

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles (part 1)

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Date: 17 December 2014

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[0 : 00] Let's open our Bibles then to Ephesians chapter 3.

! I guess since I've provided all of the scriptures I want to be looking at, I've provided in printed form. You don't really even have to have your Bible. Isn't that terrible? I've always been, over the years, critical when I would, especially in those days when I wasn't pastoring and working on my doctorate, we'd be visiting churches, and I'd always be critical of those times that I would attend a worship service or a Bible study and not ever need to open my Bible.

So here, you know, it's coming back to me here. But you can open your Bibles and look, and I'm going to read our text that really we're going to be looking at for the next couple of times we're together here.

It's going to take us at least two, well, two sessions to get through the third chapter of Ephesians. So if you want to open your Bibles to that chapter, I'm going to go ahead and read the entire chapter, and then we'll look at basically half of it, a little more than half of it.

All right, for this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles. It's pretty clear who he's writing to, Gentiles.

[1 : 33] And it's also very clear who's writing. And, of course, what he says for this reason is it's a reference to what he's been talking about in chapter 2.

We'll get to that here in just a minute. If indeed, of course, this is kind of an insertion, not really parenthetical, but, you know, he says, for this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles.

And then kind of inserts this kind of caveat or thought. If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already, by which when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

You know, Paul would be highly criticized in our day for writing in this style, but I, for one, would not criticize the Apostle Paul. But the writing style is certainly different.

And those who translated it into, you know, our English text, they, you know, they kind of bring it out of the Greek just as it was written.

[2 : 48] Which in other ages, all right, so it says, by which when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, and we're going to talk about that mystery, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him.

Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the

saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory to the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen. And you know the last part of that chapter that I read, which is the part we're not going to get into tonight, and I said we'll spend a session on it.

[5 : 16] That may be difficult in and of itself. But this is one of Paul's famous prayers. And so we'll take some time and study through that. Now let's kind of remember, get ourselves up to speed, or at least help us to connect with what we've already talked about, connect that with where we are now.

Remember God's purpose in redemption is to bring believing Jews and Gentiles together to form a new people, new people of God.

Some call it a redeemed society, a new redeemed society, or the church. And this is what we studied in chapter 2.

We spent quite a bit of time doing that. And so then Paul's primary purpose, and this is again kind of a reference back to chapter 2, his primary reference or focus, and it's because of his audience, his focus in chapter 2 was placed on this new, the new status that now belongs to believing Gentiles.

So his focus has been Gentiles. In that side of the two that come together, Jews and Gentiles, he's focused on the Gentiles and God's program with them, his purpose with them, and the overall purpose to bring Gentile and Jew together.

[6 : 39] And so now, here in chapter 3, Paul turns to his personal role, his more personal role in God's creation of this new people.

What is his role in this? And this is what we're going to be looking at here tonight. And we're going to divide this into two parts, the chapter, and Paul's personal connection with this.

And the first one would be his preaching, Paul's preaching ministry. Paul's preaching ministry.

That's verses 1 through 13. And then second, and we'll get to this next time, Paul's prayer ministry. So his personal, his preaching ministry and his prayer ministry, which will take up the latter half of the chapter. All right, so first of all, and here's our focus tonight, Paul's preaching ministry, his preaching ministry.

And so from these, the first 13 verses of chapter 3, we can learn three things about Paul's personal ministry, his preaching ministry, which is kind of a, you know, preaching ministry in the sense of the ministry of the word.

[8 : 04] There are three things we can learn about it. Number one, the nature of Paul's ministry. The nature of it. And in verses 1 and 2, let me just reread that.

You have that printed for you in your notes. For this reason, and I would add, and I think I did add in your notes parenthetically, this reason, that's God's purpose to create a new people made up of Jews and Gentiles.

For this reason, that that's God's purpose. And that again, points us back to chapter 2. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus. And I'd love to dwell a little bit on that, but we'll not take time to.

It's interesting that Paul's not a prisoner of Nero. Paul thought of himself as a prisoner of Christ. Prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. For whom?

For the Gentiles. Because of God's purpose for them, his love for them, his desire to redeem them. Redeem them. And so he's a prisoner of Christ in this purpose of God to incorporate the Gentiles into his new society.

[9 : 11] If indeed, you have heard of the dispensation. You know, that very word just causes some people, some circles, to get irritated.

But it's not, you know, words don't always mean the same thing every time they're used. Alright, so this is going to be a little bit different and we'll get to that here in a minute. So, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you.

Alright, so this is talking about the nature of Paul's ministry. Alright, so what about this word dispensation? The word dispensation here literally means the management of a household.

That's what it means. Or property would be, you know, household, the idea is to be the steward of or manager of or caretaker of or to be entrusted with we might also say with someone else's

property.

Someone else's property. And that's what Paul's referring to. The word refers to. And so in this case the property of which Paul is speaking or referring belongs to God.

[10:24] Property belongs to God and so the management of it or stewardship of it had been entrusted to Paul. Alright, that's what he's talking about.

Alright, so Paul's ministry then we could say was a sacred trust. A sacred trust before God. Alright, but what was this property entrusted to Paul?

And some would say well it was the Gentiles. But that's really not the idea here because he tells us what this property is so to speak. And so we can say just from verse 2 that this property God's property entrusted to Paul was twofold.

First of all the grace of God was entrusted to Paul the grace of God. Verse 2 the grace of God which was given to me for you.

So he he's saying that was given to me it was entrusted to me the grace of God. Alright, so Paul must be a good steward of God's grace.

[11:30] And he must be a good steward of God's grace in at least two ways. This outline gets a little bit complicated. So we start with the preaching ministry and Paul describes that you know in a couple of different ways and then under this first one there are two ways that the grace of God has been entrusted to him.

First of all is to rely upon God's grace. He must rely upon God's grace. That's been entrusted to him. Paul said the grace of God which was given to me.

The grace of God was given to me. You see God's grace given to Paul was what he needed in order to do the ministry to which God called him.

In this case his ministry was to the Gentiles. Paul could not do that could not accomplish that apart from the grace of God that was given to him. And so in that sense God's grace is entrusted to him. God had called Paul to a certain purpose and the only way Paul could fulfill that purpose was to rely upon God's grace. That's the idea.

[12:47] Now Paul's not unique in this because we that's exactly what we need. Now we've not all been called to the same purpose. Now in the sense of God's overall purpose to redeem this new society of people we're all called to that.

But how we serve in that and what place and role we have in that varies. Obviously not everybody's been called the same way that I've been called. We have a couple of three or four elders in here. Not all of us have been called to serve in that way. And we have Sunday school teachers. But not all of us in here are Sunday school teachers. And other functions that God calls us to within the context of the church, the ministry of the church, as well as in the context of just our individual, personal responsibility to do what God has gifted us to do, called us to, and so forth.

And we all must rely upon the grace of God, God's grace that has been entrusted to. See, we ought to think of that. We think of God's grace typically in terms of just something we need.

But we don't ever, don't enough, think of the grace of God as something that God has given to us and that we've been entrusted with. God gives us grace.

[14:13] All right, now, rely upon that grace. Do what God has called you to. So, it is a sacred trust that God gives us grace.

Not just grace for salvation, but I mean grace to live the Christian life and to do all that God has called us to. All right, so that's what we need. Second, to share God's grace.

So, this is what Paul has been entrusted, the property that Paul has been entrusted with, is the grace of God, to rely upon God's grace and also to share it, to share God's grace.

Paul said, the grace of God which was given to me for you. For you, you see that? And so, God's grace that he gives to us for ministry, whatever that ministry is for you, God's grace for ministry must be used for the spiritual welfare of the people to whom we are ministering.

We've been called to minister to, and this is what Paul is saying. All right, so then God's property entrusted to Paul was twofold. The grace of God, that's number one, and the second, the mystery of God.

[15:31] Can you see the word mystery popping up here a number of places in this chapter? Paul, in fact, it was a rather popular expression with Paul.

The mystery, quite often he's talking about the mystery of God, or the mystery of godliness, and a number of references to that. So, Paul is saying this is the property of God, this property of God

that's been entrusted to me.

It is his grace for me, and I'm to share it with you, but it is also the mystery of God. And so verses 3 through 6 kind of detail that.

Let me read that again. How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, there's that word mystery, and as I have briefly written already, he has written about this, this mystery, by which when you read, read what I've written down about it, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

Alright, so I guess in a sense he's saying, I'm talking about the mystery of God, and I've written about this, and you've read what I've written, and you're going to know that what I said was true.

Alright, so that's all kind of parenthetical.

[16:42] Which in other ages, now he's talked about this mystery, been entrusted to him, revealed to him, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, not made known as it has been made known to me, as it has now been revealed by the spirit to his apostles and prophets.

And again, I mentioned this last time, he's not talking about Old Testament prophets here. He's talking about New Testament prophets, preachers, proclaimers of the word.

And so you have apostles and you have the prophets, the prophets in the sense of the forth telling of God's mystery. Alright, now he is referring to the prophets so he doesn't mention them by name when he talks about the other ages, not made known to those in the other age, not been made known to the sons of men.

The Old Testament prophets are included in that. But then he said, but now, as it has now been revealed, has now been revealed by the spirit, the Holy Spirit, to his holy apostles and prophets, his preachers, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel.

Alright, so we need to answer a few questions here about what Paul is saying here in these verses. First of all, and this is the first question that ought to come to our minds if we don't already know the answer to it, and that is, what is this mystery?

[18:24] Paul keeps talking about a mystery, and it's been revealed to him, you've written about it, people have been reading about it, something was not revealed in ages past, but as it is now.

So what is this mystery? Well, you have to go all the way to the end of this sentence, this rather long sentence here, verses 3 and 6, to find out the answer to that, verse 6 says that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, this is the mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, the same body made up of who?

Jew and Gentile believers, right? So of the same body, this new society, this new redeemed people, so that the Gentiles, here's the mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel.

Now, Paul uses the word mystery then in this passage and many other places to refer to something previously obscure or hidden or concealed, at least partially, and we'll get to partially here in just a minute.

All right, so that's the mystery, that the Gentiles should be incorporated in. That's the mystery, mystery to whom? Well, that leads us to the next question, when and to whom was this a mystery?

[20:03] When and to whom was this a mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and so forth? Verse 5, which in other ages, the people of the other ages, was not made known to the sons of men.

All right, so the idea is God's purpose for the Gentiles in terms of salvation was hidden, was hidden, it was obscured to those living in Old Testament times, which is basically what he's saying.

All right, here's the third question, in what way was this a mystery? was it just a total unknown, or was it a mystery in a partial sense?

And the answer is in a partial sense. Verse 5 says, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed.

All right, so the words, as it has now been revealed means that this was a mystery, this mystery was only partial to the Old Testament saints.

[21:13] It was a partial mystery. The word as is a comparative. So it's comparatively a mystery in the Old Testament. God's plan for the Gentiles was only a mystery by comparison, that is compared to what has now been revealed.

So the Old Testament saints knew, they had to have known, because the scripture is very clear, and I'll cite one verse here in just a minute, but the Old Testament saints knew that the Gentiles would be included in God's purposes.

That was known all throughout the Old Testament. And the Jews were, God's people, Israel, would be a big part of that purpose, and they failed in that purpose.

But they knew from the very beginning that the Gentile nations would be a part of God's purpose. Genesis 12, 3, we go all the way back to when the covenant was given to Abraham, when he was still called Abram.

And in Genesis 12, 3, God says, I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

[22 : 22] Now, let me ask you a question, by the way, was Abraham a Jew? No. No. Before the Jews were even a people. And so God's covenant was to extend to all the nations of the world, Jews and Gentiles.

So they knew that, or they should have, though they did forget it, obviously. So then what they did not know was, what they did know was that God's purpose was to be extended to the Gentiles, but what they did not know was really the full substance of God's purpose for the Gentiles.

They know the full substance of that, namely everything that Paul mentioned in chapter 2. They did not know. And we could just listen, the incorporation of Jewish and Gentile believers, the common ground that they both have in terms of God's divine grace, Jews and no difference, Jew or Gentile. As well as that Jews and Gentiles would be fellow members of the body of Christ, that is, the church, even though the church, the early church, well, the early earliest church was made of primarily Jews, in fact, exclusively Jews.

But that was just the beginning point. The church would very soon become predominantly a Gentile church, and has been predominantly Gentile all throughout the age, this age in which we live today.

[24 : 01] Some would say this dispensation. All right, for the last couple of thousand years, this has been the age of the Gentiles, and it will continue until God is finished with that, and he accomplishes all that in the sense of bringing all Gentiles, all that he desires, believers, into the church.

And then, we're going to get out of here, we'll be leaving, and then God will turn again to the Jews, and he'll accomplish his purpose with them.

All right, so, but in this age, and this is what Paul is addressing, the age of the church, is Jews and Gentiles, fellow members, even status, you know, believers, all incorporated together into one new body of people.

This was what we talked about in chapter two. They all have a commonality, a common ground, that they have in terms of God's divine grace.

All right, so we're answering some questions about this mystery of God. Fourth, how is this mystery revealed? It was not revealed, not in total, not in fullness in the Old Testament.

[25 : 23] It was obscured, it was hidden, hidden to the people of the Old Testament. But now, in this age, it is revealed. So how is this mystery revealed?

Verses three, and then we have Skip also get a part of verse five. How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery. By revelation.

And verse five says revealed by the Spirit, that's the Holy Spirit, to his holy apostles and prophets. So it was divinely revealed and entrusted to Paul.

Not just Paul, but all the apostles and the early first preachers and pastors of the church.

So it was divinely revealed. It was not by research that Paul learned these things. He didn't say, you know, I think there's something here that people have been missing and I'm just going to study the Old Testament.

[26 : 25] I want to see if I can find it. He didn't get it by research. Because it was hidden in the Old Testament. Now you can't say Paul and the Jews of the day should have just studied God's word more.

Now they should have. There's a lot there that God revealed that they missed. But this mystery of the Gentiles being incorporated and Jews incorporated together into a new, totally new thing is a mystery in the Old Testament.

And so Paul could not have discovered that by research. Not also by rationalization. You know, just kind of drawing reasonable conclusions. You know, just kind of putting two and two together.

You know, and then Paul, you know, a Ford light comes on. This was God's plan. You know, we can discover things like that. We start thinking rationally.

And as long as you're, you know, you're trusting God's word and you're looking for meaning, the meaning of God's word, your brain can begin to put two and two and three and four.

[27 : 31] You can start putting these things together and it's all based upon God's revealed word. But this is not the case with this mystery, not with Paul. also not by human instruction.

Nobody taught him these things. You know, it wasn't something that was passed on to him by his, you know, his mentors and his parents and, you know, or teachers and rabbis maybe.

He grew up not instructed, it didn't come from human instruction in terms of the apostles, the original apostles.

And I would even add, not even by Jesus' teachings. Though Jesus did mention the Gentiles and we have also, just like we have in many places in the Old Testament, God's purpose being revealed that God has a purpose for the Gentiles, but still the full understanding of that, Paul did not get even from Jesus' teachings.

He doesn't say that. Now that's, you know, we get on shaky ground and start mentioning that when Jesus didn't know about that. Of course he did. But he didn't teach this to the apostles.

[28 : 49] It was something revealed by the Holy Spirit on this side of Pentecost. And it was revealed directly to Paul. Now how it was revealed to him, he doesn't elaborate.

That is, in what way did the Holy Spirit reveal it to him? Did he speak to him audibly? I don't think so. How did it work? I don't know. I don't know. I just know he didn't get it from anyone else.

He didn't get it by his own, you know, fertile thinking and research and so forth. It was revealed by the Holy Spirit. Number two, the origin of Paul's ministry.

the origin of it. it, verses seven and the first part of verse eight. Of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power to me, who am less than the least of all the saints this grace was given.

You just got to love Paul. Yeah. And, all right, so Paul's ministry was divinely bestowed.

[30 : 02] Divinely bestowed according to according to the gift of the grace of God given to me. He did not seek it. Paul didn't seek after this.

He did not choose it. His ministry. He did not choose it for himself. And, nor did some other human entity choose him.

You know, there have been many a man going to the ministry because a church chose him. They encouraged him. They said, you know, you really need to be a preacher.

Maybe a family member. Maybe he comes from a long line of preachers in his family. So, someone chose that for him. There have been many of those who have been pastors over the years who were not chosen by God.

I think they pretty quick find that out and struggle throughout their ministries. You know, I don't know. But, Paul's ministry was divinely bestowed according to the gift of the grace of God given to me.

[31 : 08] He didn't seek it, he didn't choose it, he didn't study for it. He didn't enroll in a Bible institute and then, you know, study. you know, I think I just like to pick this vocation so he studies for it and you know, I think I could do a good job.

He didn't study for it. It didn't come about because he was just a good student of God's word and a good communicator of it, you know. And he didn't merit it.

He didn't Paul never did, he's not a minister of the gospel because he earned it. He earned it.

In fact, what did Paul say? He said to me, who am less than the least of all the saints. Less than the least. I don't know how you can be less than the least.

I'm not sure how that works. That's hyperbole. This grace was given to me. It was given to me. It was divinely bestowed upon. And I think everyone who has, you know, is in a place of service to this degree, whether it's a pastor or a teacher or someone who holds an office in the church, like an elder or deacon, ought to, really ought to examine, examine himself and examine why he is what he is.

[32 : 34] And is this what God led him to, bestowed upon him, or is this something that he chose, or something he somehow thinks he deserves?

And really, at no time, not just initially, but at any time, in a man's ministry, should he think, you know, I am what I am because I really deserve it. I'm good at this.

That's when you really start having troubles. All right, so Paul's ministry was divinely bestowed. Also, Paul's ministry was divinely empowered, empowered by the effective working of his power. Those are two ingredients, must have, must be true ingredients in anyone's ministry. Divinely called or bestowed and empowered, divinely empowered.

All right, so number three, we're going to get to the end of this here pretty soon, the purpose of Paul's ministry. And several things about this. First of all, the substance of his purpose.

[33 : 50] The substance of his purpose. Verse 8, last part of verse 8, that I should preach. This is what Paul's ministry consisted of. I know, you know, some call him the missionary, he certainly was, and church planter, but his ministry was preaching, ministry of God's word.

And God used him to evangelize, to plant churches, to disciple, all of that is part of his preaching. That I should preach, he said, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Very depth, what an expression, unsearchable riches of Christ. I'm going to, I thought about kind of unpacking the meaning of that, but we're going to get into this idea of the unsearchable riches of Christ, we'll get into Paul's prayer.

So we'll wait on that. Second, the scope of his purpose. The scope of his purpose. And I would divide, Paul divides this into three.

three aspects of the scope of his purpose, the immediate scope, all the Gentiles. As his immediate, the immediate ministry and purpose of his ministry was to the Gentiles.

[35 : 07] The last part of verse 8, that I should preach among the Gentiles. That's what Paul was called to. And so that's the immediate scope of the purpose of his ministry, to all the Gentiles.

second, the penultimate scope. What is that? That's just right before the ultimate. So it begins with the Gentiles, but he doesn't just keep it with the Gentiles.

He says, really, he's talking about all the world. All the world. Verse 9, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the ministry. All, meaning Jews and Gentiles.

So his ministry immediately is to the Jews, and then his ministry really extends beyond Gentiles, rather, extends beyond Gentiles to all, in all.

And Paul really, in that statement, is incorporating all that will come after him. That our ministry is, and the purpose of the ministry is to all the people of the world, Jew and Gentile alike.

[36 : 13] Verses 10, or excuse me, verse 9, and to make all Jews and Gentiles see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Well, if the mystery is the gospel, and that's what it is, the full gospel, then it's the fellowship of the gospel, to see that, which from the beginning, and he mentions this again, from the beginning of the ages has been hidden, hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ.

So, again, a reference to the obscurity of the full gospel, the gospel to all nations, was obscured in the Old Testament.

Then the ultimate scope, and this is probably the most interesting thing, verses 10 and 11, to the intent, here's the ultimate purpose, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God, that is his full purposes, might be made known by the church, to whom?

to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Now, this is really interesting. The principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, you know, the phrase principalities and powers in heavenly places a reference to angels, to the angels. Now, you know, whether it's just simply to the good ones or to the good and the bad.

[37 : 47] And I have a sense that it could include all, all angels, even fallen angels. But here's the idea.

Ultimately, God's redemptive purpose in his creation of man, his creation, excuse me, God's redemptive redemptive purposes to man.

I worded this probably poorly. His redemptive purposes to man, and that purpose is to form a new people of God. We know it as the church.

His purpose to do that, that would include Gentile and Jews, that it will be revealed to the angels. Don't they already know all of that? Well, they don't really, not fully.

but they're observing, and they're seeing this. I mean, these very people that yell, crucify him, very people who rejected the Messiah, very people who are breakers of God's law.

[38 : 57] God, through Christ, is bringing into a new people. God is extending his grace and his redemption, and the angels are watching this, and they're interested in it.

1 Peter 1:12, these things, that is the gospel, these things which the angels desire to look into. And this is the purpose, the purpose is to accomplish, is to be accomplished by the church, to reveal God's manifold wisdom.

And you think they would already know it, but they don't know it, nor do they understand it, nor do they naturally praise God for it. But when they see the church and what God is doing through making this church, redeeming these people, the angels are exhilarated by that, glorifying God for that.

And they desire to look into that, they desire to know it. And this is what the church, I gave you a quote from MacArthur, and I really like this, it says, the church does not exist simply for the purpose of saving souls.

That's the immediate, the immediate purpose. It doesn't exist for the saving souls, even though that's a good thing and the right thing for us to do, but the supreme purpose of the church is to glorify God by manifesting his wisdom before the angels, who can then offer greater praise to God. [40:46] We're the occasion for the angels to glorify and praise God, because when they see what God has done with us, out of his grace, it's incredible thought, and then a little bit later in that, this comes out of his commentary on Ephesians, it says, the holy angels not only are interested in the salvation of men, that's 1 Peter 1:12 I read a moment ago, but constantly watch the face of God in heaven, and that's almost a direct quote from Matthew 18:10, they watch the face of God from heaven, and to see his reaction to the treatment of his saved earthly children, that's us, and they're standing ready to carry out any mission in their behalf, that's something to think about, that what we're doing here, or what we should be doing, each of us together corporately as a church, should be always giving the angels occasion to praise God and glorify

God, and they're so interested in what God is doing with us, that they are ready to serve us, ready to help us, and every time we're challenged, they're just ready to go, now God doesn't always send them, you know, God allows us to have difficult times, and to be challenged, and be persecuted, and you know, I think it started even with Jesus hanging upon the cross, you know, that famous song, he could have called ten thousand angels, it would take one to just completely display this world waste, but he didn't call for them, but they, you know, they're always kind of looking at the face of God, and they're intensely interested in the manifold wisdom of God and his purposes for the church, that they're ready, ready to aid us and our church, and all they need is a word from God, it's just incredible thought, and then third, the strength of his purpose, and I'll just read the passage and not elaborate on it, it's pretty straightforward, verse 12 and 13, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him, therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.