

# BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Dec 2002

Volume 16, No. 5

Bible Explorations Online:

email: [info@bibleexplorations.org](mailto:info@bibleexplorations.org) [www.bibleexplorations.org](http://www.bibleexplorations.org)

...to know the love of Christ  
which passeth knowledge  
that ye might be filled with  
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

## The Numerical Significance Of The Word 'Mystery' In Scripture

In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... (God breathed)." An infallible God entrusted fallible men to bring us His perfect Word. One way that God has validated that the Scriptures are indeed His words is by using a numerical system of supernatural design. This system shows us that, although the Scriptures were penned by human hands, there can be no doubt that God intervened over a period of almost 2000 years to bind together the writings of several men into one theme and to reveal His will and purpose.

An example of this supernatural design can be illustrated with the Greek word "*musterion*" (mystery, secret). This word occurs 27 times ( $3^3$  or  $3 \times 3 \times 3$ ) in the New Testament and *nine* times ( $3^2$  or  $3 \times 3$ ) in the Septuagint. Numbers can be significant in their direct usage or as in this case, by the number of times a word is used. A number that is cubed or squared, as in this case, indicates a special emphasis of the usage of that word.

A study of the word "*musterion*" will reveal several things about the hidden wisdom of God:

1) The secrets of God are revealed as a result of Israel's unbelief.

2) Truth is hidden because of a warfare between the two seedlines spoken of in Gen. 3:15. In war, it is always a wise strategy to keep information secret from the enemy.

3) Certain truths of God are kept secret from His own children who are in unbelief.

It is not our intention to look at each occurrence individually, but rather to consider the numerical pattern of how the word is distributed in Scripture.

The *nine* occurrences in the Septuagint are found in the book of Daniel. "*Musterion*" is found in 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47 (twice) and 4:9. These mys-

teries were interpretations of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Assyria. They speak of Gentile dominion and were revealed during a period when Israel was in captivity as a result of their unbelief. The number *nine* is associated with judgement. Daniel's prophecies were written at a time in Israel's history when they were being judged for their unbelief and disobedience. They were forewarned of this captivity. From the interpretations of these dreams, we see that even the governments of this world are subject to and in the hands of the Almighty God.

The 27 occurrences in the New Testament are as follows:

- 3 times in the Gospels by the Lord
- 4 times in the book of Revelation
- 20 times by the Apostle Paul:
  - 8 times before Acts 28:28 and
  - 12 times after Acts 28:28.

The *three* times we find the word in the Gospels are Matt 13:11, Mark 4:11 and Lu 8:10. The number *three* indicates Divine completion. In the context of these three passages we read the words of the Lord and the parable of the "Sower". In each case He quotes from Isaiah 6: 9, 10. In Matt 13:10, 11 we read, "**And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**" The Lord had spoken to the multitudes. These were Israelites who heard the Holy Scriptures from birth. They were familiar with the law. They knew Jehovah and looked for the Messiah. Yet, in ignorance and unbelief, they did not recognize that the very One Who spoke to them was the Promised One written of in the Holy Scriptures. The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled that day when He spoke to the multitudes.

The *four* occurrences of '*musterion*'

in Revelation are 1:20, 10:7, 17:5 and 7. The number *four* is related to God's creative works. The book of Revelation is a complement of the book of Genesis which reveals the creation. The mysteries in the book of Revelation have their fulfillment on the earth.

The remaining twenty occurrences of the word *mystery* are found in the letters of Paul. The first eight are found in his letters written before the end of Acts. They are Ro 11:25; 16:25, 1Co 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51 and 2Th 2:7. In 1Co 4:1, Paul speaks of himself and some of the other Apostles as "**stewards of the mysteries (plural) of God**". There were several mysteries that were revealed during this time. From his letters, we discover that these secrets were truths written about in the Old Testament Scriptures, but were hidden during that time and were later made known during the Acts period.

Other than those mentioned above, no other New Testament writer uses the word "mystery". Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was specifically chosen to reveal God's secrets because of Israel's unbelief. In Romans 11:25, he writes of the mystery of Israel's blindness and the grafting in of the Gentiles. The number *eight* represents resurrection or "a new beginning". Although these secrets were hidden in the Scriptures of the prophets, they were not revealed until later, being "new truths" to those who believed.

The *twelve* times the word *mystery* occurs in Paul's letters after the end of Acts are: Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19, Col. 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3, 1Ti 3:9, 16. The number *twelve* is associated with rule or governmental perfection. This is evident with Israel and the promise of *twelve* thrones for the *twelve* Apostles.

The "mystery" revealed in Ephesians 3:3 was hidden from the ages of time and was not contained in the prophetic Scrip-

...cont'd. on page 2

## The Numerical Significance Of The Word 'Mystery' In Scripture ...cont'd

tures. This mystery speaks of a creation that includes more than God's purpose with mankind on the earth. (Eph 3:9; Col 1:16,17) The message of redemption and reconciliation here extends to principalities, powers, dominions and might. These governments of the celestial realm are part of God's purposes today. In Eph 1:9,10 we read of the mystery of God's will and dispensation (stewardship) of the fulness of times. In the present dispensation described here, God is gathering together (heading up) all things in Christ, the things above the heavens and the things on the earth.

Furthermore, Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God in a reigning position. The number *twelve* is significant in that God's purposes today show forth His present position as Head in heavenly places. Eph 1:20-23 describes it in this way: "**Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every**

**name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him That filleth all in all.**" He has included the church which is His body as part of this position. It is through this assembly of believers that God is making manifest His manifold wisdom and grace.

The "mysteries" of God are of great value. His secrets have only been entrusted to a select few. We can appreciate the sincerity and concern of the Apostle Paul when we read of his desire for Timothy in 1Ti 6:20, "**O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust...**". In 1Ti 1:11, Paul speaks of the "glorious gospel" (*gospel of the glory*) that he had been entrusted with. This priceless treasure that God has revealed concerning His Son "**in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**", (Col 2:9) is a truth of unmatched importance. We who un-

derstand this truth should not take it lightly, but stand in awe of the high calling for which we have been called and walk worthy of it.

We have only touched the surface in considering the secrets of God that ultimately reveal the fullness of His Son and the fathomless grace that has placed us in His possession. On the surface we find wonderful truths concerning the mind of God. But for those who will dig deeper, there are "**...treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**" (Col 2:3) His perfect design calls our attention to even greater depths of the word "*musterion*" and reminds us of the importance of searching this truth further. "**As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him.**" (Ps 18:30)

(For further information on the significance of numbers in the Bible, see the book, "Number In Scripture" by E. W. Bullinger.)

B. Bagby

---

### The Salvation God #8

The third pair of Saviour titles in Paul's letter to Titus is found in chapter 3, verses 4-7, "**But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared (was brought to light), Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**"

The third thing "brought to light" in his letter to Titus is "**the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man**". One can argue that the kindness and love of God toward Jew and Gentile was not a new revelation after Acts. Certainly, the principal of this truth is prevalent in all of Paul's letters during and after Acts. The difference, however, is that the kindness and love of God toward men is now stated with no distinction or limitations. During Acts the offering of the gospel to Gentiles was a result of Israel's unbelief and the need to provoke Israel to jealousy. As a result of the

judgment proclaimed upon Israel in Acts 28:26-27, and the revelation of the mystery of Eph 3:3, the hope of mankind is no longer dependent upon the position of the Jew and their relationship with God. Israel is no longer being provoked to jealousy nor is the hope associated with that dispensation part of the message of Paul's last seven epistles. The titles "God our Saviour" and "Christ Jesus our Saviour" are terms that are available to all believers of this heavenly calling.

In Titus 3:5, Paul speaks of a salvation that is according to God's mercy. He further qualifies that salvation in verse 7, "**That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**" Eternal life in this context is the age abiding life that was promised before the ages spoken of in Titus 1:2. (For further explanation of "eternal life promised before the ages" see article #6 in this series in the *July 2002, Vol 16, No 3* issue.) Along with this salvation is an inheritance. Inheritance is always spoken of as a future event in resurrection. The inheritance in Titus 3:7 is a present realization.

In Galatians, those who belonged to Christ were said to be Abraham's seed

and "**heirs according to the promise.**" (Gal 3:29) Their inheritance was according to prophecy and is a future event anticipated in resurrection. The inheritance spoken of in Titus 3:7 is "**according to the hope of eternal life**" and was promised before the ages. What makes this inheritance a present realization is the position that "the church which is His body" presently has in Christ and "His inheritance".

Paul's prayer in Eph 1:18 was that they "**... ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (holy of holies).**" The preeminent position that Christ presently holds is His inheritance in the "holy of holies". Of the church which is His body we read, "**In Whom (Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance...**" (Eph 1:11); "**That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs (jointheirs, presently), and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel:**" (Eph 3:6); "**Giving thanks unto the Father, Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints (holy of holies) in light:**" (Col 1:12)

B. Bagby

**The Wife, The Bride of the Lamb,  
and The Body of Christ  
Features Common in Their  
Hopes: Judgment**

In the previous article we began a study of the judgments of God's People. It was pointed out that,

(1) The Greek word "krino" that is rendered "judge", "judgment" etc. in the King James Version of the Bible, means to evaluate or assess.

(2) The conclusion of a judgment (assessment) may be favorable or unfavorable.

(3) Those without the gift of life from God can not rise from the dead and need not rise for judgment, for they are judged already by their rejection of God's Salvation.

(4) Only God's people will rise (or be changed) to be judged. Only they have works to be evaluated or have fruit to harvest.

(5) No person will be accountable for sin or sins because Christ, by the sacrifice of Himself, took away the sin of the whole world.

Before continuing our study, it is important to recognize that failure to distinguish between things that differ has caused great confusion about God's judgment of His people.

Confusion has stemmed from failure to distinguish between (1) God's free gift of *salvation* and *wages* that may be earned, (2) One's *hope* and one's *reward*, and (3) Israel's judgment *while living* under Law, and their judgment to come at *resurrection*. False doctrines have resulted that create fear and bondage for Christians, and that make God a cruel torturer of His people.

First of all, "Salvation", or deliverance, is a gift of God that is received by faith. It may refer to deliverance from death to everlasting life, to deliverance into a calling of God, or even to the "Deliverer", Christ Jesus, but salvation is always received by believing God's Word. On the other hand, after one has salvation there are good works to walk in and "wages" to be earned for faithful service. One's salvation is settled and

**The Hopes Of God's People # 9** certain; his wages are conditional upon his service. What is said of wages must not be applied to salvation.

Secondly, one's "hope" is the future that God has promised him, while one's "reward" is the added privilege or prize that he must strive to gain. One's hope is securely his; the prize is to him who runs his race lawfully and to the finish. Jesus showed in parables that those of Israel whose hope was sure would be judged and rewarded according to their service. In His message known as "The Beatitudes", He reminded the multitude that there were *rewards* ahead for those who were meek, who were pure in heart, etc.

And finally, while living, the Israelites were subject to the Law of ordinances they had received from the Lord and had agreed to keep. Any accused of breaking an ordinance was brought to judgment before men who were God's representatives. Jesus spoke of three levels of judgment a Jew might face in His day. He said they could be in danger of, (1) The "judgment" (3 elders in the local synagogue) (2) "The council" (national Supreme Court) and (3) "Hell fire" (shameful burial in the Valley of Hinnon, the burning garbage dump where dead bodies of criminals were thrown). (Mt. 5:22) These judgments were for those people and were executed while they lived.

After Christ's ascension, we read of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who dropped dead when they lied to God about their gift for the saints. (Acts 5:1-10) In addition, the Apostle Paul wrote that many were sickly and many died because they took of the Passover unworthily. (1 Cor. 11:28-30) Thus we find that as long as God recognized Israel as a nation, the Jews were subject to laws and immediate judgments. When God postponed Israel's hope and sent His Salvation (Christ) to the nations, the Law expired and we read of no such judgments thereafter. (Acts 28:28) We must not carry the Law and its judgments over into the administration of the Church today, nor apply

them to the judgment of its members at resurrection.

Turning now to the judgment of members of the Bride company, we find that throughout Biblical history, those of Israel who diligently sought the Lord understood they had been chosen by God to be a kingdom of priests and to teach nations. They realized they were entrusted with His Words and were accountable to their Lord for that trust. They knew a time of reckoning would come; they knew that what they "sowed" they would also "reap", whether reward or loss. One of their kings wrote, **"The wicked worketh a deceitful work: But to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward"**, **"Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth."** (Prov. 11:18 and 31) This principle was repeated by Paul to the Bride company in Galatians 6:7 where we read, **"... whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."**

Not long after Christ's ascension, He spoke to John in a revelation saying, **"And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."** (Rev. 22:12) Therefore, the faithful saints expected the Lord to return to earth in their lifetime, at which point their works would be assessed.

John urged saints to be continuators in Christ so that they might, **"...not be ashamed before Him at His coming."** (1 Jn. 2:28) Peter encouraged saints to endure trials, saying, **"...But the end of all things is at hand";** **"...the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God,"** (1 Pet. 4:7 and 17)

Paul told those in Rome, **"...we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ;"** **"...every one of us shall give account of himself to God."** (Ro. 14:10,12)

And to those in Corinth Paul wrote, **"...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath**  
*...cont'd. on backpage*

## Hopes # 9 ...cont'd

**done, whether it be good or bad.”** (2Cor.5:10) He reminded them that works built upon the foundation of faith in Christ would be assessed. He warned that some works would be judged worthless. We read, **“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it ...If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”** (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

That judgment of works did not occur then because the return of the Judge (the Christ) was contingent upon Israel’s repentance. They had refused Him when He was on earth and they refused to believe on Him after He ascended, and so He remained in heaven. However, the return of Christ was merely postponed, for at the end of the great tribulation, when those in the Land finally cry up to the Lord, the Righteous Judge will come with rewards for those who are worthy. God, Who can not lie, will keep His promises to the Bride.

Members of the Bride company, who endured faithful through trials in the

past, and those who will be true through the great tribulation in the future, will be rewarded at Christ’s return. Jesus told the 12 apostles who had forsaken all to follow Him that they will, **“...sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** (Mt. 19:28) He said that some over-comers of Israel will, **“...sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.”** (Rev. 3:21)

James wrote of the “crown of life” to be gained by enduring tests and Peter wrote of the “crown of glory” to be given for willing service.

In that day of rewards, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with all in the Bride company who have died, will rise to be with Christ in the Land restored to fruitfulness. Jerusalem will be glorious with the Throne of David and the Temple in the midst. There, in the holy Land, the faithful Gentiles will also be given an inheritance. (Ezek. 47:22,23)

At the end of Christ’s 1000-year reign, the over-comers will receive additional reward. They will be given places in the New Jerusalem that comes out of heaven to the renewed earth. While

**Bible Explorations** is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

they reigned with Christ (Messiah) for a 1000 years, then they will reign with God **“for ever and ever.”** (Rev. 22:5)

We have only briefly touched on the judgment of the Bride and the rewards they will receive, but how can we describe what is beyond our human imaginations. How can we fully know the rewards the Lord has in store when, **“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”** (1 Cor. 2:9)

*J. Heltzinger*

### Spring Conference

You can start making plans for the 2003 Spring Bible Conference in Phoenix scheduled for the weekend of April 4-6th. The featured guest speaker is Richard Haskell from Chatsworth, CA. More details will be announced in the next issue.

12/2002

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 48  
SUN CITY, AZ

**BIBLE EXPLORATIONS**  
P.O. BOX 26608  
Phoenix, AZ 85068-6608