

4. What does the rainbow symbolize in the O.T.? Does the symbolism fit here too?
5. What does the diminutive form - 'little scroll,' signify in vs. 2?
6. To what does the phrase "delay no longer" refer - vs. 6?
7. Read appendix on *mystery* and discuss its use in vs. 7.
8. In what ways is God's word both bitter and sweet - vs. 9?

Note: *Mystery (Mustērion)*

For the contemporary emphasis on *mystery* in Christian thought see Michael B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy*, SCM Press LTD, 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1.

The brilliant Roman Catholic Philosopher, Gabriel Marcel utilizes the distinction between problem, which is solvable, and mystery, which is not solvable by human reason. See Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, Fordham University Press, New York, and Troisfontaines', *De L'Existence a L'Être*, Tome I et II, Secretariat des Publications, 59, Rue Brufelles, Namur, 1953. The issue of mystery in relation to human reason receives full attention in this brilliant interpretative work on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy.

Note also the place of *mystery* in the Eastern and Western Catholic Theology.

What does the New Testament say about *mustērion*?

The word *mystery* (Latin *mysterium*) is found only one time in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10). Other than this single usage in the Gospel records the word appears only in Paul and in The Revelation. It is used in two senses - (1) the total Christian revelation; (2) and of specific Christian doctrines. It is used in sense number one in I Cor. 2:1; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26, 2:2, 4:3; Eph. 1:9, 6:19; I Tim. 3:9, 16; Rev. 10:7. It is used in sense number two in II Thess. 2:7; I Cor. 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Rom. 11:25; Eph. 5:32; Matt. 13:11; Rev. 1:20, 17:5, 7. See the brief note in B. T. Westcott, *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 180.

John speaks of the entire Christian revelation (Rev. 10:7) when he declares "and was finished the *mystery (mustērion)* of God, as he preached to his slaves the prophets." John uses the term in the sense of a particular Christian doctrine in (1:20) as

he says "The mystery (*mustērion*) of the seven stars." Then the significance of the mystery is revealed in the last section of verse 20. The great "mystery Babylon" (17:5); and verse seven identifies the mystery - "I will tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast." Biblical mysteries are always clarified by special revelation of their significance.

A series of sermons on the great biblical mysteries could clarify this particular biblical teaching.

Sermon Suggestions

The Mystery of The Kingdom (Matthew 13:10ff)

The Mystery which hath been Kept in Silence (Romans 16:25)

The Revealed Mystery of His Will (Ephesians 1:9)

The Mystery of The Gospel (Ephesians 6:19)

The Mystery of Godliness (I Timothy 3:16)

A Sermon Sketch

The Mystery of Iniquity

II Thess. 2:7 - "For the mystery of Lawlessness doth already work: only there is one restraining just now until out of the midst (*ek mesou*) it comes." (A literal translation.)

Introduction:

The problem of evil is the greatest single stumbling block which keeps many from accepting the Christian view of God in Christ and salvation through His blood.

- I. Paul asserts implicitly that evil would be worse were it not for the "restraining one."
- II. All human efforts to cope with this mystery are shattered by the undeniable expression of evil in our world. Is our condition then hopeless?
- III. Our hope of ultimate victory over the "mystery of lawlessness is grounded in the bearer of the "mystery of Godliness."

Conclusion:

What can the cause of Christ do to stem the tide of this evil mystery? Lawlessness shall be finally destroyed, when our Lord and savior comes again, and the court of heaven marshalls all men before the throne to give account to the Living God. (Note the great judgment scene in *The Revelation*.)

SECTION 33

Text 11:1-14

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar; and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenthpart of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

Initial Questions 11:1-14

1. Compare the imagery of vss. 1 and 2 with Zachariah chap. 2:1ff. Discuss.
2. Who are the two witnesses mentioned in vs. 3?
3. Is there any difference in the time during which the holy city shall be trod under foot (42 months), and the prophesying period of the two witnesses (1260 days)?
4. What is the significance of the sack cloth in vs. 3?
5. What was the spiritual condition of Jerusalem as related in vs. 8?
6. What violation of Jewish burial custom do we find in vs. 9?
7. Does this second woe reveal that the havoc which is coming upon the earth is more intense than the first woe?

Further Preparations: Measuring the Temple;
the Testimony of Two Witnesses
Chapter 11:1-14

Verse 1

Abruptly the scene changes. John is commanded to measure the heavenly temple. The real Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and John is writing a quarter of a century after the destruction. This makes the perspective of *The Revelation* more preceptive as its scenes move back and forth between heaven and earth. John's imagery is taken from Ezekiel 40:3. The measurement of time used in this section of scripture is borrowed from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. During this period of time God's two witnesses will be prophesying (11:3). The descriptive imagery of the two witnesses comes from Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, and 11:5-6. When their period of prophesying is finished they shall fall prey to The Beast. This Beast is described in the second part of *The Revelation* (chp. 12ff). Why was John commanded to measure the Temple? In view of Zechariah 2:1ff it is possible that the measuring was to set it apart from all that is unholy. He was to measure the sanctuary, that is where the holy of holies, etc., was located.

Verse 2

The outside court, or the court of the Gentiles was not to be measured. John further sees that "they will trample the holy