

## Mystery Periods

(The occurrence of the Greek word *musterion* and its chronological placement in the Scriptures)

<b>Period #1</b> (approx. 495 BC) NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM	<b>Period #2</b> (approx. 27-29 AD) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT HAND	<b>Period #3</b> (approx. 39-62 AD) ACTS PERIOD - KINGDOM OFFERED	<b>Period #4</b> (future event- revealed approx. 54 AD) TRIBULATION, DAY OF THE LORD PROPHESED	<b>Period #5</b> (approx. 62 AD) AFTER ACTS - THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY REVEALED
<i>The great image</i> Dan 2: 18, 19, 27-30, 47 - Septuagint (mystery of the "times of the Gentiles")	<i>Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven</i> Matt 13:11 (mysteries of the kingdom of heaven) Mark 4:11 (mysteries of the kingdom of God) Lu 8:10 (mysteries of the kingdom of God)	<i>Mysteries of the Kingdom</i> Rom 11:25 (blindness in part is happened to Israel) Rom 16:25 (the mystery since the ages, made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets) 1 Cor 2:7 (hidden wisdom of God) 1 Cor 4:1 (stewards of the mysteries) 1 Cor 13:2 (all mysteries) 1 Cor 14:2 (unknown tongue) 1 Cor 15:51 (resurrection) 2 Th 2:7 (mystery of iniquity)	<i>Mysteries of the Day of the Lord</i> Rev 1:20 (mystery of the seven stars) Rev 10:7 (mystery of God) Rev 17:5 (Babylon) Rev 17:7 (mystery of the woman)	<i>"The Mystery"</i> Eph 1:9 (the mystery of His will) Eph 3:3,9 ("the mystery, hid in God before the ages, made known unto Paul by revelation") Eph 3:4 (the mystery of Christ) Eph 5:32 (the "great mystery") Eph 6:19 (the mystery of the gospel) Col 1:26, 27 ("the mystery") Col 2:2 (the mystery of God, Christ) Col 4:3 (the mystery of Christ) 1 Tim 3:9 (the mystery of the faith) 1 Tim 3:16 (the mystery of godliness)

This chart is intended to assist in the study of the different mysteries found in Scripture. By testing things that differ we may come to a fuller understanding of "the mystery" found in Eph 3:3,9 and Col 1:26,27.

The word *mysterion* in the Greek means a sacred secret. When we consider its usage throughout the Bible including the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament in use in Paul's day) and put them into their respective time periods, we begin to see a pattern. There are at least three things we find in common:

1. Each mystery was revealed through one who was of the seedline of Abraham, a Jew.
2. Each mystery was (and still is) revealed to whom God chooses.
3. The secret or secrets were revealed after a time of *unbelief* and *rejection* of truth.

The nation of Israel was separated and entrusted with God's word. At the end of the forty years in the wilder-

ness, Moses, in confirming the words of the covenant given to them in the land of Moab, said, "The **secret things and those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.**" (See the Companion Bible note for the rendering of this verse. Deut 29:29)

Since the overthrow of the world there has been warfare between God and Satan and the angelic beings that followed him. In war, there are certain strategies that must be kept secret from the enemy. These things can only be entrusted to reliable sources in your own camp. The same is true with many of the truths we find in the Scriptures. There were certain things that had to be kept secret until in God's perfect timing, He revealed them. And then and only then He entrusted those truths to whom He chose so that they might be dispensed. He chose Daniel, the disciples, John, and the Apostle Paul.

Further investigation will reveal

that these mysteries were revealed after a period of *unbelief* and *rejection*. Let us test this principle with the time periods indicated above.

**Period #1:** When we open the book of Daniel, we are made aware that a major event had taken place in Israel's history. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had besieged Jerusalem. For several hundred years the Lord had warned the priests and kings by the prophets that this day would come. In spite of great revival in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, their *unbelief* and *rejection* of God's word through the prophets led to the desolation of the land and the Temple and thus, the "times of the Gentiles" was ushered in.

**Period #2:** This period covers the time of the Lord's ministry on earth. His message was specifically to Israel concerning the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist had paved the way saying, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2) During this time the people, particularly

the leaders and priests, rejected their Messiah and the many signs he showed them to bear witness that He was indeed the Son of God. Their unbelief of the writings of the prophets led the Lord to speak to them in parables.

**Period #3:** This period covers the events during the time of the book of Acts. The mysteries we read of during this period were by the pen of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. It was a time in which the hope of Israel was made available from the *resurrected* Lord. When Israel rejected their resurrected Saviour, Gentiles were grafted into their hope and made heirs according to the promise given to Abraham. (Ro 11:11-25, Gal 3:16-29). Their unbelief and rejection is marked in the last chapter of Acts where we read for the third time the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "Go unto this People and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive: For the heart of this

people is waxed gross..." (Acts 28: 26,27). In the previous verses we read, "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not, And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed... (i.e. *were set at liberty, sent away, divorced*). This is the final record of *unbelief* on the part of Israel recorded during this period and they are set aside for the revelation of the fullness of truth given to Paul, "the mystery".

**Period #4:** This period has been inserted in its chronological place although it speaks of a future event. Contrary to traditional belief, the book of Revelation was written during the Acts period. Revelation was written to the seven angels of seven churches in existence at that time. This book was written to people who looked for the return of the Lord on earth and not the church which is His body who look to appear with Him in glory. (Angels are always associated with Israel, not the body of Christ.)

**Period #5:** This period marks a time that is unlike any other spoken of in Scripture. We must be careful in our study as good Bereans to distinguish between the secrets which were written about beforehand found in Scripture and the secrets which are considered "*unsearchable*" or untraceable in Scripture. During this period we read of the *completed* and *full* revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The mystery" was given to Paul *only* to dispense and was revealed after the nation of Israel was set aside in disobedience. It includes Gentiles as *fellowheirs* completely independent of the promises and hope given to Abraham and his seedline. The truth revealed at this time was hidden from the ages (Eph 3:9,10). The Lord is called the "Head" and is placed far above all principality, powers, dominion and might, not just men and angels.

Search and see! Test the things that are different.

B. Bagby