

A Mystery Revealed

Neil Girrard

Paul wrote at least two lengthy letters to the Corinthians. In one of these letters to the carnal, infantile Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:1), he writes, “We speak wisdom among those who are mature... [meaning, not many of you!] ...we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, which [not even one] of the [spiritual] rulers of this age knew...” (1 Cor. 2:6-7) “Mystery” (Greek, *musterion* [3466]) in the New Testament is not some unknown fact we must discover through logical deduction or rational reasoning. Rather it is a divinely hidden spiritual truth held in reserve in the mind and counsels of God and given to men only in its properly awaited time and season. To understand a New Testament “mystery” requires a divinely given revelation.

Thus when Peter declared that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus said, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 16:16-17) Though we have heard and read this story so many times and know this “secret” well, to Peter and the disciples at that time it was a fresh revelation of a spiritual “mystery.”

To the carnal, infantile Corinthians who were riddled with factions and divisions and plagued with many spiritual problems because of their immaturities (like almost all of churchianity is today), Paul speaks of only one of these “mysteries” reserved for the mature – the “mystery” that “We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed.” (1 Cor. 15:51) But to the Ephesians, who were more mature and assembled with united, Spirit-chosen elders (Acts 20:28), Paul, in a letter less than one fifth the size of his letters to the Corinthians, spoke of at least four of these spiritual “mysteries.” (Eph. 1:9, 3:3-3, 9, 5:32, 6:19)

One of these mysteries was that the union of a husband and wife is a symbol of the marriage of Christ and His ekklesia (Eph. 5:32) – ekklesia (Greek, [1577]) being His people called out of this world’s darkness to live in and be in His kingdom of light, a word poorly translated “church” in English. Indeed, if we look at modern churchianity, we see that much of what is done in the name of Christ and God does *not* resemble the relationship of a husband and wife. In fact, much of what is done is done for money, power or position – making the transaction more an act of prostitution than that of matrimony!

But do we suppose that Satan is too stupid to make this connection? The role of ekklesia is a spiritually revealed “mystery” entirely unavailable to carnal and immature “Christians.” By raising up men into positions of “leadership” who did not have the divine revelation of what ekklesia was supposed to be and do – and even Paul proclaimed that this was “a great mystery” – Satan made a place where a counterfeit could take the place of the bride in any individual or group too immature or carnal to have received God’s “mystery” of the ekklesia. This is the main point of the parable of the wheat and tares! (see Mt. 13:24, 36)

Satan has always (except in the case of Christ Himself) been able to draw men to eat of the wrong tree, the independent (from God) knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 3:6, etc.) Jesus said, “I give [My sheep] eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” (Jn. 10:28) Many, many people whose lives are *not* conformed to the likeness of Christ by any stretch of the imagination have claimed this promise for themselves and lived and many even died thinking that knowing and believing Jesus said these words makes them recipients of eternal life. These have failed to read the whole of what Jesus said. “My sheep *hear My voice* and *they follow Me*.” (Jn. 10:27) It is to these who hear His voice *and* follow Him wherever He leads that He gives eternal life. No one who plucks the piece of knowledge called “eternal security” from the wrong tree will ever experience the life of Christ. Christ still says, “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” (Jn. 15:5)

Similarly, men have seen the great grace of God and, without ever receiving divine revelation and understanding, have created religious formulas and concocted “theological” creeds that assure them that no matter what they do, “grace” covers all their sin. This license to practice sin and lawlessness (whatever is right in one’s own eyes – Jdgs. 21:25) is precisely what Jesus warned of (Mt. 24:12) and will earn those who practice it an eternal dismissal from Christ. (Mt. 7:22-23, Lk. 13:27) Jesus calls us to depart from *all* unrighteousness (2 Tim. 2:19) – not to remain in sin and darkness just because His wonderful grace towards us abounds. (Rom. 6:1-2)

Lawlessness has reached previously unknown proportions. Nearly everyone not only does what is right in their own eyes, but this personal code is held to be *the* standard for the life and conduct for everyone else around them as well. Anyone who does not abide by *my* standard just isn’t a “good Christian” like *me*. And few indeed seek to live life only according to the will and standard that God by His word and Spirit sets forth.

The deceptions arrayed against the people of Christ are powerful and clever but they will not prevail against any individual or group who is careful to come to Christ in sincerity and humility, allowing Him to complete His work. (Phlp. 1:6) But the one who fails to love truth can expect to receive *from God* strong delusion so that he will convince himself that his lawlessness is righteousness and his sin is holy liberty. (see 2 Ths. 2:10-12, 2 Cor. 6:14, Gal. 5:13) The one who neglects his salvation (Heb. 2:3), failing to work out with fear and trembling what God has invested in his soul and spirit (Phlp. 2:12, Mt. 25:24-27), declining to grow in the truth and grace of Christ Jesus will find he has no secure position remaining (2 Pet. 3:17-18) even though he will *too late* seek it diligently with tears. (Heb. 12:17)

The people of Christ who attain any measure of genuine spiritual maturity in Him face the same choice as did Adam and Eve – the tree of knowledge or the tree of life. One tree enables one to be one’s own god and to do whatever is right in one’s own eyes but earns that one an eternity in the lake of fire created for the devil and his angels. (Mt. 25:41) The other tree requires one to submit to the King of truth and life and to live one’s entire life in truth, holiness and love. This one will be led along the road that leads away from sin and death toward and into eternal, abundant life. (Mt. 7:14, Jn. 10:10)

“He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.” (Rev. 22:11) If what you’re doing is working for you, keep it up. If what you’re doing truly has God’s approval, all will be well with your eternal soul. If not, well, that is the risk you are taking. Just know that Christ will return unexpectedly and without warning and His reward comes with Him “to give to everyone according to his work.” (Rev. 22:12) The gamble with your life is yours alone to make.

Today the call to repent because the kingdom of God again draws near is sounding forth. If there is any question of which tree we are partaking of, it is a question only God can rightly answer. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9) but only those who partake of the tree of life, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and actually do the will of the Father will remain in His kingdom. (Mt. 7:21) Today is the day of salvation – tomorrow may be too late.

Let he who has ears hear.

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org
Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org
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