

Revelation 10: 1-7; “The Mystery of God Finished”,
Sermon # 77 in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 28th, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

There are many mysteries which are found in the Word of God, but there is none greater than the mystery of God Himself. God is greater than our greatest conception of Him, and He does not go about to do things in the way that a man would go about to do things. He does not do things in the time that men should think that He would do them. He has purposes in His creation and in His providence that men would never think about unless it was revealed to them. In Isaiah 55: 8 and 9 He says, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord.” “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Sometimes God chooses to reveal His purposes and sometimes He does not. Sometimes He is very up-front about what He is going to do, but it appears from a careful study of the Bible, that oftentimes He waits to show His hand. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; it is the glory of Kings to search it out,” it says in Proverbs 25: 2. We need to remember this when we study the Scriptures and as we live our Christian lives. There are many mysteries which will only be revealed when God decides that it is the best time to reveal them. This is very evident as we come to the passage that we are studying this afternoon. We have not reached the days of the sounding of the seventh angel yet. When the days of his sounding come, there will be no delay; but “the mystery of God will be finished, as God has declared to His servants the prophets”. So this afternoon we want to open up this mystery a little, so that we might have general understanding. A minister is a steward of the mysteries of God. He is supposed to open the mysteries of God to you in proportion to the light that God has given him, and then give application to you so that the mystery will be of benefit to your soul and lead you to live to God’s glory. This is one of the greatest of the mysteries; the mystery of God and His ways in prophecy.

The mystery of God in this passage is the mystery of how our Lord Jesus Christ’s kingdom is to come to reign upon the earth when there is so much and so great an opposition to it. It is a very great mystery ; but in due time it shall be revealed. Some things are sealed up in regard to this mystery and we cannot understand them all now, but we will later. So let us ask this question: What are the things that we can learn from this

prophecy even though some parts of it are sealed up? Even though we cannot know the specifics of what the seven thunders said when they uttered their voice, still there is great encouragement for each believer who is oppressed under Antichristian darkness. There are 2 great truths set forth here for the discouraged and persecuted saint of God to think upon.

1st- There is an Angel who is stronger than all the Antichristian forces of Darkness. (Verses 1)

“I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud.” “And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.” This is quite a description. We can see from the description given that this is not an ordinary angel. This angel is greater than all angels and is the King of Angels. This angel is the Angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Why is this angel not called by His glorious name, if this is our Lord Jesus? Why is the text not plainer? It is, I believe, because the great work that He is involved in, in building His Church, is going on even though He is not seen by His people in every generation. He is risen from the dead, He is in heaven at this very hour, watching over the affairs of His Church in relation to the Nations of the World. He is pictured in this exalted mystical way because it must be understood by His people that He is even now ruling in the midst of His enemies. He is ruling over His Church. Indeed He is ruling over the whole World and all things. But this truth is not evident in the midst of Antichristian darkness. He is pictured as “coming down from heaven”. This means that He does this in a mystical visionary way when He came down to John in this vision and convinced him to write of His Sovereign power over all the forces of darkness which seemed to be overwhelming His Church, toward the end of this 2nd time period, and entering upon the third.

Anyone who reads Church history knows that Christ’s Church was being overwhelmed with spiritual darkness. But the Church has always needed to know that Christ is the One, the Only One who can cause His people to triumph over, not only their own sin, but also when the sinful schemes of others are raised up against the true knowledge of Christ. This is why Christ is pictured as He is here. An Angel is a Messenger with a message from God. Turn with me to Malachi 3, verse 1. Here we find a prophecy of both John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ. “Behold I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.” “And the Lord whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight.” “Behold, He is coming says the Lord of

Hosts.” This was a prophecy of Christ’s first coming and his being pointed out by the message and preaching of John the Baptist. Jesus was the messenger of a New Covenant of grace. The message is that His grace is powerful enough to triumph over every sin; over every problem and difficulty.

He is pictured first of all, as coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud. When Christ comes again the second time He will “come with the clouds of glory”. And when he comes down to reckon with the Antichristian forces He shall come in a similar way spiritually. He may long delay His reckoning with these forces but He will come against them in due time. He will reckon with Satan’s schemes and the schemes of wicked men in every generation, but He will do so especially, at the close of each of these 3 prophetic time periods that we are studying here in the book of Revelation. He will do this out of love for His people. “Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.” “Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast.” “How precious is your lovingkindness, O God!” “Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings.” This is the kind of care and protection that the Lord Jesus has over all of God's children, His precious people for whom He died.

You will remember that the children of Israel were led by the pillar of cloud during their wilderness wanderings during the day. This was how Christ's presence was with the children of Israel when they faced Pharaoh and His armies in Exodus 14: 19. If you will turn with me there, I will read it to you. “And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.” “So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel.” “Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other all that night.” “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.” “So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.” “And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.” “Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.” “And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty, and the Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fights for them against

the Egyptians.” You see this same Angel, the Angel of God’s presence was with them there at the Red Sea; the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. These things that happened there are typical of what Christ does for His Church in the New Testament times of Satan’s antichristian forces coming against the Church. He is clothed with a cloud, and His legs are pillars of fire. The Church is the body of Jesus Christ. He will stand her up on her two feet to face her enemies and conquer them through the means of His powerful grace. This ought to be an encouragement to you, dear Christian, to persevere in the pursuit of holiness and righteousness. Christ’s grace will enable you to overcome sin. His face is shining upon you like the Sun in its strength when you suffer for His cause.

This truth of Christ’s care and power exercised towards His people ought to encourage you, O Christian, whose spirit is oppressed with the thought that false religions like Islam and Roman Catholicism are still gaining ground throughout the world. Lift up your head; your redemption comes through Jesus Christ our Lord, and His victories, both at the cross, and in the battles for the forward progress of truth and righteousness. These victories will come by faith in Him, even when it might seem that all is lost. He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who has overcome. The rainbow on His head shows us that He alone has satisfied the justice of God and He alone can bring peace to the hearts of God’s dear people. He alone is the ark that we take refuge in. He will bring us safely to heaven and safely into a New Heaven and Earth in which dwells righteousness. Even as He said to Noah that He would never destroy the World through a flood again; even so, He will show His care and mercy to His New Covenant people.

Turn with me to Isaiah 54: 7. Here we read, “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you.” “With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the Lord, Your Redeemer.” “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth” (and He showed that by putting the rainbow in the clouds), “so I have sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.” “For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord who has mercy on you.” You can see what a wonderful thing it is to be a part of the New Covenant. God swears that He will not be angry with you or rebuke you if you are trusting in Jesus Christ. He is your strong Redeemer. This is the picture of this first verse.

Now 2ndly- Our Lord Jesus Christ is shown telling us, that it is His sworn duty not to delay the revelation of this mystery when the times are fulfilled. (Verse 2-7)

He has this little book in his hand, which is the book which contains the prophecy of what would happen in the third time period of Church History. He knows of the many and great oppositions that come during that time and so in the vision He is pictured as, “setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and crying with a loud voice, as when a lion roars.” It is the picture of our Lord’s announcing what He will be like to His enemies. He was the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" who had overcome and sat down at the right hand of His Father. But He will fiercely rise up to the prey; of tearing apart His enemies in His time of coming to judge them at the end of this third time period and at the last judgment. This is the announcement of the 7 thunders; the particulars of what He will do at that time when He comes against the Antichristian forces. These details are what was ordered to be sealed up, so that these forces would not know in advance how our Christ will come against them. “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

Then comes the swearing of the Angel of the Covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, swearing by God His Father, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth, and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that in it, that there should be delay no longer. This phrase in the King James reads, “that time should be no longer.” But it is not time that is going to end at this point. It is not the end of the World and the beginning of Eternity; rather it is that there should no longer be a delay in the time of the revealing of the mystery of God. That is, that all of the prophecies related to the systematic oppositions to Christ's kingdom being destroyed would have their fulfillment, during and at the end of the 3rd time period of Church History; at the end of the 1260 days, and then there would be no longer any delay in Christ's kingdom spreading and conquering throughout the nations of the World, as it will, in the Millennium. We will look more at this prophecy which is found in the little book when we come to Chapter 11.

As we close this sermon, how can we apply the truths that we have learned this afternoon? We should understand that there are many secret things in the counsels of Almighty God. It is hard for us to understand how Christ’s kingdom can triumph through suffering, through weakness and by being persecuted by false religionists. But will you not remember, dear Christian, that this is how our Lord Himself triumphed over Satan and the World? He suffered and bled and died so that you could be saved here in this life, and overcome the Evil one and the World, even as He did. The

battle may be very fierce in your soul, in your heart, in the times that you are alone and feel the push and the pull of these forces to sin in various ways. But Christ is looking down through the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, and He will be your help and your shield when the battle is too great for you. Do not give up; and do not lose heart.

The mystery of God is that He fulfills all of His promises to you personally in Jesus Christ, and all of His promises to the Church so that she really will reign some day upon the earth. She will reign in righteousness and truth. “It shall come to pass in the later days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it.” (Micah 4: 1) No matter how dark it becomes when the antichristian forces do their worst, and all seems lost to the Church, never forget that the Lord Jesus will meet them and overcome them. Remember to watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, the temptation to somehow believe that all that the Scriptures have said will not come to pass for you or for the Church. The Lord Jesus has overcome so that you will overcome as well, and sit down with Him on His throne, and rule over the nations. Please do not forget this.