

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

Ephesians 3:1-11

Introduction: The Bible is full of "mysteries," things, some which were foretold/prophesied about in which some have been revealed and some are still "mysteries." The Church is one of those "mysteries" which was prophesied about and foretold about centuries before it came into being. Paul wrote about the "mystery" of the Church in his writings and in his Ephesians letter (3:1-11), open up the mystery of the Church revealing the unity of the whole Bible, its' significance and beauty. The mystery of the Church, the secret kept for centuries has now been revealed.

I. THE "SECRET" IS REVEALED (v3, 9)

1. The word "mystery" in the English language means "unable to know."
2. In the Greek language "mystery" is like not belonging to an organization (club) and therefore not knowing its order but joining and learning its "secrets" which only the members understand.
 - It is an ordinary Greek word referring to secrets known only to whom revealed.
3. God kept this secret.
 - Angels and prophets did not know what it was until God revealed it in His time.

II. WHAT THE "SECRET" IS NOT

1. The "secret" is not that Gentiles would be saved, for the Old Testament said that:
 - **Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 19:23-25**
 - Therefore it is no "mystery."
2. The "secret" was not the suffering of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Prophets told of that in **Isaiah 53; 9:6, etc.**

III. WHAT THE "SECRET" IS

1. God kept the "secret" until the time of the apostles.
2. Between the suffering of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and His second coming, there was to be a period of grace and mercy.
 - God was going to form a new "world"
 - All would be alike, in the same "body."
 - The word "Church" is never mentioned.
3. The "secret" is like a valley between two high mountain peaks and the prophets saw only the tops of the mountains, not down into the valley.

IV. THE "SECRET" IS THAT A NEW AGE WAS COMING

1. The "secret" was not a continuation of the Old Testament (**Matthew 9:15-17**)
2. John the Baptist was the forerunner of the "new age." (**John 1:6**)

3. **Romans 9 - 11** describes a complete break from the Old Testament, not a continuation of any sort.
 - It was not to be a continuation of the Jewish "church" as some believe.
 - It is a NEW covenant, a NEW period, a NEW government.
4. The "Church" is one thing and the Kingdom is another.
 - Jesus Christ is the HEAD, not the "king" of the Church.
 - The "Church" is a "body."
 - The Jews rejected Jesus in every way but Jesus is coming again to establish the KINGDOM.
 - The "Church" is "down in the valley" time.

V. WHAT IS THE "CHURCH?"

1. The Church is NEW, not a continuation of anything in the Old Testament.
 - It is not a kingdom, for that is coming later.
 - It is HERE, NOW, belong to it!
 - It is a called out people belonging to Jesus Christ.
 - For some 300 years after Jesus ascended back into heaven, it was called "ekklesia" and later Constantine called it "kuriakos" - meaning "Lordly House."
2. The church can be anywhere.
 - People are the Church.
 - **Ephesians 5:30-31**
 - As Eve was taken from the rib/side of Adam, so the Church has come from the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - **Genesis 2:24**
3. Consider what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for the Church:
 - Become His Bride.
 - Become His Church.
 - Been adopted into the family of God with all the inheritance benefits of being a child of God.

VI. THE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

1. Consider WHERE we are right now, WHO we are at this moment, OUR destiny as Christians.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17**
2. The destiny of the Church is to be caught up to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Matthew 24:40-41**)
3. Discuss the RAPTURE
 - This is the destiny of the Church - This is the secret, the mystery of God.

CONCLUSION:

1. Sadly, the Jewish people of today are STILL looking for their Messiah but He has already come.
2. The "mystery" of the Church is that it is not a continuation of anything in the Old Testament, but the coming to pass of prophecies in God's time. **"...In the fullness of time, God....."**
3. The Church is the body of Christ, made up of individual believers in Him, adopted into the Family of God which will be "raptured," called up into heaven to be with Him forever.