

Col 4:2-6 – Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 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**, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

1. What is meant by “the mystery of Christ” (4:3; Eph 3:9)?

The Gospel, which had been hidden from all former times, & which revealed that purpose long hidden in the divine councils, that the Gentiles should be called to enjoy the same privileges with the Jews (Adam Clarke’s)

Read & discuss: **Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:24-29**

The word “mystery” musteerion: something into which one must be “initiated” or instructed before it is fully known; & then anything that is concealed or hidden. We commonly use the word to denote that which is above our comprehension or unintelligible. But this is never the meaning of the word in the New Testament. It means there some doctrine or fact which has been concealed, or which has not before been fully revealed, or which has been set forth only by figures & symbols. When the doctrine is made known, it may be as clear & plain as any other. **Such was the doctrine that God meant to call the Gentiles, which was long concealed, at least in part, & which was not fully made known until the Saviour came, & which had been until that time “a mystery – a concealed truth” – though when it was revealed, there was nothing incomprehensible in it.** Thus, in Col 1:26, “The mystery which hath been hid from ages & from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” So it was in regard to the doctrine of election. It was a mystery until it was made known by the actual conversion of those whom God had chosen. So in regard to the incarnation of the Redeemer; the atonement; the whole plan of salvation, over all these great points there was a veil thrown, & people did not understand them until God revealed them. When they were revealed, the mystery was removed, & men were able to see clearly the manifestation of the will of God (Barnes).

2. Read Ephesians 3:1-13 & answer the following questions:

a. How & to whom was the “mystery” made known (3:3, 5)? By revelations of God to the Holy apostles & prophets.

b. How was the “mystery” communicated to the saints in Ephesus (3:3-4)? Through the oral preaching & written correspondence of the apostles.

c. How thorough would be their understanding of the “mystery” (3:4)? Each could have the same understanding as the apostles of Christ.

d. What is the subject or theme of the “mystery” (3:6)? “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, & partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel”

e. Of what was Paul a minister (3:6-7)? The gospel

f. What qualified him for that service (3:7-8)? “The gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power”

g. What did that service entail (3:8)? “Preach[ing] among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”

h. What did that service accomplish (3:9-10)? “To make ALL see (in the spiritual & earthly realms) what is the fellowship of the mystery....the manifold wisdom of God...by the church....”

i. Was the “mystery” revealed through the gospel an afterthought of God’s plan (3:11)? It was according to an “eternal purpose” that God planned to “accomplish in Christ Jesus our Lord”

3. Discuss the “mystery of godliness” (1 Tim 3:16)?

1 Tim 3:16 – But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar & ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **GOD (Jesus, bj)** 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.

Can you give passages to verify each statement?

[The mystery] – the divine scheme embodied in CHRIST (Col 1:27), once hidden from, but now revealed to, believers. There are five New Testament mysteries:

- (1) The incarnation here;
- (2) The mystery of iniquity (**2 Thess 2:7**);
- (3) Christ's marriage to the Church (**Eph 5:32**);
- (4) The union of Jews & Gentiles in one body (**Eph 3:4-6**);
- (6) The resurrection of the body (**1 Cor 15:51**).

(Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown)

[The mystery of godliness] – It results in godliness, piety & reverence for God since it is a message of divine truth. Error always results in ungodliness (**1 Tim 4:1, 7; 6:3**).

4. What did Paul request from the Colossians, & was the request only for him (4:2-4)?

To continue earnestly in prayer for the apostles that doors of opportunity may be opened for them to speak the mystery of Christ

a. **What was Paul's status at that time (4:18)?** A prisoner in Rome.

b. **Should we offer similar prayers today?** Absolutely! But if we are praying for ourselves, we need to be looking for the doors of opportunity.

5. What are the instructions given in verses 5 & 6, & how do they apply to the subject of speaking the “mystery” of Christ?

Our walk or manner of life, including the use of our time & the use of our tongues, will go a long way in making us more effective in communicating the gospel to others. If we live wisely & pray for opportunities to teach others, God will open those doors for us.