

LET'S FOCUS ON THE MYSTERY

Today, we will examine a term The Mystery

which God inspired and the Apostle Paul wrote down as scripture.

As we read through the passage --- notice several points about The Mystery:

1) God gave it for the Gentiles (that is, all the nations --- as opposed to just Israel).

Eph 3:1-7 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2) It has to do with the dispensation of the grace of God.

2 If ye have heard of **the dispensation of the grace of God**

3) It was specifically given to one man, Paul.

which is given me to you-ward:

4) God issued it to Paul by special revelation.

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me

5) God called it The Mystery which basically means The Secret.

the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

6) They need to read it and understand Paul's knowledge in it.

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery** of Christ)

7) No other person knew it in Times Past.

5 Which in other ages was **not made known** unto the sons of men,

8) Through Paul, it is now disclosed.

as it is now revealed

9) God's Spirit showed the apostles and prophets (living then) that it was authentic.

unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

10) It was not that Gentiles could be saved ---

that provision was made in the prophetic program.

But it was that the Gentiles would be on equal ground with Israel ---

no longer '2nd class' citizens.

Here it is in a nutshell:

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs,
and **of the same body**,
and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7 Whereof I (**Paul**) was made a minister,
according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me
by the effectual working of his power.

The 'gospel' that Paul was made a minister of

according to God's gift of grace

was actually named *the gospel of the grace of God*:

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

To the saints at Rome, it was called *the gospel of Christ*.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

To the Roman saints, it was also referred to as *the gospel of God*

Rom 15:15-16 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, (**Here again, Paul's authority in this message is restated.**)

16 That I (**Paul**) should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

In Times Past, Israel had ample opportunity to receive their Christ.

But instead of believing on Him, they rejected

and God would provoke them to jealousy

by offering salvation directly to the Gentiles ---

not through Israel --- but apart from them:

Acts 13:43-47 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you (**Jews**): but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

From the time Paul was saved, in Acts 9, the Jews hounded him to shut him up.

They continued in their rebellion all the way through the end of Acts chapter 28

when Paul pronounced a marked judgment against them:

Acts 28:28-29 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. (Israel had salvation all along but didn't want it God's way so God offered it to people who would be glad and happy to have it, in a fresh, new way.)

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

Paul explained Israel's situation in his epistle to the Romans:

Rom 11:11-15 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: Israel stumbled at the cross but they didn't fall there they recovered for another year (Luke 13:6-9, Luke 23:34) ---- but then they did fall (in Acts 7) when they blasphemed the Holy Spirit and stoned Stephen to death. So God turned away from them: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

When Israel fell, they didn't fall flat down right then - instead, they gradually faded out:

12 Now if the **fall** of them be the riches of the world, and the **diminishing** of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13 For I (**Paul**) speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh (**that's the Jews**), and might save some of them.

15 For if the **casting away** of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

The Mystery was a body of knowledge ---- a 'truth packet'

.... that God specially committed to Paul

.... that God now wants everyone to know.

Israel, as a nation, has been set aside for awhile

they're 'on the back burner' while God is doing something else:

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of **this mystery**, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; (**here is more information about the mystery:**) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Let's go back to Eph 3 where Paul continues to write about The Mystery:

Eph 3:8-12 Unto me (**Paul**), who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And **to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery**,

which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,
who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent (**with the intention**) that now (**it was never this way before**)
unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (**that's the angels**)
might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

(**God's 'multi-folded' wisdom layers of wisdom ...**

that were never before exposed to man nor angels)

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
(**that has to do with BOTH of God's programs**

to repopulate the earth with Israel -- His prophecy plan

and to replenish the heavens with us the Body of Christ -- His mystery plan.)

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

In the previous chapter 2, we see Paul's Mystery Revelation expounded again.

Our status as Gentiles --- in Time Past --- was a hopeless one:

Eph 2:11-22 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (But now, there's been a change in our condition. This is part of the mystery information. These facts we'll read are new it had never been this way before:)

13 **But now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off (that was 'us' Gentiles) are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Israel was who God was close to:

Deut 4:7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

14 For he is our peace (Gentiles, who were God's enemies (Rom 5:10) can now have peace with Him, being justified freely by God's grace (Rom 5:1)),

who hath made both one (Jew and Gentile are no longer separate identities), and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; (In Time Past, God had a 'hedge' of distinction and protection around Israel. It's gone now.)

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; (Christ took the law away) for to make in himself of twain one new man, (Jew and Gentile are merged into one now)

so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body ('of the same body' is what we read in Eph 3:6)

by the cross, (that's how it was accomplished Christ's blood paid the way) having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off (that was 'us Gentiles'), and to them that were nigh. (that was 'them Jews')

18 For through him we **both** have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Direct access to God was a priviledge only given to Israel --- not us Gentiles)

19 **Now** therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, ('fellowheirs' we read in Eph 3:6) and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, (like Eph 3:5 said) Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Now we are His temple - 1 Cor 6:19)

The Mystery includes information of what the cross-work of Christ accomplished.

Some facts of His death and resurrection were prophesied:

1 Cor 15:3,4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

But what all God did by the cross was not made known until Paul.

Remember the 'manifold wisdom' of God's eternal purpose in Christ in Eph 3:10

here it is again:

1 Cor 2:6-8 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: (mature, complete in the scriptures)

yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God **in a mystery**,

even the hidden wisdom,

which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The devils didn't know achievements God would effect by the cross --- otherwise, they would have never done it!

Col 2:10-15 And ye are complete in him,

which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism,

wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (He fulfilled and kept the law Himself and then died to pay sins' wages for us.)

15 And **having spoiled principalities and powers**,

he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Yes, it is the message of the mystery of the cross that embarrasses the devil.

The very thing he thought would foil God's plan (crucifying the Christ)

was the very thing that God used to un-do him!

1 Cor 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

We can review similar facts about The Mystery in Paul's epistle to the Colossians:

Col 1:25-28 Whereof I (Paul) am made a minister,
according to the dispensation of God (In Time Past, God dispensed the law to
the nation Israel But now, God is dispensing grace to the Gentiles.)
which is given to me for you, (God gave it to Paul to give to the nations)
to fulfil the word of God;
(Paul's mystery revelation COMPLETED God's entire program plan ---
Through the Prophecy anybody could read and know God's plan for Earth.

But now, through The Mystery

God revealed that He will take a body of believers UP to Heaven for eternity
to fill up the heavenly places that were vacated by 1/3 of heaven's population of an-
gels.)

26 Even **the mystery** which hath been hid from ages and from generations,
but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known
what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;
which is Christ in **you (Gentiles)**, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that
we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (that is, with complete knowledge
.... because we now have the complete revelation --- the mystery!)

The restocking of Heaven with the Body of Christ was part of The Mystery:

1 Cor 15:51,52 Behold, **I shew you a mystery**; We shall not all sleep, but we shall
all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall
sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Why will we be changed where will we go? God wants us to know!

He told us --- through Paul and we have the scripture written down to read about it.

1 Thess 4:13-17 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

We'll be with the Lord in the air (that's the heavens) and that's where we'll stay.

After all, that's where our blessings are:

Eph 1:3-11 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **hath** blessed us with all spiritual blessings **in heavenly places** in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory **of his grace**, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Remember

Rom 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.)

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches **of his grace**; (That's another 'mystery' benefit. Israel had to be water baptised for the remission of their sins (Mark 1:4, 16:16; Acts 2:38), and they have to wait until they get their New Testament in the earthly Kingdom (Acts 3:19-21).)

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 **Having made known unto us the mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (that's His eternal purpose in Christ, Eph 3:11)

10 That in **the dispensation of the fulness of times** (that's a dispensation that is future from the dispensation of grace in which we now live)

he might gather together in one all things in Christ,

both which are in heaven, (that's The Mystery program, where we'll be)

and which are on earth; (that's the Prophecy program, where redeemed, born-again Israel will be) even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, (Now we're fellowheirs, Eph 3:6)

being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Jew and Gentile becoming one body, one new man now called 'the church' ---

to be caught up into Heaven --- is the essence of The Mystery.

Eph 5:29-32 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is **a great mystery**: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Paul explained that aspect of The Mystery to the Corinthian saints:

1 Cor 12:12-14 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For **by one Spirit are we all baptized (that is, placed, by the Holy Spirit) into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles**, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Paul wanted the Colossians to have complete understanding of The Mystery:

Col 2:1-3 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches **of the full assurance of understanding,**

to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul's prayer request was that he would faithfully proclaim The Mystery:

Eph 6:18-20 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 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,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: **that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Col 4:2-4 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying 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:

4 **That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**

It is by The Mystery that we are established

so let's be like Paul --- **FAITHFUL TO TELL A SECRET:**

Rom 16:25-27 Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of **the mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 **But now** is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"

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The Magnified Word

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