

## **Lesson Outline**

### **I What is a Mystery?**

- A. A New Testament Truth NOT Found in the Old Testament.
- B. Truth NOT Understood by the “Uninitiated:”

### **II What are the Mysteries of God?**

- A. The Mystery of Godliness.
- B. The Mystery of “Christ In You”
- C. The Mystery of the Church
- D. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God.
- E. The Mystery of Israel’s Blindness.
- F. The Mystery of the Rapture.
- G. The Mystery of Iniquity.
- H. The Mystery of Babylon the Great.
- I. The Mystery of God.
- J. The Mystery of God’s Will.

I Corinthians 4:1 *Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

**This study inquiries into these mysteries.**

## I What is a Mystery?

The word “mystery” or “mysteries” is found 27 times in the New Testament, translated from the Greek ‘mysterion’ meaning “something deliberately hidden.”

The Bible defines a mystery two ways:

### A. A New Testament Truth NOT Found in the Old Testament.

*Read Romans 16:25-26 <sup>25</sup>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, <sup>26</sup>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:*

This passage defines a mystery as something as something which:

1. Verse 25c: It is given according to revelation.
2. Verse 25d: It was kept secret in times past.
3. All verse 26: *<sup>26</sup>But now is made manifest (known), and by the scriptures... to all nations for the obedience of faith [The obedience of faith means also an absolute trust in God / scripture, though we may lack adequate information, yet what God tells us is enough for the time being.]*

The reference to the “gospel” and “Jesus Christ” in verse 25 identify “The prophets” of verse 26 as the writers of the New Testament. (The writers of the New Testament are called “apostles and prophets” – Read Ephesians 2:20 *<sup>20</sup>And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

Old Testament prophets foresaw the mountain peaks of Christ's 1st advent [arrival]:

- **The cradle.** Read Isaiah 7:14 *<sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*
- **The cross.** Read Isaiah 53:1-12 *<sup>1</sup>Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? <sup>2</sup>For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. <sup>9</sup>And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup>Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup>He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup>Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> advent: **the crown** – read Isaiah 2:1-3 *<sup>1</sup>The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. <sup>3</sup>And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go*

*up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

However, they could not see the great valley that was between these two peaks – the valley of the present age. Read I Peter 1:10-12 <sup>10</sup>*Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: <sup>11</sup>Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. <sup>12</sup>Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

Much of the mysteries of God are found in the valley between the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.

A mystery is now an “open secrete!”

B. Truth NOT Understood by the “Uninitiated:”

Read I Corinthians 2:6-16 <sup>6</sup>*Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: <sup>7</sup>But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: <sup>8</sup>Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. <sup>10</sup>But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. <sup>13</sup>Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup>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.** <sup>15</sup>But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. <sup>16</sup>For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.*

In this context, the mystery (verse 7) is set against the so-called mystery religion which was centered at Corinth – the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and sex.

Greek mystery religions abounded in the ancient world. These religions were characterized by elaborate initiation rituals and secrete rites, in many cases centered on a mother-child deity. Initiates into these cults were privy to the mysteries of sacred rites, secrete words, and symbols.

1. The wisdom of God is understood by them that are “perfect” (saved). Also, read verse 6a for the ‘spiritual’ man (verse 15).
2. This wisdom is hidden from the natural man (verse 14) which included the ‘princes’ of this world (verse 8).
3. Read Matthew 13:10-16 *<sup>10</sup>And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? <sup>11</sup>He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. <sup>12</sup>For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. <sup>13</sup>Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. <sup>14</sup>And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: <sup>15</sup>For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. <sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*
4. Read Matthew 11:25 *<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

*Reference to the mystery of God in Colossians 2:2-3( <sup>2</sup>That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; <sup>3</sup>In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.) is probably set against the heresy of Gnosticism – a late 1<sup>st</sup>*

and 2<sup>nd</sup> century perversion of the Gospel by Greek philosophy in which the initiates claimed special ‘knowledge’ (gnosis).

In these cases, a mystery is defined as divine “Truth hidden from the lost (unsaved)”.

## II What are the Mysteries of God?

There are TEN mysteries of the faith (context: speaking with respect to ministers, read I Timothy 3:9 *9* *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience [these ‘mysteries of the faith’ are master truths of Christianity].*

They are as follows:

### A. The Mystery of Godliness.

Read I Timothy 3:15-16 *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.*

This is the central truth (I Timothy 3:15d, “*the pillar and ground of the truth*”) of Bible Christianity – the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

#### 1. “God was manifest in the flesh,”

This refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ – a truth revealed in the Old Testament but not understood by the Jewish teachers/leaders. Read:

- Incarnation
  - Isaiah 7:14 *14* *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. [8<sup>th</sup> Century]*
  - Micah 5:2 *2* *But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. [7<sup>th</sup> Century]*

- Not understood
    - I Corinthians 2:8 <sup>8</sup>Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
    - Matthew 1:23 <sup>23</sup>Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.
    - John 1:1-5 <sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The same was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life; and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
2. [Christ was] “...*justified in the Spirit,*” This refers to the Father’s authentication of His Son at His baptism. Read Matthew 3:16 <sup>16</sup>*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: <sup>17</sup>And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*
- And, the declaration of the resurrection. Read Romans 1:3-4 <sup>3</sup>*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; <sup>4</sup>And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*
3. [Christ] was “...*seen of angels,*” This refers to special angelic ministry during the times of our Lord’s greatest trials. Read
- [Jesus being tempted by Satan] Matthew 4:11 <sup>11</sup>Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.
  - [Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane] Luke 22:43 <sup>43</sup>And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
4. [Christ] was “...*preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,*” This refers to the mystery of the Gospel; that salvation would extend beyond Israel’s borders and boundaries (**WOW! – this is huge – Jesus preaching this to Jews in Israel!**) Read:

- Ephesians 6:19 *<sup>19</sup>And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (make the Gospel known to the gentiles)*
  - Colossians 4:3 *<sup>3</sup>Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*
5. [Christ] was “*...received up into glory.*” This refers to His righteous ascension. Read:
- Acts 1:9-11 *<sup>9</sup>And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; <sup>11</sup>Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*
  - Hebrews 12:2 *<sup>2</sup>Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

## B. The Mystery of “Christ In You”

Read Colossians 1:25-27 *<sup>25</sup>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; <sup>26</sup>Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: <sup>27</sup>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:*

1. This mystery was **hid from ages and from generations**. It was NOT revealed through the Old Testament.
2. This mystery is **made manifest to his saints**. It is a New Testament truth.
3. Read John 14:15-26 *<sup>15</sup>If ye love me, keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may*

*abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup>Even the **Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; **for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** <sup>18</sup>**I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.** <sup>19</sup>Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. <sup>20</sup>At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. <sup>22</sup>Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. <sup>24</sup>He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. <sup>25</sup>These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. <sup>26</sup>**But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.***

In this passage, the Lord Jesus Christ gives us the **great promise** of His comforter.

- a. From Old Testament times up to this point in Christ's ministry, the Spirit dwelt with men. BUT, He (the Holy Spirit) could come and go. This explains David's prayer in Psalm 51:11 <sup>11</sup>*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*
- b. The promise that the Spirit would soon be **in** men. This began after Christ sent the comforter. Reads Acts 2 – the Day of Pentecost.
- c. This passage actually teaches that believers are indwelt by the Godhead.
  - The Holy Spirit, John 14 verse 17 <sup>17</sup>*Even the **Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; **for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.***
  - Read Romans 8:9-11 <sup>9</sup>*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. <sup>10</sup>And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>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.

- I Corinthians 6:19 <sup>19</sup>What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
- The Son, John 14 verse 20 <sup>20</sup>*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*
  - *Read: II Corinthians 13:5 <sup>5</sup>Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*
  - *Read: Ephesians 3:17 <sup>17</sup>That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*
- The Father, John 14 verse 23: <sup>23</sup>*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*
  - *Read: I John 4:12-16 <sup>12</sup>No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup>Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

**Note: This is a reciprocal indwelling.** Christ in you and you in Christ. Read:

- Ephesians 2:10 <sup>10</sup>*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
- Ephesians 2:13 <sup>13</sup>*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*
- Colossians 1:2 <sup>2</sup>*To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Colossians 1:28 <sup>28</sup>*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*

### C. The Mystery of the Church

Read Ephesians 3:1-10 <sup>1</sup>*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,* <sup>2</sup>*If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:* <sup>3</sup>*How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,* <sup>4</sup>*Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)* <sup>5</sup>*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;* <sup>6</sup>*That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:* <sup>7</sup>*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.* <sup>8</sup>*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;* <sup>9</sup>***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:*** <sup>10</sup>*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

The New Testament Church is not mentioned ANYWHERE in the Old Testament. Read Ephesians 3:5 <sup>5</sup>***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;*

The reference to Israel as the “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:37-39 <sup>37</sup>*This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your*

*God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. <sup>38</sup>This is he, that was in **the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: <sup>39</sup>To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,) is accurate because at this point in its history.*

Israel was a church – an assembly. It met the four requirements of an assembly:

Local	Visible
Organized	Constituted

However, while Israel in the Wilderness was a Church (congregation) it was not a New Testament Church.

The book of Ephesians speaks of two aspects of the mystery of the New Testament Church:

1. That Gentiles should be members of the body, Read Ephesians 3:6 *<sup>6</sup>That the **Gentiles** should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*
2. That Christ had broken down the “middle wall of partition”. Read Ephesians 2:11-16 *remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; <sup>12</sup>That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and **hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us**; <sup>15</sup>Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; <sup>16</sup>And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*
3. That Christ’s relationship to His Churches would be like the love between a husband and his wife. Read Ephesians 5:23-33 *<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup>Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup>That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>So ought men to love their wives as their*

own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. <sup>29</sup>For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: <sup>30</sup>For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

There is a mystery revealed in the Book of Revelation which shows more of the Lord's relationship to His churches. Read:

- The Lord stands in the midst of His churches. Read Revelation 1:12-13 *<sup>12</sup>And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; <sup>13</sup>And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*
- The Lord holds His preachers in His hand.

#### D. **The Mystery of the Kingdom of God.**

Read Mark 4:10-11 *<sup>10</sup>And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. [sowing of the seed parable] <sup>11</sup>And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:*

This has reference primarily to the parables of the kingdom spoken by the Lord.

That there will be a glorious Messianic kingdom on the earth is one of the great verities [truths] of the Old Testament. Read:

- Isaiah 9:6-7 *<sup>6</sup>For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

- *Isaiah 11:1-12* <sup>1</sup>And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: <sup>2</sup>And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; <sup>3</sup>And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: <sup>4</sup>But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. <sup>5</sup>And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. <sup>6</sup>The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup>And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. <sup>9</sup>They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup>And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. <sup>11</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. <sup>12</sup>And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.
- *Daniel 2:44-45* [Daniel speaking to king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days according to the king's dreams] <sup>44</sup>And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. <sup>45</sup>Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

- Daniel 7:9-14 <sup>9</sup> *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. <sup>10</sup>A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. <sup>11</sup>I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. <sup>12</sup>As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. <sup>13</sup>I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. <sup>14</sup>And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

### So what is the mystery?

1. The Jews were looking for the Messiah to set up this earthly kingdom. But, they had missed the FIRST part of the prophet's message. Read Acts 3:18-19 <sup>18</sup>*But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. <sup>19</sup>Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*
2. The kingdom is present now in its "mystery form"
  - a. **Intangible.** Read Romans 14:17 <sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
  - b. **Invisible.** Read Luke 17:20-21 <sup>20</sup>And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: <sup>21</sup>Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
  - c. **Spiritual.** Read John 18:36 <sup>36</sup>Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants*

*fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence [from this time; from now].*

- d. Entered through the door of **faith**. Read John 3:3 <sup>3</sup>*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

It is the reign of God in the hearts of willing subjects!

3. We pray for the earthly manifestation of this kingdom to come. Read Matthew 6:10 <sup>10</sup>*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

#### E. **The Mystery of Israel's Blindness.**

The entire 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans deals with the temporary (present-day) setting aside of Israel – a fact not revealed by ANY Old Testament prophecy.

Romans 11 <sup>1</sup>*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, <sup>3</sup>Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. <sup>4</sup>But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. <sup>5</sup>Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. <sup>6</sup>And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. <sup>7</sup>What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. <sup>8</sup>(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. <sup>9</sup>And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: <sup>10</sup>Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. <sup>11</sup>I say*

then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. <sup>12</sup>Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? <sup>13</sup>For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: <sup>14</sup>If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. <sup>15</sup>For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? <sup>16</sup>For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. <sup>17</sup>And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; <sup>18</sup>Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. <sup>19</sup>Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. <sup>20</sup>Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: <sup>21</sup>For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. <sup>22</sup>Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? <sup>25</sup>**For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** <sup>26</sup>And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: <sup>27</sup>For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. <sup>28</sup>As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and calling of God are

*without repentance. <sup>30</sup>For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: <sup>31</sup>Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. <sup>33</sup>O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! <sup>34</sup>For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? <sup>35</sup>Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? <sup>36</sup>For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

#### 1. Blindness in Part

- a. **God has not cast away His people forever.** Read verses 1-2 *<sup>1</sup>I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.*
- b. There is at this present time a **remnant who are saved by grace.** Read verse 5 *<sup>5</sup>Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*
- c. The rest of the nation has
  - **Been blinded.** Read verses 7,8,10 *<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were **blinded.** <sup>8</sup>(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. <sup>9</sup>And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: <sup>10</sup>Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.*

- **Stumbled.** Read verse 11: <sup>11</sup>*I say then, **Have they stumbled that they should fall?** God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*
  
- **Fallen** (due to the riches of the world). Read verse 12: <sup>12</sup>*Now if the **fall of them be the riches of the world**, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*
  
- **Been broken off.** Read verses 17, 18, 20 <sup>17</sup>*And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; <sup>18</sup>Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. <sup>19</sup>Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. <sup>20</sup>Well; **because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.** Be not highminded, but fear:*

## 2. The Fullness of the Gentiles

The setting aside of the Israel has meant the following for the Gentiles:

- a. **Salvation** (has come to the Gentiles): Read verse 11: <sup>11</sup>*I say then, **Have they stumbled that they should fall?** God forbid: but rather **through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles**, for to provoke them to jealousy.*
  
- b. **Riches** (of the world). Read verse 12: <sup>12</sup>*Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the **riches of the world**, and the diminishing of them (Israel) the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

- c. **Reconciliation.** Read verse 15 *<sup>15</sup>For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the **reconciling of the world**, what shall the receiving of them (Israel) be, but life from the dead?*

3. Until

There is a **time limit** to Israel's blindness. Read Acts 15: 14-16 (from verse 12) *<sup>12</sup>Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. <sup>13</sup>And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: <sup>14</sup>Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. <sup>15</sup>And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, <sup>16</sup>After **this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David**, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:*

This time limit corresponds to the present age – the indeterminable time between Daniel's 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week. Read Daniel 9:25-27 *<sup>25</sup>Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. <sup>26</sup>And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. <sup>27</sup>And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation (religious offering) to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

4. All Israel Shall Be Saved – Read Romans 11:26-27 <sup>26</sup>*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: <sup>27</sup>For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

That which is spoken of by the Old Testament prophets shall surely come to pass. Read: Joel 3:16 <sup>16</sup>*The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

And Zechariah 14:3-4 <sup>3</sup>*Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. <sup>4</sup>And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

- **Provoke Israel to jealousy.** Read Romans 11:11 <sup>11</sup>*I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, **for to provoke them to jealousy.***
- **Provoke the Jews to emulation** (effort or desire to equal or excel others). Read Romans 11:14 <sup>14</sup>*If by any means I may **provoke to emulation** them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

Note: Read Romans 11:23 <sup>23</sup>*And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.*

The perquisite will be their **national belief**. Read:

- Zachariah 12:10-11 <sup>10</sup>*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. <sup>11</sup>In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.*
- Zachariah 13:1-6 <sup>1</sup>*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. <sup>2</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. <sup>3</sup>And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. <sup>4</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: <sup>5</sup>But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. <sup>6</sup>And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

- Revelation 1:7 <sup>7</sup>Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

#### F. The Mystery of the Rapture.

Read I Corinthians 15:51 (from verse 50) <sup>50</sup>*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* <sup>51</sup>*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* <sup>52</sup>*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* <sup>53</sup>*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

The Old Testament prophets foresaw the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth but they **did not see** the rapture – the translation of the saints (living and dead) in the glorious Resurrection Day.

1. The Old Testament spoke of the two resurrections in a concurrent way.  
Read: Daniel 12:2 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup>*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* <sup>2</sup>***And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.***
2. The New Testament actually separates the two resurrections in time by at least 1,000 years. Read Revelation 20:4-6 <sup>4</sup>*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark*

*upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

3. The New Testament also teaches that the FIRST resurrection is a three-part event. It follows the idea of a Jewish harvest. Read Leviticus 23:20 – 22:

(1) *<sup>20</sup>And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.*

(2) *<sup>21</sup>And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.*

(3) *<sup>22</sup>And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.*

- a. Christ's resurrection was the "Firstfruits" stage of the harvest. Read I Corinthians 15:23b *<sup>23</sup>But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*
- b. They that are Christ's at His coming make up the main part of harvest. (I Corinthians 15:23c) THIS IS THE RAPTURE: Read I Thessalonians 4:13-17 *<sup>13</sup>But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as*

*others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. <sup>15</sup>For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: <sup>17</sup>Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

- c. Those who are saved (and almost certainly will perish) during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week make up the "gleanings" part of the harvest.

Read:

- Revelation 6:9-11 <sup>9</sup>And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: <sup>10</sup>And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? <sup>11</sup>And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.
- Revelation 7:9-15 <sup>9</sup>After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; <sup>10</sup>And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. <sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the

*throne on their faces, and worshipped God, <sup>12</sup>Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen*

*<sup>13</sup>And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?*

*<sup>14</sup>And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

**Note:** Read Revelation 20:4 (verse 1-5 for context) <sup>1</sup>And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup>And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, <sup>3</sup>And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. **<sup>4</sup>And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.** <sup>5</sup>But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Revelation 20:4 sees two classes of resurrected saints:

- Those who received their resurrection bodies at the Rapture (and who now sit in judgment, I Corinthians 6:1-3) AND

- Those who were executed during the Antichrist's reign of terror (and who presumably received their resurrected bodies at the return of Christ to the Earth).
4. The Great Mystery is that we shall not all "sleep". Read I Corinthians 15:51 <sup>50</sup>*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* <sup>51</sup>**Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,** <sup>52</sup>*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* <sup>53</sup>*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Also, read Daniel 12:2 <sup>1</sup>*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* <sup>2</sup>*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

#### G. The Mystery of Iniquity.

Read II Thessalonians 2:7 <sup>7</sup>*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.* <sup>8</sup>*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:* <sup>9</sup>*Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,* <sup>10</sup>*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* <sup>11</sup>*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* <sup>12</sup>*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

### **This mystery has to do with the coming of Antichrist.**

Many details of the Antichrist and his reign are given in the Book of Daniel:

- Daniel 7:8 <sup>8</sup>*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*
- Daniel 7:20-26 <sup>20</sup>*And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. <sup>21</sup>I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; <sup>22</sup>Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. <sup>23</sup>Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. <sup>24</sup>And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. <sup>25</sup>And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. <sup>26</sup>But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*
- Daniel 8:23-25 <sup>23</sup>*And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. <sup>24</sup>And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. <sup>25</sup>And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.*
- Daniel 9:26-27 <sup>26</sup>*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. <sup>27</sup>And he shall*

*confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

- Daniel 11:36-45 <sup>36</sup>*And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. <sup>37</sup>Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. <sup>38</sup>But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. <sup>39</sup>Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. <sup>40</sup>And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. <sup>41</sup>He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. <sup>42</sup>He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. <sup>43</sup>But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. <sup>44</sup>But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. <sup>45</sup>And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*

The fact of the coming Antichrist was well known by the believers at Thessalonica. Read II Thessalonians 2:5 <sup>5</sup>*Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

The mystery is that the **SPIRIT** of the Antichrist is NOW at work in the world.

1. Read I John 2:18 <sup>18</sup>*Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.* There is one antichrist but many antichrists.
2. Read I John 4:3 <sup>3</sup>*And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.* The spirit of the antichrist is already in the world.
3. Read II Thessalonians 2:6 <sup>6</sup>*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.* There is a “withholder” who is presently keeping the Antichrist from being revealed.
4. Read II Thessalonians 2:7 <sup>7</sup>*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.* The Antichrist is currently being “letteth” (hindered – used in tennis).
5. Who or What is the hinderer?
  - a. Read II Thessalonians 2:7c <sup>2:7</sup>*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until **he** be taken out of the way. **It is a “he”.***
  - b. Read II Thessalonians 2:6 <sup>6</sup>*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. **He is known by believers.***
  - c. Consider these facts in the light of:
    - John 14:17 <sup>17</sup>*Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*
    - I John 4:4-6 <sup>4</sup>*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world*

heareth them. <sup>6</sup>We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

## H. The Mystery of Babylon the Great.

Read Revelation 17:5 <sup>5</sup>And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

### 1. The Origin of Babylon

Read Genesis 10:8-10 <sup>8</sup>And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. <sup>10</sup>And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Read Genesis 11:1-9 <sup>1</sup>And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. <sup>2</sup>And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. <sup>3</sup>And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. <sup>4</sup>And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. <sup>5</sup>And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. <sup>7</sup>Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. <sup>8</sup>So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did

*there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

- a. A city founded by Nimrod [“rebel” - what does the name Nimrod mean? It comes from the Hebrew verb marad, meaning “rebel.” Adding an “n” before the “m” it becomes an infinitive construct, “Nimrod.” (see Kautzsch 1910: 137 2b, also BDB 1962: 597). The meaning then is “The Rebel.” Thus “Nimrod” may not be the character's name at all. It is more likely a derisive term of a type, a representative, of a system that is epitomized in rebellion against the Creator, the one true God. Rebellion began soon after the Flood as civilizations were restored.]
- b. According to Genesis 11:4, *4And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*

Babel was attempting to make:

- A city - political unity
- A tower – religious unity
- A name – racial unity

**More about Nimrod:** Ancient historian Josephus says of Nimrod, *“Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah and he was a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny-seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a*

*constant dependence upon his own power.” [CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION?]*

- c. *“... lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”*

This was in direct disobedience to God’s command to man after the flood. Read Genesis 9:1 *1And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

## 2. The History of the System of Babylon

Many historians believe paganism (in all its forms, paganism is a worldview that is pantheistic, polytheistic, and/or animistic) has its roots in Babylon, where the worship of Nimrod and his wife Semiramus began.

Following the violent death of Nimrod, Semiramus claimed the child she brought forth was Nimrod risen from death. Thus developed a system of mother-child worship – a feature common to practically all of the pagan religions of the world (ancient and contemporary). It is seen, for example, in:

- Isis and Osiris (Egypt)
- Venus and Cupid (Greek/Roman)
- Ishtar and Bel (Assyria)
- Beltis and Baal (many cultures)

The Mother goddess is/has been also known as Cylebe, Ashtaroth, Aphrodite, Artemas, Diana, and the Queen of Heaven (read Jeremiah 7:18 *18The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the **queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.*)

The Child god is known as Bacchus, Baal, Tammuz (read Ezekiel 8:14 *<sup>14</sup>Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.*)

### 3. Mystery Babylon

Read Revelation 17 *<sup>1</sup>And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: <sup>2</sup>With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. <sup>3</sup>So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup>And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: <sup>5</sup>And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup>And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. <sup>7</sup>And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. <sup>8</sup>The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. <sup>9</sup>And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. <sup>10</sup>And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short*

space. <sup>11</sup>And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. <sup>12</sup>And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. <sup>13</sup>These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. <sup>14</sup>These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. <sup>15</sup>And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup>And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup>For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup>And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

This chapter of Revelation describes this final form of “one-world” religion (lead by the false prophet) which will be in place during the rise of the Antichrist.

- a. Mystery of Babylon is a Woman – verses 3-6
- b. She represents a great City – verse 18
- c. It is built on seven mountains [hills] – verse 9
- d. She is called a “Great whore” – verse 1
- e. She sits on many waters (verse 1) which symbolizes “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (verse 15). A world-wide religion.
- f. She has committed fornication with the KINGS of the earth – verse 2. A politico-religious (State-Church) religion.

- g. She is drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus (verse 6).  
A persecuting religion.

The “Church of the Antichrist” is a seducing, blasphemous, pompous, wealthy, immoral, and pagan imitation of the real thing. It is the culmination of the system of Babylon, the one-world religious order which will sweep to power on the back of the Antichrist – until he demands all worship for himself.

I. **The Mystery of God.**

Read Revelation 10:7 (from verse 1 for context) *<sup>1</sup>And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: <sup>2</sup>And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, <sup>3</sup>And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. <sup>4</sup>And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. <sup>5</sup>And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, <sup>6</sup>And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: <sup>7</sup>**But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.***

Nothing else is said about this mystery... Tying it in with the sounding of the trumpet by the seventh angel in Revelation 11:15 (*<sup>15</sup>And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*) would seem to make this mystery the

[seemingly] long delay of Almighty God in [finally] taking the kingdoms of the world and establishing His Almighty Kingdom.

**J. The Mystery of God's Will.**

Read Ephesians 1:9-10 <sup>9</sup>*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:* <sup>10</sup>*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

This is the mystery of eternity, the mystery of consummation.

1. Set for the fullness (end, completion) of times
2. All things will be gathered together in Christ.