

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

George Tabac Feb. 1990

The word Mystery or Mysteries comes from the Greek word Mysterion and is used in the New Testament 27 times. Strong defines it as a SECRET or MYSTERY imposed by initiation into a religious rite.

Vines Dictionary defines it's primary meaning as, "that which is known to the initiated." He continues by stating that in the New Testament, it denotes not the mysterious, but that which is beyond the range of unassisted natural understanding, and could only be known by DIVINE revelation, -- and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, to those who are illuminated by His spirit. In the ordinary sense a mystery implies knowledge withheld, - it's scriptural significance is truth revealed.

We find that there are 12 mysteries referred to in the New Testament. But what we will find, is rather than referring to 12 different isolated subjects, is that they are all referring to different aspects of the one great wondrous mystery of God.

To delve into this mystery, we need to go back in time. Back, before the creation of Adam. Back before the creation of earth. Back before the creation of our Galaxy. Back, back before the creation of the all the countless billions of stars of the universe. Back before the creation of all the various orders of Angelic beings. Yes, back even before the creation of the LOGOS, when God was all alone. This is when the Mystery began to unfold, in the mind of our almighty God.

As God contemplated His infinite power, we believe what was at the center of His desire was a FAMILY. A universe filled with perfect intelligent beings, all created in His likeness, with freedom of will, to seek their own destinies.

Above all He desired a precious 1st born Son who would ever be His most cherished possession. To His only begotten, he would give a glorious bride who together with His Son, He would share his own infinite Divine Nature.

But His creative power would continue on. There would be further variety in His family. Many levels or orders of life. Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, angels, all spiritual beings with powers to come and go as the wind. Then just a little lower than the angels, a wondrous human family.

Oh what a beautiful family God envisioned. Each happy, perfect, and contented beyond their fondest desires. A family who together with their Heavenly Father, would go on to live everlastingly in perfect harmony, peace and joy, throughout eternity.

But how to accomplish it? How could God develop this family without having to use COERCION to maintain perfect OBEDIENCE, and yet let them have freedom to follow their own will so they could live together in perfect harmony forever? There was only one way!

In the course of time He would have to allow disobedience to enter His Universe, so that each and every family member could experience the consequences of both good and evil. Then each in their own time and way would be given a final test to see if they were worthy of eternal life. No one would be allowed to go into the ages of everlasting life, with out reaching perfect unselfish love in their hearts.

The test for His beloved Son and His bride would be the most severe. They would have to develop this perfect love, thru extreme tests of adversity. Thru suffering, persecution, self denial, and sacrifice. For to those who would be faithful, God would share with them

His very own Nature, life within themselves. And thru the eons of eternity, he would constantly be showering them with new facets of His ending love and power.

As we read in John 17:3 "This Is life eternal, in order that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ who thou hast sent."

Yes it will take all eternity to know God, even for the Church, for there will always be something new coming forth from the mind of our omnipotent creator.

Having conceived in His mind this magnificent FAMILY, our great God took the 1st wondrous step to implement His plan. He brought forth His 1st born, only begotten Son. Oh could you imagine that momentous occasion and the emotions shared by God with His beloved Son?

How long Gods son, the LOGOS and our Heavenly Father were alone together, before other creative works took place we do not know. But in due time were told in COL 1:15 of the works that followed. Speaking of Jesus in his prehuman form as the Logos it says:

COL 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (Note the family concept brought to our attention, he was in the Image of His Father, the 1st born of every creature.)

16 By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

And so the creative processes continued. God's family expanded with all the angelic hosts and the human family brought into being.

Adam and Eve rejoiced in their companionship in the splendor of the garden of Eden. It was filled with the joy of the bird and animal kingdom, who frolicked in their presence, tame and free from all fear.

Flowers of every hue of the rainbow abounded to delight the eye and fill the air with an fragrance beyond description. All provided by their creator for their enjoyment and happiness.

A tree of the knowledge of Good and evil was placed in the center of the garden. And a beautiful guardian Cherub was appointed to watch over all. Thus the stage was set for the introduction of disobedience into Gods Universe. The testing process of every heavenly and earthly member of Gods family was about to start.

We're told of the guardian Cherub in Ezek. 28:12-16 NIV "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty; You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone adorned you, ruby topaz, and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold, on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub.

Thus sin entered the universe. The permission of evil began. To people of the world the permission of Evil is indeed a mystery. Why would an all wise and all loving God permit evil, pain, sorrow, suffering and death.

Our understanding of this, is indeed one of the most important fundamental doctrines necessary for the development of our faith. Without it, it would be impossible to develop a faith strong enough to sustain us thru all the necessary trials of life necessary to crystallize our new creature.

How thankful we are that we can truly understand, rejoice in and be thankful for this facet of God's plan. For we realize it was foreknown to God, and is an absolute necessity that will result in the ultimate development and testing of every intelligent being in this universe.

Suffering was also necessary for the perfecting of Jesus as read in Heb.2:9,10 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

He was made perfect thru suffering. That is, He was crystallized in character, tested as a new creature, which could only have taken place under the adverse conditions of suffering.

All this was hidden in the mind of God and His son long before the earth even came into being as we read in 1 Peter 1:19,20 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ...

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

But not only was the plan for His son foreordained before the world, but for His bride as well, as we read in Eph. 1:3 Phillips "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us thru Christ every possible spiritual benefit as citizens of Heaven! For consider what he has done,- before the foundation of the world he chose us to become, in Christ, his holy and blameless children living within his constant care.

He planned, in his purpose of love, that we should be adopted as his own children thru Jesus Christ - that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of his which has made us welcome in the everlasting love he bears towards the Beloved, It is thru him, at the cost of his own blood, that we are redeemed, freely forgiven thru that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth.

For God has allowed us to know the mystery of his plan, and it is this: he purposes in his sovereign will, (King James) 10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

Here we see again the Family that was the desire of God's heart. Jesus and His bride foreordained before the world to be become God's sons and as we will see to share His nature and His throne.

All mankind is being benefited by the permission of evil, from the standpoint they are learning the exceeding sinfulness of sin and it's consequences.

All the angelic hosts are being benefited for they too are learning thru observation the effects of disobedience.

Thus we see how this experiential knowledge is an absolute necessity for all intelligent beings in the universe. It is what will be the basis for the comparison of good and evil. Which in turn will enable the vast majority to pass their final test of worthiness' to live forever.

Thus God's desire for a FAMILY will reach it's fruition in the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all beings in the universe, both in heaven and in earth, will be united together as one family in Christ.

As we go on to consider the scriptures which refer to the mysteries of God we will see that most are tied in to the greatest of all mysteries, of how our great creator is willing to reach down to this tiny earth, just an inconspicuous speck of dust in the universe, and extend to us undeserving fallen sinful creatures, an invitation to the grandest, most awesome, inconceivable relationship of all eternity.

We hear Him speak to us, my child give me thine heart, transform your characters, be humble, develop a love so strong that you will see the good and overlook the weaknesses of your brethren.

Strive to develop perfect love, even for those who hate you and despitefully use you.

Present your body as a living sacrifice. Demonstrate your love to me by serving me with every fiber of your being, whether it's joyful or painful, whether it exhilarating or wearisome.

Show me your willingness to serve until at times your worn and weary, not because you have to, but because you love me.

Acquiesce to your trials, knowing I lovingly permitted every one. Don't become discouraged. I will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial I will direct the issue that you may be able to bear it. Continue pressing on, just a little while longer until I take the wave offering off your hands.

And then! If you are faithful, I will give you a glorious crown of Life, I will share with you my very own being. Isa. 62:3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

Let us go on now to delve further into this wonderful mystery of God, to see, how we, -- insignificant fallen creatures, can become a part of the glorious INFINITE portion of God's family.

Ephesians 3:1 (Combination of King James and Phillips) "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2 For you must have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

- 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
- 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
- 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Notice this mystery was not known in other ages as it is now.

The mystery was given previously, but it wasn't understood because it was in types, shadows and pictures. He goes on to explain the mystery.

- 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
- 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
- 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Truly this mystery of the high calling is unfathomable, incomprehensible, that God would call or invite little insignificant you and me to such riches.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (the privilege of common participation of this mystery,) which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 (Phillips) The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church.

Yes all the angelic host are being benefited by watching the effect of the Permission of Evil as it developed Jesus, the Church, and ultimately all mankind.

Similarly 1 Cor.4:9 says, "we are a spectacle or theatre to angels and to men." We continue in Eph. 3:11

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Yes, this was the ETERNAL PURPOSE of God, a divine family under Christ, on various planes of being, but all in His likeness, being united together in love serving Him throughout eternity. We continue:

- 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
- 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
- 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

- 14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Notice again the thought, of how all beings in the universe are part of the FAMILY of God. They all were created in His likeness.

Paul now seems to be overwhelmed with intense emotion, desiring the brethren to contemplate the immensity of our privilege.

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness' of God.

Yes there is no knowledge in this entire Universe that compares with the knowledge of this Great Mystery. Science and technology are making fantastic strides in probing into the secrets of creation. Chemistry, Electronics, Nuclear Physics, Medicine, Astronomy. But how does it compare with the knowledge that will determine the eternal destiny, of every being in this universe?

Similarly Col.2:2,3 tells us, (Phillips) "How I long for you to grow more certain in your knowledge, and more sure in your grasp of God himself. May your spiritual experience become richer as you see more and more fully God's great mystery, Christ himself! For it is in Him, and in Him alone, that men will find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Yes no earthly knowledge could begin to compare to the knowledge of Christ. For it is in Him and Him alone that all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge will be found. WE continue with Eph.3:20

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Think for a moment of what that implies. He is able to do Exceeding Abundantly far beyond what we might ask or imagine in our fondest dreams. This great love and power, are all part of that wondrous mystery.

If this knowledge is so wonderful why does God hide it as it were, keeping it a secret or mystery.

As the disciples asked Jesus one day, Lord why do you speak in parables , they're so hard to understand.

Mark 4:11,12 "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:
12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Matt. 13:16, "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

Yes it was a hidden secret to everyone who heard, except for those who would be willing to make the supreme commitment of the sacrifice of their will and of their lives.

Other scriptures in addition show us how this mystery was purposely kept hidden in the prophetic writings, by types, and shadows until a specific time.

Rom. 16:25-27 NIV "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him. - To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen!

Col.1:24-27 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to the Anointed classes afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become it's servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness,- The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Here again we see the mystery was kept hidden until Christ. And here it's defined for us as, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Yes its only if we have Christ like character developed in us, that we will receive the fruition of our hope of glory.

Rev. 10:7 tells us WHEN the fruition of hope would come. (We're going to read the paraphrased thought that is contained in the Greek.) "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, (whenever it would be in the future that the 7th angel would sound,) the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Here we believe that the Mystery of God, refers to not only the completion of the church, but to the understanding of the entire Plan of God. Thus it's telling us, that the church will be finished and the Plan understood, in the days of the voice of the 7th angel. That is, not necessarily while the 7th angel was still living, - but during the time that his message is still going forth. In the days of the VOICE of the 7th angel.

Let's go on now to consider the means by which the knowledge of this mystery is conveyed.

Eph. 6:19 NIV "Pray for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me, so that I will fearlessly make known the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

So the means of conveying God's hidden message was the Mystery of the Gospel.

In addition Eph. 4:11-13 tells us, "He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (or mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

This truly is the end goal of the mystery of the Gospel.

When was this gospel message conveyed?

In Col. 1:23 Paul speaking of the gospel, says that it had already been preached to every creature under Heaven, and he speaks of it in the past tense, something that was all ready accomplished. How could this be?

It seems it must be from the same standpoint that Paul uses in Rom.10:17,18 where speaking about Israels lack of faith he says,

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
18 But I say, Have they not heard? (that is hadn't Israel heard,) He answers by quoting from the 19th Psalm. "Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

We recall this 19th Psalm overall refers to the glory of creation.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

So from one standpoint we see here how nature, spoke the Gospel to every creature to the ends of the world.

Paul uses the same logic in Rom.1:18-20. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Again we have nature proclaiming a message of God's attributes. But though the Gospel was preached in Old Testament times it was only in these vague generalities, the heavens, nature, types, shadows, and pictures.

Paul gives us another example in Gal.3:8 "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The Gospel good news message was there, but it was a mystery they couldn't fully understand for it wasn't the due time.

There was a counterfeit Mystery of the Gospel as well. Instigated by Satan, it is called the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, referred to in 2 Thes.2:3,7,8.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

(7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Here we see it is referring to the beginning stages of Satan's false counterfeit church system that was already at work in Paul's day.

This Mystery of iniquity is referred to in other terms as well.

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

Referring to the false mother church and her daughters, who are all referred to as Harlots, for instead of remaining virgins espoused to Christ, they united with the Kings of the earth, forming Church State Unions.

Rev. 17:7 "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."

Again we see the woman is referring to the false church, and the beast that carried her, was the Roman civil government that supported her, which had 7 successive forms of government and 10 divisions of authority.

So we can see there was this false counterfeit church, called the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, which in turn put forth a false counterfeit Gospel message.

Another aspect of the hidden mystery that was alluded to in the Old Testament, but just wasn't understood, was the making anew of all creation in the Kingdom.

Jerm. 18:1-6 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.
3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.
4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.
5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

The Potter here pictured God, and the vessel that was marred and then from the same clay was remade in a way that seemed good to the potter is a picture of how all things will be made anew in the kingdom. But they didn't understand it.

In the parable Israel is referred to. Thus Israel will be made new in the kingdom as we read in Ezek. 36:25-27

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.
26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

The Old Law Covenant will be made new:

Jerm. 31:31-33 31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:
33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Mankind will be made anew in the resurrection. Adam who was the father of a condemned race, -- will be superseded by the 2nd Adam who will give new redeemed life to all mankind.

1 Cor. 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

1 Cor. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The Levitical Priesthood will be replaced by a new priesthood after the order of Melchisedec.

Psa. 110:1,4 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Church members will be made New Creatures in Christ.

2 Cor. 5:17 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The earth will have the curse removed and be renewed.

Isa. 35:6,7 "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water:

The animal kingdom will be made new.

Isa. 11:6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

The Symbolic Heavens and Earth will be made new;

Isa. 65:17 17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Confirmed in Rev. 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.

Finally the revelator says in Rev. 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Thus we see the making of all these things anew in the kingdom, was part of the mystery alluded to in the Old Testament, (the potter made a new vessel from the same old clay) but they just didn't understand it.

The next mystery we would like to consider is "THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS."

1 Tim. 3:14-16 "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

The thought of Godliness here, is God LIKENESS. It is a very similar thought to "Christ in You," which will result in "the hope of glory."

It is having the qualities, the attributes, the disposition, the character of Christ within us. It is the ultimate goal, on this side the veil, for which we are striving. It is to reach that MATURITY OF CHARACTER where we will have the mind, the will of God and Christ permeate our every thought, word, and deed.

It's not easy! As we all know! It's the work of a life time. We have a constant battle against the world, our own flesh, and all the allurements and deceptions of Satan designed to turn us out of the way.

Eph. 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

One of the tools Satan uses is to get us into strife over words. It's not new to us, it was a problem in the early church.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

1 Tim. 6:3,4 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising.

1 Tim. 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

Satan would have us to believe that our understanding of doctrine is the most important aspect of life, and everyone must see it exactly as we do. We can easily see what this could lead to.

1 Cor. 3:1-4 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and

walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Paul here refers to the Corinthian church with their carnal attitude, as being yet babes in Christ, feeding on milk instead of meat. What's meant by this analogy milk verses meat.

Paul uses it again in Hebrews.

Heb. 5:13 thru 6:3 For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Or as Rotherham puts it; To such as are mature pertaineth the strong food, to them who by reason of habit have their organs of perception well trained for discriminating both good and evil.

Diaglott has, "Having faculties habitually exercised for the discrimination both of good and evil." We go on to Heb. 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.

Do we notice what is Milk verses Meat. Here we are told Milk is referring to the DOCTRINES. Doctrines such as Repentance, Faith, Baptism, Resurrection, eternal judgment.

All of these doctrines are important. We need a good sound basis for what we believe based on the words of our Lord. But the purpose of any and every kind of doctrine is not an end in itself, -- (it is merely milk,) - but rather, it is to strengthen our faith, our purpose, our resolve, to such a degree that we will be able to withstand all the trials of life, that are necessary to crystallize our Characters.

The STRONG MEAT in other words is the application of truth, the development of Godliness or Godlikeness in our lives. The ability to rightly discern the will of God, the right and wrong as it were for every decision in life. This is the MYSTERY OF GODLINESS. This is the strong meat of scripture application.

Doctrine in other words is only the surface as it were of understanding the Lord's word, it is just the beginning.

Let's remember the Pharisees. They were great Bible students. They were doctors of the law and had every type of manuscript and reference book that was available. They could quote the scriptures at random. They could teach the law backwards and forwards.

However they were only touching the surface of understanding. They completely missed the true spirit of the application of the scriptures in their daily life.

What they failed to see was the purpose for the knowledge. As referred to in 1 Cor. 13:2.

"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 LOVE, I am nothing."

We all know this intellectually I'm sure, just like the early church, -- but just like them we at times may find it hard to apply.

Our flesh likes to have a standard, a measuring rod as it were to gage how we are doing spiritually as well as others. And we realize it's difficult to use as a measuring gage, our, or others degree of GODLIKENESS.

It's so much easier to use knowledge as a criteria. How well do we or others understand DOCTRINE. And thus if not careful we can begin to use this inappropriate, measuring gage to judge our, or others degree of spirituality.

May our emphasis on truth and the study of it, ever be motivated from the standpoint of realizing the end result of our walk, the epitome of what we and others are striving for, is not knowledge for itself, but what it leads to, GODLIKENESS in our, and others hearts and minds.

This is the "MYSTERY OF GODLINESS!"

We would like to conclude with Paul's admonition to us as to our responsibility regarding the mysteries of God.

1 Cor.4:1,2 NIV "So then men ought to regard us as servants of Christ, and as those entrusted as stewards, with the secret mysteries of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

Oh what a privilege and responsibility is ours. To be the mouthpieces, the stewards of this glorious message of our God. To share the most precious and important knowledge on earth to those who have a hearing ear.

MAY WE BE FAITHFUL IN SO DOING!

May we appreciate our present blessings that Paul refers to in Eph. 2;6 Of how he "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

The purpose for which follows in verse 7:

"In order that, IN THE AGES TO COME, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us thru Christ Jesus."

In all the ages upon ages to come, he will continue to shower us with the EXCEEDING RICHES of His grace.

But not only us, the same will be true for all the family of God, on every plane of being.

Rom. 8:19,20 NIV For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Col. 1:19,20 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, ... and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, ...whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Eph. 1:9,10 NIV And he made known to us the mystery of His will, (Now he's going to tell us what is the mystery of God's will,)

He made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect in the dispensation of the fullness of times, -- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head even Christ.

Yes, then the entire family of God will know and appreciate why God permitted evil to enter his universe on this tiny planet earth.

And thus the kingdom work will be finished, when all evil and sin are removed from the entire universe, and the kingdom will be turned over to God, and God then thru all eternity will be "everything to everyone." 1 Cor.15:28

The MYSTERIES OF GOD, will then be understood by all, and God will be praised for all eternity.