

Grace Bible Church  
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Tree of Life  
Weekly Review  
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The Vine and the Branches and some of the unique doctrinal principles that takes place right after our LORD and His disciples celebrated the Passover.

The Word of GOD is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. All scripture is GOD-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

**So that the man {or woman} of GOD may become mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This morning, we will continue with our study of John 15, concerning the Vine and the Branches and some of the unique doctrinal principles that takes place right after our LORD and His disciples celebrated the Passover.

It was here, in the Gospel of John, that our LORD began to reveal some of the most interesting doctrinal principles that our LORD used to describe or to prepare His disciples for one of the greatest relationships that ever existed before between GOD and man. Our LORD is about to teach His disciples some of the most interesting principles that He desired for all of us to learn, to perceive, to metabolize, and then finally to apply what He had learned from our LORD.

Let's begin right now to identify what some of these new doctrines were and what our LORD desired for all of His people to know, to understand or to apply these same doctrinal principles that our LORD taught His disciples even up to the point of His own death, that is His spiritual death.

Remember, the "Word of GOD" teaches us the importance of being accurate, especially when we are told that the LORD loves to see the respect that His people have for Him and for His ways. This is why we are going to meet Paul and Silas and the Berean disciples who were considered to be noble and respectful men of GOD and revealed their humility because of their attitude toward the word. And therefore, when they heard some of the new doctrines that Paul and Silas taught they didn't just believe it when they heard it, but they believed it because they went home and checked to see if these new doctrinal principles were from the Bible or the LORD.

And, not only is this principle true but Paul and Silas revealed it was true because there were certain principles that the "Word of GOD" was about to be magnified and taught by some of the greatest teachers in the beginning of the Church-age. And so, what was it that impressed some of the New Believers in the Church-age concerning their relationship with our LORD?

Well, look at Act 17:10-12.

**ACT 17:10-11, And the brethren [Royal Family] immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these [the Berean disciples] were more nobleminded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so.**

Notice a few principles here that are mentioned concerning the believers in Thessalonica:

1. First of all; Even though the apostle Paul and Silas were being judged by the legalism and the self-righteousness that the religious Jews were constantly mistreating them with,

However, Paul and Silas did not give into these religious Jews of the early Church.

2. Now, Paul and Silas remained right on schedule and continued to teach the mystery doctrines of the Church-age even though they had been the victims and not the villains of these religious Jews.

Our LORD describes them in passages like **MAT 6:19-23**; **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. [And then comes the most important principle] If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

Notice (TLB) the living Bible says, **“If your eye is pure, there will be sunshine in your soul. But if your eye is clouded with evil thoughts and desires, you are in deep spiritual darkness. And oh, how deep that darkness can be!”**

3. Religion and self-righteousness is behind our LORD’s words in **MAT 6:23**, **“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness.”**

4. Now, here is one of the main principles found in the “Word of GOD” which is the fact that we realize the principle: If the light that is in you be darkness than How great is that darkness when you think that you are in the light. Now, because many religious people were in bondage to their own system of religion, then that is one of the main reasons that darkness can appear to be light, when, in fact, it is not!

Actually in **JOH 8:12**, notice what our LORD said; Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, **“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.”**

Back in **ACT 17:10-11**, **And the brethren [Royal Family] immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so.**

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Notice in **ACT 17:10** where we read: **Paul and Silas had to travel by night to Berea so that they would not be imprisoned by the Jews.**

By the way, it was the religious Jews who were trying to corner Paul and Silas and stop their ministry from going forward.

Also in ACT 17:10, note also that Paul and Silas kept right on going forward with their dedication and devotion to the synagogue of the Jews that the apostle Paul wanted to converse with. And in ACT 17:11, Paul and Silas were told about the believers in Berea who were said to be more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica. Their noble-minded ability was to receive the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so. It is the noble-minded individual that all of us should learn from that our LORD revealed to us because they received the word of GOD with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so. In other words, this is why we have quite a few passages that teach us such things as the apostle John talked about in 1JO 4:1.

**1JO 4:1, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from GOD; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

The noble-minded individual will have a positive attitude toward the word and will do so when they received the word with great eagerness, and examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so. This is the thinking of the adult spiritual life which produces a GODly result as ACT 17:12 says that Many of the listeners believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men who also believed. And so, once again, it is the darkness that comes from the wicked legalistic crowd that grace-oriented individuals must be careful not to fall into.

For there were a lot of enemies that the spiritual leaders of the Church-age had to deal with constantly and on a habitual basis. However, the enemies of the apostles **were not** those who were partying and getting drunk down in the Jerusalem bars. No, their enemies were basically guilt ridden liars who refused to see the truth behind doctrine and judged others for not doing so as well.

Many of these religious Jews were called Pharisees and Sadducees and Scribes as well as those who were known as disciples who were trying to impress each other with their own little systems of religion. What I'm saying to you this morning is that the real enemies of our LORD and His people are those who all of their lifetime were in bondage and slavery not just to sins but, even more deceitful than sin, they were in bondage to their systems of morality. They were do-gooders.

These individuals have no idea about the slavery and the bondage and the evil that many believers can even fall into because religion is the devil's ace trump and he loves to use it against our LORD's people. Especially in a sarcastic way. Now, believe it or not, here comes one of the main reasons and some of the new doctrines that our LORD is about to mention to His disciples concerning these new doctrinal principles, which we call the mystery doctrines of the Church age.

Now, I want you to begin to see what some of these mystery doctrines were all about so that you can get a different view of the importance of the mystery doctrines of the Church-age. As we introduce the vine and the branches we need to be sure that we know about the mystery doctrines that do exist and what the apostles were about to learn themselves as they get ready to teach others as well. We know that because of certain doctrinal passages that our Apostle Paul also warned us about in **ROM 16:25-26, Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,**

Then we have the phrase **“according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,”**

It is the revelation of mystery doctrine that was hidden from many individuals so that it can be revealed to those who truly desire to know GOD and to love, honor. And obey.

**ROM 16:25-26, “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal GOD, has been made known to all the nations, {leading} to obedience of faith;**

Now, I need to establish a few more principles concerning this mystery doctrine which the Vine and the Branches have a lot to do with concerning the mystery doctrines of the Church-age. As we do introduce this subject it is important that we realize our place in the vine and the branches and the intimacy and the mysteries that exists because of our union with our LORD Jesus Christ. We realize this because of what the apostle Paul said to the believers in Corinth.

**1CO 2:4-7, And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of GOD. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak GOD's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden {wisdom,} which GOD predestined before the ages to our glory;**

Here we see a part of the mystery doctrines.

**Or EPH 3:1-10, For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of GOD's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; {to be specific}, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of GOD's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in GOD, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of GOD might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly {places.}**

As a part of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, there is also the mystery of Christian marriage, which you can believe or not, but it is a doctrine that I had the privilege of putting it all together with the greatest Theologian of the last century, Colonel R.B. Thieme Jr.

**EPH 5:32, This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.**

**COL 1:24-27, Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Of {this church} I was made a minister according to the stewardship from GOD bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the {preaching of} the word of GOD, {that is,} the mystery which has been hidden from the {past} ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom GOD willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

Now, we are ready to introduce our subject with the fact that we have at least 8 illustrative principles of doctrine concerning the wonderful relationship that we enjoy with GOD. Because of the Baptism of the Spirit and our union with the LORD Jesus Christ, we have the following doctrinal principles that reveal how close we are with the Vine and the Branches. This is just one illustration of the intimacy of our LORD that He wants us to enjoy and be confident of which is the fact that our LORD desired an intimate relationship with His people.

There are different descriptions that our LORD uses to reveal to us the closeness we have with our LORD because He desires all of us to have this intimacy and this confidence. These descriptions are given only in the New Testament for all us to say such things with boldness like:

**1JO 4:4, You are from GOD, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**

**Or PHI 4:13, I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

Now, here are some of the descriptions of our LORD and His relationship to us.

1. We have the last Adam and the new creation. The last Adam represents the royalty of TLJC and His rulership of the world. The new creation is the royal family of GOD made up of all Church-age believers. These particular synonyms are found in 1CO 15:45-47; 2CO 5:17; GAL 6:15.

**1CO 15:45-49, So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam {became} a lifegiving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

2. We have the head and the body; the head focuses in on the authority of our LORD as the King of kings and LORD of LORDs over the church. Christ is the Head, we are members of the body. Being members of the body emphasizes our difference in personality and function. This synonym is used in EPH 1:22-23; EPH 2:16; EPH 4:4-5; EPH 5:23.

3. A third synonym is the Shepherd and the Sheep used in the gospels prophetically. This is found in HEB 13:20; 1PE 2:25; 2PE 5:4. TLJC is the Shepherd and we as members of the body of Christ are His sheep. This emphasizes the providential ministry of TLJC.

4. A fourth synonym is the vine and the branches, Joh 15. There is a very strong relationship between a vine stem and its branches. They are integrated together and this emphasizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

5. Christ as the Chief Cornerstone and we are the stones of the building, EPH 2:20; 1PE 2:4-8. Christ is the founder of the church and we are the stones in the building or in union with Christ.

6. A 6th synonym is the High Priest and the Royal Priesthood. This emphasizes our privacy and freedom, HEB 7:25; HEB 10:10-14; 1PE 2:5,9.

7. A 7th synonym is the Groom and the Bride analogy which points to the future of the Church as Royal Family; 2CO 11:2; EPH 5:25-27; REV 19:6-8.

8. The eighth analogy is the King of kings and the Royal Family of GOD, 1PE 2:5; 2:9; REV 1:6. Please notice that these eight descriptions are designed by our LORD to reveal His closeness and His intimacies that He has with us, His Bride. Now, with all these different descriptions concerning our intimacy with our LORD, we have one more principle to give to you concerning the mystery doctrines of the Church-age.

What are they?

Why do we need them?

Where did they come from?

Well, here is my top ten mystery doctrines of the Church-age. For example: there is the mystery doctrine concerning the baptism of our LORD.

- a. The baptism of the Spirit results in the creation of a new spiritual species and the royal family of GOD.
- b. The predesigned plan of GOD as it is today is unique for the royal family of GOD only.
- c. There is also a phenomenal portfolio of invisible assets which belongs to each one of us as royal family of GOD.
- d. For the first time in history, every believer, regardless of his background, attainments or lack of attainments, handicaps, success, or any other distinguishing human factor, has equality given by GOD Himself.
- e. We have our unique royal commissions: royal priesthood and royal ambassadorship.
- f. We have the unique mystery doctrines of the Church Age.
- g. Every member of the Trinity indwells every believer.
- h. We have the unique availability of divine power. Never before in history has divine omnipotence been available for use to every believer.

- i. This is the first time in history when there are no prophecies to be fulfilled during the Church Age.
- j. This is the dispensation of invisible heroes.

Invisible heroes are believers who execute the predesigned plan of GOD.