

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD – BY ERIC D. SMITH

CHAPTER 3 - THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN YOU

“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; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 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: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

– Colossians 1:25-28

As Paul tells of one of the greatest mysteries revealed in the New Testament, he describes this mystery as one that *“hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints”* (Colossians 1:26). As you will see through this study, when a writer such as Paul mentions something as a mystery, he is usually ready to explain the mystery.

The Church is to take the riches of the glory of this mystery unto the unchurched. The ultimate purpose of being a steward of this mystery is recorded in verse twenty-eight when it says, *“that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”* Without the knowledge of this mystery, a man WILL NOT BE PERFECT in Christ Jesus.

Up until the time those believers who were gathered in the upper room *“were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”*, the understanding of what God was promising (God putting His Spirit within them), and how God would bring it to pass, was still a mystery (Acts 2:1-4). Even the disciples had no idea how it was going to happen. They were just instructed by the resurrected Jesus that *“they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me”* (Acts 1:4). Only when it actually happened to them did they understand the dynamics of the promise and of the mystery.

Questions, Discussions and Notes

1. Who were these mysteries made manifest to?
2. Does Paul reveal what the mystery is that had been kept secret? If so, what is this mystery?
3. What is the ultimate purpose of the steward in knowing this mystery?
4. If the church neglects this mystery, can a lost person be presented “perfect” in Christ Jesus?
5. Name three Old Testament scripture passages that show us the promise of God putting His Spirit within mankind. Found in chapter three of the book.
6. Did the believers know how God was going to fulfill His promise before the day of Pentecost?
7. Describe what happened to the believers that were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

In John chapter three, Jesus is breaking down the born again experience by saying that a man must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. Repentance is paralleled with crucifying the flesh and dying to our carnal, sinful nature. Water baptism is paralleled as being buried with Christ (Colossians 2:12). Having the Spirit within us is paralleled to being resurrected or being given new life.

When God put His Spirit within the believers on the day of Pentecost, the thing that caught the crowd's attention was the sound that was coming from the upper room. The believers were all speaking in "other tongues".

God was the one to choose again the sound of other tongues with this experience when the Gentiles received the infilling of the Spirit in Acts chapter ten. When Peter was questioned about preaching the message of salvation to the Gentiles in chapter eleven of Acts, it was the "speaking in other tongues" that Peter was able to use to confirm to the elders that it was the same experience that the Jews had from God. When the disciples of John the Baptist were met by Paul in Acts chapter nineteen, many years after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God was still using the sound of other tongues when the Spirit came to rest within the heart of the believer.

As stewards of the mysteries of God, we are not to hide this knowledge of "*Christ in you*" from a world that needs Jesus; and, we are not to change the message of how it was revealed and manifested in the saints of God. Being born again and entering into the Kingdom of God is not the act of coming forward at the end of a service and shaking a preacher's hand. In order to build the Master's Kingdom until He returns, faithful stewards of this mystery of "*Christ in you*" must preach the same born again experience of the infilling of the Spirit, evidenced by speaking in other tongues. Jesus said a person must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. Peter knew that the Gentiles had the same Holy Ghost infilling experience because "*they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God*" (Acts 10:46).

8. What does each of the following parallel to according to the Bible?
Repentance –

Water Baptism –

Having the Spirit within us –
9. Who chose "speaking in other tongues" when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon flesh?
10. Did God use "speaking in other tongues" as a sign (evidence) of receiving the Holy Ghost any time else in the Bible?
11. Can you see how Jesus needs faithful stewards that will preach and testify of the same message of the born again experience that the early church had?
12. Again, what is the ultimate purpose of the steward in knowing this mystery?