

## Doctrine of Mysteries

1. The term “*mystery*” refers to a secret that is revealed by God to His servants through His Spirit. As such a biblical “mystery” is an “*open secret*.”
2. The Bible speaks of the “*mysteries of God*.”
  - *1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

### ***Special Note.***

[Stewards of the mysteries of God.] Kai *oikonomos musterioon Theou* = *Economists of the divine mysteries*. The steward, or *oikonomos*, was the master's deputy in regulating the concerns of the family, providing food for the household, seeing it served out at the proper times and seasons, and in proper quantities. He received all the cash, expended what was necessary for the support of the family, and kept exact accounts, which he was obliged at certain times to lay before the master.

The mysteries, the doctrines of God, relative to the salvation of the world by the passion and death of Christ; and the inspiration, illumination, and purification of the soul by the Spirit of Christ, constituted a principal part of the divine treasure entrusted to the hands of the stewards by their heavenly Master; as the food that was to be dispensed at proper times, seasons, and in proper proportions to the children and domestics of the church, which is the house of God (Adam Clarke's Commentary).

3. There are certain mysteries associated with the kingdom of God.
  - *Matthew 13:11 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.*
  - *Mark 4:11 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:*
  - *Luke 8:10 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.*
4. Fourteen specific mysteries may be noted in Scripture.
  - (1) The judicial judgment that is even now upon ethnic Israel so that the Jews as a people cannot believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah is declared to be a mystery.
    - *Romans 11:25 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 fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*

(2) The conversion of the Gentiles and their inclusion into the body of Christ is set forth as a great gospel mystery.

- *Romans 16:25 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,*
- *Colossians 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 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:*
- *Ephesians 3:9 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:*

(3) The message of the gospel is declared to be a mystery openly set forth.

- *1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
- *Ephesians 6:19 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,*
- *Colossians 4:3 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:*

(4) Speaking in tongues to oneself without an interpreter is called a mystery, for while the speaker himself may know what is being said, others in the audience do not without an interpreter.

- *1 Corinthians 14:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

(5) The resurrection of the body is revealed as a great mystery of the Christian faith.

- *1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

(6) The absolute sovereignty of God is called a mystery.

- *Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

(7) The doctrine of the trinity is acknowledged to be a great mystery.

- *Colossians 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*
- *1 Timothy 3:16 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.*

(8) The state of marriage is declared to be a mystery setting forth the love of Christ for His bride, the church.

- *Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

(9) There is a great mystery associated with sin.

- *II Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

(10) All the doctrines that make up the Christian faith are declared to be mysteries.

- *1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

(11) The godliness of Christ is a great mystery.

- *1 Timothy 3:16 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.*

(12) Pastors are referred to as mysteries in the book of the Revelation

- *Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

(13) The judgment of God is called a mystery.

- *Revelation 10:7 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.*

(14) The city of Rome is called a mystery in the book of the Revelation.

- *Revelation 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

5. It is possible to know all the mysteries of God in as far as He is pleased to reveal them.

- *Ephesians 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*
- *Ephesians 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

6. Knowledge of mysteries without love is meaningless.

- *1 Corinthians 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

7. Of particular interest to the believer is the Mystery of Redemption and the Mystery of Iniquity.

8. The story of the Mystery of Iniquity with respect to humanity begins in Genesis 3:1-13. Since the story is familiar, special attention can be paid to the process by which Satan was able to reveal the Mysteries of Iniquity to Adam and Eve for that was his grand objective.

9. If a person wants a glimpse into the heart of Satan it can be seen, for Lucifer is anxious for individuals to know Evil, which he personifies as no other creature in the universe. Consider the process by which Lucifer revealed the Mystery of Iniquity.

- First, Lucifer used the power of the spoken word to introduce a startling question that challenged the goodness of God.

*Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

- Second, Lucifer boldly called God a liar. The emphasis is on the word bold. Sin is not shy. Sin is militant, demanding, and appealing. The cover up of sin may be subtle, sly, disarming, manipulative, and clever, but sin itself is bold, and uses a frontal assault more often than not.
- Third, Lucifer provided a “logic” to motivate Eve to do wrong. Make no mistake about it. Sin has a wide vocabulary and a rationale that can be very impressive. Consider some of the simple slogans today that reflect this persuasiveness.

- ❖ *If it feels good, do it.*
- ❖ *Love means never having to say you are sorry.*
- ❖ *I deserve happiness.*
- ❖ *You only go around once in life so get all the gusto you can get.*

- Fourth, having used the power of words, having challenged God’s authority, having provided a rationale for willful behavior Lucifer stepped back to see what Eve’s response would be. It was predictable. *Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

Not only did Eve eat but she gave some—not a lot, but some—of the forbidden fruit to Adam, and he did eat as well.

Now who is to blame for the Fall because of the time of temptation?

- Lucifer? What a difference the story of civilization would be without Satan.
  - God? Surely God could have created humanity in such a way that there would be no involvement with sin. And yet He accepts no blame for the sin of man, nor does the honest heart seek to blame God.
  - Man? Man is to blame for his attitude and actions. Romans 5:12 *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*
10. Having plunged himself and all of his posterity into an abyss of moral and spiritual darkness what was to be done? The Bible reveals what happened next.
- Immediate judgment. Sadness replaced joy, creation shuddered and groaned, and suddenly there was self-hatred.
  - Insight into the Mystery of Iniquity. There is a body of truth associated with Evil. Once a person enters into the sphere of sin, Iniquity, and Evil, is a mystery no more. Now there is knowledge and the secrets of darkness are known. Once more, shall I tell you the philosophy of Iniquity?
    - ❖ First, there is covetousness.
    - ❖ Second, there is reliance upon self.
    - ❖ Third, there is the non-acceptance of responsibility.
11. Now, what can one do with an understanding of the Mystery of Iniquity? Three actions come to mind.

First, knowledge of the Mystery of Iniquity might lead a desperate soul to seek the Saviour. A person can come to God and confess to knowing too much about evil and express a longing to be forgiven in order to forget what has been learned. Is that possible? In the divine economy it is. *Philippians 3:13*. “*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*”

Second, knowledge of the Mystery of Iniquity will lead us to warn others of the dangers they face. Paul, who knew covetousness, self-reliance, and non-accountability, was able to preach to the Jews in a powerful way. Listen as he says,

- *Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

Third, knowledge of the Mystery of Iniquity will lead us to teach our children objectively in hope that they will not have to experience sin subjectively and experientially.

Fourth, knowledge of the Mystery of Iniquity will enable us to help ourselves.

- We know that sin comes to us when there are means and motives, time and opportunity. So these elements are removed. We make no provision for doing wrong.
- We know that there is an emotional element to sin and so we rationally hide the Word of God in our heart that we might not sin.
- We know that there is a privacy element to sin so we are never alone.
- We know that we are weakest when we are not accountable to anyone so we tell the truth to someone.

12. As there is a Mystery of Iniquity so there is a Mystery of Righteousness.