

WHAT IS....THE MYSTERY?

This question has been asked many times. The subject is new to so many people. I think it well to go over and over the material on it so that all may understand.

The mystery was a secret. The Greek word is MUSTERION, meaning a secret that is hid until a time comes to reveal it. There are several secrets mentioned in the Bible, such as; the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of godliness, the mystery of Christ, and others. The mystery that we are considering here is the one that Paul especially emphasizes in Ephesians and Colossians. If you read these two epistles carefully you will recognize my quotations from them even tho I do not mention chapter and verse each time.

This secret was given by a special dispensation of God to the apostle Paul. Paul in turn was to make it known to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. All this happens after Paul has completed his three missionary journeys and after his arrest in Jerusalem. It could not have been before, for at Jerusalem Paul declared that up to that time he had taught nothing beyond what was in the Law and the Prophets. What he had taught, then was no secret. But the mystery which was his theme later was one that had been hid from ages and generations and had been hid in God.

One phase of the mystery which had been hid was that God would some day deal directly with the Gentiles instead of thru Israel. From the time that Israel left Egypt until eight years after the death of the Lord it was impossible for a Gentile to be saved except by being circumcised and becoming a Jew. In Acts 10 Peter used the keys which had been given to him to unlock the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles. This happened at the home of Cornelius. None of the 12 had preached to Gentiles before

this, neither did they after this. Peter prepared the way for Paul who was the apostle to the Gentiles. However during the rest of the Acts period, the Gentile was a grafted in olive branch, a wild one. He received his blessing and position from the root which was the Jew. It was a time when the Jew was first. During this time a Gentile could be saved and belong to the church of God if he observed four things:

1. Abstain from meats offered to idols
2. Abstain from blood
3. Abstain from things strangled
4. Abstain from fornication.

These Gentiles could become the spiritual children of Abraham and partake of the promise. They were warned that they might be plucked out if they did not bear fruit.

But when the mystery was made known, the Jew was no longer first. The Gentile had no dependence on the Jew for any blessing or position. In the church which is the body of Christ, Jew and Gentile are equal. God is now building a temple. It is made of living stones. It grows. Jew and Gentile are both joint-heirs with Christ on an equal footing. There are no inequalities of gifts as in the Acts period.

Before the revelation of the mystery it was known that the Lord was seated with the Father in His throne, but it was not known that some day a body of believers would be blessed in that place. The hope of the church today is to be manifested with Him in Glory. Never before had man any expectation of future blessing anywhere but on the earth. No one in the Old Testament expected to go to heaven when they died. Those of the Acts period did expect to be caught up in the air to meet the Lord when he came, but they would come back to earth with Him immediately to be with Him in the setting up of the kingdom.

Another thing that had been kept secret was that the members of the

body would be sealed until the day of redemption (resurrection). This sealing is the witness of the Holy Spirit. This seal cannot be broken. This is all accomplished without any requirements such as church membership, ordinances, payment of dues, or any other thing man may think up to impose on one whom the truth has set free.

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HOPE

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL was to be resurrected and possess the land promised to their fathers. They had the ten commandments, diverse laws and ordinances, and circumcision. There is nothing in the Old Testament about men going to heaven after death.

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD was to be caught up, either dead or alive, into the air to meet and come back with the Lord when He comes to set up his kingdom on the earth. This church was made up of both Jew and Gentile with the Jew first. There were two faiths, and two gospels. The middle wall of partition was between. They were to observe water baptism and the Passover. They were still subject to the law, (except Gentiles as in article before).

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH WHICH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST is to have an earlier resurrection, to be caught up into the super-heavens and manifested with Him in Glory. This is His coronation where He is made King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This happens before either the hope of Israel or that of the church of God.

That leaves the nations which were before Abraham and all since Abraham which are not included in the three groups above to appear at the Great White Throne. There are then four future resurrections. In which will you appear? What is your hope?

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ATTEND BIBLE CLASS

Each Sunday afternoon I teach a

Bible class at my own home. This is 6 miles west of Warsaw on the Harrison Center road. Or it is 4 miles south of Atwood and 7 miles northeast of Mentone. The time is 2:30. You are welcome. The things you read in this little paper are the conclusions of hours of study and discussion in classes.

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MALEFACTOR OR THIEF?

Which was it, one of the malefactors or one of the thieves who received the promise of paradise on Calvary? This is the question I asked my radio audience Oct. 26th. I promised an answer in this paper. If you read the account carefully as made by Luke you will find that two malefactors were LED WITH HIM out to the place of execution. One reviled. The other rebuked the first. There is no word here about repentance. He must have known the Lord before this and something of the charges against Him, for he said that the Lord had done nothing for which he should suffer. That is some indication that he may have believed that this was the Christ some time before.

But when we read the account by Matthew, we read nothing about any malefactors or anybody else being led out with Him. But after they had hanged Him on the tree and had gambled for His garments, THEN WERE THERE TWO THIEVES CRUCIFIED WITH HIM. Both thieves reviled. There is not a word about either of the thieves repenting or believing.

Then we can answer the final question I asked over the air; How many were executed that day on Calvary? There were five; the Lord, two malefactors, and two thieves.

I have asked this question just to show how carelessly we read. We should be very careful that we read the Word just as it is, nothing added, nothing taken away. When we read traditions and peculiar beliefs into the Word, we get back only confusion. More questions will follow. Will be glad to have you write if you have any comments or any questions.

PARADISE - WHAT IS IT?

The first paradise mentioned was on the earth. Man lost it thru sin and disobedience.

It is a place where man and God can dwell together. It is a place, not a state of being. It is a place where the resurrected will live. Therefore it is future. It is the new earth spoken of in Revelation. Peter also spoke of the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The question will arise as to who will have a part in paradise.

Our minds immediately go back to Luke's gospel where the malefactor was promised a place with his Lord in paradise. He asked for a place in the kingdom, but instead of that request being granted, he was assured of paradise. Why?

His request concerning the kingdom could not be granted. He was a Gentile. Peter had not yet opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles. In such a case the malefactor could not have a resurrection early enough to get into the kingdom. As did Job, he must wait for the Great White Throne. This is after the heavens and earth pass away.

Paradise is not the millennium. It comes after the millennium. The rebuilt Jerusalem of the golden age or millennium was promised to the Jews. It is the theme of the prophets. But it is not paradise, it is the kingdom.

In paradise will be the New Jerusalem which will come down from heaven like a bride adorned for her husband. Here will be the tree of life again. There will be no more sea. Paradise will be a new heaven and earth with no remembrance of former things to mar the enjoyment of it. This is the hope of the church of God of the Acts period. It is essentially Jewish, altho Gentiles known as the spiritual seed of Abraham will be there. The gates will have the name of the 12 apostles on them. It is promised to the overcomers of Rev. 2 and 3.

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BREMEN MEETING

The Bremen class sponsored a special meeting at the town hall Sept. 27. They had as speaker, Otis Q. Sellers of Los Angeles, Claif. There was an interested audience of 50 or maybe more. The teacher of the Bremen class is Mr. A. O. Bowser.

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WARSAW CLASS

We have had some assure us that they would attend a class in Warsaw if we had one. However no place has been found available yet to hold it.

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THE GODHEAD

Many seem to be confused about the triune God. It is something difficult to explain. But God is manifest by the things He has made and maybe I can explain in a crude way something of the meaning of the trinity.

Water is a chemical combination of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen. The chemical formula is H₂O. It appears in three different states, solid, liquid and gas. The gas is steam, which is invisible. God in His essence is invisible. No man hath seen Him in that aspect at any time. He also appeared as a material being, the son of man. The apostles handled the Word of Truth. Water crystalized is solid. So here was God crystalized so that man might know Him. He could be perceived and felt by the senses of the creature. Water also is a liquid. Oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit poured out upon man. He is also God in another form. There is one God, but He can be spoken of as having three states or manifestations.

It is fitting that we should go to creation to find evidence of the creator. It is His handiwork. It is also true that the Creator must limit Himself if He is to reveal Himself to the creature.

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A QUESTION

Quite often a question comes up in the Bible classes which is a difficult one for me to answer. I will give you my opinion based upon what information I have from the Word. I say it is my opinion, for I find no direct information or statement about it.

The question is; What will be the destiny of all the Christian people today who do not accept the teaching of the Word concerning the body of Christ, who are looking for the rapture instead of the manifestation in Glory, who prefer to observe ordinances of another dispensation, and who look forward to being blessed in faithful Abraham instead of in Christ?

There is ample evidence that position and blessing are taken by faith. Heb. 11 has quite a bit on that question. If one deny the truth and refuse to take his place in the position offered, he will not have that position. That has been my conclusion. Since Israel has been set aside and the church of God discontinued until this dispensation is completed, there is no chance of one today having the hope of the kingdom or of the rapture, which is the hope of the church of God. So far as I can see the only thing left is to come up in the Great White Throne Judgment.

I find no reason for believing that all who are in that judgment are lost. Job and the malefactor are two at least that will be in it and we are not to believe they are going to be destroyed.

This will give you some idea of why I am so earnest in getting out the message to everybody about the MYSTERY and the HOPE. Paul was concerned about the same thing. Read his prayers in Eph. 1 and 3, Phil. 1 and Col. 1. -oOo-

RADIO BIBLE CLASS TRUTH FOR TODAY

I have now given 5 radio programs beginning Sept. 28th.

I am taking up Ephesians verse by verse. Next week begin with 1:9.

In two or three weeks those in Chicago, Toledo, Grand Rapids, and other places up to 150 or more miles away will be able to hear. Present information is that the power then will be 36,200 watts.

I am broadcasting over station WRSW (Warsaw, Ind) which uses FM only. The time is every Tuesday night at 7:15 CST.

I appreciate the letters and cards you have sent. If I do not reply to your communication, drop a card, for I intend to answer every one. If your copy is marked SAMPLE and you want it to come regular, send me a card.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
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Sec. 562, P.L.& R.