will do what He said he would do, and by the Spirit we can start to operate in unity and reconciliation even now!

Reflection questions:

- 1. What does it mean that Jews and gentiles have the same inheritance in Christ?**
- 2. How do we participate in the glorious story God is writing?**
- 3. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is our guarantee? How does it make you feel that you've been sealed by the Spirit?**

Announcements:

1. School of Discipleship and Affirming your Steps in English: courses begin on Monday, September 16.
2. Passion for Jesus!
 - A. The first day is this Thursday at 7:00pm for Ministering Night. Admission is free, everyone is welcome!
 - B. We will also get to have the guest worship team and speakers from Passion for Jesus during our next service! (Next week, the teaching will be bilingual!)
 - C. If you're coming to Passion for Jesus and plan on bringing your kids, the last day to sign them up is September 3.
3. If you need more information about any of the events we talk about or you want to get connected with a friendship group, our website is now available in english at: housesoflight.church! (You can also find all of our Ephesians series teaching videos and notes on the website!)