

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MYSTERIES

ILLUSTRATION

Some people think of the Bible as being too complicated to understand. Admitted, there ARE some passages that are somewhat difficult to understand. 2 Pet. 3:16; Some are not justified in rejecting God's will because they don't understand it.

The Bible does speak of God's mysteries, but what we need to know to BE saved and to KEEP saved is very clear from the scripture. Eph. 5:17. There are 3 words we shall examine that allude to this truth. Those words are 3 words we shall examine now that allude to SECRET things of God, the MYSTERIES of God, and the INVISIBLE things of God.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let's look at the word "SECRET;."

A. In the O.T., there are 7 different Hebrew words that are translated "secret" in the English language.

1. Such an instance is in Deut. 29:29. (Quote)

a. The Hebrew word here is *sathar*, which is used 7 times in the O. T.

b. The word simply means "hidden" in this passage, referring to the unrevealed workings of God that had not been given for the mind of man.

c. It is used in contrast with the word "revealed," making it something NOT revealed. v. 14

1) Some things were secret and belonged to God, but what WAS revealed could be understood, and were to be obeyed.

2) God does not hold man accountable for not knowing what He has not commanded.

3) There ARE things that God has not made known, such as HOW He could speak and the universe would come into existence, or the time the world will come to an end. Matt. 24:36

2. Another use of the word "secret" is in Psalms 19:12, as David clearly refers to "faults" or sins that may have been known to HIM. Ps. 19:12

3. Yet another passage is in Eccl. 12:14. (Read verses 13-14)

a. The word "secret" is from another word, *alam*, referring to things that were hidden by man, and not God.

b. In the judgment the things that some have hidden or covered up, will be exposed or brought to light.

B. In the N. T. there are 3 verses of special interest on this word.

1. In 1 Cor. 14:25, Paul says the result of some prophesying in the early church could bring to surface of one's heart. (Read 1 Cor. 14:25).

2. In Eph. 5:12, Paul speaks of sins that are done in secret places to keep from being caught, such as the sin of fornication. Read vs. 11-13 and explain.

3. In Rom. 16:25, Paul uses the Greek word *sigao*, meaning "silent" or "unrevealed."

a. It is used here interchangeably with the word "mystery." v. 25

b. This refers to the "gospel" that had not been fully revealed before

Pentecost day, but is NOW "made known" through the "scripture." v. 26

II. 2nd, let's look at the word "MYSTERY".

A. The word comes from the Greek word *musterion* (something unknown naturally), and is strictly a New Testament word.

1. Jesus explained to His disciples that the precious mysteries (things about the **kingdom**) could then be understood. Matt. 13:11
2. Paul spoke of the mysteries of the **gospel**, that we just studied earlier.
 - a. This mystery was made known through revelation by the Spirit, to the apostles and New Testament prophets. (Read and explain Eph. 3:1-5)
 - b. Paul stated that the mysteries of the gospel TO include the Gentiles, as well as the Jews (the once chosen people of God under the Old Testament order). v. 6

B. Then, Paul explained that even the revealing of God's *marriage of Adam and Eve* was the beginning of a divine mystery that had not previously been known, but is now being revealed. (Explain Eph. 5:22-33, noting especially v. 32)

III. 3rd, let's look at the word "INVISIBLE."

- A. The word "invisible" (meaning "unseen") is used 5 times in the New Testament.
 1. Paul uses the word to describe the creation of things invisible (unseen) that are now "seen" and understood. Examine Rom. 1:20
 2. In Col. 1:15, Paul uses the same word to describe GOD. (Read)
 3. Then, in Col. 1:16, (the very next verse) Paul says some of the *things* in the creation may now be visible, or seen. (Read)
 4. Then, in 1 Tim. 1:17, Paul uses the word to describe God. (Read)
 5. Then, Paul states that Moses of the O. T. *saw* (by the eye of "faith") "him who is invisible", referring to God. Heb. 11:27

- B. Now, there is a FALSE USE of the word "invisible" by the denominations of today.
 1. Many folks in the denominations SAY that they are members of the "invisible church" while ALSO being in a man-made denomination, claiming to be IN the "invisible church of Christ", and they resent any people claiming to BE the church of Christ—exclusive of other religious bodies.
 - a. They say that the "true church of Christ" is the "invisible church", made up of ALL the 35,000 distinct Protestant churches, with each "visible church" (denominations, now in existence and all that will ever be founded in years to come) **make up the invisible church**, as long as they hold some concept of Christ, and are not Catholic.
 - b. WE, in the church of Christ as revealed in the N.T., have only two relationships: (1) In a local congregation, and (2) In the church universal, all other congregations following the N.T., but denominations have three relationships, (1) Their local denomination, (2) Other congregations of their particular beliefs, and (3) The "invisible church", that imaginary figment of their imagination.
 2. QUESTION: HOW is the so-called "church universal" (consisting of ALL churches in the world) **BE** that One universal church, when THEY (IN these denominations) **can be seen** (being **visible**) while the "church universal" is **NOT VISIBLE?**
 3. IF all denominations are churches of Christ, why do each of them teach their own doctrines peculiar to their beliefs, and **DO NOT TEACH THE SAME THING??**
 - a. Paul spoke of various congregations in the first century as congregations or churches "of Christ." Rom. 16:16

b. The same writer, Paul said they were to ALL “speak the same thing.” 1 Cor. 1:10

1) Christ prayed all who **follow the word** given through the apostles. John 17:20

2) Christ prayed that they might be ONE and united, bring glory to God. John 17:21; Eph.3:21

CONCLUSION

I. Christ is the founder and savior of only ONE body of believers, with it's members worshiping HIS ONE WAY, through the ONE WORD. Luke 6:46

A. Christ wants all to follow HIS word to be HIS people.

B. Only in this manner is God glorified.

II. There is only ONE WAY to be in Christ and His body—by confessing faith in Christ as God's Son, repenting of all sins of the past, and being immersed in water to contact the saving blood of the Lord.

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