The Bible's Two Mysteries

Hebrews, A Book of Better Things

Introduction:

The Contrast Between the Mystery of Godliness and the Mystery of Iniquity:

How few see anything attractive in the true humility of Christ! His humility did not consist in a low estimate of His own character and qualifications, but in His humbling Himself to fallen humanity in order to raise them up with Him to a higher life. Men try to exalt themselves to the position of those above them or to become superior to them. But Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself to elevate man; and the true follower of Christ will seek to meet men where they are in order to elevate them.

Matthew 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12) And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The mystery of Godliness:

Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: 10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The mystery of iniquity:

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; 17) That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

The Study:

Hebrews 2:6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, <u>What is man, that thou art mindful of him</u>? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

The Mystery of Godliness—Christ was manifested in the flesh

1Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: <u>God was manifest in the flesh</u>, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2) The same was in the beginning with God. … 14) <u>And the Word was made flesh</u>, and dwelt

among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7) But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8) And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Why did Christ come in the flesh?

Christ came in the flesh "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," "that He might "save His people from their sins," "that He might redeem us from all iniquity," that He should "take away" our sins, and "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," that He might present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy," "for this is the will of God, even your sanctification."

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26) Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: 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:

1Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.

Titus 2:14 Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Romans 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jude 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

What kind of flesh did Christ come in?

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

How did Christ condemn sin in the likeness of our sinful flesh?

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18) For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

Christ's Humility and Condescension

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3) For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.

We should ask ourselves, what about our nature? Do we exalt ourselves or do we humble ourselves? Who do we represent in our daily lives, Christ or Satan? Our characters are being sealed day by day and will be revealed in the coming crisis of the mark of the beast. Whose character will we be sealed with?

Hebrews 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

1Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:

The Mystery of Iniquity:

Even though Lucifer was the ultimate creation of God, "sealing up the sum," "full of wisdom" and "perfect in beauty," he was not content with the highest gifts God had created in him, but coveted the one thing he was not capable of attaining to, ruling the universe in the place of God.

In the following verses, the prince or king of Tyrus typifies Lucifer and his desire to take the place of God.

Ezekiel 28:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 2) Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

Ezekiel 28:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12) Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13) Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14) Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15) Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

In the Scriptures below, Paul describes this mindset of exalting oneself and the consequences of self-deception that follows.

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in (to) them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20) For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

Romans 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Ezekiel as well describes the inevitable consequences of self-deception which eventually leads to self-destruction.

Ezekiel 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst

of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Genesis chapter three gives the account of how Satan tempted Eve to covet the one thing God had instructed them not to partake of for there would be eternal consequences. God had given them everything in abundance for their every need, but not being content with the gifts of God, Eve hearkened to Satan's subtle lies and not only coveted the forbidden fruit, but partook of it, bringing upon this world sin and all its results.

Satan seeks to accomplish his original agenda vicariously through the end time antichrist who also seeks worship due only the true God, the Creator who alone is worthy. Sometime before Christ's second coming as King of kings, the antichrist, also called "the mystery of iniquity," will be revealed.

2Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

2Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

Self-deception is the result of those who do not receive the gift of the love of the truth because they take pleasure in unrighteousness. Paul calls it the "deceivableness of unrighteousness." God is the truth, the way and the life. He sent His Son to reveal truth. He does not "send" strong delusion, He allows strong delusion.

2Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11) And for this cause God shall send (allow) them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Scripture records the eternal consequences of self-exaltation.

Isaiah 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

May we learn the lessons from the examples given in the Scriptures and trust in our Lord and giver of every good gift, being "content with such things as ye have."

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation [deportment or character] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Let us along with the Psalmists pray,

Psalms 119:133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.