

**Study of Ephesians – Ephesians 3:1-13**  
**Bellevue Church of Christ – Spring & Summer 2013**

**I. Mystery (1-6)**

Apostles

Full representatives of Christ...Included the 12 (w Matthias Acts 1:15-26) as well as Paul

Prophets

Those with the gift of prophecy... spoke the word of Christ...

- Acts 13:1
- 1 Cor 12:28
- Eph 4:11

Summarizes Eph 2:11-22

**II. Minister (7-13)**

Apostle to the Gentiles

- Acts 9:15; 26:13-18
- Rom. 11:13; 15:15-16
- Gal 2:7
- 1 Tim. 2:7

Paul's Task

"The Church becomes a mirror through which the bright ones of heaven see the glory of God."  
 - J. Agar Beet (1890)

Manifold

-πολυποικίλος (polypoikilos)

-(very) many sided

Refers back to 2:11-22, and possibly all of chapter 2. Note how Paul interrupts himself, and does not pick back up again until v. 14

<sup>1</sup>For this reason I, Paul, a **prisoner** for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

Acts 21:20-36

<sup>2</sup>assuming that you have heard of the **stewardship** of God's **grace** that was given to me for you,

Gal 1:11-24

<sup>3</sup>how the **mystery** was made known to me by **revelation**, as I have written briefly.

Eph 1:9

<sup>4</sup>When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the **mystery** of Christ,

<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>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. *Not saving grace, but grace to perform his assigned task from God*

<sup>8</sup>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,

1Co 15:9

<sup>9</sup>and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the **mystery hidden for ages** in God who created all things,

<sup>10</sup>so that **through the church** the **manifold wisdom of God** might now be made known to the **rulers and authorities in the heavenly places**.

<sup>11</sup>This was according to the **eternal purpose** that he has realized in **Christ Jesus our Lord**,

<sup>12</sup>in whom we have **boldness** and **access with confidence** through our faith in him.

Heb 4:14-16

<sup>13</sup>So I ask you **not to lose heart** over **what I am suffering** for you, which is your glory.

See v. 1 - "prisoner"

Stewardship

οἰκονομία - oikonomia

-A task, a job, implying need for administration

-God equipped Paul for his special task

-v. 7; Col 1:23-25

Mystery (mystērion)

As used in the NT does not mean "enigma," but refers to God's plan of salvation, which was formerly kept secret but is now revealed in Christ.

- Ro 16:25
- 1Co 4:1
- Eph 1:9; 3:3-9; 5:32; 6:19
- Col 1:26; 2:2

Gentiles are...

All three terms begin with the prefix syn- ("with" or "co")

- (1) **Fellow** heirs  
 -Rom 8:17  
 -Gal 3:29; 4:7
- (2) **Members** of the same body  
 -Rom 12:4-5  
 -1Co 12:12-14
- (3) **Partakers** of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel  
 -Gen 12:3  
 -Gal 3:7-9

Hidden for Ages

- Rom 16:25
- 1Co 2:7

God's Eternal Purpose

- Eph 1:3-5; 2:10
- Act 2:23
- Rom 3:21
- 1Co 2:7
- 1Pe 1:18-21

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**Prisoner on Behalf of Gentiles**

Acts 21:20–36 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law,<sup>21</sup> and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.<sup>22</sup> What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.<sup>23</sup> Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;<sup>24</sup> take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.<sup>25</sup> But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.”<sup>26</sup> Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

<sup>27</sup> When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,<sup>28</sup> crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”<sup>29</sup> For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.<sup>30</sup> Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.<sup>31</sup> And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.<sup>32</sup> He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.<sup>33</sup> Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.<sup>34</sup> Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.<sup>35</sup> And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd,<sup>36</sup> for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”

**Stewardship of God’s Grace**

**3873** οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*), ας (*as*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ Str 3622; TDNT 5.151—**1.** LN 42.25 **task**, a job, implying need for administration (1Co 9:17); **2.** LN 30.68 **plan**, involving a set of arrangements (1Ti 1:4); **3.** LN 46.1 **manage a household**, administration of a household (Lk 16:2–4)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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**3622. οἰκονομία *oikonomia***; from 3621; *stewardship, administration*:—administration(3), management(3), stewardship(3).<sup>2</sup>

Colossians 1:23–25 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. <sup>24</sup> 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, <sup>25</sup> 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,

**Mystery**

In Paul's writings, the word *mystērion* refers to God's plan of salvation, which was formerly kept secret but is now revealed in Christ. This plan includes the unification of Jews and Gentiles into one new people of God (3:3, 5–6, 9).<sup>3</sup>

**3696 μυστήριον (*mystērion*)**, ου (*ou*), τό (*to*): n.neu.; ≡ DBLAram 10661; Str 3466; TDNT 4.802—LN 28.77 **a secret**, a mystery (Mk 4:11; Ro 11:25; 16:25; 1Co 2:1; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 6:19; Col 1:26; 2:2; 2Th 2:7; 1Ti 3:9; Rev 17:5)<sup>4</sup>

**3466. μυστήριον *mustērion***; from μύστης *mustēs* (*one initiated*); from 3453; *a mystery or secret doctrine*:—mysteries(5), mystery(22).<sup>5</sup>

Romans 16:25 (ESV)

<sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

1 Corinthians 4:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Ephesians 1:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

Ephesians 3:3–9 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Barry, J. D., Grigoni, M. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Eph 1:9). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

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prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,

Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)

<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 6:19 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,

Colossians 1:26 (ESV)

<sup>26</sup> the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

Colossians 2:2 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,

**(v. 6)** Three terms are used, each prefixed by *syn*- ("with" or "co"; NIV, "together").<sup>6</sup>

***Fellow Heirs***

**5169** συγκληρονόμος (*sygklēronomos*), ου (*ou*), ὁ (*ho*): n.masc. [BAGD adj.]; ≡ Str 4789; TDNT 3.767—LN 57.134 **fellow receiver**, co-inheritor (Ro 8:17; Eph 3:6; Heb 11:9; 1Pe 3:7+)<sup>7</sup>

Romans 8:17 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Galatians 3:29 (ESV)

<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 4:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

***Members of the...***

**5362** σύσσωμος (*syssōmos*), ον (*on*): adj.; ≡ Str 4954; TDNT 7.1024—LN 11.9 pertaining to **being a co-member of a body** (Eph 3:6+)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Wood, A. S. (1981). Ephesians. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (46). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>7</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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Romans 12:4–5 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1 Corinthians 12:12–14 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

***Partakers of the...***

**5212** συμμετοχος (*symmetochos*), ου (*ou*), ό (*ho*): n.masc. [BAGD adj.]; ≡ Str 4830; TDNT 2.830—LN 57.8 **sharer**, partner (Eph 3:6; 5:7+)<sup>9</sup>

Genesis 12:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> 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.”

Galatians 3:7–9 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” <sup>9</sup> So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

***Hidden for Ages***

Romans 16:25 (ESV)

<sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

1 Corinthians 2:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

**Revelation**

Galatians 1:11–24 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. <sup>12</sup> For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. <sup>14</sup> And I was advancing in Judaism beyond

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<sup>8</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>9</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. <sup>15</sup> But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, <sup>16</sup> was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. <sup>20</sup> (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) <sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. <sup>23</sup> They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they glorified God because of me.

**Written Briefly (Mystery)**

Ephesians 1:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

**Apostles**

Acts 1:15–26 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, <sup>16</sup> "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." <sup>18</sup> (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup> "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, " 'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and " 'Let another take his office.' <sup>21</sup> So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

**Prophets**

Acts 13:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

1 Corinthians 12:28 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

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Ephesians 3:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> 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.

Ephesians 4:11 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

**Apostle to the Gentiles**

Acts 9:15 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

Acts 26:13–18 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup> And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup> And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, <sup>17</sup> delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

Romans 11:13 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry

Romans 15:15–16 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God <sup>16</sup> to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 2:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised

1 Timothy 2:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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**Least of All...**

1 Corinthians 15:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

**Why Paul Was Given the Task**

“The Church becomes a mirror through which the bright ones of heaven see the glory of God. And in order to show them this glory, God committed the gospel to Paul” (Beet\*, p. 319).<sup>10</sup>

\*Beet, J. Agar. *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890.<sup>11</sup>

**Manifold - 4497** πολυποίκιλος (*polypoikilos*), ov (on): adj.; ≡ Str 4182; TDNT 6.485—LN 58.46  
**manifold**, (very) many sided (Eph 3:10+)<sup>12</sup>

**God’s Eternal Purpose**

Ephesians 1:3–5 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Acts 2:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Romans 3:21 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—

1 Corinthians 2:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

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<sup>10</sup> Wood, A. S. (1981). Ephesians. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (47–48). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>11</sup> Wood, A. S. (1981). Ephesians. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (20). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>12</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.



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1 Peter 1:18–21 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

**Boldness and Confidence**

Hebrews 4:14–16 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.