

Heirs of God or joint-heirs with Christ?

Sanctified Works in the Dispensation of Grace

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A CROWN FOR THE SANCTIFIED: HEIRS OF GOD OR JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST?

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"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to his saints:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." -THE APOSTLE PAUL
Colossians 1:25-28*

PREFACE

The following is written to scripturally expound on the doctrinal issue of sanctification and works of sanctification as they pertain to the Church the Body of Christ within the *dispensation of God's grace*.¹

1st Corinthians 3 provides the frame of reference in which this is presented. In this passage of scripture, our apostle Paul states the following concerning the judgment seat of Christ:

❖ v 09: *"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

v 10: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*"

v 11: *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

v 12: *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

v 13: *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

v 14: *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

v 15: *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."* - 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

This passage of scripture contains several important points that deserve our attention:

- The context here concerns the Judgment Seat of Christ where works of service done by the Church the Body of Christ² will be judged.

¹ The dispensation of grace is biblically cited in Ephesians 3, Col 1:25, 1st Cor 9:17 KJV

² The title "The Church the Body of Christ" is a biblical reference to Col 1:24, Eph 1:22-23, Eph 5:23, 1 Cor 12:18. This title is used to scripturally distinguish the church within the dispensation of grace from the assemblies in the prophetic kingdom program of Israel.

- The sanctified life is designed to operate on a foundational basis of doctrine which progressively builds one's understanding of Jesus Christ (verse 11).
- There is a clear warning to build one's understanding upon the *correct* foundation of Jesus Christ lest the believer's work be destroyed and suffer loss of reward (verse 10, verse 15).
- Paul defines that *correct foundation* to be that which he alone has doctrinally laid as the appointed apostle to the dispensation of God's grace (verse 10).

The underlying point behind this passage concerns *how* Jesus Christ is *doctrinally presented* in the scripture. Whereas Jesus Christ is the focus of the entire Bible, it is only in the Pauline epistles in which Christ is presented *according to the mystery gospel* of God's grace. This is the doctrinal foundation in which Paul warns us to be building upon.

- ❖ *"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 is now made manifest..." - Romans 16:25*
- ❖ *"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." - Romans 2:16*
- ❖ *"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel!" - 2nd Timothy 2:8*

Just as God had ordained Moses to lay the foundation of law for the nation of Israel, so too has Christ ordained Paul to be the doctrinal pattern of authority for the Church the Body of Christ to follow today.

- ❖ *"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." - 1st Timothy 1:16*

The fact is, all of the Bible has been provided for the benefit of our learning, (Romans 15:4, 2nd Timothy 3:16), but only the 13 books of Paul's epistles comprise the doctrinal basis by which God intends for us to pattern our thinking today. What was Paul first in? He was the first of a newly created agency: the Church the Body of Christ.

The Church the Body of Christ has been created as something that was not previously revealed in scripture prior to Acts chapter 9. It has been created for an entirely different vocation and purpose than what God has ordained for the nation of Israel. Likewise, God has furnished His new creation with specific doctrine (Romans -Philemon) for the purpose of perfecting the Church Body with a complete understanding of Christ's mind. The scripture collectively calls this doctrine "*the mystery*".

While a saint needs only to trust the blood of Christ to be justified (eternal security with God), his sanctification process is entirely predicated upon his/her knowledge of the mystery. As the word of God is designed to effectually *worketh in us that believe* (this being toward our spiritual growth; 1st Thessalonians 2:13), it also necessitates that we first correctly understand what God is saying. This will never be accomplished so long as the saint continues to amalgamate Paul's doctrine with Israel's kingdom prophecy. Doing so, takes that which is designed to be effectual and renders it ineffectual. Hence, God exhorts us in 2nd Timothy in *how* we should study His word:

- ❖ *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* - 2nd Timothy 2:15

We are to study the Bible by *rightly dividing* it according to that which pertains to Israel (prophecy) and that which pertains to the Church the Body of Christ (mystery). These are distinctions of context which God Himself has placed within the scripture. In this respect, it should also be pointed out that the process of studying does not simply mean reading. It means comparing and contrasting what is written: in verse to verse, chapter to chapter, book to book, and dispensation against dispensation. As 1st Corinthians 2:13 declares, we are taught the Bible through the Holy Spirit by "*comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*"

WORKMAN APPROVED UNTO GOD

- ❖ *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* - 2nd Timothy 2:15

Consider what 2nd Timothy 2:15 is stating concerning our sanctification. There is a right and a wrong way to study the Bible. As a result, our understanding of what God has written will either be correct or incorrect. As such, there are also those in the body who will either be ashamed or unashamed, approved or disapproved unto God. As we shall see, it is a correct understanding of God's word which qualifies us to receive reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

- ❖ *"For 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 done, whether it be good or bad."* - 2nd Corinthians 5:10

Therein lies the issue at hand: Have we been made *qualified* to serve the Lord as *workman* in the appropriate manner in which He has ordained? We intuitively understand this principle as we apply it every day toward the secular world. A physician is not qualified to practice medicine simply because he has read a large number of medical books; he is deemed qualified because he has demonstrated proficiency (according to an established standard) in what he has studied.

Likewise, the sanctification process is about having our thinking constructed and conformed into resonate harmony with the mind of Christ.

- ❖ *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." - 1st Corinthians 2:16*

We are His body, He is our mind. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. The mystery doctrine of Romans-Philemon is our curriculum. The prophetic program of scripture is our ancillary study. The judgment seat of Christ is our proficiency examination. The heavenly places are the vocation for which we are being trained to work.

Sanctification is all about *qualification* and it is our qualification which begets our eternal inheritance.

- ❖ *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." - The apostle Paul, Acts 20:32*

TWO KINDS OF INHERITANCE: HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST (THE CONDITIONAL "IF" OF SUFFERING)

- ❖ *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." - Romans 8:16-17*

If you read this verse carefully, you will note that there are actually two separate types of eternal inheritance that are being identified: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. In other words, one is an inheritance given to all that are justified, and the other is an inheritance which is given *only* to those who are sanctified.

Everyone in the Church the Body of Christ is an heir of God. This is to say that all in the Church the Body of Christ are recipient heirs of eternal life in heaven:

- ❖ *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". - Galatians 3:29*

However, not everyone in the Church the Body of Christ will be declared a joint-heir with Christ. The reason being that joint-heirship is very much conditional, as the words "*If so be*" would attest.

What does it mean to suffer with Christ (*If so be that we suffer with him*)? How can we define the suffering which is spoken of here?

There is a tendency that exists among the church today to view Christian suffering in vague and generalized terms. The common view is that *anyone* who believes in Christ is also, by

default, suffering *for Christ*. While there is a very real suffering that comes from professing faith in Christ, this is not the type of suffering that Romans 8:17 refers to.

To this point, I submit for your consideration that the *suffering* with Christ referred to here, speaks of a special kind of suffering that is inherent to the Pauline doctrine itself. This is to say, that this *suffering* is unique and exclusively appointed to saints who stand steadfast in a rightly divided paradigm of scripture. This is because, it is only in rightly dividing the word that the saint is illuminated to the distinctiveness of Paul's mystery and it is ONLY through the doctrinal comprehension of that mystery that true and effectual sanctification of the believer is produced!

Christ begins our sanctification process by first *perfecting* our thinking through His Word; This first step is entirely dependent upon our comprehension of the mystery:

- ❖ *"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:" - 1 Corinthians 2:6-7*

Satan is very much aware of the essential role that the mystery plays in the sanctification process of the saint. Satan is also very much aware that the wisdom of the mystery contains the key to the saint's glorification with Christ (This will be talked about later in the paper). For this reason, Satan has devoted the past two thousand years to engineering and to enforcing a convoluted strategy to keep it obscured from the eyes of the Church the Body of Christ. None the less, the light of God's Word is not abated. Both history and scripture are replete with examples of those who have come to discern the mystery despite Satan's best scheming. For those who have discerned, or even more so, for those who will boldly proclaim such insight, Satan reserves the affliction of *suffering* as a deterrent to subdue their enthusiasm.

Consider this:

- ❖ *"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." - 2 Timothy 2:11-13*

As 2nd Timothy 2:12 suggests, there will be those in the Church the Body of Christ who deny Christ, and likewise, will also be denied *by* Christ. Of course, the context here speaks not of losing one's salvation (as verse 13 attests) but rather of one's inheritance being denied. Paul is warning us here that the inheritance and honor of reigning in eternity as joint-heirs with Christ, will not be granted to everyone in the Church the Body of Christ. Such a statement should not be taken lightly!

In this respect, it must be understood what specifically is being conveyed by joint-heirship with Christ. What exactly is the inheritance that we are being offered to partake in? Ephesians chapter 1 provides us insight:

- ❖ *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and the revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

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." -

Ephesians 1:17-23

Christ is to be the recipient heir of Heaven and Earth. The Church the Body of Christ is His inheritance in the heavenly places. He has invited us to reign in that glory with Him. As mentioned, this requires us to be qualified to perform that function. In order to be qualified to reign, we must first be able to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). We accomplish this by studying; "study to shew thyself approved unto God..." (2nd Timothy 2:15).

Yet, not only must we study, we must be willing to suffer with Him in accordance with what we have learned in our study (that point will be elucidated later in this posit).

"...If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." - Romans 8:17

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him, if we deny him, he will also deny us." - 2nd Timothy 2:12

It behooves us then to ask ourselves: how *does* one deny Christ? Is it by failing to speak up in sharing the gospel of God's grace in the company of those whom we know need salvation? Or perhaps it's by opting to stay home and catch up on sleep instead of attending that 9 AM worship service? Maybe it's in indulging oneself in a sinful act that he/she had promised the Lord that they would repent of? How *exactly* does one deny Christ? The answer may surprise you:

- ❖ *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." - Titus 1:16*

We deny Christ when we place our service *before* our doctrinal understanding!

Within Titus 1:16 you will see that there are two different types of works that are mentioned: works that Christ considers abominable and disobedient and works that Christ considers good and befitting for a sanctified reward. How can we practically discern the difference between these works? To that question, the epistle of Titus also provides clarity:

- ❖ *"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things **shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness**, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed....." - Titus 2:7-8*

Shewing thyself a pattern unto good works in doctrine? Does this not bear similarity to what is said concerning our apostle's pattern in 1st Timothy 1:16?

- ❖ *"...that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." - 1st Timothy 1:16*

The apostle Paul has defined for us here what Christ considers to be the manifold encompassment of all *good works* that He counts as acceptable and pleasing in this dispensation. It is in possessing an understanding of *sound doctrine*, uncorrupted, that establishes the basis by which we please the Lord. *Good works* are qualified by *good doctrine*.

Paul also provides us with a working definition of what exactly sound doctrine is in 1st Timothy chapter one:

- ❖ *".....and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; **According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.**" -1st Timothy 1:10-11*

As *sound doctrine* is defined for us today as being that which is in accordance to the (mystery) gospel that was committed to Paul's trust, it concurs with that which Paul had written concerning the judgment seat of Christ in 1st Corinthians chapter 3:

- ❖ *"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. **According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.**" - 1st Corinthians 3:9-10*

Jesus Christ is the foundation by which we are built, but it is Jesus Christ presented according to the mystery!

In light of this principle, we can now further scripturally amplify the issue of suffering as referenced in Romans 8:17.

Look at how Paul links suffering directly to the mystery gospel committed to his trust:

- ❖ *"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."* - 2nd Timothy 2:7-9

Notice that Paul doesn't attribute his suffering to preaching "the gospel" (as though it were the same prophetic gospel that Peter preached). Rather, he directly connects his suffering to the distinct mystery gospel of grace that Jesus Christ had exclusively revealed to him. He's even accused of being an "evil doer" for presenting what Christ had entrusted him with!

- ❖ *"And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased."* - Galatians 5:11

Again, as seen in this passage of Galatians, Paul is distinguishing his gospel as being separate from the gospel of the circumcision (Galatians 2:7). It is also in this gospel distinction that he attributes the reason for his suffering.

In Acts chapter 9 the account is recorded in which Christ first appeared unto Paul for the purpose of revealing the mystery. Notice what Christ says to Ananias concerning the purpose of Paul's chosen apostleship:

- ❖ *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* - Acts 9:15-16

As we have already discussed, 1st Timothy 1:16 tells us that Paul (as our apostle) has been provided to us as a "*pattern to them which should hereafter believe...*". As Paul was appointed to suffer for Christ through the mystery doctrine, we too, through conforming to his pattern are also appointed to suffer for it:

- ❖ *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"* - Philippians 1:29
- ❖ *"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured....." Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* - 2nd Timothy 3:10-12

How do we live *Godly in Christ Jesus* today? Through patterning our thinking exclusively in accordance to Paul's doctrine (*a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*). -1st Timothy 1:16)

- ❖ *"For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" - 2nd Corinthians 4:15-17

The context of "*light affliction*" is specifically elucidated in verses 8-14 of 2nd Corinthians. If you read carefully from the beginning of chapter 4 you will note that Paul is speaking of the suffering and tribulation that he and his fellow laborers experienced in proclaiming the mystery gospel. In verse 9 he states that he (and his fellow laborers) were "*persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed*". In verse 13 he connects his persecution to his proclamation of this gospel: "*I believed, and therefore have spoken; we also believe and therefore speak*". Notice here, that Paul links his proclamation of the mystery to our proclamation of the mystery. Again, this illustrates the relationship of Paul's apostolic pattern for the Church the Body of Christ.

Truly, Paul endured this suffering for our sakes, so that we might receive the doctrine and thus be edified in our understanding of the mystery. He clearly states this in verse 15: "*For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God*". Therefore, we too have the opportunity to redound (or reverberate) God's glory through our willingness to suffer for this message; hence, Paul's suffering establishes a pattern for us to follow.

As 2nd Corinthians 4:17 declares, our "*light affliction*" (our suffering for the mystery gospel), "*worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*". The "*weight of glory*" cited here directly corresponds to the *glory* referenced in Romans 8:17-18:

❖ "*...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." - Romans 8:17-18*

Do you see the connection and similarity here to the "*light affliction*" and "*eternal weight of glory*" of 2nd Corinthians 4:17 to the "*sufferings*" and "*glory*" of Romans 8:17-18? **They both relate in context to suffering for the mystery gospel revealed to Paul.**

While not all of us in the Church the Body of Christ will suffer the magnitude of persecution which Paul endured for the sake of the mystery, we will all suffer in some degree for this message. Anyone who has come into an understanding of right division and has tried to share that knowledge with brothers and sisters of the denominational persuasion knows exactly what I'm talking about here!

This point raises some very reasonable questions: How can it be that Paul so clearly defines his gospel as being differentiated from the kingdom gospel of Israel, yet so few churches today teach it this way? After all, if there be any truth to this, wouldn't the majority of Bible scholars corroborate this assertion? The majority of churches can't all be wrong can they?

The answer to these questions are three-fold:

First, it is erroneous to presume that truth is *always* found within the consensus of the majority. 2nd Corinthians 5:7 tells us that we are to "*walk by faith not by sight*". This means we are to walk by faith according to the doctrines declared in Paul's epistles alone, irrespective of what esteemed "scholars" of Christian hegemony may assert to the contrary. Paul plainly declares this point in 1st Corinthians 4:

❖ "*I write these things not to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*" - 1st Corinthians 4:14-16

Just as in Paul's day, we too have "*10,000 instructors*" preaching Jesus Christ, yet we have so very few who teach Christ according to the mystery. Why is it that Paul would be *warning* and *beseeching* the Church the Body of Christ to follow him? Think of the foundation in which he warns us to take heed to in 1st Corinthians 3:10. Paul gives that warning precisely for the reason that there are *10,000 instructors* preaching Christ! Think about this: the vast majority of Christian teachers of his time (just like today), are all preaching Christ according to the wrong foundation!

Secondly, modern Bible translations have played a significant role in obscuring the mystery from the majority of saints today. Given that most Protestant assemblies do acknowledge scripture as being the sole preeminent authority over the church, this naturally evokes a question as to which translation (or translations) are worthy of being called such. Contrary to the assertion of religious academia (which continually lauds the modern English variants as being unequivocally consistent in doctrine with the King James Version), this claim is not substantiated in comparative study of the two (I say *two* because ALL modern translations are derived from the same manuscript source which came from Alexandria Egypt).

While the doctrinal differences existing between the King James and the contemporary versions have been demonstrated in volume by others, I wish to exemplify this fact specifically as it pertains to our discussion of the mystery. A comparative look at these versus will reveal how the Alexandrian variety have systematically destroyed the distinctiveness of Paul's apostleship and gospel. (I've listed the KJV first with emphasis to show where the doctrinal changes occur).

❖ "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." -1st Timothy 1:16 (KJV)

"But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life." -1st Timothy 1:16 (NIV)

What happened to the words "*first*" and "*hereafter*"? These omissions are not trivial, they completely obliterate what is being conveyed in this verse!

- ❖ { "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;" -Galatians 2:7 (KJV)
- { "On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised..."
-Galatians 2:7 (ESV)

As can be seen here, the prepositional word "of" has been replaced with "to"; this small change attenuates this verse by removing the distinctive identities of the two gospels. Where the KJV clearly differentiates the two types of gospels (mystery gospel vs. prophetic Jewish kingdom gospel), the modern translations recast this verse to imply that it was one singular gospel presented to two different audiences.

- ❖ { "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office;" -Romans 11:13 -(KJV)
- { "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry" -Romans 11:13 (ESV)

Here, the definite article "the" has been replaced with an indefinite article "an"; as a result, the modern versions corroborate their suggested notion of "one gospel" by also diminishing the exclusive apostolic authority of Paul over the Church the Body of Christ. Was Paul just another apostle appointed to help out Peter, or was he the exclusively appointed apostle to preside over the dispensation of grace?

Hopefully, you can begin to see a pattern here where the modern translations curiously blend the scriptural distinctions between mystery and prophecy (this pattern extends far beyond the few verses which I have provided). Therefore, I assert for your consideration that these deviations from the majority text (of which the King James has been translated), are not coincidental; rather, they exhibit the insidious workmanship of Satan's policy of evil to subvert God's written authority. At the very least, it can be said that these examples illustrate the failure of modern versions to convey vital information that would otherwise illuminate what Christ is doing through Paul in our present dispensation of grace. That alone is reason enough to avoid them!

Thirdly (and finally), the vast majority of churches today do not teach, nor do they even recognize the distinctiveness of the mystery gospel; this is because the majority of the church, even during Paul's lifetime, had already fallen into apostasy. What would begin regionally in Asia (modern day Turkey) would continue to spread like wildfire. As a result, the predominant church would be moved away from teaching the distinguishing attributes of the mystery gospel, in favor of the more hybridized or "Judaized" gospel that we hear from the pulpit today.

The following scriptures document this downfall of the church into apostasy:

In 1st Timothy Paul warns:

- ❖ *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;..." - 1st Timothy 4:1*

In 2nd Timothy Paul reports:

- ❖ *"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me...." - 2nd Timothy 1:15*

The ink had hardly dried on the pages of 1st Timothy before Satan had successfully turned the assemblies in Asia toward apostasy! Yet, this would only mark the beginning of Satan's campaign against the Church the Body of Christ. Paul gives prophetic warning of just how far Satan's clandestine operation would reach:

- ❖ *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." - 2nd Timothy 4:3-4*

Why is it that churches today read this scripture (2nd Tim 4:3), and always assume that it speaks of a *future* event or of *another* assembly which has unwittingly been beguiled by Satan's deception? It couldn't possibly apply to them, right? On the contrary, apostasy *is alive and well* in the majority church today. **In fact, apostasy has become the standard by which all Biblical teaching is measured!**

As a result, Satan has used this faux standard as a means to apply leverage against the Church the Body of Christ. For any who dare to stand up for a rightly divided gospel, he/she is sure to be swiftly relegated into the bowels of "fringe theology". Most certainly, there is a *suffering* today that is still very much inherent to the rightly divided gospel.

In order that no critic accuse me of imposing my own definition of what defines apostasy, consider the passages below in which Paul himself illuminates the definition:

- ❖ *"...and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." - 1st Timothy 1:10*

- Paul has defined here what constitutes sound doctrine for the Church the Body of Christ to follow: sound doctrine is defined exclusively as Pauline doctrine!

- ❖ *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." - Romans 16:17-18*

- ❖ *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."* - Acts 20:29-30
- ❖ *"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."* - Colossians 2:4
- ❖ *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* - Colossians 2:8
- ❖ *"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith."* - 1st Timothy 6:20-21
- ❖ *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."* - 2nd Timothy 1:13
- ❖ *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."* - 1st Timothy 4:16

- The context of salvation here (*save thyself*) is found in 1st Tim 4:1. It is salvation from apostate teaching which robs the saint of their sanctified reward. The doctrine referenced is Pauline doctrine which Paul had committed to Timothy's faithful stewardship.
- ❖ *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* - Galatians 1:8

-Accursed in this context does not mean damned to hell (compare to Romans 12:14), rather it signifies the *accursed* destruction of eternal inheritance at the judgment seat of Christ (2nd Corinthians 10:8, 1st Corinthians 3:17).
- ❖ *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."* - Titus 1:9-11

WORKMAN UNAPPROVED UNTO GOD

As all in the body shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, there will be many in that day who shall find their lifetime of work and service shamefully rejected by the Lord. Why is this? Because they built their service upon the wrong foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

They did not rightly divide the word as they had been instructed to do. Our previously discussed passage in 2nd Timothy amplifies this point:

❖ (v 11) *"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:*

(v 12) For if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will also deny us:

(v 13) If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

(v 14) Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

(v 15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - 2nd Timothy 2:11-15

I have included the additional verses of this passage with emphasis to better illustrate the connection of rightly dividing God's Word as it pertains to sanctified reward in joint-heirship with Christ. Note the following points:

- Paul links the conditional "if" of suffering to rightly dividing God's word (compare verse 12 to verse 15).
- Paul links this conditional "if" of suffering to reigning with Christ i.e. joint-heirship with Christ (compare verse 12 to Romans 8:17: "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together").
- Paul states that those who do not suffer with Christ (i.e. do not build upon the doctrines of the mystery) shall be denied by Christ (denied joint-heirship with Christ at the judgment seat). Compare verse 12 to 1st Corinthians 3:10-17.
- Yet, those denied by Christ shall still be saved into heaven: "if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful" (verse 13). This axiom is also paralleled in 1st Corinthians 3:15: "If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire". Therefore, those who deny Christ by denying the mystery will still be declared heirs of God in receiving heaven (living with Christ), but they will not be deemed joint-heirs in receiving glorification with Christ ("that we may be also glorified together"). - Romans 8:17
- Being *denied by Christ* (verse 12) is the antithesis of being *approved unto God* (verse 15) which are both connected in the context of the passage to studying and right division of God's word. Think about it!

Lastly, concerning the issue of being "*ashamed*", Paul often uses this word in connection to those in the body who have not or will not discern and suffer the truth of the mystery. They are *ashamed* because that is exactly what they will experience at the judgment seat of Christ (2nd Timothy 2:15, and Titus 2:7-8 are good examples of this). To this point, I'd like to add one more for your consideration, the following is presented to Timothy while Paul was imprisoned:

- ❖ *"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."* - 2nd Timothy 1:11-13

- Note that *suffering* here is again linked to the mystery (Paul's apostleship unto the Gentiles). In turn, Paul's suffering for the mystery is also placed in contrast to being "*ashamed*". In other words, Paul emphatically states that he will experience no shame at the judgement seat of Christ.

THE CROWN OF JOINT-HEIRSHIP (THE APPEARING OF CHRIST)

- ❖ *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."* - 1st Corinthians 9:24-25

I was recently directed to a story concerning a man who ran and won a marathon only to find himself disqualified. That man was 25 year old Scott Downard who finished the Cowtown Marathon in Fort Worth Texas in an impressive time of 2:37:53. The reason for his disqualification: he had failed to properly register for the race.

This story is very much apropos to our pursuit of a sanctified reward. To be honored at the judgment seat of Christ for our labor, we must first comply with the details concerning our eligibility to run that race (running on the proper doctrinal foundation).

- ❖ *"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."* - 2nd Tim 2:5

Likewise, in order to be honored, we must also be sure to cross the finish line. We must *finish the course* that is put before us. These are the conditions that predicate and determine our joint-inheritance.

While much has been discussed concerning the doctrinal foundation by which we are to build, it is also needful that we examine what it means to "*finish the course*" (2nd Timothy 4:7).

"Finishing the course" speaks of our faithful continuance to abide within the Pauline foundation in which we were established. In respect to this, the scripture gives us examples concerning some who had started well only to later falter i.e. abandoning the mystery (they wandered "*off course*"). The passages below speak to this point:

- ❖ "*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*" -Galatians 5:7
- ❖ "*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*" - Galatians 3:1-3

Most will recognize the context of "obeying the truth" that Paul is referring to here. The error of the church at Galatia was that they quickly found themselves bewitched by teachers who came in to undermine the mystery gospel of grace in which Paul had established them. Most today would call these subverters of antiquity "*Judaizers*"³. Our modern vernacular might call them "denominational pastors" (I say this with no intent to disparage the sincerity of such men).

- ❖ "*This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.*" - 2nd Timothy 1:15
- ❖ "*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck; Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander;*" - 1st Timothy 1:18-20

Clearly, as can be seen in the examples above, it is possible to start upon the course of sanctification only to find oneself *shipwrecked*. How can we avoid this from happening? Herein lies the absolute importance of renewing our minds daily through studying the Word (especially Romans-Philemon).

- ❖ "*Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" - Romans 12:2

³ "Judaize": To bring into conformity with Judaism. To adopt Jewish doctrine, beliefs, or customs of the Jewish religion.

Remember that Christ is in the process of building up our inner man through His word according to the mystery. We need to continually protect that building process from being corrupted and degenerated by philosophies and paradigms by which the secular world and the religious world both continually assault our minds.

Furthermore, lest we forget, the building process is exactly that: *a process*. The progressive workmanship of God ceases when our study of His word ceases. Therefore, our sanctification process in this life can be viewed as a race against a deadline of time. It behooves us then to be continually fervent in study, allowing as much doctrine to be built up in our inner man as time permits. What we allow God to build in us today will be that which we will abide in for eternity.

- ❖ *"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." - Ephesians 5:16*
- ❖ *"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." - Colossians 4:5*
- ❖ *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 3:14*

Finally, I wish to highlight another key passage of scripture that speaks concerning the crown of our sanctification. In 2nd Timothy, Paul gives his final pastoral instructions toward the end of his life; in it he states the following:

- ❖ *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing." - 2nd Timothy 4:2-8

Within this passage of scripture, there are several things which I desire to point your attention to:

- The context concerns the rise of the apostate church that Paul prophetically states will abandon his doctrine.

- Paul had finished his course (remained faithful in the mystery which Christ had revealed to him).
- Henceforth, Paul is awaiting a crown of righteousness that shall also be given to all those who love Christ's appearing.

Contrary to popular teaching, the direct context of the "*appearing*" of Christ spoken of here does not specifically refer to the rapture nor does it in any way refer to the second advent of Christ. Rather, it refers to the *appearing* where Christ had first revealed Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9. It was here that Christ first began revealing the secret of the mystery to his chosen apostle (A mystery which was "*kept secret since the world began...*" Romans 16:25). The reference to this "*appearing*" is paralleled in Paul's description of that milestone event in which he details for King Agrippa in Acts chapter 26:

❖ *"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said,*

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." - Acts 26:16

Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus marks the beginning of numerous appearances of Christ to our apostle. It is in these *appearances* that Paul would gradually learn the full doctrine of the mystery.

In addition, the *appearing* of Christ on the road to Damascus is also cited in 2nd Timothy 1:10 (I've included verse 8-11 to illustrate the connection of the appearing to the mystery doctrine).

❖ *"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." - 2nd Timothy 1:8-11

Furthermore, we can deduce that the appearing referenced in 2nd Timothy 4:8 can absolutely NOT be referring to the rapture based upon the following reasons:

- Paul cites his crown in context to finishing his course (hence a condition that is inherent to receiving this crown).

- We know that there are two inheritances for the body: one is given *unconditionally* to all who are justified and thereby declared heirs of God, the other is given *conditionally* to those who are declared joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).
- We know that *heirship* to God (Gal 3:29) is *unconditionally* awarded to all who have simply trusted the blood of Christ, *without works of any kind*.
- We know that *joint-heirship* with Christ is *conditionally* awarded exclusively to those *who are workman of study*, building upon Pauline doctrine (1st Cor 3:9-15, Romans 8:17, 2nd Tim 2:12, 2nd Tim 2:15).
- We know that *all in the Church the Body of Christ* have received eternal life, yet are still awaiting the blessed hope, the redemption of the physical body upon the day of rapture. The rapture signifies the manifestation of our eternal life in Heaven, i.e. our *heirship* to God (Romans 8:23-25, 1st Cor 15:51-53, Titus 2:13).
- We know that *some in the body* will be denied by Christ at the judgment seat of Christ (2nd Tim 2:12-13, Romans 8:17).
- As a crown signifies authority, and authority by definition distinguishes one group from another, we can therefore infer that the crown of 2nd Timothy 4:8 speaks not of *heirship* (which will be given *unconditionally* to all saints in the Church the Body of Christ upon the day of rapture) but of *joint-heirship* (which is *conditionally* given to all who follow Paul's doctrinal pattern at the judgment seat of Christ).

However, it should be mentioned that there are in fact other references of the word "*appearing*" which do contextually reference the rapture. In fact one of them is found in the first verse of 2nd Timothy 4 (I've included the last few verses of chapter 3 for context):

- ❖ *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at his appearing** and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." - 2nd Timothy 3:16-4:2*

Here we have a context where Paul is using the word "*appearing*" (in 2nd Timothy 4:1) to describe the judgment seat of Christ (which does occur immediately following the rapture). Yet, he also uses the same word in 2nd Timothy 4:8 to describe Christ's *appearing* on the road to Damascus. As such, we have the same word used, cited within the same chapter, to reference two *entirely different* points of time. Why is this?

The answer to that question is that both examples of "*appearing*" are really speaking of the same thing (the multiple doctrinal points of the mystery which first began to be revealed on the road to Damascus).

Confused yet? Think about this for a moment:

The mystery that was progressively revealed to Paul contains multiple doctrinal points which are only manifested in his apostolic epistles. We would know nothing concerning the judgment seat of Christ, the rapture, the gospel of grace apart from the law, etc., unless our apostle had recorded it for our understanding. Our apostle could have never recorded it (as God had previously kept the mystery secret in scripture), unless Christ had first appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus for the purpose of revealing it to us. Therefore, whether the appearing is cited in reference to a past event (road to Damascus) or a future event (judgment seat of Christ), they both, as parts, are encompassed within the same manifold doctrine that the scriptures *collectively* call (the mystery). As such, they both point to Christ's *appearing* on the road to Damascus where that mystery was first revealed.

A CLOSER LOOK AT SANCTIFICATION AND IT'S COMPONENTS

In 1st Thessalonians, Paul commends the congregation residing in Thessalonica for their spiritual maturity. In his opening commendation to them, Paul states some very interesting things concerning sanctification and the components by which it is comprised of:

- ❖ *"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;" - 1st Thessalonians 1:2-3*

From this passage we are able to dissect the mechanics of Sanctified works into three separate parts:

- work of faith
- labour of love
- patience of hope

These three components may sound familiar as they are also referenced in 1st Corinthians 13:13:

- ❖ *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." - 1st Corinthians 13:13*

In fact, these three components are also cited in the book of Colossians:

- ❖ "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have for the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel;" - Colossians 1:4-5

These three things comprise the "anatomy" of sanctification. They also signify the mark of spiritual maturity for the saint in the Church the Body of Christ.

1. The work of faith: speaks of our workmanship in studying the Word (to be approved unto God) and hashing it out with other saints in fellowship. We are called to be *workman* of faith who study the Word and rightly divide it (2nd Tim 2:15). "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17).

2. Labour of love: speaks of passing on the knowledge gained through our workmanship (wrought by study) so that we might serve to edify others with better understanding of the Word (especially the mystery). However, this is not exclusive to teaching, often times this labor functions in a supporting role. If the labor contributes to the ultimate purpose of edifying another's correct understanding of scripture, it falls into this category of sanctification, i.e. *labor of love*.

Romans 12:4 speaks to this point:

- ❖ "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of another." - Romans 12:4-5

3. Patience of hope: The *patience of hope* is an interesting component in that it contains both an outer veneer and a profoundly deeper aspect to its meaning. For this reason I have devoted the remainder of this section to explaining it.

In its most apparent light, the *patience of hope* simply refers to the *blessed hope* of Titus 2:13 (i.e. the rapture). The *blessed hope* is something that we all must "patiently" wait for.

Romans 8:23-25 establishes the connection of *patience* and *hope* to the rapture:

- ❖ "...even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." - Romans 8:23-25

-The reference to "saved by hope" speaks of salvation from depression and despair. "Hope" or "confidence" in God's promise of our eventual deliverance is God's antidote for our despair.

In consideration of the fact that the *blessed hope* is corporately appointed to all in the Church the Body of Christ (as heirs of God), this naturally raises a logical question: why is it cited as a distinguishing hallmark of sanctified life?

Therein lies the deeper aspect of what is conveyed in the *patience of hope*: For the joint-heir in Christ who has suffered faithfully for the truth of the mystery, the *blessed hope* of the rapture signifies something far more profound than deliverance into heaven: **it signifies the commencement of his/her glorification with Christ!** (This being the bestowment of the crown of joint-heirship at the judgment seat of Christ as cited in 2nd Timothy 4:8, 2nd Timothy 4:1 and Romans 8:17):

- ❖ "*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him , that we may be also glorified together.*" - Romans 8:17

Do you realize the magnitude of what is being stated in this verse? Are there even words fit to describe the magnitude of Christ's coming glory? If you take the time to ruminate on what is said here, it will offer some perspective as to just how glorified the joint-heir with Christ will be. Needless to say, the grace and goodness of God are far more amazing than most people realize!

Now, as we have already discussed, *suffering* for the doctrine of the mystery is directly associated with a future eternal *glory* in heaven. The verses below have again been provided to illustrate this connection:

- ❖ "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" - Romans 8:18
- ❖ "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*" - 2nd Corinthians 4:17

Glory is also directly correlated with the *mystery*, which in turn, is correlated with *hope*:

- ❖ "*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*" - 1st Corinthians 2:7
- ❖ "*Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" - 2nd Thessalonians 2:14
- ❖ "*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*" - Colossians 1:27

Just as *suffering* for the *mystery* is correlated with *glory*, so too, is the *glory* of the joint-heir's *crown* correlated with *hope*:

- ❖ "*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* - 1st Thessalonians 2:19

In effort to streamline all this, let's construct a chain of logic based on what we know:

- *Suffering* can be defined as suffering for the *mystery* (2nd Tim 2:7-9, Gal 5:11, Acts 9:15-16, Phil 1:29).
- *Suffering* is linked to *glory* (Rom 8:17-18, 2nd Cor 4:17, 2nd Tim 2:12).
- *Glory* is linked to the *mystery* (Col 1:27, 1st Cor 2:7, 2 Thess 2:14).
- *Glory* is linked to *hope* (Col 1:27).
- *Hope* is linked to a *crown* (1st Thess 2:19).
- Both *hope* and the *crown* are linked to the rapture and by proxy, to the judgment seat of Christ (1st Thess 2:19, Romans 8:23-25).

Therefore: we can conclude that the bestowment of glory that Paul ascribes to the rapture, is in context, the same glory of the crown that will be awarded to joint-heirs with Christ.

For this reason, it then makes logical sense that the "*patience of hope*" would be cited as one of three "anatomical" hallmarks of sanctified life (faith, hope, and love).

Please, do not misunderstand what I am saying here: I acknowledge the fact that all in the Church the Body of Christ will reflect a measure of God's glory in heaven. For example, Philippians 3:21 cites that our heavenly bodies will be "*fashioned like unto his glorious body*". However, this reference to glory (within its context), is *outside of* the judgment seat of Christ. Rather, I would clarify in saying that there is a difference between those in heaven who embody *attributes* of God's glory, and those who are *honorary recipients* of glorification at the judgment seat of Christ.

Based on the evidence presented thus far, we can further substantiate our premise by considering what is stated in the opening verses of Romans chapter 5 (specifically verses 2-5):

❖ (v:1) *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

(v:2) *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

(v:3) *And not only so, but **we glory in tribulations also**: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

(v:4) *And patience, experience; and experience, **hope**:*

(v:5) *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. - Romans 5:1-5*

First, note the transition that occurs between verse 1 and verse 2: whereas verse 1 declares the result of justification, verses 2 & 3 mark a brief transition into Paul's introduction of

doctrinal sanctification (this being conveyed by the wording: "By whom also we have access" in verse 2 and "And not only so" in verse 3).

Notice what is written in verse 2: We "**rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**" As evidenced by this verse, the fullness of God's glory has not yet been fulfilled. Therefore, we rejoice today in *hope*, in *patience of hope*, waiting for that coming day (the rapture) which begins the process of Christ's glorification in heaven and upon all of the Earth.

Additionally, note what is said in verse 3: "**And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also...**". Do you see how this verse conjoins our *suffering* and our *glorification* to the future day of Christ's glorification? This is illustrating joint-heirship with Christ (i.e. "*if so be that we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together*" - Romans 8:17).

Now consider the sequence listed in verses 3,4, & 5:

- ❖ "**...but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed;**"

Notice how this sequence begins with our tribulation (i.e. suffering for the mystery) and ends with our hope (i.e. *the patience of hope*). In this Paul is providing a schematic narrative of sorts which diagrams the process of sanctified life.

A paraphrase of this diagram might look like the following:

1. Satan attacks the saint who begins to walk by faith according to the precepts put forth in the mystery doctrine (*tribulation*).
2. The mystery doctrine counters the attack by effectually working *patience* within the saint.
3. The saint becomes emboldened in *experience* through continued study as the doctrine becomes increasingly operational in his thinking.
4. The resulting product of that experience is *hope* (i.e. confidence that God shall one day deliver him unto glory).

- In this sequence, we also have "*experience*" cited within the chain of the sanctification process. This corroborates my earlier discussion concerning our "qualification" to serve the Lord (pages 5&6). Qualification is always predicated by experience! Experience can be evaluated to the proportion that the mystery doctrine is correctly understood and operational in one's thinking.

Note that the latter part of Romans 5:5 identifies the value that hope provides for us: it "*maketh not ashamed*". As was previously discussed in the section titled: "*Workman Unapproved Unto God*", the reference to "shame" (or conversely one who is "*unashamed*") is commonly used by Paul in reference to the judgment seat of Christ. The verses below all speak concerning this context:

- ❖ *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - 2nd Timothy 2:15*
- ❖ *"...In doctrine showing uncorruptness,...sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed." - Titus 2:7-8*
- ❖ *"For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed." - 2nd Corinthians 10:8*

- The reference to "destruction" cited in 2nd Cor 10:8, and the reference to "condemned" in Titus 2:8, are both references to the destruction of eternal inheritance as presented in 1st Cor 3:15-17.

- ❖ *"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:
Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" - Philippians 3:17-19*

- Once again, the context of "destruction" refers to the destruction of inheritance at the judgment seat of Christ as cited in 1st Cor 3:15-17. These men whom Paul calls "enemies of the cross of Christ" (verse 18) are called such because they opposed/rejected the unique aspect of the cross (i.e. the mystery) that Paul had been appointed to teach.

- ❖ *"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour." 2nd Timothy 2:20*

-Notice the reference to "honour" and "dishonour". This another way of saying "glory" and "shame".

Therefore, based on this evidence: we can again conclude that the antithesis of "shame" (as it relates to the judgment seat of Christ) is "glory" (i.e. the glorification of joint-heirs with Christ).

In conclusion of this section, it can be summarized in saying that the "*patience of hope*" speaks directly of the "*blessed hope*" of the rapture. However, within the rapture, there is a deeper significance which also speaks of sanctification and the glory that shall be given to joint-heirs with Christ.

In function, the *patience of hope* operates as a catalyst designed to ignite and sustain the *work of faith* and the *labor of love* into action. For this reason, it provides incentive to study the Word (*work of faith*) and to share that study with others (*labor of love*). In total, these

three components function together as an interdependent system working to perfect and progress the sanctification process in the believer.

A MINISTRY UNTO MEN AND ANGELS

While much has been discussed concerning how one is sanctified, it is also needful to understand *why* God sanctifies the body. What is God's purpose in sanctification?

The obvious answer to this is so that we might be useful in serving Him. However, that answer is entirely too vague because it fails to illuminate the details of our sanctified vocation. For that matter, the question should be asked: What exactly is our vocation?

Most would answer that our vocation is to witness to the unsaved. Indeed, this is true. 2nd Corinthians 5:8 tells us that we have been given a "*ministry of reconciliation*" to the unsaved. Yet, there is more: there is a greater ministry in which God has purposed us to function.

To illustrate this, we first need to go back to Genesis 1:1: "*In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth*". There are two realms that God has created, and both were created by Christ and for Christ (Col 1:16); they both belong to Him. Yet, Satan led a rebellion in both, first causing corruption in Heaven (the 2nd Heaven we call the cosmos), then causing corruption on Earth. Both realms have been usurped by Satan and defiled by the presence of sin and both remain so to this day.

Where Genesis 1:1 introduces us to both realms of God's creation, Genesis 1:2 shifts its focus specifically upon Earth. In this, Genesis 1:2 marks a transition where the Biblical focus becomes centered upon God's plan to reclaim Earth back unto Himself through the nation of Israel. That theme continues throughout all of the old Testament, Matthew-John, and into the book of Acts (up to Acts chapter 9). It is parenthetically interrupted by Paul's mystery epistles before resuming again in Hebrews and on through the book of Revelation.

While the majority of the Bible concerns God's plan to reclaim the Earth through Israel, it is only through the revelation of the mystery by which we begin to see God's master plan to *also* restore the Heavenly realm back into righteousness. Therein, Paul's epistles introduce us to a new created agency by which God will perform that function: the Church the Body of Christ.

Hence, we begin to see our vocation a bit more clearly. It involves something we do concerning Heaven, but what exactly does that entail? We find our first clues in the book of Romans:

- ❖ "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

- ❖ *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." - Romans 8:19-21*

The Biblical use of the word *creature* describes all things (in Heaven and on Earth) which are living beings created by Christ. Naturally, this includes angels as much as it does people. They both are awaiting deliverance from the bondage of sin that has corrupted their habitation.

Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16-20 both detail that Heaven is comprised of an organized governmental structure, much like we have on Earth. There are thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, both visible and invisible to our perception. In other words, there is a stratification of varying degrees of authority in Heaven. Currently, these governmental seats are administered/held by the angelic realm (both elect and fallen). Therefore, Heaven is currently in a schismatic state. The angels who have remained loyal to God, grievously suffer the presence of Satan and his blasphemous host of minions that cohabit amongst their ranks. Yet, there is coming a day when Satan will be cast out of Heaven (Revelation 12:7-9).

Following Satan's banishment and God's subsequent judgment on Earth, Revelation 21:1 tells us that there will eventually be a new Heaven and new Earth created. This speaks not of destroying the old, but rather of restoring it. Heaven and Earth will be restored back unto the unity of Christ's dominion, as it was in the day before sin entered in.

This new Heaven and new Earth shall be given over, *or delivered* unto the administration of the sons of God. On Earth, the promised kingdom appointed to Israel shall preside in all authority and glory, in Heaven, the Church the Body of Christ shall preside. Both will be united under the federal headship of Christ the King of kings. The book of Ephesians calls this event the "*dispensation of the fullness of times.*"

- ❖ *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in Him" - Ephesians 1:10*
- ❖ *"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:" - Ephesians 2:15-16*

Where the angelic host currently occupies the governmental positions of Heaven, that vocation will one day be turned over for the sanctified Body of Christ to administer. This is what joint-heirship with Christ is all about. God the Father is inviting His children to run the Heavenly places with His beloved Son! Naturally, this honor of administration is only

awarded to those sanctified in the body who have been made qualified to reign with Christ (after all, Heaven is 1/2 part of Christ's total inheritance; we must prove ourselves worthy stewards to govern His estate).

❖ *"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

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 fullness of him that filleth all in all." - Ephesians 1:18-23

Notice how Ephesians groups the stratified positions of heaven by title (again, these positions are also detailed in Colossians 1:16). In combining these two passages, we can infer that the various governmental offices of heaven include: thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and might.

Yet, there is also a *generalized* category which is described in Ephesians as "*every name that is named*". Is it reasonable to conclude that "*every name that is named*" speaks of those in the Church the Body of Christ who have not been declared joint-heirs with Christ? They're obviously citizens of Heaven with eternal life (heirs of God) but they also seem to be left out from being given a specific title of authority (i.e. joint-heirs with Christ). I'll leave that for the reader to decide.

Regardless, we can absolutely conclude that God's purpose for our sanctification is so that we might function as reigning administrators of His beloved Son's inheritance. What an incredible honor this is indeed!

Now then, it can be said that our edification process has a direct impact and ministry to the angelic realm. Why is this? "*Because the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ...Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*" (Romans 8:19-21).

For the angels in heaven, hearing the mystery proclaimed and seeing it effectually constructed in the Church the Body of Christ, is analogous to occupied France of 1944 hearing news of the Normandy beach landings!

Listed below are two verses from Ephesians that declare the impact our sanctification process has in the Heavenly realm:

- ❖ *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." - Ephesians 6:12*
- ❖ *"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in a few words,*

Whereby, when you read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

that the Gentiles should be made fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." - Ephesians 3:1-10

What is God's ultimate purpose behind revealing the mystery? The passage above conveys two points of intention which are summarized in the last verse:

"To the intent that now UNTO the principalities and powers in Heavenly places might be known BY the church the manifold wisdom of God."

In other words, God is now *declaring* and *demonstrating* UNTO the heavenly realm (by and through the Church the Body of Christ), His ordained plan (His secret plan), to restore righteousness in Heaven. While His plan has been openly *declared* by Paul, it is *demonstrated* to the powers and principalities *through* those who are being sanctified through Pauline doctrine. Thereby, we can begin to see a much deeper, more meaningful dimension to the mystery of our dispensation. Through our understanding of the mystery, we are actually ministering the manifold wisdom of God unto angels in heaven!

This disclosure is encouraging to me; especially given the rejection that so often comes in sharing the truth of the rightly divided gospel with those entrenched in the religious rudiments of Christendom. Let it be known unto all saints weary and discouraged, that the power of God's Word will always have a captive audience in Heaven above!

Yet, beyond all reasons of utility, there exists an even deeper wisdom behind God's purpose for sanctification: God has purposed to demonstrate His wisdom through both agencies (Israel and the Body of Christ) for the purpose of putting Satan to an open shame.

Satan is a created being, (as all of God's creatures are created beings) and by virtue of this, all *creatures* of God have been created with finite attributes of wisdom and knowledge that are inferior to the Creator. In regard to Satan and the host of the angelic realm, they are likewise inferior in every way to God. While they certainly possess intelligence far greater than that of man, they also are restrained by the limitations of their created intelligence.

Satan had been created with a wisdom that was previously unrivaled by any of God's creation. Yet, it was through this magnificent attribute that he corrupted himself in a prideful delusion. The book of Isaiah chronicles the fateful moment of his downfall, in it, Satan boasts:

- ❖ *"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High." - Isaiah 14:14*

God's rebuttal to Satan's hubris is recorded in the book of Ezekiel in which He addresses the Prince of Tyrus as a type of Satan (a foreshadowing symbol of the Anti-Christ):

- ❖ *"...Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." - Ezekiel 28:2-3*

Whereas the prophet Daniel (chapter 9) declares in detail, God's plan to bring the Messiah of Israel to reclaim the Earth, it says nothing of God's secret plan to also reclaim the Heavenly places unto Himself. God's infinitely superior wisdom had kept the mystery secretly hidden from Satan for the purpose of shaming him. Hence, He mocks Satan in saying "*there is no secret that they can hide from thee*"; notice God's veiled chastisement here!

All of this leads to an important point:

Satan in all his created brilliance had boasted that he would be *like the most high*. In doing so, he was boasting that his wisdom was like unto God's wisdom. Yet, God had withheld something from him. That which God had withheld from Satan, has abounded toward us with all wisdom and knowledge through the mystery:

- ❖ *"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:" - Ephesians 1:8-9*
- ❖ *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,..." - Ephesians 1:17-18*
- ❖ *"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" - Colossians 1:9*

In this demonstration of wisdom, Satan has been caught in his own craftiness! In doing so, God has used the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (1st Corinthians 1:27).

- ❖ *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the foundation of the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." - 1st Corinthians 2:7-8*

The magnificence of our sanctification is that God has invited us to obtain access to a wisdom that was never offered to even His most anointed cherub. He has invited us to learn the mind of Christ!

Can there be any doubt as to why Satan hates the gospel of the mystery so much? Every time a saint comes into an understanding of that which God had kept secret from Satan, a sanctified son of God is produced, manifesting the mind and glorious wisdom of Christ. In this, God's plan to deliver the creature from its bondage is gloriously exhibited and all of heaven resounds with a voice of praise in God's triumph over Satan.

- ❖ *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." - Colossians 2:13-15*

Where God has spoiled the glory and honor that He had originally created in Satan, Satan in turn (through apostate teaching) seeks to spoil the glory and honor of Christ's inheritance in the saints. By extension this includes spoiling the inheritance of the Body of Christ itself (hence the phrase "joint-heirs" with Christ).

- ❖ *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." - Colossians 2:8*

- ❖ *"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,..." - Colossians 2:18*

CONCLUSION

Be not deceived about this reality. Joint-inheritance with Christ is very much something that can be spoiled from you. In fact, it is being spoiled from right under the noses of most (if not all) in denominational Christendom today. When Paul speaks of *traditions of men* and *rudiments of the world* (Colossians 2:8), he is speaking inclusively of the apostate religious hegemony which dominates Christian teaching. He is speaking of those *"ten thousand instructors in Christ"* of 1st Corinthians 4:15. These are the tools by which Satan spoils the saint of his/her eternal reward.

For any who may still insist on disputing the fact that joint-inheritance with Christ can indeed be spoiled, I ask you to consider this: For what purpose does Paul give such explicit and repeated warning when he speaks in context of the judgment seat of Christ?

The judgment seat of Christ is not a mere frivolous display of ceremonial pageantry, it is an appointment before the King by which all in the Church the Body of Christ will stand to give an account. It is a day in which the saint will either be glorified or ashamed before their Lord. Indeed, Paul is giving us warning for good reason; the judgments of Christ will be final and without our rebuttal. In that light, consider what is said in these verses below:

- ❖ *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, **warning every man**, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus..." - Colossians 1:27-28*
- ❖ *"For 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 done, whether it be good or bad. **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men**; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." - 2nd Corinthians 5:10-11*
- ❖ *".....But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." - 1st Corinthians 3:10*
- ❖ *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." - 1st Timothy 4:16*

Finally, let it be understood that justified heirship unto God (eternal security) is an immutable free gift to all who trust the blood of Christ. *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"* (Romans 11:29).

Yet, to be declared a joint-heir with Christ, it requires our willingness to study, it requires our study to be rightly divided, and it requires us to build upon the correct scriptural foundation.

It is also required of us to suffer and remain faithful to that foundation amidst a religious world which will incessantly chastise and rebuke us for that faith. So be it. To this, I unashamedly leave the scripture with the final word:

- ❖ *"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." - Colossians 3:24-25*