

## SOLVING THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

*“Fulfill the word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” — Colossians 1:26*

The Apostle Paul’s promise that the *mystery hidden is now made manifest to the saints*, was written nearly 2,000 years ago, and yet, it continues to be a *mystery* to earth’s billions. What was the *mystery* which puzzled generations preceding the time of Paul? Why does it still puzzle so many? And, if the followers of Christ are promised that the *mystery* is *now* to be understood, why are so many Christians still confused about this subject?



God’s Word states that those who are seeking truth as if it were hidden treasure are promised harmony and clarity. *“Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”* Proverbs 2:3-6; Matthew 7:7

### The First Clue: *The Seed*

The first clue to solving this *mystery* is found in the first book of the Bible. When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, God promised that the *seed* of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head. (Genesis 3:15) This was but a faint glimmer of hope that the serpent—Satan, who seduced our first parents into disobedience—would receive a fatal blow to the head.

Thus, an early clue is found in that term *the seed*. In time, an offspring of Eve would bring about a fatal blow to Satan, thereby ending the reign of sin and death. Would the promise come through their son, faithful Abel? No, for he was killed by his brother Cain, and in one devastating act, the first parents lost two of their sons—one to death and the other to exile.

Time and generations passed, and all those with faith waited expectantly for the realization of the *promised seed*. But instead of deliverance, the world continued on its downward course—even more rapidly when rebellious angels took on the form of men and gave birth to a hybrid

race of giants. As a consequence, God cleansed the earth with a flood. (Genesis 6; Jude 1:6) Would faithful Noah or one of his sons provide the promised deliverance as *the seed*? No, and although Noah and his sons were preserved through the flood, they, nevertheless, were still under the curse of death.

### The Second Clue: *The Promise*

Nearly two thousand years rolled by with no evidence of any fulfillment of the promise to Eve. Then God called Abraham, and because of his obedience and faith, God made Abraham an oath-bound promise: *“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”* (Genesis 22:17, 18) By a miracle, at the age of 100 Abraham was given a son and heir to the promise. But Isaac died—and then Isaac’s son Jacob died. Many more years passed by, and it seemed that *the promise* would not be fulfilled. But then, God set apart a chosen people—the twelve sons of Jacob—through whom God promised the *seed* would still come. His *“oath unto Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob”* would be extended *“to Israel for an everlasting covenant.”* 1 Chronicles 16:16, 17

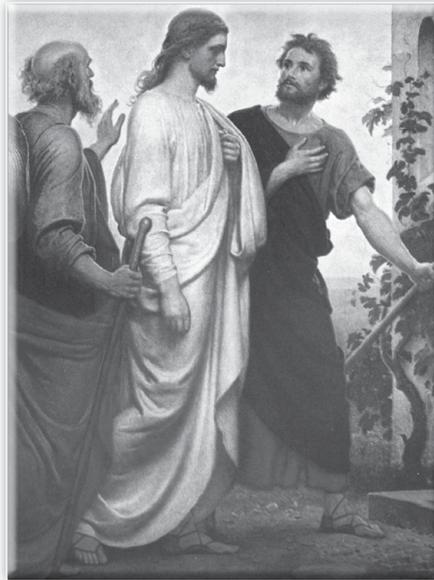
### The Third Clue: *A Deliverer*

After serving as slaves in Egypt, Israel was finally delivered from their bondage through their great leader and lawgiver, Moses. Then another clue about the *mystery* was given—that God would raise up from Israel a special *prophet like unto Moses*. (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22) This gave a further insight into God’s plan and the *mystery* which was still being kept secret. Moses prefigured a prophet who would come through the nation of Israel, and would be associated in some way with the future work of deliverance and the fulfillment of *the promise*.

As with the others who seemed likely to fulfill the promise, Moses died, and again the promise of the *seed* remained unfulfilled. Then Joshua—whose name means *Savior*—conquered the *Land promised* by God. (Deuteronomy 34:4,5) But Joshua died and the nation came to no prominence until the reigns of King David and King Solomon. There Israel reached the very zenith of its glory; but soon, instead of seeing the promise accomplished, God's children were shorn of their power when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. These were later rebuilt, but the Land remained subject to the foreign powers of Persia, Greece—and lastly Rome. This gave clear evidence that, as yet, none of God's people were capable of delivering the promised fatal blow to Satan's head.

#### The Fourth Clue: *The Messiah*

Before the birth of Jesus, *all men were in expectation* of the *Messiah*, the *anointed King*, who would bless Israel. And then came the proclamation of the angel assuring the Hebrew shepherds: "*Unto you is born this day... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*" Luke 2:11; 3:15



As Jesus grew to manhood and began his ministry, excitement filled those who accepted him as Messiah. They fully expected that God's people would finally be a *light unto the Gentiles* and that their *walls would be called salvation* to the rest of the world. (Isaiah 42:6; 60:18) But even Jesus' close followers were perplexed when he died, for they had "*trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" (Luke 24:21) Their hopes were correct, but the *times* and *seasons* were not yet due to be understood. (Acts 1:6, 7) They overlooked other prophecies that "*testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*" 1 Peter 1:11; John 1:29

After Jesus their Messiah was crucified as a common criminal, his followers were scattered and confused. But, disappointment was turned to hope once again as Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection as a spirit being.

#### The Fifth Clue: *Pentecost*

Before his death, Jesus spoke to his disciples in parables, uttering "*things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*" (Matthew 13:35) The *mystery*, though it was meant for the saints, was hidden in part from them by these parables because they could not yet bear the Truth in full. But Jesus promised them that the holy Spirit would "*bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" (John 16:12,13,26)

This great enlightenment came at *Pentecost* when God blessed the faithful—begetting them with His Spirit to a new nature, one capable of understanding the *mystery*. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...*" 1 Corinthians 2:14

#### The Sixth Clue: *Call to the Gentiles*

In the years following *Pentecost*, more of the *mystery* became apparent—not only Jews, but also Gentiles would be called to be part of the Church of Christ. The Apostle James spoke about this calling from among the Gentiles: "*Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name [the Church]. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, 'After this [after this people from the Gentiles has been taken out] I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David [the earthly dominion], which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord.'*" Acts 15:14-16

Here, again, God was informing His faithful that it would take time to work out His plans for deliverance. After the *remnant* was chosen from Israel, God would then turn to the Gentiles to complete the Church—a Bride for His Son. And thus, Christ and his Church would restore Israel and establish God's promised Kingdom in the earth with the *residue of men*—all others.

#### The Final Clue: *The Anointed*

Finally, it was the Apostle Paul who clearly identified the last clue: "*The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations... now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" Colossians 1:26-27

"*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" Herein lies the *mystery*. The word *Christ* means *anointed*. Jesus was *anointed* with the holy Spirit at his baptism, and by marvelous grace, Christians who accept his sacrifice on their behalf and who dedicate their lives to walk in his *footsteps* receive the same *anointing*. "*The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.*" 1 John 2:27; 1 Peter 2:21

The Apostle Paul explains the *mystery* further by clarifying that the *anointed—Christ*—includes *many members*. "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" "*For we are members of his body... This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the*

*Church.*” In other words, Jesus is the *head* and his followers are his *body*. Ephesians 5:30-32; 1 Corinthians 12:27

Therefore, the *mystery* is fulfilled in Christ—the *anointed Messiah*—the *promised seed*—and we are included as part of that *seed* if we *belong to Christ*. “*If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” “*We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*” Galatians 3:16, 29; 4:22-28

*Anointing* in the Old Testament was used to install kings and priests. (Leviticus 6:20; 2 Samuel 5:3) The true Church along with their Lord Jesus will be *kings and priests* together, and will rule with him for the purpose of bringing the world of mankind back to God. (Revelation 1:6, 5:10) Thus, the Church is declared to be a *royal priesthood*. (1 Peter 2:9) The *anointing* which Jesus and his followers receive to prepare them for this service has not been with literal *anointing oil*, as in the Old Testament, but with the holy Spirit. This Spirit of God begets them to a new, spiritual nature.

Yes, the promise to which Christ and his followers are *heirs* is that the *seed* would bring blessings! How wonderful to know that the purpose of our *high, royal calling* is more than being blessed ourselves—it is to *bless all the families of the earth* as part of Abraham’s *seed*.

### A Necessary Secret to All but Saints

The prospective joint heirs of Kingdom honors are the *saints* who *now* understand the *mystery*. Note that these are not just a few individuals declared to be *saints* by popes and earthly priests, but *saints* is a term that applies to *all true* Christians called and chosen by God. And it is only *the saints*—*new creatures in Christ*—who will understand this *mystery*! “*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*” 1 Corinthians 2:7, 8

Throughout the Christian era, an understanding of the *mystery* has been a comfort to the *saints*, but considered foolishness to the world. Therefore, “*thou hast hid these things [the mystery and its purpose] from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*” (Matthew 11:25) Thus, the *mystery* was hidden from the religious leaders, as their hearts were not in accord with the Spirit of God, and, thereby, Jesus, our price for redemption, was crucified. Likewise, his followers have suffered, because the

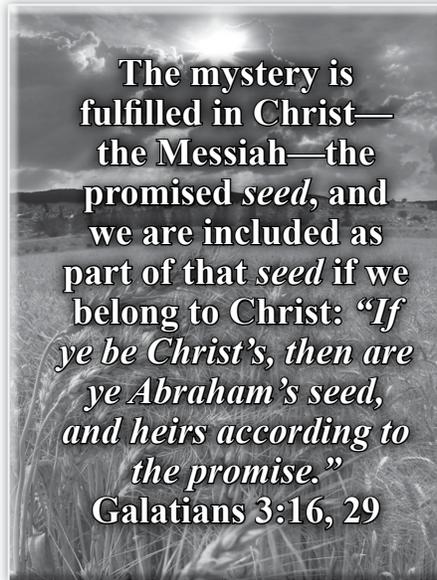
world has not recognized them either. (1 John 3:1) It has been a *mystery* to the world why Jesus allowed himself to be killed instead of accepting kingship at his first advent. It has also been a *mystery* to the world as to why the Apostles and their companions left their worldly comforts to preach the Gospel and be persecuted. In fact, that is why all who follow the Master in this *narrow way* are called *fools for Christ’s sake*. Matthew 7:14; 1 Corinthians 4:10

The worldly-wise, even among those who claim to be Christians, have persecuted this *anointed* class, often to their death. Loyalty under persecution has made true Christians worthy to become joint heirs with Christ! The Apostle Paul encouraged the *saints* for their steadfast faith: “*We ourselves glory in you... for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure... that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer...*” (2 Thessalonians 1:4-6) Even though considered *fools* by the world, these *members of Christ’s body* are beloved of their Heavenly Father, for they are willing to lay their lives down in sacrifice to be *dead with Christ*. Revelation 2:10

### Soon the World Will Understand the *Mystery*

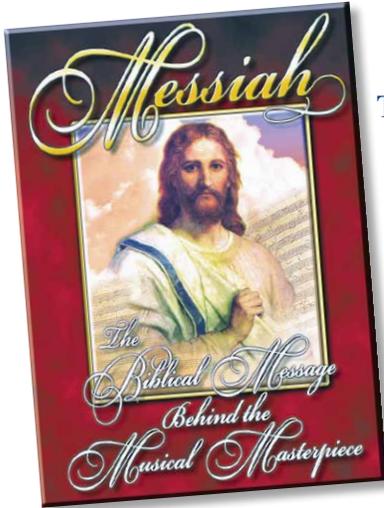
The *hidden mystery* of preparing the chosen *seed* has been a long, slow process which has taken over 6,000 years to accomplish. But we are now in the dawn of the Messianic Kingdom when the *Sun of Righteousness* is rising with *healing in his wings*—gradually dispelling all darkness. (Malachi 4:2) The *whole creation* is hoping, waiting for something, but they do not know what. They are actually waiting for the completion of the *mystery*—Christ and his Church. “*For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.*” Romans 8:19 NAS

When God finishes pouring His Spirit upon His dear *servants and handmaids*, He will begin to pour it out on *all flesh*. Then, “*all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*” (Joel 2:28; Luke 3:5-6) At the end of the Christian Age the secret features of God’s wise and merciful plan will finally be revealed and *the mystery hid from ages* will be clearly seen by all. Eventually, the world will no longer see the *little flock* of Christians as *fools*. They will rejoice in the glory of this *mystery class*—the *Bride of Christ*—and the blessings of life that will flow to the world when the “*Spirit and the Bride say, Come... take the water of life freely.*” Revelation 22:17





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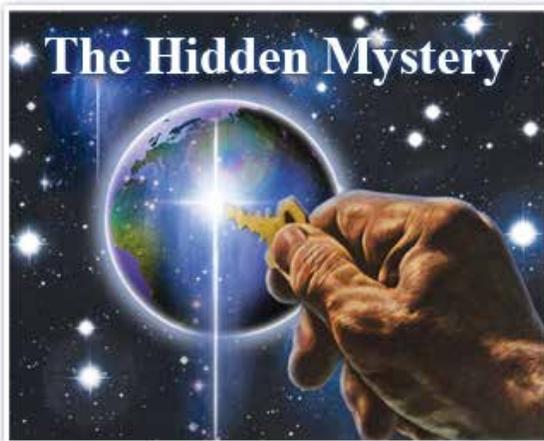


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