

The Mysteries Of God Part 8

Mystery # 15—God

Rev 10:6-7

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, **that there should be time no longer:**

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **the mystery of God should be finished**, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

First, in order to define what is meant by the mystery of God being finished we must examine the last portion of this statement. The Bible states “as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

Rom 16:25-26

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,**

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Eph 3:5

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;

2 Peter 1:21-2:1

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

God has continuously, little by little, revealed his complete plan throughout time. While we have the complete Word of God in hand we still do not understand everything that the Bible says. Anyone that says they understand the Bible from cover to cover is not being honest with you. However, when this seventh angel sounds, the complete mystery of God’s plan will be completely uncovered and apparent to all. After the rapture of the church, the book of Revelation will begin to unfold and the mysteries in Scripture that we were unable to decipher will be revealed to those that remain.

1 Peter 1:18-20

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 **Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Rev 13:8

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.

Thru his O.T. and N.T. prophets God declared his plan for humanity. Jesus was to die for our sins before the world was ever formed. The battle of Armageddon was planned long before the world was ever formed. The great tribulation was planned long before the world was ever formed. Our salvation was planned long before the foundation of the world.

Eph 1:4-5

4 According as he **hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Now while we don't have time to dive into the subject of Calvinism during this study, we can see that God knew before the foundation of the world who would accept His plan and who would reject His plan. We see in verse 5 of Ephesians chap 1 that we are predestinated according to His will...Remember that God's will is that all be saved (2 Peter 3:9) but God knew before the foundation of the world who would be saved.

This is the great mystery of God. That God has always existed and has no beginning and no end (Psm. 90:2...Many other references are available but for the sake of time and space this one will suffice). That God has set in motion this brief blip in eternity called time and that this same God is not affected by time at all.

JUST TRY IT! STOP RIGHT NOW AND TRY TO THINK THAT GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN...HE HAS NO BEGINNING AND NO END...HE'S JUST ALWAYS BEEN UP THERE...WHERE DID HE COME FROM?...HOW DID HE GET THERE?...WHAT DID HE DO BEFORE HE CREATED US?...THERE IS NO TIME WITH YOU SO IF I COULD PLACE TIME ON YOU JUST HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN UP THERE?...These are all questions our little finite minds that are bound by time and matter cannot even possibly begin to comprehend. This is part of the great mystery of God.

Eccl 3:11

11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: **also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**

There is no way we can totally comprehend the complete plan of God. But at the time of this seventh trumpet we will know that the plan of God is completed for all eternity.

Isa 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

God knew how it would all turn out before he began creation. He knows right now how things are going to transpire.

Isa 48:5

5 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

When the writings of Revelation begin to be fulfilled, man will be unable to state that God's Word doesn't come to pass. God will take away every excuse so man has to acknowledge that God's Word is true. In fact, the book of Revelation declares that man will know it is God and will still refuse to repent. (Rev. 16:9-11)

Obviously the mystery of God is the windup. God prepares to wrap up His dealings with mankind and set up His kingdom. The Lord Jesus will return, destroy the antichrist, bind Satan (Rev. 20:1-3), and set up His one-thousand-year kingdom (Rev. 20:6). At the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth, He will cast Satan into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), where he will be tormented forever. Then the wicked dead of all ages will be judged and consigned to that same lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15).

Mystery # 16—The Seven Stars & The Seven Candlesticks

Rev 1:12-20

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.

First we will discuss the first mystery of the seven angels of the seven churches. Many scholars have stated that these angels are messengers and are actually the pastors of the local church. I don't adhere to this interpretation due to the fact I am a literalist (interpret the Bible literally unless the Bible states to do otherwise). I personally believe that we have actual angels that are assigned to churches for ministering purposes.

Heb 1:13-2:1

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Ps 91:9-11

9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Matt 18:10

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, **That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**

Heb 13:2

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: **for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

The Bible is very clear that angels take part in men's lives. Why would we not believe that God could set an angel over the church as well? We don't have to correct the Bible. We also will not know this side of Heaven just how many times these ministering spirits have intervened in order to save our individual lives and whole churches from harm.

Now that we have discussed the 7 stars revealed to be angels we will switch our focus to the 7 candlesticks that are revealed by the Word of God to be the churches.

The churches are characterized in three ways:

- 1) **Historically**—These were actual churches in actual cities during the time period that John wrote the book of Revelation.
- 2) **Prophetically**---These 7 churches represent seven distinct stages of church history. Seven in the number of completion and these seven churches span from the time of the apostles to the rapture of the church.
- 3) **Spiritually**---Each of the churches represent (a) seven types of churches in any period of church history, with one being dominant, and (b) seven characteristics that can exist in any church or in any Christian.

By noticing that these churches are represented by candlesticks, just what or who are represented by the candles?

Ps 18:28

28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

Prov 20:27

27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

We as born again Christians are the candles in the church.

Matt 5:14-16

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

This is another verse in strong support of the local church. Every born again Christian should be planted in the local church. After being saved, you don't stay home and hide your light under a bushel, you place your self on a candlestick (church).

Now, while we already know that these churches existed in history we will now skip to discuss the prophetic and personal messages of the churches.

1. **Ephesus**—Rev. 2:1-7...This church represents the early church from the crucifixion to around 100 a.d. This was the apostolic church. Tolerance was not

exercised (vs 2). They exposed false prophets (vs 2). They didn't give up and kept going forward for God (vs 3). But they did begin to get ritualistic (vs 4). No longer were they working because of their love for the Lord. God tells them in verse 5 to repent or he will "remove thy candlestick out of his place". Many churches meet each and every week but God is no where near them. In verse 6 we see this church hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans and that God also hates these deeds. The Nicolaitans were a priestly class that ruled over the people. There are many Baptist Pastors attempting the same today in the churches. We should respect the man of God but the Pastor doesn't have complete authority over your life outside the church. (Example: what car to drive, what house to buy, etc etc.) Personally this church was busy for the Lord with no sincere love for Him. Program without passion! Works without love are for naught.

2. **Smyrna**--Rev. 2:8-11...This church represents the time period from 100 to 312 a.d. This church was the persecuted church. Smyrna means "bitter" and is related to the word Myrrh. Myrrh has to be crushed in order to release its fragrance (Ex. 30:23; John 19:39). We find that this church is poor materially but rich spiritually (vs 9). The reason for their poverty is that they refused to call Caesar Lord and were excluded from the guilds. They could not earn a living. We find in verse 10 that this church endured 10 persecutions under Roman emperors from Trajan in 98 AD to Diocletian in 305 AD. We find that this church is promised a crown of life for enduring temptation (James 1:12). Personally this church had no criticism from the Lord, but still the danger of compromise was constantly present. This was a poor, suffering church and compromise to escape persecution would have been easy.
3. **Pergamos**—Rev. 2:12-15---Pergamos represents the church from 312 a.d. to the end of the church age..Pergamos means "much marriage". Constantine set up this church as the state church. This church is married to the world. In verse 14 we find that Christianity is mixed with Pagan worship. The doctrine of Balaam can be found in Numbers chap. 22-25. Balak was a prophet that was in it for the money. Balak was hired to curse Israel and God turned his cursing into blessings. However, Balak was successful in causing the Jews to compromise their faith and intermingle with a Pagan religion. They compromised with the world in order to avoid persecution. They also accepted the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (priestly class over the common people). Personally they held false doctrines, making it easy to profess Christ and live in sin at the same time.
4. **Thyatira**—Rev. 2:18-21---This was the church of the Dark Ages. We have already discussed this church in detail but will highlight some of the key points. This is Roman Catholicism. This church represents the period from 500 a.d. to 1500 a.d. This was the unrepentant church. Thyatira means "continual sacrifice". This church had many good works but was ruled by a wicked woman full of abominations. Verse 23 shows that the black plague killed many of her followers. This church will go into the great tribulation (vs 22). Personally, this church has a

woman teaching doctrine within the church. Disobedience and disdain toward God's ordained order and violation of God's principles led to heresy and sin.

5. **Sardis**---Rev. 3:1-3—Sardis was the church of the reformation. This church is representative of the period from 1200 a.d. to 1600 a.d....Sardis means “escaping ones”...This church is known as the dead church (verse 1) because they held onto Catholicism...They didn't completely come out of the system...Also we find in verse 1 that they had the seven Spirits of God...There is only one Holy Spirit but He is comprised of 7 unique spirits (compare with Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6). These spirits are listed in Isaiah 11:2. All 7 of these spirits were in Jesus Christ (John 3:34; Heb. 1:9) In verse two we find that they are not “perfect” or mature before God. In verse 4 we find that there were a few of the “protestors” that did not keep the doctrines of the Catholic Church...Most of the “Protestant” churches today still have some form of Catholicism associated with their beliefs (infant baptism, Eucharist etc.)..This church was told in verse 2 to be watchful (Matt. 26:41; Acts 20:30-31; 1 Thess. 5:6), strengthen that which remains (Jude 3), remember what has been received and heard (2 Pet. 3:1-2), hold fast (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:23) and repent from dead works (Heb. 6:1; 9:14; Rev. 3:4) Personally, this church had reputation without life. Her future was behind her, she was headed back to Rome. God wants a clean break with the past (Rev. 18:4) with our old religion, our old sin, the world, and all else that would come between us and Christ.
6. **Philadelphia**—Rev. 3:7-11—This church represents the period from 1600-1900 A.D...This is the church of “brotherly love”. This church KEPT the Word of God. This word “kept” means to watch over or take care of. This is the church that placed the 1611 King James Bible in the hands of the common people. This is also the only church besides Smyrna not told to repent. This church has the open door (vs 8). No other time in church history has the Gospel been preached and so many lives changed by the Word of God. The door that was opened was shut again somewhere between 1886 and 1904..The Revised Standard Version began the assault on God's pure Word and the Laodicean period began. In verse 10 we find that this church will be raptured out before the great tribulation. Verse 11 shows that rewards can be lost so we should make sure to continue our work for God until the end. Personally, this church was a true, faithful witness, with open door, taking the Gospel to the world. But, be vigilant, for Satan's synagogue and the danger of compromise are never far away.
7. **Laodicea**---Rev. 3:14-17---This is the church age that we are currently residing in just before the rapture of the church. This is the final stage in church history. Laodicea means “rights of the people”. It is lukewarm (vs 16), preaching a social gospel. It is materially wealthy (vs. 17), but spiritually poverty-stricken (vs 17), for Christ is on the outside (vs 20) looking in. Personally, this church is lukewarm, apostate with the big budget and no blessings. Material wealth, spiritual poverty. The door is shut with Christ on the outside. SELF is in control (2 Tim. 3:5)

We must examine ourselves as individuals and examine ourselves as a collective church body in order to ensure that we don't resemble any of the churches that were lacking in our study. Oh that we would be just as the Philadelphian church! Let's not find ourselves at Falling Water Baptist Tabernacle being swayed and beguiled by false doctrine, false teachers and false security. What are we doing as a church to forward the Gospel of Jesus Christ?