

## The Mystery

Because of being unable to "rightly divide" the prophecies, many Rabbis in Israel had to invent two Messiahs. It was beyond their comprehension that one Messiah could both suffer and reign. Human reason just couldn't imagine how one could possibly meet the requirements of Messiah. They could not separate the first and second coming of the Messiah; the first coming to suffer, the second to reign.

The same is true concerning this PRESENT AGE. God's present purpose as found in this dispensation, THE MYSTERY, is as unreasonable to modern day "Rabbis," as was the first and second coming of Christ to their ancient counterparts. The Mystery is not reasonable to the carnal mind and to those who have not bothered to rightly divide the Word. It is absolutely essential that the Word of God be divided aright if one is to see the Mystery. As long as Israel is robbed of her blessings and her hope by believers who transfer such things to the present age, the Word of Truth is dishonored, and the Holy Spirit is not at liberty to "enlighten" the eyes of their understanding (Eph. 1:18).

All too often believers rely on teachers for doctrine and thereby follow some man or denomination dedicated to defending certain positions or persuasions. Regrettably, when believers are approaching the knowledge of the truth of the mystery, in checking with their "leader" they are warned not to pursue this line of truth. Many who embrace the truths of The Mystery are called dangerous or cultish. Believers who blindly follow men or denominational traditions and who fail to personally check the Scriptures can be victims of the warning in Colossians 2:18 and "beguiled of his reward".

On the other hand, many sincere Bible believers who endeavor to rightly divide the Word of Truth have asked the question, "Just what exactly is the Mystery?" We are going to attempt to answer that question by giving an outline of the unique characteristics of the Mystery.

The characteristics that make the Church of the Mystery as a distinct and separate calling from any of God's other companies of redeemed are:

### THE MYSTERY WAS A SECRET

This out-calling of believers fulfills a secret purpose of God known only to Him (Eph. 3:11). It was not made known until Israel was officially and judicially set aside in unbelief at Acts 28;

"Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts 28:26-28)

This called-out group of believers make up a company of redeemed that is referred to as "the Church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

This secret was given EXCLUSIVELY to the Apostle Paul BY REVELATION" (Eph. 3:3).

## THE MYSTERY WAS A SPECIAL CALLING

The word "calling," is used to make known dispensational truth. The Bible reveals at least three callings."

- (1) The calling of Israel
- (2) The calling of the church before Acts 28
- (3) The calling of the Church of the Mystery.

Each calling differs in its Origin, Constitution and Sphere of blessing. The special calling of the Mystery is said to be the "HIGH CALLING OF GOD" (Phil. 3:14), and a "HOLY CALLING" (2 Tim.1:9), and we are to know "what is the HOPE OF HIS CALLING" (Eph.1:18).

## THE MYSTERY WAS "HID"

This was not only a secret, but also a well-kept secret - the depository was the Heart of God. This secret was "HID IN GOD" (Eph.3:9) from the beginning of the world." Notice that it was NOT HID IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES! It was "hid in God". The Mystery was hid from past ages and past generations "BUT NOW is made manifest to His saints"(Col.1:26). This eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11) was not known by "the fathers" or "the prophets." It was God's most sacred secret, and who could wrest a secret from Him until He was ready to make it known?

## THE MYSTERY WAS PLANNED "BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN" (2 Tim.1:9)

This present Church is the only company of believers that is said to have its origin "BEFORE THE FOUNDATION of the world" (Eph.1:4). The calling of the "kingdom" is related to a calling FROM THE FOUNDATION of the world" (Matt.25:34). The "ONE HOPE" (Eph.4:4) of the Church of the Mystery was promised "BEFORE the world began" (Titus 1:2).

## THE MYSTERY WAS REVEALED EXCLUSIVELY TO PAUL, THE PRISONER

The internal evidence in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy, and Philemon designate that they were the Apostle's writings while he was a "prisoner of Jesus Christ." Paul also states that he is a prisoner for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1). Paul refers to his prison ministry in:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. " (Eph. 3:1)

"I Therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, " (Eph.4:1)

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. " (Eph.6:19-20)

"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. " (Phil. 1:7)

"So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places," (Phil.1:13)

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:" (Phil.1:23)

"Withal proving also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds."" (Col.4:3)

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2Tim.1:8)

"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:" (2 Tim.1:16)

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. (2 Tim.2:8-9)

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. " (2 Tim.4:16-17)

"Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:" (Phile.1:9-10)

THE MYSTERY was revealed to Paul BY REVELATION" (Eph.3:3)

The revelation of The Mystery was associated with Paul the "prisoner" not Paul the FREE MAN. The body of Truth for the Church of the Mystery is contained in a FORM OF SOUND WORDS" (2 Tim.1:13), (i.e. the Prison Epistles).

THE MYSTERY WAS A NEW CREATION

The Church which is "His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" is a new creation called "One New Man" (Eph.2:15). This indicates that it like all of God's creation was indeed a CREATION not an evolved entity. The Church of the Mystery did not evolve from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, but rather it was a new creation, created when the "Hope of Israel" was put in abeyance in Acts 28:17-28. Eph.2:15 says . . . for to MAKE (create) in Himself of twain (i.e. Jew and Gentile) One New Man. so making peace." Notice it says "to make". The same expression is found in Gen. 1:26 when the Godhead said, "Let us MAKE man in Our image." Gen.1:27 explains in no uncertain terms that the word "make" of Verse 26 means to CREATE. Thus as Adam was created so also was the One New Man, the Church of this dispensation. The workmanship of Eph.2:10 that was "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" has reference to the new creation of the One New Man. This body of believers is therefore a company of redeemed that form a new creation not a group that is a result of "evolution."

THE MYSTERY WAS FOR THE GENTILES

Paul says in Acts 28:28 that salvation, which had been of the Jews, is "NOW sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Gentiles during God's dealings with Israel and until the casting aside of them had a DISPENSATIONAL DISADVANTAGE. Ephesians 2:12 says that at "that time ye (Gentiles) were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:". Indeed, back in the Acts, the Gentiles were saved because Israel had stumbled and were saved to provoke Israel, see Roms.11:11-28. But now, after Acts 28, in our passage Eph.2:13, this is changed by the coming in of a new dispensation. "BUT NOW in Christ Jesus ye (Gentiles) . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph.2:13). It was "for this cause" that Paul was a "prisoner of Jesus Christ for YOU GENTILES" (Eph.3:1). The ministry of the Word of God has been given to the Gentiles; that is all nations. Until the revelation of the Mystery the oracles of God were committed to Israel (Rom.3:3). The "restoration of Israel" is now no longer possible as long as God's secret purpose is operative and as long as the Gentiles NOW have the DISPENSATIONAL ADVANTAGE.

#### THE MYSTERY WAS NOT RELATED TO ANY "COVENANTS" OR "PROMISES"

This sacred secret was promised "in Christ before the world began" (Titus 1:2). The "covenants" and the "promises" belonged to "the fathers of Israel (Rom. 9:3-5), not to the Church of the One Body. The promises made to the "fathers" were "FROM THE FOUNDATION of the world " and the "covenants" were made "SINCE the world began." This company of called-out believers was called with a "holy calling, not according to our works, but accordingly His Own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN"\* (2 Tim.1:9), thereby eliminating the Church of the One Body from any connection with "covenants and promises" that were made in time (i.e. since the world began).

Romans 15:8 says that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews) for the purpose of CONFIRMING THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS, not the Church of the One Body. The "covenants" were with Israel.

The Lord promised a NEW COVENANT with the "house of ISRAEL and JUDAH" (Jer.31:31-36), not the Church of the One Body. The Mystery was "hid in God" (Eph.3:9), it was not in a veiled language in the Old Testament, and the Mystery has no connection with any "covenants" either "old" or "new". God's present purpose was planned before the world began, thus eliminating the need for any ties with "promises or covenants."

#### THE MYSTERY HAS A UNIQUE SPHERE OF BLESSING

"The company of the One Body is ASCENDED, ACCEPTED. BLESSED, and SEATED together "IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus".

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Eph.2:6)

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph.1:6)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" (Eph.1:3)

No other company of God's redeemed is said to enjoy this place of blessing. The sphere of blessing is in GOD'S PRESENCE; in front of His face, where Christ sits; FAR ABOVE ALL (Eph.1:21). This is up above the firmament of Gen.1:6 where the heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Isa.40:22), up to the heaven of Gen.1:1. It is there, FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS (Eph.4:10) that the Church of the One Body enjoys its unique sphere of blessing.

Israel "according to the flesh" (Rom.9:3) had for its hope the EARTH as a place of blessing. Matthew 5:5 states "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the EARTH." This sphere of blessing is associated with the "Kingdom" and an earthly city, EARTHLY JERUSALEM. This is the sphere of blessing that listeners to the Sermon on the Mount were told to pray for - "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done ON EARTH, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

The faithful from the call of Abraham to the close of Acts had for its hope a HEAVENLY sphere, not "far above all heavens," but one that was associated with a HEAVENLY CITY (Heb.11:10). This city is referred to in Galatians 4:26 as "Jerusalem which is ABOVE" in Hebrews 12:22 it is referred to as "the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM." The "overcomers" of the book of Revelation are also associated with this

city called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev.21:9). This heavenly sphere of blessing is viewed as coming "DOWN FROM GOD out of heaven." In other words it is seen descending after the new heavens and new earth appear (Rev.21:1-2, 9-10). Those believers who made or will make up that company of redeemed will enjoy their place of blessing in New Jerusalem, not in "HEAVENLY PLACES, FAR ABOVE ALL, WHERE CHRIST SITS."

#### THE MYSTERY HAS ITS OWN FIGURE

The Church of the One Body is figured as ONE NEW MAN (Eph. 2:15).

The Church of the Acts economy and the Great Tribulation is likened to a VIRGINS and has it's hope in the Bride the Lamb's wife; namely the New Jerusalem.

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. " (2 Cor.11:2)

"And 1 John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. " (Rev. 21:2).

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, " (Rev. 21: 9-10)

Israel according to the flesh was a called out nation from among other nations, and is referred to as Jehovah's WIFE that is now cast off, but will be reunited in the Millennium. (Hos. 2: 19-20; 3:3-5).

Each of the three called out companies is associated with a peculiar destiny; a specific sphere of blessing.

Israel =WIFE	the faithful remnant =VIRGINS	believers today =ONE NEW MAN
the earth	the New Jerusalem (BRIDE)	Far Above All Heavens

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