



Ephesians 3:4-5

Understanding the Mystery

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Key Concepts to Be Addressed

- Paul wants us to read and use our minds to understand what he writes
- This mystery consists of Christ who makes “one new man” of Jews and Gentiles
- This revelation of the mystery is chronologically constrained
- This revelation comes through God’s ordained New Testament apostles and prophets

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Reading With Understanding

Ephesians 3:4a (LEB)

So that you may be **able** when you read **to understand**...

- “So that” points to “mystery” (vs. 3)
- “Able” uses *dunamai*, power of ability
- “Understand” is *noe_sai*, which has to do with that which is cognitively apprehended
- Reading thus is valid communication

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The Mystery of Christ

Ephesians 3:4b (LEB)

...my insight into **the mystery of Christ**,

- “Insight” is *sunesis* which denotes the ability to understand concepts and how they relate to one another
- In Luke 2:47 the young Jesus is described by Luke as having *sunesis*
- In this context Christ is the mystery

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The Previously Unknown Truth

Ephesians 3:5a (LEB)

Which in other generations was **not made known** to the sons of men . . .

- Before—not made known
- Now—revealed
- That Gentiles would be part of God’s salvation was predicted, but “one new man” of Jews and Gentiles was not
- “Sons of men” means “humans”

His Apostles

Ephesians 3:5b (LEB)

...as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit

- This refers to the New Testament apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20)
- “Holy” does not imply veneration; all Christians are holy
- This applies to Peter and the others, not just Paul

Implications and Applications

- We must not surrender to semantic mysticism
- God’s mystery is revealed publically by His apostles, not privately by shamans
- God’s mystery is the gospel of Jesus Christ and it is for all

Words Have Meaning

Genesis 3:4, 5 (NASB)

The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- The serpent questioned God’s words and their meaning (denotation: Gen. 3:1-6)
- This conversation led to a hellish result, the Fall, when connotation deceived

Eyewitness Testimony

2 Peter 1:16 (ESV)

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses** of his majesty

- Vs 17 mentions the transfiguration
- The apostles did not follow myths
- The reality of the incarnation insures the certainty of the *parousia*

The Mystery Is the Gospel

Romans 1:16 (NASB)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is **the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.