

## Rebellious Believers: Children of Disobedience are Implacable, Eph 2:2; Demonic Authority; Dispensation of the Mystery of the Church, Eph 3:6-10

32. Rebellious believers are thus characterized as children of “disobedience,” the noun **ἀπειθεία, *apeitheia***. It can be translated by several words: disobedience, willful unbelief, obstinacy, or mulish.
33. An obstinate person “perversely adheres to an opinion, purpose, or course in spite of reason, arguments, or persuasion; an unreasonable persistence. Synonym: mulish: implies thoroughly unreasonable obstinacy.”<sup>1</sup>
34. Children of disobedience and obstinacy are implacable with regard to the gospel if an unbeliever, and to doctrine if a believer. Paul refers to the unbeliever’s condition in:

**2 Corinthians 4:3** - Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - in whose case the god of this world [ **Lucifer, see also John 12:31** ] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

35. The writer of Hebrews addresses the problem of the disobedient believer in:

**Hebrews 12:15** - See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it may be defiled.

36. Let’s now merge up our first two passages in Ephesians that address the subject of Lucifer, his demonic organization, and its influence over the minds of men:

**Ephesians 1:21** - (Jesus Christ is) over and above all demon general officers, commissioned officers, special forces, fifth columns, and the rank and file, not only during the Church Age but also in the Tribulation yet to come.

**v. 22** - And God put all things in subordination under Jesus Christ’s feet, and God gave Christ as head above all over the universal church.

**Ephesians 2:1** - You were dead in your trespasses and sins,

**v. 2** - in which your former behavior patterns were according to the present circumstance of this world, according to the highest ruler of the authority of the global atmosphere, the disposition which now is operational in the children of disobedience and obstinacy.

<sup>1</sup> *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “obstinate.”

37. The next passage in Ephesians that address the demonic order of authority is found in chapter 3, verse 10. The context of this verse has to do with Paul's revelation of what he refers to in verse 4 as the "mystery of Christ." He elaborates beginning in:

**Ephesians 3:6** - To be specific, the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

**Ephesians 3:7** - of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

**v. 8** - To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

**v. 9** - and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

**v. 10** - so that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the rulers [ ἄρχή, *archē* ] and the authorities [ ἐξουσία, *exousia* ] in the heavenly places.

1. In this passage Paul reveals details about the mystery dispensation of the Church and how members of it are involved in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict.
2. The verse begins with the aorist active infinitive of the verb φωτίζω, *phōtizō*, translated "and to bring to light," or "to make known."
3. That which is made known is the subject of dispensations with emphasis on the mystery dispensation of the Church.
4. The aorist tense is constative and pulls all of Paul's teachings on the subject into one entirety. The active voice indicates that Paul produces the action of "bringing to light" information about the mystery of the Church. The infinitive indicates Paul's purpose is to enlighten.
5. That which he desires to bring to light is said in the NASB to be an "administration." The word here is οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, correctly translated: "dispensation": the administration of a business, an estate, or a household. Its function is to bring order out of chaos and activate a plan to avoid confusion.
6. *Oikonomia* is also translated "administration" in the NIV and "plan" in the NET Bible.
7. When human history is viewed as a household over which God has authority, then His control of history is designed to maintain order by means of a plan.
8. When the whole of Scripture is considered, it becomes obvious that the spiritual life required of an individual believer varies over time.
9. Theologically, human history must be viewed in two ways: (1) from the standpoint of the unbeliever and (2) from the standpoint of the believer.

