

12. God Accomplished His Mystery Completely in Christ

That God has completely accomplished his will is an overarching principle of the New Testament. Yet, the religious world continually seeks to change that principle by adding its own modification through various methods of bogus alterations: some claim apostolic powers. For example, the Catholics' Pope may bind and loose, changing the scriptures by speaking *ex-cathedra*. Mormons have their Book of Mormon with its latter day revelation and modern day apostles who claim power to bind and loose the scriptures. All those believing latter day revelation fit in this category. Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christian Scientists, etc.,—all of these and others hold this view. Other religious groups—including most protestant denominations—take to themselves the power to alter and interpret the scriptures in councils, synods, and conventions.

All of these ignore the fundamental principles of the New Testament forbidding the alteration of the scriptures in any shape or manner. The chief passage of this study of prophecy denies to all the right of private interpretation of the scriptures, usurping the power of God almighty. 2 Peter 1:20-21 denies this presumed right of private interpretation of the scriptures:

20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, Paul condemns perverting the gospel of Christ in Gal 1:8: "8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"

The Revelation warns against adding to or taking away from prophecy in Rev 22:18-19:

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

With God accomplishing his mystery completely in Christ, all other views must be false.

The Mystery of God Accomplished

The Revelation lays out the history of God's mystery revealed in Christ. Since so much of the scriptures describe this history of man's fall and redemption through Christ, it is extremely difficult to see how the perverters can even think of a different intent. *The Revelation* declares that God will accomplish his mystery in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet in Rev 10:7:

7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

Two things are important here: First, the revelation of God's mystery is not a single event (*in the days*) but it occurs over a period of days. The phrase, *in the days*, rules out all views of some future and sudden event, such as the end of the world or a mythical war of Armageddon. It is, as shall be demonstrated, the redemption story—inclusive of the Christ, coming to earth and overcoming sin and death by his death upon the cross, and the effect that his coming has had on those who subsequently live on the earth. Second, he announced the mystery through the prophets; therefore, any idea or interpretation inconsistent with prophecies of the Old and New Testament, is false and those who pronounce them are false teachers. Thus, all latter day prophecies are false; and all interpretations by the various

councils, conventions, and synods are false. God's mystery is only in *the word of the prophets made more certain* (2 Peter 1:19) by the resurrected saviour, ascended to the right hand of God, the Father.

When Did God Accomplish His Mystery

The prophets of the Old and New Testaments spoke clearly; God has accomplished his mystery completely in Christ. In fact, Paul teaches that God purposed the mystery in Christ in Eph 1:9-10:

9 And he **made known** to us the **mystery of his will** according to his good pleasure, which he **purposed in Christ**, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring **all things** in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. [Emphasis added.]

For anyone to argue that there is more yet to come, is speaking where the prophets do not speak, and worse yet they are contradicting what the prophets have said.

God's put his mystery in effect when times *reached their fulfillment*. Jesus proclaimed the *time has come* Mark 1:14-15:

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The **time has come**," he said. "The **kingdom of God is near**. Repent and believe the good news!" [Emphasis added.]

Paul specifically identified the fullness of time with Christ's coming and his redemptive sacrifice in Gal 4:4-5:

4 But when **the time had fully come**, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. [Emphasis added.]

The Mystery of God Is Complete in Christ

All latter day prophecies and interpretations have in common the view that Christ, and by association, God, failed to set up an earthly kingdom. To the contrary, the mystery of God is complete in Christ. Paul refutes any modern idea of something yet to come—an earthly kingdom, thousand year reign, etc.—in Col 2:2-3

2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the **full riches of complete understanding**, in order that they may know the **mystery of God, namely, Christ**, 3 in whom are hidden **all the treasures** of wisdom and knowledge. [Emphasis added.]

When Paul said *full riches, complete understanding, and all the treasures*, he left no room for the contrary views advanced today. We may "know the mystery of God, namely, Christ."

God Disclosed His Mystery through the Church and to the Saints

God made his mystery, namely, Christ, plain. It is no secret, and it includes the unsearchable riches of Christ with nothing hidden to come later. In Eph 3:8-11, Paul wrote:

8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the **unsearchable riches** of Christ, 9 and to make **plain to everyone** the administration of **this mystery**, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His **intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God** should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the

heavenly realms, 11 according to his **eternal purpose** which he **accomplished in Christ** Jesus our Lord. [Emphasis added.]

The mystery is made known through the church to the saints, according to Col 1:25-27:

25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the **mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is **now disclosed to the saints**. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the **glorious riches of this mystery**, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. [Emphasis added.]

The complete, glorious, and rich mystery of God is Christ in us; and that is the hope of glory, and not some future speculative events. But how is it that we receive it?

The Mystery of God Is in the Written Word, the Scriptures

Christians receive the treasures of wisdom and knowledge through the writings of the prophets. Paul describes how the mystery was revealed in Eph 3:2b-5:

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the **mystery made known to me by revelation**, as I have already **written** briefly. 4 In **reading** this, then, you will be able to **understand my insight** into the **mystery of Christ**, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been **revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets**. [Emphasis added.]

Nothing could be plainer: the mystery comes by revelation to the apostles and prophets; when we read, we may understand their insight.

Not only did apostles and prophets write, but also they did so by the command of God. Rom 16:25-27 teaches:

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the **revelation of the mystery** hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and **made known through the prophetic writings** by the **command of the eternal God**, so that all nations might believe and obey him— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. [Emphasis added.]

God reveals his mystery to us by his written word. Both the writing of his word and the reading of his word is by the command of the eternal God.

The Kingdom of Christ Began

This study began with God saying when his mystery would be accomplished in Rev 10:7:

"7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

In Rev 11:15, the sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel starts a set of events culminating in the reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked:

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom
of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he will reign for ever and ever."

The kingdom of Christ has taken the world, and his kingdom and his reign is forever and ever. Paul states the exact time of this event in Eph 1:19-23

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

God has accomplished his mystery when he raised Christ above all rule and authority, power and dominion. The teaching is all-inclusive in scope and in time (*not only in the present age but also in the one to come*).

Rewarding the Saints and Destroying Those Who Destroy the Earth

Rev 11:16-18 summarizes God's great victory as he took power over all things through his son, Jesus:

16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign.

18 The nations were angry;
and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets
and your saints and those who reverence your name,
both small and great —
and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

The rest of *The Revelation* describes the fate of the dead, of the servants and saints, and of those who destroy the earth. Since these show the end of all things, a brief review is in order.

The End of the World and Worldliness

The great tool of the devil and the nemesis of humanity is the lust that leads to sin and the sin that leads to death. James 1:13-15 describes this danger:

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

John wrote that man should not love the world or the things of the world in 1 John 2:15-17:

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

The accomplishment of God's mystery regarding worldliness is personified in the scarlet woman of *The Revelation* of whom it is written in Rev 17:5:

5 This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY

BABYLON THE GREAT

THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Therefore Babylon, the worldly city, becomes a metaphor for worldliness, contrasted to the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city. Thus, the fate of Babylon is the fate of worldliness in Rev 18:9-10

9 "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10 Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

"Woe! Woe, O great city,

O Babylon, city of power!

In one hour your doom has come!"

Worldliness will be destroyed, never to be found again, all of which was accomplished when Christ rose victoriously. Rev 18:21 describes this fate of worldliness:

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

"With such violence

the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,

never to be found again.

The End of the Beast and the False Prophet

History finds much of humanity serving the carnal and fleshly side of their nature, represented in *The Revelation* by the beast and serving the pride of life and by voyeuristic excursions into man-made religions, represented in *The Revelation* by the false prophet. As with worldliness, these oppose all that is godly, aiming to destroy man one way or another, as it were. Rev 19:20 pronounces the doom of these personifications of evil at the accomplishment of God's mystery:

20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The End of the Devil

As with worldliness, the beast, and the false prophet, the devil's place in the accomplished mystery of God is the lake of burning sulfur in Rev 20:9-10:

But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The End of Death and Hades

Death and Hades, states brought on by sins of the world and temptations of the devil, also end up in the lake of fire in Rev 20:13-15

13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The End for Evil Doers

The human victims of worldliness, the beast, the false prophet, and the devil, do not escape, but find themselves in the same place of torment as those who deceived them in Rev 21:8:

8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

The End for Christians

The fate of Christians is completely different in the accomplished mystery of God. Rev 21:5-7 teaches:

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

Study Questions from the Scriptures

1. 2 Peter 1:20-21: From what cannot a prophecy of Scripture come? What is the origin of prophecy?
2. Gal 1:8: What happens to those who preach any other gospel?
3. Rev 22:18-19: What happens to those who add to or take away from the prophecies?
4. Rev 10:7: When will the mystery of God be accomplished?
5. Eph 1:9-10: In what did God purpose his mystery? What things were brought together?
6. Mark 1:14-15: Who said, "The time has come?" Where was the kingdom?
7. Gal 4:4-6: What did God do when the time was right?
8. Col 2:2-4: What is the nature of a Christian's understanding? What is hidden in Christ?
9. Eph 3:7-12: What did Paul preach? To whom was the mystery made plain? Through what was the manifold wisdom of God made known? This was according to what purpose?
10. Col 1:25-27: What does the glorious riches of God's mystery mean to us?
11. Eph 3:2b-6: How was the mystery made known to Paul? What did he do with it? What are we to do with it? By whom was mystery revealed? To whom was it revealed?
12. Rom 16:25-27: Through what writings was the mystery revealed? By whose command?
13. Rev 10:7: When would God' mystery be revealed? Through whom had he announced it.
14. Rev 11:15: What happened to the kingdom of the world? How long was the Christ's reign?

15. Eph 1:19-23: Where does Christ sit? What is he rule over? What is the fullness of Christ?
16. Rev 11:16-18: What time has come? Who will be rewarded?
17. James 1:13-15: What entices us? What does desire result in? What follows sin?
18. 1 John 2:15-17: What three things are in the world?
19. Rev 17:5: Who is Babylon the Great?
20. Rev 18:9-10: What will the kings of the earth say? What will happen to Babylon?
21. Rev 18:21: How complete is the end of Babylon
22. Rev 19:20-21: What is the end of the beast and false prophet?
23. Rev 20:9-10: What is the end of the devil?
24. Rev 20:13-15: What is the end of death and Hades? What is the lake of fire? Who will be thrown in?
25. Rev 21:8: What is the second death?
26. Rev 21:5-7: What will he who overcomes inherit? Of what will they drink?