**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

 ***Christ – The Mystery?***

 **Colossians 1: 25-29**

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Sept 4th, In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2022

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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**Focus Verses: Colossians 1:25-26**

25 Of this church I was made a minister

according to the stewardship from God

bestowed on me for your benefit,

so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

26 that is, **the mystery**

**which has been hidden**

**from the past ages and generations,**

but has now been **manifested to His saints,**

**Mystery**: Strong’s # 3466 Greek - μυστήριον musterion

Meaning: from 3453 Origin: from μύστης mustes (one initiated)

Usage: mysteries (5), mystery (22).

See: Romans 16:25f; Ephesians 3:3f; Colossians 2:2; 4:3

**Easton’s Bible Dictionary**: 2635 Mystery,

the calling of the Gentiles into the Christian Church,

so designated Eph. 1:9,10 3:8-11; Col. 1:25-27

a truth undiscoverable except by revelation,

long hid, now made manifest.

**Paul is the ever-pressing missionary** never quitting and constantly fulfilling his commission from Jesus Christ.

**Acts 9:15** But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

 Every sentence Paul writes gives insight to how God is at work in him and how the Gospel is being transferred by “faith in God” to others. Remember that the Gospel Message is passed from faith to faith. Paul is *not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH*" (Romans 1:16-17).

**Is Christ a Mystery? [See Index of Mystery Verses - Pages 8, 9]**

 The plain explanation of the word “*mystery*” Paul used is to be applied simply to the Good News of the Gospel Message. This incorporates the Incarnation, Teaching Ministry, Miracles, Arrest, Trial, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Empty Tomb, Resurrection Ministry and Ascension with a promise to return one day to claim His faithful Church and to judge the quick and the dead. It is just that simple.

 Now, true enough. . . other than the Jews, no other culture had any idea of this “*mystery*.” The Jews had the writings of the prophets of God (Example – Isaiah 53) forecasting the coming Messiah.

 The Greek word musterion (mystery) was a known word to Greek culture as they applied the word to the varying beliefs in pagan gods that may be unknown (hidden) to outsiders. The Greek mystery cults involved secret rites and practices that only the members knew and could participate. The Greek/Roman world contained many of these *mystery religions*. By using the word “*mystery*”, Paul is calling upon their understanding of pagan cults to gain their attention like he did when he pointed to the inscription in Athens in the middle of the Areopagus.

**Acts 17:23** "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

So, Paul uses a word with which they can associate in an effort to gain their attention that he is talking about a unique event orchestrated by “The” God of creation. . . not a manmade fake idol. The God of creation presents the plan of salvation that gains eternal life. God does this with the incarnation of Himself as Jesus Christ. . . the “*mystery*.” Yes, God in the flesh was a new thing to the Jews and Gentiles. It was just as much a shock to the Greeks/Romans as it is today to a secular culture.

In order to unlock this “mystery”, a person must humble their heart to God and ask Him to give them a new heart. Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be reborn of Spirit in order to see and enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5; Ezekiel 36:22ff). This passage in Ezekiel 36 reveals the key to how God saves people who humble themselves to Him by asking Him to change their heart (Ezekiel 36:37) and place His Spirit in them. . . because they cannot change their heart by themselves.

Therefore, Christ was/is a *mystery* to the world until a person humbles themselves to God. The authentic “mystery” of God is rarely seen in human history. But God is there. . . for He has revealed Himself through His creation (Romans 1:18ff). I have often said that Christianity is misrepresented by religious hawkers and highjacked by governments to manipulate the masses. No wonder Karl Marx’s labeled *religion* is the Opiate of the Masses. Karl Marx was a German philosopher who authored the Manifesto of the Communist Party in 1848 A.D. This is why I use the term “Biblical Christianity” to differentiate from “fake” Christianity.

**A Sidenote of Importance**

Once Darwin published his book titled - Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life – 1859 A.D., Karl Marx and his accomplice Friedrich Engels attached their Communist Manifesto’s no-need-for-God philosophy to Darwin’s work in order to claim that science had proved there was not any God. Therefore, governments do not need to appeal to a God who does not exist for moral authority. Marx and Engels pushed for a government that did not have any constraints regarding the management of people. The survival of the fittest held sway in governments that adopted the Communist model and/or Darwin’s teachings. In their philosophy, there was/is not any recognition of an individual’s civil rights. This is why “communism” and its cousin “socialism” is incompatible with the United States Constitution. This is why the Democrat Party (DNC) in America, who has adopted the main atheistic tenets of socialism and communism, opposes Biblical Christianity and the Judeo-Christian code upon which the U.S. Constitution is founded. The DNC may not publicly say they oppose Biblical Christianity but their policies and actions speak loud and clear that they have a disdain for God’s Believers and His Word. Proof? The abortion-on-demand policies and the advocacy of the gay-lesbian-transgender education for children should not leave any doubt in any person’s mind that the DNC and its members are hostile in mind and heart toward God, His Word and His people – the Church.

**Back to the mystery of Christ**

The unique element of God’s actions (mystery) is that He does not require anything (payment, merit) from people in order to have a right-standing relationship with Him. In fact, the one barrier of sin, that people choose to erect between themselves and God. . . God has stepped forward and provided the solution to remove that wall of sin. God’s Cross of Christ is the one isolated act in human history that uniquely sets apart the purpose of the Incarnation.

**Ephesians 2:16-18**

6 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Manmade religious systems do not have this component. Instead, these self-placed mediators between God and people. . . have erected monuments of/to themselves, rock/wood to be used by pontifical personalities orchestrating ritual structures for people to perform (meritorious works) that never end in order to have some kind of relationship with God through a temporal person, rock or idol.

 **I have come to see all of this as a religious circus.**

**The Unique Eternal Quality of the Mystery of God**

**Hebrews 10:11-14** 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

 12 **but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. (Psalm 110:1)

 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified.

Paul’s letters, and the book of Hebrews, make clear the uniqueness of God’s actions as Jesus “The” Christ. No one else has the power, authority or love to carry-out such a selfless eternal plan of salvation. Therefore, the “mystery of Christ” is not only a “mystery”, but it stands alone in human history. . . there is not any other.

"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;

For I am God, and there is no other. **(Isaiah 45:22)**

**Colossians 1 . . . continued**

27 to whom God willed to make known

what is the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles,

which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 We proclaim Him,

admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom,

so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

29 For this purpose also I labor,

striving according to His power,

which mightily works within me.

We Believers know that the fallen world mocks and scoffs at God and His Word. Many have publicly stated that they do not have any need or want of God. We Believers pray for these that see us as fools. The Lord tells us about how the fallen world will reject His love and grace. . . as in the days of Noah, the ship builder, we too experience the same mocking and rejection.

**1 Corinthians 1:18-21**

18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

 (Isaiah 29;14; Job 5:12-13; Jeremiah 8:9)

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God

 Unfortunately, Jesus experienced the same rejection. Jesus did witness the Gospel to the Jews who did not have eyes to see and ears to hear. They did not have eyes to see and ears to hear because they did not want them. However, when the Jewish leader Nicodemus came to Jesus (John 3) he was asking and seeking how he could see and hear and enter the kingdom of God. God has always reached-out to people and loved us first (1 John 4:19). He continues to make Himself known to all people. If people want to hear Him, they can humbly listen.

**Mark 4:11** And He was saying to them,

"To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God,

but those who are outside get everything in parables,

Believers contain and experience the “*mystery*” of God/Christ. God’s love, joy, hope, grace and forgiveness is not a *mystery* to us. Our commissioning is to go into the world and witness God’s plan for life and eternal life. . . telling people that they can be forgiven of their sins, making disciples and then baptizing them in His name. **AMEN**

 **Index of “Mystery” Verses**

**Romans 16:25** Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

**1 Corinthians 2:7** but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

**Ephesians 1:9** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

**Ephesians 3:3-4** 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, . . . 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

**Ephesian 5:32** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

**Ephesians. 6:19** and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

**Colossians 2:2** that their hearts may be encouraged,

having been knit together in love,

and attaining to all the wealth

that comes from the full assurance of understanding,

resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

**Colossians 4:3** praying at the same time for us as well,

that God will open up to us a door for the word,

so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ,

 for which I have also been imprisoned;

**1 Timothy 3:9** but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. . . 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

**Revelation 10:7** but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel,

when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished,

as He preached to His servants the prophets.