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Epistle to the Ephesians: The Meaning & End of History (3.7-13)

- Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church
- 23 October 2005
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Sources:

James M. Boice, Ephesians, 101-106

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Unsearchable Riches of Christ, 52-105

For further reading:

Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians

- I. Paul was made a minister
 - A. His calling
 1. He was the apostle to the Gentiles (v6)
 2. He is called to preach the gospel to the gentiles that they should receive the same promises and blessings of the Jews
 - B. How was he made?
 1. Today, many declare themselves (or self-proclaimed) to be "pastors", "ministers", "evangelists", "missionaries" even "apostles" and "prophets"
 2. The tense is passive - Paul did not call himself but he was made an apostle! (V7)
 3. According to the gift of the grace of God given by the effectual working of His power
 - a) He was given God's grace as a gift
 - (1) This high calling is God's goodness upon His life because he was less than the least of the apostle (v8) - note his humility!
 - (2) This gift was given powerfully or effectually to the apostle
 - (a) In the same way when the Holy Spirit comes upon the sinner to save us irresistibly - without it we cannot be saved
 - (b) This working is powerful - compelling and persuasive!
 - b) To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ
 - (1) The preacher must preach Christ!
 - (a) He must not preach to change society
 - (b) He must not preach a political message to interfere with the State
 - (c) He must not preach a social or health & wealth gospel
 - (2) The preacher must preach the unsearchable riches of Christ

- (a) incomprehensible
 - (b) cannot be clearly understood or grasp (Rom. 11.33)
 - (c) cannot be described, inexhaustible
- (3) The preacher must preach the riches of Christ

II. What is he to reveal

- A. The stewardship of the mystery
1. This mystery is Christ, the unsearchable riches
 2. The apostle as preacher has to discharge a trust given to him - to preach Christ
 - a) Stewards are given a charge to fulfil
 - b) Stewards must be faithful
 - c) Stewards must give an account to their master
 3. "To make all men see" - "to illuminate to impart light, to perceive"
- B. This mystery which was hid in God from the beginning of the world
- C. To whom?
1. He is to reveal to angels (v10) through the church
 - a) "... the apostle Paul ... turns to the church as the focal point of history" (Boice, 102)
 - b) "Secular history concentrates its attention on kings, queens and presidents, on politicians and generals.' But the Bible focuses on the saints, "often little people, insignificant people unimportant people ..." (John Stott)
 - c) God is gathering a new humanity or a new people called the church
 - d) The church is God's agent through which this unsearchable riches of Christ is to be proclaimed
 - (1) There is no other agent
 - (2) This is a reason to regard the church very highly
 2. This mystery is called the "manifold wisdom of God"
 - a) "The bringing together of otherwise divided individuals in Christ"
 - b) "The displaying of Christ by Christian people in the world"
 - c) "Proof of the principle that suffering for truth and righteousness is the way to glory an the secret of true happiness" (Boice, 103 - 105)
- D. According to God's purpose in Christ
1. It is through Christ we have courage and privilege of entrance through faith
 2. "That God's plan is always in terms of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is both centre and circumference, He is everything, all is fulfilled in Him" (Lloyd- Jones, 78)
 3. v13, the apostle gives the reason for this digression