

**HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (2) (Week 21)**

*Scripture Reading: Rev. 10:7; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23; 3:3-11; 1 Cor. 6:17*

**The Mystery of the Church**

- Rev 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.
- Rom 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 3:3 That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- Eph 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,
- Eph 3:7 Of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God which was given to me according to the operation of His power.
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

**Day 1**

*Ephesians 3:3-5 - That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief, By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,*

Ephesians 3:9 says, “To enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things.” God’s mystery is His hidden purpose, which is to **dispense Himself into His chosen people**. Hence, there is the economy of the mystery of God. This mystery was hidden in God throughout the ages, but now the New Testament believers, having been enlightened, are able to see it.

In verse 9 the English word economy is an anglicized form of the Greek word oikonomia, which denotes a household administration, or arrangement. This means that God’s economy is God’s household management, God’s household administrative arrangement, the divine plan. In this economy, which is eternal and of God, a mystery was hidden. A mystery, a mysterious story, was hidden in the eternal God and in His eternal economy. This mystery, this mysterious story, is the church. (*Conclusion of the New Testament* , Chapter 337)

## Day 2

*Romans 16:25-26* - Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;

- I. **Ephesians 3:3-11** reveals that we may experience and enjoy **Christ as the mystery of the church**.
- II. **God’s hidden purpose is the mystery, and the unveiling of this mystery is revelation; the Bible speaks of the revelation of the mystery—Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3, 5:**
  - A. The mystery of Christ, the church, was hidden in other generations but has been **revealed in the New Testament age**—v. 5.
  - B. This mystery was hidden in God throughout the ages, but now the New Testament believers, having been **enlightened**, are able to see it—v. 9.
  - C. The mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles and prophets **in their spirit by revelation**—v. 5:
    1. The **mingled spirit** is the **means** by which the New Testament revelation concerning Christ and the church is unveiled to the apostles and prophets.
    2. When our spirit is **mingled with the divine Spirit**, our spirit becomes the **organ** to which the mystery of Christ is revealed—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 1:17; 3:5.
  - D. If we would see the revelation of the hidden mystery, we need to be **strengthened into our inner man**, our regenerated spirit, and **allow Christ** to make His home in our heart—vv. 14-17a.
  - E. In Romans 16:25 and 26 Paul speaks of the revelation of the mystery: “The **proclamation** of Jesus Christ, according to the **revelation of the mystery**, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages but has now been **manifested**.”

In brief, we all should believe that in Christ we are the fellow heirs of God, fellow members of the Body, and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel with His unsearchable riches in order to **enlighten all** that they may see what is the economy of the mystery hidden in God throughout the ages, which is the mystery of the church as the Body of Christ. (*Conclusion of the New Testament , Chapter 337*)

### Day 3

*Revelations 10:7 - But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.*

*Daniel 9:24 - Seventy weeks are apportioned for your people and for your holy city, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make propitiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.*

### III. The **seventh trumpet**, as the conclusion of the eternal economy of the processed Triune God, **closes the present age of mystery**; hence, Revelation 10:7 says, “The mystery of God is finished”:

- A. “To seal up vision and prophet” (Dan. 9:24c) is to **close** the age of mystery, that is, to **finish** the mystery of God (Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 3:9).
- B. In the dispensations from Adam to Moses and from Moses to Christ, everything was **unveiled, manifested**, and there was no mystery.
- C. It will be the same in the dispensation of the millennial kingdom and the new heaven and new earth—**everything will be unveiled**, and then there will be no more mystery.
- D. Christ Himself (Col. 2:2), the church (Eph. 3:4-6), the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11), the gospel (Eph. 6:19), the indwelling of Christ (Col. 1:26-27), and the coming resurrection and transfiguration of the saints as the end of this dispensation of mystery (1 Cor. 15:51-52) are all mysteries that were hidden in times of the ages (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26).
- E. All these mysteries will be **completed, finished**, and will be over at the **trumpeting of the seventh trumpet**.
- F. At the trumpeting of the seventh trumpet, not only God’s judgment of wrath upon the earth but also the mystery of God are finished.
- G. In the dispensation from the **incarnation** of Christ to the **millennial kingdom**—the church age, the age of grace—everything is a mystery:
  - 1. The **incarnation of Christ**, as the **beginning** of the age of mystery, is a mystery—1 Tim. 3:16.

In the midst of this solemn scene, another Angel appears. This **angel is Christ**. When Christ was revealed as walking in the midst of the churches, He was revealed as the Son of Man, and when He spoke to the churches, He declared all His qualifications. But in the administration of God's judgment upon the earth, Christ is the Angel standing on the position of One who has been sent by God. In a very positive sense, Christ is everything; He is whatever the economy of God needs. Revelation specifically describes Christ as "another Angel," indicating that He is not a regular or common angel but a special Angel. As we pointed out in message twenty-one, in the Old Testament Christ was called the "Angel of the Lord," who was God Himself. In Genesis 22 the Angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham, and in Exodus 3 the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses. Christ is another Angel; He is the unique, special Angel.

Verse 3 says, "*And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him that He should add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*" The first altar in this verse refers to the altar of burnt offering, and the golden altar before the throne refers to the incense altar. The golden censer signifies the prayer of the saints, which is brought to God by Christ as the other Angel. The incense signifies Christ with all His merit to be added to the prayers of the saints that the saints' prayers might be acceptable to God upon the golden altar. At the opening of the seventh seal there will still be "saints" praying on the earth.

In this scene in heaven after the opening of the **seventh seal**, **Christ appears as another Angel** to execute God's administration over the earth in the way of ministering to God as the High Priest with the prayers of His saints. As He offers the prayers of His saints to God, He adds His incense to them. Verse 4 says that "the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God." The "smoke of the incense" indicates that the incense is burnt to God with the prayers of the saints. This implies that by the incense which is added to them the prayers of the saints become **effective** and **acceptable** to God. (*Life Study of Revelation, Chapter 23*)

#### Day 4

**Colossians 2:2** - *That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,*

**Ephesians 3:4** - *By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,*

2. **Christ** is the **mystery of God**—Col. 2:2.
3. The **church** is the **mystery of Christ**—Eph. 3:4-6:
  - a. **Christ** is a mystery, and the **church**, as the Body of Christ to **express Him**, is the mystery of Christ.
  - b. **Christ and the church** as one spirit are the **great mystery**—5:32; 1 Cor. 6:17.
  - c. During the church age, the age of mystery, Christ is **building up the church to be His bride**—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 19:7-9.
4. The kingdom of the heavens, the indwelling of Christ, and the resurrection and transfiguration of the saints are all mysteries—Matt. 13:11; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

The **divine mystery** is first the **mystery of God** and second the **mystery of Christ**. We need to read, study, and pray over Colossians and Ephesians, for they unveil to us the mystery of God, Christ. The Jews have God in name, but they do not have God in reality. They have God in a mystery. They do not have God in reality because they do not know the mystery of God. The **mystery of God is Christ**! If you do not know God, and if you have not met God, just **come to Christ**, because God is embodied in Christ. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in this Christ (Col. 2:9). If you **do not believe** in Christ, you **miss** God. Without Christ, although you may say you believe in God, you believe only in terms. You believe God as a mystery. You could never realize God. You could never touch God, get God, or get into God except through Christ. The Moslems and Jews have God without Christ, but eventually they have nothing. The very God is in Christ. If you do not have Christ, you do not have God. Christ is wonderful because He is the mystery, the answer, the definition, the embodiment, and the reality of God. He is nothing less than God, but He is God with something more. **Christ is God-plus**. It is hard for us to explain. He was a little man who came from a despised region called Galilee, yet this man is the mystery of God. Outside of Him and without Him you could never see God. Whether you believe it or not, He is God. He is just God! In the whole universe, God is in Christ. Where Christ is, there is God. Apart from Christ, you could never find God.

Christ is the mystery of God. Where then is Christ? In history there has never been a name so wonderful as Jesus Christ. Whether they are for Him or not for Him, today all the nations use the calendar of Jesus. This is the year of Jesus. Every year is the year of the chronicle of Christ, of that little man. Is not this Christ wonderful? There is no man so big. There is no name bigger than the name of Jesus. Yet where is He? Some say that He is in the heavens. He is not only in the heavens but right on this earth. He is right here in this room. The mystery of the universe is God, the mystery of God is Christ, and the **mystery of Christ is the church**. For years and years I have been ministering Christ and the church, and the more I minister, the more I have to minister. Over fifty years ago I learned that the church is not a Western bungalow with a belltower. I learned that the church is the gathering of God's called ones. However, even to say that the church is the gathering of God's called people is too superficial. The church is the Body of Christ. The church is an organism, not an organization. Do not consider the church as an organization, but an organism. For so many years I never saw that the church is a mystery. The church is the mystery of Christ. In other words, the **church is just Christ in a mysterious way**. The church is Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). So, when we say that we are the Christ, this is not too much. Hallelujah, we are the Christ here! On one hand, we are wonderful persons, and on the other, we are Christ in a mysterious way. Within us we have a mysterious part, and that part is Christ. **Christ today is right here**. (*The Two Great Mysteries in God's Economy, Chapter 1*)

## Day 5

*Colossians 1:26* - The mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations but now has been manifested to His saints;

*Ephesians 5:32* - This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

### IV. The **mystery of the church** is the **ultimate mystery** in the universe:

- A. The **church** is the **hidden mystery** in God's eternal economy—Eph. 3:9-11:
  - 1. The mystery of the universe is **God**, the mystery of God is **Christ**, and the mystery of Christ is the **church**—Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.

2. According to Ephesians 3:4, the church has a particular title—*the mystery of Christ*.
3. In the ages before the New Testament, the mystery of the church was hidden from men; it has been revealed to the apostles and the believers **only** in the **New Testament age**—v. 5; Col. 1:26.
4. The mystery of the church was hidden from eternity past throughout the Old Testament times, but in the **New Testament age** it has been **manifested to all** the believers in Christ.
5. In the **New Jerusalem** God obtains an **eternal and full expression** in the man whom He created; this is the ultimate mystery in the universe—the mystery of the church—Eph. 5:32.
6. Our spirit needs to be **strong** and **full of wisdom and revelation** so that we may know the mystery of the church—1:17.
7. The mystery of Christ and the mystery of the church are **great** and **deep**.

### Day 6

*1 Timothy 3:15-16 - But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth. And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, / Justified in the Spirit, / Seen by angels, / Preached among the nations, / Believed on in the world, / Taken up in glory.*

The church also is a mystery. Are we the church? How can we be the church when we are sometimes as bad as Satan? How can we be the church when we argue with our husbands or wives? The church is holy, pure, righteous, spiritual, and heavenly. The church has rejected the soul-life to the uttermost. How can we who are full of self say that we are the church? Moreover, the church has nothing to do with the world. So how can we, who are still so worldly, claim to be the church?

Regarding the church, there are a number of questions we need to ask: Who is the church? What is the church? Where is the church? Why is the church? How is the church? As you endeavor to answer these questions, it may seem that there is no church at all. The church is mysterious. If you say that you are the church, I will say that you are not, but if you say that you are not the church, I will say that you are. We may be the church to a certain degree. For example, some may be fifty-five percent the church. This is the case because the church is a mystery. No one can measure the church. Like the air, the church is mysterious and immeasurable.

The **New Jerusalem is an eternal reflection of the church today**. If you want to see what the church is, look at this eternal reflection. The New Testament does not give us a full definition of the church, but we do see a complete picture of the church in the New Jerusalem. If you want to know the church, look at this eternal reflection. What we are doing in the church today is reflected there. (*Basic Training*, Chapter 1)

- B. The great mystery—Christ and the church—is the **meaning of the universe** and of **human life**—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 5:32:
  1. **God's intention** in His creation of all things, including man, was that **man would be mingled with God** to produce the church—Zech. 12:1; Eph. 3:9.
  2. The **desire of God's heart** is to have the mystery of Christ—the Body of Christ as the increase and expression of Christ—1:5, 9, 11, 22-23.



3. The **Body life** is the ultimate satisfaction of our spiritual experience—5:30.
4. The economy of the mystery hidden in God throughout the ages is the mystery of the **church as the Body of Christ**—3:9-10.
5. The mystery of Christ and the mystery of the church should be our daily life; **without** this mystery, our life would be merely the life of a human being, not the life of a Christian—v. 4; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.

What is the church? In the past few days we have learned many new terms. The church is the reprint of the Holy Spirit with Christ and the place of God's infusion. Now we must say that the **church is God manifested in the flesh**. What is the church? To put it a little more poetically, the church is the **great mystery of godliness**, which is God manifested in the flesh. I would ask you, however, "If you are living by your self, and if I am living by my self, and if we all are living by the self, then is the church the manifestation of God in the flesh?" No! That is merely the manifestation of the natural man in the flesh. In order for the church to be the manifestation of God in the flesh, we must live not by our self but by God. If we live by God and take God as our living and our person, then when we come together, it will be the manifestation of God in the flesh.

Let me give a little illustration. Suppose some of the young brothers who live together are talking, laughing, and playing ping-pong before the meeting; some are losing their temper and others are criticizing the saints. Then one brother says, "It is time for the meeting. Let's go!" You all go to the meeting, and one by one you enter and sit there. Do you think that at such a time this is "Great is the mystery of godliness"? I do not think so; rather, I think you would have to say, "Woe is the pitiful flesh!" Some brothers and sisters are married; the meeting is at 7:30, but at 6:30 they may begin arguing, and they argue until 7:00. At that time a sister who lives next door may come and say, "It's almost time for the meeting!" Therefore, this married couple reluctantly goes to the meeting. What is this? This is "Woe is the quarreling flesh." You simply cannot say that these conditions display the great mystery of godliness.

What is the church? The church is a group of people who have been called by God, who have received His life and nature, who live by God, and who have the element of God added into them daily, transforming them and being formed within them. They grow in this life, putting off the old living and putting on the new living, which is the church life. Thus, when they come together, they do not need even to speak; all they need to do is sit there, and the angels will say, "Behold! Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." This is the church.

We must know the church to such an extent that we know the church as the great "mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh." Simply put, the **church is the manifestation of God in the flesh**. Thank the Lord that although I dare not say that **every meeting in the local churches** is the manifestation of God in the flesh, I do dare to say that many times when the brothers and sisters in the Lord's recovery meet together, even the angels nod their heads and say, "This is God manifested in the flesh." They joyfully say, "Devil and little demons, look; is this not God manifested in the flesh?" Even the demons must admit, "Yes, this is God manifested in the flesh." Tonight as we are speaking here, I believe that there is such a condition. Hallelujah! This is the church. (*The Subjective Truths in the Holy Scriptures, chapter 8*)