

Notes on Ephesians 3:1-6

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The summary of this section can be looked at from the point of 4 words, 2 words and one word pair

- *desmios* prisoner
- *oikonomia* stewardship
- *mysterion/apokalypsis* mystery/revelation

Prisoner This word is used 8 times in NT and 5 times as a phrase “prisoner of Jesus”. Paul is playing on the use of this word. He is an actual prisoner in Rome on account of his calling, *because of* Jesus and he is a prisoner *of* Jesus. Beyond the simple translation of a captive or someone in the prison, the greek word translates to being bound. This has a deeper meaning of an inability to act without the person or force that is binding you. As a prisoner, you only do what your master or guard watching over you says you can do. You are also confined to a very small space and hence can only do what is allowed by the authority - you cant do anything that you please or what the authority does not allow or approve. This then captures the meaning of what it means to be a convert, to make Jesus your master and live under his authority as a prisoner. Although, prisoner has a negative connotation, the way we think about can be altered to really understand who is our true authority in our life and what are we prisoners to.

Stewardship This word from greek translates to administration, management, oversight. Its used in [Luk 16:2-4] all around a manager of money and how he was accounting for the money. [1Tim 1:4] talks about not worry about our genealogies (past) rather than further the administration of God which is by faith. So the term around administration points to wealth, our inheritance and riches. God is the best steward and in His infinite wisdom and for His glory He directs His grace to us. The specific use in [Eph 3:2] was in reference in how God’s grace saved Paul on his road to Damascus [Acts 9:3]. In addition to revealing the mystery of Christ, he was also shown grace to bring the message and spread it among the gentiles.

Mystery/revelation go hand in hand, as the only true way to fully comprehend

mystery is when its fully revealed. Mystery here means of hidden, things not seen as well as revealed only to chosen ones and not to all mortals. There are atleast 3 levels of mysteries here -

- how God sent His only son to be born in flesh, to suffer and die for our sins and to be raised from dead.
- if we believe in Jesus dying for our sins and that we can only be cleansed by His blood, we can be redeemed
- and this applies to both jews and gentiles alike.

The revelation of this mystery happens only by the Holy Spirit, from God.

Mysteries are spoken of in OT pointing all to Jesus, either from propher Isaiah or the first covenant God made with Abraham [Gen 15:17] when He signed the covenant for both Abraham and Himself. [Daniel 2] also introduces the dream and the interpretation which is described as mystery. [Dan 2:28] speaks of how only God reveals mysteries and the content of the dream Nebuchadnazzar had. In [Dan 2:47], the king responds,“Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries”. [John 12:22] states “He reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deep darkness into light”. In the darkness, if you look at a rope, you cant be sure if its a snake waiting partiently to strike you or if its a rope. Only under the light that God created do we know its just a rope and we can walk without fear. Similarly, we need to look to God and the wisdom that comes from Him to understand the mysteries. This was also one of the main reason why Theology was the queen of sciences through 1800s - understanding the sciences of how God’s creations work.

This mystery was not made known to men in other generations, referring to OT. All of the OT prophesis, stories and the law itself points to the mystery of Jesus, the messiah to come. As examples: the ultimate redeemer in the story of Ruth, the stone in Daniel 2 and all of Isaiah points to Jesus. But to a reader in those generations, it must have been a great mystery as it was unclear how it was going to play out or how it was going to apply to the citizens of the world. In the end when it was revealed through history for the folks that lives in the first century and to all of us through Holy Spirit, it became the most maginificiant story that applied to not only jews, but brought gentiles into the kingdom of God.