

HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3) (Week 4)

The Mystery of God—Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:2-3, 9-13; 3:1; 4:3; Eph. 3:8-9; John 1:1, 14, 16; 1 Cor. 6:17

Col 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**,

Col 2:3 In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are **hidden**.

Col 2:9 For **in Him** dwells all the **fullness of the Godhead** bodily,

Col 2:10 And you have been **made full in Him**, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

Col 2:11 In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the **circumcision of Christ**,

Col 2:12 **Buried together with Him** in baptism, in which also you were **raised together with Him** through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Col 2:13 And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He **made alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our offenses;

Col 3:1 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, **where Christ is**, sitting at the **right hand of God**.

Col 4:3 Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to **speak the mystery of Christ** (because of which also I am bound),

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,

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

John 1:14 And the **Word became flesh** and tabernacled among us (and we **beheld His glory**, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 1:16 For of His fullness **we have all received**, and grace upon grace.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is **joined** to the Lord is **one spirit**.

Day 1

Col. 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**.*

Col. 4:3 - *Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to **speak the mystery of Christ** (because of which also I am bound).*

I. In the Bible a mystery refers not only to things that are hidden and unknown but also to things that are hidden in God's heart; this is the principle concerning the mysteries mentioned in the Bible—Mark 4:11; Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19.

II. Colossians 2:2 says, “The mystery of God, Christ”; the mystery of God is manifested in Christ, so Christ is the mystery of God.

III. There are five great mysteries in the Bible:

- A. The mystery of **the universe** is **God**, who is the meaning and purpose of the universe—Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9.
- B. The mystery of **man** is also **God**—Gen. 1:26; Zech. 12:1; 1 Cor. 2:11.
- C. The mystery of **God** is **Christ**—Col. 2:2.
- D. The mystery of **Christ** is the **church**—Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:3.
- E. The mystery of the **church** is the **organism of Christ**, the Body of Christ as the enlargement of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 16; 5:30, 32.

There are five great mysteries in the Bible. The **mystery of the universe is God**, who is the meaning and purpose of the universe. Revelation 4:11 says, “*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.*” Everything was created due to something that was in the heart of God. God created everything with a purpose, but up to a certain point in time, He did not tell anybody what that purpose was. Then there came a point when He wanted to make His purpose known to certain ones—His saints. This includes us. We should want to know what God’s purpose is.

The **mystery of man is also God**. Even we ourselves are a mystery. Many people may have been open to the gospel because they were thinking, “I am a mystery. I do not know why I am here.” Psalm 139:14 says that we are awesomely made. We have these inward parts—our mind, emotion, will, and conscience—but **what are they for?** Our existence as human beings **has to be for something**, but what is the answer? The answer to this mystery is **God**.

The **mystery of Christ is the church**. If we want to know God, **we must come to Christ**. If we want to know Christ, **we must come to the church**. We must know the church and see the church. In Ephesians 3:4 Paul says, “My understanding in the mystery of Christ,” and then in the following verses he points out that the mystery of Christ is the church.

The **mystery of the church is the organism of Christ**, the Body of Christ as the enlargement of Christ. Many people hold the concept that the church is a physical building. This indicates that they do not know what the church is. The church is not a building; the **church is the people**. But is it even sufficient to say that the church is the people? What is the reality of the church? **The reality of the church is the Body of Christ**. When we see the Body, we realize what the church really is, because Christ, the mystery of God, is the Head of this Body. The church is the mystery of Christ and the Body of the Head. This is the great mystery. (*Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 7, chapter 28*)

Day 2

Eph. 1:9 - **Making known to us the mystery of His will** according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.

Eph. 3:4-5 - **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.

IV. In Ephesians **mystery** is a crucial word:

- A. In eternity God planned a will, but it was **hidden in Him**; it was a mystery—1:9.
- B. **God’s hidden purpose** is the mystery, and the unveiling of this mystery in the mingled spirit is the revelation of the mystery—3:3, 5.

- C. God's mystery is His hidden purpose, and with this mystery there is an economy—the **economy of the mystery**—v. 9.
- D. **Christ is a mystery**, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ—v. 4; Col. 4:3.
- E. **Christ and the church** as one spirit are the **great mystery**—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:32.

Day 3

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

John 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.*

V. The all-inclusive Christ is the **mystery of God**—Col. 2:2:

- A. **God Himself** is a mystery, and **Christ** is the mystery of this mystery.
- B. *The mystery of God* indicates something **incomprehensible** and **inexplicable**.
- C. As the mystery of God, the all-inclusive, extensive **Christ** is the **definition, explanation, and expression of God**—the **Word of God**—John 1:1, 14:

As the mystery of God, the all-inclusive, extensive **Christ** is the **definition, explanation, and expression of God**—the **Word of God**. *John 1:1* says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*,” and verse *14* says, “*The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us*.” In verse *18* John says, “*No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*.” Here we begin to see what this mystery is referring to—Christ as the Word of God. As the Word, He explains, demonstrates, expresses, and defines God.

We know that **God is love**, but how is God love? Look at the Lord Jesus. One day He went to a city called Nain and came upon a funeral procession. A widow had lost her only son, and the Lord was moved with compassion. He came near, stopped the bier, raised the son, and gave him to his mother. In **His expression of pity** for this weeping widow, we see God as love.

God is also light. What does this look like? Look at Christ. In *John 8* there was a woman caught in adultery. The Lord was there, and the scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Him. With just a few words **He shined as the light and even as righteousness**. He said, “*He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her*” (v. 7). The people were pricked in their conscience. Verse *9* goes on to say, “*They went out one by one, beginning with the older ones*.” The light of the world was there shining. Christ is the expression of God as light.

God is also holy. He is **not mixed with the world**. He is distinct. One day He walked into the temple and did something drastic; He drove out the merchants and moneychangers and overturned the moneychangers' tables. John writes, “His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘The zeal of Your house shall devour Me’” (v. 17). That was God's holiness in action in the person of Christ. Do you want to know God? You must know Christ. He expresses God. He shows us God. (*Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 7, chapter 28*)

Day 4

Col. 2:3 - *In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.*

Eph. 1:17 - *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him.*

Rom. 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways!*

1. Although God is infinite and eternal, without beginning or ending, He also has a **history**, a **story**—Rom. 16:26; Psa. 90:2.
2. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ—the mystery of God, the mysterious story of God—is the **history of God**.
3. **God's history** refers to the **process** through which He passed in Christ so that He may enter into us, and we may be brought into Him; this process includes **incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and enthronement**—John 1:12-14, 29; 3:14; 12:24; 14:20.
- D. In this all-inclusive, extensive Christ as the mystery of God, **all** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are **hidden**—Col. 2:3:
 1. **Wisdom** is related to **our spirit**, and **knowledge** is related to **our mind**—Eph. 1:8, 17.
 2. God is the **unique source** of wisdom and knowledge—Rom. 16:27; 11:33.
 3. This is the **spiritual wisdom and knowledge** of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church—Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 5:32.
 4. Wisdom and knowledge also refer to all the “stories” of God.
 5. All the wisdom and knowledge pertaining to God’s stories are **hidden in Christ**, who is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2-3.

Day 5

Col. 2:9 - *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

2 Cor. 13:14 - *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

VI. As the mystery of God, **Christ** is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead—v. 9:

A. *All the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the **entire Godhead**, the **complete God**—v. 9:

1. The word *Godhead* refers to **deity** and strongly indicates the **deity of Christ**.
2. Since the **Godhead** comprises the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Spirit**, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.
3. For Christ to be the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead means that the fullness of the Triune God **dwells in Christ in a bodily form**—Col. 2:9:

- a. This implies the physical body that Christ put on in His humanity, and it indicates that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as the One who has a human body—John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14.
- b. **Before** His incarnation the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in **Christ as the eternal Word**, but it did not dwell in Him bodily—John 1:1.
- c. **After** He became incarnate, clothed with a human body, the fullness of the Godhead began to **dwell in Him in a bodily way**, and in His glorified body (Phil. 3:21) now and forever it dwells.

B. *Fullness* in *Colossians 2:9* refers not to the **riches** of God but to the **expression** of the riches of God:

1. The **riches** are the **quantity of an object**, whereas the **fullness** is the **flowing out**, the **overflow**, of the object to become the expression of the object.
2. What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but also the expression of the riches of what God is:
 - a. **God's fullness is the overflow of His riches**, and this overflow is God's expression.
 - b. The **fullness** of the Godhead is the **expression** of the Godhead, the expression of what God is—v. 9.
3. The Godhead is expressed both in the **old creation**, the **universe**, and in the **new creation**, the **church**—1:15, 18.

C. When the Son of God was **incarnated** as a man, with Him was the **fullness of God**, and of this fullness **we have all received**—John 1:14, 16:

1. In *John 1:16* *grace* does not refer to the riches of grace but to the **fullness of grace**; the riches of grace are in God, but the fullness of grace is in Christ Jesus—Col. 2:9.
2. The grace we receive is the fullness of grace; beginning from the time we are saved, we may **receive grace upon grace**.
3. The phrase *grace upon grace* in John 1:16 can be compared to the **rolling waves** of the sea that come in wave upon wave without ceasing.

VII. As believers in Christ, we are made full in Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily—Col. 2:9-10:

The Colossians had so many **replacements** for Christ. They needed to be converted back to Christ from their philosophies of living. It is possible that we may unknowingly have philosophies of living and standards that we have **accumulated from our upbringing and our culture**. We may not realize that we are depending on those things instead of the Lord. We may evaluate many things as we are raising our children or looking for a home to purchase. We look at the school districts and all kinds of things. It is not that we should not do these things, **but where is Christ?** Even in those matters, are we enjoying our portion of the fullness? As we are making decisions, we should remember that **we have been made full in Christ**. The mind of Christ is **accessible to us**. We have **wisdom as our portion**. Why, then, do we still try to figure things out on our own? That is what the Colossians were doing. They were seeking other types of wisdom. Experientially, they had been transplanted out of Christ and rooted in earthly wisdom. We may not realize that we have been deluded and defrauded of our prize. We may have been carried off as spoil. We need to come back. (*Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 7, chapter 28*)

Day 6

Col. 2:10 - And you have been **made full in Him**, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

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**.

- A. The Greek word translated “full” in verse 10 implies **completion, perfection**.
- B. Because all the fullness dwells in Christ and because we have been put into Him, we have been **made full, filled** with the divine riches—1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 3:8:
 - 1. All those who believe in Christ have been put into Christ; therefore, we are **identified with Him** and are **one with Him**—Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:17.
 - 2. We the believers have been **put into** the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, **identified** with Him, and **joined** to Him as our Husband; hence, we are **one with Him**—Col. 1:28; Rom. 7:2-4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 3. Because we are one with Christ, **we partake of all** that He has accomplished, obtained, and attained; **we inherit all** that Christ has experienced and passed through, receiving all that He is and has.
 - 4. All that He has passed through is now **our history**, and all that He has obtained and attained is our inheritance.
 - 5. The result is that all that He is and all that He has **belong to us**, and all that He has experienced has become **our history**—Col. 2:11-13; 3:1.
- C. We need to have a full realization of what we have in Christ and to exercise faith to **partake of all that is ours in Christ**—Eph. 3:17.
- D. Because this fullness is all-inclusive, it accomplishes everything for us, it fully **satisfies and supplies us**, and it **makes us full, perfect, and complete**—Col. 2:9.
- E. We have the all-inclusive, inexhaustible fullness that dwells in Christ bodily, and **in Him we are made full**—Eph. 3:8; Col. 2:9-10.

The Colossians needed their hearts to be adjusted. **We need a sober mind, a regulated emotion, and a subdued will** if we are to see the mystery of God. We need an **unoccupied mind** that is **not cluttered** with many things. The Colossians had many things, including many standards, that they had allowed to come into the church life. They were even judging one another according to these things. The result was that they were being defrauded of their prize, and they were being carried away as spoil from Christ as their good land because their mind was full of other things.

We need to consider **how many things are in our mind** when we are with the Lord personally. Can we be **emptied** for just ten minutes? Can we be **calm**? Can we be **available** to the Lord for just ten minutes? Sometimes this is not that easy. There are so many things that come our way. Oh, that we would have the grace to be emptied, opened, and focused!... We may be involved with **many things** in the church life, and sometimes it is these things that are cluttering our mind. Can we put them down for ten minutes? For thirty minutes? **Can we simply be with the Lord?** Sometimes saints listen to messages with the “glasses” of their work and their burden, so they receive the points that match their work and their burden, but they do not receive the burden of the Lord. We may not realize that our heart needs to be **comforted** and **adjusted**, that our emotion needs to be **regulated**, that our will needs to be **subdued**, and that our entire inner being needs to be **engaged** in a proper way so that we can see this great mystery. (*Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 7, chapter 28*)