

Title: **“THE MYSTERIES OF GOD”**

Text: 1 Corinthians 4:1

Subject: *Things Now Revealed*

Date: Tuesday Evening — April 20, 2010

Tape: # Z-85a

Readings: *Bobbie Estes and Joe Blakely*

Introduction:

Turn with me, if you will, to 1 Corinthians 4:1. My subject tonight is **“THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.”** In the first three chapters of this epistle, Paul has been urging the saints at Corinth to overcome their carnal strife and division. In chapter three, he particularly urges them and us to esteem all God’s servants equally as instruments of good to our souls.

LABORERS TOGETHER

Gospel preachers, all gospel preachers, are co-laborers in the cause of Christ. **We are not rivals, but co-laborers.** One is no more important than another. Some pastor large churches in large cities. Others pastor small assemblies in insignificant little towns. But each faithful servant serves Christ in the place the Lord has put him.

- Some of the Lord’s servants are very well educated. Some have very little education.
- Some are very eloquent, gifted preachers. Others speak with greater plainness.

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- Some may appear to be more influential. Others may appear to be less influential. I say “appear to be” because none of us really knows how God uses men.

But all God’s servants faithfully preach the gospel of Christ, telling eternity bound sinners how God saves poor sinners by his rich, free, abundant grace in Christ. **Zion’s watchmen all see “eye to eye”** (Isaiah 52:8), **and are all co-laborers in the Lord’s vineyard**. While it is true that one preacher may be more personally beneficial to you or me than another, that fact does not make him more important or more useful than another. **Let me illustrate my point**.

Who knows the name “**Henry Scougal**”? Very few. He was a Scottish preacher and theologian. He lived a short twenty-seven years on this earth before the Lord took him. Just one year before his death, he wrote a lengthy letter to a friend, seeking to show his friend the way of life and salvation in Christ. At the urging of others, that letter was published as a small booklet entitled “**The Life of God in the Soul of Man**.” That was in 1677. Fifty years later another young man read Scougal’s marvellous little tract. It was blessed of God to that young man’s everlasting salvation. His name we all know well — George Whitefield! Whitefield was used of God as an instrument by whom thousands have been converted. But no one

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would have heard the gospel from Whitefield’s lips, had it not been for a man named Henry Scougal.

The same thing is seen in the conversion of **Charles Spurgeon**. No one outside heaven knows the name of the Primitive Methodist “stand-in” preacher from whose lips Spurgeon first heard the gospel preached with efficacy to his soul.

Let none of God’s saints ever look with scorn upon any man who preaches the gospel of God’s free grace in Christ. He who faithfully preaches the gospel to two or three of the Lord’s sheep is just as important in his place, doing what God has called him to do, as the man who preaches to hundreds. He is to be heard, respected, honored, supported and prayed for just as the preachers whose names are widely known.

You who believe are God’s husbandry. We who preach are nothing but **hoes and hoses** by which God works his garden. **You who believe are God’s building.** We who preach are nothing but tools in his hand: — Laborers Together. Now, look at our text (1 Corinthians 4:1).

MINISTERS OF CHRIST

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The opening line of our text reads, — **“Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ.”** — What an awesome privilege, honor and responsibility this is! The man who now stands before you is nothing. There is not a man in this building who is not more fit than me to be your pastor and to preach the gospel of Christ. I know something of my own innate limitations, inward lusts, personal weaknesses and heart corruption. But the Lord God has been pleased, in his infinite goodness and boundless grace, to make this worthless piece of human flesh a minister, a servant of Christ. He has trusted to this earthen vessel the treasure of his gospel! — *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among [you] the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (Ephesians 3:8).

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” — Those men called and gifted to preach the gospel are stewards in God’s house, *“stewards of the mysteries of God.”* They are men to whose care the Lord God has committed the wondrous mysteries of the gospel, giving them light, knowledge and understanding in them. It is their business and responsibility to dispense and make known, the mysteries of his boundless, free grace in Christ.

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(1 Thessalonians 5:12-13) “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.”

The one thing that is required of stewards is that they be found faithful to their stewardship. — “*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Corinthians 4:2). — I covet your prayers on my behalf in this regard, that I may be found faithful to your souls, faithful to the gospel, faithful to God’s Word and faithful to the will and glory of God.

In faithfulness to my responsibility to your souls, as the servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God, I want to talk to you tonight about “*The mysteries of God.*”

MYSTERY

The word “mystery,” as it is used in the New Testament, refers to **something once hidden but now revealed.**

- That which was hidden, only partially revealed, under the types and shadows of the law is now revealed in the gospel.

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- That which is hidden from natural, unregenerate, unbelieving people is revealed regenerate people, to those who are born again, by the Holy Spirit.
- A mystery in the New Testament is a profound, spiritual truth that could never be known or understood but by divine revelation.

When we come to study the mysteries of God we are studying that which no one can understand apart from divine revelation and a God given faith in Christ. These mysteries revealed in the New Testament are the most profound truths of the universe. Yet, to the believer, these are matters of confidence, assurance, joy and peace. Our Savior declares, — *“It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them (those who believe not) it is not given”* (Matthew 13:11).

The fact is, the mysteries of God are those aspects of gospel truth which are most confusing to the world, but most comforting to God’s elect. The word “*mystery*” is used twenty-two times in the New Testament. But the mysteries revealed are seven. There are **SEVEN MYSTERIES** specifically revealed in the gospel.

1st THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

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The apostle Paul speaks of “the mystery of godliness” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

(1 Timothy 3:15-16) “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (16) And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

“The mystery of godliness” is the whole body of revealed truth regarding the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ the incarnate, crucified, risen, exalted, saving Son of God (Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 2:2; 4:3). It is called — “*the mystery of the gospel*” — “*the mystery of God*” — and “*the mystery of Christ*.”

(Ephesians 6:19) “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known **the mystery of the gospel**.”

(Colossians 2:2) “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of **the mystery of God**, and of the

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Father, and of Christ.”

(Colossians 4:3) “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak **the mystery of Christ**, for which I am also in bonds.”

Multitudes deceive themselves with “*a form of godliness*” in which the power of godliness (the gospel — the mystery of godliness) is completely denied.

The word “godliness” simply means devotion. The devotion, dedication and commitment of a true believer to Christ is a mystery to the unbeliever and to the religious hypocrite. The world calls our faith fanaticism and our devotion to Christ foolishness. The fact is — “*The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not*” (1 John 3:1). **What is it that inspires and encourages the believer’s commitment to Christ, his church and the gospel of his grace? Here Paul declares that the mystery of godliness, the mystery of our devotion to our God and Savior is the person and work of Christ as our Substitute and Savior.**

Here are **SIX THINGS** about the Lord Jesus Christ which graciously constrain and irresistibly compel the hearts of all who know him to consecrate themselves to him.

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1. **“GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.”** — The Son of God came into this world in human flesh that he might both bring in everlasting righteousness and satisfy divine justice as the Substitute and Representative of God’s elect (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Matthew 1:21; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4-6).

2. Our Savior was **“JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT.”** There are many ways in which the Holy Spirit has born witness to Christ and justified all his claims as the Messiah and the Son of God. He did so at our Master’s baptism (Matthew 3:13-17). He did so on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33-36). The Holy Spirit bore witness to and justified the claims of Christ by the miracles of the Apostolic Age (Hebrews 1:3). He continues to do so today through the preaching of the Word by the gospel. However, **Paul is talking about our Lord’s justification from sin by his resurrection from the dead. When he was raised from the dead, Christ, who was made to be sin for us was freed from sin and justified in the Spirit.**

3. In all his work as our Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ was **“SEEN OF ANGELS.”** The angels of God beheld him and worshipped him at his birth, saw him and ministered to him in the wilderness, and watched with wonder as he prayed in Gethsemane, as he was made to be sin and as he suffered and died at Calvary. They watched

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him in his resurrection and ascension. They behold his face in glory today. They even behold him through the ministry of the Word in the house of God (1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10).

4. Christ Jesus, our crucified, risen, exalted God and Savior, has been and is now **“PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES.”** The gospel of God’s redeeming, saving grace in Christ is now preached to us Gentiles, the most vile men and women in the world, the vilest wretches of the earth, by our Lord’s express command (John 3:16-17).

(John 3:14-17) “14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

5. The preaching of Christ to the Gentiles has brought saving faith to God’s elect throughout the world. Therefore the Holy Spirit tells us that Christ Jesus is **“BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD.”** Wonder of wonders! God has given faith to the most despicable wretches in the world.

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He has given us faith in Christ. Truly, this is the basis of and motivation for all true godliness, devotion and commitment.

6. When he had finished all that he came here to do, our Savior, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, was **“RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY.”** He was raised from the dead in a glorified body. He ascended into heaven in a glorious manner. When he was received up into glory he was there received as our Representative and Forerunner (Hebrews 6:20; 9:12). He is crowned with glory. He is the King of Glory. He holds all the fullness of glory for all those for whom he lived, died, rose again, ascended up into heaven and makes intercession. — **The believer’s devotion to Christ is not fanaticism. It is the most reasonable thing in the world** (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). **It is devotion to an all-sufficient Redeemer who is the sovereign Monarch of the universe!** — *“Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness!”*

2nd **THE MYSTERY OF FAITH**

The Holy Spirit tells us (1 Timothy 3:9) that pastors and deacons must be men who hold **“the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”** **The mystery of faith is the doctrine of the gospel.**

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(1 Timothy 3:9) “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

A pastor must be a man who holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. There is but one faith by which sinners are saved, the faith of Christ. John calls it “*the doctrine of Christ.*” “*The mystery of the faith*” is the message of salvation by the grace of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the message of the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:7). Paul urged Timothy to war a good warfare...

(1 Timothy 1:19-20) “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: (20) Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

This mystery of the faith is called “the mystery of the gospel” in Ephesians 6:19. Paul does not leave us to guess what that mystery is. It is the message which God has sent his ambassadors to proclaim (Ephesians 6:20). **Very simply put, the mystery of faith, the mystery of the gospel, is the salvation of sinners by a Substitute.** It is the revelation of atonement, reconciliation, peace, pardon, justification, righteousness, sanctification and eternal life

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for sinners through the merits of Christ’s redemptive work as the sinner’s Substitute. **The mystery of the faith, the mystery of the gospel, is Substitution!** To the wiseacres of the world, it is foolishness. To the self-righteous religionists it is a stumbling stone and rock of offense. Yet, to every believer it is the wisdom of God, the power of God and the glory of God. We see and find everything required for the saving of our souls in Christ, our crucified Substitute (Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:12; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

3rd THE MYSTERY OF SPIRITUAL UNION

Then the Scriptures speak of what I will call “**the mystery of spiritual union**” between Christ and his people (Ephesians 5:32; Colossians 1:27).

(Ephesians 5:25-32) “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as

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the Lord the church: (30) For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (31) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (32) **This is a great mystery**: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

(Colossians 1:25-27) “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (26) **Even the mystery which hath been hid** from ages and from generations, but **now is made manifest to his saints**: (27) To whom God would make known what *is* **the riches of the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**”

What a mystery this is! There is a real, blessed, indestructible union, a mystical, spiritual oneness between Christ and his people. We are in Christ and Christ is in us. **Believers are so thoroughly one with Christ that all that he is and has as the God-man, our Mediator, we are and have in him.** His doing is our doing. His acceptance is our acceptance. And his reward is our reward.

‘Twixt Jesus and the chosen race
There is a bond of sovereign grace
That hell with its infernal train

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Can ne'er dissolve, nor rend in twain!

Nothing in all the Bible is more profound and nothing more blessed, than the wondrous union that exists between Christ and his people! This union is a union common to and enjoyed by all believers. We are one with Christ representatively (Ephesians 1:6), spiritually (Ephesians 4:4), mystically (Ephesians 1:22-23) and vitally. We are one in him, like branches are one with the vine. He is in us, like the soul is in the body (Colossians 1:27). **Without him we cannot live; and without us he is not complete.** Yes, God's elect are *“the fulness of him that filleth all in all!”* We are one with Christ eternally. We always have been one with him (Ephesians 1:6) and always shall be (Romans 11:29). We shall be one in Christ and one with Christ perfectly forever (John 17:21-26).

4th **THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE**

The mystery of providence is masterfully set before us in Romans 8-11 (Romans 11:25-27; Ephesians 3:3-9). The mystery of providence is **the revelation of the fact that God has always intended to save chosen sinners out of every nation.** To that end he sovereignly rules all things. Even the fall and casting away of the Jews was used by God to be a means of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.

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(Romans 11:25-27) “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) **And so — [That is to say, “by this method, by this means”]** — all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (27) For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

(Ephesians 3:3-9) “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (6) **That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:** (7) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (8) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning

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of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

The mystery of providence is that which assures and comforts our hearts as we face the sorrows, trials and troubles of life in this world.

This is the mystery of providence: — God almighty sovereignly arranges, manipulates, and disposes of all things for the salvation of his elect. Just as the Lord God raised up Pharaoh and Egypt, and destroyed Pharaoh and Egypt, for the saving of Israel, so to he raised up and destroyed Israel as a nation for the saving of his elect throughout the whole world, so that all the Israel of God shall be saved. It is still true today. **God hides the gospel from some in judgment that he might reveal it to others in mercy** (Matthew 11:25-26). God, our Father, sacrifices men and nations on the altar of his love for his elect, to gather his precious seed out of the earth (Isaiah 43:1-5). This is the mystery of his will (Ephesians 1:9-11); and this is cause for adoration and praise (Romans 11:33-36).

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to

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him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen.”

5th THE MYSTERY OF THE STARS AND CANDLESTICKS

When John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, he was “*in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.*” When it came time to worship, though he could not meet with them in body, he met with God’s saints around the throne. As he did, worshipping God, the Lord Jesus taught him **the mystery of the stars and candlesticks** (Revelation 1:20). — The revelation of this mystery is the assurance given to faithful pastors (stars) and gospel churches (candlesticks) that they are in the hands of Christ, established, provided for and preserved by him.

(Revelation 1:10-20) “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (11) Saying, **I am Alpha and Omega**, the first and the last: and, **What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches** which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

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(12) And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, **I saw seven golden candlesticks;** (13) **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man,** clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (14) His head and *his hairs were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; (15) And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. (16) And **he had in his right hand seven stars:** and out of his mouth went **a sharp twoedged sword:** and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

(17) And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (18) *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (19) Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; (20) **The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**”

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The seven golden candlesticks are the churches of Christ.

- There are seven of them — always enough! Christ is in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20).
- As he walks in the midst of his churches, he sends out his Word.
- The churches are established by him, provided for by him and ruled by him.

The seven stars are the pastors of the churches. — Pastors are God’s messengers (angels) to his churches. There are always seven of them, always exactly as many as are needed to accomplish the Lord’s purpose for his Church. It is Christ who puts his messengers in his churches. And those who are Christ’s messengers are in his hand.

6th THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

“The mystery of iniquity”(2 Thessalonians 2:7) **is called the mystery of Babylon** (Revelation 17:5), like all that we have seen thus far, is a mystery that cannot be known and understood, except by Divine Revelation. But this is a mystery plainly, forcibly, unmistakably revealed in the Book of God.

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The mystery of iniquity and of Babylon is the wicked influence of freewill, works religion, as it is used by God to be an instrument of judgment upon those who receive not the love of the truth.

(2 Thessalonians 2:7-12) “For **the mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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(Revelation 17:4-8) “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: (5) And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (6) And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, **I wondered with great admiration.** (7) And the angel said unto me, **Wherefore didst thou marvel?** I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. (8) The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and **they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,** when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

“The mystery of iniquity” refers the delusions of antichrist, the delusions of Arminian, free-will, works religion. One might wonder why God allows so much perverse religion in the world. Why is it that the religion of antichrist is so prevalent in the world today? Do not allow these things to

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disturb you. **This too is according to the purpose of God.** When men and women will not receive the love of the truth, God sends them a strong delusion and gives them over to a reprobate mind that they might be damned (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

- The heresies of this age must abound, so that God’s elect might be distinguished from the reprobate (1 Corinthians 11:9).
- Christ’s sheep hear his voice. A stranger they will not follow! (1 John 2:19, 20, 27).
- The only reason God’s elect are not engulfed in the perverse religion of antichrist is their eternal election to salvation in Christ by his grace (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

“The mystery of iniquity doth already work!” — God’s greatest judgment upon this generation is not immorality, drugs, abortion, or aids. God’s greatest judgment upon the world in which we live is the perverse freewill, works religion of this age. Just as the universal acceptance of papacy brought degeneracy to the world in those dark days prior to the reformation, so the universal acceptance of free-willism has brought degeneracy upon this age. Wherever and whenever men embrace a religion of works salvation degeneracy and immorality follow!

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“It is the mystery of godliness that God made himself man. It is the mystery of iniquity that man makes himself god.” — Syd Buggins

7th **THE MYSTERY OF THE RESURRECTION**

Now, turn to 1 Corinthians 15 and behold **the mystery of the resurrection** (1 Corinthians 15:51-58). The mystery of the resurrection is the wonder of how Christ will both raise the dead and reconcile all things to God (Ephesians 1:9-10) at his glorious second advent.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-58) “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. (54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? (56) The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. (57) But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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(58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

The mystery of the resurrection is the blessed hope set before us. Scoffers laugh at us, skeptics ridicule us, the religious world derides us for what they call our “old fashioned,” “unintelligent” beliefs; but all believers walk in the old paths of divine truth, believing exactly what we are ridiculed for believing. **We believe in the literal, bodily resurrection of the dead and the triumph of God’s elect over death, hell, and the grave.** — “*We shall not all sleep.*” We will not all die. Some will still be living in faith when Christ comes again. — “*But we shall all be changed.*” Both those who have died in the Lord and those who are yet upon the earth when Christ comes again in his glory shall be transformed into the likeness of Christ in glorious immortality and perfect holiness. We shall all be triumphant at last.

GOD WITH MAN

My friend, **Syd Buggins**, whom I quoted a moment ago, wrote, —

“Looking along the long line of Eternity, which stretches out of sight behind us, and into the distance

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before us, we see a notch in the line, which represents time. This short period of a few thousand years, in which God will work out his whole plan of Redemption.”

It was God’s purpose from everlasting to dwell with man upon the earth in that great, eternal Sabbath awaiting chosen sinners in the New Creation. Three times in the Book of God (Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14) the Lord God declares that **“The earth shall be filled with the Glory of God,” that is, filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, the revelation and apprehension of the glory of the triune God in Christ.** In that day, the earth shall be cleansed by fire, as it was by water in Noah’s day. The old coat of the curse shall be removed, and the Lord God shall make all things new.

That is the purpose of God and the promise of the gospel. Astonishing as it is, so astonishing that Solomon asked with amazement, **“Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?”** (2 Chronicles 6:18). Yet, it is true and sure. — **Our God shall soon burn the slime of the serpent from his creation.** In that blessed eternal day, when the knowledge of the glory of God fills the earth, in that day called *“the glorious liberty of the sons of God,”* we will look over this little notch in eternity we call “time,” taking into consideration all the rage of Satan and of hell

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against our God and his Christ, the fall of man and all its consequences, all seen in the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, in the light of redemption accomplished, and rejoice to say, “**No harm done!** The Lion of the Tribe of Judah has prevailed. All Israel is saved. And the Triune Jehovah glorifies himself forever, dwelling with redeemed men upon the earth!” (2 Peter 3:11-14).

(2 Peter 3:11-14) “[Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Amen.