

Basic Distinctions Between Prophecy and The Mystery

Prophecy

1. Concerns a *kingdom*; a political organization (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 6:10).
2. The kingdom to be established *on earth* (Jer. 23:5; Matt. 6:10).
3. Christ to be its *King* (Jer. 23:5; Isa. 9:6,7).
4. The kingdom *prophesied* “since the world began” (Luke 1:68-70; Acts 3:21).
5. Israel to be given *supremacy* over the nations (Isa. 60:10-12; 61:6).
6. The Gentiles to be blessed through Israel’s *instrumentality* (Gen. 22:17,18; Zech. 8:13).
7. The Gentiles to be blessed through Israel’s *rise* (Isa. 60:1-3; Zech. 8:22,23).
8. Prophecy mainly concerns *nations* as such (Isa. 2:4; Ezek. 37:21,22).
9. Prophecy concerns blessings, both material and spiritual, *on earth* (Isa. 2:3,4; 11:1-9; etc.).
10. Prophecy concerns Christ’s *coming to the earth* (Isa. 59:20; Zech. 14:4).
11. In prophecy salvation by grace through faith *alone* is not contemplated.
12. The proclamation of the prophetic program committed particularly to *the twelve* (Matt. 10:5-7; Acts 1:6-8; 3:19-26).
13. The prophetic program revealed through *many* of God’s servants (Luke 1:70; II Pet. 1:21).
14. Old testament writers frequently did not understand the prophecies made known through them (Dan. 12:8-10; I Pet. 1:10-12).

The Mystery

1. Concerns a *body*; a living *organism* (I Cor. 12:12,27; Eph. 4:12-16).
2. The body given a position *in heaven* (Eph. 1:3; 2:5-6; Col. 3:1-3).
3. Christ its living *Head* (Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 1:18).
4. The body chosen in Christ before the world began, but “*kept secret since the world began*” (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:4-11; 3:5-9).
5. Jew and Gentile placed on the *same level* before God (Rom. 10:12; 11:32; Eph. 2:16,17).
6. The Gentiles blessed through Israel’s *obstinacy* (Acts 13:44-46; Rom. 11:28-32).
7. The Gentiles blessed through Israel’s *fall* (Acts 28:27,28; Rom. 11:11,12,15).
8. The mystery concerns *individuals* (Rom. 10:12,13; II Cor. 5:14-17).
9. The mystery concerns “all spiritual blessings *in the heavenlies*” (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1-3).
10. The mystery explains Christ’s present *absence from the earth* (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:1-3).
11. Salvation by grace through faith alone lies at the very heart of the mystery (Rom. 3:21-26; 4:5; Eph. 2:8,9).
12. The proclamation of the mystery committed particularly to *Paul* (Eph. 3:1-3,8,9; Col. 1:24-27).
13. The mystery revealed through *one* man: Paul (Gal. 1:1,11,12; 2:2,7,9; Eph. 3:2,3).
14. Paul both understood and longed that others might understand the mystery revealed through him (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9-10; 2:1-3).