



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 128

The Mystery

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“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” (Romans 16:25).

Paul’s gospel was firmly centered in the “preaching” [i.e., proclaiming] of Jesus Christ. Yet Paul did not merely proclaim Jesus Christ based on His earthly ministry as recorded in the four “Gospels” of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Instead he proclaimed Jesus Christ based upon and advancement in truth from God; and progression known as “the Revelation of The Mystery.”

Why Is It Called THE MYSTERY?

Because it was Kept Secret.

*“... The Revelation of The Mystery, which was **kept secret since the world began**” (Romans 16:25).*

Because it was Hid in God.

*“... The fellowship of The Mystery, **which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God ...**” (Ephesians 3:9).*

Because it was Hid from Ages and from Generations.

*“Even The Mystery which **hath been hid from ages and from generations ...**” (Colossians 1:26).*

“Which in other ages was not made

known unto the sons of men ...” (Ephesians 3:5).

Because it was Unsearchable.

*“... That I should preach among the Gentiles the **unsearchable riches of Christ**”* (Ephesians 3:8).

Paul’s message was “unsearchable,” i.e., it was untraceable – unlocatable – in the rest of Scripture. (For a further look at *THE MYSTERY* study the following references: Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-4; 6:19; Colossians 4:3; I Timothy 3:9.)

Where Did THE MYSTERY ORIGINATE?

It Came as a Direct, Divine Revelation.

“I certify you, brethren, that the gospel

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Dear Saints,

We are aggressively taking the best articles that have appeared in past issues of the *Bible Student's Notebook* and making booklets and leaflets. These not only make good reading, but they are great tools to share truth with others.

We currently have 110 booklets and leaflets available. We offer the entire current set for a discounted price of \$40. These can be ordered separately (15¢ - \$1.49 each).

We read these as a family at our dinner table. We read appropriate ones with guests in our home. We use them to give to others we are fellowshiping with. We give them according to where people are at in their current understanding.

We encourage our readers to get a set and learn each of them well enough to know which ones to give to those we are engaging in Scriptural discussions with.

Here is what is in the current set:

All Things Are of God (Arthur P. Adams)
Beauty of Holiness (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Blood in Relation to..., The (C.I. Scofield)
Broken Things (M. R. DeHaan)
Busy Doing the Lord's Work (Andre Sneidar)
Called, The (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Christ in Our Everyday Lives (J.R. Miller)
Christian Individualism (Otis Q. Sellers)
Christian's Greatest Need, The (E.W. Bullinger)
Church's Heavenly Character, The (C.H. Mackintosh)
Clergy System, The (Carl Ketcherside)
Comparison of the Coming of Christ, A (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Enjoy the Learning Process (Ross Purdy)
Error of Eternal Conscious Torment (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Evangelism? or Ambassadorship? (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Exchanged Life, The (J. Hudson Taylor)
Fifteen Bombs (V.E. Jacobson)
Finding Purpose in Life (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Flesh, The (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Forever, Eternal and Everlasting (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Freedom from Letterness (C.S. Lewis)
Gap Theory – Affirmed (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Glorious Presentation of the Saints, The (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
God at Work (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
God in Redemption (A.E. Saxby)
God is Love (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
God Who Spares Not His Sons (Three Brothers)
God's "Wrath" (John R. Gavazzoni)
God's Present Purpose (Otis Q. Sellers)
God's Will: The Salvation of All (Andrew Murray)
Gospel Paul Did Not Preach, The (Bill Holcomb)
Grace! (William R. Newell)
Greatest Show on Earth, The (Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.)
Hidden Truth, Treasure, and Triumph (Eugene F. Rueweler)
Hope for the Downtrodden (C.H. Spurgeon)

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization" or "mission."

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**" (Galatians 1:11-12).

"... **By revelation He made known unto me The Mystery** ..." (Ephesians 3:3).

"... I will come to **visions and revelations of the Lord ... the abundance of the revelations** ..." (II Corinthians 12:1, 7).

The last words of the Lord Jesus Christ are not recorded in the book of Acts (chapter one).

To Whom Was THE MYSTERY REVEALED?

Paul was the Recipient of THE MYSTERY.

"... The gospel of the uncircumcision **was committed unto me** ..." (Galatians 2:7).

"... The dispensation of the grace of God **which is given me** ..." (Ephesians 3:2).

"... The dispensation of God **which is given to me** ..." (Colossians 1:25).

"... The gospel which was preached of me **is not after man** ..." (Galatians 1:11).

Paul wrote down the words concerning our Lord Jesus Christ (I Timothy 6:3) for the Body of Christ in this dispensation of Grace (Ephesians 3:2).

Paul was an apostle of the Lord (Galatians 1:15, 16; 2:8; Acts 9:15; I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11; Acts 26:16-17; Romans 11:13; 15:16).

What Does THE MYSTERY CONTAIN?

The Formation of the Body of Christ.

No other Bible author speaks of the Body of Christ.

Until Paul's reception of the revelation of THE MYSTERY, Israel had been the instrument of God. Now a new group of individuals, called out from among the nations, are being formed as the instrument of God (I Corinthians 10:17; 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, 12; Romans 12:5; Colossians 1:18; 3:15). This body of individuals is made up of Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14-18; 3:6) and begins with Paul (I Timothy 1:13-16). The body of Christ is God's *ecclesia* ("the church" – Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24). The body of Christ is a totally new creation (Ephesians 2:15; Galatians 6:15; II Corinthians 5:17).

**The Present Dispensation
(i.e., Administration) of Grace.**

No other Bible author speaks of this dispensation.

This dispensation begins with Paul (Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25). Grace has such control in this dispensation it is said to "reign" (Romans 5:21).

The Gospel of the Grace of God.

No other Bible author speaks of this gospel.

This wonderful gospel emphasizes and magnifies God's grace. Paul uses the word "grace" over 100 times in his epistles (more than any other Bible author.) This gospel was provided for by the finished redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it was not revealed until Paul (I Timothy 2:5-7; II Timothy 1:9-11).

The Temporary Setting Aside of Israel.

The revelation of THE MYSTERY gives the only scriptural answer to why God is not now dealing with the nation of Israel (Romans 11:11-15, 25). In the program of the "kingdom of heaven" the Gentiles were to be blessed by Israel's rise (Isaiah 11:1, 10). Yet, according to THE MYSTERY, the

Gentiles are blessed through the fall of Israel.

The One Baptism.

There were “divers” (many) baptisms under God’s program for Israel (Hebrews 6:2; 9:10). By contrast, the revelation of THE MYSTERY has only ONE baptism, which is spiritual (Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 1:17).

The Heavenly Position of the Body of Christ.

Whereas Israel’s hope was an earthly one, THE MYSTERY reveals a heavenly hope for the believers

in this age (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-3).

The Complete, Absolute and Total Forgiveness of Sins.

The Mystery reveals that all sins have been forgiven entirely, thoroughly, perfectly, and finally (Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 1:7; Acts 13:38-39; Titus 2:14).

God’s Forgotten Gift

SELECT READINGS ON *Trials and Suffering* (Part 1)

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29).

BROKEN AND POURED OUT

“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.”
Colossians 1:24

This call has nothing to do with personal sanctification, but with being made broken bread and poured-out wine. God can never make us wine if we object to the fingers He uses to crush us with. If God would only use His own fingers, and make me broken bread and poured-out wine in a special way! But when He uses someone whom we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we said we would never submit, and makes those the crushers, we object ... If ever we are going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed; you cannot drink grapes. Grapes become wine only when they have been squeezed.

I wonder what kind of finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you, and you have been like a marble and escaped? You are not ripe yet, and if God had squeezed you, the wine would have been remarkably bitter ... We have to be adjusted into God before we can be broken bread in His hands. Let Him do what He likes, and you will find that He is producing the kind of bread and wine that will benefit His other children.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)
My Utmost for His Highest

JIGSAW PUZZLE OF LIFE

Our experiences resemble a jigsaw puzzle ... When it is all ready, we shall find that the dark pieces of the puzzle were as important in the completion of the full beauty of the pattern as the brightest sections. The dark background will only bring out in bolder and

more gorgeous relief the figures in the picture, in the center of which will be His lovely face.

M.R. DeHaan (1891-1965)
Broken Things

DISAPPOINTMENT

Everybody faces disappointment, but how are Christians to deal with it? The answer boils down to trust in Jesus Christ. That means not just professing our trust, but practicing it. When we know that He is Life, the sting of disappointment finds a healing salve in the truth of His Word.

I have found a particular verse in the Bible to be a good antidote to disappointment in my circumstances. It is found in Philippians 1:6, where Paul wrote: *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* This verse is a reminder that the flow of our lives isn’t up to us, but rests on the shoulders of God Himself. This verse promises that He started His work in you and He will be the one to sustain it. At the risk of oversimplifying the matter, “God’s going to do what God’s going to do.”

We get into trouble when we think that our agenda has to be fulfilled in life. It isn’t up to us to fulfill our plans. That’s God’s business. Our role is simply to trust Him in every circumstance.

Are there disappointments you face in your own life today? Place them into the hands of a sovereign God who loves you and already has the details of life worked out for you. It’s okay to feel disappointment. That’s normal, but don’t be dominated by it. Instead, acknowledge your feelings to the Lord and then lay your expectations at His feet. Then move forward, being assured that He has your best interest at heart and will work out all things for your ultimate good and His highest glory.

Steve McVey
Grace Walk

THE PURPOSE OF THE VALLEY

God gives us the vision [of the divine viewpoint of who we are, and of our walk before Him], then He takes us down to the valley to better us into the shape of the vision, and it is in the valley that so many of us will be made real if we will have patience ...

God has to take us into the valley and ... until we get to the place where He can trust us with the genuine reality ... The vision is not a castle in the air, but a vision of what God wants you to be. Let Him put you on His [potter’s] wheel and whirl you as He likes, and as sure as God is God and you are you, you will turn out exactly in accordance with the vision. Don’t lose heart in the process... all noble things are difficult.

Every time you venture out in the life of faith, you will find something in your common-sense circumstances that flatly contradicts your faith. Common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense; they stand in the relation of the natural and the spiritual. Can you trust Jesus Christ where your common sense cannot trust Him? Can you venture heroically on Jesus Christ’s statements when the facts of your common-sense life shout – “It’s a lie?” On the mount it is easy to say – “Oh, yes, I believe God can do it”; but you have to come down into the valley and meet with facts that laugh ironically at the whole of your mount-of-transfiguration belief. Every time my belief is clear to my own mind, I come across something that contradicts it. Let me say I believe God will supply all my need, and then let me run dry, with no outlook, and see whether I will go through the trial of faith, or whether I will sink back to something lower.

Faith must be tested, because it can be turned into personal possession only through conflict ... The final thing is confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe steadfastly on Him and all you come up against will develop your faith. There is continual testing in the life of faith ... Faith is unutterable trust in God, trust which never dreams that He will not stand by us.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)
My Utmost for His Highest

CIRCUMSTANCES

Have circumstances caused you to feel beaten down? Are you tired? Spent? Weary? If so, you aren’t alone. I’ve been there at times myself. When that happens, I often find out that the heart of my problem comes from wanting to be the one in control of my life and all the things and people associated with it. It’s so easy to let ourselves become anxious about the situations of life.

While we want to feel our Father’s loving embrace at moments like these, it is sometimes a challenge of our faith to even keep our focus on Him. We are so

vulnerable to becoming preoccupied with the things that scream for attention. It's so easy to let our emotions be drained by other things, until we feel empty inside.

The answer isn't complicated. It is simply to trust Him. That's all you need. When you don't feel God's presence in the midst of your circumstances, He is there nonetheless, working out the details of your lifestyle in a way that is perfect and beautiful in His sight.

One day you will understand the intricate workings of your Father's hand in the details of your life. For now, your only response must be to know, even when you don't feel anything, you must know, that He only acts in ways that are for your good and His glory.

Choose to lean on your Father. Know that at every moment His arms are around you, sustaining you and holding you. That will never change. Though the world should fall around you, His arms will never let you go. He will protect, comfort and guide you all the days of

your life. Choose to rest in Him. It's the only way to move beyond fatigue in your circumstances.

Calm your troubled heart with thoughts of His love and faithfulness, His goodness and Sovereignty. He will never leave or forsake you. He will work out all things for good, according to the perfect plan that He has for you. Those things that concern you concern Him and are under His absolute control at every moment. Nothing escapes His attention; nothing lies beyond what His eyes can see and His hands can control.

Don't worry. All is well. When the winds blow and the waves toss your emotions and thoughts about, all is well. He is Lord of all things at all times. Rest in Him and find peace.

Steve McVey
Grace Walk



(continued from page 1346)

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Mystery: The Body of Christ,			

Elders: THE FORGOTTEN MINISTRY OF THE GRANDFATHER

by – James Wesley Stivers

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee” (Deuteronomy 32:7).

Parents are parents for life, and the covering they provide for their offspring grows ever larger ... The honor due them by their children is one which includes their legacy ... As men grow older, they become exalted fathers, the fathers of fathers.

In ancient Israel, each allotment of land had a village – a cluster of houses where there lived an extended family group (3-5 generations), with their servants, hired hands, and their families. Each man was the head of his respective household, but the over-all magistrate for that estate and of all who lived upon it was the leading male member. Generally, that male was the oldest father who was the heir to the land. His word was final. It was he who went to the city gates to convene with the other elders as the family spokesman. Of course, the Grandpa was not to be a tyrant or a despot. If he was, Biblical laws had ways of dealing with his sins. He did not meddle in the affairs of his grown children or of residents, as a rule. He supervised the affairs of the estate. He had eminent dominion. Primarily

though, he was there for consultation and to sit as a judge in family disputes. The goal of Hebrew education was to train children for dominion over their own estates. The training did not end at age 18. It was a gradual process of transference of power.

Grandpas had appellate jurisdiction within the family structure and he was the spokesman and elector for the family at the city gate. The village eldership was not subservient to the city eldership. Much like the equal suffrage of the several States in the United States Senate, they each stood on equal footing, irrespective of the populations of their constituent bodies ...

The link between the private government of the family in the home and on the family estate with the outside world is the eldership of the grandfather. This is the forgotten ministry.

Restoring the Foundations
1995, pages 59-62

Which Is Better?

WHICH IS BETTER?

A God who **saves**:

- some
- many
- all

A God who:

- **annihilates** some people
- **punishes** some people
- **restores** all people to Him

A God whose **will** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God whose **power** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God whose **love** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God whose **compassion** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God who has **reconciled**:

- some
- many
- all

A God who:

- **does** impute sin
- **does not** impute sin

A God who:

- **hates** his enemies

- **loves** his enemies

A God who has created an endless:

- **Hell**
- **Hope**

A God who depends on:

- **my** faith
- **His** faith

A God whose **mercy** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God whose **grace** is:

- limited
- unlimited

A God who includes

- some
- many
- all

A God who

- is limited by man's will
- has absolute sovereignty

WHICH IS BEST?

Depending on how you answered these questions, you end up with an image of God that is either **limited** or **unlimited**.

Which is **best**?

- a limited God
- an unlimited God?

What do **you choose** to believe about God?

- God is limited.
- God is unlimited.

Which would be more honoring to God?

BELIEVE THE BEST!

If you prefer the best wouldn't you think that God would also? For God to prefer the best He would use all things He has made in His Wisdom. God's best would bring all creation to a desired end or goal accomplishing His purpose.

Doesn't this bring peace of mind, harmony, joy and satisfaction with no condemnation?

He corrects and caresses us into His image. In this "best" view of God, there are no worries, threats, or fears. His generosity is for all and to all. The God of all creation is all knowing and all powerful. His Plan, Purpose, and Pleasure shall be done.

Isn't this better than a limited God? Wouldn't you prefer this better understanding of God? Truth makes all people free. Share these questions with others. They will challenge their thinking and understanding of The Almighty God.

Our view of God determines how we live our lives. Our view of God determines how we treat other people, as individuals or as groups.

Let us give God **our best!** After all, He has given us **His Best!**

by – Harold Lovelace
Saraland, AL