# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear "Special Friend" of Christian Destiny,

**April 2008** 

#### MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE

Part 1

#### **Mysteries of the Ages**

It was Thomas Edison who said that we do not know one one-hundredth of anything. That's not a bad observation by someone who was quite brilliant by comparison to most of us. The mystery of things--that's what we want to think about. There are many mysteries afloat in this society of ours, and happily, quite a number of them are named in that Book which understands it all, the Bible.

Let's think about the mysteries of the ages. You may already suspect what they are. But if we look a little deeper, we will uncover some exciting nuggets of knowledge that lie just below the surface.

#### The Mystery of Iniquity

Principal among the mysteries of the ages is the mystery of iniquity. Most of us have good thoughts and fine aspirations in life, and want things to go well. But as is so often the case, we sometimes find ourselves swept away by a hidden river that is prurient and poisoned, that runs deep beneath society. It tears things down and ruins our best plans. The best laid schemes o'mice and men Gang aft a-gley, said Bobby Burns. That's really the way it is. No matter how well we make our plans, they so often go terribly wrong.

What is it that takes a brilliant young man, who looks like he has a life filled with potential, and turns him into a hopeless derelict before too many years have gone by? What is it that takes a beautiful, virtuous young lady, for whom we would instantly forecast greatness, and leaves her life a ruin before she has even begun to live? The Bible calls it "the mystery of iniquity," and we must never ignore it. Listen to what the Apostle Paul says: "For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only He who now restrains will continue to restrain until He be taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

That is a fascinating verse in the Word of God. There is a subversive, terrible, swirling tide that tears down the best laidplans of everyone. That activity, however, is retarded by a certain force that will not allow it to actually take over the world. So the mystery of iniquity continues to fester, and spread beneath the surface of all activity on earth. You see, we don't really understand life until we realize that we are in a great conflict between Christ and Satan. We are born on a battlefield. On the one hand is the power of God and the reality of Christ. On the other hand is the mystery of iniquity, which continues to cut down everything.

What keeps the mystery of iniquity from taking over, and producing total ruin everywhere? What holds back "The Great Tribulation," preserving perhaps three billion lives until some can find safety in the Savior?

It is really the Church, the Body of Christ, used as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, that does its job as the salt (the preservative) of the earth. By proclaiming the Gospel, telling others that they need to be saved, we hold back the terrible hand of iniquity. When that restraint is taken out of the way, watch out. The world will be devastated so quickly that it will reel in incredulity as to how terrible sin is, how terrible it was all the time. The world will be shattered because of the rise of iniquity.

Time would fail, if we were to talk in detail about sin. Do you realize that sin costs trillions of dollars? Do you realize it threatens at all points and at all times the very bankruptcy of society? Look at what it takes to keep sin from taking over now! Police forces and armies and alarm systems and all of the rest of it--the mystery of iniquity continues to chew away at the reality and the goodness of life. So my advice is, don't let the mystery of iniquity overtake your life, but join in the combat against it.

#### The Mystery of Human Nature

We can learn something additional about this when we consider a second mystery that works in life: the mystery of human nature. The Psalmist started asking the question, and the writer of the Book of Hebrews continued asking the question:

"What is man, that You are mindful of him? and the son of man, that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:4-6). See also Hebrews 2:6-8.

This is what the Bible says in answering the question, "What is man?" What is this being who has perhaps a brilliant mind and high aspirations, but at the same time sets such limitations on himself by his actions, that he lives a life of frustration? What is this thing called man, who is able to build great buildings, but many times is unable to master his own spirit? It all boils down to the question, "Who am I?" The answer is that man is an individual being made in the image of the eternal God. There is something about you that is just like God; something about the way you think that resembles God's intelligence; something about the character of your being that's like the Lord.

Never believe, not for one idiotic moment, that you are simply a beast in the field, a worm in the dust, a leaf on a tree. Rather, the Bible says you are an individual, made in the image and likeness of God. That truth alone causes my heart to leap with joy, to think of the power and potential that God has entrusted to us!

#### The Mystery of Divine Love

That brings us to consider the mystery of Divine love. One of the most cryptic but wonderful passages in the Bible is the verse that says,

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

When I know that I am a sinner, having been captured by the mystery of iniquity; when I know that God is a holy Being that presides above the universe; when I know that God could cause me to disappear with the snap of His fingers, never to exist again—when I know those things, then I ask again: how is it that God loves me? Why is it that He loves me? Strictly speaking, the answer to that question is that it cannot be answered. Love is so absolutely majestic and amazing, that it is utterly beyond description. Even the great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, fails to tell us what love is, but instead describes what love does.

"Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love does not brag, is not arrogant" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

It tells us about Divine love, *agapao*, without which life does not really exist. The mystery of Divine love should lead us every day to pray with tears that God should help us to understand how much He loves us.

The poet has said, "How thou canst love me as I am, and be the God thou art, Is darkness to my intellect, but sunshine to my heart." Still the Apostle Paul was pressed by this mystery. He said in his letter to the people at Philippi: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12).

"I am pursuing the great reason why Christ pursued me. I would like to know," Paul says, "what God ever saw in me, to offer me the gift of salvation." And by the way, Paul was made a chosen vessel unto God. "Why should this happen to me?" Paul asked. He didn't have any answer, but he said, "That is going to be the great pursuit of my life. I am going to find out about the mysterious, amazing, infinite love of God." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Explain that to me, and believe me, I promise to listen with great attention. But since we are unable to suggest even the simplest answer, we stand in awe at the remarkable love of God. We write songs about it. "The

love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell." It is. It is a mystery that should stagger our imaginations every day that we live.

#### The Mystery of Salvation

From here, we go to another mystery which is essential to life: The mystery of salvation. How is it that God is able to translate Divine love into eternal salvation for me? How is it that the mystery of iniquity could be cancelled in my life by the mystery of salvation? How is it that my human nature, infected by the dread disease of sin, could yet become the heir of salvation? It is a mystery, but it is marvelous evidence of the love of God. How can I be saved, being a sinner? Can I be saved just by saying, "I'm sorry?" Can I be saved just by saying, "I'll never do it again?" Can I be saved just by saying, "God, I'll follow You all the days of my life; Lord, I'll submit to Your Lordship; I'll be a perfect reflection of Your desire for me; I'll join a church and be baptized and do many other things?" Is that how I can be saved?

Let me tell you something: not one of those suggestions has anything to do with salvation, and how it comes to me. How does salvation come to me? "The Bible says: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:23-25).

It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves from sin. We are not saved through high purposing or life changing. We are not saved by newly deciding that we will try to be different. We are saved by properly answering the age-old question: "Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" Hear it again: "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins; and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

Salvation by the blood of Christ--that's the only way. It is a great mystery how God saves us; by grace rather than by works; by the blood of Christrather than by our own high purposing. But there it is--it is the mystery of salvation.

The mystery of salvation announces that the most Godless reprobate, the most terrible sinner, the most wretched individual you could think of in all of life, who comes to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, will be given eternal life. Christ says he will never perish. It is fantastic, marvelous, wonderful beyond description, but it is true. You're saved by the blood of the crucified One.

#### The Mystery of the Mind of the Lord

"I understand God," some people say. "I know all about Him." You'd better watch out, making presumptuous statements like that! Everything that is a part of the Divine creation grew out of the mind of God. He made them; He arranged it that way. Therefore, we ought to consider, "What is the mind that stands behind it all?" Listen to the mystery of the mind of God:

"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

That question stands out, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" Take some time, maybe on your knees, to try to figure out what God is thinking--what is coming from His eternal mind. I can assure you that after you've done all the reviewing you possibly can, then you're going to have to lay even your best ideas down and say, "God is greater than I; He is beyond comprehension. The fact that I am an object of His grace is enough for me." When we realize who God is, we should be stunned to think that He would permit us to be in His presence, even for one moment.

Do you want to know who God is? There are a number of ways to find out, the Bible tells us. For instance: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2).

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The mind that fashioned this fantastic universe is totally beyond comprehension. In addition, let metell you a little secret that applies to the Christian. (If you are not a Christian, you are not an heir of the universe. If you are not a Christian, you are becoming progressively more stupid, and I say that respectfully.)

But about the Christian, the Bible says, "We have the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16). In another place, it comes to us in the form of an admonition: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:5-7).

We have the mind of Christ. We are to allow ourselves to be taken over by the mind of Christ. Speaking about the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul says: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are where: at Cambridge, at Ox ford, at M.I.T.? Are they in the ancient libraries of Alexandria, or in the Library of Congress? The treasures of wisdom and knowledge--are they hidden in some computer somewhere? The answer is, while these suggestions may be interesting, the true treasures are not there. All of these entities are pitiful little dead leaves in the great living forest, by comparison to the knowledge of God and the mind of the Lord, which is ours when we believe the Gospel.

Ideally, a Christian should be in the process of becoming progressively more brilliant, because the mystery of Divine knowledge is his. This is the prayer Paul offered for the Colossians. Remember that these were the smart guys of the New Testament. They invented Gnosticism when their knowledge turned into heresy. But Paul prayed that they would have full knowledge; not just *gnosis* (knowledge), but *epignosis* (full knowledge), the knowledge of God. That is also my prayer for you, as well as for me.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

That is to apprehend within myself the mind of Jesus Christ. Are you smarter today than you were yesterday? If not, forget some of your other plans Go get your Bible off the shelf, and spend some time reading it. Pray: "More about Jesus and His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Spirit of God my teacher be; Showing the things of Christ to me."

#### The Mystery of Godliness

One more mystery that we must consider is the mystery of Godliness. When we hear about God, and especially about having the mind of Christ, I'm sure there's an inconsolable longing that grows up within our minds and souls that says, "How can I be like God?"

That's a proper aspiration. We are to be imitators of Christ. We are to be like the Lord as much as possible. So the Bible says, "great is the mystery of godliness" (I Timothy 3:16). God was justified in the Spirit. He took the form of human flesh. He was seen of angels. He came into this world to die for us.

The mystery of Godliness--that is presented to us in order that we might know the core reality of the universe and of our salvation. How the God of the universe became human flesh, went to the cross, died for our sins at Calvary, and makes it possible to be like Him--this is a mystery. You will never find out the details of that marvelous plan just by going to the grade school or the high school somewhere in your neighborhood. The answers can only be found by looking into the sacred pages of the Word of God.

How can I be like God (which is what it means to be Godly)? I can be like God by accepting Jesus Christ into my life as personal Savior. He came to make that possible. As a result, I can live the quickly passing days of my life for His honor and His glory. That is what you and I must genuinely intend to do.

From the writings of Dave Breese Part 2 in June 2008 Bulletin

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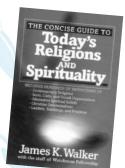
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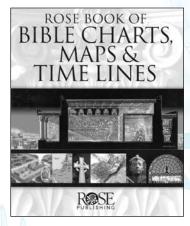


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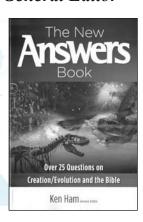
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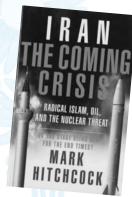
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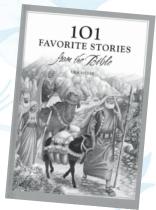
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