Ephesians 2:20-3:5

Ephesians 2:20 – “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,”

> **Ephesians 2:20**
> having been built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
> **N-GMP**
> **N-GMS**

1. “Cornerstone”
   a. **Akrogoniaiou** – literally means the tip of the angle. It means “in the corner”. It means at the extreme angle or corner.
   b. It covered the right angle joining two walls
   c. Often the royal name could be found inscribed on this stone

Ephesians 2:21 – “in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

> **Ephesians 2:21**
> in whom the whole building being fitted together is increasing to a temple
> **N-AMS**

1. **Synarmologoumene** – the verb “joined together”
   d. Meaning “fit together” or “compact”
   e. From:
      i. **Syn** – “joined closely with”
ii. Harmos – “reason”, “a joint”, “properly, interconnected”, “fit together to efficiently and effectively function”, “hinged together”, “fittingly framed together into a harmonious, synergistic whole.”

f. Also used in Ephesians 4:16 – “from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

g. It is the detailed process of masonry that fits the stones together. In masonry construction it meant the whole elaborate process of fitting stones together:
   i. Cutting stone blocks
   ii. Rubbing the surfaces
   iii. Testing the fittings
   iv. Preparation of the dowels and dowel holes
   v. Fitting the dowels into the stone with molten lead.

2. “whole building” is on Christ, the Cornerstone, not individual stones.
   a. Since the Greek says “pasa oikodome” or “whole building” the commentators indicate the article “the” is missing which makes the phrase actually say (as would be obvious) “whole building” which would mean the progress is still occurring in Paul’s day (and, yet in ours) so this means “all building that is being done”

3. “is increasing” – auxei – “grows”, “rises”, “increases”
   a. The present tense of this verb again indicates the process is continuing.
   b. The use of this verb which means “grows” indicates organic, natural growth as out of a seed.

4. “a temple” – naon – means the inner shrine or the Most Holy Place
   a. This is not the word hieron which would include the all the precincts surrounding the holy place shrine.
   b. Again, there were not church buildings or shrines for Christians in the first 300 years. This is talking about people coming to the faith and being built together in God’s spiritual kingdom on earth independent of buildings, location, borders, languages, culture, etc.

Ephesians 2:22 – “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

1. “in him” or “in whom” connects 2:22 with 2:21
2. “also you” or “you too” connects with 2:13
3. “being built together” – *sunoikodomeisthe* – is in the present tense which emphasizes a continuation of building.

4. The purpose of the continuation of the process of “being built together” is to become “a habitation” (*katoiketerion*) for God. This word *katoiketerion* is only used here and in Revelation 18:2 – “And he called out with a mighty voice, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.’ ”

---

**Ephesians 3:1** – “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles”

1. “For this reason” – *toutou charin* – begins a discourse or resumes the prayer that is quickly interrupted (3:1-13 when Paul begins to describe his own ministry and personal conditions as a Roman “prisoner of Christ”), but resumed in 3:14 where *toutou charin* is repeated to regain the direction.
a) Actually, the verb that goes with the subject “I, Paul,...” is not found until 3:14 when he says, “I bow my knee before the Father...”
b) Paul does not consider himself a victim, but sees his oppression as part of his ministry in the kosmos.
c) Paul is a champion for the Gentiles. He was arrested because of his association with the Gentiles, particularly Trophimus of Ephesus in Acts 21:21, 28.

Ephesians 3:2 – “assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you,”

1. “God’s grace that was given to me for you” is a reference to Paul being called and equipped as an apostle.
   a) Romans 12:3 – “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you...”
   b) 1 Peter 4:10 – “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”
   c) Ephesians 4:7 – “Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
2. “Administration” – oikonomian –
   a) Oikonomian refers to “stewardship” or “a task”. It usually refers to the management of household affairs or the oversight by a steward of an administration. A classic example is Joseph as a steward over all the affairs of Potiphar’s household.
   b) Colossians 1:25 – “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.”
   c) Some say oikonomian here means the “strategy that is implemented” to fulfill this stewardship or task.
**Ephesians 3:3** – “how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ὧν (conjunction)</td>
<td>κατὰ (preposition)</td>
<td>by revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐγνώρισθέν (verb)</td>
<td>μοι (object)</td>
<td>to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τὸ (article)</td>
<td>μυστήριον (noun)</td>
<td>the mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καθὼς (adverb)</td>
<td>προεγραμμένον (adjective)</td>
<td>just as I have written before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. “Mystery” – *mysterion* – “something hidden,” “a mystery”. This refers to information that is only accessible to those who have undergone initiation. It is a word used of ancient fraternities.
2. “made known” – *egnoriste* – means “make known,” “declare,” “discover”. Here it is “made known” by way of direct revelation or spiritual enlightenment to an apostle.
3. “revelation” – *apokalypsin* – “an unveiling,” “uncovering,” “revealing”. This refers to something that was previously unknown because it was covered or concealed, but now it is revealed or made known.
4. “I have written briefly” likely refers to the previous words in this letter.

**Ephesians 3:4** – “When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἐν (preposition)</td>
<td>ὀλίγον (adjective)</td>
<td>brief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Read this and understand the mystery. As the Ephesians read the words of this letter explaining Paul’s message and mission they will gain the insight he has been given to this mystery.
   a. NOTE: God revealed it to the Apostles; the Apostles writing reveals it to the Ephesians in 60 AD (and, likewise, to us today.)
b. It was given to Paul for us to understand

2. “Understand” – *noesai* – means to receive into the mind (nous) and to perceive. This is clearly implying intellectual processing and evaluation of the material presented.

3. “Insight” – *synesis* – is the result of revelation comprehended because of the Holy Spirit’s presence.

4. “Mystery of Christ”

   a. Colossians 1:27 – “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
      i. In Colossians Paul identifies this “mystery” as Christ being present in the believer today which guarantees the believer being in the presence of the glory of God in the future.

   b. Ephesians 3:6 – “This mystery is that the Gentiles are:
      i. fellow heirs,
      ii. members of the same body, and
      iii. partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

**Ephesians 3:5** – “which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

1. OT prophets did not understand because it was not revealed to them.

   a. Although the Gentiles are consistently mentioned as being involved, it was not clear how or to what extent:
      i. Genesis 12:3 – “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
      ii. Isaiah 56:3 – “Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, ‘The Lord will surely separate me from his people’
      iii. Isaiah 11:10 – “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.”
      iv. Isaiah 49:6 – “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”
      v. Isaiah 42:1 – Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
    he will bring forth justice to the nations."
2. It can be found in the OT, but it was not at the forefront of Jewish theology, that the Old
Covenant would be replaced by a better covenant:
   a. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 –
      i. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among
         your own brothers. You must listen to him.”
      ii. “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I
          will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I
          command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak
          in my name, I myself will require it of him.”
   iii. Note the religious leaders asked John the Baptist if he was this prophet, Philip told Nathaniel they had found this prophet and John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was this prophet:
         said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’
      2. John 1:45 – “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have
         found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote,
         Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
      3. Luke 7:19 – “calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the
         Lord, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for
         another?’”
   b. Jeremiah 31:31 – “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will
      make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah”
3. “apostles…prophets” here is clearly the New Testament prophets because it has just
   referred to the OT prophets not having it revealed to them.
4. Prophets of the OT longed to understand these undisclosed revelations:
   a. 1 Peter 1:10-12 – “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about
      the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what
      person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the
      sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they
      were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been
      announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy
      Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”
   b. Matthew 13:17 (Luke 10:24) – “For truly, I say to you, many prophets and
      righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear
      what you hear, and did not hear it.”

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.”
Ephesians 3:7 -“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.”

Ephesians 3:8 -“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,”
Ephesians 3:9 -“and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,”

Ephesians 3:10 -“so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 3:11 -“This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,”
Ephesians 3:12 -“in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.”

Ephesians 3:13 -“So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.”