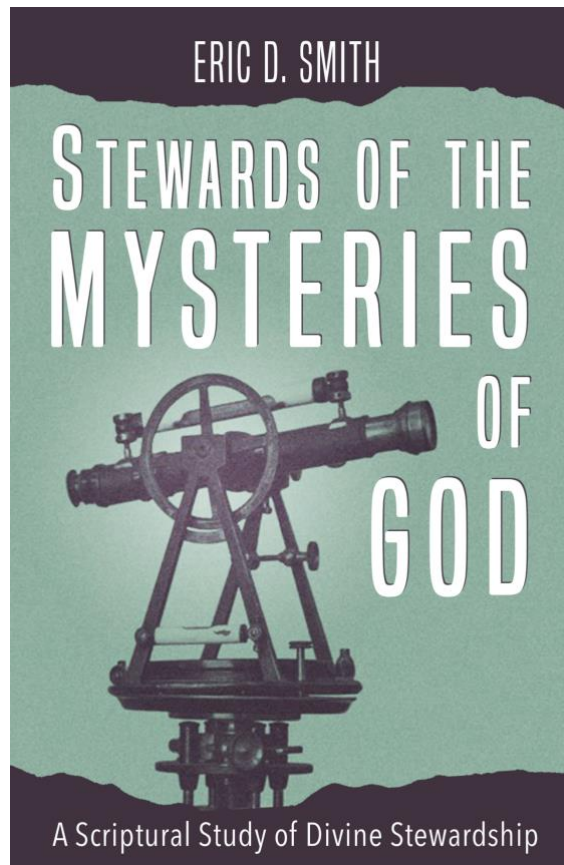


Study Guide For



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Twenty-seven times the Greek word that is translated into the English word “mystery” or “mysteries” is used in the New Testament (KJV). If we are to be stewards and held accountable with these treasures that were once hidden and then given to the Church, then we, as the body of Christ, need to learn, know, and share this knowledge. Ignoring the mysteries would be the same as the man who hid his talent in the earth until his master returned. No true believer would want to find themselves as the one being cast out into outer darkness for ignoring or hiding what has been given to us.

Eric D. Smith
www.Just1God.org

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD – BY ERIC D. SMITH

CHAPTER 1 - STEWARDSHIP

*“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
– 1 Corinthians 4:1-2*

Matthew 25:14-18

14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

This parable begins with the phrase, “*For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country . . .*” (Matthew 25:14). Jesus, by referencing the Kingdom of Heaven, is giving us a direct allegory to Him handing us the incredibly valuable treasures of His Kingdom as He returns to Heaven. He is also telling us that when He returns for His Church, He is expecting His servants to have been faithful with the things that He has left to us.

There is something of much more value than both money and time that God has placed into the hands of the Church to take care of until He comes back! To teach the Church to be a better steward of our money from these passages would be as erroneous as teaching a believer to be a better gardener from the parable of the sower and the seed.

When referring to a role of a minister in 1 Cor. 4:1, Paul uses a Greek word (*hypēretēs*) which means that of an “under-oarsman”, or one that rows or toils. Every believer should understand that they are the under-oarsman that are here to help the Church continue to move forward in the Great Commission.

Questions, Discussions and Notes

1. What were parables used for?
2. What might be some of the valuable things that Jesus has left for His Church to take care of until He returns?
3. What are some responsibilities that an “under-oarsman” might volunteer for in helping their local church move forward in the Great Commission?

When the master responded to the unprofitable servant in Matthew 25:27, he told him, *“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”*

We are all stewards of the mysteries of God and the Master will someday ask how we did in this stewardship. When a person comes into the understanding of salvation and makes that step of faith and commitment, the mysteries are often just as hidden to them at that moment of new birth as when it was hidden in ages past. Besides the parables about the talents and the pounds, chapter 1 briefly mentions three other parables. It mentions the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:3-9). It mentions the woman who searched her house for the lost coin (Luke 15:8). And it mentions the man who found the buried treasure in a field (Matthew 13:44).

4. What does the term “exchangers” refer to?

5. How does the sower and the seed, the lost coin and the buried treasure in the field fit in with the concept of stewardship, mysteries and a new believer in Christ?