

The Apostle Paul & The Mystery of Christ

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What is “the Mystery” the Apostle Paul preached?

How each believer answers this question is of critical importance since it is by “[Paul’s] gospel” and the “preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery” that believers are established (see Rom. 16:25). Complicating the issue is the fact that several major ministries are built upon and promote common misperceptions of what this “mystery” actually is.

In approaching this topic, we must be clear that we are not focusing on the smaller, previously unrevealed “mysteries” Paul communicated from time to time. These include the “mystery” that we shall not all sleep, but will all be changed at the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51), the “mystery” that God’s design of the husband and wife relationship reflects “Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32), and the “mystery of iniquity” that Paul refers to when discussing that “wicked (one)” who is to come (2 Thess. 2:7-8).

No, this paper will focus on and attempt to define the primary doctrine Paul calls “the mystery,” the teaching that is part of the overall will of God revealed to Paul (1 Cor. 2:7, Eph. 1:9, 3:3); the “mystery” that establishes believers in the faith (Rom. 16:25), “fills up” (or completes) the word of God (Col. 1:25-26), and is set forth to all nations “for the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26).

THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF “THE MYSTERY”

Without doubt, the most accurate way to define “the mystery” preached by the Apostle Paul is to use the Holy Spirit-inspired words Paul himself used to define it!

Of the few places in the Scriptures that Paul provides us with an actual definition of the mystery, the most prominent and thorough definition is in Ephesians 3:

EPHESIANS 3

³...by revelation [the Lord] made known unto me the mystery... ⁶that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

As Paul defines it, the “mystery” is about the Gentiles being “fellowheirs.” The “mystery” is about the Gentiles being of the “same body” (literally, a “joint-body”). And the mystery is about the Gentiles being “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

These are the specific words Paul uses to define “the mystery” and these are the words we need to understand if we are to be established by it.

As Gentiles who are now “fellowheirs,” we must understand with whom we are co-heirs and what we are to inherit with them.

As members of a “joint-body,” we must understand what this particular body is and with whom are we joint-members of it.

And as “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel,” we must understand what “His promise” is and how, by the gospel, we partake of it.

If we first understand this comprehensive definition of the “mystery” here in Ephesians 3:6, we will also understand the Apostle Paul’s other references to it.

As we work our way through the three stated aspects of the mystery, we will find an extremely consistent overall theme among them.

THE GENTILES ARE “FELLOW-HEIRS”

The Greek word in Ephesians 3:6 which is translated “fellow-heirs” is the word *sugkleronomos* (4789). Other ways to translate this word would be “together-tenants” or “joint-enjoyers-of-an-allotment.” It is the idea that two or more designated individuals or groups are going to join together to share in an allotment or inheritance. *Sugkleronomos*, which comes from *sun* (4862 - “with”) and *kleronomos* (2818 - “heir”), is used three other times in the New Testament, once each in Romans 8:17, Hebrews 11:9, and 1 Peter 3:7. Those references firmly establish the meaning of *sugkleronomos*:

Romans 8:17 reveals that believers who suffer with Christ will have the special privilege of being *sugkleronomos* (“joint-heirs”) with Him. This means that suffering believers will share in, be co-heirs of, the specific inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Interestingly enough, this same verse declares all believers to be “heirs” (*kleronomos*) of God by virtue of the fact that believers are children of God (see 8:16). Thus, there are “heirs” of an inheritance (*kleronomos*) and there are those who are described as sharing an inheritance; which are “joint-heirs” (*sugkleronomos*). Romans 8:17 will be brought up again in the next section.

Hebrews 11:9 teaches that Isaac and Jacob will be “joint-heirs” (*sugkleronomos*) with Abraham. This means Isaac and Jacob will inherit a portion – an allotment - of the very same land that Abraham was promised to inherit. They are “sharers together” of the inheritance. This verse will also be brought up again.

1 Peter 3:7 teaches that the husband and the wife will be “joint-heirs” (*sugkleronomos*) of the “grace of life.” The husband and the wife will both – together – participate in and inherit the miracle of *life itself* as they beget children according to God’s perfect design. In this way, they are “joint-heirs” of this overwhelming blessing.

Taking all of this information about *sugkleronomos* into account, Gentiles who read and understand this “joint-heirs” aspect of Ephesians 3:6 will naturally ask the question: “*What do we get? What is it that I and my fellow Gentiles are going to inherit?*”

They will also ask, “*With whom are us Gentiles going to share this inheritance?*”

It is important to note that Ephesians 3:6 does not identify what specific inheritance the Gentiles are now co-inheriting. The passage does not say “the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs of a new inheritance, namely XXX.” The passage just says “The Gentiles have become ‘fellow-heirs.’”

To properly identify the inheritance, then, we must first understand with whom it is we Gentiles are sharing our newly-acquired inheritance...

Some might try to assert that Paul, in Ephesians 3:6, is defining the mystery by reiterating the truth of Romans 8:17, that those who suffer with Christ will be “joint-heirs” with Him. But in Romans 8:17, the joint-participants in the heirship are defined as *Christ* and *those who suffer for Him*. In Ephesians 3:6, Paul has defined one of the joint-participants solely by their nationality (“Gentiles”), not by the level of their participation in suffering. Romans 8:17 will not help us define with whom the “Gentiles” are “fellow-heirs” in Ephesians 3:6.

What we can confidently assert is that, throughout the Scriptures, the term “Gentiles” (literally, “the Nations”) is always used in contrast to the nation of Israel. In the Scriptures, there are “Jews”...and there are “Gentiles.”

With whom else, then, could the Gentiles be “fellow-heirs?”

Indeed, as we will see going forward, the immediate context of this word in Ephesian 3:6 and the rest of Paul’s writings solidly confirm the fact that the Gentiles have become “fellow-heirs” with the Jews!

What would such a conclusion mean?

It would mean the Gentiles and the Jews will inherit a portion of the very same thing! If this is accurate, it would certainly explain why Paul did not feel the need to identify the inheritance awaiting the “joint-heirs”; because the inheritance of the Jews had already been firmly established and explained throughout the Scriptures! It is a primary theme of the entire Bible!

Furthermore, a Gentile “joint-heirship” with the Jews is in perfect agreement with what the Lord Jesus Christ told Paul to preach when Our Lord first called the persecutor on the road to Damascus. At that moment, the Lord Jesus said:

ACTS 26

¹⁷...now I send thee [to the Gentiles] ¹⁸to open their eyes...that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and [an] inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.

At the time the Apostle Paul was called, those who were “sanctified by faith” in the Lord Jesus Christ were those Jewish believers who had responded to the Lord’s message that the “Kingdom of Heaven was at hand!” (Matt. 3:2) A primary part of the Lord Jesus’ instructions to Paul on the road to Damascus was to tell the Gentiles who believed that they, too, had an inheritance with those sanctified Jewish believers!

Thus, the message here on the road to Damascus is that of “the mystery!” The message Paul was sent to proclaim was that the Gentiles would be “fellow-heirs” with those Jewish believers!

And the exact wording of Acts 26:18 is critical to our understanding of the mystery. The Lord Jesus did **not** say the Gentiles and those Israelites “sanctified by their faith” would both inherit something *new*; He said the Gentiles would have an inheritance “**among those**” Jewish believers who already had faith! The Gentiles would inherit a portion, an allotment of the **same inheritance** already being inherited by those Jewish believers!

The remaining question about identifying the specific inheritance then answers itself!

What were the Jewish believers to inherit? The Kingdom of God upon the earth! (Ps. 2:8, Jer. 3:17-18, 23:5, Isa. 2:2-3, 35:17-25, Joel 3:16-18, Micah 4:1-2, Zephaniah 3:14-17, Zechariah 2:4-5, 10-12, 8:3-8, 22-23, 14:8-11, 16-18, Matt. 5:5, 6:10, 19:28, Luke 2:14). It is the theme of the entire Bible ever since God first had Abraham walk to and fro and throughout the entire land he had been promised! [See Appendix 1 – “Inheritance in the Old Testament.”]

If the Jews were to have an inheritance in the coming Kingdom of God upon the earth...and the “mystery” is that the Gentiles are to be “fellow-heirs”...then doesn’t that mean the Gentiles will have an inheritance, an allotment, in the coming Kingdom of God upon the earth? YES!

This – the Gentile heirship - is the secret that was never before revealed! This is the inheritance and “heir-ship” that is constantly referred to throughout the New Testament! [See Appendix 2 – “Inheritance in the New Testament.”]

“The Mystery” is that the Gentiles are now “fellow-heirs,” joint-inheritors with Israel in the long-promised, coming Kingdom of God!

Again, this interpretation is completely consistent with Paul’s other writings:

COLOSSIANS 1

¹²...the Father...hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; ¹³Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Paul told the Thessalonians that God...

1 THESSALONIANS 2

¹²...hath called [them] unto His kingdom and glory.

And when Paul wanted to motivate his Gentile converts to properly walk according to their calling, he referenced that inheritance in the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Messiah (Christ) of Israel:

GALATIANS 5

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are manifest...²¹...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

EPHESIANS 5

⁵For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

The motivation in these passages is clear: *“Those who participate in such sinful behaviors don’t have an inheritance in the Kingdom of God.”* The insinuation is, *“but you do! So act like it!”*

In the Old Testament, the inheritance of the patriarchs was clearly and repeatedly defined. Abraham was initially promised a specific land. He was asked to walk to and fro and all through the land he was to inherit (Gen. 13:14-17). He was told his seed after him would inherit the land (Gen. 12:7). Isaac and Jacob were to be “joint-heirs” of this land with Abraham (Gen. 26:24, 35:12, cf. Heb. 11:9). And specific portions of this land were eventually divided up so that each Israeli tribe’s inheritance was clearly delineated (see the whole of Ezek. 48).

But there was never any hint of an inheritance for the Gentiles among them! There was never any information about the Gentiles being “fellow-heirs!” That was the mystery, the secret!

The Gentiles of faith are the ones who will fill up the remaining seats at the Lord’s banquet in the Kingdom (Luke 14:16-24)! They are those from the “highways and byways” who are being brought to the feast after the “firstborn sons,” Israel, declined their invitations!

To be clear, it had always been revealed that there would be Gentiles in the Kingdom of God. In the coming Kingdom, the Gentiles will grab the skirt of a Jew and say “We have heard God is with you!” (Zech. 8:23) What was not known, however, was that there would be Gentiles who would be “fellow-heirs” with the Jews in that Kingdom!

The Apostle Paul proclaims early in the book of Ephesians that “we have obtained an **inheritance**” (Eph. 1:11) and we have received the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing that **inheritance** (Eph. 1:14)! In 3:6, Paul affirms that this inheritance is part of a “joint-heirship!”

All three aspects of the mystery defined by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:6 speak to this very same concept; that the Gentiles have an inheritance with (or among) the nation of Israel. It is initially defined by the term “fellow-heirs.” It is next reinforced by the fact that the Gentiles are “of the same body.”

THE GENTILES ARE “JOINT-MEMBERS OF HIS BODY”

The second aspect of the mystery reveals that the Gentiles are members of the “same body.” The Greek word used here is *sussoma* (4954), which can be expressed as “joint-body” or “together-body.” This word, like the word *sugkleronomos*, is made up of two words; *sun* (4862 – “with”) and *soma* (4983 – “body”). It communicates the idea that two or more designated individuals or groups are joined together to make up a specific body.

While this specific Greek word is only used in Ephesians 3:6, the “body” made up of joint-participants can be easily be identified by Paul’s other writings.

1 CORINTHIANS 12

¹³**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles..**

In the above passage, Paul identifies a “body” which is made up of Gentiles...and Jews. The two designated groups are “joint-members” of this body.

Identifying to whom this body belongs is just as paramount as identifying who makes up the body:

1 CORINTHIANS 12

²⁷Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

This body is Christ’s body; the body of the Messiah (Christ) of Israel.

The mystery proclaims that the Gentiles have the privilege of sharing with the Israelites in the very make-up of the promised Messiah’s Body; the “Body of Christ.”

Why is the joint-participation of Gentiles and Jews in Christ’s body included as a component of the “mystery?” Because it is the Messiah of prophecy who is the inheritor of all things.

ISAIAH 65

⁹And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. ¹⁰And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

When Gentiles and Jews became part the Messiah’s very body, they became part of the inheritor of all things. This explains why Paul prays that the Ephesians would have “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” so that they would understand...“the riches of the glory of HIS inheritance in the Saints...” (Eph. 1:17b – 18). By virtue of their baptism into and identification with the Messiah of Israel, Gentiles will share with the Jews in the “riches and glory” of “His Inheritance in the saints!” Thus, the Gentiles need to understand it!

What is “His inheritance in the saints?”

The Old Testament defines “His Inheritance” as redeemed Israel (Psalm 33:12, 78:71, 94:14, Jeremiah 10:16)! The Gentiles will share in the “riches of the glory” of redeemed Israel because the Gentiles, by virtue of “the mystery,” are part of the very one who will inherit those riches!

The Lord Jesus, of whose Body the Gentiles are now a part, is the singular “seed” to whom the promises spoken to Abraham were made (Gal. 3:16). The inheritance, which is the result of the promise (Gal. 3:18), all belongs to the Messiah. In His grace and by virtue of the Lord’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He has given out allotments to His people; specific portions to Israel’s descendants (see the whole of Ezek. 48).

Based on the truth of the “mystery” in Ephesians 3:6, our Lord will give an allotment, an inheritance to the Gentiles as well!

In both of these first two aspects of the mystery, the theme and message are consistent. The Gentiles are joined together with the Jews; joined in co-heirship and joined to co-inhabit and make up the Messiah’s very body.

The Gentiles have an inheritance with the Jews, not because they have become Jewish, but, by virtue of “the mystery,” they have become “fellow heirs,” co-inheritors of their own allotment in Christ’s glorious Kingdom.

Furthermore, the Gentiles have a claim to the inheritance belonging to the “inheritor of all things,” not because they are a part of the fleshly descendants of Abraham, but because they have been baptized into the “inheritor,” the seed to whom *the promises* were made.

Which bring us to the final and most blessed part of the mystery preached by the Apostle Paul:

THE GENTILES ARE “PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL”

The final aspect of the mystery that ties them all together is “His promise” and the fact that the Gentiles are now (literally) “joint-partakers” in it. The Greek word for “joint-partakers” here is *summetochos*. It, like our two previous words, is a compound word, this one made up of *sun* (with – 4862) and *motochos* (sharing in, partaking). It communicates the idea that two or more designated individuals or groups are joined together to partake in or partner together to participate in something.

As with the other two aspects of the mystery, the group partnering and partaking with the Gentiles is the Jews who were “sanctified by faith in Christ.”

The thing that the Gentiles and the Jews are partaking of together in this aspect of “the mystery” is “His promise.”

What is “His promise?”

While virtually every devout Jew will automatically associate this phrase to God’s “promise” to Abraham, it is worth establishing that fact from the New Testament and especially from the other writings of the Apostle Paul.

In Galatians 3:16-18, Paul establishes that this “inheritance” was to be given to Abraham’s singular seed, a single “inheritor” (the Messiah) by a “promise.”

GALATIANS 3

¹⁶...Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ...¹⁸...God gave [the inheritance] to Abraham by promise.

Performing a word study of Paul’s usage of the word “promise” will reveal that when Paul uses the word “promise,” he is almost always referring to the promise(s) made to Abraham.

The nature of the Abrahamic promise(s) should be taken into account when reading through the Apostle Paul’s usage of the word. God’s promise to Abraham entailed a specific land, yes, but the very nature of “the promise” *requires a resurrection* for that land to be forever occupied. It should also be noted that “the promise” for one man’s seed to be a blessing to “all nations,” by its very nature, requires God’s *supernatural empowerment* for the Jewish people to be witnesses

to “all nations.” This would, of course, require the Jews to be able to communicate with the other nations (i.e., by speaking the tongues/languages of the nations). All of these aspects of the Abrahamic promise(s) are brought out in the Apostle Paul’s continual usage of the word “promise.” (See Appendix 3 – “Promise” used in the New Testament).

Galatians 3:29, written to Gentiles and Jews in the body of Christ, sums up all the aspects of “the mystery” in one concise phrase:

GALATIANS 3

²⁹...if ye be Christ’s [i.e., part of His body, whether Jew or Gentile], then are ye Abraham’s seed [the seed to whom the promises were made], and heirs [joint-partakers of the inheritance] according to the promise [made to Abraham].

Other uses of the phrase “His promise” in the New Testament also point to the original Abrahamic promise(s) and the final, ultimate possession of that inheritance:

2 PETER 3

⁹...The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

and...

2 PETER 3

¹³...Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Thus, the three aspects of the “mystery” (joint-heirship, a joint-body, and joint-partaking in “His promise”) are very tightly interwoven; so much so that they should never be interpreted individually without consideration of the other two.

While the previous two aspects of the mystery firmly establish the identity of those with whom the Gentiles share co-heirship (i.e, the Jewish people), this third aspect of the mystery firmly establishes the actual inheritance of which the Gentiles have become “co-heirs.” This inheritance is ***the land***, the earth in the coming Kingdom of God.

The inheritance of the land was first established with Abraham. The singular “seed” of Abraham who is to inherit all things (Christ) was established in the conversation with Abraham. And both are eternally tied together and summed up in “the promise” that was made to Abraham’s seed.

The Gentile participation in these things is the secret, “the mystery” that was previously hidden.

This is truth that will establish believers today and this is truth that Paul did not want the Gentiles to forget. The great Apostle distinctly admonishes the Gentiles to remember that, while “in times past” they were “strangers from the covenants of promise,” (Eph. 2:12) he emphatically affirms that, now, they are “strangers [from the covenants of promise] no more!” (Eph. 2:19)

The “mystery” reveals that now Gentiles, with our Jewish co-heirs, look for “a new heaven and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13, cf. 1 Peter 1:3-4); we, with Abraham, look for the “Jerusalem from

above” (Heb. 11:10), the Jerusalem which is “our mother” (Gal. 4:26), the Jerusalem that is “coming down from heaven” (Rev. 21:2). And we look for “peace on earth,” where Christ will rule the nations in truth and justice.

The extremely clear definition of the mystery in Ephesians 3:6 gives us insight into the other time Paul defines the mystery in much more concise terms. In Col. 1:27, Paul says:

COLOSSIANS 1

²⁷ **...this mystery among the Gentiles...[which] is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

This very short definition of the mystery is in complete harmony with Ephesians 3:6. Here, in the letter to the Colossians, the “mystery” is that the Messiah (Christ) of Israel is now among Gentiles; and that presence of the Messiah “among them” offers them the hope of the glory to come (i.e., in His Kingdom).

These two Scripture passages are the only two instances where Paul attaches the word “mystery” to a specific definition. The clarity and detail set forth in Ephesians 3:6 should forever settle the question of the mystery’s true definition.

WHAT THE MYSTERY IS NOT

If the words of Paul in Ephesians 3:6 and Colossians 1:27 make up an accurate definition of the mystery (and the inerrancy of Scripture demands that they do), then we can definitively state what the mystery is NOT as well as what it is.

1) **“The mystery” is not a new way of obtaining righteousness.** Though some attempt to define “a method of achieving righteousness” as part of the mystery, nowhere in Ephesians 3:6, Colossians 1:27, or anywhere else does Paul say the “mystery” is a new way of obtaining righteousness. Paul clearly states that the “righteousness which is of faith” he preached was “witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom. 3:21); Consequently, the “righteousness of faith” cannot be a part of the previously hidden “mystery!” Paul establishes the “righteousness by faith” by pointing to Abraham (Rom. 4:1-5) and to David (Rom. 4:6-8)! Thus, while this “righteousness by faith” was *manifested* by Paul (Rom. 3:21), it was not *initiated* by his ministry! The Apostle Paul clearly asserts that the means by which righteousness is imputed by God has always been the same! Those who associate the “righteousness of faith” with “the mystery” are not teaching the “mystery” of Ephesians 3:6!

2) **“The mystery” is not a new coming of the Lord (secret or otherwise).** Nowhere in Ephesians 3:6, Colossians 1:27, or anywhere else in Paul’s writings does he say the “mystery” entails a new, never-before-revealed “coming” of the Lord. The “coming” (*parousia* – 3952) of the Lord taught by the Apostle Paul (1 Thess. 4:15) was associated with the “Day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2) just as was the previously revealed, post-tribulational coming taught by the Lord Jesus Christ!* Those who associate a “secret coming” with “the mystery” are not teaching “the mystery” of Ephesians 3:6!

3) **“The mystery” is not a new destination or inheritance for believers.** Nowhere in Ephesians 3:6, Colossians 1:27, or anywhere else in Paul’s writings does he say the “mystery”

introduces a new **destination** for the Gentiles. One ministry built on this incorrect understanding of the “mystery” states the following:

*“The hope of Israel was a great kingdom here on the earth. The hope of Job was to live in the new earth. And the hope of the members of the church of the dispensation of the mystery is to go to a place and position far above [the] heavens** to rule over principalities and powers there.”*

Where is the Scriptural support for such a statement about the “church of the mystery?” Where does Paul say the church’s *destination* is in heaven or anywhere other than the earth?

Please note, Brethren, this particular interpretation of the “mystery” has Jews and Gentiles going to *different places*! They have different inheritances! Yet the Apostle Paul says the heart of “the mystery” is that the Gentiles are “joint-heirs” with Israel!

Doesn’t “joint-heirs” mean they are going to inherit the same thing?

If Israel inherits the earth and the Gentiles inherit a place in “the heavens,” the Gentiles are not “joint-heirs” with anyone!

Furthermore, if the Gentiles have been made a part of the Messiah’s Body, how can we maintain that our inheritance is going to be different than His?

If the Gentiles “in Christ” are “Abraham’s seed” (Gal. 3:29), how can “the promise” we partake of (in Eph. 3:6) be anything other than “the promise” made to Abraham’s seed?

As detailed in Ephesians 3:6, the mystery is about the Gentiles sharing in the inheritance already defined for their Jewish brothers who are in Christ! It is a glorious and wonderful hope that we Gentiles need to search out and understand! That is why the Apostle Paul writes and prays that we would have the “spirit of wisdom and revelation” to understand what is “the hope of our calling” (Eph. 1:17-18a)! In this passage, Paul is not introducing a new hope for the church without telling us what it is (as some believe and teach)! Paul, here, is praying that the Gentiles will have the spirit of wisdom and revelation necessary to **search out** the “hope of His calling” already revealed throughout the Jewish Scriptures!

“The mystery” is a glorious truth. It is God’s wonderful plan, not to separate Jews in one place and Gentiles in another place, but to ultimately gather “in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth; even in Him!” (Eph. 1:10)

Those who would seek to make “the mystery” about a new destination “in the heavenlies” would do well to heed the warning of another individual “mystery” Paul taught which is characteristic of the time period in which we live today...

A “MYSTERY” WITH A WARNING

One other “secret” that Paul revealed has a significant bearing on how we view and teach the doctrine of “the mystery” defined in Ephesians 3:6. This “secret” is found in Romans 11:

ROMANS 11

²⁵...For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. ²⁶And so all Israel shall be saved...

The individual “mystery” Paul reveals here is about Israel’s temporary blindness and their eventual restoration. After Israel’s blindness is removed, after “the fullness of the Gentiles come in,” “...all Israel shall be saved.” Paul states that “ignorance” of this particular “mystery” will make one “wise in their own conceits.”

This is a profound warning relating to the topic of this paper.

If the Gentiles do not realize that the time of their privileged position is *temporary*, conceit will follow; they will start to assume they have permanently replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people. But that is not true.

Israel will beyond doubt be restored to their position of prominence. The covenants made with the descendants of Jacob (Israel) declared that they – not the Gentiles - will be a “Kingdom of Priests” for our God and King who will reign from Jerusalem (Ex. 19:5-6, Isa. 24:23).

The relevance to our current topic is this: If Paul says we risk “being wise in our own conceits” by not recognizing the very *temporary* aspect of our current privilege over the nation of Israel, how much more do we risk conceit by saying that we will receive a *permanent*, more prestigious and privileged inheritance than Israel’s?

If we speak of a “heavenly privilege” and a “heavenly destination” as if we will have a greater eternal privilege than God’s chosen people, are we not in even greater danger of being “wise in our own conceits?”

Do we really think we Gentiles are to inherit something better than God’s chosen, His firstborn?

Shall we Gentiles not, rather, be fully content to be “fellow-heirs” with God’s chosen?

Such is the proper admonition of “the mystery” taught by the Apostle Paul.

Footnotes:

*See Matt. 24:29-31. Note that the “coming” (*parousia*) is *after* the signs in the heavens. These signs *precede* and signal the ushering in of the “Day of the Lord” (see Acts 2:20). 1 Thess. 5:1-2 associates the coming of 1 Thess. 4:15 with the “Day of the Lord.” Also compare 1 Thess. 5:2, the “thief in the night” with 2 Peter 3:10. The same “Parousia” (coming) is being discussed in both passages. For further study, see the Author’s messages on “the Return of the Lord.”

**Ephesians 1:3 is commonly referred to when a “destination” in “heavenly places” is discussed. However, being *blessed* in heavenly places with the spiritual blessings *clearly defined* in Ephesians 1:4-10 in no way indicates that we will eventually *abide* in heavenly places. No where does the text introduce the heavens as a *destination*. See the Author’s studies on Ephesians 1.

“Inheritance” in the Old Testament

Because the Bible will sometimes refer to an “heir,” an “inheritor,” or an “inheritance” without clarifying the specific inheritance associated with it, the Bible student would do well to review the foundations laid in the Old Testament regarding “*the* inheritance” and the “inheritors.”

“*The* inheritance” that is referred to consistently throughout the Old Testament is established early in the book of Genesis with the calling of Abraham. Abraham and Abraham’s *seed* were promised an “inheritance” – yet Abraham’s seed is also portrayed as “*His* (the Messiah’s) inheritance.” These inheritances will be realized at the same time.

First, consider the following references to “the inheritance” in the Old Testament:

Genesis 12:1-3, 7: Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed....And the LORD appeared unto Abram [after he had arrived in the land], and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land...

Genesis 15:1-7: After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine **heir**. And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine **heir**; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine **heir**. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to **inherit** it.”

Exodus 32:13: Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall **inherit** *it* for ever.

Psalms 25:12-13: What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall **inherit** the earth.

Psalms 37:9-11: For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall **inherit** the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*. But the meek shall **inherit** the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Ezekiel 47:14: And ye shall **inherit** it, one as well as another: *concerning* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for **inheritance**.

Ezekiel 48:29-31: This *is the land* which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for **inheritance**, and these *are* their portions, saith the Lord GOD. And these *are* the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures. And the gates of the city *shall be* after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben...

Next, consider the following references to “**His** inheritance” in the Old Testament, which is defined as Israel (or “Jacob”):

Deut. 32:8-10: When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD’S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his **inheritance**. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Psalms 33:12-14: Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own **inheritance**. The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

Exodus 34:9: And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it *is* a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine **inheritance**.

Psalms 78:70-71: He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his **inheritance**.

Psalms 94:14: For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his **inheritance**.

Psalms 106:40: Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own **inheritance**.

Zech. 2:12: And the LORD shall **inherit** Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

Finally, these passages seem to indicate the unique position of Christ as “**the** inheritor,” who possesses a unique portion and relationship to that promise of inheritance made to Abraham.

Exodus 15:17: Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine **inheritance**, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* thou hast made for thee to dwell in, *in* the Sanctuary, O Lord, *which* thy hands have established. (cf. Heb. 11:10)

Isaiah 65:9-10: And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an **inheritor** of my mountains: and mine elect shall **inherit** it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

“Inheritance” in the New Testament

With the New Testament’s proclamation of the coming, “at hand” Kingdom of God upon the earth (Matt. 3:2, Luke 2:14), the Old Testament’s theme of the Abrahamic inheritance is once again brought to the forefront of the Biblical narrative. Needless to say, the overwhelming majority of the references relating to an “inheritance” are used in connection with the promises made to Abraham and to his seed.

The New Testament uses 4 words for “inheritance” (or forms of “inheritance” such as “inherit”). The words are: *kleronomia* (always translated “inheritance”), *kleroo* (translated “inheritance” twice and “obtained” once), *kleronomeo* (translated “inherit” 14 times, “heir” 1 time, “heirs” 1 time, “inherited” 1 time, and “obtained” 1 time), and *kleros* (translated “lots” 6 times, “inheritance” 2 times, “lot” 2 times, “part” 2 times, and “heritage” 1 time). The definition and each occurrence of each word are listed below.

Do any of the following passages introduce a new inheritance? Or do the references below refer to the **Abrahamic** inheritance or **His** (Messiah’s) inheritance as described in the Old Testament?

Kleronomia - 2817 (definition)

- 1) an inheritance, property received (or to be received) by inheritance.
- 2) what is given to one as a possession
 - 2a) the eternal blessedness of the consummated kingdom of God which is to be expected after the visible return of Christ
 - 2b) the share which an individual will have in that eternal blessedness

Occurrences of *kleronomia* (14)

Matt. 21:38: But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his **inheritance**.

Mark 12:7: But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the **inheritance** shall be ours.

Luke 12:13: And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the **inheritance** with me.

Luke 20:14: But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the **inheritance** may be ours.

Acts 7:5: And [the Lord] gave [Abraham] none **inheritance** in [the promised land], no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

Acts 20:32: And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an **inheritance** among all them which are sanctified.

Gal. 3:18: For if the **inheritance** *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Eph. 1:14: Which is the earnest of our **inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Eph. 1:18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints...

Eph. 5:5: For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Col. 3:24: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of **the inheritance**: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Heb. 9:15: And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal **inheritance**.

Heb. 11:8: By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an **inheritance**, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

1 Peter 1:3-4: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an **inheritance** incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...(i.e., the city that is coming down).

Kleroo - 2820 (definition)

- 1) to cast lots, determine by lot
- 2) to choose by lot
- 3) to allot, assign by lot
 - 3a) on to another as a possession
- 4) in NT; to make a lot, i.e. heritage, private possession

Occurrences of Kleroo (3)

Translated Inheritance – 2 times

Translated Obtained – 1 time

Eph. 1:11 (2 times): In whom also we have **obtained** an **inheritance**, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will...

Heb. 1:4: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by **inheritance** obtained a more excellent name than they.

Kleronomeo - 2816 (definition)

- 1) to receive by a lot, receive by lot
 - 1a) especially to receive a part of an inheritance, receive as an inheritance, obtain by right of inheritance
 - 1b) to be an heir, to inherit
- 2) to receive the portion assigned to one, receive an allotted portion, receive as one's own or as a possession
- 3) to become a partaker of, to obtain

Occurrences of *Kleronomeo* (18)

Translated Inherit – 14 times

Matt. 5:5: Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall **inherit** the earth.

Matt. 19:29: And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall **inherit** everlasting life.

Matt. 25:34: Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit** the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...

Mark 10:17: And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may **inherit** eternal life?

Luke 10:25: And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to **inherit** eternal life?

Luke 18:18: And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to **inherit** eternal life?

1 Cor. 6:9-10 (2 times): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not **inherit** the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall **inherit** the kingdom of God.

1 Cor. 15:50 (2 times): Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot **inherit** the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption **inherit** incorruption.

Gal. 5:21: Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not **inherit** the kingdom of God.

Heb. 6:12: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience **inherit** the promises.

1 Peter 3:9: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should **inherit** a blessing.

Rev. 21:7: He that overcometh shall **inherit** all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Translated Heir – 1 time

Gal. 4:30: Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be **heir** with the son of the freewoman.

Translated Heirs – 1 time

Heb. 1:14: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be **heirs** of salvation?

Translated Inherited – 1 time

Heb. 12:17: For ye know how that afterward, when he would have **inherited** the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Translated Obtained – 1 time

Heb. 1:4: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance **obtained** a more excellent name than they.

Kleros - 2819 (definition)

- 1) an object used in casting or drawing lots, which was a pebble, a potsherd, or a bit of wood.
 - 1a) the lots of several persons concerned, inscribed with their names, were thrown together in a vase, which was then shaken, and he whose lot fell out first upon the ground was the one chosen
- 2) what is obtained by lot, allotted portion
 - 2a) a portion of the ministry common to the apostles
 - 2b) used of the part which one will have in eternal salvation
 - 2b1) of salvation itself
 - 2b2) the eternal salvation which God has assigned to the saints
 - 2c) of persons
 - 2c1) those whose care and oversight has been assigned to one [allotted charge], used of Christian churches, the administration of which falls to the lot of prebyters.

Occurrences of Kleros (13)

Translated Lots – 6 times

Matt. 27:35: And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting **lots**: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast **lots**.

Mark 15:24: And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting **lots** upon them, what every man should take.

Luke 23:34: Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast **lots**.

John 19:24: They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast **lots**. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Acts 1:26: And they gave forth their **lots**; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Translated Inheritance – 2 times

Acts 26:18: To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and **inheritance** among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Col. 1:12: Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the **inheritance** of the saints in light...

Translated Lot – 2 times

Acts 1:26: And they gave forth their lots; and the **lot** fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Acts 8:21: Thou hast neither part nor **lot** in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Translated Part – 2 times

Acts 1:17: For he was numbered with us, and had obtained **part** of this ministry.

Acts 1:25: That he may take **part** of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Translated Heritage – 1 time

1 Peter 5:3: Neither as being lords over *God's heritage*, but being ensamples to the flock.

There is one more word in the New Testament very closely associated with kleronomia, kleroo, kleronomeo, and kleros: that word is kleronomos (2818), which is used 15 times and is always translated "Heir." Those occurrences are listed below.

Kleronomos - 2818 (definition)

1) one who receives by lot, an heir

1a) an heir

1b) in Messianic usage, one who receives his allotted possession by right of sonship

2) one who has acquired or obtained the portion allotted to him

Occurrences of Kleronomos (15)

Translated heir – 8 times

Matt. 21:38: But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the **heir**; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

Mark 12:7: But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the **heir**; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

Luke 20:14: But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the **heir**: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

Rom. 4:13: For the promise, that he should be the **heir** of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Gal. 4:1: Now I say, *That* the **heir**, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all...

Gal. 4:7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an **heir** of God through Christ.

Heb. 1:2: Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed **heir** of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...

Heb. 11:7: By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became **heir** of the righteousness which is by faith.

Translated heirs – 7 times

Rom. 4:14: For if they which are of the law *be* **heirs**, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

Rom. 8:17 (2 times): And if children, then **heirs**; **heirs** of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Gal. 3:29: And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and **heirs** according to the promise.

Titus 3:7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made **heirs** according to the hope of eternal life.

Heb. 6:17: Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the **heirs** of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath...

James 2:5: Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and **heirs** of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

“Promise” used in the New Testament

A. Relevant uses of “His Promise,” “the Promise,” “Promise,” etc. by Paul

(50x)

A study of the Apostle Paul’s usage of the word “Promise” can be very advantageous when attempting to interpret Ephesians 3:6, where it says “Gentiles [are]...(literally) joint-partakers of **His promise** in Christ by the gospel.”

There are times that Paul refers to the Abrahamic promise in regard to the land and times that he refers to the fact that the Abrahamic inheritance will, by necessity, require a resurrection. There are times Paul refers to the promise that Abraham’s seed would be a blessing to all nations and he relates the Holy Spirit’s gift of languages to the original Abrahamic promise.

In light of Paul’s usage of the word “Promise,” it would be very difficult to assert that he means anything other than the Abrahamic promise when writing Ephesians 3:6.

Acts 13:22-23: “And when [God] had removed [King Saul], He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to **His promise** raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”

Acts 13:32-33: “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that **the promise** which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.”

Acts 26:6-8: “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of **the promise** made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

Romans 1:1-3: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had **promised** afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh...”

Romans 4:13-14 (2x): “For **the promise**, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and **the promise** made of none effect: ”

Romans 4:16: “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end **the promise** might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all...”

Romans 4:20-21: “[Abram} staggered not at **the promise** of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God... And being fully persuaded that, what he had **promised**, he was able also to perform.”

Romans 9:4-5: “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and **the promises**; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

Romans 9:8-9 (2x): “That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of **the promise** are counted for the seed. For this is the word of **promise**, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.”

Romans 15:8-12: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm **the promises** made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And 18again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”

2 Cor. 1:20-22: “For all **the promises** of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

2 Corinthians 7:1: “Having therefore these **promises**, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Galatians 3:14-29 (8x): “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive **the promise** of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were **the promises** made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make **the promise** of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of **promise**: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom **the promise** was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against **the promises** of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that **the promise** by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to **the promise**.”

Galatians 4:23-28 (2x): “But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by **promise**. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written,

Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of **promise**.”

Ephesians 1:13-14: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of **promise**, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians 2:12: “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of **promise**, having no hope, and without God in the world...” (and see Eph. 2:19).

Ephesians 3:6: “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of **His promise** in Christ by the gospel...”

Ephesians 6:2-3: “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with **promise**;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. ”

1 Timothy 4:8: “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having **promise** of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

2 Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to **the promise** of life which is in Christ Jesus...”

Titus 1:2-3: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, **promised** before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

Hebrews 4:1-2: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a **promise** being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

Hebrews 6:12-15 (3x): “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit **the promises**. For when God made **promise** to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained **the promise**.”

Hebrews 6:17-18: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of **promise** the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us...”

Hebrews 7:6: “But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had **the promises**.”

Hebrews 8:6-7: “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better **promises**. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”

Hebrews 9:15: “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive **the promise** of eternal inheritance.”

Hebrews 10:23: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that **promised**;)...”

Hebrews 10:36-37: “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive **the promise**. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

Hebrews 11:9-11 (3x): “By faith he sojourned in the land of **promise**, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same **promise**: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had **promised**.”

Hebrews 11:13-18 (2x): “These all died in faith, not having received **the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received **the promises** offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called...”

Hebrews 11:32-34: “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained **promises**, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

Hebrews 11:39: “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not **the promise**.”

Hebrews 12:25-26: “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath **promised**, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”

B. Relevant uses of “His Promise,” “the Promise,” “Promise,” etc. by Others (12x)

Luke 24:49: “And, behold, I send **the promise** of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:4: “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for **the promise** of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”

Acts 2:33: “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father **the promise** of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Acts 2:39: “For **the promise** is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Acts 7:5: “And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he **promised** that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.”

Acts 7:17-18: “But when the time of **the promise** drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.”

James 1:12: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath **promised** to them that love him.”

James 2:5: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath **promised** to them that love him?”

2 Peter 3:4: “And saying, Where is **the promise** of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

2 Peter 3:9-10a: “The Lord is not slack concerning **His promise**, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...”

2 Peter 3:13: “Nevertheless we, according to **His promise**, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

1 John 2:25: “And this is **the promise** that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”