

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## MYSTERIES

*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. I Corinthians 2:7*

Almost everyone enjoys a good story which keeps them in suspense, waiting for the unveiling of a mystery; keeping them occupied with anticipation, as they dwell on various solutions to the riddle in their own mind. The best of these mysteries cannot be fully solved apart from the author's full explanation as he masterfully plays out the sequences of events which work together to make the solution so clear, when it is finally revealed, that one wonders why they could not solve the conundrum before the finale.

There are also mysteries in the world which remain mysteries because of the inability of men to plumb their depths or scale their heights apart from DIVINE revelation. Quite often men assume that they have obtained the answer to some mystery which has stumped men for ages only to discover later that their hypothesis is brought into question by some other mystery solver who is equally certain that his solution is correct.

Paul declares to the Corinthians that he was sent into the world to set forth "a mystery", which the LORD had kept hidden from the beginning of the world. (see Eph.3:9). In a measure the whole of the gospel is a "mystery", since man by nature cannot comprehend it, nor receive it apart from DIVINE revelation. This is alluded to when the LORD told Nicodemus, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3)

Thus it is true that unless it is given unto men the ability to grasp and desire the message set forth in the preaching of the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD, then they cannot and will not receive it nor can they believe it. Many have said that the LORD taught in parables to make it easy for men to comprehend HIS teaching, yet the reality is that HE taught in parables in order to cause the things of the Kingdom to remain hidden to those to whom this Kingdom was not given. He pointed this out to HIS disciples when HE explained to them why HE taught in parables. "*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*" (Luke 8:10)

Men in their natural pride believe that they can arrive at the truth of GOD through their own efforts, philosophy, and study of the scriptures. This was especially true of those Jews whom Paul describes as "*going about to establish their own righteousness, (and) have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*" (Rom 10:3) While it is pointedly true of these Jews, they are but an illustration of all natural men who assume that they have within their own power, the ability to repent, believe, and follow the way of CHRIST.

Religious men are convinced that they can, not only, follow the way of CHRIST, but that they possess the power to teach other men to do the same. They are quite proud of their efforts in this endeavor and often publish various statistics which demonstrate their effectiveness. These published results are used to build followings and raise the much needed cash to keep their various enterprises rolling. They are like the Jews of whom the LORD said, "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*" (Mat 23:15)

The Psalmist understood this principle when he said, "*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*" (Psa 127:1) The LORD must reveal HIS truth to a man and give him a

love for it, in order that the man might receive it. *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1Cor 2:14)

The "mystery" which Paul speaks of contains many "mysteries", each of which cannot be discerned apart from the work of the SPIRIT OF GOD in a man. As a point of beginning we would consider the very "mystery" of GOD HIMSELF. To the Colossians he points out *"the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* (Col 2:2-3) Any man who thinks that HE has a complete knowledge of GOD in all of HIS ways and purposes is foolish. In writing to Timothy, Paul says of the LORD, *"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."* (1Tim 6:16)

All that we, as men, can possibly know about HIM, is what HE has been pleased to reveal to us in the pages of Scripture. We cannot know what else HE might have done or what worlds HE might have created. HE is greater than our loftiest thought and is beyond the scope of our knowledge. HE reveals HIMSELF as FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, yet can only be seen in JESUS CHRIST, who possesses all of the wisdom of the GODHEAD. To go into lengthy explanations of this GODHEAD is to tread upon ground which is an enigma shrouded in mystery, the depths of which is beyond the scope of man's understanding. Did, not CHRIST say, *"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"*? (John 14:9) With that we are satisfied.

We have already mentioned the *"mystery of the Kingdom"*, but we would be remiss not to point out that this is a Kingdom which is not inherited by flesh and blood. It is not bound by any geographical borders, nor inhabited by any particular nationality. Its KING sits upon no earthly throne nor has any limitations. Rather, as the Psalmist said, *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."* (Psa 115:3)

Then there is the "mystery" of Jew and Gentile being gathered together in CHRIST. *"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."* (Eph 3:6) Paul says, this 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."* (Eph 3:9) It is now apparent that the natural descendants of Abraham, in the Old Testament were but the foreshadowing of that elect people which were hidden in CHRIST from the foundation of the world. *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* (Rom 2:28-29)

There is the "mystery" of marriage. While marriage (between a man and a woman) was indeed ordained for the benefit of the human race, the greater purpose of marriage was to illustrate the everlasting, perfect, and unbreakable love which the REDEEMER has for HIS elect Bride, the church of CHRIST. *"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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* (Eph 5:31-32) For her HE came, and for her HE died and arose again.

The scriptures speak of the *"mystery of iniquity"* (2 Thess.2:7). Many become embroiled over the useless debate of the origin of sin, as if they could defend the honor of GOD. Nothing exists in this world that does not fulfill the purpose of GOD and has not sprung from HIS creative genius. Sin is necessary in order to demonstrate the glory of GOD's grace in the REDEMPTION of that people which HE chose in CHRIST and saw fit to subject them to vanity for HIS ultimate glory. Who is sufficient for such things and who could accuse GOD of unrighteousness?

We read of the *"mystery of the faith"*. (1 Tim 3:9) How could any man ever possess faith, were it not the gift of GOD? Or how could any man delight in the *"mystery of the faith"* if the LORD did not cause a man to love the gospel and desire to remain faithful to it?

Then the ultimate embodiment of all "mysteries" which are able to be known by the awakened sons of GOD, is wrapped up in Paul's declaration to Timothy, *"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."* (1Tim 3:16) This is the very basis of the faith which we profess. Let no man think that he has the faith of GOD's elect apart from seeing the glory of these events and rejoicing in them as the grounds of all of his hope and expectation. Herein we stand and magnify the glory of HIS grace and the blessing of HIS mercy revealed to sinners.