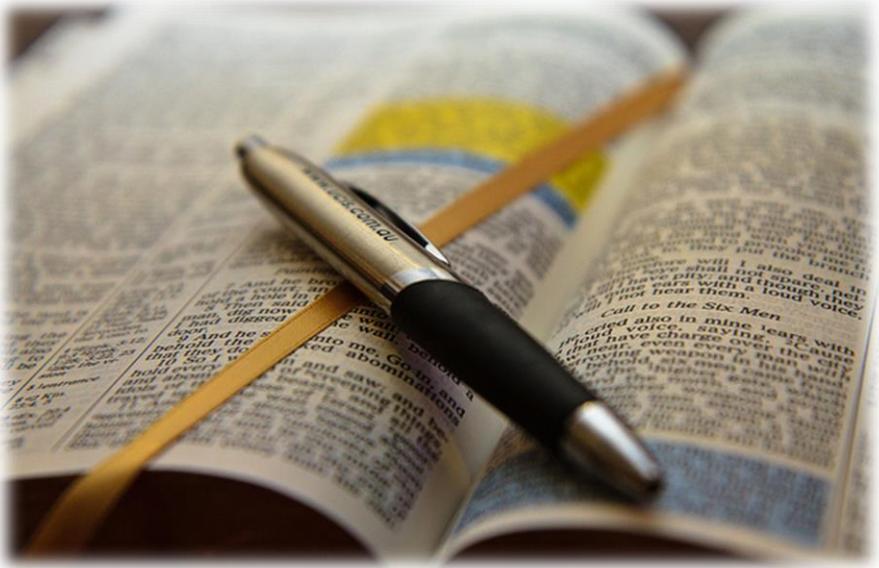


The Mystery of



The Mystery of the Church Which Is His Body

Alan R. Naas

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have all men to be saved,

and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men,

the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time

1 Timothy 2:3-6

NOTE: The intent of this booklet is to make all see the dispensation of the mystery and contains the interpretation, understanding and opinions of the author. Do not adopt or believe any of the contents of this booklet until the Holy Spirit convicts it as truth to you in the Word of Truth.

Why is the mystery of the church still a mystery to most believers?

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the **mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. (Eph 3:8-9)*

*Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the **mystery** which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints (Col 1:25-26)*



The word “mystery” in the Bible comes from the Greek form **musterion** from the root *muo* which means “shut the mouth”. The common ancient Greek usage of *musterion* was to withhold truth by secrecy in the sense of those initiated into the mysteries of religious rites or secret societies were sworn to secrecy or silence. In the Bible it is used by God to withhold some plan or truth from Satan in the sense of spiritually revealing something to whom and when it serves God’s purpose. Jesus quotes Psalm 78:2 “*I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*”. (Matt 13:35) Notice the contrast of intent.

Musterion in the NT denotes not the mysterious, but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and only by His Holy Spirit. Hidden truth in the Bible is not revealed to just anyone. (Mark 4:9-12, 1 Cor 2: 9-11, 13-15)

A mystery which has been revealed is no longer a mystery to whom it has been revealed. It then becomes a **truth**. It is a mystery only to whom it has not been revealed. To them it is still hidden truth: a mystery. Satan's method of silencing truth is called "religion" or "tradition". These are the binding agents to his lies.

Religion means to bind anew (*re ligo*) and is found five times in the Bible. Religion becomes tradition and tradition becomes religion. Paul referred to his past in the "Jew's religion": "the traditions of my fathers". The Pharisees called it tradition. Jesus said the following about their tradition (religion):

*And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own **tradition (religion)**.* (Mark 7:9)

*Making the word of God of none effect through your **tradition (religion)**, which ye have delivered: any many such like things do ye.* Mark 7:13)

Nimrod tried to establish religion in the land of Shinar in a city called Babel (Gen 11:1-9) and we see what God thought and did about that.

But man as a whole never changes and man never learns. Man has a need for religion regardless of what Scripture says. By embracing all the books of the New Testament without distinction and blending today's believers with past Israel you have the present Judeo-Christian religion (tradition); but is this true to Scripture?

Religion is man's way. What is God's way?

*For **my** thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your **ways my ways**, saith the Lord.* (Isaiah 55:8)

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways** higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* (Isaiah 55:9)

*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known **my ways**.* (Hebrews 3:10)

*Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep **my ways**.* (Proverbs 8:32)

I went to church for 50 years but it was through independent Bible study that I first heard and acknowledged the hidden secret or mystery (Greek form *musterion*) of the church revealed to Paul. Like many others, I asked, **“Why have I not heard this in church before now?”** After almost 2000 years of Christian theology, Christian doctrine, and Christian preaching, why is this mystery still a mystery to most believers? What happened to the mystery?

The next questions became, **“Why now?”** **“Why was this truth given to me?”** At first, I wondered, **“Is this truth or is it false doctrine?”** It was so different than what I was taught for 50 years in the churches. Can this be right?

So, I studied the word of truth, the King James Bible. I studied church history. I researched the history of Bible versions. The more I studied and searched and read, it became clear that traditional church teaching (religion) was on the wrong foundation. At the same time it became clear that this *musterion* truth was confirmed by the Scriptures. After 16 years of independent Bible study, it couldn't be more obvious and exciting.

After 50 years of “going to church” I never heard any teaching about:

- How to study the Bible
- The principle of right division
- Israel's Lo-Ammi condition
- The mystery of the church
- Paul's Post-Acts doctrine

All I ever heard was Israel's kingdom gospel and the return of Christ. Once saved just wait for the rapture! (Oops, wrong gospel) I heard hundreds of sermons on practice but not one on my present position in Christ.

I did not know there is a great dividing line and turning point in the New Testament that reveals a doctrine that is at variance with traditional church teaching. Once seen, it is hard for believers to admit their ignorance of it and hard to step away from “orthodox” and traditional religion. I believe that is exactly what God is looking for: the faith that goes against the current in the main stream and goes against the world's system of religion: [to keep himself unspotted from the world.](#) (James 1:27)

I believe 2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And John 16:13

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth

But 2 Timothy 2:15 is the key verse that unlocks the mystery:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There are many things in the Scriptures to rightly divide. I had to learn that the Bible is written for me, but not all to me. I had to learn whom each book or epistle is addressing. I had to learn when they were written. I had to learn the context and the theme of the period of their writing. I had to grasp God's overall plan and purpose given in the Scriptures.

I had to learn that God is dealing with different groups of people in different ways. Traditional teaching just runs everything together, which creates confusion thereby veiling the truth. (I wonder who is behind that.)

I believe that by rightly dividing the word of truth, it becomes clear that the church is very separate from Israel and their kingdom hope. We may have the same Savior, but not the same calling and hope.

Traditional Christian doctrine assumes that the church of today just gradually evolved from Jesus and His twelve Apostles. After Act 28:28 the church assumed the role of Israel and their kingdom promises and their ordinances (water baptism and the Lord's Supper) and their Ten Commandments and their New Covenant, etc., etc., etc. This is Satan's great deception and veiling of the hidden truth revealed in the Scriptures.

I believe that rightly dividing Paul's epistles is the only means by which the *musterion* (mystery) message of the church can be understood and acknowledged. I believe that Acts 28:28 is the doctrinal dividing line between the inter-Acts hope of the Kingdom of Heaven **on earth** and the post-Acts hope and calling of the Church in the **heavenly places**.

At Acts 28:28 God called a big **"time out"** with Israel when He:

1. removed the Jew's priority status
2. invoked the Lo-Ammi condition to Israel as a nation (see below)
3. authorized salvation to all nations
4. suspended His dealings with Israel in all aspects
5. silenced all appeals to Moses and the Prophets
6. withdrew the signs (spiritual gifts)
7. postponed the "great commission" (Matt 28:19-20)
8. postponed the return of Christ
9. revealed His secret plan for all the nations

How do we know this? By what is written or omitted in the epistles written by Paul after Acts 28:28. **Most Christians do not realize Paul had two ministries in two separate dispensations (administrations) each with seven of his epistles.**

Israel	Church
Kingdom Hope and Calling	Heavenly Hope and Calling
<u>Inter-Acts Epistles</u>	<u>Post-Acts Epistles</u>
Galatians	Philippians
1 Thessalonians	Ephesians
2 Thessalonians	Colossians
Hebrews	Philemon
1 Corinthians	1 Timothy
2 Corinthians	Titus
Romans	2 Timothy

Although the New Testament books contain the Cornerstone and the foundation of the doctrines of grace and salvation, the post-Acts epistles of Paul are necessary to reveal a separate "calling out" for a different purpose.

The church of God's choice, the church, which is His body, is found in Paul's post-Acts epistles: primarily in Ephesians (1:1-23) and Colossians (1:21-26, 2:11-15, 3:1-4). This church is of a different calling and a different hope apart from Israel's kingdom calling and hope of the inter-Acts writings.

But the mystery of the church seemed to die with Paul. After Paul and Timothy left the scene what happened to the mystery? It was still right there in Paul's writing. By the sovereignty of God, the principle of right division and the mystery of the church, which is His body, may have been made manifest to individuals known only to God since it was revealed to Paul. Until now any recorded manifestation of this rightly divided mystery has been known for less than 200 years in Christendom. God is presently calling out His church: the fulness of the body of Christ.

Many early Christians returned to the inter-Acts doctrine that was suspended by God at Acts 28:28. They resumed the kingdom gospel and the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper. This continuance of the suspended kingdom gospel became one of Satan's lies.

The mystery seemed to be camouflaged (veiled) by all the false doctrine that Satan produced and partly because of how the books in the printed Bibles have been arranged. Think about this. The Pope's church claims to be the "True Church" because they claim they are the ones who produced the Bible. What makes their arrangement "sacred"? Having been it for 30 years I found that they do nothing that is Biblical in their practice. All other Bible versions use the same canonical arrangement. Translated and printed Bibles have only been available in the past 500 years or so.

A Bible has never been arranged and produced under the principle of right division. Is this the believer's folly?

Much wisdom and understanding of Paul's *mysterion* message became available more recently through the ministry of a humble man of little means, Mr. C. H. Welch, in England (1880-1967). Many are thankful for his dedicated work in these last days of this dispensation. Most of his life was dedicated to teaching the Bible and Paul's epistles rightly divided.

Another truth that must be understood is the present Lo-Ammi condition of Israel. (Hebrew: No people of Mine are ye)

Then God said call his name Lo-Ammi; for ye are not my people and I will not be your God. (Hosea 1:9)

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim. (Hosea 3:4)

After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. (Hosea 6:2)

During this present 2,000-year age Israel is set aside while the “salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles (nations), and that they will hear it”. John’s Gospel contains the salvation message to “whosoever”. This does not mean all who are saved will be chosen for this higher (*musterion*) calling and hope.

During this age God is also calling out his chosen church by revelation of the mystery (*musterion*) through the Holy Spirit in the word of truth.

God’s purpose for Israel is to be a witness on the earth. (Matt 28: 19-20)

God’s purpose for His church is to be a witness in heaven. (Eph 3:10-11)

The dispensation (administration) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, **also became manifest to the enemy**, who then, by the power of darkness, hid (veiled) it from generations of believers under a mountain of false doctrine and false religion with profane and vain babblings (2 Tim 2:16).

As soon as Paul expounded the mystery in his post-Acts epistles, Satan was immediately aware and was eager to oppose it. Since the *musterion* message was a personal revelation to Paul and not found in the scriptures written before, that was an easy basis on which Satan could plant doubt in the mind of the new Judeo-Christian. Also, since it pertained to a new hope and calling far beyond the kingdom hope and calling, it was a new frontier they (as many believers today) were not willing to enter.

Also, since Paul was falsely accused and imprisoned, it became a risk to follow his teaching any longer. Therefore it was easy for the “grievous wolves” (Acts 20:29) to come in and destroy the flock. By the time of Paul’s second imprisonment and the writing of 2 Timothy the Judaizers (leaven of the Pharisees) had reverted Paul’s churches. It appears that all had left Paul (1:15) or forsaken him (4:16) except for a few individuals such as Timothy and Luke.



Scripture tells us that Satan is the founder of man’s false worship (Gen 4:5) and man’s religion (Gen 11:4).

“Church” history and spiritual understanding tells us that after two centuries of persecuting the Jews and the Christians, Satan established his counterfeit church in Rome beginning in the fourth century. Under the pagan Emperor Constantine, Christianity became a state religion infested with paganism and idolatry. Pagan temples were confiscated and converted to “churches”. It was a trap (snare) set to attract believers who could avoid further persecution. Ironically and eventually Bible truth-believers were persecuted (martyred) by this dictatorial false church for not taking the bait and entering the trap. Satan, since Babel, continues to build a universal (catholic) religious system in which he traffics his false doctrines in his sanctuaries. Satan’s “religion” thrived through the dark ages by coercion, i.e. convert or die.

Satan even deceptively called his church the “church of the mysteries”, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Man’s tradition overruled the Scriptures. Bibles were destroyed so minds could be controlled by the doctrine and practice of the Nicolaitanes (control the people) which the Lord hates (Rev 2:6, 2:15).

By the grace of God I was called out from among those being deceived.

People had to rely on the learned men of the church for their doctrine because most could not read. Obviously this presents inherent danger of errors. Printed and translated Bibles were not available until the sixteen century. Even then many people could not read.

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. Through the Reformation period (16th Century) and the Restoration period (1790-1840), by use of the translated Scriptures and “*sola scriptura*”, men began to rise above some of Satan’s false doctrines.

But how can they “reform” a religion of Judeo-Christian doctrine infused with tradition and paganism and come out with the truth?

How can they “restore” a Judeo-Christian kingdom doctrine that has been suspended by God and come out with the truth?

Nonetheless, “the salvation of God”; the eternal-life-giving salvation-in-Jesus Christ message of John’s gospel was restored. Christian doctrine was reformed to Paul’s doctrine of “*the just shall live by faith*” (Luther) (Habakkuk 2:4). Paul’s doctrines of election, justification, sanctification, reconciliation, and identification were preached. *Whether in pretense or in truth Christ is preached.* (Phil 1:18) But the mystery remained hidden.

Religious freedom to follow one’s own interpretation of the scriptures without life-threatening persecution is slightly over 240 years old.

For the “Reformers” and “Restorers” a return to the Scriptures for guidance might have revealed a correct form of worship. Jesus stated in John 4:23

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

The church, which is His body, is a spiritual church (Eph 2:18), invisible to the world, and based on Scriptural truth. We worship in Spirit and in truth 24/7. The truth sets us free (John 8:32, 36) from bondage to man’s religion (bind anew).

Sadly, Christianity continued in Satan's form of worship in the flesh and in veiled truth. Satan hates truth and freedom. **Satan loves to pervert church doctrine and the word of God.** Incorrect doctrine manifests itself in incorrect practice. Church buildings are akin to pagan temples. Religious ceremonies resemble pagan rituals. This also created division instead of unity. Satan has spawned many religions, many perverted versions of God's word, all in the name of Christianity: counterfeit Christianity that is.



Are you cut to the heart? Are you ready to stone me? Remember Stephen?

The church is not a building or a denomination. **Ekklesia stresses a group of people called out for a special purpose.** The revealed church is the body of Christ with Christ as the Head and the members are an equal or concorporate unit (Eph 3:6, 4:3-6). There is no hierarchy (no Nicolaitanes).

Here is some salty seasoning: anyone who "goes to church" likely does not understand what today's true church is. If a person does not understand and acknowledge the doctrine of the church of the mystery, how can he be a member of it? Only God knows who the members of this church are.

Those who believe that the church of today began in the Acts period and "evolved" from there and will be raptured (1Thes 2:19, 4:17) at the return of Christ may need to consider their personal responsibility to study the Scriptures to see if these things be so. It is OK to question all teaching.

So every one of us shall give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:12)

According to Ephesians 1:4 the church was chosen in Christ **before** the foundation of the world. The Jew (Israel) was chosen **from** the beginning according to 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

The mystery of the kingdom gospel was kept secret from the foundation of the world until spoken of by Christ. (Matt 13:35, 25:34). The mystery of the church was hid in God from the beginning of the world (Eph 3:9) until revealed to Paul.

The reason why the mystery of the church is still a mystery to most believers is the same reason why the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the kingdom were, and still are, a mystery to Israel. In due time, God will enlighten the eyes of their understanding. Believers can see the blindness of Israel, while at the same time have a blindness of their own. (I did)

Israel past: Why, after 2,000 years of types, and shadows, and miracles, and prophesies, and witnesses was Israel deemed to be blind, deaf, and ignorant to the coming of their promised Messiah? In fact, when He came unto them (John 1:11), they convicted Him to death. A few believed and were called out (*ekklesia*) near the end of their 2,000-year period.

Believers today: Is it likely that, after 2,000 years of Scriptures and religion and doctrines and theology and eschatology, believers could be deemed blind and deaf and ignorant of the mystery of the church? A few understand and are being called out (*ekklesia*) now near the end of this 2,000 years.

As Paul said in Romans about Israel in his time, “[The night is far spent and the day is at hand](#)”. It could be said of this dispensation that the night is far spent and the day is at hand for the Church (the 2 days of Hosea 6:2).

Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. **In this dispensation blindness in full is happened to Israel until the fulness of the church of the mystery be completed, then salvation will be returned to Israel.**

The mystery of the church is a mystery to most believers because that is the plan and purpose of God. But now I can understand how God can triumph over the wiles of the Devil and complete his plan. Only the faithful *who are* willing to rightly divide the word of truth and depart from the traditions of man’s religious system and free themselves from the snare of the devil (2 Tim 2:26), will be worthy of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:14)

This church is God's church of God's choosing (Eph 1:4) who are given the spirit of wisdom and revelation to acknowledge Him and whose eyes of understanding are enlightened to know what is the hope of His calling (Ephesians 1:17-18) The veiling by Satan has been unveiled by God.

He has blessed us with every blessing that is spiritual (Eph 1:3)

He has chosen us in Him before the overthrow of the world (Eph 1:4)

That we should be holy and without blame before Him (Eph 1:4)

He predestinated us unto the adoption as sons (Eph 1:5)

He made us accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6)

He redeemed us through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph 1:7)

He abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence (Eph 1:8)

He made known to us the mystery of His will (Eph 1:9)

He obtained us as an inheritance (Eph 1:11)

He sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13)

He quickened us together with Christ (Eph 2:5)

He raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus where Christ sits on the right hand of God (Eph 2:6, Col 3:1)

We died and our life is hid with Christ in God (Col 3:3)

When Christ who is our life shall appear (*epiphaneia*), then shall we also appear with Him in glory (Col 3:4)

The inter-Acts Judeo-Christian church was looking for His return or coming (*parousia*) (1 Thes 2:19, 4:17).

The post-Acts church, which is His body, is looking for His appearing (*epiphaneia*) (Col 3:4) and the "out resurrection" out from among the dead. (Phil 3:11)

These are separate events. We believe God's next move is the manifestation of Christ in the heavens complete with His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Christ is hid in God and cannot be manifest until His body is complete.

As I understand the mystery of the church, after the church has left this world, Paul's post-Acts epistles will no longer be relevant except as a historical explanation as to what happened to the church.

And He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell (Col 1:18-19)

Proverbs 3:5-6 is interwoven with Eph 1: 17-18 and 2 Tim 2:15

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on thy own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct (rightly divide) thy paths

Trust in the Word of God and not man's religion (thine own understanding) so that He *may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge (acknowledgement) of Him: the eyes of your understanding (heart) being enlightened* (Eph 1:17-18)

He shall help you rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15) so that you needeth not to be ashamed, but approved unto God.

Satan's *musterion* will culminate by rearing its ugly head in Rev 17:3-6.

"MYSTERY (*MUSTERION*), BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (a city of a secret name which is the fountainhead of the mystery of iniquity found in all the great religions of the world). The secret city of Satan's *musterion*, the veiling and silencing of the truth of God, will be revealed and destroyed.

Which *musterion* do you prefer?

Israel

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Co 3:12-17)

Believers Today

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Satan, which put a vail over our face, that the children of God could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the new testament; which vail is done away in Truth. But even unto this day, when Paul is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when we shall turn to the Truth, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Truth is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of Truth is, there is liberty. (Author's parallel)

