

Major Event: The Church

Lesson 3: Uniqueness of the Church

Central Text: Colossians 1:24-27

Suggested Subjects for Teacher to Cover:

The Church did not exist in the OT times nor was it revealed in the OT - Ephesians 3:1-7:

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles if indeed you have heard of the **stewardship** of God's grace which was given to me for you; (*οικονομία oikonomia-stewardship, administration, dispensation*) that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;** to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

The Church is a "mystery":

- The word "mystery" (*μυστήριον, musterion*) occurs in Ephesians 3:3-4 and means something hidden or unknown to past ages.
- Ephesians 5:32 This **mystery** is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
- Ephesians 3:1-6 reveals that the mystery is that Jews and Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of one body, and joint-partakers of the promise. A Gentile has the same rights and privileges as a Jew does in Christ.

Unique Characteristics of the Dispensation of the Church:

- Baptism of the Spirit (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:12-13) - all believers, Jew and Gentile, are in union with Christ at the point of faith in Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jesus prophesied - Jn. 7:39; 14:17; the Spirit in the believer - Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:19)
- Sealing ministry of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30)
- The indwelling of Christ (Colossians 1:27)
- Filling of the Holy Spirit - Ephesians 5:18
- Universal priesthood of the believer
 - Christ our High Priest - Hebrews 5:5; 9:11
 - Believer is a priest - Revelation 1:4-6
- The completed canon of Scripture (Hebrews 2:3-4; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19)
- No longer under the Mosaic Law (Romans 6:14; 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25)
- Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- We have at our disposal "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:3).

Suggested Attributes and Characteristics of God:

- Omnipotence - God's power in forming the church through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Reading for Parents and Child at Home:

- The church was predicted by Christ during the dispensation of Israel as a future event (Matt. 16:18).
- Colossians 1:24-27