

Colossians - Chapter 1
“God’s Secret Made Known”
Colossians 1:26

Verse 26

1. What was the core and foundation of the divine revelation given to Paul? Paul calls it “*the mystery.*” vs. 26
2. The word “mystery” refers to something that had been previously kept secret (by God), but has now been revealed and made known (manifest). You won't find it revealed in the Old Testament, or in Matthew through John. God hid and kept secret what He would do.
3. The mystery is in direct contrast to the divine revelation referred to as “prophecy.”
 - God has a **prophetic** program which He has declared and made known from the very beginning. The core of prophecy is the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom as the King of Israel. Luke 1:31-33; Acts 3:19-21
 - The prophetic program called for the conversion of Israel and their establishment as a source of divine blessing to all the Gentile nations. Isaiah 59:20-60:3
 - When Israel rejected Christ and the Spirit-filled apostles, prophecy called for the outpouring of God's wrath. But, this is where the mystery comes in.
4. There was a divine interruption in the prophetic program, by Christ making an unprophesied appearance from heaven to His chief enemy, Saul of Tarsus. Christ saved Saul (Paul: his Roman name) and began to reveal the mystery to him. What was this mystery?
 - Instead of God pouring out **wrath**, God would dispense unprecedented **grace** to a lost and rebellious world. This is why Paul calls it the dispensation of the grace of God. Ephesians 3:2-4
 - This grace would not just extend to Israel, but would be offered on an absolutely equal basis to Jew and Gentile alike. Ephesians 3:6, 8; Romans 10:12-13
 - Israel's prophetic plan would be set aside, temporarily, and God would begin forming something altogether new - the body of Christ. Ephesians 2:14-17
 - Gentiles would no longer have to go through the nation of Israel for divine blessing and acceptance. They could go straight to God, through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:18
5. This wonderful mystery that God had kept secret, He made known in due time to Paul, and Paul then revealed it to the churches and the other apostles. 1 Timothy 2:4-7
6. Paul didn't receive the mystery from Peter, James, John, or any of the other apostles. He got it by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:11-12, 2:2, 6-9

7. A failure to understand the difference between prophecy and the mystery is the mother of most false teaching and false doctrine today. When believers today attempt to live by doctrine in the prophetic program of Israel, confusion is the result.
 - So many times, false doctrine is **true** biblical doctrine that has simply been misplaced in the wrong dispensation. If you take a truth for Israel in Israel's prophetic program, and then try to force that upon the body of Christ in the dispensation of grace, false doctrine is the result. Example: prosperity theology.
8. Paul says in verse 26 that there is new truth that **was** a mystery, "*but now is made manifest to his saints.*" Every believer must understand that the Bible is a book of progressive revelation, and that God has given us special revelation through Paul that did not exist in previous generations. A failure to understand this can cause a person to either:
 - Mix law with grace (legalism).
 - Mix kingdom doctrine with church age doctrine (Calvinism and charismatic confusion).

