

***“Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Introduction —  
The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery, Part 2”***

**Review: “Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Introduction — The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery”**

- ***Paul's Doctrine Fills Full or Completes the Word of God***
  - ***In Col. 1 we read these words which we should never forget:***

***Col. 1:24-26***  
***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;***  
***26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:***
  - ***There is much wonderful truth here. But what is Paul saying? Why is he using the word “fulfill” here?***
    - ***What does the context indicate for the answer to this question? That these mysteries or sacred secrets regarding the dispensation, the gospel of grace, and the body of Christ all relating directly to the current working of God under grace were previously unrevealed and have now been revealed. So Paul's letters revealing these truths “complete” or “fill full” the word of God as verse 25 indicates. That should be so clear. Has this truth changed your life? It Surely has mine.***
- ***Paul's Doctrine Is Essential for our Understanding and Spiritual Growth***
  - ***What did Paul write here in Colossians that would explain his and the Lord's goals for giving this revelation? And does that help us to understand the meaning and critical importance of these doctrines for the believer today? These are essential questions to ask and hopefully easily answer by looked at what is written in God's holy word of truth.***
  - ***These are essential questions because without knowing what God is doing our works are inevitably in vain. For our works must be in line***

*with his. If we are trying to do what only he can do we will surely fail. And when it has been revealed what he is doing and we continue to do our own thing, no matter how religiously, we only underscore further our error. Those works which are fleshly and carnal at their base can never glorify God.*

- ***BUT SINCE IT ALL WAS HIDDEN IN GOD (NOT, NOTE, HIDDEN IN THE WORD OF GOD), IT COULD NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL GOD GAVE IT THROUGH PAUL AND THE SPIRIT MADE IT KNOWN TO OUR SPIRITS . AMEN.***

**Col. 1:26-28**

**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:**

**28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**

- *Then, growth and maturity in the faith today is and must be founded upon Paul's doctrine. Why would that be? Because the issue is what is God doing today, not on what did God do in the other dispensations now past or what will he do in the dispensation of the millennial kingdom (or the Great Tribulation) still future.*
- ***The Seven-Fold Dimensions of the Mystery (Parts 1-4)***
  - *This is most wonderful and blessed. This is at the heart of Paul's doctrine. This blessing is part of the whole realm of blessings, under grace, which he describes here at the beginning as "given to me for you (or "for your benefit"). This teaching is contained in seven (or more) parts and I call them here the various Dimensions of the Mystery".*
  - ***The Seven-Fold Dimensions of the Mystery (Parts 1-4):***
    - ***A New Dispensation, Our Current Reality (Eph. 3:1-9)***
    - ***A Better Gospel, Given for the Faith of Sinners (1 Cor. 15:1-8)***
    - ***Every Benefit of Christ's Work on Calvary, Fully Provided (Eph. 1:3; Rom. 8:28-30)***
    - ***An Abundant and Eternal Life, Offered Freely, Based on Christ's Righteousness! (Rom. 5:17)***

○ ***A New Dispensation, Our Current Reality:***

- ***The subject of a dispensation is all about “the rule of the house” since that is what the word “dispensation” means. So to speak of a dispensation of God is to speak concerning the rule of or principles of God’s working, or, as I like to put it, “what God is doing”!***

***Eph. 3:1-9***

**1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,**

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

**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 [the] Christ)**

**5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;**

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

**7 Whereof I 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;**

**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:**

- ***There are key parts of the “mystery” or “sacred secret” identified here and they are truly essential for us to understand:***
  - ***These truths were “kept hidden in God”, hidden from even the apostles and prophets — vv. 5 & 9***
  - ***This is all about the Gentiles and how God’s working today is to make them “fellow heirs” — v. 6a***
  - ***These Gentiles are included in the “one Body” — v. 6b***
  - ***They are also given “the promise in Christ” — v. 6c***

- ***And it is all “by” or “through” “the gospel” — v. 6d***
- ***This gospel was given to Paul to administer by a great gift of God’s grace.***

***This leads to the next segment of the mystery for us to look into today, that gospel itself. Paul says it was part of this mystery and therefore hidden until given to Paul. So there were other gospels and this one is distinctively different!***

- ***A Better Gospel, Given for the Faith of Sinners:***

***1 Cor. 15:1-8***

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:

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.

***Gal. 1:6-8***

**6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:**

**7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.**

**8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**

- ***But if it is even the gospel itself that is therefore under attack, Paul’s teaching is so very desperately needed as the corrective or antidote for those errors. It is there that we find our defense for it is his writings where we find the constant theme that the enemy desires very much to pervert his gospel***

*by adding legal requirements to it when in its essence it is all about God's abundant grace! The enemy sincerely desires and will use every means available to present the lie that the revelation given to Paul for us Gentiles including the gospel itself is not really unique and different but just an "evolution" of what had been revealed before to the Jews. The ending of the letter to the Romans says it with great power and simplicity:*

**Rom. 16:23-27**

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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:

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

- *So we see that Paul's gospel (called here "his own" in verse 25, speaking of his special endowment, is quite unique and that may be understood only as we read his letters and dwell upon their content, receiving this truth as our spiritual food.*
- **Every Benefit of Christ's Work on Calvary, Fully Provided:**
  - *So we see that the sacred secret now finally revealed is all about what God is doing today according to the riches of his grace. God has opened the door of salvation and blessing to the Gentiles by removing the law which was the great barrier. To accomplish this the law was "nailed to the cross" as he wrote it in Colossians:*

**Col. 2:13-14**

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

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross..

- ***And what blessings are these so freely given now even to Gentiles? Ephesians 1:2-9 tells us both in general, “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”, and specifically, our election in him before the foundation of the world, our sonship, our inheritance in him, our redemption through his shed blood with the full forgiveness of sins, and all the “according to the riches of his grace”. How wonderful indeed.***

***Eph. 1:2-9***

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

**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:

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

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

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;

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

- ***Only those saved by grace through faith are promised these heavenly and eternal blessings. Israel and the Jews were promised very much in earthly blessings which they have not yet received. According to Hebrews 11, our blessings are greater than theirs! Furthermore, part of the essence of our promises as revealed in the mystery given to Paul for us is that we would receive these blessings before they receive theirs. Oh joy!***

***But there is more, so much more, and even includes our life itself which is a very special gift of God’s unlimited grace:***

- ***An Abundant and Eternal Life, Offered Freely, Based on Christ’s Righteousness:***

- ***Based on the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to our accounts, and additionally his death and resurrection, we***

***Gentiles have according to Paul's doctrine been gifted with a new life.***

***Rom. 5:17, 20-21***

**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.)

**...**

**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.

- ***And these blessings will never end, for what God has begun in us must have its fulfillment in eternity:***

***Eph. 2:4-9***

**4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

**5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

**6** And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

**7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

**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.

- ***So God's eternal purpose in us shall be met. Praise God!***
- ***But this brings us to our lesson for today, the practical working out of his grace gifts through his transforming power bestowed upon us Gentiles who have been saved through his abundant grace.***

**Our Outline for Today (The Mystery or Sacred Secret, Dimensions 4 - 5):**

- ***The Indwelling of the Triune God, Providing Constant Resources in Living (Col. 1:26-27; Rom. 8:8-10)***
- ***The Church Which Is One Body, Given for Our Mutual Blessing (Eph. 4:4; 5:32)***

## Next Times

- *The Mature Life of the Believer Under Grace, Endowed in Every Way to His Glory (Gal. 5)*
- *The Blessed Hope & Expectation. Assured by Almighty God (Tit 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 5:9-11; 2:1-3; 2:13-17)*
- *A Heavenly Warfare, Demanding Our Constant Engagement (2 Thess. 2:6-12; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Tim. 4:1-4)*

**I. The Indwelling of the Triune God, Providing Constant Resources in Living (Col. 1:26-27; Rom. 8:8-10):**

- *Paul gives details regarding this life that is now abounding:*

***Col. 1:26-27***

**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:*

***Rom. 8:1-17***

**1** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

**2** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

**3** *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

**4** *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

**5** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

**6** *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

**7** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

***[READ ] Rom. 8:8-11***

**8** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

**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.**

**12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.**

**13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.**

**14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**

**15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**

**16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

**17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.**

- *All believers are blessed today with these gifts for they are all part of his working under grace in each of us as the apostle says so well in verses 8-10 here.*

*But it is in Ephesians, a later letter written along with Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon from a prison setting in Rome that Paul writes the details concerning these great gifts based in many cases on the indwelling of the Triune God in each of us his children.*

*Indeed, as he wrote in 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19, that the spirit of God dwells in us and that we are the temple therefore of the Holy Spirit. But in his later letters we see the full glory of God's working in us today revealed, for in general, and then in specifics:*

**[READ ] Eph. 3:14-21**

**14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

**16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

**17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,**

**18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;**

**19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

- ***So God will accomplish his mighty and glorious purpose in and through us beginning in this life and reaching its climax in heaven. He has gifted us accordingly with his Holy Spirit and with the spirit of his son. Additionally, we have the Father's nature dwelling in us so we are his children and sons. Amen! Are these scriptures and encouragement to you? They have transformed me and continue to do so.***
- ***Praise God. We have been given an empowering that was never given to man before!! Both the indwelling of the Spirit of God and the indwelling of the risen Christ. All of us have both, and if you can receive it, even more, for the Father also dwells within each of us, for we are his children and we have our new nature from him. Praise God and the riches of his grace. It is so amazing and so wonderful indeed.***

***The indwelling of the Triune God is a teaching that we simply cannot live without. If we did not possess this reality we would have so little of what we have been blessed with today under the fullness of his abundant grace. Amen.***

- ***We now move onwards. One of the most blessed and consequential Pauline doctrines is that of the Body of Christ, the "one body" teaching so clearly made known in Eph. 4. After early in chapter 3 revealing the Mystery or Sacred Secret teaching given to him for us Gentiles, he gives instruction in that chapter of a general nature as we have seen and now proceeds to give detailed and specific instruction in words that are most glorious. Those words given earlier in that chapter were intended to prepare the reader for the extreme magnitude of the more specific revelation that will come next. And it is glorious indeed:***

**II. The Church Which Is One Body, Given for Our Blessing (Eph. 4:4, 15-16; 5:32):**

- ***This teaching regarding the One Body of Christ is written initially here in the form of an exhortation effectively summarizing many of the truths already shared:***

**[READ ] Eph. 4:1-7**

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

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.

**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.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- ***Note that here several aspects of the sacred teaching called the Mystery are also mentioned including the Indwelling Spirit of God, the faith as the ground of our salvation, and the Baptism which brings us into the Body of Christ. Those were already mentioned in earlier chapters here in Ephesians or in letters to the churches writes before the Ephesians, such as Romans, 1 Corinthians, or Galatians.***

***This is a wonderful summary of the various dimensions of the Sacred Secret as I have called them here, isn't it? But what we read here in the following verses is the practical teaching of how these gracious gifts are designed to work together in our lives. But, he writes these gifts resulted in gifted believers that are thereby designed by God Almighty to work together "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It is to be expected that the enemy would want to destroy the power of these gifts and Paul writes about that next.***

- ***For these several "graces", aspects of the gift according to grace are shown here and described in their fullness as for our benefit and edification. First we see the "body life" described as the members jointly bless each other from Christ, the Head, down to each of us and through each of us, the body's members. It is a special and deeply meaningful analogy since we all have such intimate knowledge of our own body and the interactions between its members. But as we all know, our lives here on this earth are also often the devil's playground:***

**[READ ] Eph. 4:14-16**

14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

- ***But there is even more revealed about the Body of Christ in chapter 5, with the analogy of husband and wife in the marriage bond. That seems on first look to be a teaching about marriage, but Paul corrects that by his wording in verse 32. He then applies to teaching to the marriage bond in verse 33:***

**[READ ] Eph. 5:31-33**

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.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

- ***Only Paul was given the teaching for the church which is his Body. Believe it. It is true. Check it out. Even Peter was not given the teaching through Christ, but received it through Paul and found it “difficult” to understand years later. His final written words in scripture make that crystal clear:***

**2 Pet. 3:15-18**

15 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

- ***Paul’s letters are filled with these teachings so important for “grace” believers, members of Christ’s Body, to know and understand. And***

*critically important, all of the exhortations found in his letters are based on God's unlimited grace and his empowerment through that grace and by the spirit. Amen.*

- *Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 10-12, Eph. 2-4, Col. 1-3 contain the Pauline revelation concerning the Body of Christ, ten chapters! How important did he consider them to be for us? We see in Eph. 4:14:*

*Eph. 4:14 ... That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*

- *So he underscores the absolutely critical necessity of understanding this teaching. Take it to heart, believer, he says, for otherwise we may remain like immature children, easily deceived by the enemy which is everywhere!*
- **SO THIS IS THE BOTTOM LINE: THE LORD GOD DESIRES TO GLORIFY HIMSELF THROUGH US SAINTS. THE BODY OF CHRIST TAKES CENTER STAGE THEREFORE.**

**WHAT IS GOD DOING IN THIS DISPENSATION OF GRACE? QUITE SIMPLY, HE IS WORKING HIS GRACE INTO US AND THROUGH US, ONE TO ANOTHER, AND THOUGH THIS "DISPENSATION" HE HONORS HIMSELF THOUGH SUCH AS OURSELVES. OR, AS HE WRITES IN 1 TIM. 3:14-16:**

**1 Tim. 3:14-16**

**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.**

### **Conclusions / Application:**

- *The Mystery or Sacred Secret revealed to Paul for us Gentiles contains such a wealth of truth that it is somewhat foolish to attempt to present it all in one hour, or even ten.*

- ***The dispensational change from the Lord working according to his unlimited grace to a working with his long awaited Kingdom will in fact be initiated once our calling into glory in the Blessed Hope has occurred. The truths contained in the sacred secret revealed to Paul are found nowhere outside Paul's writings. Only he received this teaching and only he is able to reveal it to us. The other scripture writers agreed to that in Gal. 2.***

***Let's remember that as we study God's Word of Truth which has now been "completed". As we study that word now by necessity comparing scripture with scripture, discerning the word according to dispensational context and understanding it accordingly, let us recognize what God was and is doing in every dispensational context. For us today living under the Dispensation of the Grace of God, let us relish and rejoice in the full extend of his grace and abound in it, confirmed and built up and enabled by the word of that grace, that we might be shining witnesses in his continuing ministry of that grace.***

***Let us never be drawn aside by other teachings that are given for our faith and understanding but not indeed for our obedience. Stealing other's blessings as our own is not our way I would hope. Let us be content always with what God has provided and promised to us Gentiles, forgiven, justified, and perhaps soon glorified! Amen.***