



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 24
Issue 592

The Puzzle

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Every piece is different. No two are alike. Each has its own uniquely crafted shape, color and shade combination. All of the pieces lying in a pile look so confusing, as if there were no rhyme or reason to any of them. Seemingly, they are only a heap of random pieces without any design or purpose.



Every preference, every like, every fondness and every partiality; *all* are influencing, impressing, prompting, molding, plying and shaping us toward our ultimate place in Father's plan, where all that makes us who and what we are finds its fulfillment – on the deepest, most intimate, personal and individual level.

That is, until one gets a glimpse of the puzzle box. The picture on its cover is all that it takes to remedy any confusion. Now granted, we may not yet know how all of the individual pieces fit together, but we can clearly see from the box cover that they do indeed all fit together into one single, grandly prearranged picture. There is purpose in it all, after all.

When Father brings us to this place for which we are being made, we will fully *recognize* it. It will be the culmination of all that we have ever wanted or desired – all that Father has ever molded into us to want and long for – all that makes us *His* unique self.

We all are like the individual pieces of an elaborate puzzle, of precision craftsmanship. Whether we recognize it or not has absolutely no bearing on this reality. Each of our lives has been uniquely shaped and colored with meticulous care for an exclusive place in the puzzle. Though, for now, we may feel quite *out of place*, without purpose or design, nonetheless there is coming a day when all shall be placed into perfect position in the framework of the puzzle.

So suited to perfection is this place that we will intrinsically know that it is *His* place uniquely designed for us – and us for it. It will leave nothing ever built into us unfulfilled. We will *immediately* know this place – for we will finally be “home.”

All of us are designed to go somewhere. Father is preparing us to live out our distinct individuality in the consummation; He is preparing us for that place that will, in the end, fulfill all of the definitive dreams of who He is in the process of making us to be.

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) fittingly wrote:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. *If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.* If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably
(see PUZZLE, page 5141)

Every situation, every circumstance and every trial; every desire, every longing, every aspiration, every passion and every dream; every predisposition, ev-

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The Revelation of the “Mystery”

by — Adlai Loudy (1893-1984)

Acts 28:17-28 – Ephesians 3:1-12 – Colossians 1:24-29

Introduction

There are certain facts and truths which must be recognized and held clearly in mind if we are to grasp with understanding the “*revelation of the mystery*” or secret, and enter into the full heart realization of the transcendent spiritual blessings of the untraceable riches of Christ which it is designed to bring to the believing from among the nations today.

A. That Israel, the Circumcision in flesh, made by hands (Genesis 17:7-14; Ephesians 2:11), as a royal priesthood (Exodus 19:5,6; I Peter 2:9), and *their hope* (the Kingdom), took preeminence *from Pentecost to Acts 28:28* (Acts 3:22-26; 13:46; 18:4-6; 28:20).

B. That, during “*that era*” (Pentecost to Acts 28:28), those believing from among the nations – proselytes of righteousness, as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39), and proselytes of the gate, of the status of Cornelius (Acts 10) – were dependent on the “*priestly*” nation of Israel “*for salvation*” (John 4:22; Acts 11:13-14; Isaiah 49:5-6; Zechariah 8:23), and subject, subordinate and subservient to them in all things (Isaiah 2:2-5; 14:1-2; 56:1-8; 60:10-12; 61:5-6). Even those among the nations who received Paul’s evangel – justification – and, in one spirit, were baptized into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13, 27), were, nevertheless, subject to the *priestly prerogative* of Israel, *guests* of their promise covenants, and *their debtors* (Ephesians 2:11-12; Romans 15:27).

C. That the kingdom was divinely set in abeyance at Acts 28:25-28, and became a *future prospect, awaiting the return of the King*, is unmistakably confirmed by the following prophetic Scriptures (Luke 19:11-27; Daniel 7:13-14; II Peter 1:11; Revelation 1:7; 11:15; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

D. That the kingdom door was *locked* with Acts



28:25-28, is further confirmed by the fact that the *evidential “signs,”* which accompanied the heralding of the *Kingdom gospel*, and by which the *Lord confirmed the Word*, and *believers* partook of “*the powers of the future eon*” during *that era* – 30 to 61 A.D. – (Mark 16:17-18, 20; Acts 4:30; 5:12-16; 19:10-28; 28:3-7; Hebrews 6:5-6) are subsequently *significantly absent*.

E. That, with the writing of Ephesians and Colossians, the *priestly regency* of Israel *as the channel of salvation to the nations* (Genesis 22:15-18; Isaiah 49:5-6; 61:5-6; Zechariah 8:23; John 4:22; Acts 3:25; 11:13-14), was “*cast away*,” “*spoiled*” or *stripped off* (Romans 11:15; Colossians 2:14-15). Even Paul was *imprisoned* so that he could no longer “*act as a priest of the evangel of God among the nations*” (Romans 15:16; Ephesians 3:1-3).

F. That the “*casting away*” of Israel (61 A.D.) was the *conciliation of the world* (Romans 11:15; Acts 28:25-28), and since then, the believing among the nations, with a remnant according to the choice of grace out of Israel (Romans 11:5), are *now reconciled together in one body to God* (Ephesians 2:13-18).

G. That, *with the revelation of the Secret*, God’s wrath or indignation was withdrawn and men are not subject to the Providential judgments of the Pentecostal administration during the present Secret administration.

I. The Divine “Mysteries” or Secrets

1. The word “*mystery*” in our Bible is translated from the Greek word *musteerion*, and denotes a previously hidden or concealed truth, a *divine secret*, which is now revealed or made known.

A. The Scriptures reveal twelve “*mysteries*” or secrets in God’s purpose of the eons, which we

list according to the order in which they are given in the divine records:

- (1) The secrets of the kingdom (Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).
- (2) The secret of the duration of Israel's blindness (Romans 11:25).
- (3) The secret of the evangel: *the conciliation* (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 1:26-27).
- (4) The secret of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:51).
- (5) The secret of the Christ (Ephesians 1:9; 3:4; Colossians 4:3).
- (6) *The Secret* and its administration (Ephesians 3:3, 9; Colossians 1:26).
- (7) The secret of marriage (Ephesians 5:32).
- (8) The secret of lawlessness (II Thessalonians 2:7).
- (9) The secret of devoutness (godliness) (I Timothy 3:16).
- (10) The secret of the seven stars (Revelation

1:20).

(11) The secret of God (Revelation 10:7).

(12) The secret of Babylon (Revelation 17:5, 7).

B. In this study we are particularly concerned with the *sixth* in order of the divine "mysteries" – *The Secret* and its administration.

II. Time of Revelation.

1. The *time* of the *revelation* of the Secret and its administration is made clearly evident by the following considerations:

A. First, the internal evidence of the Ephesian and Colossian epistles attest to the fact that they were written *soon after the last recorded public witness* of the Kingdom of God and the Messiahship of Jesus to *representatives* of the nation of Israel, in Rome, spring of 61 A.D., when their "*casting away*" was terminated by the declaration of Isaiah 6, as recorded in Acts 28:17-28.

B. Second, the *repeated* use of the adverb of time, "*now*," in these epistles concerning the *revelation of the Secret*, the joint spiritual blessings for the saints, and *the Secret Administration* in which they are to be *dispensed* and *enjoyed*, unmistakably mark off these truths, with special, divine ►

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emphasis, from *that era* prior to 61 A.D. (Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:3-5, 8-10; Colossians 1:21-22, 24-26).

III. What Is the Secret?

1. The Secret and its threefold wealth of untraceable riches of Christ *for the nations* is divinely *itemized* and *explained for us* in Ephesians 3:6, as follows:

IN SPIRIT, the nations are to be,

joint enjoyers of an allotment, and a

joint body, and

joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.

2. These Threefold Blessings are IN SPIRIT.

It is preeminently important that we grasp with heart recognition that the *three itemized blessings of the Secret* are IN SPIRIT, not in flesh (Ephesians 1:3,13; 2:5-6, 18), and are concerned with *joint* relationship: God-ward, Christ-ward and man-ward.

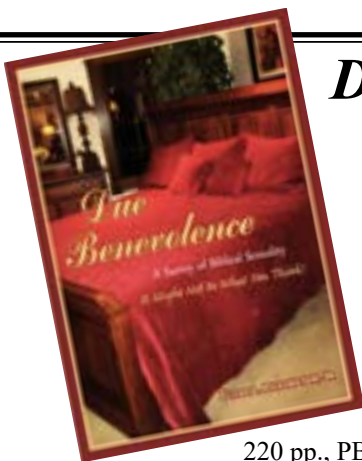
A. Joint-allottees: God-ward

The first item of the Secret – *joint*-allottees – reveals the God-ward relationship of our blessing. In *that era*, prior to the *revelation* of the Secret, Israel, the Circumcision in FLESH, made by hands

(Genesis 17:7-14; Ephesians 2:11), was *God’s people* (Exodus 3:7, 10; 4:22; Isaiah 52:4; Matthew 2:6; Luke 7:16; Romans 11:1-2), and by *covenants* and *family relationship* Jehovah was *their God* and *not of the nations* (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:7-8, 31-38; Amos 3:1-2; Acts 13:16-19). *Those believing among the nations*, in *that era*, worshipped Him as Israel’s God – the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And, though they enjoyed an allotment (Romans 8:17), and had much blessing *with His people* (Romans 15:8-12, 16, 27), yet, *in flesh* they had *no hope* and were *without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12). But *now*, with the *revelation of the Secret*, a *new family relationship* has been *created*, in which, believing nations and a remnant according to the choice of grace out of Israel (Romans 11:5), IN SPIRIT become *joint* enjoyers of an allotment blessed with every *spiritual blessing among the celestials* (Ephesians 1:3-14). Hence, the believing among the nations are no longer without God, but are members of God’s family (Ephesians 2:19).

B. Joint-Body: Christ-ward

The second part of *the Secret* – the *joint*-Body – makes known the Christ-ward connection of our blessing. In *that era* before Ephesians was written, Israel, the Circumcision in FLESH, made by hands (Genesis 17:7-14; Ephesians 2:11), had Christ *according to the flesh* (Matthew 2:2, 6; 27:37; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 9:4-5; (see *MYSTERY*, page 5142)



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PUZZLE (continued from front page)

earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage.¹

This understanding of Father and His plan, and our perfect place in it, was also echoed with great discernment many years ago by A.P. Adams (1847-1925):

God has a definite purpose in the creation of *everything* – a definite end in view – and that end is certain to be reached. In other words, every creature ultimately fulfills the purpose of the Creator in its creation. For us to suppose otherwise would be to suppose a failure on the part of the Creator, which is unthinkable. The believer's attitude toward God then might be thus expressed:

God has created me for a definite purpose. That purpose I shall ultimately fulfill in His economy. It is a wise and good purpose, one with which I should be perfectly satisfied and contented if I only understood it all. Toward that end I am continually moving. All things tend to advance me in that one direction, and I shall surely arrive. I shall surely fulfill the purpose of my creation.

It is a great satisfaction and pleasure to think of our relationship to God in this light; for God has something in His mind to make of me, and I shall

surely become that something. Furthermore, since God is wise and good, that something will please and satisfy me perfectly. When I reach the place for which God created me, and for which He has fitted me, then I shall have no regrets that it is not another place. I shall realize that it is *my* place and shall be *satisfied*, perfectly satisfied, with the accomplishment of the ever blessed and good will of God *in me*.

I am a seed, ultimately destined to a certain result. The seed may pass through many adversities in reaching that result, like the seed in the hand of an Egyptian mummy lying dormant for a thousand years, but still its end is fixed, and it will reach that end, and none other.

I may be disappointed many times in failing to be what I would *like* to be, and what I *imagine* I might have been, and so my experience will correspond to the poet's words, "Of all sad words by tongue or pen, The saddest are these – it might have been."² Even this experience is a part of my training, and by it I am continually being advanced toward what, in the providence of God, *I am to be*.

Thus may the trusting child *rest in God* both for himself and for the *whole creation*, and with the utmost confidence he may commit all of his interests to Him "*as unto a faithful Creator*" (I Peter 4:19).³ ■

1. An abridged excerpt from C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, chapter 20, "Hope."

2. *Maud Miller*, John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892).

3. An abridged excerpt from Arthur P. Adams' excellent work, *The Purposes of God and the True Basis of Redemption* (see order form).



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MYSTERY (continued from page 5140)

15:8). Believers among the nations during *that era*, though in one spirit, were baptized into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13, 27), nevertheless, *in flesh*, were *apart from Christ* (Ephesians 2:12; Matthew 15:21-28; Acts 21:27-29). Yet *now* since the *revelation* of the Secret, believing among the nations, with a remnant according to the choice of grace out of Israel (Romans 11:5), are made a *new humanity* (Ephesians 2:13-18), and *IN SPIRIT* become the *joint-Body of Christ* (Ephesians 3:6), vivified together (2:5), roused together (:6), and seated together among the celestials in Christ Jesus (1:20-2:10).

C. Joint-partakers: Man-ward

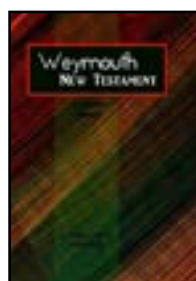
The portion of the “*mystery*” – *joint-partakers* – is concerned with the *man-ward* participation of blessing. Before 61 A.D. and the *revelation* of the Secret, Israel, the Circumcision in *FLESH*, made by hands (Genesis 17:7-14; Ephesians 2:11), had their *earthly* commonwealth and were sons of the promise covenants (Exodus 19:5-6; Acts 3:25; Romans 9:4-5), while the believing among the nations were alienated from their citizenship and partook of their promise covenants as *guests*, and consequently, were *their debtors* (Romans 15:27; Ephesians 2:12). Yet *NOW*, since the writing of

Ephesians and the *revelation* of the Secret, there is a *new citizenship, in the heavens* (Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 3:20), in which, the believing among the nations, with a remnant according to the choice of grace out of Israel (Romans 11:5), *IN SPIRIT* become *joint-partakers* of the promise in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:6).

Consequently, the believing among the nations are no longer *guests*, but are *fellow-citizens* of the saints (Ephesians 2:11-22).

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 31 (1940)
(abridged & edited)

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This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "*preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past*" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:

- total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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