



Lesson 7: The Mystery of the Church

Text: Ephesians 3:1-11

Key thought: The church age was concealed until God revealed it.

Read Ephesians 3:1-11

God chose not to reveal the "church age" to the Old Testament prophets. In other words, the age or dispensation of grace when both Jews and Gentiles would become one and function as the body of Christ was unknown until God revealed it to & through Paul. Keep in mind that Paul was imprisoned because He taught and preached the resurrection of Jesus and felt compelled to share the gospel with Gentiles.

1. In our text, Paul uses the word "mystery" several times. A mystery is something that is otherwise unknown until or unless it is revealed or uncovered. What in your view is the biggest, most shocking, disturbing or interesting mystery that's been revealed or uncovered in your lifetime?

A.

What current unsolved mystery intrigues you most? Why?

A.

2. Although God revealed much to the prophets about the coming Jewish Messiah, what they clearly saw was his coronation or reign. What should have been clear to them, but wasn't, was the cross. It was the means God used to deal with man's sin and bring about salvation for ALL people. How is this universal blessing revealed in the following scriptures? (*Genesis 12:1-3 [key: verse 3]; Galatians 3:16; Isaiah 49:6*)

A.

3. Truth is, the Jews in Jesus' day were not looking for a Messiah who would die, they were looking for a Warrior King who would help them overthrow their oppressors. How is this revealed in the following scriptures?

John 6:15 **A.**

John 18:4-11 **A.**

4. We should not fault the Jews for wanting to overthrow their Roman oppressors. They simply wanted their freedom and for justice to be served, albeit on their terms. When have you sought justice deploying your might, will or influence, without waiting on or consulting with God? What was the outcome?

A.

5. Bottom line, God knew the Jew's rejection of Jesus would result in His execution. This was His plan and means to save us from our sins, as Jesus became our sin bearer. The age of grace Paul talks about in Ephesians 3:2 began after the resurrection of Jesus and will end at Jesus' Second Coming. Unfortunately, most Jews refuse to believe the gospel and place their faith in Jesus Christ.

How did God respond to their unbelief in Acts 13:42-47?

A.

How do at least some Gentiles respond? (*Acts 13:42, 48-49*)

A.

How did the unbelieving Jews respond after the Gentile's response? (*Acts 13:50*)

A.

6. What is the main purpose or goal of the church according to Ephesians 3:8-11?

A.

7. Besides bringing them into His family, what other purpose do Gentile conversions serve? (*Romans 11:11-14*)

A.

8. Today the church is made up mainly of Gentiles, but that doesn't mean God has abandoned His chosen people. How is this truth revealed in Romans 11:25 and Galatians 3:28?

A.

9. **Homework Assignment:** Where in the world is the church growing the fastest right now?

A.