

benefit of this reign of Christ is that Christ's power and knowledge are available to the believer to aid his or her growth."<sup>18</sup>

Participating in the fullness of God requires one to be a part of the Messiah's Body. The fullness of Yeshua is intended to be represented in the world by those who know Him, being a conduit of His grace (Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11). This fullness to be something realized in the lives of His people today who are empowered to fulfill His tasks in the world, as opposed to being something ethereal and intangible. I. Howard Marshall observes, "However the difficult language be understood, it enhances the omnipotent position and influence of Christ through whom God's power is at work in the lives of believers."<sup>19</sup> This power is something that is to enable God's people to fulfill His mandate of being a holy and separated people.

## **Ephesians 2:18**

### **"The Son, the Spirit, and Father"**

**"for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."**

In writing to the Believers in Asia Minor, Paul stresses how Jewish and non-Jewish Believers have been joined together as "one new man" (Ephesians 2:15) or "one new humanity" (NRSV) by the sacrificial work of Yeshua the Messiah.<sup>20</sup> He says that this was with the intention, that "[He] might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR [Isaiah 57:19; 52:7; Zechariah 9:10]" (Ephesians 2:16-17). Paul associates Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah as participating together in the restoration of Israel's Kingdom realm.

Paul's priority on all people believing in Yeshua the Messiah is very clear. He says, "through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). Believers in Yeshua have *prosaḡōgē* (προσᾶγωγή), to the Father, via the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. In a classical sense, *prosaḡōgē* was "approach, access to a person, esp. to a king's presence" (LS), but it can also notably be "a bringing to or up to, a bringing up" (LS).<sup>21</sup> Some have thought that the kind of "access" to which Paul is referring would be similar to how the Torah instructs people to bring specific offerings before the Lord (i.e., Leviticus 1:3; 3:3; 4:14) in either entreating His mercy, or perhaps also in thanksgiving. Hebrews 4:16 tells us, "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." And, the eschatological expectation regarding the restoration of Israel includes the nations swarming to God's Temple and knowing Him (Isaiah 56:6-8; Zechariah 8:20-23; cf. 1 Kings 8:41-43).

What need not escape readers of Ephesians 2:18 is that what is intended is that "for through Him," *hoti di' autou* (ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ), "we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father." The first personal pronoun is intended to be Yeshua or Jesus, noted by a number of paraphrased versions: "Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us" (NLT); "We both have access to the Father through Christ by the one Spirit" (Common English Bible). It is unavoidable that within Ephesians 2:18, spiritual and supernatural activity is present which involves the Son, the Spirit, and the Father.

<sup>18</sup> Witherington, *Colossians-Philemon-Ephesians*, 246.

<sup>19</sup> I. Howard Marshall, "Ephesians," in James D.G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp 1385-1393., 1387.

<sup>20</sup> This entry has been adapted from the author's commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic*.

<sup>21</sup> LS, 685.

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Pauline Epistles and Hebrews

While today's Messianic people may have various critiques or criticisms of traditional Christian Trinitarianism, the presence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working together on behalf of the redeemed—a tri-unity, or perhaps better a unity in plurality—is something that theologians and examiners have deduced from the Biblical text.

### Ephesians 3:9-11

#### “The Administration of the Mystery”

“and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the [assembly] to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”

Paul was not only to proclaim Yeshua the Messiah to the nations,<sup>22</sup> but he was also called “to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things” (Ephesians 3:9, NIV), likely a parallel of Colossians 1:26.<sup>23</sup> Some have suggested that the cosmic language of the mystery of Messiah being kept hidden is Paul borrowing from the (proto-)Gnostics of Asia Minor, specifically in an attempt to emphasize Yeshua as the true Mystery. But the key more than anything else, as Foulkes explains, is “this was His purpose from the beginning of the creation, though in His wisdom He chose to reveal it to man in stages.”<sup>24</sup> Lincoln further remarks, “in the context of the ensuing mention of principalities and authorities, it functions as a reminder that God is able, because he is creator, to carry through his purpose of salvation as it affects all creation, including the rebellious powers.”<sup>25</sup> If indeed any kind of Gnostic language has been adapted by Paul, it is doubtless under the guise of him insisting that “the administration of the mystery” will be used by God to judge their sin.

Far be it from Paul wishing that only initiates into his gospel be among those who know Yeshua, *the mystery*, the administration given to him by the Lord laid forth a mission for His people. He says, “This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the [assembly] to the rulers and authorities in the heavens” (Ephesians 3:10, HCSB). Witherington indicates, “The overcoming of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles betokens the overcoming of such human and cosmic barriers in this universe. Christ will reconcile and pacify all. The existence of the [ekklēsia] heralds the victory of Christ over the cosmic powers.”<sup>26</sup>

The wisdom that God's people are to possess is His wisdom, described as being *polupoikilos* (πολυποίκιλος), which “**pert. to being diversified, (very) many-sided**” (BDAG).<sup>27</sup> Among all the things the *ekklēsia* has been called to be, a significant part of it is to be the vehicle by which God's great and awesome wisdom is known in the universe. The existence of the *ekklēsia* with Jewish and non-Jewish Believers as equals in the Messiah is not only a display of God's wisdom—in revealing the ultimate consequence of salvation having come. The *ekklēsia* is also to give testimony of God's wisdom—a wisdom that that will draw others to Yeshua and provide answers when people question their existence in the universe. It is a great and deep wisdom drawn from the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:14) and which comes from the same power that

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<sup>22</sup> This entry has been adapted from the author's commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic*.

<sup>23</sup> “[T]hat is, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints” (Colossians 1:26).

<sup>24</sup> Foulkes, 98.

<sup>25</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 185.

<sup>26</sup> Witherington, *Colossians-Philemon-Ephesians*, 267.

<sup>27</sup> BDAG, 847.