

Walking in This Divine Mystery Puts the Devil in His Place

I love a good mystery.

I have a good collection of Alfred Hitchcock and Poirot movies, because I love a good Whodunit; it's like putting puzzles together. I search for clues, trying to find the missing pieces, and when that final piece fits in place, I have a great sense of satisfaction.

Perhaps that is why I have always been drawn to the book of Ephesians.

In the first two chapters, Paul alluded to a mystery being revealed. He has whet our appetite, he has drawn us in, and now he is about to reveal what that mystery is.

But first, we must understand what Paul actually means by the word "mystery".

What is a mystery?

When we hear the word "mystery," we think of something that is impossible to understand or find out. But the word in the Greek actually means a divine truth that has been hidden away, but that is now being revealed.

which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ... and to reveal for all people what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:5, 9).

God doesn't make divine mysteries impossible to understand.

That is the problem with high liturgical religions that masquerade as Christianity. They teach that only educated theologians can understand biblical doctrine, but this is not true at all.

God specifically designed it that His Word can be studied and understood by the illiterate as well as the educated, so that all mankind can enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.

What is the purpose of the mystery?

So that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:10).

The purpose of the mystery is that the church would declare it to demonic forces!

That we would plunder hell to populate heaven!

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has resurrected together with Him, having forgiven you all sins. He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and contrary to us, and He took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed authorities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by the cross.

This is the good news of the gospel! Jesus Christ, seeing that we were dead and hopeless, made us alive by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, forgave us of our sins and by a judicial act in heaven completely obliterated the judgement written against us for our sins.

But He didn't just stop there! He then went out and completely disarmed demonic forces and publicly shamed them, put His foot

on their neck and raised His arm in triumph over them! This is the purpose of the mystery: declaring to demonic forces that they've lost, Christ has won, we are free, and they are defeated! Now ...

What is the mystery?

Now that we understand that God designed all along that we would discover this mystery and not only comprehend it, but live it out in our personal lives each and every day, He chose to reveal it through Paul for the very first time in human history in the book of Ephesians. Paul was given a special stewardship of grace by God to first understand this mystery and then write it out for us so that we could understand it too.

1. We are no longer aliens and foreigners.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God ... which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, *how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel.* (Eph. 2:19, 3:5-6, emphasis mine).

From the time God chose that Israel would be His chosen people until Acts 10, Gentiles could only come into the covenant of God through Jews. They could not independently enter into God's fact, for the most part, Gentiles were to be avoided by Jews. They were pagans and Jews were to have as little association with them as in Acts 10, Peter has a vision in which God calls him to take the gospel to Cornelius' house, a Gentile household. This is the first time the gospel has gone out of the Jewish community to the Gentiles. Yet, Peter's ministry was exclusively to the first part of this mystery revealed by Paul is that Gentiles can enter into all of the covenant of God independent of the Jews! As Gentiles, all of

the promises of Scripture given to the Jews, now apply to us as well. We are members of the family, we are citizens of God's kingdom, and we have full rights and privileges to the promises and covenant given in Scripture to God's chosen people-Israel.

2. A new temple has been created, and Christ is the cornerstone.

For He is our peace, who has made both groups one and has broken down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of the commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile both to God into one body through the cross, thereby slaying the enmity (Eph. 2:14-16, 19-22).

The plans for the temple given to Moses in Exodus had three compartments: The courtyard—where the people gathered; The Holy Place—where the sacrifices were brought by the priests only; The Holy of Holies—where God dwelt and the high priest could enter only once a year on a specific date (violation of this was a death sentence). God is revealing to us, through Paul, that in this mystery, God has created a new temple. We are the temple. God has chosen to dwell in the hearts of human man, not limiting Himself to time and space. He has torn down the curtain separating us from His presence so that we have access to the Father anytime, any place. But this has another meaning as well. God has torn down the wall separating the Jews from the Gentiles. Now we are all one people, all one body, and Jesus Christ is the cornerstone that joins the two people together as one holy temple of worship until Him. God has completely abolished the old temple and made a new temple, a new created body called the church, in Himself and made Jesus Christ the one who joins what was once two bodies that were enemies of one another together to make one body to His praise and glory!

3. This new temple—church—is the manifestation of Jesus on the earth

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

When Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross, rose the third day, and ascended into heaven, God chose to do something truly miraculous. Because God is outside of time and space, He chose to completely destroy the old plans for the tabernacle in Exodus and make the human heart His dwelling place. We are now the temple—the church. We don’t meet *in* a church. We *are* the church. The church—the tabernacle—was always designed to represent God’s presence among mankind. And that purpose remains today. The church—as individual temples of God, and as collective local fellowships and globally as Christ’s body— is designed to be the manifestation of Jesus Christ here on earth. Our purpose as a temple of God is to be a walking manifestation of Jesus Christ.

“Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me will do the works that I do also. And he will do greater works than these, because I am going to My Father” (John 14:12).

We are individually the church. We gather together locally in fellowships made up of individual temples of God. We are all part of the global body of Christ, over which Jesus Christ reigns supreme.

The purpose of this newly created church:

1. To be the manifestation of Christ to the world

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

2. To declare to demonic forces that they are defeated

“so that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10).

There is incredible power in knowing our identity in Christ, as His adopted children, His redeemed possession, His workmanship and now as His temple—His church. {eoa}

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