

THE MYSTERIES



OF THE BIBLE

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Preface

It is the purpose of this booklet to introduce you to some astonishing and little-understood Biblical concepts that, until now, you may have found difficult to comprehend. While this booklet does not present comprehensive answers on each subject, it does give you a synopsis, if you will, of some great *mysteries*.

Mysteries? Yes, the Bible contains many mysteries! In fact, God's Word describes and identifies them as such. It is our sincere desire to help you understand them.

In presenting this overview of the mysteries of the Bible, we first briefly discuss a given subject in broad terms, and then we offer you some additional literature (free of charge), relevant to the subject. It is through this additional literature that these vital subjects are presented in a much more comprehensive way, proving the true Biblical understanding of these mysteries.

We hope you will study this booklet prayerfully, and then take advantage of the additional literature offered, which is free for the asking. If you do, you won't be disappointed. If you don't, you will be missing the most important knowledge that God has revealed to mankind—knowledge that can lead to understanding the very reason for God's creation and the incomparable future He is offering to those who respond to Him.

Introduction

You may have heard some people say, “I just can’t understand the Bible. For me, it is a book with seven seals. The whole thing is just a mystery to me.”

Surprising as it may seem, the Bible does, in fact, refer to many mysteries. And perhaps even more surprising is the fact that only those who have received the keys to unlock those mysteries can understand them—only those to whom *God chooses* to reveal them.

The word “mystery” is derived from the Greek word, “*musterion*.” It means: “That what is only known by the initiated.” In order to understand the mysteries of the Bible, we must belong to the “initiated”—to the very few whose minds God’s Spirit has opened at this time, so that we *CAN* comprehend what we read.

If you are truly interested in reading this booklet to gain Biblical understanding, then there is a good possibility that God *IS* opening your mind to His mysteries. This is a GIFT from God...don’t treat it lightly!

Join with us, now, in an overview of THE MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE.

#1 The Mystery of the Gospel

Why does the Bible say that “the gospel” is a mystery? Because most people do NOT KNOW what the gospel is! This might be a challenging statement, but judge for yourself, as you read the following scriptural proof.

Ephesians 6:19–20 states: “[Pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the *mystery of the gospel*, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

We must let the Bible tell us just what the gospel is, because, there is only *one* gospel. Many have turned away from the true gospel of God *AND* Christ, and have replaced it with a counterfeit. This happened early in the New Testament Church, at the time of Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it has continued ever since.

Note what Paul says in Galatians 1:6–9, 11: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, *to a different gospel*, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and *want to pervert the gospel of Christ*. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach *any other gospel* to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches *any other gospel* to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. . . . But I make known to you, brethren, that *the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*”

Indeed, the true gospel is not “according to man.” GOD Himself must reveal to us the mystery of the gospel. GOD must tell us what the gospel is. The meaning of the word “gospel” is “good news” or “glad tidings,” but what IS that good news?

Mark 1:14–15 informs us concerning the gospel Jesus Christ preached: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the *kingdom of God* is at hand. Repent, and *believe in the gospel.*’”

Matthew 4:23 adds: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the *gospel of the kingdom*, and healing

all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of disease among the people.”

The one and only true gospel is the gospel of the *kingdom of God*. THAT was *THE GOSPEL*, which the early apostles continually proclaimed! Notice in Acts 28:30–31: “Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, *preaching the kingdom of God* and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

Also notice Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 24:14, that **His gospel of the kingdom would still be proclaimed by His Church just prior to His return**: “And *this gospel of the kingdom* will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

The gospel, or good news, which Christ and the early apostles proclaimed, and which the Church *still is to proclaim TODAY*, is the gospel of the Kingdom of God! Christ’s true gospel message has been a mystery to most people. It is time that the veil of this mystery is lifted.

Additional Booklet:

- The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

#2 The Mystery of the Kingdom of God

Just as the *identity* of the gospel is a mystery to most people, so is its *message*. Many don't know what the gospel is, and when they hear that it is a message about the Kingdom of God, they are confused about the nature of that Kingdom.

Mark 4:10–12 explains: “But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable [of the sower]. And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to *know the mystery of the kingdom of God*; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that “Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.””

The Kingdom of God is a mystery to most people because they don't know what the Kingdom is, who will be in it, where it will be set up and how one can enter into it. They erroneously believe that we go to heaven when we die and enter the Kingdom of God at that time. They also have an incorrect understanding of the Scripture where the Kingdom of God is referred to as the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:23–24: “... Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the *kingdom of heaven*. And again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the *kingdom of God*.”

Though the Kingdom of God is referred to as the kingdom of heaven in some places, it is because God IS that Kingdom, and He is in heaven now. However, He will also set up His Kingdom ON THIS EARTH at the time of Christ's return.

The *Ryrie Study Bible* states correctly in its comments on Matthew 3:2: “[The] *kingdom of heaven*... is the **rule** of heaven **over** the earth.” Today, the earth is under the rule of Satan the devil (Matthew 4:8–9).

Another point relevant to this subject is that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). Rather, one must be *born of the Spirit*—*become* a Spirit being—in order to be IN the Kingdom (John 3:5–6, 8).

Many are also confused about *where* the Kingdom of God is. They

think it is already here, in “the hearts of men,” having misunderstood one of Christ’s sayings in Luke 17:20–21, translated as follows: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation. . . . For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

The *Ryrie Study Bible* correctly points out that the better translation for “within you” is, “among you.” It continues: “It cannot mean, ‘within you,’ for the kingdom certainly was completely unconnected with the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking (v. 20).” Christ, as the representative of the Kingdom of God, was in the midst of them.

So then, just as the *identity* of the gospel is a mystery to most people, so also is the *identity* of the Kingdom of God. Christ brought the gospel—good news—of the *Kingdom of God*. You need to know just what that Kingdom is.

Additional Booklets:

- Are You Already Born Again?
- The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

#3 The Mystery of God

Many don't understand that the *one true gospel* is the message about the Kingdom of God. They don't understand what the *Kingdom of God* is. And they don't even understand who and what *God* is. They are in spiritual darkness about the true identity and nature of God. That, too, is a *mystery* to them. They are ignorant of what God looks like in appearance, and they don't even understand how many beings "God" consists of. Some claim that God is just an all-encompassing "blob" without any form or shape (note, however, Numbers 12:8; Exodus 33:19–23), and that He is just "one" "being." Others claim that God is one "person" in "three persons." Still others maintain that man does not and cannot know anything specific about "God." But that is not what the Bible says.

The Bible makes it clear that *God* must reveal Himself to us so that we can know Him. We find that Paul prays in Colossians 2:2–3 that we all come to "*the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.*"

This is truly a great mystery, as many do not know that the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, are the only two Spirit beings, which are God. In other words, the Holy Spirit is NOT God! It is the power emanating from God, through which God creates and sustains His creation. On the other hand, the nature and identity of "God" is also a mystery to many, because they don't know that BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE God, and that God is not just one person, but a governing or ruling FAMILY—the Kingdom or Family of God.

The God Family presently consists of the Father and the Son, but with the potential of adding many more members. You, too, could ultimately become a member of the Family of God. Even though these things are a mystery to most people, they do not have to be a mystery for you.

Additional Booklets:

- Is God a Trinity?
- God Is a Family

#4 The Mystery of Christ

Most today don't really know who Christ is, or what, if anything, He does today. It is therefore no surprise that the Bible speaks about the "mystery of Christ."

We read in Colossians 4:2–4: "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the *mystery of Christ*, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

The *mystery of Christ* includes the revelation that Jesus Christ *IS* God. In Titus 2:13, Paul encourages all of us to look "for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." The *mystery of Christ* also includes the fact that **Jesus Christ has always been God**. John 1:1 tells us that in the beginning was the Word who was with God the Father, and who was also God. Christ is called the Word of God in Revelation 19:13. God the Father calls Christ "God" in Hebrews 1:8–9.

But the *mystery of Christ* not only relates to who and what Christ was and is, but also, what Christ does. Again, human speculation is useless. God must *reveal* this mystery to us in His Word, and He does reveal it.

Ephesians 3:1–7 explains: "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me *the mystery* (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power."

The mystery of Christ includes the fact that Jesus Christ is selecting people from all nations to be placed in His spiritual body, His

Church, to become fellow heirs of God's promise—the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. God the Father *gives the Spirit of His Son* to all those whom He wants (Galatians 4:6)—not just to those who are physical descendants of the tribes of Israel and Judah (and even the modern identity of Israel and Judah is a mystery to most people).

In Colossians 1:24–28, Paul sheds further light on the *mystery of Christ*—that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, lives in all whom God the Father has called, and that He is making us perfect to attain to His glory in God's Kingdom.

He tells us: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, *the mystery* which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints ["the initiated"]. To them God *willed to make known* what are the riches of the *glory of this mystery* among the Gentiles: **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Jesus Christ."

Christ is a mystery to most people. They don't know who He was, who He is now, or what He is doing today. They don't understand that Christ lives in His disciples, through His Spirit (Romans 8:9), helping them to overcome, as He overcame (Revelation 3:21). And they don't comprehend that Christ is leading His disciples to glory—His glory. Although these wonderful truths are hidden from most people, you could belong to the few "initiated" who do understand.

Additional Booklets:

- Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery
- The Fall and Rise of Britain and America

#5 The Mystery of Godliness

Not only is Christ God, He *was* also a man for a very short time. That is, He gave up His divine nature and *became* flesh and blood when He lived here on earth (compare Philippians 2:5–8). God the Father resurrected Him after three days and three nights in the grave, restoring to Him His divine, eternal glory (Philippians 2:9–11).

The fact that Jesus Christ, who *WAS* a glorious GOD being, *BECAME* a man, is a total mystery to many. They think that in some way, Christ did not really divest Himself of His divine powers. They claim that He was fully God and fully man when He was here on earth. They continue to preach falsely that while Christ's "man-part" died, the "God-part" did not die—as God cannot die. But these human concepts are blatantly wrong and, in effect, reject the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is true that God, as a Spirit being, cannot die. That is why Christ had to become a *MAN*—a physical human being—so that He *could* die.

We read in 1 Timothy 3:16 about this mystery which is not understood by most people: "And without controversy great is the *mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.*"

The *mystery of godliness* includes the fact that Christ who was God, became *totally flesh and blood* when here on earth. 1 John 4:2 explains: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God." John 1:14 says that Christ *became* flesh.

Romans 8:3 points out why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had to come "in the flesh" and why He "*became*" flesh (compare John 1:14): "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh [that is, we were too weak to keep it], God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh."

Jesus Christ proved that it is possible, with the power of God's Holy Spirit, to overcome sin in the flesh—as a human being. He could not have proven this fact if He had been "*fully God*" and "fully man."

Additional reasons why Jesus Christ had to come in the flesh, and *become* flesh, are explained in Hebrews 2:14, 17–18: “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil... Therefore, *in all things He had to be made like His brethren*, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God... For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”

The fact that Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, who dealt directly with the ancients of old, became a human being, is one of the greatest mysteries to most people. They simply cannot understand how God could become man, and they fail to comprehend WHY Christ HAD to become a man. In rejecting this vital truth, they also reject the tremendous meaning and purpose of Christ’s sacrifice. As a consequence, they still live in spiritual darkness, even though they might think that they have come to the light.

Who and what Christ was, and what He became and is today, is a great mystery to most people. Is it still a mystery to you?

Additional Booklet:

- Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery!

#6 The Mystery of Man's Calling

In the same way that many people are ignorant of what Christ did and what He is doing today, they also don't know that no one CAN come to Christ, unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). The concept that everybody can be saved today if only they will "accept Jesus in their hearts," is totally wrong! We must be *called out* of spiritual blindness, and the fact that God must call us for salvation is, indeed, a great mystery to most people. But when God calls us, we must respond to His call. And as God teaches us more and more of His truth, we must act upon what we know. This would include baptism through immersion, upon repentance of our sins and the acceptance of Christ's Sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. The need to be baptized, as well as the correct form of baptism and the "laying on of hands," is a mystery to many people, including the understanding that we will receive God's Holy Spirit upon proper baptism. Another important aspect of this mystery is the fact that God does not call very many today. He calls only a very few, who are identified as the "firstfruits." The rest will be called later—*after* Christ has returned and the Kingdom of God has been established on this earth.

Paul explains the *mystery of man's calling* in Romans 11:25–26: "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant *of this mystery*, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob...'"

Not every one is called now—that is, salvation is being offered to only a select few in this age. Today is NOT the only day of salvation for everybody. Many will be called later, after Christ has returned and established God's Kingdom here on earth. This means that not everyone will be resurrected from the dead at the time of Christ's return, either. Only those who died "in Christ" will be resurrected when Christ comes back (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). This astonishing fact is also a mystery to most people. So is the fact that we don't go to heaven when we die, but that we are "sleeping" the sleep of death in our graves, until we are resurrected from the dead (John 5:28–29;

compare Daniel 12:2: "And *many* of those who *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall *awake*...").

Most people think that we have an immortal soul that continues to live on when we die. This, too, is a false concept. The Bible teaches that the man *is* the soul, and that the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Indeed, death is a mystery to most people. So is the fact that most of those who died without knowing and following Christ will be resurrected *at a later time*, which is called in the Bible "The Great White Throne Judgment."

Revelation 20:4–5, 11–12 explains: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years [the "Millennium"]. **But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.** This is the **first** resurrection... Then [after the thousand years were finished] I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And *I saw the dead, small and great, standing* before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

Christ spoke on several occasions about the "second resurrection" at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment. He said in Luke 11:31–32: "The queen of the south will **rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation** and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Niniveh will **rise up in the judgment with this generation** and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."

Christ made similar remarks in Matthew 10:15: "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah *in the day of judgment* than for that city [that had refused to listen to the gospel that was preached to it by the apostles]!" He added in Matthew 11:20–24: "Then He began to rebuke the cities in which

most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon *in the day of judgment* than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom *in the day of judgment* than for you.'"

Christ then thanked God the Father that He revealed to His Church the mystery of our calling in this day and age, and of the calling of others at a later time. Continuing in verse 25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.'"

Most people don't understand that God does not call everyone in this day and age, and that both the calling and the resurrection from death to eternal life are subject to a certain order or timetable. This mystery also includes the correct understanding of what happens to us when we die.

Additional Booklets:

- The Fall and Rise of Britain and America
- Do We Have an Immortal Soul?
- God's *Commanded* Holy Days
- Baptism—a Requirement for Salvation?

#7 The Mystery of the Church

Just as most people do not understand that only a very few are called in this day and age for salvation, they likewise are ignorant about another mystery which pertains to those who *are* called today.

We read in Ephesians 5:25–32 about Paul’s admonition to Christian husbands, as well as an analogy, which is a mystery to most people: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a *great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*”

Paul is addressing here the mystery of the relationship between Christ and His Church. He emphasizes that those who are called must come out of the ways of this world in order to be joined with Christ. Christ must be continuously living within them (1 John 2:15–17; Romans 12:2; Galatians 2:20).

The true purpose and function of the Church is a great mystery to most people. The Church is not a building. Instead, the Church is a spiritual organism—the spiritual “body of Christ”—consisting of those in whom God’s Spirit dwells. Still, the Church is organized. Many think they don’t need the Church in order to be saved. Others have joined a religious organization, thinking that they have become a part of the true Church of God. You need to know why Christ has established His Church, where it is today, and what your responsibility is pertaining to Christ’s true Church.

Additional Booklets:

- The Keys to Happy Marriages and Families
- Baptism—a Requirement for Salvation?

#8 The Mystery of Man's Future

Christ cherishes His Church and nourishes it so that it will be ready for His return. As long as those who are called by God for salvation, at this time, follow Christ's lead and let Him prune them to produce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, they can look forward to a glorious future. They will have made themselves ready to marry Christ—the Bridegroom—at His return (Revelation 19:7–8). As God allows for marriages only between beings of the same “kind,” Church members will have to be changed—from mortal to immortal, from flesh to spirit, from man to God—in order to be able to marry Christ. This future change is a mystery that virtually nobody understands.

1 Corinthians 15:51 sheds light on this mystery of man's change from flesh to spirit: “Behold, I tell you *a mystery*: We shall not all sleep [in death], but we shall all be changed.” The hidden mystery is that those who are “in Christ” will be changed to God, in the same way that the human Jesus Christ became, again, an immortal God being through the resurrection—the second member of the God family at that time. They will enter into the Family of God, or Kingdom of God, as additional born-again members of that Family. (Many believe that they are already born again, but they are wrong. The correct understanding as to when we are born again is a mystery to most people.)

1 John 3:1–2 tells us: “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, *we shall be like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is.”

God's Word says that we will be LIKE Him. Many translations, including the *Elberfelder Bible*, state that we will be “equal with Him.” To most people, the very concept that we can be “like” or “equal with” God is a great mystery! But Colossians 1:15 explains to us that Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” The Greek word for “image” is “*eikon*.” It means,

“likeness, representation, profile.” Christ said that he who sees Him sees the Father.

As Christ is the image of God the Father, so we are to become the image of Christ. Romans 8:29 says: “For whom He foreknew, He also *predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Paul adds in 1 Corinthians 15:49: “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also *bear the image* of the heavenly Man [Jesus Christ, the second Adam].”

For those with spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear, Paul elaborates further on the fantastic future change of man in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are being transformed into the same image* from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

When we bear Christ’s image, we will look like Christ (note a description of Christ’s glorious appearance now in Revelation 1:14–18).

In Matthew 22:17–21, Christ was given a denarius, a Roman coin that had an imprinted image of Caesar on it. Anyone looking at the coin would easily recognize the imprint as that of Caesar. In a similar way, we will be recognized as being an image of Christ. We will look like Him in His glorious state. We will have His characteristics. We will actually *become* God, that is, a God being—a full and total image of God the Father and Jesus Christ, much like a physical child is often recognized as being an image of his or her parents. Those who are called and chosen in this day and age are already [begotten] children of God, awaiting their change to a full Spirit being at the return of Christ.

Additional Booklet:

- God Is A Family
- Are You Already Born Again?

#9 The Mystery of God's Wisdom

1 Corinthians 2:7–12 and 14 introduces us to yet another mystery, which the “wisdom of this age” does not, and cannot, comprehend. As with the other mysteries, understanding this mystery is of tremendous importance if we want to understand why God has called only some in this day and age.

We read in the above-quoted passage:

“But we speak the *wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom* which God ordained [predetermined or predestined] before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit [which] is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God... but the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Again we read that God, through His Spirit, must reveal the mysteries of the Bible to us. Man, left alone to himself, regardless of how smart and educated he might be, CANNOT understand those mysteries! That is why the most sophisticated and brilliant minds do not know what the potential of man is! They do not comprehend *the mystery of God's wisdom for our glory*.

God has predestined—predetermined a long time ago—some to inherit His glory. He chose them before they were born, even before the earth was formed—“before the ages”—to become born-again members of His Family. And He has now revealed to them, through His Spirit, the “mystery of His wisdom,” so that they “may know the things” that God has given to them, “for our glory.”

Additional Booklets:

- Are You Predestined to Be Saved?
- The Theory of Evolution

#10 The Mystery of God's Will

Closely connected with the *mystery of God's Wisdom* is still another mystery—that of *God's Will*. Seemingly identical, these two mysteries do reveal slightly different aspects of God's plan for man.

We read in Ephesians 1:7–14: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence [understanding], having made known to us *the mystery of His will*, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all *things according to the counsel of His will*, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, [which] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Again, we read that some have been predestined to be called in this day and age to inherit God's kingdom (verse 11–12). But the *mystery of God's Will* emphasizes an additional aspect of God's plan—the fact that their calling did not occur accidentally or coincidentally, and that the outcome is not a big gamble in God's eyes. Rather, it is *GOD'S WILL* and *GOOD PLEASURE* to give His kingdom to those whom He has called (Luke 12:32). God did not flip a coin, so to speak, to see whether or not they might make it into His kingdom. Insofar as God is concerned, their success is guaranteed. It is God's Will—and He is confident—that they are going to succeed; otherwise, He would not have called them at this time.

God gives them all the “tools” necessary for their success. He offers them forgiveness of their sins if and when they sin, through the Sacrifice of His Son (Ephesians 1:7). He gives them His Holy Spirit, which is a guarantee of their inheritance of eternal life in God's

Kingdom (verses 13–14). This is not to say that they could not fall away. But it does mean that **God does not expect them to fail**. The mystery of God's Will for them is that they win. Only they can thwart God's plan for them by giving up themselves.

Do you belong to those whom God has predestined to be called in this day and age? How can you be sure that you are *not*? Are you interested in God's mysteries? Are you willing to OBEY God and DO what He asks you to do? If you are, then there is a great chance that God is calling you now!

Additional Booklet:

- Are You Predestined to Be Saved?

#11 The Mystery of the Faith

It is one thing to read about and understand God's plan for mankind. It is quite a different matter to actually believe it—have faith in it. But we must have faith if we want to come to God (Hebrews 11:6).

Unfortunately, many people don't know what faith is. They think that faith is a human emotion, or, that it is something they have to work up themselves. Some confuse faith with superstition. So then, we see that faith is also a mystery to many people.

First, we need to understand that human faith is not enough to please God. Rather, what we need to have is God's faith, and we can only have the faith of God in us, when *God gives us His faith*. The fact that we actually must have—and that we *can* have—God's faith remains a great mystery to most.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:8–9:

“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the *mystery of the faith* with a pure conscience.” These principles actually apply to every Christian.

But, most people know nothing about the faith of God and Christ, which must be in us, and which is required for salvation. It is an active faith, evidenced by obedience to God and His Law (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

It is not a passive faith in God, which even disobedient demons have (James 2:19). We must not only believe in God, but we must have “obedient” faith to DO what God tells us to do.

Revelation 14:12 refers to the necessary active faith that we must have in our lives as follows: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who *keep the commandments* of God and *the faith of Jesus*.” We see that the faith of Jesus goes hand in hand with commandment-keeping.

Note, too, Galatians 2:20 (*Authorized Version*):

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth within me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Does God's faith live in you? If not, how can you obtain it? This question is a great mystery to most people. It does not have to be a mystery for you.

Additional Booklet:

- Baptism—A Requirement for Salvation?

#12 The Mystery of Angels and Church Eras

Closely connected with the mystery of God and the Church is a mystery that is described in Revelation 1:12–13, 16 and 20 in this way: “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band... He had in His right hand seven stars... [The Son of Man—Jesus Christ in His glory—said:]... ‘*The mystery of the seven stars* which you saw in My right hand, *and the seven golden lampstands*: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.’”

In a number of Scriptures, the Bible speaks of stars as being symbolic of angels. Even demons can be referred to as stars, as they are *fallen* angels who sinned against God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). But most people today know little, if anything, about angels and demons, let alone the entire realm of the spirit world. It is simply a *mystery* to them. If they believe in angels, they have in most cases a totally wrong concept of them. Or, even worse, they may be in communication with demons, thinking that they are talking to God’s holy angels.

Additionally, Christ describes as a *mystery*, *the history and future of His true Church*, and the fact that *seven stars*—or angels—watch over the Church. Christ gave a message to John about seven churches. While His message pertained to the Church of God for all times, including seven historic Church eras, beginning with the Ephesus era and ending with the Laodicean era, it also pertained to seven local Church congregations at the time of John. This fact is also a mystery to many people.

The very last era of the Church—Laodicea—is described as being “lukewarm.” That era will be extant just before Christ returns to this earth (Revelation 3:20). However, remnants from previous eras, including the Philadelphia era, will be in existence at that time, as well. Christ tells the remnant of Philadelphia that He will come quickly and that they are to hold fast what had been given to them (Revelation 3:11). There will also be in existence at that time a remnant of the

Sardis era, which is warned to watch, lest Christ come upon them as a thief (Revelation 3:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–4). Even a remnant of Thyatira would still be in existence at the time of Christ’s return, and they might have to go through the Great Tribulation because of the lack of repentance (Revelation 2:22).

The history of the true Church of God is a mystery to most people. Orthodox Christianity, as well as most of the rest of the world, assumes that a great powerful and well recognized Church organization constitutes the true Church of God. However, this view is in error. God’s true Church has always been a little flock (Luke 12:32), persecuted and sometimes unnoticed by the world at large (compare Revelation 12:6: the woman—God’s Church—survived unnoticed in the wilderness for 1,260 days, or years). At times, God’s Church has faced persecution, rejection and resistance because of the fulfillment of its commission to preach the true gospel in all the world as a witness, and those who are faithful to this commission will be hated by all nations (Matthew 24:8–14), even more so just prior to the return of Christ to set up God’s Kingdom on this earth.

Additional Booklets:

- The Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord
- Angels, Demons and the Spirit World
- Should You Fight in War?

#13 The Mystery of Babylon the Great

The last two mysteries we will discuss are as important to understand as the other mysteries, but it is imperative that we NOT, in any way, be *associated* with them because of what they represent.

The first of these last two mysteries is described in the 17th and 18th chapters of the book of Revelation. In Revelation 17, John sees in a vision a woman sitting on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. We read the following about this woman in Revelation 17:4–6: “The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.” Even John did not understand, at first, *the mystery of Babylon the Great*.

As instructed by God, the angel began to *reveal* to John the meaning: “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains [or, hills] on which the woman sits... And the woman whom you saw is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 17:9, 18).

This city is referred to as modern Babylon in several places (Revelation 18:10, 15–16, 21). It is a rich city, but it also represents a religious and economic system, which, in turn, rides a political system—the beast with seven heads and ten horns. But it is a brutal and violent system that has been persecuting the true servants of God. Revelation 18:24 says: “And in her [the modern city of Babylon—the city which is built on seven hills] was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

God tells His people to *disassociate* themselves from this system: “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’” (Revelation 18:4).

In order to come out of Babylon, one must know who and

what Babylon is, and where it is to be found today. One must also understand the mystery of *ancient* Babylon and how man's civilization came into existence. After all, for most, ancient Babylon, as well as Babylon the Great, is *a mystery*. They don't know what it represents. But God's true servants do know, as God has revealed it to them. They don't become confused with every wind of prophetic speculation, trying to give "new meaning" to the mystery of Babylon.

Additional Booklets:

- Europe in Prophecy
- The Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord
- Don't Keep Christmas
- The Fall and Rise of Britain and America

#14 The Mystery of Lawlessness

Once we have identified the mystery of Babylon the Great, we are prepared to review the last remaining mystery—that of lawlessness. The mystery of Babylon the Great identifies the modern Babylonian system, while the mystery of lawlessness describes what that system stands for and what it teaches.

The mystery of lawlessness was already in operation at the time of Paul. He warned in 2 Thessalonians 2:7: “For *the mystery of lawlessness* is already at work...”

We are told in 1 John 3:4 that “sin is lawlessness.” The Biblical teaching is that we will not enter the kingdom of God if we practice lawlessness. This is a mystery to most people, as they have been taught by the Babylonian system (the mother church and its daughter churches) that Christ came to abolish the law of God. They have been misled to believe that the Ten Commandments are no longer in force and effect; that God accepts us as we are; that we are already in His Kingdom; and that we are saved by grace without any need to keep His Law.

True Christians—those who practice what Jesus Christ taught—know full well that Christ did not teach anything like that. As Matthew 13:41–42 points out: “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will *gather out of His kingdom* all things that offend, and *those who practice lawlessness*, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

He also gave us this startling admonition and warning in Matthew 7:21–23: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*’”

Just as the fact that God’s Law is still in force and effect today is a mystery to most people, so also is the identity of that Law a mystery to them. Many don’t know what it is they are supposed to do. They think that as long as they follow the dictates of their own heart and

their own conscience, they are pleasing God. They fail to understand that our conscience can never make us right in the eyes of God, when it contradicts God's Law. God must *reveal* the mystery of His Law to us. He must *show us* His way of Life, His way of righteousness and what it means for us, and we must understand that the way of lawlessness will, in fact, keep us out of His kingdom.

David understood that God had to reveal to Him the wonders of His Law. He wrote in Psalm 119:18–19, 27, 34: “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me... Make me understand the way of Your precepts... Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law.”

David also stated, in Psalm 25:14: “The secret of the LORD [or, the mystery of the LORD] is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.”

Most people are deceived, thinking obedience is unnecessary for salvation. They never seem to ask why God would change a rebellious, God-defying mortal individual, who does not want to obey Him, to an immortal Spirit being and give him eternal life. And if they ever did ask this question, they immediately dismiss it, claiming that it is a “mystery” to them. But *YOU* do not need to be in doubt about the “mystery of lawlessness.”

Additional Booklets:

- And Lawlessness Will Abound...
- Tithing—Today?

The Mysteries Are To Be Made Known

As we have seen, the Bible contains many mysteries; mysteries that God *CHOOSES* to reveal to the “initiated”—God’s true servants. But HOW are these mysteries revealed to God’s people? Can just anyone sit down and read the Bible on his own, thinking that God will open his mind to all these mysteries we have covered in this booklet? Hardly!

Individual Christianity, which is the idea that anyone can inherit salvation apart from God’s Church—the Body of Christ—is as wrong a concept as the belief that we can come to true understanding while attending with an organization which is not a part of Christ’s spiritual body.

Paul asks these timeless questions in Romans 10:14–17: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? *And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?* As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel! For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*”

God has decreed that His truth be revealed by and through His Church and His faithful ministers (compare Ephesians 4:11–16). In fact—unbelievable as it may seem—God’s Church has a responsibility to declare God’s truth even to *angels!*

Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:8–10: “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the *mystery hidden for ages* in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God *might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places* (*Revised Standard Version*)” Compare, too, 1 Peter 1:12).

In addition, Christ told God’s Church they must proclaim God’s Truth to all nations (Matthew 28:19–20). Paul stated in Romans 16:25–27: “Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my

gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings *is made known* to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the *obedience of faith*—to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen (*Revised Standard Version*).

Ultimately, everything that is secret, will be revealed. In preaching the gospel into all the world, the Church is following God's commission to make known His mysteries to those who are willing to accept them. Christ said in Luke 8:17: "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light."

He told His faithful servants in Luke 12:3: "Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."

He added in Matthew 10:27: "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops."

A Warning and Challenge

This booklet would not be complete if we failed to state a warning and a challenge for you to consider.

Even if you agree with everything that has been written in this booklet, and if you have been motivated to study deeper into the mysteries of the Bible, all such knowledge would be of no value to you if a most important aspect is missing in your life.

Even if you know and understand all of these mysteries discussed herein, it would do you absolutely no good unless a most vital element was also present in your life—that of God's love.

1 Corinthians 13 describes the love of God and prefaces it by saying: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and *understand all mysteries* and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (verse 2).

Paul is addressing here the love of God—not just human love. We can only have this godly love if God gives it to us through His Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). And God does not promise that we will *receive* His Holy Spirit, unless we are first properly baptized (Acts 2:38).

Understanding the mysteries of the Bible is extremely important. But we must also have a proper perspective. God regards the fruit of His Holy Spirit in our lives as being even more important than understanding the mysteries of the Bible, and the foremost fruit of God's Spirit is His love (Galatians 5:22). God's love does no harm to our neighbor and thereby fulfills God's Law (Romans 13:8–10). *In fact, the love of God is defined as keeping His commandments* (1 John 5:2–3).

Notice how God's love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (*Living Bible*): "Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him."

Does this describe you? If it does, then the knowledge of God's mysteries can be of great value to you. They show you what only very few understand today. We hope that you will be motivated to study deeper into these mysteries and to read the literature offered throughout this booklet, as well as the material listed in the appendix of this booklet.

We pray that you will come to fully comprehend these mysteries and that you will treasure them.

Finally, we pray that you will live your life in thankful appreciation of the fact that God is offering YOU the knowledge and understanding of...

... the Mysteries of the Bible!

Appendix

In our regular weekly Update publication, we have a Q&A (Question-and-Answer) section, which presents the Biblical teaching on a variety of topics. As is the case with all of our literature, these are posted on our Websites:

USA: www.eternalgod.org

Canada: www.churchofgodacf.ca

United Kingdom: www.globalchurchofgod.co.uk

If you require hard copies (free of charge), please write to our nearest office (see last page for addresses).

SAMPLE Q&A TOPICS

A sample listing of the Q&A topics that address questions and issues related to some of the topics discussed in this booklet, are as follows:

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO JESUS CHRIST

Update #105—Accepting Christ as Personal Savior

Update #116—Sign of Christ's Return

Update #119—Time of Christ's Return

Update #156—How do we address the Messiah?

Update #166—Was Christ a sin and a curse?

Update #169—How did Christ learn obedience?

Update #193—How did Christ fulfill the law?

Update #224—How to discern the Lord's body?

Update #236—Was Christ Created?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO GOD AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

Update #55—Did Lucifer rule on earth?

Update #56—Was Satan's former name Lucifer?

Update #69—Whom does the word "Lord" refer to?

Update #70—Whom does the term "Ancient of Days" refer to?

Update #74—Who are the Watchers in Daniel 4?

Update #97—Are there three or seven heavens?

Update #129—What is Satan's fate?

Update #212—To whom should a Christian pray?

Update #223—Can angels reproduce?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SIN AND GOD'S LAW

- Update #58—Is the Sabbath for the Jews only?
Update #67—Should Christians participate in War?
Update #79—Who pays for sin?
Update #84—Why did the ancient Israelites fight?
Update #108—Are we free from the Law?
Update #114—Should we participate in Halloween?
Update #122—Why don't you celebrate Christmas?
Update #134—What is the origin of April Fools' Day?
Update #149—Was Paul a Sabbath observer?
Update #150—Is the Sabbath still in effect today?
Update #151—Did Christ's death abolish all Old Testament laws?
Update #165—Is the law of circumcision still in effect today?
Update #170—Did God give laws that were not good?
Update #179—What is the Biblical teaching on polygamy?
Update #197—Is only belief needed for salvation?
Update #218—Did God tell Samuel to lie?
Update #225—Are Paul's instructions binding today?
Update #226—What is the Biblical teaching on Adultery and Premarital Sex?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE FUTURE OF MAN

- Update #54—Will there be a secret rapture?
Update #118—Where will the Biblical Wedding Supper take place?
Update #128—What happened to Enoch?
Update #130—Did Elijah go to heaven?
Update #152—Christ is the firstborn from the dead
Update #191—Will an aborted fetus live again?
Update #194—Do the Wicked go to hell?
Update #195— Update #201—What is the Baptism with fire?
Update #205—Does a Christian go to heaven after death?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO CHRISTIAN LIVING

- Update #92— What does the Bible say about Confession?
Update #103—Should we charge our brother interest?

- Update #113—What does the Bible say about Tattoos?
- Update #124—What does the Bible say about Water Divining?
- Update #142—Are we to forgive those who sin against us?
- Update #158—Are Christians subject to Time and Chance?
- Update #190—Avoid a root of bitterness
- Update #198—What do you mean—“to live is Christ”?
- Update #203—How are we to take up the cross?
- Update #204—Rejoice in sufferings
- Update #221—Don’t act hastily
- Update #230—Should Women study the “Hidden Secrets” of the Bible?
- Update #232—How can we be perfect, since we all sin?
- Update #237—What Is A True Christian?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO PROPHECY

- Update #121—What is the key of David?
- Update #123—Who are the 144,000 of the book of Revelation?
- Update #126—The modern identity of Biblical nations
- Update #139—Distinction between the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord
- Update #154—Who is the king of the south?
- Update #159—What is the future of Ireland
- Update #167—The King of the south—yet to come?
- Update #174—Will prophetic events be cut short?
- Update #185—Will the Jews build a temple before Christ returns?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

- Update #96—Why does the Church exist?
- Update #107—The open door of Revelation 3:8
- Update#157—Does the Bible teach Church eras?
- Update #171—Who is authorized to baptize?
- Update #172—God’s Church must warn of future events
- Update #187—Identity of the seven church eras

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO HISTORICAL BIBLICAL EVENTS

- Update #68—Who created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

- Update #82—Who created the vicious nature of some animals?
- Update # 94—Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?
- Update #95 —Did Jesus dishonor His mother Mary?
- Update #101—Was Christ dead for only 72 hours?
- Update #109—Is there historical proof that Christ existed?
- Update #115—Genealogy of Christ
- Update #136—Who was Moses' Cushite wife?
- Update #138—Who was Joseph's Egyptian wife?
- Update #143—Did Pharaoh drown in the sea?
- Update #162—When was Jesus Christ born?
- Update #173—Did Jesus wear long hair?
- Update #181—The death of Paul
- Update #182—Did Jephthah sacrifice his own daughter?
- Update #189—Was Jesus resurrected on Sunday morning?
- Update #207—How was Lot righteous?
- Update #210—Where did Cain's wife come from?

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Along with his wife and two adult children, Norbert now resides in Southern California and serves as a director for the Church of the Eternal God (CEG), with headquarters near San Diego, California.

Ordained as Evangelist, Norbert Link is the powerful spokesman appearing on the CEG sponsored StandingWatch program. In addition, Norbert serves full-time in ministerial and administrative duties for CEG, and he, along with other ministers, can be heard live on Internet Sabbath services at: www.eternalgod.org.

For more information, you may inquire via email: info@standingwatch.org

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The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

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