

# Ephesians 3:6-7 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

NEXT

Ephesians 3:6 *to be specific*, that the [Gentiles](#) are [fellow heirs](#) and [fellow members](#) of the [body](#), and [fellow partakers](#) of the [promise](#) in [Christ Jesus through](#) the [gospel](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [einai \(PAN\) ta ethne sugkleronoma kai sussoma kai summetocha tes epaggelias en Christo lesou dia tou euaggeliou.](#)

**Amplified:** [It is this:] that the Gentiles are now to be fellow heirs [with the Jews], members of the same body and joint partakers [sharing] in the same divine promise in Christ through [their acceptance of] the glad tidings (the Gospel). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** The secret is that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the same body, fellow-sharers in the promise in Jesus Christ, through the good news ([Westminster Press](#))

**KJV** Ephesians 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

**ESV** Ephesians 3:6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**Hoehner** - that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow participants of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,"

**NIV** Ephesians 3:6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

**NET:** namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. ([NET Bible](#))

**NLT:** And this is the secret plan: The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children. Both groups have believed the Good News, and both are part of the same body and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (revised)** Ephesians 3:6 And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.

**Phillips:** It is simply this: that the Gentiles, who were previously excluded from God's agreements, are to be equal heirs with his chosen people, equal members and equal partners in God's promise given by Christ through the Gospel. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and belong jointly to the same body, and are fellow partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus, revealed through the good news ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** that the nations be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in the Christ, through the good news,

**TO BE SPECIFIC, THAT THE GENTILES ARE FELLOW HEIRS AND FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE BODY:** [einai \(PAN\) ta ethne sugkleronoma kai sussoma:](#)

- Ep 2:13-22; Romans 8:15, 16, 17; Galatians 3:26, 27, 28, 29; 4:5, 6, 7
- Ep 4:15,16; 5:30; Romans 12:4,5; 1Corinthians 12:12,27; Colossians 2:19
- [Ephesians 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 3:1-7 Grateful for the Gospel](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 3:5-6 The Mystery Revealed, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 3:7-13 The Mystery Revealed, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

## EMPHASIS ON THE NEW UNITY OF JEWS AND GENTILES

to be specific, that the Gentiles are (present tense - continually) fellow heirs ([sugkleronomos](#)) and fellow members of the body ([sussomos](#)), and fellow partakers ([summetochos](#)) of the promise ([epaggelia/epangelia](#)) in Christ ([Christos](#)) Jesus ([Iesous](#)) through ([dia](#) = means or instrumentality) the Gospel ([euaggelion](#)) - To be specific is added by the translators. Here Paul clearly explains the content of the Spirit's revelation of the mystery that Gentiles are now joined with believing Jews in one body. In order to make the mystery clear Paul coins 3 words (2 of which are used nowhere else in the NT) to explain that now the Gentiles are Fellow Heirs (joint heirs), fellow Members of the Body (joint bodies) and fellow Partakers of the Promise (joint partakers).

We need to understand the revelation of the mystery is not that Paul is saying the Gentiles can be saved for this was not a mystery, as it was well known that Gentiles could be saved in the OT. (Ro 9:24-33; Ro 10:19-21).

**Gentiles** (1484) ([ethnos](#)) refers to non-Jews or the heathen and when preceded by the definite article ("*the*") in Greek, means "*the nations*" which is synonymous with *the Gentiles* a description implying those who practice idolatry and are ignorant of the true and living God. Remember that all of mankind can be divided into the general groups of Jew and Gentile. It follows that "Gentile" is a synonym for anyone who is non-Jew and is not one of the "chosen people". The Hebrew word for the Gentiles is *goyim*. From Genesis 12 onward the majority of the Scriptures are about the Jews, with the Gentiles mentioned as they interface with the Jews.

### The Importance of the Preposition "Sun" in Ephesians

In each of the three descriptions of this "new race" which are no longer Jew and no longer Gentile but are now "one new man" Paul utilizes words that all begin with the same prefix "**sun**" a preposition that means "with". Sun however differs from "meta", the other Greek preposition meaning "with", in that the former describes a more intimate relationship. Here is Wayne Barber's illustrative explanation of the difference...

"One Greek word for "with" is the preposition **meta**. We are **with** one another (Ed note: he is speaking this to his congregation, those who are "**with**" him to listen). The Lord Jesus was **with** them when He was on this earth. He was alongside them, in a room together with. That's the word **meta**.

Another word for "together with" is the preposition **sun**, which means not only are we together with one another, but we are so mixed in that nobody can tell the difference one from the other. We can't get apart from each other.

Let me give you the illustration... making biscuits. Take all the ingredients and put them out on a cookie sheet. Measure out the flour, the shortening, the baking powder, etc. Put each ingredient on the sheet. All of those ingredients can still be separated, but at the same time they are with each other— that is a picture of the meaning of the word **meta**.

Now take all of the ingredients and mix them together. Cut the dough and put it in a pan and bake it. After it has baked, it comes out as a biscuit. Once the ingredients are baked together, the biscuit serves as a perfect picture of the meaning of the preposition **sun**. No scientist can separate the ingredients of that biscuit because they are united together in intimate union! That's the idea of the preposition **sun**.

Ephesians is "rich" in combination words beginning with "**sun**". Clearly Paul is emphasizing to his Greek reading audience a profound sense of unity that now exist in believers (see the 2 uses that have a negative connotation). Here is a list of the "**sun--**" words, composed of verbs and nouns...

Ephesians 2:5+ even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive together with** ([suzoopoieo](#) = **sun** + [zoopoieo](#) = make alive - Colossians 2:13) Christ (by grace you have been saved)

Ephesians 2:6+ and **raised us up with** ([sunegeiro](#) = **sun** + [egeiro](#) = to raise) Him, and **seated us with** ([sugkathizo](#) = **sun** + [kathizo](#) = to set or sit down - Colossians 2:12; 3:1) Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:19+ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are **fellow citizens with**

(**sumpolites** = **sun** + **polites** = a citizen) the saints, and are of God's household,

Ephesians 2:21+ in whom the whole building, **being fitted together** (**sunarmologeō** = **sun** + **harmologéo** = join together - Ephesians 4:16) is growing into a holy temple in the Lord

Ephesians 2:22+ in whom you also **are being built together** (**sunoikodomeō** = **sun** + **oikodomeō** = to build) into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:6+ to be specific, that the Gentiles are **fellow heirs** (**sugkleronomos** = **sun** + **kleronómos** = heir, sharer by lot) and **fellow members of the body** (**sussomos** = **sun** + **soma** = body), and **fellow partakers** (**summetochos** = **sun** + **metochos** = a partaker, participant, sharer - Ephesians 5:7) of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

Ephesians 4:3+ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the **bond** (**sundesmos** = **sun** + **déo** = bind = literally means "bound together" - Colossians 2:19; 3:14) of peace.

Ephesians 4:16+ from whom the whole body, **being fitted** (**sunarmologeō** = **sun** + **harmologéo** = join together) and **held together** (**sumbibazo** = **sun** + **bibazo** = to make to go up) by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:7+ Therefore do not be **partakers with** (**summetochos** = **sun** + **metochos** = a partaker, participant, sharer) them;

Ephesians 5:11+ And do not **participate** (**sugkoinoneō** = **sun** + **koinoneō** = to partake) in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them

**Sun-** can also be written "**syn-**" and is an important prefix to many familiar English words - synagogue, synergy, synonym, synoptic, synchronous, syncretism, symphony, sympathy, symmetry, etc)

**Fellow heirs** (4789) (**sugkleronomos** from **sun** = with, together, implying a closer relationship, intimacy or union + **kleronomos** = heir, sharer by lot, a possessor) is a joint heir, one who participates in the same lot. **Sugkleronomos** speaks of receiving possessions along with another OR OF inheriting together with. Heirs as used by Paul describes one who obtains something assigned to himself with others and the focus is upon receiving an unearned gift. In the biblical sense 'heirs of God' are those who receive the blessings that God has for His people.

Even in the OT (cf Genesis 12:3) God had included Gentiles in the sphere of salvation, but heretofore it was never on an equal footing with Jewish believers. Now God has revealed that the Gentiles are to share equally with saved Jews as heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Ro 8:17), and fellow heirs with all the redeemed. The two have become one new man in Christ.

**Kleronomos** signifies more than one who inherits, or obtains a portion, it means to take into possession.

**Sugkleronomos** is used of Abraham in Heb 11:9; of a husband and wife who are also united in Christ in 1Pe 3:7; here in Ephesians of Gentiles who believe, as participants in the gospel with Jews who believe, and of all believers as prospective participants with Christ in His glory, as recompense for their participation in His sufferings, Ro 8:17.

In Galatians Paul alludes to the equality and heirship of Gentiles writing that...

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus**. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, **heirs** according to promise. (**Galatians 3:28-29**)

**Fellow (joint) heirs** is used 4 times in the NT...

Romans 8:16+ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **8:17** and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and **fellow heirs** with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (note)

**Hebrews 11:9+** By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac (Ge 26:3, 4) and Jacob (Ge 28:3, 4, 48:3, 4), **fellow heirs** of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

**Comment:** Isaac and Jacob are co-participants in the promises God initiated with Abraham

1Peter 3:7+ You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a **fellow heir** of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not

be hindered. (note)

**Comment:** Peter describes believing husbands and wives as united in Christ

**Fellow members of the body** (4954) (**sussomos** from **sun** = with, together, implying a closer relationship, intimacy or union + **soma** = body, used figuratively here of the Church) refers literally to a joint body and figuratively to fellow-members of the Christian community. It describes a "co-member" or one who is a member of a group, with emphasis upon the coordinate relation to other members of the group.

The best commentary on this unique word which appears to have been coined by Paul what he had just explained in Ephesians 2 writing...

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who **made both groups into one**, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself **He might make the two into one new man**, thus establishing peace, 16 and **might reconcile them both in one body to God** through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; 18 for through Him **we both** have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (See **notes** Ephesians 2:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18)

As **Wayne Barber** says "Gentiles are not in the body because of the courtesy of the Jews. The Jews didn't stop and say, "Well, okay guys, we will let you in." They had nothing to do with it. The Jews are not in by the courtesy of the Gentiles. Both of them are in solely by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been allowed in. (Ephesians 3:1-9 God's Divine Mystery - 2)

The Gentiles are at no distance or disadvantage now, but share a position of equality with saved Jews. Both groups are united in one body as members of the "Mystical Body of Christ", the Church, which corporately is a new man, a new creation, in which the line of separation (the barrier of the dividing wall) between Jew and Gentile has been broken down

In Jesus Christ we are made **fellow members** of one body, and all the middle walls that separate us are removed. This has been demonstrated clearly again and again when people of different backgrounds and cultures and classes, different outlooks, different races, have come together in Christ and found that all the differences which once seemed to be so tremendous are reduced to nothing, and they are able to overleap them and be healed in their fellowship together.

**S Lewis Johnson** had some enlightening comments on this section writing that what...

we have today in the church of Jesus Christ is something **new**. Now, the church is not the **mystery**, but it's **the relationship of the Jew and Gentile** within the church that is the secret. It was not a secret in the Scriptures that the Gentiles would be saved. Now the Apostles had difficulty with this. Do you remember who had difficulty? Well, Peter had difficulty. Remember, when he had the vision, he was looking out, fell asleep, had the vision of the sheet that came down from heaven and those unclean animals within it, and he was told arise and eat; he said, not so Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean. All of this was to prepare him for the preaching of the Gospel to Cornelius and the Gentiles. Because they had the idea, carried over from Old Testament times, where it was a proper idea, that the person who was converted through the preaching of the Gospel, in order to be related properly to the true God, he became an Israelite. He became a part of the company of Israel. Think of Ruth, for example. Ruth was a Moabitess, but because of Ruth's experience and finally her conversion, she became an Israelite. And actually, as you know, became one in the line of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are other illustrations of that in the genealogies in Matthew chapter 1.

**So when a person in the Old Testament became a believer, they identified with Israel. They became a member of that company of people.** Now Peter had difficulty with that, the idea that Gentiles could be saved. That was just natural, because Israel had the revelation of God, and God had spoken to them, and he had appeared to them, and he had ministered through them, and he had difficulty with that. But finally, God overcame his difficulties, and he came to Cornelius' house, and he preached the Gospel, and he came to Jerusalem and told them how God has been saving Gentiles.

Now there was still one other thing that they didn't understand. And that was, not simply that whether or not Gentiles could be saved, but if they were saved, were they in the believing company on the same level with Jewish saved people? Did they have to be circumcised? And of course, that question arose in Antioch. And after a lot of disputing there, Paul and others, like Barnabas, came down to Jerusalem, and there they had some more disputation and had a lot of arguing with people standing up and citing Scripture, seeking to understand the mind of the Lord, and finally Peter stood up, and he gave what came to be ultimately, the

decision of the council, and that was, God saved people by faith through grace, and that the Gentiles not only could be saved, but they were saved in the same way. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they."

Now Peter turned it around, because anybody who had the slightest idea that there was any advantage so far as salvation was concerned in being a Jew, didn't understand the grace of God. So he said, you people who wonder how the Gentiles can be saved and whether they can enter the church on the same basis with us, you need to have your theology purified. We'll send you back to theology 101 if you don't watch out, when you get to heaven. So we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ not, "they shall be saved even as we," but "we shall be saved, even as they," in case there's somebody with this lurking sense of self-righteousness. (See Acts 15:11)

So in history, they had to go through the experience so that the Gentiles might be saved (cp Ro 11:15ff-note), and when they are saved they don't have to become Jews. They are saved, and they stand on the same plane as the Jews. That, I think, is what he means when he says that the Gentiles in Ephesians 3:6, should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.

You know, if you look at that in the Greek text it's a rather interesting construction that the Apostle uses in connection with the three words. I'm going to read it out of the Greek text because the relationship of the Jews and the Gentiles is seen more plainly in the Greek text. The Apostle writes, "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the Gospel." Now in Greek he takes three nouns and he puts the little preposition "with" with them, and coins – doesn't coin in the sense of making up new words entirely – but rather puts these words together so that you get the overwhelming idea of the sameness of relationship between Jew and Gentile in the Church of Jesus Christ. So the Gentiles are fellow heirs, they are fellow members of the one body, they are fellow partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel. That's the mystery. That's the secret. That's the relationship that did not exist in Old Testament times. That's the content of the mystery.

Now notice, too, the means by which they come to these blessings is through the Gospel. Just as in the Old Testament times individuals were saved through the Gospel, so in New Testament times they are saved through the Gospel. The Gospel is not different now. The Gospel is the same Gospel that was preached in Old Testament times. It's not the Gospel that's changed. The results of the Gospel are different in the sense that in the Old Testament, when Jews were saved, they became a member of the theocratic company. They also were responsible to be put under the Law of Moses, and they also were responsible to submit to the sign of the covenant. But now, in this age, the law done away with, they are fellow members, fellow partakers of the promise.

Paul in Romans says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God which he had promised before by his prophets and the holy Scriptures." So in the Old Testament we have the Gospel. In the New Testament we have the Gospel. In this age we have the secret. That was not made known in ancient times as it is revealed through Paul and the apostles and prophets of New Testament times.

And that's a magnificent relationship we have it is not? Gentiles and Jews now brought together in one redeeming company, fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, this one new man, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel.

We are, Sunday morning, studying Paul's letter to the Romans, and in Romans chapter 11 he goes into more detail concerning the fact that the natural branches were cut off, broken off, and the unnatural branches of the Gentiles were grafted in among them, that is, the faithful ones, the remnant, and have become fellow partakers of the root of the fatness of the olive tree. In other words, the Gentiles have been brought in to this one body and they have been made partakers of the blessings which are called the promise in Christ by the Gospel. What we have now in the church of Jesus Christ, then, is a group of redeemed people who are made up of Jews and Gentiles who stand on the same plane before the Lord God.

It is a new international community, too. Jews and Gentiles, all equal in Christ. They are not joined to the Jewish nation and subordinated to them in significance, but there is one new, or to use the adjective "new" in its stress, one fresh man, for that's the idea of the Greek word **kainos** which is used there instead of the word **neos**. One fresh man. Isn't that a magnificent thing, that we Gentiles are now members of the church of Jesus Christ, fellow partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel? We're called Children of Abraham, seed of Abraham, because we possess those promises. Something remarkable and new in the unfolding of God's program. ([Ephesians 3:1-13 The Dispensation of the Grace of God](#))

**AND FELLOW PARTAKERS OF THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPEL: kai summetocha tes epaggelias en Christo Iesou dia tou euaggeliou:**

- Gal 3:14; 1Jn 1:3; 2:25
- [Ephesians 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 3:1-7 Grateful for the Gospel](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 3:5-6 The Mystery Revealed, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 3:7-13 The Mystery Revealed, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

**Paxson** tells the following story which indicates that there is a great need for a proper understanding of this foundational truth of Jew and Gentile in one body...

Just recently a decree was issued by a Christian church that hereafter no Jew could worship there because of governmental threats. A very consecrated Hebrew Christian missionary in that country who had membership in that church and often preached there, was among those ejected. He and other Christian Jews were compelled to form a Hebrew Christian church. Christian Jews not allowed to worship with Christian Gentiles as fellow-heirs, fellow-members, fellow-partakers! Not "both one," but both two. Not "both one body," but each one body. Oh! the awful shame and sin of such an act!

(To this she responds writing) Did not God put that word "remember" in Ep 2:11(note) for such a day as this? "remember" that "in time past" you were an helpless, hopeless outcast in the deepest depths of sin. "Remember" you would still be there, as "far off" from God as any Jew you know to-day, had you not been "saved by grace." "Remember" that you were then the "alien" and the "foreigner" belonging to a pagan, unprivileged race, while the Jew belonged, and still does, to God's chosen people, a nation privileged in God's sight beyond all nations of the earth. "Remember" that apart from the blood of Christ you could never have been "made nigh" unto God. "Remember" that, as a Gentile, you have nothing in yourself or in your race of which to boast; and that your position as a "wild olive tree grafted into the good olive tree as a branch" is held only through faith, and not because of any personal, national or racial merit or superiority (Ro 11:11-34-note). "Remember" that God has no favorites in His family, and that both Jew and Gentile have the same access unto the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. "Remember" that, when once either Jew or Gentile has been incorporated into Christ through faith in His blood, he is a fellow-member of Christ's Body and a "fellow citizen" with all saints. "Remember" that "we twain" are made "one new man" in Christ, and that henceforth we belong to a heavenly race that is super-racial and super-national, sharing alike both the privileges and the responsibilities of the Christian Church. O yes, ye Gentiles "remember" that your two most precious possessions, your Saviour and your Bible, came to you through the Jew; that the door to the Church was opened to you by Peter, the Jew; and that the revelation given of your equal possession of all its blessed privileges came to you through Paul, the Jew. And to any Gentile Christian who gives over all the curses to the Jew pronounced upon him in God's Word, while he glories in all the blessings as promised to himself, even those plainly and exclusively given to the Jewish nation, "remember" the Word of God spoken centuries ago to the father of the Jews:

Genesis 12:3. "I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

And the Word of God through the Psalmist:

Psalm 122:6-[note](#). "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."

And our Lord's own touching word regarding "my brethren":

Mt 25:40, 45. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me... Inasmuch did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." (The Wealth, Walk and Warfare of the Christian)

**Fellow partakers** ([4830](#)) (**summetochos** from **sún** = with, together, implying a closer relationship, intimacy or union + **metochos** = a partaker or sharer as one who participates with and shares common blessings with another) means literally partaking together with one, a joint partaker of something, a sharing with (a co-sharer, co-participant).

It means to share in the possession of something, in this case **'the promise in Christ Jesus'**.

**Summetochos** was used in the papyri of those who were joint possessors of a house.

Thus Gentile believers who have entered the New Covenant by faith now share in all the gracious promises of God, except those specifically concerned with the future of Israel as a nation. In the present context the **promise** refers to the gift of salvation in **Christ Jesus** as proclaimed in the Gospel.

Paul also spoke of the **promise of the Spirit** associated with salvation writing to the Galatians

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"--in order that (here is one purpose for which Christ set us free from the curse) in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the **promise of the Spirit** through faith. (Gal 3:13,14)

**Ray Stedman** applies this truth about **fellow partakers in the promise of Christ Jesus** writing that "in the mystery of the gospel, Jews and Gentiles alike are made joint partakers of the promise of the Spirit of God. The power of God is given to us to do what we otherwise could never do. Those who have learned to reckon upon this power find they are able to love and forgive when they never could have otherwise. So this gospel touches the heart of humanity's problems. ([Ephesians 3:7-13: Secret Riches](#))

As **fellow partakers** or fellow sharers, it is perfectly proper for Gentile believers to claim and apply the wonderful blessings first given to the Jews in the promises found in the Psalms and Proverbs and the rest of the Old Testament (again excepting those promise made specifically to the nation of Israel, such as the land of Palestine.)

**William Barclay** puts these great privileges made available to Gentiles in their historical/cultural perspective writing that "This was a completely new discovery. The basic sin of the ancient world was contempt. The Jews despised the Gentiles as worthless in the sight of God. At worst they existed only to be annihilated, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste" (Isaiah 60:12). At best they existed to be the slaves of Israel; "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours; they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over and they shall fall down unto thee" (Isaiah 45:14). To minds which could think like that it was incredible that the grace and the glory of God were for the Gentiles... in the ancient world the barriers were complete. No one had ever dreamed that God's privileges were for all people. ([Ephesians 3](#))

**The promise** (1860) ([epaggelia/epangelia](#) from **epi** = upon or intensifier of meaning + **aggello** = tell, declare = to announce with certainty as to what one will do) is a declaration to do something with implication of obligation to carry out what is stated. **Epaggelia** was a legal term denoting promise to do or give something. It was a legally binding declaration giving one to whom it is made right to expect or claim performance of the specific act. Most often **epaggelia** is used to describe the promises of God. and provides firm assurance of His future action. **Epaggelia** in Eph. 1:13; 2:12; 3:6; 6:2;

**Wayne Barber** explains that "fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" speaks of...

is the promise of redemption, that if a man comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he can enter into the family of God. In Galatians chapter 3 there are several verses that discuss now we have been allowed to partake. Look at Galatians 3:13-14...

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

We have been allowed in. We have redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Galatians 3:19...

"Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made."

The Seed was promised to Abraham, and now we are a part of all of this. Remember, He told Abraham, "through you all nations will be blessed." How can all nations be blessed through the Jewish race? Through the seed that came to them, which was the Lord Jesus Christ. We've been allowed in by faith in Him. Look at Galatians 3:22:

"But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

There is no distinction whether they are Jew or Gentile. Now we can enter in to the promise. If we believe, we are a part of the redeemed. Look at Galatians 3:29

"And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

He is talking about spiritual Israel here. He is talking about the Israel that has come, by faith in Jesus Christ, into the family, into the kingdom, into the very holy Temple of God Himself. He is saying to those Gentiles in Ephesus,

"Don't take this thing for granted. It was revealed to me and then explained to me very specifically that you are allowed in. God stopped me on the Damascus Road. He commissioned me and made me an apostle out of due season. I am preaching something to you that God revealed to me. Don't you dare take it for granted. Gentiles, you have been allowed in. You are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus."

Do you realize what you have, what I have? We are talking about what you have in Jesus Christ. You are rich beyond measure...

Don't ever take salvation for granted. Remember whose you are. Remember who you are. We are about to get into Ephesians 4-6. That's not the riches... not the reasons... not the revelation. That's the responsibilities of our salvation, and they are based on everything Paul has said in the first three chapters. If you don't get this down pat, you'll never understand why there is so much responsibility for Christians to live as God wants them to live. (Ephesians 3:1-9 God's Divine Mystery - 2)

**In Christ Jesus** - (See also in Christ, in Christ Jesus ) The inclusion of Gentiles in God's purposes remained mysteriously unclear under the old covenant. It became clear in Christ through the preaching of the Gospel, the good news of redemption and reconciliation of God and man and of Jew and Gentile.

**William MacDonald** explains that "In the coming kingdom of our Lord, Israel will be the head of the nations (Isa. 60:12); Gentiles will be blessed, but it will be through Israel (Isa. 60:3; 61:6; Zec 8:23). The calling of Israel was primarily, though not exclusively, to temporal blessings in earthly places (Deut. 28; Amos 9:13, 14, 15). The calling of the church is primarily to spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3-note). Israel was called to be God's chosen earthly people. The church is called to be the heavenly Bride of Christ (Rev 21:2-note, Rev 21:9-note). Israel will be blessed under the rule of Christ in the Millennium (Hos. 3:5); the church will reign with Him over the entire universe, sharing His glory (Eph. 1:22, 23-note). Therefore it should be clear that the church is not the same as Israel or the kingdom. It is a new society, a unique fellowship, and the most privileged body of believers we read about in the Bible. The church came into being after Christ ascended and the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2). It was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). And it will be completed at the Rapture, when all who belong to Christ will be taken home to heaven (1Th 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-note; 1Cor. 15:23, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#)))

"Religions are man's search for God; the Gospel is God's search for man.

There are many religions, but one Gospel."

-- E Stanley Jones

**Gospel** (2098) (**euaggelion** from **eú** = good + **aggéllō** = proclaim, tell) is literally good message and was in common use in first century indicating good news of any kind. A common question must have been "Have you any good news (euaggelion) for me today?" **Euaggelion** in Ephesians - Eph. 1:13; 3:6; 6:15, 19. As in the OT so among the Greeks, **euaggelion** was used for the proclamation of news of victory and the death or capture of the enemy! Ponder this in terms of our enemies! Often the news was sent in a letter, but also came from the field of battle by ship, by horse, or a swift runner, who proclaims to the anxiously awaiting city the victory of the army, and the death or capture of the enemy. Other uses of **euaggelion** included being gladdened by the birth of a son, by news of an approaching wedding, or of the death of someone. The Cult of the Caesar was the state religion of the Roman empire, in which the emperor was worshipped as a god. When the announcement of the emperor's birthday was made, or the accession of a new Caesar (gives rise to our English Kaiser & Czar!) proclaimed, the account of either event was designated by the word **euaggelion** or "good news." The NT evangelists appropriated the word, take it out of the secular usage, and applying it to the message of salvation as the "best news" a man could ever hear!

**A B Simpson** is reported to have said that the **gospel** "Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner cancelled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone."

**John Phillips** sums up this verse writing that...

The new equality of the Gentiles was a bitter pill for most Jews to swallow. For centuries they had prided

themselves on being God's chosen people. They had nurtured a growing contempt for Gentiles and wallowed in religious and racial snobbery. They had considered themselves to be God's favorites. Now all this superiority was shattered. It turned out that all along God had loved the Gentiles just as much as He had loved the Jews (witness the events in the book of Jonah, for instance). Now God was proving this truth in an astonishing way by bringing Jews and Gentiles together in a new body that ignored the special privileges the Jews had enjoyed for some thousand years. Gentiles were not going to be added to the existing corporate body of the Jewish people, the nation of Israel. There would be an entirely new body to which Jews and Gentiles would be added on equal terms.

Jews and Gentiles would share equally in the same **legacy**. They would be "**fellow heirs**." There would be no double portion for the Jews. Jews and Gentiles alike would receive the same blessing.

They would share equally in the same **life** too. There would be one body, its head being Christ and its members believers. Jews and Gentiles were all one in Him- all washed by His blood, all partakers of the same Spirit of life, and all equally dependent on Him and on one another.

Jews and Gentiles would also share equally in the same **light**. In Christ, there were no longer any special promises to Jews (**Ed note**: the promise to the nation of Israel of the land is however yet to be fulfilled to them and it will be in the future), no revelations made to them alone. The full blaze of New Testament truth was the property of the church, not Israel.

It made no difference that Saul of Tarsus had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a trained rabbinical scholar, a tribal member of the nation of Israel, and a practicing and zealous Pharisee. In the church he was an equal partner with the Philippian jailor and the runaway slave Onesimus. ([Exploring Ephesians](#)) (Bolding added)

**Ephesians 3:7 of [which](#) I was [made](#) a [minister](#), [according](#) to the [gift](#) of [God's](#) [grace](#) which was [given](#) to me [according](#) to the [working](#) of His [power](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [ou egenethen \(1SAPI\) diakonos kata ten dorean tes charitos tou theou tes dotheises \(AAPFSG\) moi kata ten energeian tes dunameos autou.](#)

**Amplified:** Of this [Gospel] I was made a minister according to the gift of God's free grace (undeserved favor) which was bestowed on me by the exercise (the working in all its effectiveness) of His power. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** of which I was made a servant through the free gift of the grace of God, which was given to me according to the working of his power. ([Westminster Press](#))

**Hoehner** - "of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of his power

**KJV** Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

**ESV** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

**NIV** I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

**NET:** I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the exercise of his power. ([NET Bible](#))

**NLT:** By God's special favor and mighty power, I have been given the wonderful privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (revised)** Ephesians 3:7 By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

**Phillips:** And I was made a minister of that Gospel by the grace he gave me, and by the power with which he equipped me. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** of which I became one who ministers according to the gift of the grace of God, which grace was given to me according to the operative energy of His power. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** of which I became a ministrant, according to the gift of the grace of God that was given to me, according to the working of His power

**OF WHICH I WAS MADE A MINISTER ACCORDING TO THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME: ou egenethen (1SAPI) diakonos kata ten dorean tes charitos tou theou tes dotheises (AAPFSG) moi:**

- **of which I was made a minister** Ep 3:2; Ro 15:16; 2Co 3:6; 4:1; Col 1:23-25
- **according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me** Ep 3:8; Ro 1:5; 1Co 15:10; 1Ti 1:14,15
- **according to the working of His power** - Ep 3:20; 1:19; 4:16; Isaiah 43:13; Romans 15:18,19; 2Corinthians 10:4,5; Galatians 2:8; Colossians 1:29; 1Th 2:13; Hebrews 13:21
- [Ephesians 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 3:1-7 Grateful for the Gospel](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 3:7-13 The Mystery Revealed, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Colossians 1:23+ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which **I, Paul, was made a minister.**

Mark 10:43-45+ "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Luke 22:26+ "But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

### PAUL'S DIVINE APPOINTMENT AS A DIAKONOS

In Ephesians 3:7-9 Paul explains how his ministry is connected with the Church.

**Of which I was made a minister (diakonos), according to the gift (dorea) of God's grace (charis) which was given to me according to the working (energeia) of His power (dunamis) - Made (ginomai)** means Paul did not come into existence (so to speak - base meaning of ginomai = to come into existence) as a servant, but the divine passive indicates it was an external work, **according to the gift of God's grace**, with no hint of merit. **According to (kata)** means it was in proportion to God's infinite grace. Note the translation as **minister** might mislead some to think Paul is referring to our modern day meaning of **minister**, a word that designates the pastor of a church. The NT **never** uses diakonos with that connotation. Paul is saying that he ministered the gospel or served God in the capacity of proclaiming and teaching the gospel.

**MacArthur** on **minister** (servant) - By definition, a servant is one who acts on the commands of others, who recognizes and submits to a higher power. His primary responsibility is to do what he is told to do. Paul's single responsibility was to faithfully be a servant, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to [him] according to the working of His power. (See [Ephesians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hoehner** - The Greek more clearly implies that Paul's service was initiated by "the gift of God's grace" and continues by "the working (energeian) of His power" (dynamis).

As alluded to above **Paul did not make himself a minister. Corollary thought:** Guard against seeking **your** ministry, instead seeking of to discern **His** ministry which He has prepared for you-see this principle in Eph 2:10-note); and know that if you are a follower of Christ, you are a priest and you have a ministry to fulfill - cp 1Pe 2:9+, 1Pe 4:10, 11+) but that God brought him into existence (as it were) as a minister and servant. The calling and empowering of God's **minister** is His prerogative Alone. This principle is seen throughout the NT...

Acts 26:16+ (Jesus ordered Paul to) arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a **minister (huperetes** from **hupó** = under, beneath + **erétes** = a rower. Literally described the men in the ship's galley, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "Row, Row, Row your boat!") and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you

1Corinthians 15:10+ But (Always pause and ask what is being **contrasted** - this forces us back to 1Cor 15:9-note for the answer -- as you look back to answer the question, in a sense, you are beginning to practice the blessed discipline of **Biblical Meditation**) by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain; but I labored (kopiao = to the point of exhaustion = speaks of our responsibility) even more than all of them, yet not I, but the **grace** of God with me (This speaks of God's sovereign, sufficient provision for our work). (What is the **key word** in this great passage [what is repeated]? Notice how grace saved [justified] Paul ["I am what I am"] and also continued to sanctify and enable him to accomplish the work God had prepared for him beforehand.)

Colossians 1:25-27+ Of this church I was made a **minister (diakonos)** according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:29+ And for this purpose (What purpose? see Col 1:28) also I labor **kopiao** = to the point of exhaustion = speaks of our responsibility), striving (**agonizomai** = English "agonize"! Again our responsibility) according to His power (God's part, His provision of inexhaustible **dunamis** = inherent ability to accomplish), which mightily works (**energeo** - in the present tense = continually "energizes") within me (Pictures the work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ).

**Minister (1249)**(**diakonos** - some say from **diakonis** = "in dust laboring" "running thru dust". Others from **diako** same as **dieko** = to hasten) represents the servant in his activity for the work he is to do and speaks of one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master. A **diakonos** in the NT described attendants, waiters at table (John 2:5, 9, servant of a king - Mt 22:13) or those with other menial duties, deacons, ministers, servants (both slaves and hired) not in his relation to his master, but in his activity. The **diakonos** represents the servant in his activity for the work. **Diakonos** in Ephesians - Eph. 3:7; 6:21

**Gift of Grace** - means the gift consisting of the grace of God.

**Gift (1431)**(**dorea** from **didomi** = to give) refers to a free gift laying stress on the gratuitous character of the gift. This refers to the gift in which the grace of God consisted, Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles. **Dorea** - 11 times in NT - Jn. 4:10; Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Ro 5:15, 17; 2 Co. 9:15; Eph. 3:7; 4:7; Heb. 6:4

**Grace (5485)** (**charis**) in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. It is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give. Grace addresses man's sin while mercy addresses man's misery. The gift of grace makes men fit for salvation, making strangers into God's sons.

What is "**God's grace**" in this context? The aspect of grace in view is the office of the apostleship or the ministry to the Gentiles.

**D L Moody** said "The law tells me how crooked I am. Grace comes along and straightens me out.

**John Flavel's** offers a picturesque description of grace - Grace is to corruption as water is to fire.

**Jowett** defined grace as "holy love on the move".

Grace first inscribed my name  
In God's eternal book:  
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,  
Who all my sorrows took.  
-Philip Doddridge

**According to (kata)** (**kata**) as noted above means in proportion to. Let's apply this to our lives....

**THOUGHT** - Pause for a moment and ponder (Meditate on) the productive proportionate power of God the Omnipotent One! Apply this truth to whatever you are struggling with - e.g., is it some besetting sin, etc? If God graciously makes His resurrection power available to us [which He does!] through the Holy Spirit Who forever indwells us, then why am I not experiencing this power? Am I trusting my feeble efforts rather than His extravagant omnipotence? In other words am I persisting in reliance on self, rather than pursuing reliance on the Spirit? Am I grieving His Holy Spirit by harboring some secret/unconfessed sin (cp Eph 4:30-note; see some of those sins in Eph 4:29-note, Eph 4:31-note)? Am I doubting that His omnipotent power could really exert a positive effect in my personal situation, my besetting sin, my "addiction", my unforgiving spirit, my

bitterness, etc, etc? (cp James 1:5, 6-note, James 1:7, 8-note)

**According to the working of His power** - The gift was bestowed in accordance with that efficiency which could transform Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. In other words the fact that God could save a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, and commission him to be an apostle was a clear demonstration of the "**working of His power**".

**Marvin Vincent** writes that "The gift was bestowed in accordance with that efficiency which could transform Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. (Word Studies in the NT)

**Comment:** Take a moment and think about Vincent's comment - if God's gift of transforming grace (which equates with His power - cp 2Cor 12:9-note) was sufficient to transform a hater and persecuter of the Gospel into a lover and proclaimer of that same Gospel, is anything in my life (test, trial, temptation, circumstance, problem, person) that is too difficult for Jehovah? (Rhetorical question expecting a resounding "No!" - Ge 18:14, Nu 11:23a, Lk 1:37, Mt 19:26, Mk 10:27 see especially Jer 32:17 and observe what was not too difficult for God! Which gives Him the right to testify Jer 32:27!)

**Working** (1753)(**energeia** from **energes** = at work, operative, active from **en** = in + **érgon** = work <> English = energy, energetic) describes active, operative, efficient and effective power. **Energeia** is exclusively a Pauline word used only to describe superhuman power, whether of God or of the devil; of God. **Energeia** - 8x in NT - Eph. 1:19; 3:7; 4:16; Phil. 3:21; Col. 1:29; 2:12; 2Th 2:9, 11 **Energeia** is found in the classic Greek writings first in Aristotle describing diabolic influences. And so in Hellenism, as in Philo, the word group **energeia/energeo** (noun/verb) is used of cosmic or physical forces at work in man or the world around.

**Energeia**, for example, describes **God's operative power** in raising Christ, Paul instructing the Colossian saints that they have been buried with Him (Christ) in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the (supernatural) **working (energeia)** of God, Who raised Him from the dead (Col 2:12+).

In Php 3:21+ Paul gives us the glorious, encouraging, sure promise (a "Blessed Hope") that our Lord Jesus Christ

will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the (supernatural) **exertion (energeia)** of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

**THOUGHT** - Compare John's proclamation of our "**Blessed Hope**" - 1Jn 3:2+, which is motivation in 1Jn 3:3+ - Are you living by *looking ahead* or *looking around*? In other words, if you are *looking around* at the world which is passing away, your **hope** quotient will be "low", but instead you are choosing daily to "look up", *looking ahead* to the rock solid promise of our Redeemer's return, your hope will be buoyed up even in the midst of the inexorably rising "floodwaters" of evil in this present passing world. - 1Jn 2:17+)

**Power** (1411)(**dunamis** [Note words derived from the stem **duna**— all have the basic meaning of "being able," of "capacity" in virtue of an ability & root for English dynamic, dynamo]) means inherent power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature.

**Dunamis** is the root from which we derive the English word **dynamic**, which describes that which is marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change. That which is **dynamic** is characterized by energy or forces that produce motion, as opposed to that which is static.

**THOUGHT** - As an application of the truth of **dunamis** - how would you describe your Christian life - *dynamic* or *static*? Beloved child of the Most High God, be encouraged to partake of His plentiful power by faith and obedience and experience the times of refreshing and revival which come from the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ (cf Eph 1:19-20+ and Eph 3:16+)

Our word "dynamite" is the transliteration of **dunamis** but not its translation. **Dunamis** does not refer to an explosive powder. The Greeks knew nothing about gunpowder as if the gospel will blow men to bits but as discussed above, it refers to intrinsic power. The gospel is not the "dynamite" of God in the sense of dynamite's explosiveness. Although in the sense that a stick of dynamite contains the **inherent power to effect results** it would be a reasonable picture of the Greek word.

The work to be performed is ours,  
The strength is all His own;  
'Tis He that works to will,  
'Tis He that works to do;  
His is the power by which we act,  
His be the glory too.

**ILLUSTRATION OF WORKING ACCORDING TO HIS POWER** - - Before his conversion, John Wesley, who was very religious outwardly, but lacked the inward reality of God's grace, had a conversation with a poor porter at his college that deeply impressed

him. Wesley discovered that the man had only one coat and that he had not had any food that day, but only water. And yet his heart was full of gratitude to God. Wesley said, "You thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie upon. What else do you thank him for?" "I thank him," answered the porter, "that He has given me my life and being, and a heart to love Him, and a desire to serve Him." (In *The Inextinguishable Blaze*, by A. Skevington Wood [Eerdmans, 1968], p. 100.) That porter knew the reality of God's saving grace. Like him, we can be joyfully thankful even in our trials if we remember God's gift of salvation and the gracious privilege of serving Him.