



BOLD TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY

Volume 3

Issue 2

INTRODUCTION TO PAULINE GRACE

Subtitle: THE LIES OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD

Over the past roughly 2,000 years of “Christian” history, historic Christianity has promulgated some basic lies to the detriment of the saved and unsaved alike, and it began to do this in the very days of the Apostle Paul himself (2 Tim. 1:15; Gal. 1).

What do I mean when I speak of “historic Christianity?” Historic Christianity consists of two main groups. The first and largest group is what we would call nominal Christianity. That is, Christianity in name only, unbelieving Christianity, apostate Christianity. The second and far smaller group within historic Christianity is what we would call true Christianity, believing Christianity. The main difference between these two groups is that the former has rejected in unbelief all of Paul’s distinct teachings, including his Gospel of Grace, the Good News of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. In doing this, they have rejected God’s one way of salvation for today, and, therefore, they remain spiritually dead. The latter group, however, has at least received by faith Paul’s Good News of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Therefore, they are spiritually saved unto eternal life. Unfortunately, this latter group, while receiving Paul’s Saving Gospel, have continued to reject the rest of Paul’s dis-

tinct teachings, which means they are ineffective in serving God today.

In turning away from Paul’s distinct teachings, whether completely or in part, as most of historic Christianity has done, they have turned away from God and His Truth, opening the door to Satan and his lies. While it is not surprising that unbelieving Christianity would embrace Satan’s lies, it is sad beyond words to realize that most of believing Christianity has embraced those lies as well, making it impossible for God to work in and through them today. That is why this series is so important. We will reveal some of the greatest lies of Satan that historic Christianity has been propagating, going all the way back to the so called “church fathers,” whom they revere so dearly, exposing their lies in the light of God and His Word.

LIE #1: Paul’s Apostleship is NOT Unique and Distinct

The first and most fundamental lie of historic Christianity, the source of all other lies, the Mother of all lies, is that Paul’s apostleship, message and ministry is NOT

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distinct and unique from all other apostles, messages and ministries in the Bible, including those of Peter and the 12 and the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry. Satan has invested a great deal of time, energy, and resources in promoting this lie through Historic Christianity's man-made religious and man-centered theological systems. If Satan can get us to throw away Paul's distinct apostleship, he can steer us away from God's plan, purpose and provisions for today. For the most part, Satan has been successful in accomplishing this, convincing most of historical Christianity that Paul is just one in a long line of God's spokespeople throughout the Bible. He is just the next step in the continuation of God's one plan that is centered on man and his redemption. While it is not surprising that apostate Christianity has always embraced this lie and rejected Paul's distinct apostleship, it is sad to realize that most of believing Christianity has accepted this lie and rejected Paul's distinct apostleship as well.

IS PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP DISTINCT?

But is this "traditional" teaching of historic Christianity true? Is Paul just one in a long line of God's spokespeople, participating along with Peter and the 12 and Jesus in His earthly ministry in what God "**had spoken about since the world began** (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21)?" Or is Paul's apostleship new, unique and distinct from all others, something that God "**had kept secret since the world began** (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-12)?" God's Truth exposes the teaching of historic Christianity for what it is: A LIE! God's Word teaches that Paul's apostleship is indeed NEW, DISTINCT AND UNIQUE, separate from all others!

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preach-

ing of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began. (Rom. 16:25)

There are two general ways historical Christianity has tried to throw away Paul's distinct apostleship. One way is to say that Paul should have been one of the 12. In this confusion of the facts, they insist that Peter and the 12 acted hastily in early Acts, and instead of waiting on God, they rushed ahead outside of His will and appointed Mathias to be Judas's replacement when God had intended it to be filled by Paul.

A second way they try to throw away Paul's distinct apostleship is to say that while Paul was not one of the 12, God made him the 13th. Their argument goes something like this: God had commanded the 12 to go out to the Gentiles. But they never did. So, Peter and the 12 must have been bigoted and prejudiced Jews in rebellion against God, forcing Him to go to plan B and raise up the Apostle Paul and send him out to complete the work that should have been done by the 12.

Let's throw some Scriptural light on these teachings. Should Paul have been one of the 12? Or was he the 13th, God's "cleaner" for the mess that the 12 made of their ministry? Is he just God's plan B? Or is he God's new and unique and distinct apostle with a God-given responsibility NOT by continuing with God's Prophetic Program for the Nation of Israel, which **had been spoken about since the beginning of the world** (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21), but by beginning a new program, God's Mystery Program for the Body of Christ, which **had been kept secret since the world began** (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-12)? Are we going to go with the lies of historic Christianity that deny the distinct apostleship? Or are we going to go with the Truth of God's Word, which affirms in the strongest possible

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terms that Paul's apostleship is indeed distinct?

Part 1: Could Paul Have Been One of the 12?

To correct this false teaching, we must go to the biblical account in Acts 1. There we see that the first thing Peter and the 11 (minus 1 because of the betrayal and death of Judas), are determined to do when they go to Jerusalem (in obedience to Jesus' final words in Acts 1:4) is fill the vacancy Judas left behind, bringing the 11 back into wholeness with a full complement of 12 apostles. It is important to remember that the 12 had just gone through about 3 years of Jesus' pre-resurrection teaching ministry and had just finished 40 days of His post-resurrection teaching ministry, in which He had instructed them **in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself** (Lk. 24:27). This should give us great pause before we even think of suggesting that the 12 didn't know what they were supposed to do and were operating outside of God's will.

Contrary to such teaching of historic Christianity, Peter and the 12 knew exactly what they were doing in filling Judas' vacancy, and they did it based on the Scriptures in reliance on the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16, 20) and in prayerful reliance on the Lord (Acts 1:24). Peter methodically listed out the specific qualifications a candidate needed to meet to be one of the 12 (which, no doubt, Jesus taught him during His post-resurrection ministry). First, the candidate needed to have been with Christ from the beginning of His earthly ministry, going all the way back to John the Baptist. Second, he needed to have stayed with Jesus throughout His life, death and resurrection and still have been with Him at His ascension. Third, he needed to have been an eyewitness of His resurrection. Out of all the people there with Peter, only 2 met the qualifications—

Joseph and Matthias (Acts 1:21-23)

And it is here that God's Word exposes the lie of those who say Paul is or should have been one of the 12. Paul not only *shouldn't* have been one of the 12, he **COULDN'T** have been one of the 12. He wasn't qualified to be one of the 12. He hadn't been with Christ from John the Baptist to the ascension, nor had he been an eyewitness with the 12 of Christ's resurrection during the last 40 days.

Part 2: Was Paul the 13th?

Well, if Paul wasn't one of the 12, perhaps he was the 13th. This false teaching usually goes something like this: According to the Great Commission, the 12 were supposed to take the Gospel out to the Gentiles. But some 10 years later the 12 were still sitting in Jerusalem! They never went out to the Gentiles. Therefore, they say, the 12 must have been disobedient to God's clear instructions to them. After suggesting this, it is only a short step to say that the 12 didn't want to go out to the Gentiles because they were bigoted and prejudiced Jews who, in rebellion against God, refused to go out to the Gentiles. And then it is even a shorter step to conclude that this forced God to come up with another plan, a Plan B, whereby He raised up Paul to finish what the 12 had refused to do. Therefore, they say, Paul was the 13th apostle, raised up to finish the work of the 12. What nonsense! The only bigoted and ignorant people in this argument are the Gentile teachers of historic Christianity who suggest such things.

Let's go back to Acts 1 and see if this suggestion holds water. Just before His ascension, the Risen Lord Jesus Christ taught the 12 about Israel's Kingdom, and in that context, He instructed the 12 to go to Jerusalem where they would receive the Holy Spirit and be a witness to the leaders of Israel there (Acts 1:3-8). Then, they would go out and wit-

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ness to Judea, then to Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). Now, let's get something straight at the start and realize what Jesus is NOT saying here (contrary to the teaching of most of historic Christianity). Jesus is not instructing the 12 to go be a witness of Christ to the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem, and if they continued to reject Christ, then they were to try going out to Judea. And if Judea continued to reject Christ, then they were to try going out to Samaria and then the whole world! To suggest such a thing betrays a complete ignorance of the whole Bible, especially regarding God's Prophetic Program for the Nation of Israel as revealed in the Old Testament, Gospel Accounts and ministry of the 12 (Is. 59:20-60:3).

In God's Prophetic Program with Israel (in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant), the whole world would be blessed WITH ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER RISE. The first thing that needed to happen for God to fulfill His Prophetic Program was for Israel's leaders in Jerusalem to receive their Messiah and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Once that happened, then, and only then, could the 12, together with Jerusalem's leaders, go out to Judea. And then, once Judea received Christ, then the 12, together with Jerusalem's leaders and Judea, could go out to Samaria. And then, once Samaria received Christ, the whole Nation of Israel—Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria -- would be saved, and once that happened, THEN, and only then, national Israel would take God's blessings out to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the Gentiles, WITH ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER RISE. That is God's revealed way of Gentile blessings according to His Prophetic Program spoken about in the Old Testament and Gospel Accounts (Acts 3:25-26). That is the only way of Gentile blessings God had made known to Peter and the 12, and they faithfully followed

that program to the end, obeying Christ's instructions to a "T"!

Peter explains this process explicitly in Acts 3, speaking to the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem:

FIRST, THE MEN AND LEADERS OF JERUSALEM HAD TO RECEIVE CHRIST:

Ye men of ISRAEL ... ¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate ¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just ... ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. ¹⁶ ... ¹⁷ And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as *did* also your rulers. ¹⁸ But *those things*, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

SECOND, THEN THE WHOLE NATION OF ISRAEL WOULD RECEIVE CHRIST—JERUSALEM, JUDEA AND SAMARIA:

¹⁹ Repent ye (men of Jerusalem) therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when *the* times of refreshing (for the Nation Israel) shall come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ²¹ whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all *things* (for the Nation Israel) which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets (of the Nation Israel) since the world began. ²² For Moses truly said unto the fathers (of the Nation Israel), A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all *things* whatsoever he shall say unto you. ²³ And it shall come to

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pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. ²⁴ Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after (in the Nation of Israel's history), as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

THIRD, ONCE ALL ISRAEL HAS RECEIVED CHRIST, THEN GOD WOULD RESTORE NATIONAL ISRAEL, AND WITH ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER RISE, HE WILL SEND BLESSING TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH:

²⁵ Ye are the children of the prophets (the Nation of Israel), and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed (the physical descendants of Abraham) shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

(Acts 3:12-25)

BUT FIRST, ONCE AGAIN, FOR ALL THIS TO HAPPEN THE LEADERS AND MEN OF JERUSALEM NEEDED TO RECEIVE CHRIST:

²⁶ Unto you (leaders and men of Jerusalem) **first** God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from *his* iniquities. (Acts 3:12-25)

This is the Prophetic order, and this is the order that the 12 were operating under. Peter and the 12, instructed fully by the Risen Lord and full of the Spirit (Acts 2:4), knew exactly what they were supposed to do. They didn't "refuse" to go out to the Gentiles because of their prejudice in rebellion against God. Rather, they COULDN'T go out to the Gentiles because Israel's leaders, in their rebellion against God in Jerusalem, continued to refuse Israel's King and Messiah, and rejected Christ. This threw a "monkey

wrench" into the machinery of God's Prophetic Program with national Israel, bringing it to a screeching halt, and when that happened, it brought the ministry of the 12 to a screeching halt as well. That is why they remained in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had once-for-all rejected Christ and, therefore, the 12 COULDN'T go out to the Gentiles.

In Acts 15, God sent Paul to Jerusalem to explain all of this to Peter and what was left of the 12 at that time. He lets them know that they are officially "off the hook." Because of Israel's rejection of Christ in unbelief, Paul explained, God temporarily set aside His Prophetic Program for Israel and started a new program, the Mystery Program, through the Apostle Paul, a new, distinct and unique apostle. God did what we might do today when watching a football game or a movie on TV. He took the remote control and hit the "pause" button. Then, while we might go off to make popcorn or answer the phone, God went off to accomplish a new work called His Mystery Program through the distinct apostleship of Paul, whereby He revealed a new way of blessing the world, especially the Gentiles, a way that He had never made known before. He called it **God's Mystery Program for the Body of Christ**, whereby God is now blessing the world **APART FROM ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER FALL** (Rom. 11)!

One day, when God's Mystery Program for the Body of Christ is completed, he will remove the Body of Christ from the earth through the Rapture, hit the "un-pause" button on His remote control and restart His Prophetic Program for the Nation of Israel right where He left off. So, let's be clear: It is not Peter and the 12 who were ignorant and bigoted. It is historic Christianity that slanders their reputation and God-given work who are ignorant and bigot-

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ed.

Conclusion:

The Apostle Paul was not one of the 12. He wasn't qualified. And he wasn't the 13th, God's plan B, raised up to finish what the 12 refused to do. No, Paul's apostleship is unique and distinct. At the very moment Christ should have returned in His wrath and judgement to destroy His enemies, beginning in the House of Israel, beginning with the leader of the persecution against Christ and His people, SAUL, and especially among the Gentiles in accord with His Prophetic Program, Jesus Christ instead returned in His Grace and Peace to SAVE His enemies, beginning with the Jews and SAUL, making him our distinct Apostle Paul for today, and especially among the Gentiles. Through the distinct and unique apostleship of Paul, God introduced a NEW, previously un-prophesied, unrevealed Mystery Program, which provided blessings for the whole world **APART FROM ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER FALL.**

LIE #2: The Bible Contains Only One Purpose of God That Centers on Man and His Redemption.

This false teaching has infiltrated historic Christianity in many guises. You may know it as the redemptive-historical theological approach that teaches that in the Bible, going from Genesis to Revelation, God progressively reveals only one divine purpose, and that purpose is centered on man and his redemption. This lie flows directly out of the 1st lie. It is only by throwing away Paul's distinct apostleship, that historic Christiani-

ty could have made such a great theological error. After all, if Paul was just carrying on from the ministry of the 12, who had been carrying on from Christ in His earthly ministry, which was just a continuation of the Old Testament Law and the Prophets, *which had spoken about in the Old Testament since the world began* (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21); if that were the true case (which it is not) then there must be just **one** divine purpose revealed in the Bible.

But if Paul's apostleship is distinct, then there must be **two** divine purposes revealed in the Bible. We have already seen that Paul could not have been one of the 12 and was most definitely not the 13th. Paul is a new and unique apostle of God, whom God raised up to make known His Mystery Program, *which had been kept secret since the world began* (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-11). When we appreciate Paul's distinct apostleship, it becomes clear that the Bible reveals two divine Purposes, not one, and that they are centered on God and His Glory, not man and his redemption (as wonderful as that is!).

TWO PURPOSES:

The Earth and the Heaven

It is important to notice that the Bible opens with the creation of two realms of existence: It opens with the creation of the Heavenly realm and the Earthly realm in Gen. 1:1; and it closes with the creation of the New Heavenly realm and the New Earthly realm in Rev. 21. While we know that both realms were created good (Gen. 1-2), we also know that both realms were corrupted by sin. The Heavenly realm was corrupted through the Fall of Satan (Ezek. 28; Is. 14), and the Earthly realm was corrupted through the Fall of Adam (Gen 3). Therefore, the most fundamental problem the Bible must solve is not how will God redeem fallen humanity (as important as

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that is!), but how God will re-establish His Glory in the Heavenly and Earthly realms.

And this (contrary to most of historic Christianity) means that the Bible must reveal two purposes of God: One purpose to re-establish His Glory in the Heavens, and the other purpose to re-establish His Glory on the Earth. In Genesis, the Bible begins explaining (“speaking about”) how God will re-establish His Glory on the Earth but says NOTHING about how God will re-establish His Glory in the Heavens. God kept His Heavenly purpose a secret, a Mystery, until He revealed it to and through the Apostle Paul, whom He commissioned to make it known to all people and record in his Letters, the Pauline Scriptures.

TWO PROGRAMS:

Prophecy and Mystery

In order to accomplish these two divine Purposes, God originated two divine Programs. First, beginning in Genesis and extending through the Old Testament, Christ’s earthly ministry in the Gospel Accounts and the ministry of the 12 in early Acts, God revealed His *Prophetic Program* that explained how He would re-establish His Glory on Earth. This was something that He **had spoken about since the world began** (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21). But there was another Program, a Mystery Program, which God had NOT spoken about since the world began but **had kept secret since the world began** (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-11) until He revealed it to and through the Apostle Paul, which explained how He would re-establish His Glory in the Heavens.

TWO PEOPLES:

Israel and the Body of Christ

And in order to accomplish these two Purposes through these two Programs, God created two Peoples—the *Nation of Israel* and the *Body of Christ*. So, let’s put this all together: On the one hand, the Bible reveals God’s Purpose to re-establish His Glory on the Earth through His Prophetic Program with the Nation of Israel as recorded in the non-Pauline Scriptures. On the other hand, the Bible also reveals God’s Purpose to re-establish His Glory in the Heavens through His Mystery Program with the Body of Christ as revealed in the Pauline Scriptures. This is why Paul could write to the Colossians, explaining that with his Scriptures regarding God’s Mystery Revelation, the whole Bible, the Word of God, was fulfilled and completed (Col. 1:25).

Conclusion:

Therefore, God’s Word has debunked the lie that the whole Bible, starting in Genesis and ending in Revelation, reveals just one divine purpose that is centered on man and his redemption. Rather, there are two divine purposes of God revealed in the Bible that are both centered on God and His Glory. Let’s review these two distinct purposes, programs and peoples that explain what the whole Bible is really about:

God’s Two Purposes:

Earthly Purpose: To re-establish His Glory on the Earth (Non-Pauline Scriptures).

Heavenly Purpose: To re-establish His Glory in the Heavens (Pauline Scriptures).

God’s Two Programs:

Prophetic Program: He will re-establish His Glory on Earth through His Prophet-

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ic Program, which had been spoken about since the world began (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21) and recorded in the non-Pauline Scriptures.

Mystery Program: He will re-establish His Glory in the Heavens through His Mystery Program, which had been kept secret since the world began (Eph. 3:1-10; Rom. 16:25) and recorded in Paul's Scriptures.

God's Two Peoples:

The Nation of Israel: He will re-establish His Glory on Earth through His Prophetic Program for the Nation of Israel.

The Body of Christ: He will re-establish His Glory in the Heavens through His Mystery Program for the Body of Christ..

LIE #3: The "Church," The Body of Christ, Began at Pentecost

We have already seen that contrary to the false teaching of historic Christianity, Paul's apostleship is, in fact, new, unique and distinct. He is not one of the 12, nor is he the 13th, merely carrying on where Peter and the 12 left off. We have seen that Peter and the 12 preached Jesus Christ according to God's Prophetic Program whereby He will re-establish His Glory on Earth through the Nation of Israel. Paul, however, preached Jesus Christ according to God's Mystery Program whereby He will re-establish His Glory in the Heavens through the Body of Christ. The former had been spoken about "**since the world began**" (Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21). The latter had been kept "**secret since the world began**" (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-11).

Once we understand these things, we

will have no problem debunking historic Christianity's 3rd great lie, which teaches that the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost through the ministry of Peter and the 12 in Acts 2-3. This is a great lie indeed, yet it is assumed to be true by the vast majority of Christians, resulting in nothing but confusion.

So, what does God in the Bible say He was doing on the Day of Pentecost? Does God say He was beginning something new? Or, does He say He was continuing in something old? Was He carrying out things that He had "**spoken about since the world began?**" Or was He carrying out things that He had "**kept secret (NOT SPOKEN ABOUT) since the world began?**" **Let God be true and every man a liar** (Rom. 3:4)!

It is readily apparent that both cannot be true! No amount of human reasoning, no matter how circuitous and complex, can make a body of truth that **had been revealed since the world began** be the same body of truth that **had been kept secret since the world began**. It is a logical impossibility. So, when historic Christianity promulgates this lie, it is not out of genuine "sound doctrine" but out of deceptive "sleight of hand." Let's see what the Bible has to say about what God and Peter were doing on the Day of Pentecost.

We have already seen that Jesus, in His post-resurrection ministry to Peter and the 11 (at that time), opened up the Scriptures to them, explaining how they concerned Himself and the coming of Israel's long-prophesied Kingdom on earth (Acts 1:3-6). After Jesus ascended, they followed His instructions and went to Jerusalem, where the first thing they did was to bring the 11 into its full completeness by replacing the

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apostleship of Judas with that of Mathias, bringing their number back to 12. Then, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and through the 12 offered Israel's Kingdom to the rulers headquartered in Jerusalem.

According to Paul, the church, the Body of Christ was something new, a secret **not spoken about since the world began. It had been kept secret since the world began** (Eph. 2:16, 3:8-10). Peter, however, filled with the Holy Spirit described what was happening on the Day of Pentecost as something old and previously revealed, having been spoken about by the prophet Joel. When Peter later summarizes the whole message of the 12 at that time, he describes it as something that **had been spoken by the prophets since the world began**:

Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them ... But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:14-16).

Yet now, brethren (men of Israel), **I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers** (leaders of Israel).¹⁸ **But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets ... so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord** (to establish the Kingdom of Israel) **... until the times of restoration of all things** (through the Kingdom of Israel), **which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began** (Acts. 3:17-21).

According to Paul, there is **neither Jew nor Gentile** in the Body of Christ (Gal. 5:28). At Pentecost Peter only addressed the Jews and years later Peter was still instructing his followers to **preach the word to NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY** (Acts 11:19). At Pentecost, Peter only speaks about the

“church,” the Nation of Israel (Acts 1:6; 2:22, 36; 3:12; 4:8-10; 5:21, 31, 35; 7:23, 37, 42). There is no mention of a new “church,” which is the Body of Christ. The Greek word for “church” is “ekklesia.” It just means a called out assembly or group of people. To determine what assembly or group of people the writer is referring to, we must go by the specific context. The “church” that Peter addresses is the assembly or group of Jews who have to do with the Nation of Israel. Paul, however, addresses the assembly or group of people, especially Gentiles, who have to do with the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; et al.).

Paul describes that entrance into the Body of Christ occurs when the Holy Spirit baptizes or places the believer into Christ and His Body (the Body of Christ—Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Cor. 12:13). Peter, however, proclaims a baptism whereby Christ baptizes Jewish believers with or into the Spirit (Mk. 1:8; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:38).

Paul proclaimed blessings to the Gentiles **APART FROM ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER FALL** (Rom. 11). Peter, however, proclaimed blessings to the Gentiles **WITH ISRAEL AND THROUGH HER RISE** (Acts 3:17-26—see Lie #2 for a full explanation of this passage).

Paul says that for the church the Body of Christ there are no Jewish feast days or sabbaths (Col. 2:16-17). Peter, on the Day of Pentecost (a Jewish feast day that occurred after Sabbath observance!) expected his hearers to observe both (Acts 2-3).

Paul said that the new church, the Body of Christ, was **APART** from the Law, and that its members were the temple of the Lord (Rom. 3:21; 6:14; Eph. 2:20-22). Peter told his followers to observe the Law and conducted his life around the physical Tem-

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ple (Acts. 3:1-11).

We could go on and on with this list, but it suffices to show that God's Word debunks this lie of historic Christianity; that the church, the Body of Christ, began on Pentecost through the ministry of Peter and the 12 in early Acts. At that time, God was not beginning something NEW. He was continuing something OLD. The church, the Body of Christ, was not yet created. Rather the church of believing Israel was being brought to its full maturity.

So then, when did the church, the Body of Christ, begin? It began when God raised up His new and distinct apostle, the Apostle Paul, and gave to him the stewardship of making known God's new and distinct Program, the Mystery Program, for His new and distinct People, the Body of Christ, to fulfill His new and distinct Purpose of re-establishing His Glory in the Heavens.

“For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me FIRST Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a PATERN to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” (I Tim. 1:16)

LIE #4: The Mystery Wasn't REALLY a Mystery.

This 4th great lie of historic Christianity tries to do away with Paul's distinct apostleship and God's new and unique Mystery Program for today by changing the definition of one word, the word “mystery.” If they can replace the Bible's definition of “mystery” with their own definition, they can replace God's Mystery Program with their own man-made religious and man-centered theological systems.

So, let's lay some groundwork. How does

the Bible define the word “Mystery?” “Mystery” in our English Bible is the translation of the Greek work “mysterion,” which simply refers to a “secret,” to something that God had kept secret before but then, at the appropriate time, He revealed it, making it known.

When we use the word “mystery” in English it includes some additional connotations that we need to get out of our minds. Oftentimes we use the word “mystery” to refer to things mysterious; deep, dark secrets, unknowable to mere humans. That is NOT what the Bible means by “mystery.” Or sometimes we think of a “mystery” like a puzzle, something exceedingly difficult to figure out and hard to understand. This also is NOT what the Bible means by “mystery.” When the Bible uses the word “mystery” it is simply referring to something that God had kept secret before but has now made known to all. God had kept His Mystery Program a secret until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul. It **had been kept secret since the world began**, and then God revealed it to and through the Apostle Paul and now His desire is that ALL PEOPLE MIGHT FULLY KNOW IT (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-11)).

Historic Christianity has turned all this biblical truth on its head, by redefining the word “mystery,” making it mean something else entirely. They say that when God described the “mystery” as something that He had **kept secret since the world began**, He didn't *really* mean it. What He *really* meant is that He had, in fact, been revealing it all along but that the readers of the Scriptures just didn't realize it. Having emptied the word “mystery” of its biblical meaning they then filled it back in with their own traditions. The “mystery,” they say, has to do with man and his redemption (see Lie # 2 above) and, therefore, refers to the incarna-

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tion, death and resurrection of Christ. The problem with this claim, however, is that the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ were not “mysteries” in the biblical sense, **things kept secret since the world began** because they had, in fact, been spoken about since the world began.

The Incarnation was a promise God gave to David a thousand years before Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry (2 Sam. 7; et al.). And the Death and Resurrection of Christ were spoken about long before Christ died and rose again (Gen. 3:15; Is. 53; Ps. 22; et al.). No, the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ were not the Mystery Truth that Paul refers to because Paul (and God!) repeatedly insist that his **Mystery had been kept secret since the world began**. Therefore, we need to set aside the false teaching of historic Christianity and find out about God’s Mystery from God Himself in His Word.

For this reason I, Paul ... ² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the MYSTERY (as I have briefly written already, ⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the MYSTERY of Christ), ⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel (Paul’s Gospel) ... To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus

Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Eph. 3:1-11)

In this passage, God and Paul insist that the Mystery God revealed to Paul was completely **unknown** to anyone prior to Paul (v. 5). It is the **unsearchable** riches of Christ that had been **hidden in God** (NOT the Old Testament!). Contrary to historic Christianity, God and Paul insist that God’s Mystery Truth had been **kept secret since the world began** (v. 5; Rom. 16:25) until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul through a direct revelation (vv. 1-3; Gal. 1:11-12). Everyone after Paul learns about the Mystery by reading Paul’s Letters (Eph. 3:4), which the Holy Spirit uses to reveal and teach the Mystery to us today (Eph. 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:6-12; Col. 1, et al.).

The Mystery God revealed to Paul is the **UNSEARCHABLE** riches of Christ. You won’t find it in the ministry of Peter and the 12 in Acts or in the earthly ministry of Jesus in the Gospels or in the Old Testament. It is the **UNSEARCHABLE**, untraceable, riches of Christ. The only place your searching will find the Mystery is in Paul’s Letters (Eph. 3:1-4). Then, just in case we still miss the point, God and Paul go on to say that the Mystery He gave to Paul had been **HID IN GOD!** God didn’t hide it in the Old Testament or the Gospels or the parables of Jesus or in the teachings of Peter or anywhere else. He **HID IT IN HIMSELF** from eternity past until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul, who then, through the Holy Spirit, recorded it for us in his Scriptures.

INTRODUCTION TO PAULINE GRACE

God and His Word leave absolutely no room for historic Christianity's re-defining of the word "Mystery." In doing so, most of historic Christianity, including most of true, believing Christianity, has willfully (or very ignorantly) rebelled against God, discarding His Mystery Truth, replacing it with the vain lies of its own man-made religious and man-centered theological systems that not only leads us astray but calls into question the very character of God Himself. If God doesn't mean what He says and say what He means, then He is a woefully inadequate communicator who can't keep His Word.

Let me give a homely illustration. Perhaps some of you remember the episode of the old Dick Van Dyke Show where just before leaving for work, Rob told Laura that he was going to be bringing home a famous movie star for dinner. He made her promise that she would not tell anyone so that no one would crash and ruin their dinner party. Of course, as soon as Rob stepped out the door, Laura was on the phone, cryptically sharing the secret with her neighbor Millie, who, easily guessed what it was and although she promised to keep it a secret, she promptly shared it with others. When Rob finally arrived with the movie star, the whole neighborhood was in his yard.

So, I will ask you one final question. Is your God, the "Laura Petrie" God of historic Christianity? Or is He the real, infinite, eternal, all powerful God of the Scriptures, who when He says He has kept a secret really means He had kept a secret! God kept His Mystery Program a secret since eternity past until He revealed it to and through His new, unique and distinct Apostle, the Apostle Paul, who then recorded it in the Holy Scriptures for everyone else. Are we going to believe God and His Word? Or are we going to believe man and his traditions?

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We preach *Christ Crucified*¹; we worship *Jesus Christ According to the Revelation of the Mystery*²; and we study the Bible using the principle of *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*³.

1. 1 Cor. 1:23 2. Rom. 16:25 3. 2 Tim. 2:15

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