

## **The Mystery of The Church Age (03)**

Book of Ephesians was a circular letter to the churches of Asia Minor (Eph.1:1, 15). The Ephesian church was one of seven churches listed in Revelations Ch. 2-4 (Rev.2:1-7).

Paul wrote this letter from a Roman prison (Eph.3:1; 4:1; 6:20). This letter is loaded with Bible doctrines designed to bring believers to spiritual growth maturity (Eph.4:11-16).

One of these Bible doctrines is the mystery doctrine of the dispensation of church age. It is recorded in one of the longest sentences in the Greek NT (Eph.1:3-14).

In the midst of this long Greek sentence (Eph.1:9-10), Paul introduced the doctrine of the Mystery of Church Age. In this Greek sentence (Eph.1:3-14), Paul used the phrases, **in Him, in Christ, or in Beloved**, ten times (Eph.1:3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 10, 12, 13, 13) to teach the doctrine of Positional Truth (Gal.3:26-28).

Paul introduced the doctrine of the Mystery of Church Age by "**He made known** (gnorizo / a.a.ptc.nsm) (2 Tim.3:16) **to us** (personal pronoun / d.pl.m / the believer's dative of advantage in the Church Age) **the mystery** (to musterion) **of His will** (to thelema / g.s.n) [Decreed in the plan of God]" (Eph.1:9).

### **This lesson will study four aspects of Mystery of Church Age.**

#### **1. Paul explains that the "mystery of His will revealed", with the first advent of Jesus Christ, was the Mystery of Church Age.**

(Eph.1:9b-10a) "According to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable (oikonomia / a.s.f) to the fullness (tou pleroma / g.s.n) of the times (ton kairos / g.pl.m)." (Gal.4:4)

- The term **Oikonomia** is used to emphasize the stewardship of the Dispensation of the Church Age.

The Dispensation of the Church Age is the period between Pentecost of Acts Ch.2 and the Rapture of the church of (1 Thess.4:13-18) and (1 Cor.15:51-58).

The Jewish age was interrupted by the church age; and the priest-nation of Israel was replaced by the church of Jesus Christ as God's Custodian or Steward.

#### **2. Paul was teaching that the Dispensational Plan of God is under new management in the Church Age.**

The term Oikonomia was used in two parables by Jesus to teach there would be a dispensational change of stewardship because the priest-nation of Israel would reject their Messiah (Lk.16:1-13 / **16:2-4**) and (Matt.21:33-46 / **43-46**).

This dispensational change brought new management which is the church of Jesus Christ (Col.1:24-29).

(Acts 13:46-47) "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, 'it was necessary that word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'" (**Isa.46:6**; Luke 2:32)

**3. Change of stewardship means that the church of Jesus Christ is the custodian of the Word of God and evangelism of the world.**

The church of Jesus Christ has a Universal Priesthood as custodians of the Word of God (1 Pet.2:4-10; Rev.1:6).

The church of Jesus Christ also has a Universal Ambassadorship as custodians of evangelism of the world (2 Cor.5:18-21; Matt.28:18-20).

**4. The mystery dispensation of the Church Age is described as “summing up (anakephalioo / a.m.infin) of all things in Christ, things in heaven and things in earth.” (Eph.1:10b, 20-23) [The Session of Jesus Christ]**

Vines says, “**Anakephalioo** refers to consummation extending beyond the limits of the church, though the latter is to be a factor in its realization.” (Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, pg.609)

The Mystery of the Church Age brings everything in heaven and on earth under the headship of the resurrected Jesus Christ, seated (in Session) at the right hand of God (Eph.1:10, 22; 3:10, 21; 4:15-16; Col.1:18; 3:1; 1 Pet.3:22)

Headship of Christ is the “Celebrity” part of the **Eucharist bread**:

- Virgin birth
- Hypostatic union
- Impeccability
- **Celebrityship of session** (1 Cor.11:24)
  - Head of church (Col.1:18)
  - Savior of body (Eph.5:23)
  - Mediator (1 Tim.2:5-6)
  - Advocate (1 John 2:1)
  - Chief shepherd (1 Pet.5:4)
  - Chief cornerstone (Eph.2:20-21)
  - Guardian of soul (1 Pet.2:25)
  - High priest (Heb.7:17-28)