

Ephesians 3 (Conrad Bowman) (February 5, 2006)

Now we're in Ephesians. We ran through the end of chapter 2. And we're going to run from the end of chapter 2 right now into chapter 3, and continue with that.

I'm going to look at verse 13 [12] of chapter 2 and start there.

Remember that [you, Gentiles, were] at that time [before you were saved – and they're five points that are made in this verse – one] you were separated from Christ; [two] you were excluded from the Commonwealth of Israel; [three] you were strangers to the covenants of promise; [four] you were having no hope; and [five] you were without God in the world.

That is as critical a situation that man could be in right there.

Excuse me. That's verse 12. I'm glad you corrected that.

Now in 13. "But" – contrast – that word "but" always introduces a contrast – in contrast to where you were,

But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were formally far off – [as described in those 5 conditions – you who were far off] have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

The blood of Christ is the gateway that opened the door to becoming intimate with God. You have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ. You've also have been brought near to one another.

For He Himself is our peace.

And, I don't want you to forget that. Christ Himself is the ground of peace on to which we have been moved by the Spirit of God. Okay? Verses 3 and 4 are going to explain that a little more fully, but we have been taken from the ground of being far off and physically relocated – spiritually relocated – on to the ground of peace with God. And, that's in Christ Jesus. We have been wrapped up in Him. Joined to Him. He has taken His righteousness and wrapped us up in it and drawn it to Himself.

Now in Christ Jesus you who were formally far off have been brought near by means of the blood of Christ, for, He Himself is our peace.

He made both groups – and that both groups is we who were, use to be separated from the Commonwealth of Israel and Israel itself – He took both of them now and pulled them into one direction. And that direction is in Christ. He Himself is our peace, and made both groups into one. Broke down the barrier of the dividing wall. Put us in the same condition

By abolishing in His flesh the enmity – [and the enmity, it says, which is – I'm reading from the New American Standard] – which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances.

Now, that's the enmity that existed between man and God. It defines why there was a separation between man and God. It also defines why there was a separation between the Gentile and the Jew. It defines both things. Okay?

Now, He who abolished in His flesh the enmity. The reason He came as a man was so that He could take that Law that was imposed on humanity unto Himself and as the perfect Man satisfy all of its requirements. Having satisfied its requirements, it makes no further claim on humanity, at all. THAT'S FREEDOM.

This morning I woke up early, I turned the TV on, I'm listening to Chris Christopherson, explained his relationship – did you know that man was a Rhodes scholar? He's smart. He was a poet. Brilliant. He wrote this song that Janis Joplin took, and in the worst voice you could possibly ever hear – [laughter] – screamed into the microphone for a billion dollars – freedom is another word for nothing left to lose.

Guys, that's our condition in Christ. Truth is where you find it. Okay? It was a miserable performance, but it spoke truth. As believers, we have nothing to lose, nothing we can give and add to what Christ has already done. That's what freedom is. The world knows that. They just don't know how to get it. We do. We accept it by grace. There is not one thing you can add to what Christ has already done. So we, of all people on earth, have freedom. We're free. We're free to spend our life in service of others. We're free to spend our years pursuing the Gospel, with people who really don't want to hear it. We're very fortunate to be on site when one of those souls is claimed by the Spirit of God. God privileges us

by letting us be there when that happens. That's what our life is all about. That's why you go to Cambodia. That's why you go to Bangkok. You want to be on site when that happens. What a thrill it must be to be on site when that happens, half way around the world. In a camp, with a little one. In a nursing home with one who is just two steps away from meeting the Lord himself. You know. That's what life is about. It's a search and find mission. We want to be there when the Holy Spirit finds one of Christ's own who is still lost and gathers him together and brings him to that one baptism where they're joined to us. Then we can celebrate together. Isn't that a gorgeous picture? A simple but gorgeous picture. It's a shame it's lost to so many. They are occupied with their work in getting to the site. That's not the point. The point is the privilege of being there by the Spirit as He does His work of drawing that lost one in. We can be so busy building our own trophy of having gotten there that we miss the event. We don't want that to happen. We don't want that to happen, ever. Whether it happens here or wherever. In abolishing in his flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments contained in the ordinances that, "that" – purpose clause, "that" introduces purpose, for this purpose:

that in Himself He might make the two – [bingo, Israel and Gentile, Jew and Gentile] – into one new man.

He didn't join us to Israel. Neither did He take Israel and adopt Israel into the Gentile church. He took both Israel and the Gentile over here. And of them, He made one new man.

Thus establishing peace.

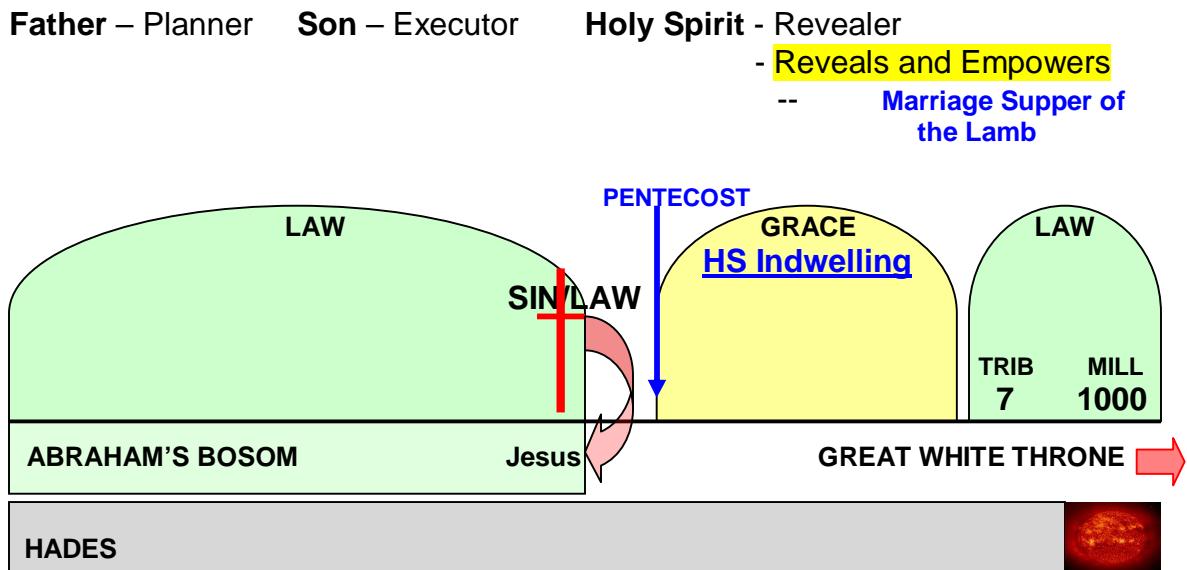
Because in that one new man there's no animosity between God toward the man, nor is there any animosity between the men in that body or the women in that body. He made a new man. That's new creation. That's the new creation life that we have beginning with Pentecost and moving to where we are today. We're the creations. Make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace.

And, that He might reconcile them – [bring them together] – both in one body – [that's the Church] – to God through the cross.

Okay? So, the one body that He put together is one that came through the cross. Now, you remember we've talked a lot about this. That when Christ died on the cross, went into the grave, He went into the grave to announce Himself to all the

redeemed of the ages past. From Adam to the cross. And there He announced victory. The victory over death. The victory over sin. The victory over Satan.

[Depiction on the Board].



And, He gathered them together to Himself. Okay? The thief on the cross. He took the thief on the cross – he's one of the latest arrivals – and He took them to Himself, led them – captivity – to Himself in His resurrection. And, in that resurrection many were seen on earth. Okay? During the period of time immediately following His resurrection. They were seen by people and recognized as such, and He kept them gathered to Himself until the moment of His ascension which occurred ten days before Pentecost. Day forty. And on day forty, He took all those that were gathered together – and that's the gathering of the people who were invited to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It's not a gathering of the Bride. It's the gathering of the guests. And He took the guests with him, and in His ascension, they all rose in one company and were transported to heaven where the Marriage Supper is taking place. In the process, He returns at the Rapture of the Church at the end of this Age, and He comes back for the Bride. Now the guests are already there, and He comes back and gets the Bride and takes her to that happy celebration in the heavenlies – the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. When this occurs – the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is going on up here – it's heck to pay on earth, because the Tribulation has begun. And the judgment of the earth for its disobedience and rejection of Him is what takes place during that seven year period that follows the Rapture of the Church and the signing of the peace treaty. The Rapture of the Church doesn't

trigger the seven years. The Rapture of the Church is a marker. What triggers the seven years is the treaty that's signed, and that's a little internal little thing, and we'll discuss that when we get to Revelation one day. That will be – well we've got Titus; and Galatians; and 1st and 2nd Timothy – a couple of things.

Joe Morris. A couple years!

Conrad Bowman. A couple or three years. Alright. So, we've got some enduring to do here. Putting up with me and Joe and Phil for two or three years while we get there. But eventually it will happen. Any questions on this so far?

Gentleman. [Question. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. No. I believe what was seen were people that were known to people who were living at that particular time. You know. And, Christ took them on to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Along with – you know, there was a huge company of them.

Gentleman. [Inaudible. Questions & Comments regarding Jesus taking the people out of Abraham's bosom, and after His and their resurrection, taking them to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as guests of the Groom].

Conrad Bowman. And we'll get back in the Gospels and we'll pick that up there. And by the way, if any of you are interested in the study of the Gospels, there's a book by J.G. Bellett. Late 1800's. Called, *The Evangelist*. *The Evangelist*. Its practically new. [Laughter]. *The Evangelist*. You will be blessed by looking it over. Marvelous commentary. Relaxed. Easy to read, on Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You will fall in love with that. If you can't find him, get Arno Gaebelein. Arno C. Gaebelein.

Gentleman. [Inaudible. Comment. Something about Jacob wanting his bones buried in Israel].

Conrad Bowman. Where your bones came to rest was a big deal. And the reason for it is coming right there. You know. I just – I know when we get into this stuff sometimes – Phil, Joe and I – I guess we are all subject to tunnel vision. We get focused on something like this and you can just get buried in it. You see the plan of God intensifying and coming together across centuries. You know. And a lot of times we don't communicate the reason we are so intensely interested in this. And you think we've lost our minds, because all at once we got buried in bones.

But, this all comes together. This all comes together. You know. I was evaluated by a Jewish psychologist for the Company Cutler was using in view of promotion into management. It took three days to evaluate me. What an interesting time that was. Several years later ...

Lady. Did you analyze him at the same time?

Conrad Bowman. Well, he did remind me a couple of times in the course of our conversation, "you know, I am the doctor!" [Laughter]. It was interesting, we were comparing notes on some things. But in his analysis, which a manager shared with me later, he said, Conrad has a well defined matrix against which he tests everything. Here it is. And, if it fits the matrix, it's Okay. But, if it doesn't fit the matrix, he'll discard it until he gets through working on it. I thanked him for that later. That was a rare compliment. He didn't intend it that way. It had limited value as a manager, but, so what? So, is there a cost to this thing? It can be. It can be. It's very interesting. Life is a hoot, isn't it, the way God brings us along, brings us through things and then brings us where we are today. And all the time He's unfolding Himself in this one long continuous story, that just adds to our understanding of who He is and our understanding of who we are. And it's a marvelous story. I invite you to get on board, at any time you want to, and there are some interesting things that pop out of it.

Okay. So,

He reconciled them both into one body to God through the cross.
By means of the cross put to death the enmity.

So the enmity, which was the Law of Ordinances was kind of stopped. He didn't kill the Law. He didn't kill the Law. He died to the Law. It's just like a highway patrolman, chasing a car, and the car hits a post. Hits a tree, and the driver is killed. The patrolman is not going to go up to the driver's side and say, pardon me sir, before the ambulance gets here, I need to write you a ticket. That's pointless. The guy is dead. He can't pay a ticket. You can't take him to jail. He's dead. He died to the law that said, "Don't Speed." It killed him. That's the only price that can be paid. Well, that's what Christ did to the Law. He did it for the whole Law. Every whit of it. So there is nothing left of the Law to be satisfied. There is only the life of the man who satisfied it. He is a man. That's why as a man He ascended. It wasn't in His Spirit form as the Son of God, it was the Only Begotten Son of God. The man, Christ Jesus, who ascended. It's the man who sits

on the throne in heaven. It's the man to whom you are joined. We're compatible with that. It's the man who reigns forever, and who has been glorified, which is why in the New Testament in Paul's epistles, he keeps speaking of our glorification. The glory we share with Christ. It's because Christ is a man, the perfect man. And, we've been joined to him. When He laid aside his deity – the Doctrine of Kenosis – it was a forever laying aside. He didn't pick it up and then ascend to the Father, as the Son of God. He ascended to the Father as the Only Begotten Son of God – the man Christ Jesus. He laid it aside for you FOREVER. And nowhere in Scripture does it ever say, He lays aside His humanity and picks up His deity again. He was never less than deity, but He laid aside all His prerogatives as deity to take on human form and the limitations that we have, and in that state He depended entirely upon the Spirit of God from the Father of God to fill His life and instruct Him every step of the way. He didn't know you because of His omniscience. He knew you because of His intimacy with the Spirit of the Father, who knows all things. And as a man, He depended upon that Spirit. No wonder He can ask you to do some of the most outlandish things you could possibly dream of, and expect you to believe that they could be done. Because that's what He did. That's what He did. When He prayed, "Father let this cup pass from Me. If there is any other way to do it, let's do it another way." That's the cry of His humanity. "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours." Can't each one of us, in the times of our testing, pray that same prayer. Yes. Yes. We pray that our intimacy with the Father through the Spirit based on the blood of Christ on the cross will give us the confidence to do the same. Tempted in every way, as we? Absolutely. Absolutely. Is He temptable? Yes. Did he have the capacity to fail? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. And He expects us to walk in the light as He is in the light. Look at 1st John.

Now, let's look at some of the things Christ asks us to do, and asks us to say, and asks us to accept. And you understand, that He is doing it from His own experience as a man, having laid aside His prerogatives as deity. Was he not deity? He absolutely was deity. But He acted in every case based on His humanity, and His intimacy with the Father and with the Spirit. He came, in verse 17 (chapter 2):

He came and preached, announced peace to you who were far away – [Gentiles] – and peace to those who were near [as His ministry to the Jews].

That last, peace to those who were near, was virtually His entire ministry during the Gospels. Okay? He didn't preach to the Gentile Church during the Gospels.

He came to announce Himself as Messiah to Israel. And he let the Gentiles look at that and listen to that.

For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you were no longer strangers and aliens [not with one another, and not with God], but you are fellow citizens with the saints [that's the Old Testament saints] and are of God's household [that's the current circumstance]. Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself, being the cornerstone to whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

So it's not talking about the current Temple. It's talking about a separate holy Temple set apart to God in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. So that's a spiritual Temple, not the one that has been practiced and revered in the Old Testament and in Jerusalem at that particular time.

Ephesians chapter 3.

For this reason, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.

This is a long statement now he goes here.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Gentleman. Who are the apostles and prophets he's referring to?

Conrad Bowman. Well the apostles and prophets in verse 20. Some would say the apostles and prophets are Old Testament apostles and prophets. Some will say New Testament apostles and prophets. I think it's inclusive of both. I do believe it's inclusive of both. And, the reason I believe that – you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints, and of God's household. Your having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. There's no question but what the Old Testament apostles, or the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament apostles, and the New Testament prophets – the ones who are announcing the Word before they had the written Word – are laying the foundation for a complete work of Christ and the beginning of the new creation man. Now, that new creation, as Paul is going to

go into from chapter 3 into chapter 4, was certainly a mystery to the Old Testament's, so they could not have known about the Church being formed. That requires New Testament apostles and prophets to complete that. So I view this thing, my image for that is like a cake. And the layers were built in the Old Testament, they were cooked in the Old Testament and laid down. But there's no icing on it, there's no dressing on it. That waited until the New Testament. That waited until the apostles to Israel, which would have been James and the whole company, with the exclusion of Paul. And they would have laid down in the finishing aspects of it as they sent those messages out to Israel scattered.

And then Paul comes along and he dresses that whole thing. And he lays it down, what the new creation man is all about. What was hidden in the past is now revealed. And the full nature of that thing is right there. Yes sir?

Gentleman. [Inaudible. Question].

Conrad Bowman. The prophets of the Old Testament saw their Kinsman Redeemer coming, as the Messiah of Israel, not to redeem the Church, the *Ekklesia*, but to redeem Israel. And Israel in grace, then would turn and accept the Gentiles that would come and accept the God of Israel. That's what they saw. They didn't see one New Man. That was the mystery. The mystery was that everything they had lived on the basis of supported by the Law was gone. When Christ satisfied that, He satisfied it totally. Okay?

Now, the one New Man aspect of chapter 2 in this letter opens up a whole new world to them. A whole new world. See, you have to remember, that the whole basis of the practice of the Law was to cover their sins. And it was over, and over, and over, and over. And they were ruled over spiritually by a High Priest who alone had access to a Holy of Holies. And now comes on Christ in His death. The implication of the veil split in the Holy of Holies having sunlight hit that thing for the first time, and access by everybody. Law.

Now, that's why I am saying. It's like a two layered cake. The Kinsman Redeemer came, and they could see that, they could see the promises, and all the promises were there. But then what happened right after that, is, wait a minute. The promises also included national restoration. They didn't see that. That didn't happen.

I've been on an exchange on a Christ Watch forum all week with a guy who sounded Jewish, and as it turned out he claims agnosticism, but actually he's an

atheist. I'm covering the same ground, about was God fair in terms of what He did and what he does for Israel today, etc., etc. A long argument with a guy who's at the bottom of the pit trying to make this argument. And he fails to see that that whole system has been satisfied, and it's just not there anymore. It's just not there.

Phil, you had another comment.

Phil Richman. Something the order of things – apostles and prophets, not prophets and apostles. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. And Gaebelein is one of my favorites.

Joe Morris. To compliment that further. Ryrie says the same or similar thing to that. He says Christ is the cornerstone, the apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation and each Christian is a stone in the building. Is that a good thing or not?

Conrad Bowman. That's a good thing. That's a good thing. You know. There's that New Creation belief. You couldn't have any other stones in the building until that cornerstone is laid down. So, until Christ Himself became the chief cornerstone, you couldn't have one other stone laid on it. You know. So the entire work and everything, the whole building has to move on this side. You know. And I realize it's risky to allow those Old Testament prophets – allow Phil – its risky to allow those Old Testament prophets a place at the end of the pew.

Phil Richman. Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. I understand that. I understand that. Because it was hidden in the past. When you look at this thing and the revelation of it and everything – and the reason I do that is because as we get into Ephesians and we start talking about when did the Father, when did the Father have this all in mind? And that's what we covered last week in closing was, this is in accordance with verse 11 of chapter 3. This whole thing was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord from before the foundation of the world, is when He started that. So from the beginning, from prior to, He had this whole thing in mind, and the whole plan of time and space and history is rolling up to the very moment of that upper room at Pentecost – a hundred and twenty Galileans – when this thing started being revealed with the ministry of the Spirit shrilling a hundred Galileans. There's the one baptism. Okay? And that's that

one baptism that we participate in as He draws us together in Him. So, I come to Him here, and the Spirit takes me to the Upper Room. And puts me into Christ in the one baptism with a hundred and twenty Galileans. And now with all those Jewish friends of mine in the Church, and then He takes me to before the foundation of the world where the whole plan was put in motion. It was always so. So, from before the foundation He has it in mind. In the Upper Room He brings it to past. In my life He brings me face to face with the reality of it so I can understand it, and come to grips with that Gospel. That's the election of God, in my life, when He takes me, in my hard-headness, and brings me face to face with the saving Christ. And then looks forward to rewarding me after I'm through with this bag of bones. At the Rapture of the Church, He comes and gets me and takes me to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Now, when I think of that, I cannot separate myself from the revelation of God in the past. Not just through the Law and Israel, but from what He did in Adam. So, from Adam to the Law, He's got the prophets at work shaping the life of man and keeping the concept of a righteous holy God in front of all mankind for all eternity in the past. I understand the risk of declaring that the apostles and prophets of the Old Testament are part of this, because that was not the case. But all the prophets of the past, all the apostles, the ones sent with the message in the past, which were holy angels in the Old Testament. And then the apostles of the New Testament who were the active agents of revelation for this.

Gentleman. Conrad?

Conrad Bowman. Yes sir?

Gentleman. I think that apostles and prophets included both old and new. One of the reasons I would include them in the old self, is that I keep thinking about the sacrificial system – the Levitical sacrificial system – that told us that sin had to be atoned for, and it took a blood sacrifice to do that. And for hundreds of years that was drilled into the minds of men, at least the Jewish community. And so the prophets, in perpetuating and teaching that, taught that there was sin, and that there was atonement needed for that sin, and without that, the final blood sacrifice of Jesus, which ended it all, was really not a bad meaning

Conrad Bowman. Thank you. Ray?

Ray Johnson. Let me make one step out of that.

Conrad Bowman. Alright.

Ray Johnson. The prophets were not perpetuators of the Levitical offering. The prophets in all the messages you can go to, are not telling the people the Law, the Law, the Law. The prophets are telling the people, the Lord God, the Lord God, the Lord God. You're missing it, you're missing it, you're missing it. The whole time. Everyone of them ... [inaudible] ... what's important, is not the man, but the message. Okay? The prophets in the Old Testament messages still went through in this Age because the prophets' message is not, "Come to the Law." It is "Follow the Lord." Okay? That prophets' message is still good even in the New Testament Church. Okay? The prophecies are what carries forward, not the prophets.

Conrad Bowman. And it was the priest. It was the priest who advocated the Law, and the prophets who advocated the life.

[Class comments back and forth. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Let me get to Carol first, and I come right to you.

Carol Johnson. If you will recall two weeks ago when you drew this line of, you know ... [inaudible]. And if Abraham believed God and it was attributed to him as righteousness. [Long stretch – inaudible]. And therefore, Abraham and all of these people who knew God and trusted God in faith, maybe going through it a while, but trusting God for their faith, I believe, you know, are included in the apostles and prophets, and I'm not going to in anyway ...

Conrad Bowman. Alright. Here is – Phil. Phil the concern you expressed is now coming through. [Laughter]. I'm going to come back to that in just a second.

We arrived on the very grounds – we were trying to build a fence around it and I appreciate that. Gary?

Gentleman. Maybe kind of tying into what Carol just said. I noticed the wording in chapter 3, verse 5 ... [inaudible]. "Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men." He did not use the words, "prophets *per se*, but in a larger sense he is referring to things that could be foundational but where he really speaks about prophets and apostles ... [inaudible].

Carol Johnson. But what was not revealed was that which was included to the Gentiles.

Conrad Bowman. No. It's not just that it was included to the Gentiles. Included to the Gentiles is a very small, small point. It was the New Creation [man] that was hidden in the past. It's the one New Man. It wasn't the inclusion of the Gentiles. That's where we get in trouble. Because that joins the Gentiles to a Jewish organization that is on-going. What the whole point of Paul is, is the one New Creation, the one New Man, and Christ is the chief cornerstone, not of the old building he's been working on for a long time, but a brand new spiritual building that He started at Pentecost. Okay?

Now, the definition in verse 5 – "it's now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit," – is not the means by which He revealed them, it's the place where the holy apostles and prophets were found. They were on the ground of peace by means of the Spirit, or in the Spirit still, right there. And it makes the distinction between apostles and prophets in the past, and apostles and prophets today to whom these things were revealed. Because the sons of men included all those in the past, including apostles and prophets. I'm not switching positions to get Phil back as a friend. [Laughter]. Though Phil will interpret it that way and remind me of it this week sometime I'm sure.

[More class banter back and forth].

The study in Hebrews we did will take us over that same ground. Now, let me – is there another hand?

Lady. Gnosis and epignosis. Explain. Gnosis is what they knew. What the Old Testament people knew. And epignosis is what we ... [inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's it. See, it could never become to them more than gnosis.

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's good. I'm going to claim that as my own. [Laughter].

Lady. That's all they knew. The Old Testament is all they knew. And they experienced everything they knew of what God had revealed to them. Now we have a new thing. Now we get to experience it all.

[More class banter back and forth].

Alright.

For this reason, I Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you – [and then maybe you have, and then maybe you haven't] – that by revelation that was made known to me the mystery as I wrote before in brief and by referring to this when you can really read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it's now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. 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.

But that Body – you need to draw a line from verse 6 down to "one New Man" of verse 15 of the previous chapter. You don't want to lose sight of that. That the one Body into which they have been joined fellow heirs with Jews and what-have-you, is not the one new body of the Old Testament, but the one New Man of the new, which started at Pentecost, in order that – and to bring to light to me,

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.

So, His power dictated the grace which determined Paul's understanding of this.

To me, the very least of all saints, ...

[TAPE ENDED. This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].