

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 13 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit: The Essence of Christian Character

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “When Moses...” thoughts?

What do you understand God’s glory to be? (Other Evidence – first and second temple).

Read memory verse Col 1:27: thoughts?

What is the mystery?

Let’s read some more texts and see what we can learn:

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past**,²⁶ 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—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Romans 16:25-27

What new insights or questions come to mind? Why was the mystery hidden? From whom was the mystery hidden? How? “Long ages” refers to what? And what is now revealed?

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you,³ that is, **the mystery** made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight **into the mystery of Christ**,⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this **mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God**, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God **should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms**, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which **he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord**. Col 3:2-11.

What is the mystery? Why was it to be revealed to the rulers in heavenly realms? Could this mystery be hidden so far in the past that even heavenly beings didn't know? Is the mystery somehow connected to the wisdom of God? Was the wisdom of God hidden? How?

How has the wisdom of God been revealed? Is the mystery of the Gentiles being heirs with the Jews a new mystery or part of the same mystery? How is this mysterious wisdom related to the Gentiles being brought in to the promise?

What is the mystery?

And he made known to us the **mystery of his will** according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—**to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head**, even Christ. Eph 1:9,10

The mystery of his will to unify all things – is there a thread running through all aspects of this mystery?

the **mystery that has been kept hidden for ages** and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ 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**. Col 1:26,27

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and **united in love**, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may **know the mystery of God, namely, Christ**,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col 2:2-3

What is the mystery? What do you hear?

- Christ
- Gentiles heirs along with Jews
- Unity of all things
- Christ living in the believer or believer renewed to be like Christ
- A truth that was mysterious but which Christ revealed and through the church is revealed to the universe

What is the mystery?

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body.³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² This is a profound **mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church**.³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph 5:25-33

Does this give further insight into the mystery – what is the mystery? What is being described? Is it selfless love to heal, protect and build up?

Is the mystery the mystery about the character of God – His love, His law of love?

How has it been hidden? Was God's character of love, the mystery of selflessness hidden by God or by Satan's lies about God? How is it revealed? It is through Christ that God's love is manifest – not just in revelation of God, but it's power – it's life giving, healing, restorative power?

What is the impact of this mystery being revealed? The law of Lord is perfect reviving the soul!

Listen, I tell you a **mystery**: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

What is the mystery? Why is it a mystery that we will not all sleep? Is this a different mystery that Christ in you? Is this a different mystery that unification under one head? Is this a different mystery than two becoming one flesh, unity of Christ and His bride? No, it is the same – for what is the basis of life?

John 17:3 life eternal is knowing God – God is love, the law of love is the law of life, the new covenant is God writing His law in our hearts and minds, partaking of the divine nature, in other words Christ in you. Thus, death comes from not knowing God, from not living love, from being selfish, from separation from God. The mystery is the mystery of God's character of love, broken in mankind when Adam sinned, hidden away from our eyes by Satan's lies and revealed by and restored into humanity by Christ and for which we can all again partake. When will all of this happen?

But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, **the mystery of God will be accomplished**, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.” Revelation 10:7

What is the mystery of God? The restoration of His law of love into His people, not on an individual basis only, but so that the Bride, the Church is ready to meet Jesus. (AKA cleansing of the sanctuary).

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe **the love of God**, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "**No, it cannot be described.**" We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." [1 JOHN 3:1.] In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. **This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down** in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, **he might also exalt those who believe in him**, to a seat with him upon his throne. **All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.** {CE 77.1}

What is the mystery of God? His character of love, which God originally designed mankind to possess, yet this love was hidden by Satanic lies, replaced in the heart of man by Satan's law of selfishness, but Christ came to reveal God's love and replace it back into mankind again!

Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a new setting,--the frame-work of truth. He brought out of the treasure-house of God things **new and old**, that we might be able to trace down the links in the great plan of salvation. Through the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish dispensation, we

are pointed forward to Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. When Christ came, **it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, in the sight of the universe of heaven.** But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?--It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his revolt against God's government. **He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men today.** He made a pretension of loyalty to God, and yet he argued that angels should not be under law. He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and hatred of God's law originated in the minds of the angels in heaven through his influence. He caused the fall of man through the same temptations with which he had caused the fall of angels; and in the world where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, **that all might behold the real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard. He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes. Christ came to represent the Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds.** The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." {ST, November 18, 1889 par. 6}

What is this mystery of which Paul writes to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, saying that it was given to him to fulfil the word of God, the mystery "which hath been hid from ages and from generations?" One translation reads, "which hath been kept in silence through eternal ages." {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 2}

Many have endeavored to define **the mystery** which Paul here mentions. **But it embraces much, and our ideas in regard to the love, the goodness, and the compassion of God are strangely limited.** Because our knowledge of spiritual things has become so dwarfed and enfeebled, we have not advanced from light to greater light. **The Lord has not been able to open to our understanding many precious things.** In view of the losses which we have sustained by our earthliness and commonness, we have much to make us humble. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 3}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make his purposes to fit circumstances, but he allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but he knew that such a condition would exist. **The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven,--this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages.** And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 4}

Thoughts? Is not the mystery a mystery about God, a being who could love His creatures so much that He would become one of them and give His life to save them from eternal death?

SUNDAY

Middle text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." Matt 6:33.

What is the kingdom of God that we are to seek? Does it mean seek for eternal life, to have sins pardoned, to get our record book erased, to get our payment made? As the lesson points out too often our prayers are about us, what we want or desire, rather than what we need to become.

Is the kingdom of God the kingdom of love and seeking it would mean seeking to be like God in heart?

What would God's kingdom look like in our lives today? How would we treat each other? When you hear of a member who has stumbled how would you respond, if you are a member of God's kingdom?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What do you think about requests like this?

MONDAY

Other fruits of the Spirit include:

- Godliness
- Virtue
- Hope
- Knowledge
- Discernment

Thoughts about these gifts? How do we experience these fruits? Are they miraculous gifts bestowed without any effort on our part or are they gifts which require our effort in cooperation with divinity? Do we have to practice these gifts? Do we have to study? Do we have to choose to hope? Do we have to practice thinking and giving and godliness?

TUESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “At the same time...” thoughts? Where does our salvation lie? What do you understand Jesus accomplished on the cross for you?

Read green section – thoughts? How is this true? How is it not true?

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts?

What does it mean to love the world? Flowers, animals, sunsets, mountain views, artwork, music? Or is it the methods and

principles of the world it is speaking of, loving self, promoting self, enjoying taking advantage, getting pleasure out of exploiting or hurting others, liking the power and control over others?

Read second paragraph, “While we...” thoughts? How is our church in danger of this? Did the Jewish nation in Christ’s day fall into this trap? Is our church vulnerable? How?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How can we increase or encourage the work of the Holy Spirit in healing us?

The lesson suggests:

- Bible study
- Prayer
- Right thinking
- Christian witness

Thoughts about these? Did those who put Christ on the cross concern themselves with 3 of the 4, study of scripture, prayer and how they appeared or witnessed to others?

What about right thinking? The battle is for the mind when the mind and heart are right the behaviors are right. This is what true righteousness is about, a change in the inner man, not a mere behavior change.

What else can we do to help the Holy Spirit heal us?

- Problem solve, weigh out the issues, discuss together as we are here
- Minister to others
- Discipline self (diet, exercise, what we watch and read)
- Choose healthy friends and associates

Bottom green section states, “The fruit of the Spirit isn’t going to happen on its own. Your own choices will determine your destiny.”

Well said, this is absolutely true – then why do we teach God decides our destiny in the judgment?

FRIDAY

Questions 1-4 read and discuss