

# ***THE MYSTERY***

It's that time of year that the harvesting of the almonds, or Amonds, as you may prefer, is underway. This time of year typically brings with it beautiful weather but the harvesting stirs up the dust and spores in the dirt and the mold from the husks, so, while it's nice having access to the freshly picked produce from the area, the cost of that, is putting up with the bad air quality this time of year. Now the point of that, is that none of the fresh produce that we get around here can happen if the trees aren't planted or the seeds aren't put in the ground. It takes a lot of work to grow a crop of anything. Just ask some of brethren here that plant gardens. There is nothing like a fresh tomato out of your own garden, sliced with a little salt and pepper and maybe a little dressing, for a summer salad. But I can tell you, that my darling wife spent hours preparing the ground, weeding, keeping the bugs and the dogs out, just to get me that tomato, and I really appreciate it.

In...

*Col 4:2-4*

**1**

**2** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; **3** praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; **4** that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

A quick aside here, note what Paul's request is...

**2**

*"Pray for us"*

Remember, Paul is speaking to the everyday Christians in Colossae, and he is asking them to pray for him and his companions. If we are not supposed to pray and ask for things from God, that really doesn't harmonize with Paul's request. Little things, but they add up to refute the false teaching that some are spreading.

Back to our lesson.

Paul speaks of the...

**3**

*"Mystery of Christ"*

In **Mark 4:1-9**, Christ teaches the parable of the sower and the seed. I know that we have all probably looked at this parable before, but to refresh our memories, Christ uses the everyday occurrence of how seed is planted and the types of ground it falls on to illustrate how different people will respond to God's Word. And make no mistake, regardless of how you feel about God and His Bible, you do have a response, everyone does, whether it's positive or negative.

What the problem comes down to is that people don't choose to believe or accept that point. It is almost as if they think that if they don't acknowledge the fact of the Bible or that it is God's Word, then they are safe from it. What a foolish notion. Just because we choose to ignore or deny the fact of something has no bearing whatsoever on the truth of it. Man can deny until he dies the facts of Christ and the Word, but they are still the truth and they will still be the standard that judges all men. You are probably wondering what in the world planting and harvesting has to do with anything, but please bear with me a moment. For this lesson we won't be looking at the first **9 verses of Mark 4**, where the ground and the seeds response to the ground is discussed, rather we are going to look at the discussion Christ has with His disciples following the teaching of the parable. Paul speaks about this...

## *Mystery of Christ*

It is this mystery that we want to talk about for a little bit today. This is the same mystery that Paul spoke of in the passage from **Col. 4**.

**Mark 4:10-12**

**4**

**10** as soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. **11** And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, **12** in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they return and be forgiven. "

It is this concept of seeing and perceiving that we want to explore for a bit. Christ said that there are those that will see, understand and be forgiven, and then there will be those that will see and have no perception of understanding, no perception of what they are seeing. What is the difference? Why can some see and others not? And lastly, what is the mystery our Lord is talking about.

The mystery first.

**Rom 11:25**

**5**

**25** For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation,

God wants us to know what this mystery is, and through Paul is saying that if we are uninformed of this mystery, then we will feel wise in our own estimation. This idea of feeling wise in our own estimation is a common thread throughout the scriptures. It is what Jeremiah is speaking of in...

**Jer 10:23**

**6**

**23** I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

We might feel wise in our own estimation but God tells us that it is not in man to guide his own footsteps. This would seem to indicate that knowledge of the mystery would be both relevant and important since according to God, man does not have the capability to be his own guide. I marvel at the gross audacity of the man who thinks that he can do a better job of determining his way than can God.

Would you like to see what true wisdom really looks like?

**Job 6:24**

**7**

**24** "Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have erred.

Job shows us what true wisdom is, give yourself over to God and allow God to teach us and show us our error. So, we see that it is not within man to guide his own footsteps and true wisdom is in allowing God to teach us His way.

But let's be fair. Does God really care to guide us in our daily lives, to determine what we will do as a career, who we marry, or where we live? The answer is an unequivocal yes, but only in the broadest sense, in as far as the decisions that we make concerning those things don't violate the Law God has set in place, we make the decisions of our lives with His blessings. But God obviously

cares for us otherwise He would not have given us the mystery of his kingdom. And God has given us that mystery, He has revealed that mystery...

**Rom 16:25-27**

**8**

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Paul here states categorically that Jesus Christ is the mystery. Everything that was pointed towards in the Old Testament and referenced back to in the New Testament, is embodied in Christ. That is what Paul says here in Romans. Everything that God had planned is revealed in Jesus Christ. And in...

**1 Peter 1:10-12**

**9**

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

Even the angels didn't understand the mystery. This is where the question gets asked...

**10**

### *Understand what mystery?*

Let's see if we can explain this. In...

**Rom 6:23**

**11**

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sin separates us from God, brings us death, physical and spiritual, and not even the angels understood how God would overcome the requirement of the Law, that death will be the just reward for sin. But God promised that there would be one who broke the hold that Satan had over death, the seed of woman...

**Gen 3:15**

**12**

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

That is the mystery that the angels did not understand. The requirement of the Law of sin was death. That requirement must be fulfilled. The mystery of how God would provide for man to be freed from the penalty of sin is what is revealed by God through the sufferings of Christ and His Death, Burial, and Resurrection. Christ paid the penalty for all men that the Law required. John writes in...

**1 John 2:1-3** 13

**1** My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. **3** And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

There the mystery has been revealed, God has made known to all, man and angel, how man can overcome the penalty for his sin by giving it to Christ to pay the price and be reunited with God.

That is the mystery, in a nutshell, now the difference, the difference between seeing and understanding and seeing and not comprehending as we saw in **Mark 4:10-12**.

Note some passages...

**Ps 49:20** 14

**20** Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish.

**Prov 12:15** 15

**15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,

**Prov 18:2** 16

**2** A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

Do you see the point that God is making?

He has created us to be creatures of free will, able to make the choices we want. But just because we have the ability and the right to choose, that does not necessarily mean that our choices will be the right ones. When we choose to follow our own way, to seek after the wisdom of man, to trust in emotion, education, or tradition, we are no better than the beast of the field, without understanding. Where does your delight come from, seeking understanding or revealing our own mind? Remember...

**Ps 14:1** 17

**1** The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Prov. 12:15 is a thought we have already seen in Job...

18 ***“But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”***

This is God’s counsel, counsel in wisdom, understanding, and righteousness. Direction for our hearts that is eternally enduring, personal to our own needs resulting in glory and wisdom the rest of our days.

That is also what is seen in God's Word...

**Ps 33:11** 19

**1** The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

**Ps 73:23-24** 20

**23** Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. **24** With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

**Prov 19:20** 21

**20** Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.

See the difference that Christ is illustrating for His disciples in...

**Mark 4:10-12**

**22**

**10** And as soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. **11** And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, **12** in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they return and be forgiven.

The person who chooses to ignore the mystery of the Scheme of Redemption, chooses to place himself before God and is following his own path as opposed to God's. That person cannot find God or forgiveness, because they have chosen to see but not perceive, listen but not hear, because they have chosen not to see the mystery of God, to hear His plan to bring man back into a covenant relationship, to understand the manifestation of His love in sending His Son to pay the price for our sin. How sad to go through life with such a lack of understanding. This is the one who

- 23** A) Revels in his own pomp, without understanding *Ps. 49:20*
- 24** B) Decides that his way is right, as a fool *Prov 12:15*
- 25** C) Who likes nothing more than to show others how smart he thinks he is *Prov 18:2*

The one who accepts God and His word is the wise man with understanding and that one will be forgiven and find a home in heaven.

- 26** D) Trusts in the eternal counsel of the Lord for his guide in this life *Ps 33:11*
- 27** E) Takes the hand of the Lord to allow the Lord to lead him to eternity *Ps 73:23-24*
- 28** F) Accepts discipline, *Job 6:24*, that he may be wise all of his days *Prov 19:20*

The mystery has been solved. It has been revealed. The Law is immutable and requires death as the penalty for sin. Death. Physical death that all men face, and spiritual death, that all who choose not to partake of the mystery of God, Christ will pay. But the mystery is that Christ has paid that penalty, so that man does not have to die spiritually, so any who believe in Him can be forgiven.

**John 3:16**

**29**

**16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Only one question left. Are you the fool who trusts in your own intellect to get you through this life and into the next, or are you the wise man who trusts in God, the sacrifice of Christ, and the Word that was sent by the Holy Spirit to guide us into all righteousness.