



# The Good News

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## Mysteries

By Michael McCleary

Most everyone loves a good mystery. Perhaps you read Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, or Agatha Christie novels; or perhaps you enjoy watching mystery-related movies. Regardless, on some level most people's interest is piqued anytime there is an unknown quality within a story. It's fascinating really, man's fascination for that which he does not, and sometimes, cannot know. Perhaps the most enthralling of all mysteries are those that are true to life, and most especially those that have no clear-cut conclusion or big reveal. For instance, lately there have been many articles written and a revival of interest regarding Amelia Earhart and her mysterious disappearance over the Pacific Ocean. Sure, there are two very likely and possible explanations as to what happened to her and Fred Noonan; but there are several other, more enthralling and less substantiated theories that arouse the curiosity and inspire the imagination for millions of people. Why is this? It's probable that we will never know for certain exactly what happened to Amelia Earhart...so why all the attention and fascination? It's because most of the excitement of a mystery is not in discovering the truth, but rather in the not-knowing. Interestingly enough, the New Testament speaks of mysteries on several occasions. Last week we considered the "Mystery of Godliness" from 1 Tim. 3. Are there other mysteries to be found in the Bible as well?

In **Col. 1:26**, Paul says, "...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints." Well, this does not sound like the same kind of mystery that we have been discussing. The term here for "mystery" is "musterion" which means "*that which was once hidden, but has now been revealed by divine revelation*". It appears that the Bible's concept of a mystery is actually the opposite of how we would typically define a mystery. To us, if something is a mystery, it's because we lack knowledge. Based on the definition of "musterion", the Bible's "mysteries" are those that were once not known, but now are known. Consider

with me two very important "mysteries" to the Christian:

1) The mystery of the Gentiles, **Eph. 1:9, 3:1-12** – As Paul writes to the saints in Ephesus, he tells them how wonderful God's grace is that it would bring them from being without God to being members of His household (**Eph. 2**). He goes from this thought to expressing that the mystery (**3:3,4**) is "*that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel*" (**v.6**). Why was this a mystery? Because for generations the only people able to receive the blessings of God were God's own people, the Jews. It was not known before (or rather not perceived before) that God would enable the Gentiles to become part of His people.

2) The mystery of Christ's relationship with the Church, **Eph. 5:32** – Paul spends a great deal of time (verses) discussing how a husband ought to consider, care for, and love his wife. He makes some references to Christ and the church but for most of the text, he appears to be using Christ as an example for the husband. We find in **Eph. 5:32**, "*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*" We learn that while Paul is presenting applications about how husbands and wives are to treat one another, he is ultimately teaching about the relationship of Christ and the Church using an example (marriage) that everyone understands.

These are only two of the "mysteries" found in the Bible. But we find that their nature is not one that should encourage curiosity and inspire the imagination as perhaps Amelia Earhart's disappearance does. Rather, the "mysteries" of the Bible are designed to help us know the truth of God's word and to understand what His will is for us. Let us have faith and confidence in the "mysteries" which the Lord has revealed for our benefit to the saving of our souls.