

Mystery If God Permits

Doctrine of the Mystery

I. Etymology:

1. The origin of this word refers to a person who was initiated into a Greek fraternity of the ancient world.
2. It is also derived from a Greek verb meaning to initiate, that is to instruct in the secret teachings of a fraternity.
3. Paul transferred this noun away from its reference to the secrets of ancient mystery cults, and uses it in a technical theological reference to indicate that the Church Age was totally unknown in Old Testament times, from Adam to Jesus Christ.
4. Those involved in this fraternity were known only to those initiated into the fraternity.
5. The word mystery refers to information hidden or not manifested before.
6. And very important to your understanding of this Greek word: the word mystery in the New Testament does not refer to teaching or doctrines that are to be withheld, kept a secret, but it refers to information, not previously revealed to man, but is now to be proclaimed to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. And the Bible is clear on who is appointed by God to proclaim these mysteries, every male with the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher.

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Stewards, here refers to those appointed to administer or teach the mysteries of God, that is, the Pastor-Teacher.

7. So, this New Testament word refers to revelation previously hidden, but one that is now proclaimed. It also refers to a revelation that contains a supernatural revelation.

II. The primary use of this Greek word in the New Testament epistles is referred to in the Church Age and Church-Age doctrines.

1. The mystery of the Church as the body of Christ. Of course, since the Church was a mystery (hidden) in all the Old Testament, it is not spoken of nor described. Since Jesus Christ was not yet identified, of course the Body of Christ would be a mystery throughout all the Old Testament. And therefore, the Church as the body of Christ would have been a complete hidden truth. It was hidden but always part of the Plan of God, (doctrine of Dispensations). The body of Christ is made up of all believers, Gentiles and Jews.

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

Ephesians 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;

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Ephesians 3:3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Ephesians 3:4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Ephesians 3:5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

Ephesians 3:6 to be specific, that 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. (the Holy Spirit)

Ephesians 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

Ephesians 3:9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all

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things; (the Church-Age has always been part of God's plan)

Ephesians 3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (Angels)

Ephesians 3:11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Ephesians 6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Colossians 4:3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

So far we have:

- (1) Simply the mystery, Ephesians 3:3
- (2) The mystery of Christ, Ephesians 3:4
- (3) The administration of the mystery, Ephesians 3:9
- (4) The mystery of the Gospel, Ephesians 4:3

Each of these are in reference to the Church as the body, the mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

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Ephesians. 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

Ephesians. 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

Ephesians. 5:30 because we are members of His body.

Ephesians. 5:31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh

Ephesians. 5:32 This mystery is great; (in knowing and understanding) **but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.**

A very important understanding is that a multitude of verses throughout the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ in the mystery. This is seen in Ephesians 5:31 of its fulfillment in

Genesis 2:24 for this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The Old Testament has always been proclaiming truth of the Messiah which is fully revealed in the New Testament in Jesus Christ. Study by Kit Sheehan in Judges where the as you study through

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Abraham > Jacob > Moses > Gideon > Kings

All are revealed in the person Jesus Christ. This is also seen in a study of Revelation in Revelation 17:7 the beast and the seven heads and 10 horns, and in the Old Testament in a study of Daniel.

2. The mystery of Christ in us – the hope (assurance) of Glory.

Colossians 1:26 the Word of God that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, (members of His body by Faith in Him)

Colossians 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

3. The mystery of God, even Christ.

Colossians 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Colossians 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

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1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

The presence of Jesus Christ in the dispensation of the Church has always been a part of God's plan.

4. The Mystery of how man is returned to Godliness in Christ.

1 Timothy 3:9 and 1 Timothy 3:16 declare more than just the gospel but of Godliness by faith in the Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not insincere, not prone to drink much wine, not greedy for money,

1 Timothy 3:9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

1 Timothy 3:16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Jesus the Christ Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

III. This mystery is now revealed.

Here is the full example of the use of the New Testament word mystery.

Roman 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the

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revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, (past dispensations)

Roman 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; (obedience that is faith)

Colossians 1:25-26 declares that the mystery is seen in the total declaration of Jesus Himself. The mystery is in Christ in you! It is not about Jew or Gentile but Christ in your being.

Colossians 1:25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

Colossians 1:26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, past dispensations but has now been manifested to His saints,

The declaration of the mystery in Ephesians is the declaration of the evangelic plan of God's universe of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan for the glory of His Son.

Ephesians 1:9 He (subject from verse 3 is God the Father) made known (revealed) to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind

intention which He purposed in Him that is in Christ.

Ephesians 3:3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Ephesians 3:4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Ephesians 3:5 which in other generations (dispensations) was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

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

Therefore, the primary function of the Pastor-Teacher is to teach all realms of this mystery doctrine.

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

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What is the point here? First, there is no excuse for the believer to be ignorant of the mystery doctrines of the church. Ignorance and arrogance are the two worst enemies of the believer which will cause the believer to make wrong assessment of his/her life and not have the priorities in life that touch into eternity. It is the Pastor-Teacher's job to uphold by his teaching the mystery doctrines of the Church.

1 Timothy 3:9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

This means the Pastor-Teacher is to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ all the mystery doctrines of the Church. Unfortunately, most pastors today like to teach something that is simple and that 'scratches the ears' of his assembly. Most prefer to preach on traditions and what the denomination believes rather than sound doctrine from his study of the Word of God.

- IV. Mystery is used by Paul to refer to the revelation of and teachings of the Church, which were hidden from ages past: all periods before the Church Age which began on the day of Pentecost.

The gospel is not part of this mystery for the gospel has been proclaimed throughout all history in every dispensation.

Some of these doctrines that were a mystery in the Old Testament include:

(1) Baptism of the Holy Spirit; which results in universal, permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, be it a Jew or Gentile, therefore

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(2) resulting in every believer being in an intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict and

(3) in Full Time Christian Service; and the grace recovery from sin, by faith into the Filling of the Holy Spirit;

(4) and universal priesthood—not a specialized priesthood as in the Age of Israel;

(5) Maturity by the study in the Word of God in Local Church through teaching by a Pastor-Teacher. Every believer will be part of the Body of Christ, becoming the bride of Christ (the wedding will be in heaven after the Judgment Seat of Christ). The Wedding and then the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be on earth in Jerusalem right after the 2nd Advent and right after the battle of Armageddon, the baptism of fire for all unbelieving Gentiles, the baptism of fire for all unbelieving Jews, the bounding of Satan and Jesus Christ establishing His Millennium Kingdom. There is an intimacy with God the Father in prayer and a unique set of rewards for the believers who glorify the Son of God, Jesus Christ, during his/her life on earth by living by faith in Holy Spirit.

V. Paul gives a severe warning to those who do not know the mystery as it relates to dispensations.

In other words, a warning is given to every believer for not growing in the teaching of the doctrine of the Bible and who does not grow in maturity of His Word. How do they not know the mystery? Because as in Hebrews 6:1, they do not **press on to maturity**.

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, (believers in the Church Age) to be uninformed

of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—(ignorant) that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

One of the most important results of Dispensationalism is the distinction between Israel and the Church and that the Church does not replace Israel. Therefore, God has a marvelous plan for Israel which includes the seven years of Tribulation. Then His return and sitting on the throne of David in the Millennial Kingdom. Ignorance of dispensations is ignorance of part of the mystery doctrine. The partial eclipse of Israel is seen in the mystery until the fulfillment of the Gentiles is in place of the Church Age.

We saw in Hebrews 6:1-3 about moving on in advanced doctrine and the problem of being ignorant of sound doctrine.

There are several warnings to not knowing important doctrines. As in Romans 2:4 not knowing about the *kindness* of God, not knowing about God's righteousness in Romans 10:3 and because of ignorance of knowing the Word of God reveals the failure to advancing in knowledge of the mystery. We should not be ignorant of the schemes of Satan, 2 Corinthians 2:11.

And of course not knowing and understanding the rapture of believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff.

- VI. Another warning to all believers is not to be ignorant or arrogant of your knowing of the mysteries. How does a believer head off ignorance or arrogance? By understanding Spiritual Love from the Holy Spirit gives knowledge of the mystery.

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1 Corinthians 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing I am an echoing sound!

Spiritual Love protects the believer from arrogance in life.

VII. A good place to see a non-doctrinal use of the word mysteries is in Paul's discussion of speaking in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14: 2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

He does not understand, and neither does anyone else. He jibbers a mystery.

VIII. The rapture is part of our mystery doctrine.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; I make known to you a mystery we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

Doctrine of Resurrection of every believer throughout the Church Age at the taking out of the Church or the Rapture.

Another part of mystery related to the Rapture is found in

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; (in the Church Age) only he who now restrains (restraining

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ministry of the Holy Spirit) **will do so until he is taken out of the way.**

And the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way with the removal of every believer of the Church Age in whom He Indwells. The real issue here is the *mystery of lawlessness*.

IX. Jesus Christ's use of the term 'mystery.'

In the Gospel accounts of the same teaching by Jesus Christ, Christ refers to the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; and Luke 8:10. There Jesus Christ explains to the disciples why He speaks in parables. Parables are not designed to make the message clear but just the opposite; to hide or conceal what is hidden while others in contrast are given the secret of the Kingdom of God. The inner secret revealed in this passage is that Jesus Christ Himself is identified with the Kingdom of God. A *secret* is being revealed to a specific number. Multitudes today do not know who Jesus is and who He is in regard to the Kingdom of God.

X. The Greek word mystery is used in four passages in Revelation.

Revelation 1:20, to the mystery of the Church in the new Age; Then in Revelation 10:7; 17:5, 7 where it refers to various mysteries of the Tribulation period, where the mystery is to be fulfilled.

XI. Understanding the mysteries of the Church Age absolutely requires the Filling of the Holy Spirit, the teaching ministry of Holy Spirit, the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

This is seen in a careful study of 1 Corinthians chapter 2. You have to be very careful in chapter 2. It begins in verses 1-5 speaking of the Gospel, which is not part of the mystery. The

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Gospel has always been revealed in the Old Testament. Verses 1-5, explain the gospel. But look closely at beginning of verse 7:

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

now look at verse 10

1 Corinthians 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

And the remainder of this chapter concentrates on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now verse 12

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, the Holy Spirit so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, (mysteries of the Church Age)

1 Corinthians 2:13 which things (mystery doctrine) we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words (so that we can understand them in our fleshly bodies from the Holy Spirit).

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man (this refers to unbelievers but includes every believer

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who is not in Filling of the Holy Spirit but in the flesh) **does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

Only by and in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit can they be understood.

1 Corinthians 2:15 But he who is spiritual (Filled by the power of the Holy Spirit, empowered by Holy Spirit) appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one

1 Corinthians 2:16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

This is from Isaiah 40:13 and is referring to the Holy Spirit who has been the subject all through this teaching.

So, it is imperative that one be a believer in Jesus Christ, therefore Indwelt by the Holy Spirit and then be in the Filling of the Holy Spirit or empowered by the Holy Spirit...by grace through faith. It is so important for every believer to know how to be Filled by the Holy Spirit by grace through faith just as he was saved eternally by grace through faith, so that he may grow by the mystery teachings of the Bible.