

Colossians #7

"The Hidden Mystery"

"Mystery" in common usage refers to something that we do not comprehend. In the New Testament its usual meaning is "something once concealed but now revealed." The word is found many times in the New Testament. One reads of "the mystery of iniquity"; the "mystery of godliness", "MYSTERY, Babylon the Great" and "the hidden mystery" (2 Thess. 2:7, 1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 17:5, Col. 1:26). The word "mystery" is found in each of these passages but the word refers to a different mystery in each text. Our particular interest in this article is to the "hidden mystery" spoken of in Colossians 1:26.

There are also other reference to this hidden mystery in other of Paul's letters. Romans were told the "revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal" had been revealed through his preaching (Rm. 16:25). In his parallel epistle to Colossians (Ephesians), Paul told brethren that by revelation had been made known unto him the "mystery" (Eph. 3:3. This entire section in Colossians 1:24-27 is very much akin to Paul's treatment of the same subject in Ephesians 3:1-11. A study of these two sections reveals the hidden mystery to be the church in which Jew and Gentile are made "FELLOWS": "fellow-citizens", "fellow-heirs", "Fellow members of the body" and "fellow partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus through the gospel. The "glory" of this mystery is "Christ in us, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) Let us consider this to a fuller extent.

That the "church" in which Jew and Gentile are joined together is the mystery which from ages had been hidden in God is explained in Ephesians 3:10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purpose din Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10f). Jesus purposed his church before the world was. It reflects his manifold wisdom. It contains the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). In it may be realized the promised blessings that comes to all nations in the seed of Abraham (Gen. 22; Acts 3:25 and Gal. 3:16).

Jesus removed the enmity between Jew and Gentiles by nailing the law (which had separated them) to the cross. He thereby made one of the twain of them (Eph. 2:11-16). He made them "fellows": equals. Fours words describe their state. Fellow citizens, (Eph. 2:1). Citizens necessarily

implies a kingdom. Jesus promised the kingdom was near when he came and that it would come in the lifetime of the apostles (Mk. 1:15; 9:1). He told Nicodemus that he must be born anew to enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5). The Colossians were in the kingdom (Col. 1:13). Gentile and Jew were fellow partakers of the promises.

The glory of the mystery is "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27). Christ is our hope of glory. He is the cause for our hope of a resurrection, we glory in his cross (1 Pet. 1:3; Gal. 2:20f).

It is the gospel which reveals this mystery which was hid for ages or generations. Like Paul we should not be ashamed of the gospel but recognize it to be "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, but also to the Greek" (Rm. 1:16). Truly, Christ should have the preeminence in all things. Great things He has done!

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