

“Don’t You Just Love a Good Mystery?”
 (Better known as “Who Dunit?”)—Ephesians 3:4-6

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Don’t You Just Love a Good Mystery?” (Better known as “Who Dunit?”), is Ephesians 3:4-6
 → *When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

When it comes to stories, mysteries rank very high on the list. Whether it’s books, movies or documentaries on tv, it seems a mystery keeps one interested, engaged and “on the edge of your seat” trying to figure out “who dunit.” The popularity of murder mysteries has created the common cliché, “the butler did it.” Poor guy . . . seems like he’s always getting blamed.

The word “mystery” refers to that which is secret, hidden, or beyond normal human understanding and requires revelation of some kind. No matter what it is that is a mystery to us—from something as simple as

being unable to find an object which you just had in your hand to the seemingly irrational behavior of someone—**it's message must be revealed and made know to us by something or someone.** Thus, in order to know “who dunnit” in a murder mystery you must keep reading to allow the words of the text to reveal it to you; or someone must give you some guidance verbally or even visually to “discover” the hidden meaning.

Today, January 6th, is referred to as “Epiphany” in the traditional Church Year Calendar. “Epiphany” is a Greek word meaning “to shine forth” or “reveal.” The focus of today’s Scripture readings and propers is the familiar account of the wise men seeking Jesus at His birth and giving Him gifts. The focus of their search was a star which they had followed, revealing to them a mystery—the birthplace of *He Who had been born king of the Jews? For they saw His star when it rose and went to worship Him.* (cf. Matthew 2:1-12) In this mystery account the question is: “Who dunnit?”

Well, God, of course! Everyone knows that God put the star before these Magi to “shine forth” the revelation of Jesus, the Savior of all peoples . . . or do they? Does everyone really know this? In his letter to the Gentile Christians in Ephesus Paul had to reveal this mystery by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Since only the Jews had the revealed knowledge of Yahweh and His promised Messiah in the Old Testament

Scriptures, many believed the benefits of the work of the Christ was only for Jews (or those who converted to Judaism). Thus, Paul reassured these Gentile Christians in Ephesians 2:13,19-20 that, because they were *brought near to God by the blood of Christ*, they were *no longer strangers and aliens, but . . . fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.*

According to verse 6 of our text this *mystery* which needed to be revealed *is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.* This was truly a good mystery because of Who dunnit and why He “dunndidit.”

The mystery of Jesus’ unique conception and person was revealed **by God** through angels to Mary and Joseph and some shepherds (cf. Luke 1:26-35; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:8-20) and to the wise men **by God** through the star (cf. Matthew 2:1-12). Without these revelations no one would of had a clue that the Messiah was finally being sent **by God** to deliver His people. However, these revelations were based upon the Holy Spirit working faith in the hearts of people through the written Word of God. This is why Paul says in verses 4-5 of our text: ***When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was***

*not made known to the sons of men in other generations **as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.***

Thus, the angel's words to Mary referred to God's promise to King David (cf. 2 Samuel 7:16), saying to Mary in Luke 1:32 → *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David.* The wise men needed *all the chief priest and the scribes* to reveal God's promise from Micah 5:2 which states that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem (cf. Matthew 2:4-5). Even the message to the shepherds that they would find *a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord in a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger* meant nothing to them without the promises of God revealed in the written Old Testament Scriptures.

Who dunnit? The mystery of Jesus being God in the flesh was revealed **by God** through the many miracles He performed throughout His earthly ministry. Yet, to many it remained a mystery because Who He was, Whom He claimed to be and what He taught and did went against their ideas of what the Messiah they were looking to deliver them should look like. When Jesus taught the people in His hometown Matthew 13:54-57 says *they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And are not His brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all His sisters with us?*

*Where then did this man get all these things?” **And they took offense at Him.***

*They took offense at Him? Why would they take offense at Jesus? They couldn't deny the works He was doing before their very eyes. Could they not see the connections to God's promises in the Old Testament Scriptures revealed at His birth? This offense continued, expressing itself in the ultimate display of the offense—having Jesus beaten, mocked and nailed to a cross to die. When people take offense at Jesus, even while being *astonished* with His *wisdom* and *mighty works*, there is only one reason. Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 4:4 → *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God.* It is a deception of the devil, the world and our own sinful nature striving to blind us to the revelation of the mystery of God's grace, forgiveness and new life **by faith in the Person & Work of Jesus.***

It is not a matter of just seeing the revealed mystery in action but of knowing exactly Who dunnit and why He dunndidit. In verse 5 of our text Paul says it is a revelation which is accompanied *by the Spirit*. God the Father did it by keeping His promises to save you from the power of sin and the devil by taking on your sins Himself. Jesus did it by living perfectly in obedience to God's Law for you, fulfilling all righteous for

you. Jesus did it by offering Himself as the perfect, sinless sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus did it by rising from the dead and ascending into heaven so that you can have eternal life with a new glorified body. This is *the gospel* to which Paul refers in our text. The mystery revealed!

The Holy Spirit does it also as He creates faith in your heart which trusts the atoning work of Jesus for you, not simply so you can admire it from a distance. This is described by Paul as another part of the mystery in Colossians 1:27. There he says *God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*** Along with the revealed knowledge of God's steadfast love for you in Christ the Holy Spirit creates faith through the Word so that you can confess that *Jesus is Lord* of your life (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3)—that He is your *Savior, Who is Christ your Lord!*

Don't you just love a good mystery? When you know Who dunnit—God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and why He dunndidit—for your forgiveness of sins, new life now under His grace and salvation—this mystery becomes a revelation in which we *are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.* Amen.

*As it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love Him”—
these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.*

(1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

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