

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

By Brother Mike Sutherland

The word “mystery (mysteries)” occurs 27 times in our King James Bible. All of those appear in the New Testament. A short definition of a mystery is a Biblical doctrine that was known to God alone in the Old Testament, but was not revealed to mankind until the New Testament. Its primary Biblical definition is given in *Romans 16:25-26* and *Colossians 1:25-26* which state:

²⁵ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,** ²⁶ **But now is made manifest,** and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: *Romans 16:25-26*

²⁵ Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; ²⁶ **Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:** *Colossians 1:25-26*

Before we proceed in our discussion on the mysteries, it is necessary that we quote verbatim from an entry titled “SACRAMENT” in the Way Of Life Encyclopedia by David Cloud. Here is that quote:

SACRAMENT. Originally, the Latin word “sacramentum” referred to an oath, or to a ceremony producing an obligation. In present religious usage, sacrament refers to an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The term *sacrament* is used by the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox, and certain Protestant denominations to describe their ordinances. Roman Catholicism has seven sacraments—baptism, eucharist, confirmation, marriage, holy orders, penance, and last rites. Those who describe baptism and the Lord’s Supper as sacraments usually believe these ordinances are more than symbolic ceremonies.

“The Reformed [Protestant] creeds did not get free from Rome as regards what they still called ‘sacraments’—a Babylonish term. For *sacramentum* was the Latin word for a mystery of the pagan religion. ‘The grand distinguishing feature of the ancient Babylonian system was the Chaldean mysteries, that formed so essential a part of that system’ (Hislop, p. 4). ‘Even in the prayer-book of the Church of England, the Lord’s Supper is called ‘these holy mysteries’! But such a term for it is unknown in the New Testament, and was subsequently introduced merely because the initiates (of Babylonish idolatry) fixed upon the Memorial Supper as the one thing in Christianity which they could most easily metamorphose into a Mystery, or Sacrament. Then, associating Baptism with the bath which preceded (pagan) initiation, they called it, also, a Mystery, or Sacrament—though they often dropped all disguise, and spoke of it plainly as initiation’” (William R. Newell, *Revelation: A Complete Commentary*). Baptists, as well as others who strive to maintain a New Testament pattern, reject the

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

concept of sacraments. The Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles delivered to the churches two ordinances [observances]: *baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*. These do not impart grace; they signify and memorialize grace and turn the believer's thoughts to Christ.

Quoted from Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity, Page 535; PDF Edition; Copyright 2008; David Cloud

The need for that quote will be seen when we have a brief discussion on MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS. As at stated at the outset, the word "mystery(s)" occurs 27 times in our King James Bibles. I have created a document that quotes every one of those occurrences in context. It is six pages long. In the discussion that follows, we will look at ten of those 27 mysteries. Some of the 27 mysteries are duplicates. Now let us look at our first mystery.

1. **The Mystery Of Godliness** — *1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 2:2-9*. This refers to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. See: *John 1:1,14; 14:9*.

¹⁶ And without controversy great is **the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. *1 Timothy 3:16*

² That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of **the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ**; ³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. ⁵ For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. ⁶ As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: ⁷ Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. ⁸ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹ For in him dwelleth all **the fulness of the Godhead bodily**. *Colossians 2:2-9*

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *John 1:1*

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

and truth. *John 1:14*

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? *John 14:9*

2. **The Mystery Of “Christ In You”** — *Colossians 1:26-27*.

This refers to the indwelling of Christ in the life of the believer through the Person of the Holy Ghost. See: *John 14:17,20,23*.

²⁶ **Even the mystery** which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷ 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*

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. *John 14:17*

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. *John 14:20*

²³ Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. *John 14:23*

3. **The Mystery Of The Kingdom Of God (Heaven)** — *Mark 4:11* and *Matthew 13:11*.

Although the Old Testament speaks much of the coming kingdom, its present form as a spiritual, invisible entity was not seen.

¹¹ And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know **the mystery of the kingdom of God**: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: *Mark 4:11*

¹¹ He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**, but to them it is not given.

4. **The Mystery Of The Church** — *Ephesians 3:1-12* and *Ephesians 5:32*.

The Old Testament does not mention anything about the founding of the New Testament

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

Church by Christ, the component members of New Testament churches (*Ephesians 3:1-12*), or the special relationship Christ has with His churches (*Ephesians 5:30-33*)

¹ For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
² If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: ³ **How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴ Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ⁶ That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:** ⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. ⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; ⁹ And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: ¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: ¹² In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. *Ephesians 3:1-12*

³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.** ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband. *Ephesians 5:30-33*

5. **The Mystery Of Israel's Blindness** — *Romans 11:25* with *Isaiah 6:9-10*.

The entire 11th chapter of Romans deals with the temporary (present-day) setting aside of Israel as a nation — a fact not seen in any Old Testament prophecy. That blindness itself was not a secret, because it had been prophesied of in *Isaiah 6:9-10*. What was a secret was the duration of that blindness that was revealed to the apostle Paul by the Holy Ghost.

²⁵ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

in. *Romans 11:25*

⁹And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. ¹⁰Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. *Isaiah 6:9–10*

Israel is to be blinded until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

6. The Mystery Of The Rapture — *1 Corinthians 15:51* and *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*.

The Old Testament prophets saw the return of Christ to the earth with His saints in power and glory, but not His coming in the air for the saints. The term “*rapture*” is not in the King James Bible. The term “*rapture*” is rooted in the Latin words “*rapio*”, “*rapiemur*”, or “*rapturo*”. They came to us out of the Latin Bibles.

⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, *1 Corinthians 15:51*

¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. *1 Thessalonians 4:16–17*

The fact that the events that occur in *1 Corinthians 15* happen after those recorded in *Matthew 24* proves that *Matthew 24* is NOT about the Rapture of the saints. The Holy Ghost stated in *1 Corinthians 15* that the fact of the rapture was not revealed to anyone until it was revealed to Paul in *1 Corinthians 15*. A careful reading of *Matthew 24* will show that there is NO resurrection recorded in *Matthew 24*. That is also true of *Mark 13*, *Luke 17*, and *Luke 21*. By definition, the Rapture is an event that must be accompanied by a resurrection since the Rapture is the redemption of the body as stated in *Romans 8:23*:

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. *Romans 8:23*

7. The Mystery Of Iniquity — *2 Thessalonians 2:7-9*.

The coming Antichrist is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, but the fact that he will be Satan manifested in the flesh is not.

⁷For **the mystery of iniquity** doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*,

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

until he be taken out of the way. ⁸ **And then shall that Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, . *2 Thessalonians 2:7-9*

The mystery of iniquity has his ultimate manifestation of power in *Revelation 13* through the beast and the false prophet. *Revelation 13:11-17* states:

¹¹ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. ¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, ¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. ¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six. *Revelation 13:11–18*

Satan will meet his eventual destruction *where the mystery of iniquity will be no more* as prophesied in *Ezekiel 28:11-19* :

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ¹² Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ¹³ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. ¹⁴ Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵ Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ¹⁶ By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason

THE NEW TESTAMENT MYSTERIES

of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. ¹⁸ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. ¹⁹ All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. *Ezekiel 28:11-19*

8. The Mystery Of Babylon The Great — *Revelation 17:5*.

The Babylonian is seen throughout the Old Testament narrative, but this final form of a one-world religion as a tool of the Antichrist (*Revelation 17:7*) is New Testament truth.

⁵ And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. ⁷ And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. *Revelation 17:5-7*

9. The Mystery Of God — *Revelation 10:7*.

This mystery is in reality the long time span of this present age of man. “The mystery of God is the long delay of our Lord in taking the kingdom unto Himself and in establishing righteousness in the earth.

⁷ But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. *Revelation 10:7*

10. The Mystery Of Consummation — *Ephesians 1:9,10*.

This may be described as the mystery of eternity.

⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: ¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: *Ephesians 1:9-10*

That completes our brief study on the New Testament mysteries.