

The fellowship of the mystery

The mystery program revealed to Paul by the risen Christ

Romans 16:25, 1st Corinthians 2:7, Ephesians 3:8-9, and Colossians 1:26

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All scripture quotations are from the 1611 King James Bible

Introduction

The mystery program that was revealed to Apostle Paul by the risen Christ is found in 12 of Paul's 13 epistles, but it is probably best defined in the following four scriptures:

Romans 16:25-26, 1st Corinthians 2:7-8, Ephesians 3:8-9 & Colossians 1:26

What is the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest which is found in Romans 16:25-26?

What is the wisdom of God in a mystery that Paul revealed to the body of Christ that was the hidden wisdom that God ordained before the world unto our glory which is found in 1st Corinthians 2:7-8?

What is the fellowship of the mystery that was hid in God from before the foundation of the world which is found in Ephesians 3:8-9?

What is the mystery that has been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints which is found in Colossians 1:26?

If you honestly don't know these answers then this book is for you. Could you right now name the mysteries that Jesus Christ gave to the apostle Paul to dispense to the body of Christ? Don't worry, most Pastors religious leaders cannot, but they are required to know them and to teach them to others.

Paul's Plea of Unity

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

The Problem with Pride

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Bond of Peace

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Why are there so many churches today each claiming that they alone have the truth? All of them cannot be right. If we are honest we can agree that if only one church is right then those churches that disagree with the one that is right are wrong by default.

What is it that keeps a church that is wrong in some area from getting right? Look at the verses above and let's see. Paul (the Apostle of the Gentiles) beseeches (or pleads) all believers to walk worthy of the vocation

wherewith we are called, and most are not, or we would not have this division in the body of Christ. See Romans 11:13

The problem churches and individual believers have multiplies day after day by their not walking worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, by not following verses two and three above.

They do not practice humility (lowliness) in regards to the very thing that is causing the division in the first place. They are not longsuffering with fellow brothers and sisters in attempts to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1st Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Many churches are all about the first half of verse four, but have no clue what the second half is talking about, so they replace it with the doctrines and practices of their group or camp.

They will win them, wet them, and then fail to teach them about the truth concerning mystery program revealed to the Apostle Paul because their forefathers didn't know them either.

It's a vicious cycle that repeats itself in the life of local church until someone starts to see what was right in front of their face in the scriptures and they start to make all men in their circle of influence see what is the fellowship of the mystery. See Ephesians 3:8-9.

What truth? The Truth.

The truth that produces that unity of the Spirit mentioned above. The truth Paul mentions here is the subject of this book. Truths that are described as mysteries that were formerly kept hid in God before the world began, but now are made manifest.

The Fellowship of the Mystery

Ephesians 3:9 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:

“I cannot unsee, what I have seen.”

Many friends, and total strangers who humbled themselves and have given me and many others their ears for a few hours have almost all said, “I cannot unsee what I have seen.”

Having come to the knowledge of **the truth** revealed to the Apostle Paul by the risen Christ, they cannot go back to the division they were once a large part of. The mystery is no longer a mystery to them.

Others, unfortunately, have refused to humble themselves to believe that they could be confused about somethings, even when they know they don’t “have all the answers”, and they one day become sad statistics by being what Paul spoke about in his final Epistle:

2nd Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

They instead puff up their chest at fellow believers in Christ, and draw battle lines in the sand, and they refuse to consider that they, or their “Camp/Denomination could be a part of the many who are causing this division in the body of Christ.

Am I encouraging unity at the expense of truth? Absolutely not. Unity can never come when truth is compromised. Pride is the only thing that will keep you ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Will you in all lowliness read this book and pray that if you have anything wrong in your theology that God did not plant there ask him to root that doctrine up and replace with the knowledge of the truth?

Then you will be able to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, as you come unto a knowledge of the truth. Once you see, what religion has kept you from seeing, you will never be able to unsee it.

Then you will also be fellowshipping in the mystery that was once a mystery to you. The mystery that Satan wants to keep a mystery, is you coming unto a knowledge of the truth concerning the mysteries revealed to the Apostle Paul.

Below is two verses related to the mystery God wants us all to come unto the knowledge of, and that Satan wants to keep you of ignorant of.

Interestingly, the times when Paul writes “I would not have you to be ignorant of something, it is these mystery truths that the body of Christ is the most ignorant of.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish 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:

Satan wreaks havoc in Churches and individuals lives by keeping God’s saints ignorant of the truths that are for them today. If you get a computer, or a cell phone, and you never get the updates, your phone will not produce for you what its designer made the updates for.

Many Christians, Camps, and Denominations operate under Law and Grace today to one degree or another, and they pick and choose which things they like from both dispensations while ignoring others. We need to practice what our Apostle taught us in his last epistle as we study scripture:

2nd Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Brother Jim Phillips

The Fellowship of the Mystery

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis

1:1

Two separate, and distinct places, with two different sets of laws governing them both. One celestial, and the other terrestrial. One heavenly, and one earthly. I cannot survive for one second in the heavenlies unless a change happens (the rapture), and this mortal puts on immortality. See 1st Corinthians 15:54.

1st Corinthians 15:40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

Satan fell in the heavenlies and caused a third of the angelic host to follow him in the heavenlies. God had a mystery program devised to deal with Satan's and his rebellion in the celestial heavens before the terrestrial world was ever created.

When God made mankind (Adam) on this terrestrial earth he gave them (mankind) dominion over it, but mankind, led by Satan (the Serpent) fell in the garden of Eden here on this terrestrial earth and they lost that dominion because of the sin disobeying God and his plan for mankind.

Death was just another of the consequences of man's fall, along with the curse God placed on the (terrestrial) earth, but God devised a plan to redeem both the earth, and mankind, by his dying to pay the wages of sin (death) and to give eternal life to those that would believe on His Son who died for all of humanity. See Genesis 3 and Romans 6:23.

God will one day set up the Kingdom of heaven here on this earth after the Church age (the dispensation of grace) ends with the rapture of the body of Christ (the Church), and the seven year tribulation period concludes that is called, very importantly, the time of **JACOB'S TROUBLE**.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and Israel has a promise to be a kingdom of priest in that future kingdom, but only after Israel (Jacob) goes through the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27) as called the time of Jacob's Trouble in Jeremiah, and the tribulation period in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

You are not Jacob (Israel) in any way, shape, or form. If you are saved today you are part of the "one new man" which is neither Jew nor Gentile. You are not "spiritual Israel", not are you "the Israel of God". See Ephesians 2:15.

Genesis 32:28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

But what about the heavens (The Celestial realms)? Job teaches us that even the heavens are not clean:

Job 15:15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

God has a plan to purge the heavens of Satan, and all his rebellious angels as well as the earth:

Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Isaiah 34:5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

We also learn from the book of the Revelation that at the mid-point of the Tribulation Period (Daniel's 70th week or the Time of Jacob's Trouble) that God cleanses the (Celestial) heavens of Satan (the Dragon) and his angels with the help of Michael and his angels.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

We can tell from the writings of the prophets and from John what God is going to do with Israel in the later days, and with Satan and his angels, but what is his plan for the heavens?

We know also that God is going to make a new heaven, and a new earth, but why a new heaven. For the same reason stated above. God will cleanse both places from any sin and rebellion.

There is much written by the prophets that God sent unto Israel about the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth, but what will be going on in the heavens during those 1,000 years and beyond. That is the subject of the

preaching of Jesus Christ according to the fellowship of the mystery mentioned in Romans 16.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish 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:

I have heard many preachers say they preach Christ Jesus, and him crucified. To that I say, Amen! Others will say, I preach the preaching of the cross, and again I say, Amen. They should! See 1st Corinthians 1:18 and 2:2.

But salvation is not the only thing we are to preach to people. God will have all men to be saved, AND come unto the knowledge of the truth. The truth of the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the mystery. It is that truth that has the power to stablish you according to PAUL'S GOSPEL.

You may think you know what that is but, chances are you do not. If you are wrong about the gospel (PAUL'S GOSPEL) there are far reaching eternal consequences. Paul's gospel is most clearly found in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

You owe it to God Pastor, fellow believer in Christ, and to all those who you know (those to whom you have preached to or will preach the gospel to) to tell them Paul's gospel, so that they can be saved, and then let Jesus Christ, and his word **stablish** them by their coming unto a knowledge of the truth.

That can only happen by you hearing the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest with Paul having received the revelations concerning these mysteries from the risen Christ.

The beginning, and the end.

The mystery program has a beginning, and it has an ending. It began with Saul of Tarsus being saved on the road to Damascus when the ascended Christ appeared to him on that day. It will end when the last person in the

dispensation of grace is saved, and God raptures the body of Christ out of this world. See Acts 9 and 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17.

Then Israel's prophecy program picks up right where it left off at the end of the 69th week of Daniel 9:24-27 and it will resume with the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel.

Ask yourself what happened right after the 69th week ended? Israel stumbled at that stumblingstone when they did not believe of Jesus as their Christ. See Romans 9:31-33.

God was merciful and he gave Israel one more year to repent to receive her kingdom, because **the nation did not know what they were doing**, but she as a nation refused to repent. See Luke 23:34.

Luke 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Israel is the fig tree that gets cut down (her branches are broken off because of unbelief. See Romans 11), and God still gives Israel one more year to repent (**let it alone this year also**) after himself ministering to Israel for three years (**these three years I come seeking fruit**).

God fills the twelve apostles with the holy Spirit, and they preach with boldness throughout that year (God digs about Israel, the fig tree, and he dungs (fertilizes) Israel with Spirit filled preaching, but they as a nation do not repent, and they kill Stephen in Acts 7.

That is where Israel falls as a nation and the fig tree is cut down/off, but the root remains for when Israel will believe in the time of Jacob's trouble. See Romans 11:23-27.

When Stephen is killed at the feet of Saul of Tarsus, Jesus stands up from his seated place at the right hand of God in heaven where he is to remain until his enemies be made his footstool (See 110:1) to judge Israel.

Isaiah 3:13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

But he does not pour out his wrath at this time, instead he shows grace by saving the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, and ushers in the dispensation of grace.

Paul begins to receive by revelation from the ascended Christ, all of these mysteries concerning the body of Christ, and Satan has been doing his best to keep preachers from learning these mysteries so they cannot not make them known to all their own people.

Sincere people, sincerely ignorant of the very things Paul says that he would not that they be ignorant of. Sad.

These teachings are rarely expounded upon by the pulpits around the world because they are not known by so many Pastors who should know them, but they are blinded by the fellowship of their friends in the ministry instead of being enlightened by the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the fellowship of the mystery. See Romans 16:25-26.

This mystery remains a mystery to most of the world, and it is because Satan has blinded our eyes, so we are ever teaching what our Camp/Denomination preaches, and our people are ever learning, but never able to come unto a knowledge of the truth. 2nd Timothy 3:7.

What is the mystery program, and where is it found in the scripture? In order to understand what the mystery program is, we must first understand what it is not.

What the Mystery Program is not:

The mystery program is not Israel's prophecy program for this earth, which has been spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the word began about an earthly kingdom:

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

The mystery program is not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven that are found in Matthew 13, which all concern Israel's future kingdom here on this earth:

Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

The mystery program is not Mystery Babylon from the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

Revelation 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The Mystery Program was not revealed by Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, who was a minister to the circumcision (the Jews) during his three-and-a-half-year ministry as he came only to confirm the promises that were made unto their fathers:

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

What the Mystery Program is and was:

The mystery program was a secret, kept hidden in God from the beginning of the world, and it was not revealed until it was revealed to the apostle Paul, and in this present dispensation we are to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery:

Ephesians 3:9 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:

The mystery program that was kept secret since the world began has now been made manifest to the world by the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 16:25-26a):

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish 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,

The mystery program is part of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given unto the apostle Paul to give unto us, and can only be found in his writings:

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

The mystery program is the dispensation of God given unto the apostle Paul for us, to fulfil the word of God. The apostle's writings were to complete (fulfil) the word of God (the Cannon of scripture) with the revelations given unto him concerning the mystery (Romans – Philemon):

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

The mystery program was hid from ages (dispensations), and from generations, but now it is made manifest to God's saints:

Colossians 1:26 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, the hope of glory:

A dispensation can be defined in a couple of ways. There are more than one dispensation in the Bible. The two major dispensations in the Bible are the law, which was given unto the nation of Israel, and the dispensation of grace that was given unto the apostle Paul to give unto us in the body of Christ.

The dispensation of grace was given unto the least of all saints (who persecuted the church of God in Jerusalem and wasted it), who became the apostle Paul, and he preached among the Gentiles.

1st Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, 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;

Paul calls the message of grace “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, which means that the old testament saint could search in the writings of the prophets to Israel, and they would not be able to find them, because these rich truths about God’s plan for the heavenlies, because they are unsearchable, that is why it is referred to as the mystery program.

It is mentioned eight times in Paul’s epistles as “**the grace given unto me**” (Paul): See Romans 12:3, 15:15, 1st Corinthians 3:10, 15:10, Galatians 2:9, Ephesians 3:2 and also in the following two consecutive verses:

Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, 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;

The Mystery Program was kept hidden since the world began to bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent, and to destroy the wisdom of the wise, while establishing the wisdom of God in a mystery:

1st Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

The Mystery Program is the wisdom of God spoken by the Apostle of the Gentiles to the world in a series of mysteries given to him concerning this dispensation of grace.

It was not the wisdom of this world, nor of its rulers (princes) which amounts to nothing. Which if the Princes of this world knew they would have never crucified the Lord of glory:

1st Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: 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:

Had Satan and his princes known the consequences of the cross they would have never crucified the Lord of glory. Satan is called the prince of the devils, the prince of the power of the air and the prince of this world. See Matthew 9:34, John 12:31 and Ephesians 2:2.

1st Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The Mystery Program resulted in the creation of the one new man that is neither Jew nor Greek and hath reconciled both unto God in one body (the body of Christ):

Ephesians 2:11 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: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, 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.

5. Name the two places God created in Genesis 1:1:

6. What governs those two places differently from each other?
7. What secret did God have planned and why?
8. Was this secret kept hidden in God from the beginning of the world?
9. To whom was this secret revealed?
10. What was the plan God had in place to redeem both the earth, and mankind?
11. Where will God, one day, set up the Kingdom of heaven?
12. What other “term” or “dispensation” is used for the “church age”?
13. When will this age end?
14. What period will follow the rapture? Give two names.
11. What was Jacob’s name changed to? Give scripture.
12. What does Israel have a promise to become?
13. Are those saved today (Jew or Gentile) still a Jew or Gentile, or do they become something else, and if so, what? Give scripture.
14. Is the church today “spiritual Israel” or the “Israel of God”?
15. Are the heavens “clean”? Why or why not? Give scripture.
16. IF the heavens are unclean, will God cleanse them and if so, when? Give scripture.
17. Where is Paul’s gospel most clearly found in scripture?
18. From whom did Paul receive the revelations concerning the mysteries?
19. When did the mystery program begin?
20. When will the mystery program end? Give two scriptures.
21. When was Israel’s prophecy program put on hold (give scripture) and when will it resume?
22. What happened right after the 69th week ended?
23. God gave Israel one more year to repent to receive her kingdom, but she did not because she didn’t know what she was doing. Give scriptures where this is referenced.
24. Explain how Israel is like the fig tree, her unbelief, and the extra year to repent. Give scripture reference.
25. How does God work with Israel during this time?

26. What was the incident that occurred that Israel, like the fig tree, is cut down/off, but the root remains for when Israel will believe during the tribulation? Give scriptures.

27. When did Jesus stand up from His seated place at the right hand of God in Heaven? Give scripture.

28. Does God begin to pour out His wrath at this time?

29. The revelations of the mystery that Paul received from the ascended Christ, do they concern Israel, the body of Christ, or both?

The Mystery of Israel's Partial Blindness

Let's take a brief look at the mysteries as they are mentioned in the Pauline Epistles starting with the Israel's partial blindness as it is mentioned in Romans.

Blindness in part is happened to Israel, tells us that the partial blindness set in during Paul's early ministry. Romans was one of Paul's earlier Epistles and he uses the past tense word "happened" when speaking of Israel's blindness to instruct his hearers that it has already happened.

The partial blindness will be removed when this present mystery dispensation of grace ends at the rapture of the body of Christ (the Church) when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in:

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

There is a picture of this partial blinding of the nation of Israel that happens to a Jew who was a false prophet when Saul began his first missionary journey in Acts 13. He, Bar-Jesus, is blinded for a season, and for a reason which we will look at more in this book.

Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the

sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

A Jew blind from birth

We have a story in the gospel of John that typifies what the apostle of the Gentiles is teaching in Romans 11, in the story of Jesus and the blind man.

Again we start a chapter here that begins with the word, "and" which means there is something that we need from chapter eight to help us to fully understand what is happening in chapter nine.

In chapter eight Jesus has been confronting the Jewish leaders and he tells them that he was before Abraham. They took up stones to stone him for saying that, and he passed by them.

John 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

First of all, the parents of this man who was born blind were both sinners as scriptures teach. They wondered if this man was being punished for his parents' sin.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he

anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. 8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. 24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26 Then said they to him again, What did he to

thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27 He answered them, I have told you already and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. 30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. 39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Paul was blinded for three days

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus

whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Here we see a Jew blinded for a short period of time, and for a reason. What better way could there be than to show this truth to Israel than to have a prominent Jew blinded because of his own unbelief, then after he acknowledges Jesus as the Christ, he begins to tell other Jews that God is now blinding them in part for their unbelief, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Paul was the very first person who started preaching to Gentiles, so they could become a part of the body of Christ. In the body however God does not recognize Jew and Gentiles just the one new man. You are either saved or lost today. Who your ancestors are doesn't matter to God today.

Was Paul's blinding forever? No of course not because he represents Israel being blinded but the blinding was only temporary so that he could bring salvation to the Gentiles in a new un-prophesied dispensation of grace.

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Barjesus (Son of Salvation) was a Jew and a false prophet none the less and he was trying to keep the Gentile Sergius Paulus from being saved so God blinded him for the reason that he would serve as a warning to all other Jews that their nation was being blinded in part for their rejecting of God's Son for their salvation.

The Jew could also take some solace from the fact that Barjesus' blinding wasn't permanent, it was only for a season, like Israel's is until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. See Romans 11:25.

Why did God have to keep something about Israel's partial blindness a secret from before the world began? Because we have an adversary. God wanted to keep the devil out of the loop on this so that he would go ahead with the crucifixion of Christ.

This would thus enable the creation of the "one new man" (believers in the body of Christ with an heavenly destiny) to take over the thrones Satan has usurped for the past 6,000 years when he and all of his devils are cast out of heaven at the mid-point of the time of Jacob's trouble. See Ephesians 2:15.

1st Corinthians 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: 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 Mystery of Israel's Partial Blindness Test:

The mystery of believers being changed

1st Corinthians 15:50

The mystery of the rapture was not revealed to anyone until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul to shew us the mystery that not all believers will die before this dispensation ends. Those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not prevent them which are asleep (dead) from rising:

1st Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1st Thessalonians 4:13 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Many of the mysteries in the Mystery Program can be found near the words: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren". Unfortunately, there are still too many ignorant brethren for whom the mystery program is still a mystery.

What is the Rapture referred to as in the Bible?

The Rapture is referred to as "the catching away", or "the day of redemption" in the Bible. It is also called the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him. The "our" mentioned in the next verse are both the dead in Christ, and those believers in him who are alive and remain unto his coming.

2nd Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

His coming, and our gathering together unto him are both located in a specific place, in the clouds. (There will be more on this topic later in our study.)

1st Timothy 4:17 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.

The Catching Away, or Rapture was a mystery not revealed under Israel's Prophecy program, but it was later revealed to the Apostle Paul to give unto us:

1st Corinthians 15:51 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.

Where is the word Rapture found in the Bible?

The word Rapture is not found in the Bible, but the teaching permeates the Apostle of the Gentiles Epistles (Romans through Philemon). The word Rapture comes from the Latin Vulgate word Rapturo, which means to catch away.

What other words are used in Bible to explain the Rapture or Catching Away? One of the terms used in the Bible to explain the Rapture is the term the Blessed Hope:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Notice that Paul mentions the blessed hope along with the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, as to connect the two, but also to distinguish one from the other.

The blessed hope has to do with our departure from the earth, while the glorious appearing has to do with our arrival in the air to meet our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of course see to him in all his glory.

Our departure will be exciting to say the least, but I am more looking forward to seeing our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ upon our arrival than our method of departure.

Another word that is used in place of the word rapture, is the resurrection:

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Second Timothy was Paul's final Epistle before his martyrdom in Rome (written around 64 A.D.) at the hands of Nero, and there were people teaching that the rapture had occurred already and that they were now in the Tribulation Period suffering the wrath of God that is referred to in Jeremiah as the time of Jacob's Trouble. See Jeremiah 31:31.

They were overthrowing the faith of some because with Paul in prison and many of the twelve Apostles to Israel dying off around this time many of the Christians alive under Nero's reign believed that he was the Anti-Christ and that they were indeed suffering the wrath of God.

They were not confusing the Rapture with the resurrection of the Nation of Israel into her Kingdom because it was obvious that that had not occurred. Another term used to describe the Rapture/Catching Away is the Day of Redemption:

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The day of redemption is the day of the Catching Away, and the term the day of redemption describes some of what happens at that moment, mainly it tells the believer that they have been redeemed, or bought back. We have been justified by the death of Christ on the Cross through the shedding of his blood on our behalf. See Romans 5:9 below.

The wages of sin is death, and since humanity could not pay that debt because they were spiritually broke, Jesus Christ redeemed us from the wages of our sin. He redeemed us from the curse of the Law becoming a curse for us.

The sting of death is sin the Bible says, and Jesus became sin for us. Those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not experience the sting of death. Jesus experienced it for us at the Cross.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Notice that at upon our trusting the gospel of the grace of God today, we were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (the down payment) of our inheritance (our salvation) until the day of redemption (or

on the redemption as it is mentioned here which is also called the rapture today by many). We are the purchased possession.

We are sealed with the holy Spirit, not baptized with the holy Spirit. The holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ and seals us until the day of redemption. Is there only one Rapture/Catching Away in the Bible, or are there more?

There are numerous raptures in the Bible but there is only one rapture associated with the Body of Christ of which all believers in this dispensation of grace are a part of.

It is mentioned primarily in 1st Corinthians 15:51-60 and 1st Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, but there are many other places where the catching away is mentioned in Paul's Epistles which are also noted in this study, and they are sometimes called by different names.

The 144,000 witnesses also get redeemed from the Earth during the tribulation period after the body of Christ has their day of redemption at the rapture.

They are redeemed/caught up at the mid-point of the tribulation period. There are those today who teach a mid-tribulation rapture by misapplying verses for these servants and attribute them to the Body of Christ.

The body of Christ will have been with Christ for at least three and a half years already. The rapture does not begin the tribulation period, but it does end the dispensation of grace.

Revelation 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Moses and Elijah will be caught up to heaven as the two witnesses in Revelation 11:8-12:

Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

When did Paul receive the doctrine of the catching away? Paul received the mystery revelation of the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto him while he was at Corinth on his second Missionary journey.

We know that because he mentions the teaching in the epistle to Thessalonians that he wrote from Corinth. When Paul mentions the Mystery, he is mentioning 1st Corinthians 15:1-4, where he is repeating to them what he taught them originally when he was first there.

Just as he has been doing throughout the first epistle to Corinth because he was writing to correct the wrong teachings that had crept in since he had left that he heard about from the household of Chloe.

First Corinthians was written on Paul's third Missionary Journey from the city of Philippi. Don't think for a second that those from the houses of Chloe were spreading gossip, they were not.

They were giving Paul an honest report of the dealings with the church in Corinth since Paul had left. Over and over, people would give Paul a report of how their church was doing.

When does the Rapture or Catching Away occur?

The Rapture or Catching Away occurs at the end of the dispensation of grace. It is not the end of the body of Christ, but it's really just the

beginning because then the Body of Christ will be able to do exactly what it was formed to do from that moment on throughout all eternity.

The rapture, or the catching away has to occur before the mystery of iniquity is to be revealed, which is also mentioned by the apostle of the Gentiles in his second epistle to the Thessalonians:

2nd Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The day of Christ is often confused with the day of the Lord, they are not the same thing! The day of Christ has to do with his return at the end of the Tribulation Period and the rapture. Some were comparing things going on in their day and assuming it was the end. It looked bad for them, but it was not the end.

The term the day of Christ appears only in Pauline literature, and it is coincidentally mentioned seven times in his epistles: Romans 2:16, 1st Corinthians 1:8, 2nd Corinthians 3:14, Philippians 1:8, 10, 2:16, 2nd Thessalonians 2:2.

The falling away that must come first is a reference to things that will happen on the earth prior to Christ's return to the earth. The Greek word for falling away is the word Apostasia, which is where we get our English word Apostacy.

Don't let someone tell you that the falling away really means a catching up, it does not. It means an Apostacy or falling away from truth. There will be great apostacy before the day of Christ because the Devil knows he has but a short time.

Only after the falling away into apostacy will the wicked one be revealed, the man of sin, and not before. Prior to the Rapture the man of sin cannot be revealed because there is something that is preventing the man of sin from being revealed and that is, **he** that is hindering him from being revealed.

Just who is the "**he**" that is hindering/letting the man of sin from being revealed? Whoever **he** is that letteth, has to be all powerful to contain the man of sin during this present dispensation.

Today the Devil cannot do as he once did in the days when Israel was under her Law Program but once the rapture of the Body of Christ occurs then this dispensation of grace ends, and Satan will then be able to operate as he once did with Israel while she was under the Law of Moses.

What is the Body of Christ called in Scripture? The one new man. Is a man masculine or feminine, male or female?

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

The one new man is also the Body of Christ who is also masculine. We as the One New Man are hindering the revealing of the Anti-Christ during this dispensation of grace. It is not until we as the Body of Christ are gone can the man of sin, the son of perdition be revealed.

The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit dwells in us as believers and he has sealed us until the day of redemption. We are Temples of the Holy Spirit and one day these Temples which he resides in will be taken out of this world.

Will the world be without the ministry of the Holy Spirit during those days? Absolutely not! He will once again come upon those Jewish Tribulation Saints and enable them to do many signs and wonders to verify the message they are preaching at that time.

Why does the Rapture happen?

The Body of Christ has a heavenly destiny, and we must be translated into the heavenly places to begin our eternal ministry of glorifying God in eternity. Our vile bodies will have to be changed into a body like unto his glorious body.

The Lord will subdue the principalities and powers in heavenly places that have been usurped by the Devil and those fallen ones who followed him in rebellion and the heavens will be subdued once and for all according to his working to subdue all things back to himself.

Philippian 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The Rapture is imminent and can occur at any moment. It has always been imminent since the first days of the Body of Christ. Paul thought it would occur in his day because he says so in his epistle to the Thessalonians:

1st Thessalonians 4:15 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 that are asleep.

Paul included himself in the Rapture believing that it may come in his lifetime, but it did not. God intended him to believe the Lord's return could be at any time.

The very damaging teaching that the Body of Christ must first go through seven Church ages before the Lord's coming for his Church has weakened the Saints with false doctrine that has confused the Saints. Notice also that the teaching on the Rapture was not something that originated in the mind of Paul, but it was **“by the word of the Lord.”**

How does the Rapture happen?

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

When Paul tells us that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven to get us and those who have died in Christ it means what it says, the Lord himself is coming to get us.

The elect of Israel in their program will have angels gather them from the four winds of the earth after the tribulation of those days, but we are greeted, not by angels, but by the Lord himself. Notice Israel's meeting with Christ:

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When the Lord himself descends he will do so with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, two things, not one) What? Yes, two things, not one. The first thing is a shout that is for the first group, the dead in Christ.

It will be a very specific shout that the Lord will return with just like it was with Lazarus. Jesus had to limit his command to saying “Lazarus, come forth” because if the all-powerful Son of God just said, “Come forth”, then all in the Sea, and the Earth's dead would have had to obey his command.

Jesus will call the dead in Christ first from out of the graves, and their bodies will reunite with their souls that he brings with him at his return in the clouds, and then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air at the trump of God.

If God did not have two separate callings here, we would rise at the same time as the dead in Christ, but we don't do we? How does God separate the two groups? One responds to a shout and the other to the trump of God.

Who will be Raptured?

The only ones who will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, will be those who have believed that Jesus died and rose again. All those who have fallen asleep (the dead in Christ) will also be caught up together with us who are alive and remain unto coming of the Lord to meet the Lord in the clouds and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1st Thessalonians 4:13 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For

they that sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

What will happen to our body?

Our earthly bodies will be dissolved and replaced with an heavenly one that is eternal. Paul calls both our former and later bodies houses. The eternal body he calls a building of God:

2nd Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

The earnest of the Spirit is the down payment of what was promised believers for eternity. We have the Holy Spirit residing in us from the moment we are saved, and that gift of the Holy Spirit is like when someone puts down some earnest money on something as a guarantee that they are going to purchase it.

1st Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death hurts! But those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not experience the sting of death because they will be translated/gathered together unto the Lord in the air.

What happens right after the Catching Away/Rapture:

2nd Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

One of the first thing that we know that happens is that we will be absent from our current body that is earthly, and we will receive an eternal one, called a building of God.

Philippians 1:23 says that while we are still here on the earth we abide in our flesh, which implies that when we are absent from the earth we will no longer abide in our flesh.

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

1st Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The

first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Notice that Paul tells the Corinthians that flesh, and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God and he explains himself so as not to confuse people with the Kingdom of Heaven that comes down to earth, they are different programs.

When those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord are raptured or resurrected their bodies will have to be changed in a moment and that is exactly how quick he does it, (in the twinkling of an eye). Matthew 24 and Luke 17 both have to do with the lost being taken together unto Judgment. It even tells you were the bodies of those taken are taken to:

Where the eagles are gathered together.

Luke 17:33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Revelation expands on this and tells the reader that God calls the fowls of heaven to feast on the bodies of the unbelievers.

Revelation 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of

horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

One is taken to judgment while the other remains alive to enter into the Millennial Kingdom that begins after the chaff is burnt up. There is no rapture of the Body of Christ being mentioned in the Gospels anywhere! It was still a Mystery at that time. The Body of Christ was kept hidden until after the Resurrection, so the One New Man could be created by God that could live in heavenly places.

The Rapture of the Body could not have been made known before the Body of Christ was revealed as the Body of Christ is what makes the One New Man, and it is what will be Rapture at the day of redemption.

The Mystery of His will

Ephesians 1:9

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

The mystery of his will is God's eternal purpose for this earth with Israel reigning with Christ in their kingdom and the heavens with us seated together with him in heavenly places.

God will in the dispensation of the fullness of times (after the creation of a new heaven and a new earth) gather together in one all things in Christ which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (that is under his authority).

The verse above does not teach the universal reconciliation of Satan, his devils, and the lost people. There is no mention of things under the earth being reconciled unto God in these verses.

Philippians 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

The book of Philippians does here mention the things under the earth but only as bowing the knee to Christ. Nothing is ever said about them being released from their torment, in fact the opposite is taught in other verses:

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Notice what Peter tells the Jewish believers in his second epistle as he tells Israel about the future purpose for the earth:

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Before there can be righteousness dwelling in the heavens then Satan will have to be cast out of the heavens. That is prophesied in Revelation 12:

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Satan will also have to cast out of the earth and that will happen when Hell is cast into the lake of fire for ever and ever. Then God can make a new earth wherein dwelleth in righteousness.

The ultimate purpose of God's will is for the heaven, and the earth, and all things that dwell therein to both be to the praise of his glory for all eternity. We as the body of Christ will be to the praise of his glory in heavenly places, while Israel will also finally be to the praise of his glory here on the earth.

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The mystery of Christ

Ephesians 3:3-4

Ephesians 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).

Colossians 4:3 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:

The mystery of Christ is a general title for the mystery program as all whole (all the mysteries delivered unto the apostle Paul for the body of Christ).

A great mystery concerning Christ and the church

Ephesians 5:32

First of all, the word church is an English word that is used to describe an assembly (Ecclesia in Greek) of people. There are numerous churches listed in the Bible that existed at different times, or dare I say, during different dispensations. They are not all a part of the same church.

First, we will look at the church which is Christ's body, and then we will look at the mystery aspect of it, before we look at the other churches mentioned in the scriptures:

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

First of all, whatever the Church is, Christ is the head of it. We however are not left ignorant of what the Church is as Paul calls the Church, the body of Christ. It is only fitting that a body has a head, and we in the church have the best head that anyone could ever want, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, let's see what new things we can find out about the head (Jesus Christ) of this new organism, shall we? Paul tells us in verse eighteen above that Christ is **the beginning, the first born from the dead**.

Since it says Christ is **the beginning**, we will start with that statement before moving on to what the firstborn from the dead means. Christ is the beginning, The beginning of what?

Is this talking about creation? Yes, but not the creation you are probably thinking of. Christ is the beginning of a new creation. The one new man, that is neither Jew nor Greek:

Ephesians 2:11 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: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of

partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Jews and Gentiles in one body, where there is no distinction as in time past under the Law. Circumcision is also a thing of the past, today there is no advantage being a Jew.

God hath concluded both Jews and Gentiles in unbelief that he may have mercy on them both in one new creation. The only advantage today is being in the one new man.

Interlaced in all of Paul's epistles are these teachings that are new to both Jew and Gentile alike, all of them speak to the manifold wisdom of God and his dealings with mankind:

Romans 11:30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Mankind had his beginning at creation where all three members of the godhead created everything that exists today, including man. Mankind's beginning started with Adam, the first man, but man fell, and all that were

born from the first Adam (man) were born sinners, and the wages of sin is death. See Romans 6:23.

Man was given the earth to have dominion over it, and he was told replenish it, subdue it, but man fell, and Satan became the god of this world. (2nd Corinthians 4:4) To help Adam replenish the earth, God gave him Eve:

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

God performed surgery on Adam and put him to sleep without using anesthesia, and from his body God gave Adam an helpmeet that would help him replenish the earth. Paul tells us of something that sounds very similar to what Adam said concerning Eve, regarding the body of Christ (the Church):

Ephesians 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

We are the one new man that will be taken from this earth, because we are the new creation that will fill the heavens. We will have a new body like our head's body.

Satan not only caused mankind to fall here on the earth, but he also led one third of the angelic host in heaven to rebel against God in heavenly places as well. God however, had a mystery hid in himself from the beginning of the world to deal with Satan's rebellion in both places (Heaven and Earth).

It is a great mystery about Christ, and the Church which is all about just what it is that makes up the Church, which is his body, and how that all came into being. But for the moment let's get back to what it means to be a part of the body, the Church:

The Will of the Lord concerning the Church

Ephesians 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 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.

The Church here is likened unto a marriage between a man and a woman, and as a woman is to be submissive to her husband (her spiritual head), so the Church is to be subject to its head (Christ) in everything. V:24.

We in the Church today are cleansed by what Christ did for us dying on the Cross for us. No longer are Gentiles unclean, and common, The middle wall of partition has been taken down because of what Christ did for us at the cross.

We are cleansed when we by faith believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross on our behalf, believing he died for us according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose from the dead the third day according to the scriptures. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Let's go back to the statement that Jesus Christ (our head) is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead for a moment Adam was the first man created from the earth, while Christ is the firstborn from the dead. He is called "the last Adam:"

1st Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Because Christ is not from the earth but rather from heaven, if we have trusted in his death, burial, and resurrection we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Our bodies shall be like our Lord's body. I currently look like my father Adam, but one day I will look like Christ.

This great mystery concerning the church has a special aspect to it for one generation in particular. The generation that will be around when the Lord

returns in the clouds to catch away his body, the church in the rapture, to take it where it will fill up its eternal dwelling places in heavenly places.

All of the mysteries delivered unto the Apostle Paul are associated with one another, but the rapture has a special connection as Christ raps things up with the church down here and calls us all to be with him in heavenly places.

Technically, the dead in Christ also participate in this event as they are raptured a twinkling of an eye before those of us who remain, but I think it may be a bit more exciting for us who are alive. The rapture is spoken about in conjunction with the whole teaching on the last Adam that we just looked at.

Since Christ is the firstborn from the dead, it is implied that all others who die in Christ will be born from the dead as well, the members of his body who are asleep in Christ. It is found in 1st Corinthians 15:51-58.

Because he was the firstborn from the dead, he has the right to be the head of the church which is his body. Paul further explains the differences between the first and last Adam in Romans 5.

Adam is the figure of him to come:

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath

abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul goes on to tell us about the consequences to Satan and his plan of evil as a result of God keep this great mystery hid in him from the foundation of the world.

God would replace the rebellious angels in heavenly places with us, the body of Christ, and Satan was an unknowing participant in making this happen by crucifying Christ thus enabling the one new man (the new creature) to be created who would not live eternally on the earth, but in heavenly places.

1 Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: 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 Church in the Wilderness

There is the church in the wilderness mentioned by Stephen which consisted of the children of Israel as they were exiting (the Exodus) Egypt. They assembled together and made up the church in the wilderness.

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

There is the church that is mentioned in the gospels that was a Jewish kingdom church that was empowered on the day of Pentecost. Matthew is the only gospel writer to mention this church.

* This is not the church, which is Christ's body, which is the subject of our study, but let's first take a look at the church that is first mentioned in Matthew:

The Church of Matthew 16:18

The word church is found 79 times in the Bible. It is first used by Christ here in Matthew:

Matthew 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Jesus said that it was upon Peter's profession **that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God**, that he (Jesus) would build his (Jesus') church. Here the church is still in the future because Christ says, "I **will** build my church".

The church that Jesus did build was not in existence at that time because it was still in the future according to its founder and builder. So, when did it begin?

Jesus then went on to describe the authority that Peter would have (along with the other 11 Apostles to Israel) to bind and loose things on earth, as a part of that future kingdom church.

Notice that there is the ability to bind, and to loose mentioned as well when this Jewish kingdom church is mentioned the second and last time that it is found in the gospel records:

Matthew 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Notice here that the apostles are told that if there is a problem between two brothers, and they cannot resolve it, they are to now take it and to tell it unto the church. The word church is the Greek word ecclesia, and it means a called-out assembly.

If the individual refused to hear the called-out assembly (the church) then they were to be treated as the heathen. Notice however the type of church that we have so far.

It is a called-out assembly of nothing but Jews only, and its membership consist of those that that have been baptized with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and those who recognize that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It is a church, of which Peter and the other eleven apostles at that time, could bind, and loose things on earth, and God would honor their decisions in heaven.

It was a church where if two or more apostles agreed concerning anything that God would give them whatsoever, they would ask. (That is not a prayer promise for you today! You have never been a part of this Jewish kingdom church).

That is kingdom authority! It is not for the body of Christ! Notice I did not say it is not for the church. There is a church here that Christ began to build during his earthly ministry, and it was different than the church which is Christ's body that Paul tells us about.

Don't let me lose you here. So far everything I have said has been backed up with scripture, but some of you think there is only one church in the Bible, and that it began on the day of Pentecost, or with John the Baptist back in Mark 1:1, well give the scriptures some more time to prove themselves.

Let's take a look at the church that existed in the Old Testament for a moment. Scriptures says there was, but do you base your beliefs on Dr. So, and So, or on the Bible. Hopefully, the Bible, so let's look at what it says:

Acts 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

The children of Israel were "**called out of Egypt**" a type of the world, and were assembled together in the wilderness where they received the word of God, and Stephen lead by the Holy Spirit informs us through Luke that the children of Israel were "**the church in the wilderness**". Period! End of discussion.

They were a church (a called-out assembly), but they were not the church, which is Christ's body that we belong to today, nor were they the church that Jesus was building made up solely of the lost sheep of the house of Israel who would be led by the apostles when Jesus ascended into heaven until Israel's blindness set in.

The church, which is Christ's body, Ephesians 1:22-23 is today in full swing. More on that later in this study, but for now let's get back to our study on the church mentioned by Christ in the gospels, and the early Acts period.

Can you bind and loose things today Pastor, or Christian? No, you can't! At least not the way they could, because you are not an Apostle, and because you are living in the dispensation of grace.

They were able to do that before the dispensation of Grace came about, while the law was still in force until soon after the death of the Testator, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9).

It was to this little flock of believers that was called out solely from the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mat 10:1-7) and who were led by apostles that the earthly kingdom was promised to by Christ:

Luke 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. 24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? 26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

The little flock was the believing remnant in Israel that believed the testimony that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It was to them who were looking for the king and his Kingdom that the kingdom was promised by Christ, but before he could offer it to them, he had to first take it from those to whom it was promised, the whole nation of Israel, so he could give it to a nation bearing fruit (the Israel of God found in Galatians 6:16) who is known in scripture as the remnant.

Jesus also had to die for them before a legitimate offer of the kingdom could be made to Israel. He did that at the cross and the offer came soon after that, but was rejected by Israel in Act 3:19-21. (You can read more on this in our study on Early Acts.)

Notice also in verse 33 that this “little flock” of called out believers in Jesus Christ was told to **sell all that they had**, and earlier in the same passage they were told not to worry about food or clothing because he would take care of them. If you try that today, you will have to move into the rescue mission because that is not the program for today.

That is what was going on in the first part of the book of Acts where the disciples were selling their land, and things and laying them at the Apostle's feet because they were expecting the kingdom to come at any time. See Acts 2:42-45.

That is also why they were still at the temple, because they had not been told otherwise, and also because the temple will be in use during the kingdom that they were waiting for at that time. Notice what Jesus spent 40 days teaching the apostles after his resurrection:

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

What was it that Jesus spake to the disciples about? **The kingdom.** The very same message he had been preaching since he preached his first message three years earlier:

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The kingdom was at hand, and it would be established if Israel as a nation would do the one thing mentioned in verse seventeen, repent. They did not, and instead they killed their king. Jesus while he was here on earth for three and a half years preached **the gospel (good news) of the kingdom**, not the death, burial, and resurrection.

Just like there are different churches in the Bible, there were different gospels, which is not the topic of this study, but they go hand in hand. Please see our studies on the gospel.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Why did Jesus preach about a coming kingdom if he knew the church age was going to be around for the next 2000 years? Because Israel had to be given a chance to accept their kingdom by repenting and believing on Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. They chose to reject their king saying, "We have no King but Caesar".

Let's take a look at the church that Christ was building. Some say that it began on the day of Pentecost, but that is not the church which is Christ's body, because it is made up of Jew and Gentiles in one body. The church that was added to on Pentecost was made up solely of Jews.

The little flock was told to wait in Jerusalem until they were baptized "**with**" the Holy Ghost, which they did and were baptized "**with**" the Holy Ghost, not "by" the Holy Ghost. There is a big difference. We will see as Pentecost approaches.

Notice that while the apostles were obeying Christ's commands to tarry in Jerusalem, they had to address one very needful matter. One of the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel (Judas Iscariot) was a traitor, and he had to be replaced because in this kingdom that was still at hand if Israel would repent, then the twelve apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel:

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the

Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Notice what the apostles **did not ask** at that time. They did not ask, will you at this time establish your church? Instead, they asked something that they had spent the last 40 days learning about, and the same thing that they had spent the last three and a half years preaching about, the kingdom:

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

They asked about the kingdom because that is what they had been preaching about, and learning about for over three and a half years. Notice also that they are told the Holy Ghost **will come upon them** and they shall be witnesses.

That is exactly what began to happen on the day of Pentecost. They had been baptized "**with the Holy Ghost**," it literally came upon them as cloven tongues of fire and they immediately went outside and started witnessing to Jews from 16 different areas. See Acts 2.

But first they had to have a twelfth Apostle chosen to judge in this soon coming kingdom because that was what they were told during those 40 days that Jesus taught them "THINGS PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM"!

Matthias was chosen as Judas' replacement because he met the requirements to be one of Israel's Apostles, and you and I do not, he was with them since the baptism that John preached, and he was a witness of the resurrection, PAUL WAS NOT! He is not the 12th apostle. I don't care what Dr. so and so said!

Luke, wrote that the eleven chose Matthias, and he was Paul's physician and long-time traveling companion, and there is one person who would know even better than Luke who wrote the book of Acts, and who

never corrected Luke, or stated an opposing argument, and that was Paul himself.

Paul said he was not the 12th apostle to the nation of Israel. Paul himself said he was the apostle of the Gentiles, not of the Jews (the circumcision). People come up with some crazy ideas and they do not care what the scriptures say.

Will you accept Paul's word on who the 12th Apostle to Israel, is or will you stick to your tradition? Please hear the words of Paul my friend, for he is very clear:

1st Corinthians 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

He was seen of the twelve! He was seen of all of the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also. Ask yourself this question, if these verses are wrong then how can I trust the other verses? You couldn't! Trust God's word, and God's men who wrote it.

Why is it so important that Paul not be one of the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel? Because God said he wasn't one of the twelve first of all, and he had a reason.

Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and it was to him that the 13 epistles that all begin with his name teach us about the dispensation of grace that was given to him to give to usward:

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

There was a kingdom church made up of solely Jews of which Peter and the eleven were a part of. James the Lord's half-brother ended up pastoring the church in Jerusalem that had the responsibility to win Jerusalem to Christ.

That was the kingdom church that Jesus promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against it in Matthew 16:18:

That thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Some Baptist have said that this means that Jesus' true church will be in existence from the time of John the Baptist until the Lord returns, but Matthew 16:18 doesn't say that at all.

We have learned what the church is that Jesus was talking about and all those who professed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God were a part of that kingdom church.

When a person died under the law, and kingdom program they went to Abraham's Bosom, also called paradise which was in the center of the earth. It is called the "abode of the dead" or hades.

Hades had two compartments, Paradise, and Hell. Between these two parts of the abode of the dead (Hades) was a great gulf fixed so that those in torment side of Hell could never cross into the abode of those who became a part of the kingdom church went when they died, Paradise or Abraham's Bosom.

That helps explain David's comment (Psalms 16:10) made by Peter on the day of Pentecost when he repeated David's words:

Acts 2:25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

David knew he would not be left in hell (the abode of the dead) in the center of the Earth, but that he would be resurrected one day to live in the kingdom forever.

All who had the testimony of Jesus Christ being the Son of God also have the same hope, and there is nothing that the gates of Hell can do to prevail against them. How can the gates of any place prevail against its own Creator? It cannot!

What are gates meant to do? To keep people in, while keeping others out. The saints in Abraham's bosom don't have to fear that one day those in the torment side of Hell would crash the gates of Hell to take over the Paradise side. God put a great gulf between the two:

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: **20** And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, **21** And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; **23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. **25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. **26** And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. **27** Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: **28** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. **29** Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. **30** And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. **31** And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Between Abraham's bosom and the torment side of Hell (Hades) there is a great gulf fixed there by God to prevent those in torment from going over to the side where Abraham's bosom was.

Matthew 16:18 has nothing to do with what some Baptist teach that there has always been a Baptist church in existence down through the last 2,000 years that had its origin with John the Baptist.

Remember folks, John the Baptist ministered while Israel was still under the law, and he was the only person called a Baptist in the Bible. Are you under the law today or under grace? Paul says we are under grace. See Romans 6:3-4.

The great mystery concerning Christ and the church is that the church is to submit to Christ who is its head, and he is the Saviour of the body. The body is a reference to the body of Christ (the church).

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

The Church which is Christ's body is to be subject unto its head (Christ) in everything as a wife is to her husband.

Ephesians 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Christ died (gave himself) for the Church so that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. He delivered his teachings to the Apostle Paul so that we may know how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth:

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

1st Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Jesus Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church so that he might present it to himself a glorious church.

Ephesians 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it

should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

As saved people in this dispensation of grace we are members of his body (the Church), and we are one flesh with him. He is the head of the body:

Ephesians 5:30 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.

The Mystery of the Gospel

Ephesians 6:19

The mystery of the gospel has to do with the gospel (the good news) going to Jew and Gentile alike without distinction, because in the Church, which is Christ's body, there is neither Jew nor Greek.

What does the word Gospel mean? The word Gospel means the good news, but we must ask what good news? Is there more than one gospel in the Bible? Is there another gospel out there today being preached? Which one is the one that is for us today?

John the Baptist, Jesus, and the twelve Apostles all preached the gospel of the Kingdom to the nation of Israel. Is the gospel of the kingdom good news for us today in the dispensation of grace? No! Let's take a look.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

In the above verses Jesus preached the good news that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. It would be set up if Israel would repent. There was no

good news of Jesus dying on a cross for Jews and Gentiles, but only a message that Israel could enter their kingdom if they as a nation would repent, period!

There was no death, burial, and resurrection mentioned in this message.

Ephesians 6:18 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.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul called the gospel that he preached “his gospel” that was given unto him. Why would God need to give Paul his own gospel? Paul’s gospel would come and with it a new dispensation of grace in which salvation would be by grace through faith:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Salvation according to Paul’s Gospel

Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish 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,

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Paul received the gospel of the grace of God for the dispensation of grace, and it was good news for all that if they would simply believe that Jesus

died for their sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures, they would be saved.

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.

1st Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **2** By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. **3** 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; **5** And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

The Mystery of the Gospel

The mystery of the gospel is of the utmost importance to us today and that is why it appears first in this study. This mystery is a part of a group of other mysteries that God had kept secret since the world began.

After the cross of Calvary however he revealed them unto the apostle Paul as we have seen in our previous study on the mystery program as a whole. It is important that as a student of the Bible you know the context of this study so that you can put it in its proper place.

There are many mysteries in the Bible, but they were not all part of the mystery program revealed unto the apostle of the Gentiles. These are all distinct because they are all part of the message God has for us in this present dispensation of grace.

The gospel (good news) that we will look at in this study was not known before it was revealed to the apostle Paul. Before Paul received the mysteries dispensed unto him. Israel on the other hand, had a prophesied gospel preached unto them which we will look at first to find out.

What the Mystery of Gospel is not.

The mystery of the gospel is not something that has been spoken by the prophets since the foundation of the world. It is something that was hid in God from before the foundation of the world, which we will look at later in this lesson.

Israel had been told by their prophets that there was a kingdom that was to come and when that kingdom was at hand, they had the gospel (good news) of the kingdom preached unto them first by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2), then six months later by Jesus and the twelve apostles.

They continued where John left off telling Israel the “good news” that the kingdom of heaven was “at hand” if they would repent, and that gospel of the soon coming kingdom was accompanied with healings and the casting out of devils.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. 23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. 24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Why did the gospel of the kingdom call Israel to repent, and why was the gospel of the kingdom accompanied by healing all manners of disease and sickness, as well as those that were tormented with devils?

Because Israel, not the body of Christ was promised that they would be a kingdom of priests in their coming kingdom way back when they came out of Egypt. Priest also could not have any diseases, sicknesses, devils.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

You couldn't have any blemishes in the flesh and be a priest in the kingdom, so Jesus healed all to make them ready to be the priests that God promised he would make them.

The children of Israel however rejected him, and that kingdom was then put-on hold. There could not be a kingdom of priests if they were not **a holy nation**, and they were far from that at that time.

The requirements under the law to be a priest.

Leviticus 21:16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, 19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, 20 Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; 21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23 Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.

This gospel of the kingdom required that a person be baptized with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The Pharisees came to John the Baptist to be baptized and he would not allow it because they had not showed the fruits of their repentance.

Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John told those Jews who had repented and were baptized that Christ would come after him and that he would thoroughly purge his floor.

This was to sift out the unbeliever, represented by the chaff, and the believer, represented by the wheat. The wheat would go in the garner (the kingdom), but the chaff (unbelievers) would be burned up (hell). Those Jews who repented and were baptized would be baptized “with” the Holy Ghost as promised on the day of Pentecost.

After that time they could be baptized “with” the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of an apostle, as was seen in Acts 8:14-18 when the apostles had heard the Samaritans had believed on Christ they sent for James and Peter to come and lay hands of those of Samaria who had believed and were baptized with the baptism of repentance.

The cleansing and anointing of Israel's priests.

Before a priest could begin his ministry under the Levitical priesthood, they must first be a descendant of the tribe of Levi and also be a descendant of Aaron himself.

The priesthood that was to be in the kingdom was not to be from just one family in one particular tribe but was available to all those in the nation that repented and believed in Jesus as the Christ (their high priest).

The first thing a priest had to do to hallow him before beginning his ministry is to be cleansed with clean water and then he had to be anointed with oil.

Exodus 29:1 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: 4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.

The water was called the water of purification, and it was to make the priest clean ceremonially. The oil that was poured upon the priest was a type of the Holy Spirit that was promised to be poured out upon believing Israel in their future kingdom.

John the Baptist mentioned that the Christ who would come after him and his water baptism would baptize believing Israel “with” the Holy Ghost.

Today we are baptized “by” the Holy Ghost at salvation. Israel's baptism “with” the Holy Ghost was what was prophesied by the prophets since the foundation of the world but our baptism “by” the Holy Ghost is totally different, and will be dealt with later in this study.

The book of Mark adds some interesting information about the gospel of the kingdom that needs to be understood so that you can see the differences in what was preached early on by the twelve and what Paul preached later on that was a mystery hid in God.

The gospel of the Kingdom had signs that followed it:

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

These agree with the signs that followed Jesus as he preached the same message. Jesus even told his disciple that they would do greater works than he did once he went unto his Father because he would send them the anointing (the Baptism “with” the Holy Ghost):

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Speaking with new tongues, the ability to take up a deadly serpent, or if they accidentally drank something deadly it would not hurt them were great new works given to help believers go out and preach this gospel of the kingdom. We have no such promise for us today with Paul’s mystery gospel.

In Acts 2 we read about the how the gospel of the kingdom was still being preached, and how that water baptism was required for the remission of Israel’s sins (not ours), as the Apostles were not going to any Gentiles. See Acts 2:36-39 below.

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the

name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The baptism “with” the Holy Ghost was for Israel if they had repented and were baptized. The only thing that had changed after the resurrection was that now the gospel of the kingdom was being preached in Jesus’ name. If there was no baptism, or no repentance, then there was no remission of sins for them.

You, and I today do not have the remission of sins, we have the total and complete forgiveness of all sins. This was not the case under the gospel of the kingdom, they waited for the forgiveness of sins which will come on the day of atonement when believing Israel is resurrected into their kingdom:

Acts 3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Israel under the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom had their sins under remission if they repented, were baptized in Jesus' name. They would have their sins blotted out when the kingdom is established in the future.

The kingdom is called here "the times of refreshing" it is also called "the time of the restitution of all things" and it is the time according to Peter as the time when Jesus comes back and is physically present on the earth.

Notice how verse twenty-one ends, "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began, that is Israel's prophecy program in a nutshell. The mystery program however was kept hidden from before the foundation of the world. It was not known to the prophets.

We are told by Paul that today we must believe and trust in Christ' death, burial and resurrection in order to be saved while the Jew under the gospel of the kingdom message had to believe as Peter did that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. There are similarities, but they are still different.

But Now

We have now seen what the mystery of the gospel is not. It is not the gospel of the kingdom that was preached "**in time past**" by John the Baptist, Jesus and the 12.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein **in time past** ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

We will now see what the mystery of the gospel is in all its fullness in the time identified as the "**but now**" period by Paul in Ephesians 2:13:

Ephesians 2:13 **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Just what about the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection was kept hidden from before the foundation of the world, but now is made manifest to us? The fact that Gentiles who were far off would be made nigh and we would be "in Christ" by the blood of Christ.

Paul calls the mystery program "the unsearchable riches of Christ" because it is not found anywhere in the writings of Moses or the prophets,

because it was revealed only after the cross to the apostle of the Gentiles to be dispensed by him unto the body of Christ.

It is only found in the thirteen epistles that all begin with the same first word: Paul. The word "mystery" appears 22 times in the King James Bible, once in Matthew, four times in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and seventeen times in the Pauline epistles.

The verse(s) in Matthew and Revelation all have to do with Israel's prophecy program, while all the ones found in the Paul's epistles have to do the mystery program for the body of Christ.

There is disagreement as to just how many mysteries there are actually in the mystery program. Some say seven, others eight. For most of the religious world however, the mystery program as a whole, still remains a mystery to them.

The setting for the mystery of iniquity

God first revealed the mystery of the gospel to the apostle Paul, which he dispensed to all those that he came into contact with, how that we are justified today in this dispensation by grace, through faith Ephesians 2:8-9.

Other mysteries were then revealed unto him later which are in accordance with the statements made by the apostle Paul himself in 2nd Corinthians 12:1-7:

2nd Corinthians 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

and:

2nd Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

The mystery of the catching away (the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ) is taught in 1st Thessalonians, the very first epistle written by the apostle of the Gentiles.

He also writes about the mystery of iniquity in this very same epistle, which tells us that these mysteries were made known unto Paul to dispense unto us from very early on in his ministry.

Luke makes no mention of Paul's revealing of these two specific mysteries on his first missionary journey, which took place in Acts 13 and 14. It was not until Paul's second missionary journey that began in Acts 16, that we find Paul talking about these two mysteries.

It is actually after he receives his vision to go into Europe (Macedonia) that we have any record of Paul teaching these two particular mysteries.

We read about these mysteries in the past sense there, meaning that Paul mentions them in first Thessalonians as teachings that he told them when he was first with them, which would have been on the second half of his second Missionary journey Acts 16:9-17:10.

2nd Thessalonians 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

What is the mystery of iniquity?

First of all, let me restate what has been said in the other lessons concerning the mystery program. The mystery program for the church, which is Christ's body, consist of numerous mysteries, not just one. The mystery program is part of the manifold wisdom of God (See 1st Corinthians 2:7 and Ephesians 3:10).

The different mysteries combine to make up the mystery program that was kept secret since the world began but was later revealed to the apostle Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).

A mystery is something that is not made known for a time until it is revealed by someone or something. God revealed these mysteries to Paul to give to the body of Christ only after the cross.

God kept these mysteries a secret because they dealt with Satan's plan of evil (called the course for this world) and how God would deal with the mess that the devil has made.

The mystery program deals with Satan, his angels, the fall of man, and God's plan for the future of the earth through Jesus and the nation of Israel, and the future of the heavenly places with the church the body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

Satan is God's adversary, and God was not about to reveal his mystery program to Satan and to the world before the cross so that Satan, the prince of the devils, would go through with the crucifixion as part of his evil plan, not knowing he was sealing his own fate by encouraging Christ's crucifixion.

1st Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Let's take a look at what the mystery of iniquity is, and what it is not, and see what it is associated with in Paul's epistles, starting with Second Thessalonians:

2nd Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, **2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. **3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

First notice that the man of sin, also called the son of perdition will not be revealed until after the coming of the Lord, and our gathering together unto him at the rapture.

The antichrist sitting in the temple of God is the abomination of desolation spoken of in Daniel. It is not the mystery of iniquity, because that was already mentioned hundreds of years ago in Daniel's prophecy to Israel (Daniel 9:24-27).

If it is a part of the prophecy program, then it is not a part of the mystery program. Paul does, however, add some additional information to Daniel's

prophecy. Paul identifies the antichrist as the man of sin, and the son of perdition.

Paul mentions that there would be a falling away first, before the man of sin could be revealed. He also previously mentions our gathering together with Christ which is a separate mystery discussed in more detail in that study.

When the rapture ends this current dispensation of grace, the mystery program will end, and Israel's time clock will restart with their prophecy program picking up right where it left off in early Acts before Saul of Tarsus got saved.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

Paul had already during his first visit to Thessalonica told them these things soon after they had gotten saved. Paul didn't have much time in Thessalonica if you read the account in the book of Acts. What is it that withholdeth the man of sin from being revealed in his time? First of all, "the what" is revealed as a he in the next verse.

He must be taken out of the way. We are the body of Christ and have the holy Spirit indwelling us, God will take us (the body of Christ) out of the way as it will not be the time of the body of Christ's trouble, it will be the time of Jacob's trouble (Israel). We (the body of Christ) are not appointed unto wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

If the mystery of iniquity was working in Paul's day, and it was according to verse seven, then it is still at work today in the same dispensation of grace that Paul revealed unto us.

I have recently read a book numerous times by a wonderful brother in Christ that comes up with a different conclusion about what the mystery of iniquity is than I do. That is okay.

I am sure I don't always come to the right conclusion on some things because we all have different biases that lead us in different directions in some of the greyer areas.

He says that the mystery of Iniquity is how God is dealing with iniquities today because of the cross work of Christ. That is something that was a mystery for sure because God kept the way he was going to deal with sin a mystery so that Satan would go ahead with his plan to have Jesus killed.

But the context of 2nd Thessalonians 2 seems to be dealing with God's hindering (letting) of the devil during the dispensation of grace through the power of the Spirit of God that is in each member of the body of Christ. We are Christ's body and members in particular.

If Christ is a male and he is, and he is our head, and he is, it follows that since we are his (male) body, then we are identified as being male. We are the body of Christ, not the bride of Christ. Believing Israel is the bride of Christ.

I know I just lost some of you, but please stay with me. See our Revelations study Part II on just what the bride of Christ is according to scripture, and not what a particular religious system says it is, just the scripture.

See Revelation 21:2 if you just can't wait, but please read the whole chapter so that you can get the context. Not to do so will only cause more confusion. The antichrist cannot be revealed to Israel until the church which is Christ's body is taken out of the way at the rapture.

He will then later be consumed with the spirit of God's mouth and be destroyed with the brightness of Jesus' coming at the second advent. All of his power and influence will be destroyed as he is cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and as Christ begins his reign here on the earth.

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

They had a choice to believe the truth but rejected it for the pleasure of sin for a season, They will become so diluted that they will believe the lie of the antichrist because of all the signs he will be able to do, and God will allow them then to be damned because they chose to reject the truth he presented to them.

Three times in these twelve verses Paul writes about doctrines that are being spread by Satan's forces to deceive those who have heard the truth. The devil is using doctrines of devils to deceive people today in the body of Christ. He does not use the same tactics as he did with Israel because the holy Spirit hinders his power with the organism that is the church which is Christ's body.

We are not Israel under the law of Moses today, so Satan has to attack this new entity (the church which is his body) in a totally different way. Old ways of attacking Israel will not work on the one new man. I believe Paul in his first epistle to Timothy backs this up when he contrast iniquity with godliness:

1st Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.

Paul talks about how Satan is using deceit to get people to follow anything other than the truth. Anything other than sound doctrine. He uses seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

It is no mystery that we have an adversary (the devil), it was however a mystery how God would hinder Satan in this dispensation of grace through the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery (which is a series of doctrinal truths that God had put forth to educate the body of Christ as to Satan's working in this current dispensation.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 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. 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.

The Course of this World

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The Mystery of Israel's Blindness

Numbers 23:7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. **8** How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? **9** For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Israel was not to be reckoned (counted) among the nations (Goyim-Gentiles) because God had elected them as a nation to become a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, an holy nation but only if they would obey his word, and keep his covenant.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Instead, Israel played the harlot, and fell when her Deliverer came, and she rejected him, and is now blinded in part for the time being, so that God can send salvation to all mankind without distinction in this un-prophesied dispensation of grace that we find ourselves in today.

Blindness In Part

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

From verse twenty-five we learn that Israel was blinded in part, but Israel's blindness is not the mystery here, because their blindness was prophesied in the writings of the prophets, as well as in the gospels.

Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Paul even backs this up earlier in the same chapter of Romans when he says:

Romans 11:7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded **8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. **9** And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: **10** Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.

Israel is promised that all of her promises made to her by God will be fulfilled in her kingdom, so Israel's sight (spiritually speaking) has to be restored in full, now they are bowing down their backs all the time touching the ground spiritually speaking trying to find their way.

Israel was asleep on the job, as seen portrayed in the life of Jonah, who was asleep in a boat running away from God and the message that he was called to preach.

The spirit of deep sleep

Isaiah 29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. **11** And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee:

and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? 16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Notice that only after Israel had been given many opportunities to repent and return to the LORD did, he finally allow a spirit of sleep to be poured upon Israel as a punishment for their rejecting their Creator.

The timing of Israel's Blindness

The apostle Paul tell us in the body of Christ today that Israel's blindness in part will only last until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Paul also tells the body of Christ that during the time of Israel's blindness in part, that God will establish a new entity called the body of Christ, or the church which is his body.

This new entity/body is the means whereby Jews and Gentiles can now be saved apart from Israel. For more on this subject see our study on the body of Christ.

This was not spoken of anywhere in the writings of the prophets, this is the mystery aspect of Israel's blindness in part that was revealed only to the apostle Paul.

The Times of the Gentiles

vs

The Fulness of the Gentiles

Let's take a look at what the times of the Gentiles, and the fulness of the Gentiles mean in scripture, but notice as you read that the two things are synonymous, and the two key words to prove that are: Gentiles and fulness/fulfilled.

The times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, **6** As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. **7** And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? **8** And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. **9** But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. **10** Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: **11** And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. **12** But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. **13** And it shall turn to you for a testimony. **14** Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: **15** For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. **16** And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. **17** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. **18** But there shall not an hair of your head perish. **19** In your patience possess ye your souls. **20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. **21** Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. **22** For these be the days of vengeance, that all

things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. 29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. 37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

In verse thirty we are introduced to the term "the times of the Gentiles". The fulness of the Gentiles mentioned in Romans 11:25 has to come to pass (the rapture) before the end of the times of the Gentiles, but just what is "the times of the Gentiles" then?

As long as Jerusalem is trampled underfoot of the Gentiles it is still the time of the Gentiles. Israel does not control Jerusalem today, only part of it. Gentiles control much of it. Israel will be taken away as captives into every nation as they suffer the time of Jacob's trouble as mentioned in Jeremiah 30:7.

This time is Israel's last week of seven years mentioned in Daniel for breaking the covenant they made with God at mount Sinai. Seventy weeks (of seven years) were determined as the amount of time Israel would suffer for her breaking the covenant she made with God.

The times of the Gentiles began when Judah's last king named Zedekiah was blinded for his sin for disobeying the LORD through the words of Jeremiah, and for the sin of the nation of Israel.

It will end when Jerusalem is no longer trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Guess what? That hasn't happened yet. Even today Muslims control half of Jerusalem, including the temple mount.

Jerusalem will not be delivered until Christ returns and makes his enemies his footstool at the end to the seventieth week of Daniel when he sets up his kingdom.

King Zedekiah was taken into Babylonian captivity, and he died there. He pictured what was happening with the nation of Israel at that time because they had finally gone too far away from God and were now beginning in their fifth stage of punishment mentioned at the end of Leviticus chapter 26.

The Five Stages of Blessing for Israel

Leviticus 26:1 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

The Blessings for obedience:

3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4 Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their

fruit. 5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. 7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8 And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9 For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. 10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. 11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 13 I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

The Punishment for Israel's disobedience

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you;

Israel's first course of punishment

I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

Israel's second course of punishment

18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron,

and your earth as brass: 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

Israel's third course of punishment

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.

Israel's fourth course of punishment

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; 24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

Israel's fifth course of punishment

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. 31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. 34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be

in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. 35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. 36 And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. 37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

The remedy for Israel

40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; 41 And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: 42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. 43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. 45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD. 46 These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

Did you notice how verse forty-five ends? "That I might be their God:" There is a time, in their kingdom, when God will once again be Israel's God, and she shall be his people. That is proven by the very chapter where God pronounces that Israel would not be his people, and he would not be their God:

Hosea 1:8 Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. **9** Then said God, Call his name **Loammi**: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. **10** Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. **11** Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Israel will once again become God's people and he will be their God, but only after the time of Jacob's trouble comes to an end. The time of Jacob's trouble are the "those days" spoken of in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **32** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **33** But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **34** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Those days, are the time of Jacob's trouble, when Israel will have gone through its last week of punishment as mentioned in Leviticus 26, Daniel 9:24-27 and Jeremiah 30:7:

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

The seventieth week is seven years long as shown in Genesis 25 in the story of Jacob serving Laban for a week of seven years for his wife Rachel.

Genesis 29:27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. 28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

Those that endure unto the end of this terrible time will enter into their kingdom, and God will be their God, and he will give unto them eternal life, and write his word onto their hearts (this has nothing to do with the church today). We (the body of Christ) will be in heavenly places enjoying all spiritual blessings. Praise the LORD. See Ephesians 1:3.

Israel's blinded eyes

John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

John 12:40 is a quote by Jesus from Isaiah 6:9-10, and as I mentioned earlier, Israel's blindness was not the mystery, because their blindness is spoken about in the writings of the prophets. The apostle Paul alone tells us the mystery aspect of Israel's blindness in part in both the book of Acts, and the book of Romans 9-11.

Act 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 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. 28

Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

Did you see what Paul said that got the Jews to reason among themselves? He said something that was unheard of before in the writings of the prophets. He said that "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it."

That is part of the unsearchable riches of Christ that was revealed unto Paul to reveal unto the body of Christ, and many in Israel hated what Paul said, it meant that Israel was being cut off as the means by which salvation could come to the Gentiles if they would convert to Judaism.

Judah's Last King

For now, I want you to join me on a study of three Jews in scripture that relate to this very subject. The first of which is king Zedekiah (Mattaniah) found in Second Kings and the book of Jeremiah.

He reigned over Judah in Jerusalem for 11 years until it was taken by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, beginning the times of the Gentiles (when Israel was not self-ruled, but ruled over by other nations).

The Preaching of Jeremiah to Israel

Jeremiah 38:1 Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, 2 Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. 3 Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. 4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold,

he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you. 6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire. 7 Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; 8 Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, 9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city. 10 Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. 11 So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12 And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

The King's questioning of Jeremiah the Prophet

14 Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me. 15 Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? 16 So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life. 17 Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth

unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: 18 But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. 19 And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. 20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. 21 But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me:

Jeremiah's prophecy to King Zedekiah

22 And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back. 23 So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire. 24 Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die. 25 But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee: 26 Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there. 27 Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived. 28 So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken.

Verse twenty-eight is the key verse in chapter 39, because in it we find God's man in the dungeon as a testimony of the spiritual temperature of the nation of Israel (Cold hearted towards the things of God).

It also tells that Jerusalem was taken at that same time the nation treated Jeremiah in such a way, and the promise of Leviticus 26:27-33 was fulfilled when God allowed the city of Jerusalem to be led away captive into Babylon:

Leviticus 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. 31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Jeremiah Thirty-nine

1 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. 2 And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up. 3 And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4 And it came to pass, that when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain. 5 But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought

him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. 6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem. 9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained. 10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

Both Samson and Zedekiah were both Jews that were blinded and went into captivity. Jews will go into captivity once again in the time of Jacob's trouble and they will have an opportunity to be saved as the gospel of the kingdom will go out to them in every nation on earth wherever they may have been dispersed to.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The Mystery of his will

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Since we here understand that the mystery program was delivered unto us by the apostle Paul concerns that which was kept secret since before the foundation of the world, we just need to ask the following question:

What was it that God kept secret about his will since the world began? It is no mystery that in the kingdom God's will shall be done on the earth as it is in heaven. That is something that has been spoken about by the prophets since the world began.

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

What is the mystery of his will? The answer is in verse ten:

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

God has his plan to gather together in one all things in Christ.

We have the when: In the dispensation of the fulness of times.

We have the who: All things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth.

We have the what: God the Father will gather together in one, all things in Christ.

In Ephesians 5 God through the apostle Paul commands us,

Ephesians 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Can you follow the Lord's command to be wise if you do not know what the will of the Lord is? No, you cannot. We are told in verse 15 to walk circumspectly (cautiously), not as fools, which implies only fools rush in like the song says.

A wise person will walk cautiously, and in Houston that's a way of life if you just want to go out for a walk to get some exercise. We are talking about our Christian walk, however. A wise person is someone thinks before he acts. Suzanne and I went for a walk the other night and it got dark rather quickly.

We didn't think it was so wise to still be out in a park in the dark in Houston, so we started to walk more circumspectly.

We were looking ahead of where we were. We discussed what to do if someone jumped out of the woods at us. We discussed how foolish we were for going out after 7 PM because we did not have enough time to get back to the car before it got dark.

We now plan to move our walks up 30 minutes. Do you know why? Because we don't want to walk as fools walk. The devil's crowd is looking for those who are foolish in the body of Christ because he can take them down the easiest. Don't be an easy target!

God had a secret plan hidden from all of Creation that in the dispensation of the fulness of times (not time) he might bring together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth, even in him.

From this verse we have all kinds of wishful thinking, or doctrines of devils as I call it. There are those liberal theologians who teach a universal reconciliation, where Satan, Hitler all those in hell will all come together in the future and sing cum bi yah my Lord. Well, that is not what this verse is talking about at all.

You have to stay in context. How do we begin to understand Ephesians 5:17-18? We have to understand Ephesians 1:10. How do we understand Ephesians 1:10? We need to understand Ephesians 1:3-9, so let's go there, shall we?

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

My question to all of you is, are you there yet? Have you arrived? What are you talking about Brother Phillips? What am I asking you is are you in heavenly places yet? What I am asking you is, where are your spiritual blessings?

The one goes hand in hand with the other. You can't get your spiritual blessings because your still in your physical bodies. You need to have something happen to physical condition to affect your spiritual condition.

You must put off **the terrestrial in order that you may put on the celestial**. How will that happen? Two ways. One way is at death. **To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.**

That was not always so. Israel has an earthly hope in the kingdom. When a Jew who died in a right relationship with his Creator, he would go to not the Lord's Bosom, but Abraham's bosom. Abraham's bosom is in the heart of the earth.

Where they would await the resurrection of their bodies that are buried in the earth to unite with their souls and a new Spirit be given unto them, so they may reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years.

Job 14:11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: 12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. 13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! 14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Job is a type of Israel that is hidden in the grave (Abraham's bosom) until God's wrath is past (the time of Jacob's trouble Jeremiah 31:31). Then Christ will come at the appointed time set for the Israel of God and he will tell all the dead to come forth out of the grave and their change will come. Those who had died before shall live again on this earth.

Mankind has always known that there was more to life than to just eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Man knows because he has been told from the beginning that there is life after death.

For Israel, and all before the Law, it is here on the earth, but for a mysterious group of people in this dispensation there are the heavenly places that we will occupy.

Ephesians 1:3 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:

Another secret (which had never happened before the body of Christ was formed beginning with the apostle Paul), is that the Father hath chosen us to be in Christ before the foundation of the world, and he kept that as a part of the unsearchable riches for a little over 4,000 years of human history.

1st Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a

pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

No prophet ever spoke about the body of Christ being formed that would live in heavenly places. Only God and angels dwelt in heavenly places before the dispensation of grace.

It's nice to know we are not a plan B. God had us in the body of Christ in his plans from before the foundation of the world. What does it mean to be, in Christ? Read Ephesians 1:3 again and let's see how it ends:

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

In Christ. How do we get in Christ? There is no zipper that we can unzip so we can be in Christ, that's think physically. We are to inherit all spiritual blessings in the spiritual realm of the heavenly places and so we must get into Christ in a spiritual way, not a physical one.

That is where the holy Spirit comes in. We in the body of Christ originally got in the body of Christ by trusting in another component of the mystery program, the mystery of the gospel. The gospel that was dispensed to the apostle Paul.

1st Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. 18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

In the current administration of grace, a gospel was committed unto the apostle Paul to dispense unto us called 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.

He did not say that the gospel of the kingdom was also committed unto him as it was unto the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel.

That kingdom gospel was for a nation to fulfill the promises made unto the fathers, but that good news of their kingdom being at hand was quickly rejected, and the kingdom was put on hold, so God could usher in the current dispensation of grace.

We get in Christ after we simply believe the gospel (good news) of the grace of God:

1st Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 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:

The moment that we believe the gospel of the grace of God, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures, we are placed into Christ by the one baptism of the holy Spirit mentioned in Ephesians also:

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We are placed into Christ when we believe the gospel of the grace of God.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized 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.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Spirit baptism can mean you are identified with Christ, because you are in Christ, how much more can you be identified with him than to be in him? In the baptism “by” the holy Spirit the word “baptism” literally means to be placed into. Who else could place us into Christ other than God’s holy Spirit? No one could!

Ephesians 1:4 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:

What were we chosen for? Salvation? No matter what a Calvinist says! It says that we, as the body of Christ, meaning every saved person since the apostle Paul through the rapture, were chosen to be holy and without blame before him in love.

Guess what? You cannot be holy before God, or without blame, if you are still positionally in Adam, because then God would see you as sinners, but because you are in Christ, God sees you, holy, and without blame, because you are in him.

He doesn’t see you, he sees Christ, the perfect Son of God. He is not speaking to us as individuals, he is speaking to us in this the greatest of all the books in scripture as the body of Christ. He is the head; we are the body. See Ephesians 5:23-27.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 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.

Because we are in Christ, and we are his body, we should glorify him in our bodies. We should be submissive one to another. This is one of two

mysteries, the other being the mystery of godliness in 1 Timothy 3:16, that are called great by the apostle Paul. This is covered more in depth in that lesson.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Not only are we in Christ, but God the Father is in us according to Ephesians 1:4. And if God is our father, what does that make you? Sons and daughters. How so? Adoption!

Notice that verse five says that we (the body of Christ) are predestinated unto the adoption of children. The word adoption has a new meaning to us today than it had in scripture.

Our destiny (that's all who have trusted in the gospel of the grace of God) have the exact same destiny, and that is unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the means by which the body of Christ will receive the adoption of children. It is according to the good pleasure of God the Father's will that the body of Christ be receive the adoption of children by Christ to himself.

The will of God the Father is that the body of Christ is to be holy and without blame before him in love one day. We are not doing such a good job of that down here, but we (the body of Christ collectively) will soon receive the adoption (the rapture), and then the body of Christ will be holy and without blame before him in love.

Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

As you can see here, we see the adoption is related to the redemption of our body. This is a reference to the rapture of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according

to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

God has made us (the body of Christ) accepted where? In the beloved, Jesus Christ is the beloved. He is beloved of the Father, and because we are in Christ by believing the gospel, we are beloved of the Father as well.

We have redemption through his (Jesus') blood. What is redemption? It means to be bought back from our earthly father, the devil, but it means that we have the forgiveness of sins, because Jesus blood is richer than any banker ever dreamed to be. His blood pays our debt that was impossible for us to pay.

He hasn't given us just enough grace to get by, he has abounded towards us with grace and given us the manifold wisdom of God in understanding the mysteries delivered unto the apostle Paul.

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Just what was the mystery of his will exactly? That in the dispensation of the fulness of times (a dispensation that is yet to come) the Father might gather together in one all things in Christ.

Some say they only believe in two dispensations, law, and grace. What about the dispensation that occurred before the law? Do they not believe that 1,500 years was a dispensation? They just refused to think about it.

What about before Adam in eternity past? Is that not a dispensation? What about the Kingdom? Is that Grace part 2? How about the time after the new heaven and new earth are created? Is that not a dispensation? It is as well.

To say you do not believe in any dispensations today, is to flat-out deny the word of God. To say there is only two dispensations is to ignore, or deny the word as well.

The dispensation of the fulness of times, not time, he is going to gather together in one all things in Christ. both which are in heaven (that will be us

because we will be in heavenly places), and which are on earth; even in him: that would be the kingdom saints.

So, just what are these all things that are in heaven, on which are on the earth? For that we will look deeper into the book of Ephesians and its companion book Colossians.

Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

That sounds a lot like the Father's will for us in Ephesians. He wants his children not to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, but to be full grown mature sons and daughters of God, able to function to our fullest in the body of Christ.

So, he has given us the Pauline revelations to fill us with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. So, what are the "all things" that God the Father wants to bring together in one in the dispensation of the fulness of times? Colossians again gives us the answer:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The Rapture of the Church which is Christ's Body

The word rapture does not appear in the scriptures. It is a transliteration of the Latin word Rapturo, which means to be caught up.

1st Thessalonians 4:13 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Notice Paul's use of the pronoun "we" because he expected the Lord to return in his lifetime. The Rapture of the body of Christ is imminent (it could happen at any moment).

The Rapture of the Body of Christ (the church which is his body) is the last event of the dispensation of the grace. It is mentioned only in Paul's writings and nowhere else in scripture. It is not in Matthew 24! That is the Revelation of Christ after the Tribulation Period, It is not in Revelation 4 either.

Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

There will be a departing from the faith (the doctrines of grace) in the latter times of the dispensation of grace.

1st Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The next event to happen after the rapture will be the time of Jacob's Trouble spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet:

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

The "he" here is Jacob, Jacob became or was renamed Israel by God later in his life. It is the time of Israel's trouble, not the church which is Christ's body.

It is also called Daniel's seventieth week by many today. It would be more accurately called Israel's seventieth week and Jerusalem's seventieth week according to the angel Gabriel:

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

The Rapture was a mystery until Paul revealed it unto the body of Christ:

1st Corinthians 15:51 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.

If Jesus were talking about the rapture in Matthew 24 then Paul could not have been revealing a mystery to the people of Corinth, they would have already known about it from Christ.

Jesus was telling Israel about his literal, visible return to set up his kingdom, known as his revelation or revealing, when every eye shall see him, not the rapture which will be a secret return in the clouds that only Paul reveals in his writings.

God kept his mystery program of the dispensation of grace a mystery until he revealed it to the Apostle Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. See Romans 11:13.

The dead in Christ do not include the Old Testament saints! They are promised an earthly destiny in the Kingdom, while the body of Christ has an heavenly destiny. Old Testament saints will be resurrected at the beginning of the kingdom to rule and reign on earth with Christ for a thousand years.

The mystery among the Gentiles

(Christ in you)

Colossians 1:27

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

That Christ would be in the Gentiles is something not made known unto the prophets since the world began, until it was revealed to the Apostle of the Gentiles. Before the body of Christ began, if a Gentile wanted to be saved, they had to come to the Jews, for salvation was of the Jews.

After Israel rejected their Saviour, salvation was sent to both Jew and Gentile alike without respect of persons and Christ would begin to take up residence in believers (Christ in you).

Christ never indwelt anyone under the Law of Moses, but now God is building a new creature, the one new man, the body of Christ. So much more could and should be said on this subject, but that is for another day.

The mystery of God

Colossians 2:2

The mystery of God is a general title regarding the mystery program as a whole, as it was revealed unto Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, by direct revelation from the ascended Christ.

The mystery of iniquity

2nd Thessalonians 2:7

The mystery of iniquity is concerning the revealing of “**the man of sin**” who masquerades as the world’s Christ, but who is really the Anti-christ who will deceive the world during the tribulation period?

He will be the impersonator of Christ coming in the flesh (see the mystery of godliness 1st Timothy 3:16), when the devil enters into human flesh, in the person of the anti-christ.

2nd Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

The Mystery of Iniquity was already working in Paul’s day. People were claiming that they were in the day of the LORD (the Tribulation Period) at that time.

Paul said that there must come a falling away first, then the man of sin can be revealed. The Greek word for “falling away” is the word Apostacea from where we get our English word Apostacy.

What is apostacy? It is a falling away from the truth, or a departure from the truth. Since the Greek word can mean a “departure”, could it be referring to the rapture? It is the forsaking of the truth. Acts 21:21 uses the Greek word Apostacy and says that Paul was teaching Jews to forsake (Apostacea) Moses.

Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

It could, but it isn't needed here, because Paul clearly states his support for a rapture when he mentions the coming of the LORD, and our gathering together unto him.

People were making claims that the Spirit told them that they were already in the Tribulation Period and there was no rapture, others were even saying that Paul wrote a letter claiming that very teaching to deceive many.

That is the mystery of iniquity, deceiving people to cause them to be shaken in mind (not settled on truth) and they believe a lie, and therefore trouble them and those who hear this false teaching.

The Mystery of Iniquity is an outright attack on the teaching of the Rapture as Paul states in the opening verses of 2nd Thessalonians because Paul mentions very clearly the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.

Those two statements alone tell us Paul believed in a pre-tribulational view of the rapture, and why wouldn't he? The Mystery of the Rapture was revealed unto him directly by revelation from the ascended Christ.

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The word let, or letteth, means to hinder. When a tennis player serves the ball and he hits the net, a person yells "let", meaning the ball was hindered. What is hindering the revealing of the wicked one? The Holy Spirit who resides in each member of the Church, which is Christ's body. Who will the man of sin be revealed to?

To believing Israel during the Tribulation Period, as it will be the time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), not the body of Christ, because Paul clearly teaches that we (the body of Christ) are not appointed unto wrath.

1st Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

When we are taken out at the rapture the Holy Spirit will no longer dwell in the believer. The Holy Spirit will once again begin to come upon the new believers in the Tribulation Period.

Just as he once did when believing Israel was baptized "with" the Holy Spirit in the early days when the Church in Jerusalem was strictly made up solely of Jewish believers (the little flock of Luke 12:32).

The Holy Spirit filled them, and they needed to be filled again and again to receive boldness to witness and perform miracles. He did not indwell them but only filled them for a short time and for a specific reason.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Notice they were filled "with" the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, and then had to be refilled again here in Acts 4:31, because the Holy Ghost would come and go on them.

Today believers are baptized "by" the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, but prior to Paul those Jewish believers were baptized by Christ "with" the Holy Spirit.

The way to avoid the effects of the mystery of iniquity in the dispensation of grace is to study the Bible rightly dividing the word of truth and you will

not fall prey to the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils that blend Israel's Prophecy Program with the Body of Christ's Mystery Program.

2 Timothy 2:14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

The mystery of iniquity is all about trying to overthrow the faith of some to keep them from the knowledge of the truth. The mystery of iniquity will come to its Zenith (peak) in the Tribulation Period with the man of sin, but he will be revealed at that time to the believing remnant of that day.

We, in the body of Christ, cannot predict who the Anti-Christ will be. Stop buying these nut's books who say that they know who he is, only to write a new book a few years later with different conclusions.

The Mystery of the Faith:

Every Deacon, in every Church, is required by the word of God to hold in their minds (to understand) the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Less than 1% of all Deacons have any idea of what this actually means, and it is one of their main qualifications for their office:

1st Timothy 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

This mystery is sometimes considered another mystery, but it is speaking of the overall mystery program revealed to the Apostle Paul. Deacons should be taught all of these mysteries because God expects them to know them and to work together with their church to propagate them.

The mystery of godliness

1st Timothy 3:16

First of all, you need to realize that this mystery is about the godliness (a lower case "g" is used), not the mystery of God (an upper case "G").

Secondly, you need to read chapters one and two of first Timothy, and all of the preceding verses leading up to this passage in chapter three, especially verse fifteen, before you try to begin to understand verse sixteen so that you will get the context.

Most people take verse sixteen way away from its context, and try to give it a private interpretation, and many wrong teachings can come out of that method, as well as divisive teachings.

Let's take a look at the immediate context:

1st Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Notice that the preceding verse gives you the context in a nutshell. **“That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God:”**

Paul is writing to Timothy in one of the last epistles that he will write. He will soon be re-arrested, and put to death for his faith. He is writing these pastoral epistles to Timothy, who now has the responsibility to train and ordain elders (pastors) since Paul will no longer be able to do that while he is in prison.

In verse fifteen we learn that the house of God is the church of the living God, and it is **the pillar and ground of the truth**. The truths for this age of grace that were given to Paul by revelation from the ascend Christ.

The Church is not the truth, it is the pillar, and the ground of **the truth**. The Church (the body of Christ) is supposed to hold up the truth. James,

Cephas, and John all seemed to be pillars in the Jerusalem Church to Paul, but they were not without fault, because they were all born sinners.

Peter's words and actions were wrong on occasions. James and John both selfishly wanted to sit on Christ's left and right sides in the kingdom, only the word of God is perfect.

The Church here was what Timothy was being told about, and how the members that make up the Church are the pillars, and the ground of the truth, but **the truth** is the real issue at hand here, not the church.

Every teaching in every church in every city is not the truth, because many churches speak different things that all can't be true, they are not holding up the truth if they do not understand, promote, and defend the mysteries given to the Apostle Paul. The word of God, however, is the truth that lets us know how we are to behave ourselves in the church of the living God.

There is a very large religious group which calls itself the church today, and it says that they are the pillar and ground of the truth, and that truth can change from leader to another over the years, as we have seen in our own lifetime with them switching positions on some major teachings. The word of God however is the truth, it never changes.

The word of truth is that which each church is to believe and to proclaim to the world. The scriptures will alter the things taught in a church, but a Church can never alter the scriptures. Verse sixteen is one of two of the most powerful verses in all of the scriptures that teaches the deity of Jesus Christ, and guess what?

The devil attacks this verse with all his subtilty, and he uses ministers to do it (even grace preachers), yes there is disagreement with some of them on these verses. That is nothing more than the seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils that Paul warned us about in 1st Timothy 4:1.

They begin their attacks by using the exact same method Satan did in the garden. "**Yeah, hath God said?**" They first question God's word, "and then they outright deny it. **Ye shall not surely die!** See Genesis 3.

Sometimes they accomplish this by attacking the King James Bible in favor of another version that supports what they were taught, and at other times they spiritualize away the literal meaning of the words, or the teaching.

“In the "best" manuscripts it says.,”

God **was** manifest in the flesh, and he is now in a glorified resurrected body today, like the one we will have one day. He tabernacled in the flesh 2,000 years ago.

Do you remember the Tabernacle in the wilderness? What was it? It was a tent, or a Tabernacle made of skins (flesh) that housed the Glory of God inside it. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. See Isaiah 7:14.

If your Bible has the word "**he**" in the place of the word "God," then you have a Bible that cannot be trusted. If the note for that verse says, "**Some Bibles use the word God here, but the best, or most reliable manuscripts say he**", or "**a more accurate translation would be he**," then get rid of that perversion from the truth.

If you have a Bible like that, then you have a Bible that has problems. God **was** manifest in the flesh! It is not a big deal to say "**he**" was manifest in the flesh?

All of us are manifest in flesh, but God being manifested in the flesh 2,000 years ago to Israel was a big deal. We will take a deeper look at the meaning of this verse later on in this study.

You are not God in the flesh today!

I am a man who is made of flesh and bone, but I am not God manifest in the flesh. God does however dwell in me today, and he manifests himself through all believers today:

Christ in you

Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 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, the hope of glory:

Christ in me (or Christ in you), that is the mystery that was hid in God prior to it being revealed to the Apostle Paul (our Apostle), but again, what does 1st Timothy 3:16 say?

Notice that the verse says, God **was** manifest in the flesh, not that God **is** manifest in the flesh. There is a difference. Everything about verse 16 is **past tense**. Christ is however, manifesting himself today in us.

The body of Christ (meaning the church) is not God manifest in the flesh. Christ alone is God manifest in the flesh. God does manifest himself today however, through his body (the body of Christ).

Paul tells us here that "**great is the mystery of godliness**" (Godlikeness with a small g), and he begins it by reminding us that God became a man, and he is the greatest example of how we should live a godly life.

If you want to practice godliness (the theme of the Pastoral Epistles, by the way which is not a coincidence), then you should follow God's example when he was manifested in the flesh.

How can we know what godliness is without God manifesting it to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ? How can the world today know what God is like if we don't allow him to manifest himself to them through us?

If you look at the chapter where this teaching is mentioned, and the chapter that follows it, you will find the context. The context is godliness, or godly living.

How are we to know how to live a godly life, or how to behave ourselves in the church of God, if we don't have the word of God, and the witness of God coming to man in the flesh 2,000 years ago?

The word godliness appears fifteen times in the Bible, most of the appearances are found in the pastoral epistles of 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, and Titus.

The only other times the word godliness appears in the Bible is in 2nd Peter 1:3, 6 & 7, and 2nd Peter 3:11, and Peter actually mentions that Paul taught his own hearers about godliness, just as Peter was teaching his hearers what godliness was.

The Greek word for godliness is **G2150 eusebia**, and it only appears fifteen times in the Bible. It is translated fourteen times as **godliness**, and one time as **holiness** in Acts 3:12.

The big controversy, of which there should be no controversy, is over the word God, not the word godliness. Theos is the Greek word for God in the Bible. There are those who hold to the position that the word God should be translated "he", that is because they come from very similar words.

The Strong's concordance list it as word number **G2316**. The word godliness however appears only one time as the Greek word **G2317 Theosebeia** which has the word theos in it.

The Greek words for "he" in the Bible are the words "**autos**" and "**he, ho, or to**". None of these words look, or sound anything like the Greek word "**theos**". It sounds like some people don't want it to be read here that God was manifest in the flesh so that they can teach something else.

Was it a mystery that cannot be not found in the Old Testament that God would one day manifest himself in the flesh? No! It is a fact found in numerous places in the Old Testament. Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14, & 9:6-8 to name a few.

Didn't John, an Apostle to the circumcision, write about God being made flesh? Yes, he did, but there is more to the verse than just God being manifest in the flesh, read the rest of the verse.

The mystery of godliness is about godliness. What was revealed about godliness by Paul that has been previously kept secret since the foundation of the world? God is now living in us, and we have the holy Spirit convicting us of sin, so that we can let Christ live through us and be a witness to the lost.

Let's take a look at the ten occurrences of the word godliness that Paul waits to use until his last three epistles, and let's see what we can glean from a study of them.

It is necessary to cover chapter two as it is all about the subject of godliness in the believer's life. Notice that it is connected heavily with prayer, and with the study of the word of God. First, he deals with the men in the first eight verses:

1st Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For

this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

If a man will pray as mentioned above, it is a godly thing for them, and Christ was our example in the area of prayer. He prayed for others. He wants us to pray for our leaders, as that will also lead to some of them being saved, and their using their authority to help us lead a quiet and peaceable life.

Notice that when he says to the men that when they pray it's God's will that they pray lifting up holy hands, as opposed to unholy hands. Godliness living, verses ungodly living will get God to hear your prayers easier.

Now it's the ladies turn to learn how to live godly lives:

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

It is not my goal to teach on the roles of women in the body of Christ in this lesson, it is however my goal to show the link to godliness in Paul's epistles as it relates to both men and women today in the body of Christ.

If a man sees a woman professing godliness in the congregation adorned with modest apparel, he will not let his mind wander, and he will be able to focus on spiritual things instead of fleshly things.

There are more and more congregations today where a woman is teaching or preaching to men, and she is not fulfilling what the scriptures say a woman is to do to possess godliness.

Seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils

1st Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; **2** Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; **3** Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. **4** For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; **5** For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. **6** If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. **7** But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. **8** For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. **9** This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. **10** For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. **11** These things command and teach. **12** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. **13** Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. **14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. **15** Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. **16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

A believer in order to live a godly life must exercise himself, or herself with prayer and with doctrine. We all hate to exercise, and our flesh is

selfish, but we must do these things if we wish the spiritual benefits of a life lived in godliness.

You will not only enjoy life more without regrets, and sleep better, but eternity will be better for all concerned as well. Let's also take a look at the word godliness in chapter six as it is mentioned four times there as well.

The doctrine which is according to godliness

1st Timothy 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he

shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen. *The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.*

Where does God live today?

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Believers are in Christ according to Romans 8:1, and the Spirit of God dwells in us, and it also says the Spirit of Christ lives in us according to Romans 8:9:

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Over and over again we are told that God Spirit dwells in us fleshly beings, How does he do that? By faith in His Son. Christ in us, the hope of Glory is a mystery not experienced in the Old Testament, nor was it known to them, and the mystery of godliness is that we let God live out his will through us.

If God dwells in us, and our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost then where is God's house? In individual believers for sure, but in the assembly of believers as well, the Church.

1st Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1st Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Great is the mystery of godliness:

How many of the seven mysteries that make up the mystery program are separated by the distinction of being a "great" mystery? Just two, the mystery of the Church, and the mystery of godliness. We make up the Church, the body of Christ.

This is a great mystery

Ephesians 5:30 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.

When we first get saved, we are babes in Christ:

1st Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on

the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

2nd Corinthians 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

A problem in many people's mind has arisen when they notice that the flow of verses 14 and 15 do not chronologically go along with the historical events that occurred in the life of Christ. Obviously, Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, but why would Christ need to be justified in the Spirit? He is God, and he has always been just.

A popular interpretation of these two verses about the mystery of godliness is that God was manifest in the flesh, it is speaking about the body of Christ which has Christ living in them, and through them manifests Christ the world through our flesh, by how we live a Christlike life in front of them.

When it says that He was preached unto the Gentiles (they say that is when Paul was sent to the Gentiles after the nation of Israel's fall), he was believed on in the world, when Paul took the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike.

Lastly they say that when it says he was received up into glory, that it means the rapture of the church, which is his body, as we are received up into glory when we are caught away.

Are there similarities with that explanation? Yes. Is it correct? Possibly, but I want you to notice something maybe you haven't heard before which is right in front of your eyes if you will look at it for a minute.

Great is the mystery of godliness

This mystery is also called great, there should be no controversy surrounding this mystery, but there is with those who would attack the word of God.

This mystery has to do with the teaching that God manifested himself in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago, and we are to manifest Christ to others through living godly lives as he did, because Christ is now dwelling in believers in this dispensation of grace.

That is the mystery that God had never done for the Jews under the law of Moses. The mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you,

1st Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The mystery of godliness is about godliness (God likeness). A mystery is something that is now being revealed, that has been hidden from before the foundation of the world.

The fact that Jesus was preached unto the Gentiles, in a way that was not manifested to Israel through her prophets, is a part of the mystery of godliness.

Gentiles under Israel's prophecy program would be preached to by Israel in her Kingdom only after they received the gospel of the Kingdom and believed on their Messiah.

This had not happened because Israel had rejected their King and therefore the Kingdom must be postponed and now a new mystery would be revealed called the mystery of godliness wherein God would reach the Gentiles in spite of Israel's fall, and he would cleanse them with his word.

He was believed on in the world, not during his earthly three-year ministry, but afterwards as the Apostle of the Gentiles would take the gospel to the Gentile world, and he was of course received up into glory at his ascension.

Just because his ascension is out of order with him having been preached unto the Gentiles and believed on in the world is no reason to start spiritualizing the passage and claiming it's not talking about Jesus at all, but it is the Church.

The word godliness first appears in the Bible in this epistle, interestingly enough, and it only appears fifteen times. Paul tells us how we are to be holy, or godly in this present dispensation, and how we are to behave ourselves in the body of Christ which is also called the house of God.

It is my prayer for you, and I hope you will pray for me, and for Grace Bible Institute, that God would open unto us all a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ to others.

Notice my underlining of verse sixteen above, do you see the four parts to the verse? First you see the topic: Great is the mystery of godliness. Then you see three two part explanations of what the mystery of godliness is, and that is almost always overlooked by the average grace believer.

Notice the back and forth between the earthly and the heavenly aspects of this mystery. Jesus Christ was baptized (placed into) into humanity, and we were baptized into his body. See 1st Corinthians 12:13.

Great is the mystery of godliness:

Earthly

Heavenly

God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,

Heavenly

Earthly

Seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles,

Earthly

Heavenly

Believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The End

Intro Test Questions

Introduction:

1. List the four scriptures that show the mystery program was revealed to the Apostle Paul by the risen Christ:
2. Who is the apostle of the Gentiles? Give scripture.
3. What two verses in Romans sixteen tells us about the fellowship of the mystery that God wants all believers to be established in?
4. What is the only scripture in Paul's epistles that tells us how to study the bible?

The Mystery of believers being changed Test:

1. When did Israel's partial blindness set in and what word does Paul use specifically regarding this and why?
2. When will this partial blindness be removed? Give scripture.
3. Give scripture of a picture of this partial blinding of the nation of Israel.
4. Give two examples of partial blindness - one in the gospel of John and one in Acts.
5. What were these two incidents a truth of?
6. Were the blinding of these two individuals permanent?
7. Why was Paul blinded temporarily?
8. What was the reason (besides unbelief) for Israel's partial blindness? Give scripture.
9. What was the reason for Barjesus' blinding?
10. Why did God have to keep something about Israel's partial blindness a secret from before the world began?

The Mystery of the Rapture Test:

1. Was the mystery of the rapture revealed to anyone before the apostle Paul? Why or why not? Give scripture.
2. Many of the mysteries in the mystery program can be found near what words?
3. What is the rapture referred to in the Bible?
4. Who are the “our” mentioned?
5. Where is His coming and our gathering located? Give scripture.
6. When was the “catching away” or “rapture” revealed - under Israel’s prophecy program or the mystery program?
7. Where is the word “rapture” found in the Bible?
8. What does the word “rapture” come from and what does it mean?
9. What other words are used in the Bible to explain the rapture or catching away? Give scripture.
10. What does the Blessed Hope concern?
11. What does the Glorious Appearing concern?
10. What does the Day of Redemption concern? Explain. Give scripture.
11. If you are saved today, you are:
 - a) sealed with: the holy Spirit of promise
 - b) the holy Spirit of promise is: the earnest or down payment of our inheritance
 - c) inheritance: salvation
 - d) until what time: the day of redemption
12. Are we sealed with the holy Spirit or baptized with the holy Spirit?
13. Who baptizes us into the body of Christ?
14. How long are we sealed?

15. Are there more than one rapture in the Bible and are they all associated with the body of Christ?
16. Who else gets redeemed from the earth during the tribulation period?
17. Does the rapture begin the tribulation period?
18. What ends the dispensation of grace?
19. Who are the two witnesses that are caught up to heaven?
20. When did Paul receive the doctrine of the catching away (rapture) and what was that doctrine?
21. When does the rapture/catching away occur?
22. When is the end of the dispensation of grace?
23. Are the day of Christ and the day of the Lord the same thing?
24. What does the day of Christ concern?
25. Where does the term “the day of Christ” appear? Give scripture.
26. What must come first before the rapture?
27. What is apostasy (apostasia)?
28. Will the man of sin be revealed before the rapture/catching away? Why or why not?
29. What is the body of Christ called in scripture?
30. When will the man of sin be revealed?
31. Who is hindering the revealing of the man of sin? How?
32. Will the world be without the ministry of the holy Spirit during the tribulation?
33. How will the holy Spirit minister during this time?

34. Why does the rapture happen?
35. What will the Lord subdue in the heavenly places?
36. Is the rapture/catching away imminent or scheduled for some time in the distant future?
37. Who knows when the rapture will occur?
38. Where did the teaching on the rapture originate?
39. How does the rapture happen? Give scripture.
40. Who will gather the elect of Israel after the tribulation? Give scripture.
41. Who will be raptured?
42. What will happen to our bodies?
43. What does Paul call our earthly bodies and what does he call our heavenly eternal ones? Give scripture.
44. What and/or who is the earnest of the Spirit?
45. What happens right after the rapture/catching away?
46. What happens to unbelievers?
47. Is the rapture of the body of Christ mentioned in any of the four gospels?
48. Why was the body of Christ kept hidden until after the Resurrection?

The Timing of Israel's Blindness:

1. How long will Israel's blindness in part, last?
2. When did God establish a new entity called the body of Christ?
3. What does this new entity/body a means of?
4. Was any of this spoken anywhere in the writing of the prophets?

The Times of the Gentiles Be Fulfilled:

1. How do we know that the time of the Gentiles is still going on?
2. Who controls Jerusalem today?
3. How many weeks are determined as the amount of time Israel will suffer for breaking the covenant she made with God?
4. When did the times of the Gentiles begin?
5. When will it end?
6. When will Jerusalem be delivered?
7. At what stage of punishment was Israel in when King Zedekiah was taken into Babylonian captivity and died there?
8. Where is the fifth stage of punishment found in the King James Bible?

The Five Stages of Blessing for Israel:

Obedience - Give scriptures

Punishment - Give Scriptures

What is the First Course of Punishment - Give Scriptures

What is the Second Course of Punishment - Give Scriptures

What is the Third Course of Punishment - Give Scriptures

What is the Fourth Course of Punishment - Give Scriptures

What is the Fifth Course of Punishment - Give Scriptures

1. What is the remedy for Israel?
2. What are “those days” found in Jeremiah 31:33?
3. How long is the seventieth week of Daniel?
4. What will happen to those that endure unto the end of the tribulation period?

Israel’s Blinded Eyes:

1. In what two books of the Bible does Paul tell us about the mystery aspect of Israel’s blindness?
2. What was it that Paul said in Acts 28:28 that got the Jews to reason among themselves?
3. Who was instrumental in having the means by which salvation could come to the Gentiles if they would convert to Judaism?

Judah’s Last King - King Zedekiah (Mattaniah):

1. King Zedekiah reigned over Judah in Jerusalem for 11 years before it was taken over by what King?
2. When did this takeover begin?
3. Was Israel self-ruled at this time or ruled over by other nations?
4. Who rescued Jeremiah from the dungeon and where did he remain after being rescued?
5. What is the key verse in Jeremiah 38 (change this from 39 to 38 in the course material) and what does it represent?
6. What else does this verse tell?
7. Who were the two Jewish men that were blinded and went into captivity. Hint: One was a judge, and one was a king.

The Mystery of His Will Test:

1. What was it that God kept secret about His Will since before the world began? Give scripture.
2. What is the when, who, and what of the above verse?
3. What are we commanded to do by God through the apostle Paul?
4. What is Job a type of?
5. What was the secret that God kept hidden before the foundation of the world and was part of the unsearchable riches of Christ?
6. Did any prophet ever speak about the body of Christ being formed that would live in heavenly places?
7. How do we get “in Christ”?
8. What were we chosen for?
9. How does God see us when we are “in Christ”?
10. Does God see us or His Son when He looks at us and how is this possible?
11. Since we are in Christ, God the Father is in us according to Ephesians 1:4. Since God is our Father, what does that make us?
12. What did God predestinate us to according to Ephesians 1:5?
13. According to Romans 8:23, what is our adoption related to?
14. God has made us, the body of Christ, accepted where?
15. Who or what is the beloved?
16. What is redemption?
17. Ephesians 1:9-10 mentions the “mystery of his will? What is it?
18. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, does this concern heaven, earth, or both?
19. What are the “all things”?
20. Does the word “rapture” appear in scripture?
21. What is the word “rapture” a transliteration of, and what does it mean?
22. What is the last event in the dispensation of grace?

23. Is the rapture mentioned anywhere else in Scripture besides the Pauline epistles?
24. What does Matthew 24 deal with?
25. What will there be a departing of in the latter times of the dispensation of grace?
26. What is the next event to occur after the rapture/catching away?
27. Do the dead in Christ include the Old Testament saints?

The Mystery of Iniquity Test:

1. What does the mystery of iniquity concern?
2. How does this man become the man of sin/the anti-christ?
3. What is the Greek word for “falling away” and what is it?
4. Since the Greek word, apostacea means “departure”, could it be referring to the rapture? Why?
5. What is the mystery of iniquity an outright attack on?
6. What does the word “let” or “letteth” mean?
7. Who will the man of sin be revealed to?
8. How will the holy Spirit work during the tribulation period?
9. How can believers avoid the effects of the mystery of iniquity during the dispensation of grace?
10. What is the mystery of iniquity all about?
11. Can the body of Christ know or predict who the man of sin is? Why or how?

The Mystery of the Faith Test:

1. What is the mystery of the faith?

The Mystery of Godliness Test:

1. What is 1st Timothy 3:16 concerned with?
2. What is the house of God?
3. What is the pillar and ground of the truth?
4. Is the church the truth?
5. What is the truth?
6. How does Christ manifest Himself today?
7. How many times does the word “godliness” appear in the King James Bible and where does it appear?
8. What is the Greek word for godliness?
9. How many times is it translated as godliness? How many times as holiness and where is it located?
10. Give three scripture locations in the Old Testament where it says that God would one day manifest Himself in the flesh.
11. How can we live godly lives?
12. What is a way to get God to hear your prayers?
13. According to 1 Timothy 2, how are women to live godly lives?
14. Where is the doctrine which is according to godliness found in scripture.
15. Where does God dwell today?
16. Who, or what else, dwells in us today?
17. How does God’s Spirit dwell in us?

18. What is the mystery of godliness?
19. Where are the two locations of God's houses?
20. How many of the seven mysteries that make up the mystery program are separated by the distinction of being a "great" mystery and what are they?
21. Explain the great mystery.

The Mystery Among the Gentiles (Christ in you) Test:

1. What is the mystery among the Gentiles according to Colossians 1:27?
2. How would a Gentile get saved prior to the cross of Christ?
3. Did Christ ever indwell anyone under the Law of Moses?

5. Name the two places God created in Genesis 1:1:
6. What governs those two places differently from each other?
14. What secret did God have planned and why?
15. Was this secret kept hidden in God from the beginning of the world?
16. To whom was this secret revealed?
17. What was the plan God had in place to redeem both the earth, and mankind?
18. Where will God, one day, set up the Kingdom of heaven?
19. What other "term" or "dispensation" is used for the "church age"?
20. When will this age end?

14. What period will follow the rapture? Give two names.
11. What was Jacob's name changed to? Give scripture.

12. What does Israel have a promise to become?
13. Are those saved today (Jew or Gentile) still a Jew or Gentile, or do they become something else, and if so, what? Give scripture.
14. Is the church today “spiritual Israel” or the “Israel of God”?
15. Are the heavens “clean”? Why or why not? Give scripture.
16. IF the heavens are unclean, will God cleanse them and if so, when? Give scripture.
17. Where is Paul’s gospel most clearly found in scripture?
18. From whom did Paul receive the revelations concerning the mysteries?
19. When did the mystery program begin?
20. When will the mystery program end? Give two scriptures.
21. When was Israel’s prophecy program put on hold (give scripture) and when will it resume?
22. What happened right after the 69th week ended?
23. God gave Israel one more year to repent to receive her kingdom, but she did not because she didn’t know what she was doing. Give scriptures where this is referenced.
24. Explain how Israel is like the fig tree, her unbelief, and the extra year to repent. Give scripture reference.
25. How does God work with Israel during this time?
26. What was the incident that occurred that Israel, like the fig tree, is cut down/off, but the root remains for when Israel will believe during the tribulation? Give scriptures.
27. When did Jesus stand up from His seated place at the right hand of God in Heaven? Give scripture.
28. Does God begin to pour out His wrath at this time?
29. The revelations of the mystery that Paul received from the ascended Christ, do they concern Israel, the body of Christ, or both?

The Mystery of God Test:

1. What is the mystery of God?