

Article of the Month October, 2016

The Hidden Mystery

People seem to like mysteries! Unfortunately, when Christians have questions which their ministers cannot answer, the questions are sometimes just passed off with some peculiar response like, “That’s a mystery. You can’t understand it. Just accept it on faith.” That should never be the case.

First of all, it is important to realize that a “mystery” is NOT something which is not understood. A mystery is something which is understood ONLY by “insiders.” That is how the Bible uses “mystery.” There are many “mysteries” in the Bible, but every one of them IS understood by the Lord’s initiated people. We wish in this article to look at only one of the Biblical mysteries. It is mentioned in Colossians 1:26:

“The mystery hid from ages and from generations, but now made manifest to His saints.”

We are looking at this particular mystery because it is at the root of all proper understanding of Scripture and of God’s purposes. Quoted in its context (from the NRSV), the passage from the Apostle Paul reads as follows:

“I became its (the Church’s) servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the Word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to His saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

We could analyze the words with great care; but perhaps the best approach is to explain their meaning and their consequences.

Nearly all religions have concluded that mankind must be saved during this present lifetime — or else they will end up in some disastrous after-life. But the whole world of religions has been deluded with this erroneous conclusion. The TRUTH of the matter has remained a “mystery” — and it is this mystery to which our text refers.

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The mystery, in short, is that God is developing a group of people who will be “glorified” — changed from human nature to a spirit nature. He is doing this because He wishes to give this group the *special privilege* and *special opportunity* of being the active agents in restoring mankind to the perfection it once enjoyed in Eden. This “restitution (or restoration) of all things” has been the message of all God’s holy prophets since the world began. (See Acts 3:20,21.) But it HAS REMAINED A MYSTERY despite the testimony of all those prophets! God has this unusual ability to tell something out in the open, century after century, and yet no one gets it! How’s *that* for a mystery!

So, mankind has been going on and on thinking the wrong things about God and His plans while God, Himself, has been taking out a people for this special privilege of blessing all the families of the earth — the PROMISE He made through Abraham thousands of years ago. This **IS** the “mystery hid from ages.” Once this group of faithful disciples of Jesus has been completed (there will be 144,000 of them — Rev. 14:1), THEN the promised Kingdom of God “on earth” will be established, and the restoration of mankind to perfection as humans on a perfected earth will proceed.

The concept is *simple* — so simple that nearly everyone has missed it. It has, indeed, remained a mystery for ages and generations and was begun to be understood only in Paul’s day when the Gospel Age (or Christian Age) was beginning. It has been during this period (about the last 2000 years) that God has been selecting this group of men and women to be an intimate part of His spiritual family (the “bride of Christ,” His Son). He will shortly give them, once glorified, the blessed commission to bless all the families of the earth. Then will the promise to Abraham be fulfilled: In thy seed (Gal. 3:29) shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The age-long prayer of Jesus and of billions will be answered: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Amen!
