

THE MYSTERY AT THE HEART OF THINGS

Ephesians 3:1-13

September 13, 2020

Passage Summary

Paul's commission to steward a newly revealed mystery (1-5)

The mystery: Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews (6)

As Paul carries out this commission, the church broadcasts God's wisdom
(7-10)

Centered in Jesus Christ, Paul's suffering, the Gentiles glory (11-13)

The concept of "Mystery" in Paul

17x in Paul's letter, 11x in Ephesians and Colossians

"Mystery" as something previously unknown but revealed by God

- As uniting all things in Christ: Eph 1:9-10
- As the Gentiles being fellow heirs with the Jews: Eph 3:6

Didn't the Old Testament predict the inclusion of Gentiles? Why is this a mystery?

Blessing versus leveling

The heart of the matter: in Christ separated things that were never meant to be separated are coming back together, and in this case specifically, the human family

The Bible-Wide Theme of Things Coming Back Together

The splitting of Adam and the reunion of marriage

The Tree of Life in Genesis 3 and Revelation 22

The separation of language at the Tower of Babel and the Pentecost miracle

From the Promised Land to Egypt and back again

The Babylonian Exile and the return to the land

The Incarnation and the Ascension of Jesus

The lost parables of Jesus in Luke 15

The death and the resurrection of Jesus, first fruit of the our resurrection!

The old creation and the new creation

What About Separation Images in the Bible?

Sheep and the goats, wheat and tares, good fish and bad fish, etc.

What belongs together; cancellers do not belong together

Evil does not belong with good (death with life)

God is inviting people and separating evil

If people choose to board the outbound ship, they can't say they weren't invited in

The Four Forms of Reconciliation

People with God: made us alive and raised us up: Ephesians 2:5-7 (UP)

People with People: brothers and sisters: Ephesians 3:6 (IN, OUT)

People with Nature: proper dominion: Genesis 1:28 (OUT)

Nature with itself: predator and prey lying down together: Isaiah 11:6-9

Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Ambassadors for Christ: 2 Corinthians 5:20

We use the tools of our kingdom: peacemaking, forgiveness, mutual respect

We do not use the tools of the enemy: gossip, dissension, anger, ridicule,

We operate simultaneously on all three levels, believing them all to be interrelated
