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Revelation & Purpose of the Mystery

(Ephesians 3:1-13)

An Introduction to "Mystery" in the New Testament

Before we begin the study of the "mystery" of 3:1-13 it would be helpful to review the concept of "mystery in the New Testament. The New Testament word "mystery" is the Greek *mustarion*. It refers to information that is hidden or conceal from general knowledge by spiritual and or human beings. The word appears twenty-seven times in the New Testament in various contexts. There are at least twenty-five different contexts for the use of the word "mystery" as follows:

1. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God as a mystery signifying that human understanding alone cannot comprehend the concepts related to the Kingdom of God, Matt. 13:11; Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10.
2. Paul spoke of the salvation of the Gentiles as a mystery, Rom 11:25.
3. The Gospel of Christ as a means of salvation revealed in the last days is a mystery, Rom 16:25-27; Col 1:26.
4. Spiritual discernment cannot be comprehended by the unregenerate person who finds spiritual things to be a mystery, 1 Cor 2:6-16, esp. v. 7.
5. A corollary to the Kingdom of God idea is the knowledge of the mystery of the Kingdom as a stewardship for those who believe, 1 Cor 4:1.
6. Understanding the mysteries of God is a matter of faith, 1 Cor 13:2.
7. Understanding the mysteries of God is a particular work of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 14:2.
8. The fact of the resurrection of Christ and all believers is a mystery from God, 1 Cor 15:51-58, esp vv. 51-52.

Six Divine Mysteries in Ephesians

9. Knowing God's will is a mystery from God to believers, Eph 1:7-9.
 10. God's secrets once hidden but revealed in the last days to believers are part of His mysteries, Eph 3:3.
 11. The revelation of Jesus Christ as the redeemer is a mystery revealed by God, Eph 3:4.
 12. The "dispensation" or stewardship of the Gospel as sent to both Jews and Gentiles is a mystery of God, Eph 3:9.
 13. The church as the bride of Christ is a mystery of God for believers, Eph 5:32.
 14. The gospel as the means of salvation for all is a mystery from God, Eph 6:19
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15. - 16. Christ is you as a hope of glory is a mystery, Col 1:26-27; see Eph 3:3, 13.
17. God as a source of wisdom and spiritual knowledge is a mystery, Col 2:2.
18. Christ as the hidden truth of the Gospel and Salvation is a mystery, Col 4:3
19. The mystery of iniquity, why did God allow it? 2 Thess 2:7.
20. Faith that results in a pure conscience is a mystery, 1 Tim 3:9
21. The mystery of godliness is a six-fold mystery, 1 Tim 3:16
 - The incarnation of Jesus is a mystery
 - Justification in the power of the Holy Spirit is a mystery
 - The witness of angels to the life, death, and resurrection is a mystery
 - The Gospel of Jesus the Jewish Messiah also for Gentiles is a mystery
 - The faith as the means that results in salvation is a mystery.
 - Jesus' ascension to glory with a promise we will follow is a mystery

22. The message of the seven stars (*angelos*) or messengers of the seven churches, in the right hand of God is a mystery, Rev 1:20
23. The mystery the consummation of history and voice of the seven thunders is a mystery, Rev 1:4-7.
24. The mystery of Babylon the Great, kingdom of Antichrist, Rev 17:5.
25. The mystery of the Babylon as the great harlot and of the beast, 17:7.