

The Great Mystery

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ephesians 3:1-6.

B. At the heart of the universe is mystery.

C. Mysteries are secrets that God alone knows about life, and many are revealed in the Scriptures.

II. The mystery: Gentiles are fellow partakers with the Jews of the riches of Christ.

A. Paul is suffering because he was a prisoner.

1. Paul calls himself a prisoner of Christ however, not a prisoner of Caesar.

2. Behind the power of Caesar is the power of Jesus Christ. Christ determines the duration of an imprisonment.

3. The Jews were upset because Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles.

4. However, it was to be for the Jews benefit that Paul was imprisoned because he ministered greatly through his letters.

5. Paul considered himself a steward of the mystery of God. (I Corinthians 4:1)

a. Every Christian is charged with sharing the mysteries of God.

b. Christians need to speak into every area of life.

B. The mystery was made known by revelation. (II Corinthians 12)

1. This was the basis of God's authority to speak as an Apostle. (I Corinthians 11)

2. Paul calls this mystery the mystery of Christ--no matter what a person is struggling with the answer is in Christ.

III. The characteristics of the mystery.

A. It was hidden in the past. (Matthew 13)

B. The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and partakers of Christ.

C. The Gentiles in Christ are joint-heirs, a joint-body, and joint partakers of the promise with the Jews.

1. Heirs refers to possessions.

a. In Christ God is beginning a new creation that is not subject to the laws of decay.

b. Christians have the answer to the ecological problems.

2. Body refers to the problem of performance. The Spirit brings power now.

3. The promise refers to the power given by the Spirit, which can be experienced now.

4. We have been made a new creation in Jesus Christ.

Application questions:

1. Of what mystery does Paul speak?

2. Why do you think God kept this information a mystery until the appropriate time?

3. How does the text characterize the new relationship the Gentiles and Jews have in the church?
What is unique about this gathering as a body?
