Decoding Ephesians 3

The Moment When God's Grace Broke me!

https://youtu.be/TuLtF-p0iyA

Is there really such a thing as dispensationalism? What is this mystery that Paul is talking about in the book of Ephesians? We're in chapter three right now, and we're going to uncover everything that Paul is talking about, especially what is the love of Christ, and how can it transform you from the inside out? Don't miss this episode.



This was transforming for me personally, as I gave it. We're going to walk through all of it, so get your Bibles, get them open. We'll be right back, right after this. It's time to go deeper in our understanding of God and the Scriptures, to ask the questions that lead us back to the Word and discover how biblical truth speaks into the world we live in today.

Introducing Passion for Truth Podcast. Join Jim Staley and special guests for meaningful conversations about scripture, faith, culture, and the issues that matter to believers today. Passion for Truth Podcast. Hello everyone and welcome back to this week's broadcast.

I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. I'll be your Bible teacher for the next few minutes as we continue to go verse by verse through the book of Ephesians. We are now in chapter three. We went through the introduction, which I highly recommend you go through.

We went through chapter one and we went through chapter two, which I believe is my favorite chapter in all of the New Testament, in my opinion. I absolutely enjoyed bringing that to you last week. It has become quite the popular teaching. If you haven't seen it, I encourage you to go back and watch that episode.

I think that broadcast will bless you and it really sets the stage for the rest of the book of Ephesians. We're going to continue doing that as we learn to do Bible things in Bible ways. Let the Holy Spirit guide us. Let spirit and truth come together and let one foot get in front of the other.

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And let all of it be led by the footsteps of Christ and the apostles. And that all comes back to a Jewish Hebrew mindset. We're not trying to be Jewish. We just have to understand that these were all Jews.

And they're writing these texts from their perspective. And their whole upbringing was in the Torah, in the prophets, and what we call the Old Testament. They called it the Tanakh. I call it the front of the book.

And as we learn the front of the book, and understand the phraseology and the history in the cultural context, when we get to the New Testament, it's a piece of cake. It just all comes together. All these crazy complicated doctrines of dispensationalism and the elect and Calvinism, Arminianism, predestination. All these things are just made-up doctrines by men doing their best to understand the scriptures from a 21st century perspective or a modern-day Christian Western Greco-Roman perspective.

But that's not what it was written in. Go back to the original. It all just makes sense. By the way, before we begin, if you're not subscribed to this channel and this is something that you want to be a part of, please do that.

Subscribe to this channel, send this to someone else that might be blessed by it, and help them in their journey if they're looking to go deeper into the Word of God. Okay, let's begin with Ephesians 3, verse 1, shall we? It says, For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, 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, 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. I love Paul for more than one reason. One, he has some of the same issues that I have, especially my past. He's kind of short with people sometimes, but he also has a lot of run-on sentences.

But what we're going to do is we're going to go back here and unpack all of this. First of all, we're going to talk about this word right here, dispensation of grace. This, in traditional Christian circles, they have put together an entire doctrine called dispensationalism, where God reveals himself in different dispensations, different time periods. Well, to some extent, I do agree that God over time reveals more of himself, but not to remove his previous self in the previous dispensation. This is the problem with this particular theology. It has the idea that since we are in the dispensation of grace, that means before people were in the dispensation of law. And that's just not true.

There's just as much grace in the Old Testament as there is in the New Testament. God is giving grace all over the place. I could spend literally hours going through verse after verse where God gives mercy, God gives grace. The grace of God did not start in the New Testament, the book of Matthew, or it didn't start at the cross.

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What the apostle is talking about, the dispensation of grace, is not the beginning of grace. It's the solution to the mystery of temple service, of what to do when you break the covenant of God, when you break one of the commandments in the law of God. Remember the analogy I gave of an umbrella? The handle of the umbrella is the decrees, it's the ordinances, it's the commandments of God, it's the do's and the don'ts, it's the blessing and the curses.

We hold on to that. But the umbrella is the covenant. That's the relationship. That is the authority structure. And when you break a commandment, you're judged by whatever authority is there. Well, if the law is there, like the old covenant, Jesus was not in charge of the judgment of the commandments at that time. He ends up doing that under the new covenant, but under the old covenant, the law was in charge. It was the tutor until the dad showed up, and then the tutor left.

That doesn't mean the commandments go away or the household rules change. It just means that there's a new sheriff in town. The dad's here, and so he's the one that administers justice, and he can give grace if he wants. The solution to the condemnation of us breaking the law, which is the sin and death, because the wages of sin is death, Romans 6.23, right? But the free gift of God is eternal life. So, Yeshua is the solution to the problem. The solution is grace. Instead of condemnation of breaking the law, we get grace.

That's why Romans 8.1, Paul says, the same Paul, says there's no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. So if you're dead in Christ, you're free from the law. No, not free to break the law. You're free from the law's authority to kill you. That's what it means. It means that the moment that you jump on Sheriff Yeshua's horse, the guy down there, that deputy, he cannot get you. Remember when we were kids and we'd play hide and go seek? Whatever the home base was, if you got to home base, you're safe.

That is where you're safe. And that was the whole point, was to get to home base. The law will kill you if you're not on home base. But the moment you get on home base, you're free. You're free. Yeshua is the home base. He's always been the home base. The problem is He didn't show up until He was born.

Now those who are on the home base are free from the penalty of the law. This is the grace. The dispensation of the grace is the answer to the problem that we're playing hide-and-go-seek with the law, but there was no home base. There's no place to go where you're safe because you're going to sin. And the moment you sin, you're condemned. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 3.23. This is the gospel.

It's the Romans road. And so Paul is trying to make this clear right up front. We are in the dispensation of grace. It does not mean that we don't keep God's law. May it never be. That's called lawlessness. And the last time I read Matthew 7.21, if I remember off the top of my head, there's a few guys that stood before God on judgment day and God said, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness, I don't know who you are.

I never knew you. Depart from me. Lawlessness is never a good thing. Keeping God's law through the sheriff who's now in charge, that is what God's looking for. That's spirit and truth together right there. All right, let's continue. So Paul talks about this mystery right here. He talks about this mystery.

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Now, I'm here to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, there is no mystery on the Gentiles coming to faith. That's straightforward, right out of all of the Old Testament, the Tanakh, as the Hebrew Scriptures, as the Jewish people like to call it. There is no mystery. It's very simple. God even lined it out that when the Gentiles come out from Egypt during the Exodus, Moses came up to God and said, God, we got a problem here. We got a mixed multitude. What do we do? Yahweh made it clear in Exodus 12, verse 49.

He said, look, there'll be one law for the native born and for the sojourner. I'm not going to have two different people. That's crazy. I'm not going to have one law for you, the Israelites, and one law for the Egyptians. That's crazy. And then what happens if another group comes? Do I have another law for them? No.

One constitution, one people, one king, one nation, under God, indivisible, liberties and justice for all. That was the whole point. One people called Israel, those who struggle with God. So, the mystery was not how the Gentiles come in. There was already a plan for that. The mystery was just like I explained in Identity Crisis, which if you haven't seen, you need to watch it. Last week, we talked about Ephesians 2, a lot about that because there's a lot of things in verse 14 and 16 that talk about the whole concept of the mystery. As Paul is quoting the text out of the prophets in Isaiah and all over the place, from Joel to Hosea to Ezekiel 37, where the northern house of Israel was divorced.

The bride of God was divorced and there's no way for her to come back. She became like the Gentiles. She got mixed amongst the Gentiles. She was a cake half-baked and no way to come back under law. It's impossible. But he prophesied in Hosea that she could come back. And that was a mystery. How in the world is she going to come back?

How is God going to get around his own law? And we found out last week, kind of gave away the whole punchline to identity crisis, but we found out last week there was a provision in the law that as long as the original husband lived, the bride that's divorced will always be an adulteress. She can never come back. But if the original husband dies, then the bride that's divorced can actually come back. She can come back, but the husband's dead. How does she come back? Why, Jeshua rose from the dead. That's why Jesus rose from the dead, to have a husband for her to go back to.

This is the mystery that has been solved. Even the Jewish people today, the Orthodox, pray three times a day for the northern house of Israel to come back. They pray for this mystery to be solved. They have no idea how it's going to be solved either. They want all Israel to come back into unity, because that's the prophecy. It's the biggest prophecy in the Old Testament that hasn't been fulfilled yet, is how does the northern and southern kingdoms come back together into this one new man? How does the Ezekiel 37, the bones of Joseph, come back together? This is it.

Yeshua solved the mystery. Paul says, it was revealed to me. He says he's a minister, according to the gift of God, to explain the mystery. Again, it can't be pagan Gentiles. There's no mystery about that. The Jewish people didn't even see a mystery of that. Their solution was conversion to Judaism. Today, the mystery is solved. The bridge across the Grand Canyon has been complete. Now, they can simply walk again. That's what we do. Let's go back to the text here and get into verse 8 to find out what the purpose of the mystery.

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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, the ecclesia, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places." This is going to be good. "...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." Okay, let's go back through it, verse by verse.

To me, I'm less than everybody. But this grace, this Jesus, this Yeshua that came, this bridge that laid himself down and bridged the gap of this mystery of how God's going to get around this. He says, I'm preaching to the Gentiles. Now look, without a doubt, there are pagan Gentiles all over the place that never were part of Israel.

There's a lot of Israelites that are living in the first century that they all knew which tribe they're from, from the northern ten tribes, but they knew they couldn't be in covenant with God. Even Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, tells us that the northern tribes are all over the place in multitudes across the Euphrates River, but they just couldn't be in covenant. And they're not Jews. They're Israelites that are now Greeks.

They can't be in covenant, so they'll just serve another god. And they mixed amongst the Gentile. So, as Paul is going and giving the gospel, imagine like an Amish teenager that leaves the community. And he puts on completely different garb and he's dressing just like regular teenagers today, acting like regular teenagers, you would never know that he came from an Amish community.

It looks just like the same as everybody else. That's exactly what was going on in the first century. You couldn't tell which was a regular pagan Gentile and which is a former Israelite that's just out of covenant and decided generations and generations and hundreds of years later, they don't even remember the covenant of Israel. But when he starts giving the gospel, That God has solved this problem and created this bridge back.

They came by the thousands. They came by the thousands. They knew their history. They knew where they came from. But they knew there was no way. Jesus is the way back. For whatever you're going through, the theology of all this is amazing. It's incredible. It's deep. It's palatable to the deepest part of your taste buds in the spirit. The real fundamental principle is Yeshua is the bridge for everything. Every gap in your life, every hole in your heart, every broken promise that someone did to you, the abandonment of your father, the slander by a brother, the pit that the enemy set for you, the trap that you willingly jumped into, knowing what you were doing.

Ladies and gentlemen, I've been there. I know what it's like to create your own gap, to create your own chasm, to fall to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and go, there's no way out of this. And all of a sudden, you see this rope fall all the way down the canyon, a rope that can't possibly be made by man. It's just, it's too far down here. You just hold on, that's all he asks. No condemnation, just hold on. And he pulls you up, no effort but holding the rope. And you know what's absolutely phenomenal about that analogy?

In Hebrew, the word for hope and rope and weight is all the same word. Your hope is in Christ, but your responsibility is to wait on the Lord by holding on to that rope. He will pull you out if you do your part. He's the bridge to everywhere you want to go. God has a plan right now. This is just off script. But I believe someone needs to hear this. And if it's you, put it in the comments.

Man, that was for me. But I ask you to get on your knees right now, literally right now by faith. If God is hitting you and your heart's pounding and you're hot all over right now because the Spirit is convicting you, get on your knees and ask God to forgive you and help you to hold on to the rope because maybe you're about to let go. I'm here to tell you your life is worth it.

The plan and the purpose that he has for you is worth it. And when you're on top of the canyon wall, and you embrace your savior, and you look where you were, you won't believe how far you came. And all you had to do was hold on. That is the definition of faith, holding on to the rope. Sometimes that's all you can do. In verse 10, to the intent. What's the intent of us holding on to the rope?

What's the intent of this mission and this mystery that God has of bringing the two houses together and allowing the mixed multitude to join the commonwealth of Israel? You know why? Here's the intent. God wants to make fun of Satan. He wants to mock every demon in it. He wants to totally put it in the face of every fallen angel that chose to walk away from their glory. That's the New James Version. But look, it says, I want to make known the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

What's he talking about? He wants us as believers to walking covenant at such a degree that all of the demonic realm is blown out of their mind. They're mocked because they didn't see it coming. They didn't see it coming, when they kill Jesus. By the way, this is why God doesn't say everything and line it all out in scriptures and make it simple. The devil would figure it out. He would have never killed Yeshua to begin with if he knew it was solving the mystery and allowing the whole world to come into covenant with God. It's for kings to search out.

Let's get back to the scriptures here. 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. This is temple language, ladies and gentlemen. We have access to God. Every Jew knew there's no access to God except for the high priest. You have to go through that veil, which was cherubim embroidered into that veil. Gosh, guys, this is right out of the Garden of Eden. You want to get to the Tree of Life, you've got to go through the Cherubim.

The Ark of the Covenant, the presence of God is right on the other side, but you're going to die unless you are in the High Priest, if you're the High Priest. But we're not the High Priest, so you can't go in the Holy of Holies. But if you're in Christ, you can go into the Holy of Holies. That's why it says, boldness, I go into the Holy of Holies, the blood of Christ. It's not me. Nevertheless, it's not I who live, Galatians 2.20, but Christ in me. Amen. Boldness, access, temple language, Holy of Holies, with confidence, by faith, holding on to that rope.

Therefore, I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. Paul gets it. Tribulations bring about the rope, the rope brings about faith, the faith brings about bridging the gap, and bridging the gap brings you closer to the Messiah. You want to be close to your daddy?

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Find yourself in the pickle in the arms of the enemy and see how fast he will travel across this universe to save you. Just don't let go. For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom the whole family in heaven and earth is needed, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. It didn't say that he's strengthened by your knowledge of the Bible.

It's strengthened with might through his spirit in the inner man, not right here. Too many of us believe this is the inner man. The more closer I'm going to be to God, nope, never will you find a scripture that says that. The more you know the word of God, that's just tools in the tool belt for the Holy Spirit to get it here.

You see the 18 inches from here to here? That's the longest road in the universe. And trust me, it took me decades. I'm not even so sure that it's in here yet, but I am working in my walk with God to let the Spirit take the tools and transform me into the man that He wants me to be. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you being rooted and grounded in love. Did you hear that? It didn't say rooted and grounded in the word of God. That's great too. But the fundamentals of all of it is the two biggest commandments, which is love God and love your neighbor as yourself. And by the way, I like to tell my kids, you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

And you do that by loving your neighbor as yourself. It all based on love. All of it. If anything happens in your life that's not rooted in love, you're not in Christ in that moment. It's of the devil because love is the foundation of all things that are in Christ. Then you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, verse 18, what is the width and the length and the depth and the height to know the love of Christ, which passes all knowledge. It's more than knowledge. Too many people follow this ministry are about knowledge. It is not about gnosis, ladies and gentlemen, the Greek word of just understanding something. It's epignosis, the Greek word of intimate knowledge. There's two types of knowledge. There's the knowledge of the word of God and understanding what it means in interpretive, and we love that.

That's what this ministry is built on, is understanding the word of God, gnosis. But if we don't weave the intimate knowledge in there, it becomes static relationship, no different than a husband and a wife that know each other, but never have any kind of intimacy. If there's no intimate moment, of flesh meeting flesh, there's no life that can be created. The beauty of a marriage is not being together.

The beauty of marriage is creating something together, and that something is a child. It's the beauty, for those of you that can have children and have, you know what I'm talking about. Marriage is one thing, gnosis, but if you never are intimate with one another, you can't go deeper and no life can ever be created. Intimacy with God, relationship with the Messiah is what creates the seed of life for someone else.

This is how the gospel was actually meant to be given. It was not meant to be given through sermons or teachings and all of that's fantastic, but that's gnosis. Epignosis is the personal intimate relationship. It's the consummation of knowledge and spirit. And in God's formula book, that is what? A true worship. John 4.24, here's what I'm looking for, says God. I'm looking for someone who will worship me in spirit and in truth.

I got too many people worshiping in spirit and ain't got a clue what the word of God says. I have no idea they're offending me in other parts of their life because I don't read the word of God. Then I got people that are just book savvy. They know what the Word says, but if the Spirit showed up, they would never even recognize it. And matter of fact, they'd probably condemn it. Man, the Word of God is so awesome. Come on, you guys, somebody put amen in the comments right now. This is so good.

I'm not talking about me. I'm talking about the Word is so powerful. It's so alive. It jumps off the page. The Holy Spirit is just permeating and boiling in my heart right now. I hope He's in yours as well, creating the pressure of having to come out and read more, learn more, put it into practice. But all of it is about knowing the love of Christ. Do you know the love of Christ?

You know, most of us grow up in households where we don't feel the love. And so it creates a barrier, especially for young daughters that don't get it from their dads. It creates a barrier to truly understand what love is. So we find it in every other place, trying to fill that gap, trying to fill that void. You know what I did? Can I just go off script for a second? I don't know who I'm asking, but I'm saying for you. I'm going to open up my chest for a minute.

You know what one of my largest sins is, my largest problem, my greatest deficiency and brokenness is the spirit of performance. I got caught in that as a young teenager, wanting to gain access to the love of my father through performance. And I brought it right into the rest of my life, overachiever in every area, successful in everything I ever did. It never dawned on me because I had never not been successful, whether it be sports or winning the state championship to always at the top of my game in baseball or basketball or 18th in the nation in billiards, whatever it was in business.

I was always in the top 10, every company I've ever been in. All these things are not to give you a resume of Jim Staley and how successful he is. It's to show you a deficiency that I was just looking for acceptance and I never found it. And my mistake was I brought that into ministry and never consciously knew that I was doing the same thing.

And my relationship with God was built off of performance. I was performing, so therefore He loved me. But the moment that I didn't perform and the moment that I began to make mistakes and kind of fall apart and have a midlife crisis, what happened was God's grace was poured out on me and He broke me. It wasn't the law of God that saved me, it was the grace of God that saved me. It was not the judgment of God that should have been there for my lack of performance. It was His grace. And the moment I experienced the grace of God and learned what the love of Christ really is, it surpassed my knowledge. It surpassed everything I ever knew about God.

Blessing and curses. That's what I knew. But the grace of God, the unmerited favor, blessing you in the moment of your mistakes. Like sometimes with my kids, I will pardon them, even though they deserve to be punished. I'll say, you know what? I'm going to pardon you. I want you to understand what the love of God is like. You deserve. You deserve death. You deserve punishment. You deserve a steeper curfew for not bringing the car home in time. But I'm pardoning you because I want you to experience the grace of God.

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And once I experienced the grace of God at the level that I have in my past, it broke off the spirit of performance. And some of you are stuck in that performance right now and you know it. You feel it. Your eyes are watering right now. It's getting hot in your eyeballs and they're sweating because you know and you feel what I'm saying. And I encourage you to ask God to break the spirit of performance in your life. Because when I experienced the opposite of what I deserved, which is what mercy and grace is, it's giving you what you don't deserve. No longer was that relationship based on performance necessary.

I didn't have to try to please God that he'll love me. I experienced love in the depths of despair. And it broke me. Can I say it freed me? I didn't know I was in bondage. I didn't know I was a slave to my own performance and my competitive spirit. I didn't see it, but he did. And he knew that if he would have disciplined me, and gave me what I deserve. Years ago, you know what would happen? It would have solidified that I've been right all along. God is a God of performance, blessings and curses. But like Paul, I learned the love of Christ surpasses the knowledge, and it even can put aside what we deserve from breaking the law, because the wages of sin is death.

Praise God, there's a big but after that. The free gift of God is eternal. And we'll finish with verse 20. 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 the glory in the assembly, congregation, by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever and ever. Amen. Ladies and gentlemen, I've been through some things in my life. I've spent 55 months away from my family.

I've made more mistakes and have more hang-ups than a Chinese line. You're mad as they say. I don't know if we'll keep this in the video because me crying on film may not be the most professional academic teacher thing to do but I have seen verse 20 in real life and how God can do exceedingly, exceedingly above and beyond what you could ever ask or think. Not because of what you do, but because of the power that works in you. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory. It's Christ in you. It's not your understanding of Scripture is alone.

It's Christ in you. It's sitting in your daddy's lap in the dark. It's taking time out. You don't even have to pray. Just sit there. Sit there and say, God, will you form yourself in me? Take away this vice. Take away this addiction. Take away all that is keeping me from going deeper with you. Because I can tell you right now, he wants to do it. He has the power to do it. But he's limited by our ability to hold on to the rope.

He's limited by our faith. He's limited by the fact that we choose to let go and do it our way. We choose not to believe. We are the 10 tribes that crossed the Jordan River and looked at the giants and said, no way. It can't be done. The fruit is beautiful, but too much to overcome. Some of you have been in a situation, may or are. You look at your situation.

This can't be overcome. It's too big. A mountain is a massive wall. You don't see a road. You don't even see a path. You just see a giant. But I'm living proof, that a giant can come down with one stone, and that stone is Yeshua. Jesus. He's the Messiah. He is stone. Now take your sling and throw it at your giant, and that giant will come.

Just the faith of a mustard seed. Call the sling the mustard seed. That stone will find its way exactly into the skull of that giant. It will fall before you. You will rise. So before I completely fall

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apart, we will end there. And I feel very compelled to pray an ancient prayer over you. God bless you and keep you. May his face shine upon you. May his countenance be lifted up over you. And when you put your head down at night, may he give you peace. And may that peace be found in our Lord Jesus Christ, Yeshua Messiah.

Thank you, my friends. Be blessed in Yeshua's name. I'm Jim Staley, and I'll see you in the next video. Next week, we'll hit chapter four.

Shabbat shalom.

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