

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CHURCH LIFE, THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD, Week 1

The Consummation of the Age—the Age of Mystery

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:20; Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 1:4; 3:9; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 11:6

Matthew 28:20	Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.
Revelation 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.
1 Timothy 1:4 1 Timothy 3:9	Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy , which is in faith . Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
Ephesians 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,
Hebrews 11:6	But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him , for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Day 1

I. "I am with you all the days until the **consummation of the age**"—Matt. 28:20:

- A. The word **consummation** means that there is a process that will be brought to **completion** or **fulfillment**—24:3.
- B. The **consummation** of the age and the **end of the age** refer to the same thing.
- C. In Matthew 28:20 the consummation of the age indicates the **end of the church age**, which is the age of grace—John 1:14, 16-17; Rev. 22:10.
- D. The consummation of the age will be the **three and a half years** of the great tribulation—Dan. 12:4, 6-7, 9.

II. The present age—the age of grace, the age of the church—is the **age of mystery**—Eph. 5:32:

- A. Revelation 10:7 says, "The mystery of God is finished"; to finish the mystery of God is to **close the age of mystery**—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3, 5; 5:32.
- B. In the dispensations from Adam to Moses and from Moses to Christ, everything was unveiled, and there was no mystery; it will be the same in the dispensation of the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth—**everything will be unveiled** and there will be **no more mystery**.

Day 2

- C. In the dispensation from the incarnation of Christ to the millennial kingdom—the church age, the age of grace—**everything is a mystery**—1 Tim. 3:9:
 1. The **incarnation of Christ**, as the beginning of the age of **mystery**, is a mystery: through the incarnation of Christ, the infinite God was brought into the finite man—v. 16.
 2. **Christ** is the **mystery of God**—Col. 2:2:
 - a. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.
 - b. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment of God; all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily—v. 9.

THE CHURCH BEING THE MYSTERY IN GOD'S ETERNAL ECONOMY

The New Testament reveals that the **church is the mystery in God's eternal economy**. According to Ephesians 3:4 the church has a particular title—the **mystery of Christ**. God is a mystery. He is real, living, and almighty, but invisible. No one has ever seen God, and therefore God is a mystery. This mysterious God is embodied in Christ; hence, Christ is the mystery of God. In Ephesians 3:4 Paul used the expression the mystery of Christ to explain the church as the Body of Christ in God's eternal economy, indicating that the church is the mystery of Christ.

The believers have Christ, the mystery of God, dwelling in them, but worldly people do not realize that He is in the believers. To them, this is a mystery. The all-inclusive Christ is the mystery of the mysterious God. **Such a Christ as the mystery of God produces a mysterious Body, the church**. Thus, the church is the continuation of the mystery, which is Christ. Mystery surely produces mystery. Christ, who is the mystery of God, brings forth the church, the mystery of Christ. The church, the mystery within a mystery, is the mystery in God's economy. (*Truth Lessons, Level 4, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 1*)

Day 3

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, the Body of Christ, to be His bride—Matt. 16:18; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 4:16; Col. 1:18; Rev. 19:7-9.

4. The kingdom of the heavens, the gospel, the indwelling of Christ, and the coming resurrection and transfiguration of the saints are all mysteries that were **hidden in the time of the ages**—Matt. 13:11; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.
5. All the mysteries will be **completed, finished, and will be over** at the trumpeting voice of the **seventh trumpet**—Rev. 10:7.

Day 4

- D. We need “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. 3:9:
 1. In the New Testament a mystery refers not only to things that are hidden and unknown to us but also to things that are **hidden in God’s heart**—ark 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.
 2. 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—3:9.
 3. The mystery hidden in God’s heart is **God’s eternal economy** (1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4), which is God’s eternal intention with His heart’s desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen and redeemed people to be their life and nature so that they may be the same as He is as His duplication (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2), to become an organism, the Body of Christ as the new man (Eph. 2:15-16), which will become the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2–22:5).
 4. Paul preached the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and he also preached the gospel concerning the economy of the mystery hidden in God—Eph. 3:8-9:
 - a. The gospel concerning the economy of the mystery hidden in God is to **produce the church** for God’s expression and the glorification according to God’s eternal purpose—vv. 10-11, 21.
 - b. Today we must **announce the gospel concerning the mystery hidden in God**, to **enlighten all** so that they may see, what is the economy of the mystery hidden in God, who created all things for the fulfillment of His will, the desire of His heart, and His eternal purpose—1:5, 9, 11; 3:8-11.

Being Hidden throughout the Ages in God, Who Created All Things

In Ephesians 3:9 Paul 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 is the God who created all things. God’s mystery is His hidden purpose. This mystery was hidden in God throughout the ages, that is, from eternity, but in the New Testament age it has been **brought to light to His believers**. God’s mystery, God’s hidden purpose, is that **God wants to dispense Himself into His chosen people**. This is the **economy of the mystery of God**.

According to Ephesians 1:5 and 9 the motive of God’s creating all things was His desire and pleasure. God’s creation reveals His desire in the universe and manifests His purpose in eternity. Revelation 4:11 says that all things were created because of God’s will. Zechariah 12:1 says that Jehovah stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. This indicates that the heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and **man with the human spirit is for God**. God’s marvelous creation, focused on man, is **for man to be mingled with God to produce the church**. God created the heavens, the earth, and billions of items in order to have the church. Therefore, Ephesians 3:9 reveals that the church is the mystery hidden in God, who created all things. (*Truth Lessons, Level 4, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 1*)

Day 5 & Day 6

III. The age of mystery is the **age of faith**—Heb. 11:1, 6; Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim 3:9:

- A. God’s mysteries are **known by faith**; for this reason, the age of mystery is also the age of faith—Rev. 10:7.
- B. **Faith** is the substantiating ability by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things not seen or hoped for—Heb. 11:11:
 1. Faith **assures us** of the things not seen, convincing us of what we do not see; therefore, it is the evidence, the proof, of things not seen—v. 1.
 2. We do not regard, or look at, the things which are seen but the things which are not seen—2 Cor. 4:18.
 3. The **Christian life is a life of things unseen**, and the Lord’s recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
- C. Faith is the **unique way** for God to carry out His New Testament economy with man—Heb. 11:6:
 1. **God’s economy is in faith**—a matter initiated and developed in the sphere and element of faith; **without faith we cannot realize God’s economy**—1 Tim. 1:4.
 2. **Faith** is the **unique requirement** for people to contact God in His New Testament economy—Heb. 11:1, 6; 1 Tim. 1:4.
 3. God’s requirement for us related to everything in the New Testament economy is **faith**—Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Mark 11:22; Luke 18:8.
 4. **Genuine faith** is Christ Himself **infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him**; after the Lord Jesus has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith—Rom. 3:26.
 5. Through **faith in Christ Jesus**, we are brought into an **organic union with Christ**; in this organic union we experience Christ and live Christ—Gal. 2:16, 20; John 14:17; Eph. 3:17.
 6. In the Body “God has apportioned to each a measure of faith”; therefore, we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think “but to think to be sober-minded”—Rom. 12:3.
 7. **Faith** is the **divine requirement** for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return and to receive the reward of the kingdom—uke 18:8; 2 Tim. 4:7c-8A; Heb. 10:35, 39.

THE ECONOMY OF THE MYSTERY

The third great matter in Ephesians 3 is The Economy of the Mystery in verse 9. An economy is a [dispensing](#), a distribution of riches. The apostle Paul was doing a particular kind of work—he was distributing Christ in His riches into people. As genuine Christians, we can testify that since the day we first called on the name of the Lord, something mysterious has been added into our being: [Christ has been dispensed into us](#). The mystery of Christ is [Christ experienced](#) in all His riches. To experience the riches of Christ means that something of Christ, some element of His riches, has been dispensed into us. In this way we experience and enjoy Christ as our life, life supply, support, and strength. The more we experience Christ, the more He is dispensed into us. The dispensing of His riches into us is The Economy of the Mystery. Something eternal, mysterious, and incomprehensible yet sweet, rich, and high has been dispensed into our being and makes us joyful, living, powerful, loving, and lovable. This is the enjoyment of the riches of Christ.

[Every believer has Christ within](#). Once we receive Christ, we can never send Him away. We may sometimes try to reject Him, but we cannot get rid of Him. We may even say, “Lord, I do not love You,” but He will say, “I still love you.” The more we talk to the Lord, even in this way, the more of Christ we will receive. Instead of resisting the Lord, we should simply love Him. Loving the Lord and being loved by Him is the reason that Christians may appear to be crazy to others. Saints often travel from a long distance to come to church conferences. At the conferences we only attend meetings. We do not come for entertainment, yet we are happy. Unbelievers cannot understand our joy and may think that we are superstitious or misled, but the real reason is that [we have the dispensing of the mystery](#). (*Crucial Aspects of the Experience of Christ Revealed in Paul's Epistles, Chapter 5, Section 1*)