

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about ¾ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, tannerst.com to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Consider: Colossians 2:12 Needed News

Addison Wright has been having some kidney problems. She has an appointment at Children's Monday.

Ruben Keisler talks with doctors Tuesday regarding back surgery. **Brenda Keisler** is doing better but will have more shots for her neck pain.

John Ragsdale is undergoing several test regarding his health. **Betty Ragsdale** has finished her physical therapy.

Paula Laubach is gradually getting over her bronchitis. **Conrad Harris** received a good "no cancer" report from his recent scans. **Joyce Venable** is doing much better following recovery from a fall last weekend.

Kimber Gray is doing much better following her recent bout with streph. **Judy Robinson** has started her cancer treatments. **Dan's** Sister-in-law, **Tonya**, lost her last living grandparent Saturday when her Mother's Mom past away. Her Mother's Dad passed away just a few months ago.

As always, talk to these families to see if any help is needed. Pray for God's will in all things.

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

May 2015

Volume 4 Number 18

The Mystery Revealed

Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

I often hear people say that the Bible cannot really be understood. One reason some give is that the Bible is a mystery that no one can understand. As proof, they point to the fact that the Bible sometimes refers to itself as a mystery. Now it is true that in many passages the Bible does characterize the things within it as a "mystery." The question that must be asked is if these things continue to be a mystery. Let's first look at what is meant by the word mystery. A mystery is "something unexplained, unknown, or kept secret" (Webster's New World Dictionary). The Greek word "musterion" (moos-tay-ree-on) which is translated mystery in the New Testament literally means "to shut the mouth" and means "a secret" according to Strong. So the things that are contained in the Scriptures are things that at least at one time God kept His mouth shut about or kept secret. But the question is whether these things are a mystery or secret any longer or has God made His will known to us so that we can understand. A careful consideration of a few Bible passages should give us the answer to this.

Romans 16:25-27 *"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 kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith -- to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."*

Notice that although the "revelation of the mystery" had been "kept secret since the world began" that Paul says it "now has been made manifest" and "by the prophetic Scriptures has been made

known to all nations." Does that sound like the things in the Scriptures are still covered up (kept secret) or have they been uncovered (revealed) so that we can know and understand God's will?

1Corinthians 2:7-10 *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained 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."*

Notice here that Paul said that he and others spoke the "mystery" or "hidden wisdom" of God. But they were able to speak these things because "God has revealed them to us." When the Holy Spirit made known the things of God to Paul and others, it no longer was secret. It is no longer a mystery, but can be known and understood.

Ephesians 1:7-10 *"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, 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."*

We see here again that the "mystery of His will" has been "made known to us." It is no longer kept secret. We can know it and understand it.

Ephesians 3:3-12 *"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. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to*

the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him."

There are several things brought out here. We see that Paul had the "mystery" revealed to him. This mystery had not been revealed in "other ages," but had now been "revealed" or uncovered. Paul wrote down what he received and when we read it we can "understand" what was revealed to him. Also Paul had within his power to "make all see" what was once a "mystery" that had been "hidden in God," but obviously no longer was hidden. God's word is therefore no longer a mystery, but something that has been revealed so that we can understand it.

Colossians 1:24-29 *"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. 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 Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily."*

Notice again that here the "word of God" is characterized as "the mystery which has been hidden," but "now has been revealed."

These passages ought to be enough to convince us that the Bible is not a mystery which cannot be understood by us today. On the contrary, God's will was once a MYSTERY shut up in His mind UNTIL He saw fit to REVEAL it to us by the apostles and prophets, who wrote it down in what we now know as the Bible. We can understand it now. All we have to do is read it and follow it.

(Some supplemental material to our recent Sunday Bible Class discussion on **Ephesians 3**. DLH)