



New Testament Mysteries

By Keith Greer

Often, words used in the Bible do not mean the same thing they do in our English language. For example, our dictionary defines the word “mystery” as “something that is not fully understood or that baffles or eludes the understanding.” As used in the New Testament, the word “mystery” is defined as: “Made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit; truth that has been revealed – previously hidden.” Let’s examine some New Testament “mysteries.”

The Mystery of Godliness. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.” {1 Timothy 3:16} Christ was once hidden to the minds of men. But now He has been revealed in the flesh; he was made right by the Spirit, seen by heavenly beings, preached to the Gentiles. Many in the world believed on His name, and after His resurrection, He was received back to heaven in glory! Once, men knew nothing of these matters; they were hidden from their eyes – now, their eyes are open.

The Mystery Kept Secret. “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith.” {Romans 16:25,26} The message of the saving gospel of Christ was once hidden from men. Yet, through the work of the Holy Spirit, that powerful life-saving message has now been revealed.

“But as it is written: eye has not seen, or ear heard, nor have entered into the hearts of men, the things God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them

to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." {1 Corinthians 2:9-13} There is no excuse for man's ignorance. Truth has been revealed, and man can choose his own course.

The Mystery of the Faith. "Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." {1 Timothy 3:9} We must cling to the revealed truth in which we believe. The scriptures tell us that faith is necessary. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." {Romans 10:17} The only way to have true Bible faith is to hear and obey God's revealed word – not the words of men. {John 6:63-68; Matthew 15:8,9}

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." {Hebrews 11:6} We must believe in God and trust Him totally. Without this type of faith, we cannot be saved.

"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." {James 2:24-26}

The Mystery Concerning Christ and the Church. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." {Ephesians 5:31,32} To many, the relationship between the Lord and His church is a mystery. The Scripture reveals that the church is the bride of Christ, and Christ is the head of the bride. When time is no more, Christ will deliver the church back to God. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power." {1 Corinthians 15:24} Christ loved His bride enough to die for her

(Acts 20:28). The grand design and plan for the Lord's church is no longer a mystery – it has been revealed in the sacred text. It is man's duty to search out and believe the revelation, and to give the church the honor, respect, and love that the Father and Son have for her.

The Mystery of Equality. "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." {Ephesians 3:3-6}

The Jews experienced great difficulty accepting the truth that, in God's eyes, they and the Gentiles were on equal footing. Jesus died for ALL men – not one select or special group. His death imploded the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles. "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." {Ephesians 2:14-16} Why should man be mystified by this great truth? God's eternal plan was to save all men through His Son. See Ephesians 3:10,11. When the mystery was revealed, the Jews, because of their prejudice, refused to accept the truth.

The Mystery of Lawlessness. "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders." {2 Thessalonians 2:7-9} The tricks of the evil one are no longer hidden. God revealed all. We, by opening and reading God's revealed word, can know Satan's aims, his wiles, and his intents.

“Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” {2 Corinthians 2:11} Satan uses every trick in his evil book to lure us away from Christ. His goal is the spiritual destruction of every soul he can win over to his cause.

“Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” {2 Corinthians 4:4}

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” {1 Peter 5:8,9} Yes, he is on the prowl, but you don’t have to fall into his trap!

God revealed many great “mysteries” in the New Testament. Dear reader, don’t remain in the proverbial dark. God has revealed His will and plans to His creation. It is up to us to determine what we will do with this vital information.