Ephesians 3:14-21

1. 3:14-19 is one long sentence of Paul’s habitual prayer for the Gentiles.
   a. 3:14-19 provides the contents of Paul’s prayer for the Gentiles.
   b. Paul praying for the Gentiles is as much a part of his service and apostleship as preaching to the Gentiles. Here Paul reports the content of his prayers in his service to the Gentiles.
   c. The essentials of this prayer have already been mentioned and developed in the first two chapters, mainly 1:15-19.
   d. 3:14-15 – introduce the prayer; address God as “Father” since every family in heaven and on earth derives its name from him.
   e. 3:16-19 – collects the content of Paul’s habitual intercession for the Gentiles that accompanies his habitual preaching/teaching to the Gentiles. There are two central themes mentioned as Paul’s focus of intercession for the Gentiles:
      i. 3:16-17 – inner strength through the Holy Spirit
         1. To be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in their inner being
         2. Which results in Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith
      ii. 3:17-19 – A prayer that the Gentiles would have knowledge of:
         1. The four dimensions
         2. Love of Christ
      iii. 3:19 – Concluding request which is the ultimate result of the first two requests being achieved: that they might be filled up to all the fullness of God.

2. 3:20-21 is a two verse sentence that is a doxology used at the conclusion of Paul’s Prayer.
   a. Doxologies –
      i. Doxologies are short statements of praise to God.
      ii. Doxologies are concluding formulas to:
         1. Prayers
         2. Hymns
         3. Sections of Paul’s teaching in his Epistles
      iii. Doxologies are made of three short parts:
         1. Identity of the person being praised (“Father”)
         2. The statement or word of praise (“glory”)
         3. Conclusion of a temporal description or the statement of the time limit ascribed to the word of praise, which is usually stated in the form of an eternity formula (“for ever and ever”)

Ephesians 3:14 – “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,”
1. “For this reason” was already started by Paul in 3:1 where he attempted to begin this prayer for the Gentiles, but he diverted immediately to:
   a. Explain his ministry to the Gentiles and
   b. Explain his insight into their place in God’s plan known as the mystery of God now revealed.

b. 3:14 completes the sentence Paul began in 3:1

c. The details Paul inserted between 3:2-13 make this prayer more insightful

d. “For this reason” originally used in 3:1 was pointing back to:
   i. 2:19-22 – where the Gentiles had become part of the spiritual temple God is constructing where he will dwell by his Spirit
   ii. 2:1-10 – where God’s work of salvation for the Gentiles was explained to the Gentile readers.
      1. This work brought people out of both the Jews and the Gentiles into a new group, a new man, a new humanity, a new community the church.
   iii. 1:15-23 – Paul’s opening prayer from 1:15-23 is developed and built on in 3:14-19 after many of the details are developed in chapter 2 and 3.

e. Clearly God’s eternal purpose in Christ is ultimately connected and accomplished by the creating and assembling of this new people, the believers in Jesus Christ.

2. “bow my knee”
   a. Bowing in prayer was not unknown (Luke 22:41; Acts 21:5; 1 Kings 8:24; Ezra 9:5), but normal Jewish prayer and first century Christian prayer was to stand (Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11)

b. In this universal collection of peoples into the new man, the church, Paul may be reaching for Isaiah’s reference to universal homage to the universal King, the Messiah.
   i. Isaiah 45:23 – “By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’”
   ii. Also, Romans 14:11 – “for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”
   iii. Philippians 2:10 – “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,”

3. “Father” – in Paul’s Jewish and Gentile culture the title and position of “Father” included:
   a. Intimacy
   b. Dignity
   c. Authority
   d. The father worked for the good of the family
   e. The father ruled the family unit

b. Paul is approaching this “Father” on behalf of the family and Paul intends to be heard since it was the Father who sent Paul

c. “Father” has already been used in 1:2; 1:3; 1:17; 2:18; and will be used again in 4:6; 5:20; 6:23

d. This “Father” is the ruler of the universe and king of the world. He is more than “daddy”, but the universal king of whom every believer in Jesus Christ is a member of his royal family. Correct interaction with him includes paying homage as well as being an intimate family member.
Ephesians 3:15 – “from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,”

15 ἐκ τοῦ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν πανταξιόν καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὄνομάζεται, from whom every family in [the] heavens and on earth is named

Ephesians 3:16 – “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,”

16 ἵνα δῷ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, δυνάμει, κράταρον, that He might give you according to the riches of the glory of Him with power to be strengthened

Ephesians 3:17 – “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,”

17 κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν ἀγάπῃ [for] to dwell - Christ through - faith in the hearts of you in love

Ephesians 3:18 – “may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,”

4492 [e] 2532 [e] 2311 [e] errizōmenoi kai thesethelēzōmenoi, being rooted and being founded

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Ephesians 3:19 – “and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:20 – “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.”

Ephesians 3:21 – “to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”
21 to Him [be] the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.