

Did God Write a Mystery Book?

The words “mystery” and “mysteries” are used 27 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. Each occurrence is a translation of a single Greek word, “mysterion.” Strong’s Concordance gives it an extensive definition, but, in essence, it means, “a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding.” In its Divinely inspired usages, the word refers to the eternal truth that is the Word of God.

Because this word is used in reference to spiritual matters, does that mean that God intended to hide His truth from mankind? Did God give us a mystery book that we’ll never be able to understand? In light of the error that is being taught regarding the direct operation of the Holy Spirit today, is it the case that we can only understand the Bible if the Spirit enlightens, reveals or explains it to us?

The first question can be correctly answered in the negative. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32). In that God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), it is His desire that all be freed from the bondage of sin. Since spiritual freedom comes through knowing God’s truth, it would be inconsistent with the character of God to hide His truth from mankind. Spiritual freedom comes via knowledge of the truth. If we cannot know the truth because God has shrouded it in mystery, we cannot be free.

The second question can also be answered in the negative. Anyone who claims to be a Christian admits by that claim that there is something about the Bible that they can understand. How could one even call himself or herself a Christian if they did not grasp the concept that there is a Christ and, specifically, that Jesus is that Christ? If we can understand that Christ exists, then there’s at least one Bible truth that is not a mystery. If we can understand one Bible truth, can we not understand more?

The third question deserves a negative response as well. It is NOT the case that we can only understand the Bible if the Holy Spirit enlightens, reveals or explains it to us. It is, on the other hand, the case that a person can pick up the Bible, read it, understand it and obey it without any direct intervention from above.

According to I Corinthians 2:10, the “things which God hath prepared for them that love him” were revealed to inspired men by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote the words that the Holy Spirit gave him (I Corinthians 2:13). The words recorded in the Bible are God’s revelation. They are the revelation of the mind of God (I Corinthians 2:11). Basically, that’s all the Lord needed to say. If the Holy Spirit is needed to explain what has been written, would that not be a revelation of the revelation? God has revealed what He wants us to know (Deuteronomy 29:29). Not only have there not been additional revelations since the final word of the Bible was originally penned, there have not been revelations explaining the original revelation that is the Bible. It’s just not necessary. The Scriptures are sufficient (II Timothy 3:16-17). They are God’s revelation. He doesn’t need to reveal His revelation.

Now let’s go back to “mystery.” Taking in hand a good concordance like Strong’s, look at each passage in which the word is used. Notice how many times when the word is used the writer talks about the mystery being revealed or explained at that moment. For example, having devoted several verses to the husband-wife relationship in Ephesians 5, Paul wrote, “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:32). To what was Paul referring in the sentences leading up to that recorded in verse 32? By inspiration of the Holy Spirit he revealed that he had been using the husband-wife relationship to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church. There was a mystery there, but Paul explained it by Divine inspiration. In essence, it is not a mystery now because it has been revealed. There are abundant examples of this when “mystery” or “mysteries” are used.

God’s Word can be understood. You don’t need to be “called.” You don’t need to have to rely on a member of the “clergy” to explain it to you. You don’t need intervention by the Holy Spirit. God has given His revelation. It is the Bible and it is all we need (II Peter 1:3).