

Chapter Six

The Church, The Body of Christ

*become offenceless,
both to Jews and Greeks,
and to the assembly of God;*

*1 Corinthians 10:32
—Young's Literal Translation*

And now we come to the third group of people whom the Scriptures address as a group. I chose the *Young's Literal Translation* of 1 Corinthians 10:32 because it shows the more literal meaning of the Greek word usually translated church. The following from *The Companion Bible* makes this plain:

The Greek word, *ekklesia* means *assembly*, or a gathering of *called-out ones*.¹

E. W. Bullinger, author of the notes in *The Companion Bible* further states that Paul's usage of *ekklesia* speaks of *a new body* consisting of called-out ones from both the Jews and the Gentiles.

The Old Testament reveals only the first two of the three groups: The Jews, The Nations (The Gentiles). The third group was hidden. *A hidden mystery*. Only to be revealed through the Apostle Paul.

God's Plans
God's Mysteries

God's plans are often identified as His mysteries. The English word *mystery* in the New Testament is a transliteration of the Greek word *musterion*, which means a sacred secret.

Several plans of God are identified as His mysteries. Some of these are: the mysteries of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10), the mystery of Israel (Romans 11:25-29), the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:6), the mystery of the catching away of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51) etc.

By far the outstanding mystery revealed in the New Testament is the mystery of the church (*ekklesia*, assembly). This being, the body of Christ to be, was kept hidden throughout the Old Testament. In fact, it was still hidden in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

It was first revealed to Paul. And it was only after at least 17 plus years of separation, during which Paul received his revelation, that he "went up by revelation" and shared what the Lord had revealed to him with the leaders of the followers of the Lord.

Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

Gal. 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen [nations, gentiles]; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Gal. 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Gal. 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Gal. 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Gal. 1:20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Gal. 1:21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Gal. 1:22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

Gal. 1:23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

Gal. 1:24 And they glorified God in me.

Gal. 2:1 ¶ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.

Gal. 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

What Paul received was the revelation of the hidden mystery, the mystery of the church, the assembly which is the body of Christ.

The Hidden Mystery
of The Assembly
of The Body of Christ

The following verses speak of a plan in the mind of God from before the world. But a mystery that was hidden in Him.

Rom. 16:25 ¶ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began,

Rom. 16:25 ¶ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Rom. 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

1Cor. 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Eph. 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Eph. 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Eph. 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Eph. 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Eph. 3:9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Eph. 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Col. 1:26 *Even the **mystery** which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

¹ *The Companion Bible*, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, E. W. Bullinger notes, Appendix #186.