

Declaring the Mystery
A PAULINE JOB DESCRIPTION

1

Purposeful Suffering

Main Point: In his ministry, Paul reveals and declares the age-old mystery so that people might reach maturity in Christ.

- **Purposeful Suffering**
 - Joy through *purposeful* suffering
 - “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions?” | A Few Options
 - o Christ’s atoning, reconciling work was incomplete
 - o Genitive games
 - “for the sake of Christ”
 - “resembling that of Christ”

2

Purposeful Suffering Cont.

- o Corporate Suffering
 - In proclaiming the Gospel *after* the ascension of Jesus, the Church, not the embodied Son of God, plays the role of the suffering servant in a Christ-hating world while awaiting final redemption. “Lacking” doesn’t mean a deficiency—it means something that is not yet complete.
- o Paul as Christ’s Mission-Completer
 - Christ was the prophesied light to the nations, but Paul *took* the light to the nations. In their respective ministries, both endured suffering, but for different ends—one in order to achieve reconciliation, one to proclaim it to the nations. Christ and Paul form an *achievement-publication package* that brings to fulfillment “the mystery hidden for ages.”
- o Acts 9:15-16
 - “Christ began to fulfill the Isaianic prophecy to Israel, and then Paul completed the fulfillment in his mission to the Gentiles.” – Beale

3

A Faithful Servant

- A stewardship of “completing” (Gr. *plēroō*) the word of God
 - o The mystery, hidden and now revealed to the Gentiles
 - Christ *in* you—the hope of glory
- Warn and teach → present
- Paul’s toil

Living Out the Mystery

- The fullness of God in you
- Maturing vs. Aging
