

Raising our Awareness of Mysticism and Mystical Writing –

- Generally speaking, modern Christians in the West lack an awareness of the Mystical sides of both Judaism and Christianity.
 - This study aims to raise our awareness of Mysticism.
 - As we become aware of Mysticism and Mystical writings, we will see how often these mystical topics are found within the New Testament.

1. Mystical Judaism and Christianity –

- There has always been a mystical aspect to both Judaism and Christianity.
- In Judaism, mysticism is known as *Kabbalah*, which means "receiving."
- Within Christianity, mysticism has generally found its home within the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Protestantism has had a tenuous relationship with mysticism over its 500-year history.

2. Bible Based

- The mystics are 100% Bible-based but believe the Bible has more to say than is found on the surface.

"The mystic, however, does not seek an academic understanding of the scriptural text, nor is he or she content with viewing the Bible only as a repository of doctrine and moral regulations. The mystic wants to penetrate to the living source of the biblical message, that is, to the Divine Word who speaks in and through human words and texts."¹

3. Wisdom Tradition

- Wisdom is concerned with the nature of reality.
- The Bible writers contrast Wisdom with Foolishness.
- Torah and God's commandments are generally concerned with the external, while the Wisdom tradition is concerned with man's internal – inner life.

¹ Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, (p. 3). <https://amzn.to/47TtuDB>

4. Greek *Mysterion*:

- The Greek *Mysterion* comes from the root *muo*, which means "to shut the mouth."
- The word is used 27 times in the New Testament – the Apostle Paul uses the word six times in his letter to the Ephesians.²
- ***Mysterion* definition:** A mystery, secret, of which initiation is necessary. *Mysterion* is not something unknowable. Instead, it is what can only be known through revelation.
- **Mystery of the Sacraments** – the early church used the sacraments as the initiation into the mysteries of Christ.
- **Mystery of the Eucharist** – by ingesting Christ's body and blood, we enter into a Mystical Union with Christ which is supposed to transform us into his likeness.

5. Mystical Topics also found in the Gospel of John:

- **Light vs. Darkness** – John 1:4-5
- **Cosmic Reality:**
 - Genesis 28:12-13 – Jacobs ladder. See John 1:51
 - Ezekiel's Visions:
 - Ezekiel 1:28 – the likeness of a man on God's throne.
 - Ezekiel 40-47 – compare to John 2:19 & 7:38.
 - Daniel 7:13 – "One like a Son of Man"
 - "Son of Man" is found 12x throughout the Gospel of John.
 - 12 represents divine governance.
- **Paradox** – i.e., We are made in the Image of God, but God has no image.
 - The Gospel of John is riddled with paradox, and he does not attempt to alleviate the tension.
- **Mystical Union** – a primary goal of the mystic is union with God.
- **Creation (Genesis 1-3):**
 - The Gospel of John is modeled after Genesis 1.³
 - John has seven signs.
 - The death and resurrection of Jesus represent the dawning of a new creation.

² <https://biblehub.com/greek/3466.htm>

³ See our lesson on the pattern found in Genesis: https://youtu.be/ej_fkOEOaGA