

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

### CHAPTER 2 - WHAT IS A MYSTERY?

*“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith . . . .”*

– Romans 16:25-26

An amazing twenty-seven times the writers of the New Testament use the Greek word *mysterion* that is translated into the English word “mystery” or “mysteries”. *Strong’s Concordance* says the word is “from a derivative of *muo* meaning to shut the mouth.” *Strong’s Concordance* continues to say that it carries a connotation of “a secret or mystery . . . a hidden thing, something that is unknown or never spoken, uttered, or have been revealed”. So, Paul is referring to believers as overseers of things that had been kept a secret, but now have been revealed; and, Paul tells us these mysteries have been “*made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*”.

Paul quotes the passage from Isaiah 64:4 as he tells the believer that God is revealing to us the things that were hidden even to the Old Testament writers like Isaiah. Things that have been kept secret since the world began have been hand-delivered to the believer, being written down in the pages of the New Testament for us to know and become stewards of. We have been made stewards of revealed mysteries that even Isaiah did not know about.

The author makes a statement that if the believer can understand what God is truly trying to do through the Church, we could then believe why Jesus declared the following statement in Matthew 11:11: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding *he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*”

### **Questions, Discussions and Notes**

1. Who were these mysteries kept secret from?
2. Who are these mysteries now being revealed to and for what purpose are they being revealed?
3. Do you feel that a prophet had to understand everything that God gave him to write about in order to write it down?
4. John the Baptist was recorded in the Gospels of the New Testament. Do you think he fell under the Old Testament law or under the New Testament grace? Explain your answer.
5. John the Baptist ministered and died before the blood of Jesus was shed. Jesus’ statement seems to indicate that the New Testament believer can be greater than John. Why do you think Jesus expects someone least in the kingdom of God could be greater than John?

The root word of ignorant is the word *ignore* and comes from a Latin word. People usually ignore something because something else takes precedence in their time or attention. If a believer is ignoring the Word of God because they are being distracted by entertainment, sports, sin, or even simply overwhelmed by the cares of this world, then ignorance of the Word and of the mysteries entrusted into their care will result.

Mysteries which have been kept secret since the world began have now been placed within our care. The revealed mysteries are the greatest treasures that the Church carries to reach a lost and dying world. This treasure of knowledge is what we will be held accountable for as stewards.

6. When the author talks about the distractions of this world taking precedence in people's time and attention, he uses a phrase that aptly describes this type of believer. What did he call believers who have become ignorant of the mysteries of the Word of God because of the things of this world.
7. Do you think that a distracted believer that does not know what the master left unto him would fall under the same category as a servant that hid the talents until the master returned? Explain your answer.
8. List some of the major things of this world that seem to distract people from learning more about the mysteries that God has revealed to the church.