***The Great Mysteries of the Bible

RV210-02***

Please open your Bibles once more to Revelation 17:1-18. Our subject is "Ecclesiastical Babylon," and this is segment number five.

It is amazing to realize, as you speak with people, to see how spiritually shallow they are. No place is that more evident than when you watch the TV preachers who put out drivel for which people send in millions of dollars. I watched Oral Roberts' son this morning as he and his wife went through their paces on TV, and he was pleading for money so that he could go back on the daily television program. He said, "What we're going to do is heal people." He said, "We're in the healing ministry." Now, that caught my attention right off the bat. He said, "I'm going to show you what we're going to do." Then he proceeded to pray with a prayer of healing. And he commanded this demon, and that demon, and that vile thing, and that disease, and he named them all. But he never once mentioned broken bones. That was just like him – playing it safe, because I was ready to get on the phone.

Then he said, "Now all you people have been healed," and there are idiots out there who believed it. Maybe somebody who had a bad piece of mustard on a piece of beef suddenly felt better in his stomach and said, "I've been healed by this wonderful prayer," and got carried away with it. These people could not be on public television (with all the costs) if the Christian community were not filled with shallow spiritual idiots who send their money in.

People who walk into our church services who are not used to being taught the Word of God, or who don't have a frame of reference, are often shocked. It is very hard for them to. Their minds go spinning off in all directions while they try to grasp what's going on, because suddenly they're in the presence of the deep things of the Word of God. Certainly, we have entered no deeper things in the Word of God than Revelation 17. People who are shallow spiritually don't care for the deep things of the Word of God. Their eyes get glazed over; they get tired; their minds wander off; and, they are not eager to know the deep and eternal things of the Spirit of God. But that's what we are gathered here for. Every service is an enormous contribution to that end. If you don't think that's true, just go up to the tape library and pick out any tape, and listen to it, and see, after you have listened to it, if you don't admit that every tape is an enormous, deep, powerful instruction in the Word of God. Why that? Well, it's because it's based on the Word of God. It is not trivialized, and the minds of the believers are not degraded as those who cannot grasp the things of the Word of God.

Ecclesiastical Babylon is a great area of the Word of God. The apostle John, we have seen, has been transported in his vision to a desert place – Babylon on the Euphrates River, that desert area here. Here, John is shown a woman whom God labeled as a spiritual harlot. This woman had her origin in Babel in the time of Nimrod, the great rebel against God. Nimrod created a whole religious system along with his wife Semiramis, which we call Babylonianism, and that religious system permeates life in the religious world everywhere today. At the heart of that system, of course, is Satan and the spirit world. The charismatic movement is part of Babylonianism. The charismatic movement, and what Roberts' son was carrying on about this morning, is spirit, demonic power. He is in the finest tradition of the religion of Nimrod. But it's all given the dignity of Christianity.

**The Fear of God**

This woman had her origins as a religious system in Babel under Nimrod's guidance. The harlot woman is a false religion, and at the heart of it is idolatry – worshiping idols instead of God. The religion of Babel was designed specifically to attract people by indulging their sensual lusts – the lust patterns of the sin nature, and telling them that it's all right to do that. The Babel religion sought to remove the fear of God. That's what it was all about. Nimrod said, "We've got to remove this fear of God that is so prevalent among us so that we can be free to be what we must be." And yet, God's Word in Psalm 111:10 teaches us that the fear of the Creator God is the beginning of wisdom. But Satan's Babylonian religion says, "That the fear of God is dumb, because it is a restriction on personal freedom."

The fear of God means a reverential trust in Him, and it means a positive volition and respect for His moral laws. Babylonianism teaches that we should trust in man and his natural goodness, and pursue the potential godhood that is in us. The doctrines of the religion of Babel are all around us today in various forms, and nowhere more prominently than in the Roman Catholic Church. That is the epitome of the expression of the doctrine of Babylonianism under the cloak of Christianity.

**The Woman (the Harlot Church)**

Well, John sees this harlot church riding on the back of the government of the antichrist. This woman will, during the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, dominate the civil authorities, just as the Roman Catholic Church did in the Middle Ages. This is always wrong. The Christian church is never authorized to exercise authority over civil powers. They are to be separated. But this harlot is exercising power over governmental authorities, and they hate her for it, but they have to tolerate her, because they need her, because the people are so loyal to her.

**A Name on Her Forehead**

This harlot is dressed as a queen of royal lineage, and she wears the symbols of wealth. The harlot religious system offers the nations a cup to drink which is full of moral abominations and of the unclean acts of her spiritual immorality. So, we come to Revelation 17:5 and, we read, "And upon her forehead, a name was written." On the forehead of the woman is a name. The word "written" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "grapho." This means "to inscribe something." It is in a tense in the Greek language which indicates that this inscription on this woman's forehead was made in the past and continues to the present. And that's exactly what was done in Babylon in the past. That's when this woman's name and her description was put on her forehead. It is in the passive voice which indicates that she didn't put it there, but that God has done this to her to identify her to us.

So, this woman has something on her forehead. In the ancient world, it was not unusual for the courtesans, the high class prostitutes, to wear their names prominently on a headband that they would wear on their foreheads. The book of Revelation, we have seen several times, has references to having marks on the forehead. This is a prominent display. The mark on the forehead has a declaration about the individual.

For example, we have the mark of the beast on the forehead of unbelievers. You have that in Revelation 13:16; Revelation 14:9; and, Revelation 20:4. Then you have the name of the harlot on the forehead here in Revelation 17:5. Then you have two places where we have the seal of God placed on the forehead of believers: Revelation 7:3; and, Revelation 9:4. Then in two places the very name of God is to be upon the believers: Revelation 14:1; and, Revelation 22:4. So, this custom of identification of something on the forehead is rather commonplace. We've had it several times in Revelation.

**A Mystery (a Secret)**

Now we come to this woman, and on her forehead is an identification that is an explanation and clearly indicates who owns her. This name upon her forehead is preceded by the word "mystery," because the name "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" is a mystery. The Greek word for "mystery" looks like this: "musterion." The word "mystery" in the Greek New Testament does not mean something mysterious or spooky. In the New Testament, this word has an explicit meaning that you need to understand. What this word means in the Bible is "secret." When God says that something is a mystery, He means that He's dealing with something which has been a secret. This expression "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth" is a secret. We're going to delve into that a little more in some detail. But right now, the point to make is that this is a mystery.

In the Bible, a mystery is a secret which God has kept about something that He's going to do (some spiritual factor). He has kept this out of the Old Testament Bible. It's a secret that you could read the Bible (the Old Testament Scripture) from one end to the other, and you'd never find any indication of it. It was just a secret. Then at some point in time, God says, "Now I'm ready to reveal this secret."

A clear definition is in Colossians 1:26 where we read, speaking about one of the mysteries – the mystery concerning the church: "That is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages (a secret in the past) and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints." So, every time you come up to something that says, "It's a mystery," it means that it's been a secret in the past of some tremendous spiritual truth that now God says, "It's time for Me to let you in on it."

The word "mystery" in Revelation 17:5 is not part of this woman's name. If you will compare that to Revelation 16:19 and Revelation 18:2, you will see in those passages that the name is simply Babylon the Great. It does not have the word "mystery" attached to it. So, the word "mystery" is simply an indication that here "Babylon the Mother of Harlots (spiritual harlotry) and of the Abominations of the Earth" has been a secret in the past. This religious system, and its full impact, is now going to be made known.

**Secrets in the Bible**

There are a number of secrets in the Bible that are very exciting to realize that we live in a time (in an age) when God says, "I'm ready to tell you about this."

1. **The Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven**

There is, first of all, the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 13:3-50 – the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. When the Jews rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah, the kingdom which He had come to set up on this earth was postponed until the Second Coming. On Palm Sunday, when the official leaders of Israel rejected Jesus Christ and proceeded to plan His death, that brought to an end the mission of Jesus Christ, for the moment, to set up the Davidic kingdom on the face of the earth. Suddenly, everything came to a screeching halt. And on that day, the time schedule that was given in the book of Daniel came to stop. It was seven years short of the full 490 years that God had said He would complete His dealing with Israel. But the time (the clock) stopped, and unknown, there was to be interjected a period of at least 2,000 years of the church age. This was a total sacred in the Old Testament, and totally unknown, but the kingdom that God had sent Christ to bring was now going to be in what is called a mystery state. This kingdom is in abeyance, but it's in a secret condition.

Here, Jesus proceeds to reveal the status of this Messianic Kingdom between the First and Second Comings of Christ. The secret was now ready to be revealed. And in these verses, Matthew 13:3-50, the secret status of the kingdom is revealed in a series of seven parables. We won't go through those in detail. You can do that on your own. But in these parables, several things are indicated concerning the sphere of Christendom. That's what we live in today – Christendom and the sphere of profession. We live today with the Messianic Kingdom in a state of public profession, and in a state of public standing by, but certain things take place during this era. It is the period where you have mingled together true and false profession.

**The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares**

So, you have the parable about the wheat and the tares. Jesus said that you can't tell them apart. You have to let them grow together until they come to maturity, and then you can separate them – those who have true profession and false. It is a period of great satanic deception among those who weren't taught in the Word of God.

**The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

We also have the mustard seed parable where, from a little bit of evil, this thing is going to spread throughout the whole world as a result of a huge worldwide system of religion – Nimrod's religion expanded and accepted in various forms around the world. That's what's taking place today.

**The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price**

Today, the era of profession is a period in which the church is described as a treasure hidden in a field – a treasure of Jew and gentile believers who are also called in another parable here – the pearl of great price. It is, in short, a period of formalism. It is a period where people doubt the integrity of the Bible. It is a period of great worldliness. It is a period where a man is exalted above the Word of God, and man's reason is placed before the doctrines of Scripture.

1. **The Mystery of Israel's Spiritual Blindness**

A second mystery is found in Romans 11:25. This is the mystery of Israel's spiritual blindness. Paul says: "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery." Right away, you say, "Aha, here's a secret that God has been keeping for ages, and now He's explained it to Paul, and Paul is going to give us this secret: "Lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening (and another way to understand that word is 'blindness') has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles has come in." Paul said, "I do not want you gentiles to get arrogant. Obviously, you are the apple of God's eyes now. Obviously, you are the objects of God's blessing. The Jew is the dog's tail today. He is not the object of God's blessing. You might think that you have replaced the Jew." That's what reform theology teaches. That's what amillennialism teaches. That's the great mistake – that the church has replaced Israel, and God has no future for the Jews. That is wrong.

So, Paul here says, "I want to tell you a secret. God, in ages past, determined that He would (because of the Jews rejection of the Messiah) temporarily set them aside as the objects of His special blessing, and instead, He would turn to the gentile world, and He would pour blessing upon a special body of people who were called by invitation only to be part of this body – the body of Christ, the church. And it is by invitation only. You don't just get into it because you decide you want to come in. Most Jews today, as you well know, are spiritually hardened toward Jesus Christ. They hate Him. In Israel, you can go past houses, and see the garbage cans that are outside the houses of Jewish homes, and they have the word "Jesus" on them, to express their contempt for Jesus of Nazareth. Very few Jews today trust in Christ the Savior. Those who do become part of the church. They cease being Jews, as gentiles cease being gentiles, and they enter a new category known as "Christians."

Paul says, "I do not want you gentile believers to be uninformed on this secret so that you don't get arrogant in your own estimation, and feel very proud of yourself that God has replaced the Jew with you, and you are now considered worthy of blessing, and he is not, so that you look down upon the Jew, because a partial hardening has happened." What does that mean? That means that every now and then, some Jewish believer gets the invitation. Some Jewish believer is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and he sees that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and he believes in Him. So, the overwhelming number of Jews are going to be lost. They're all blinded. They're all hardened toward Jesus Christ. This has happened to Israel, and this hardening will continue until the fullness of the gentiles has come in; meaning until the rapture of the church – until the church (primarily made up of gentiles) is completed. Then God will turn back His dealings with Israel, and will once again pick up the nation, and bring it back to spiritual enlightenment.

Now you could never have known that from the Old Testament – that there was going to be such a period. You would never dream this. If you were to say to a Jew of the Old Testament, "God's going to quit dealing with our people, and just shove us into a corner, and He's going to go and do his work through gentiles," the Jew would have scoffed at you. He knew that God would never do such a thing. But he was wrong. That was God's plan, and it was a secret. Now it is made known. The Jew is hardened toward Jesus Christ.

On the Phil Donahue program that I saw one time, they were talking about the subject of being born again. People in the audience were rising up in their various comments and indignation over the fact that Jesus says, "You must be born again or you don't go to heaven." Most of it was ignorance being spewed out by the people in the audience. Finally, one Jewess stood up, and she was hopping mad, and she said, "I'm a Jew, and I'm not born again, and I'm going to heaven." I said, "No, you're not, lady." But she was proud. She was confident. She was a hardened Jew. She was in that category of the one who was left blinded. She never got an invitation from God to come into His heaven, because she has never been enlightened to be willing to receive Christ as Savior. Her heart has never been softened. Her blindness has never been removed so that she could trust in Him.

1. **The Mystery of the Rapture**

A third great secret that is of interest to us is the secret about the catching away of a whole body of believers alive, and some of them from the graves, to go to heaven directly by meeting Jesus Christ in the air. The rapture of the church was a mystery. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (that is, we Christians are not all going to die), but we are all going to be changed (We're all going to get glorified sinless bodies.) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

So, here is a secret. Suddenly God is going to do something. In a moment (in the twinkling of an eye), we're all going to be changed, and some are not going to have to die to experience that change. The further details of this, you may read in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. In this passage, we have the detailed description of how Jesus Christ is suddenly going to come into the air, and He is going to meet the body of believers. Some Christians will be rising from their graves, and then following them come the Christians who are alive. All of them suddenly transform into sinless perfection.

The divine secret here was not that some gentiles would go to heaven. The Old Testament was full of that promise. It was full of the instruction that gentiles will be saved. That was no secret, but that some would go into heaven without dying – that was a secret. Nowhere was such an idea to be found in the Old Testament. They go as part of the first resurrection, which is the resurrection of believers. This happens just before the tribulation era begins. They'll be taken off as 1 Thessalonians 4 describes to meet Christ in the air, and He will take them directly into heaven. Some church saints will be raised from the dead, while others will simply go up without having died. But they'll all instantaneously get a glorified body. This rapture of the church was a total secret in the Old Testament.

1. **The Mystery of the Church**

A fourth secret is the mystery of the church as one body composed of Jews and gentiles. Ephesians 3:1-12 refers to this. Paul says, "For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the stewardship (or the dispensation) of God's grace, which was given to me for you (the dispensation of the church age). That by revelation there was made known to be the mystery (the secret) as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit."

Here again you see the definition of a mystery – a great spiritual secret that God had. Now, it's been made known through the communicators of God: "To be specific (here's the secret), that the gentiles, our fellow heirs and fellow members of the same body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me according to the working of His power."

Now, you know what a problem Peter had when he was told to go to the household of Cornelius (to go to the gentiles) and to preach the gospel to them so they could become believers in Jesus Christ, and enter the church, and become members of the body of Christ. That was an offense to Peter. You don't preach to gentiles. Now, when Peter got that commandment to go to Joppa to do that, it was seven years since Pentecost had taken place. They were talking only to Jews. It was inconceivable to them that God would also bring in gentiles, and join a gentile and a Jew into one body. It was unthinkable to join a gentile and a Jew together into one body. You may read through the rest of the passage here in Ephesians, but it goes on to talk about this great mystery, and the details of it, and the special privileges of those who are part of this body. You may also add Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 6:19 that further expand on this.

The divine secret was that God would create a whole new body of believers in the church made up of both Jews and gentiles. There are many people in the religious world and the Christian community who have learned this secret. They still think that the church is some kind of replacement for the Jews, but it is not. It is a new body made up of Jews and gentiles. This church is called the body of Christ, and it will in time become His bride which will reign with Him forever. So, this body of Jews and gentiles have a special relationship to the second person of the Trinity. In the church body, the distinction between Jew and gentile disappears. All become Christians. And everybody in the world today is in one of those three categories. You're either a Jew, or a gentile, or a Christian.

Entrance into the church body is by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which takes place at the point of your trusting in Christ the Savior.

If God is going to bring together such a body of believers with special royal privileges, where are we going to learn about them? Where are we going to read? You can't go to the Old Testament. The Old Testament doesn't have a whisper of a reference to the church. It was unknown. It was a secret. Now, all of a sudden, Jews and gentiles are put together into something that God calls the body of Christ – the church. That is where the New Testament epistles come in. That's why the epistles are the vital area of instruction for the believer. In the New Testament epistles, we find what it is to live by the special grace of God. We find the relationship of the church to Jesus Christ, and we find the power system for living on the basis of the indwelling Holy Spirit and on the principles of doctrine. So, this union of Jew and gentile believers into one new body in Christ was a secret never found in the Old Testament times.

1. **The Mystery of the Bride of Christ**

Another mystery or secret is that of the church as the bride of Christ. Ephesians 5:23-32 describe that. In this passage, we read, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water of the Word, that He might present to Himself the church, in all her glory, of no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she should be holy and blameless."

A bride normally prepare yourself for her husband in her wedding. Here, the husband is preparing the bride. Christ prepares the church to be His bride, and He's going to be related to her as a husband is related to the wife. Now, this is a secret – that there would be a group of believers who would be related to the second person of the Trinity as the bride is related to her husband. That's a very intimate relationship. And it is a permanent relationship, and it is a relationship that gives great privilege to that wife, because all of the husband is, and all that the husband has becomes hers. Jesus Christ, as the husband, is the protector and provider for His bride, the church. Church believers are to be in subjection to Christ, their husband, because He is the one who so loved her that He gave Himself in death for her upon the cross that she should become a beauty with no wrinkle; with no tarnish; and, with no smudge of anything upon her but a perfect beauty. Christ Himself prepares His church, the bride, to be presented sinless to Himself. The eternal relationship of the church to Christ in this in this context as a bride was just a secret never to be found any place else in Scripture.

1. **The Mystery of Christ Indwelling the Believer**

A sixth mystery in the Bible is the mystery of Christ indwelling the believer. In Galatians 2:20, we have a reference to this: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Add to that Colossians 1:26-27: "That is the mystery which has been hidden from past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God will make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." That is fantastic enough that God kept a secret that He was going to create a body of believers which would be related to Christ, the second person of the Trinity, as a bride. But here, it is even more amazing that this person of the Trinity would indwell the believer – the secret that Jesus Christ permanently would take up residence within the believer Himself. It is described here as "Christ in us, the hope of glory." It is Jesus Christ in the believer that's the basis for our hope of sharing in all the glory that is in heaven. The once outcast gentile – the gentile who once had nothing, has now received the indwelling of the person of Jesus Christ with all the spiritual blessings and all the fellowship that He's there to give. That's why He's in you. That's why He resides in us. As long as we keep that channel of temporal fellowship open, He is there, within, to give us blessing; to be our friend; and, to walk with us in personal fellowship. We need to remind ourselves more often than we do that: "Christ lives in me. He is in me, the hope of glory." The permanent indwelling of the believer during the church – what a great secret.

1. **The Mystery of Jesus Christ as the God-Man**

Secret number 7 was the mystery of Jesus Christ as a human being who was the fullness of the Godhead and of divine viewpoint wisdom. 1 Corinthians 2:6-8 tell us about this secret: "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery; the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age have understood. For if they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

They would not have crucified Jesus Christ, the very wisdom of God. They looked upon this man, and they didn't realize that they were looking upon God. They looked upon Jesus Christ, and did realize that this was a human being that was the full embodiment of deity. Colossians 2:2 says, "That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ himself."

This was a great secret. It was not made clear in the Old Testament that a human being was to enter the human race, and He would have in Him the full deity of Almighty God.

Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him, all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus Christ is undiminished deity, and He is God incarnate. Jesus Christ is the God-man. And in Him, because of that, is to be found all the wisdom of God that is inherent in the essence of God. The believer's divine viewpoint wisdom and spiritual perception is in the pattern of the God-man, Jesus Christ. What Jesus Christ knows, you can know. The wisdom that He has, you can have. Your knowledge of the Word of God, and your openness to the leading of the Spirit of God, put you in the possession of that wisdom. In Jesus Christ lives divine viewpoint wisdom – the wisdom of deity. The wisdom of deity can also reside within you. Deity does not reside in you, but the wisdom does. The fullness of deity in the man Jesus Christ, with divine viewpoint wisdom, was a great secret in ages past.

1. **The Mystery of Man Restored to Godliness**

Then there is mystery number 8, which is the mystery by which man is restored to godliness. What a great mystery this is! In 1 Timothy 3:16, a human being can be taken from his total depraved condition. The doctrine of the total depravity of men is the doctrine that says that we cannot produce one thing good that God accepts as merit. We are totally simply contaminated, and we can do nothing that is acceptable to God. Yet suddenly, God says, "It is possible for a human being to walk this earth with the integrity and the godliness of Jesus Christ. That was a secret that the world needed to know.

1 Timothy 3:16 says, "And by common confession." That means that he's going to quote for us part of an ancient hymn – a verse perhaps from a hymn of the New Testament church: "By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness." That is the secret of a believer being able to live a life totally compatible with God's righteousness. That's almost inconceivable, but that's what we're called to do. That's why it's so sticky when we realize that Jesus says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." What do you think he meant by that? He meant be as perfect as God is perfect. Is that possible? Here is the secret that it is possible for a human being to live, not consistently, but with spans of total godliness and total compatibility as if Christ himself were living your life, which indeed He is. There are breaks in it, but you will notice that the spans get longer and longer as you as you consistently feed upon the Word of God, and as your positive volition and receptivity to the meaning of the Word of God take hold. The spans of godliness become greater.

Here are the details of how this was brought about – the mystery of godliness. He, Jesus Christ, is revealed in the flesh – here is the basis of the Christian victory over the sin nature. It began with the fact of: "The incarnation of Jesus Christ (as the God-man), was vindicated in the Spirit (which meant that God the Holy Spirit had a part in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that resurrection confirmed everything that Christ claimed – all of His claims to be the Messiah Savior, and that He was going to pay for the sins of the world were confirmed by the fact that He was), raised from the dead, beheld by angels (which means that He was seen in heaven), presenting the work of His atonement for the sins of mankind; proclaimed among the nations (meaning that the gospel of the grace of God has gone forth throughout the world); believed on in the world (that some who hear this gospel respond with positive faith volition, and now enter the family of God); become indwelt by the Holy Spirit; become indwelt by the Son of God (now have access to great spiritual power and capacity to learn the Word of God – to learn the principles of doctrine, and taken up in glory when He had done His work; He ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of God the Father," to do what?

There He is, our advocate, we're told in 1 John. And as an advocate, He pleads our case when Satan accuses us, which he does day and night, when we come to those places where we break our gaps of godliness. He defends us on the basis of our faith in Christ. And He's our intercessor. He prays for us. How many foolish decisions we have never followed because Jesus Christ prayed that we would not do that, and the Father responded? That's going to be something interesting to find out someday – how much the prayers of Jesus Christ have carried us through, and have protected us from injury, and from spiritual wounding. It is the Word of God that is the guidance under the power of the Spirit of God that provides this godliness. It's a power system – the divine power system which Jesus Christ used in His humanity. That's the secret. It's out now. Learn doctrine. Keep yourself in temporal fellowship with keeping known sins confessed, and say, "Yes" when God lays something upon your heart.

I saw a very sad demonstration once more within the circle of our Christian associates, where I was in the presence of a man speaking to me. He was speaking about a need, and all of a sudden I get that little tinge of intuition. I don't want to play Oral Roberts here on this, but there is a time when (as one friend I used to have used to say) the joy bells start ringing. But there was an intuitive sense that suddenly I found myself in the presence of a man who was receiving a message from God. God was laying upon his heart to do something that he could well do, and that God had prepared him to do, and that God enabled him to do. And it was rather startling to me to see him enunciating the message that God was giving him, and his intention of what he was going to do. And you know what? He backed off. He didn't do it. Someday he will discover how much poorer he was in this world, and how much poorer he is in eternity because God gave him a guidance to an act of godliness, and he could not rise to it. It was very hard for me to have held back as I saw him veering off and entering his privacy of his priesthood, with my not saying, "Do you realize that I stood there while God spoke to you, and you have walked away from it?"

Integrity is at the heart. Anything that you are now into, or that you are doing, or that you're riding on that is wrong; that is a cheat; that is a lie; or, that is a break of integrity – don't kid yourself about that. You are not enjoying the secret of godliness. You're going through the motions, but you're out of fellowship. And because of that, you have needs that are not being met. Go back and fix the things that are wrong, and fix the things that are out of line. Make the confession; straighten it out; and, get back on track, and you will suddenly discover that all the things you're struggling for are going to fall into your lap. That's what we're talking about here – the mystery of godliness with all the fruitful blessings that come with it.

1. **The Mystery of the Seven Stars**

In Revelations 1:20, there's a ninth mystery: the mystery of the seven stars. These seven stars are explained to us as symbols for the messengers of each of these seven churches. They are the communicators in the local church. They are the pastor-teachers. Here, God's message is delivered to each local congregation through the pastor-teacher. His job is expository preaching and the teaching of doctrine. He's talking about the secret of the local church structure: the whole local church organization; the Bible; the pastor-teacher with a gift – that elder who has the ability to teach spiritual things; the gathering in a room together; gathering in somebody's home; gathering in a bigger room; and, the privacy of the priesthood of the believer, where you can sit and listen, and you can be negative, and I won't know it, and nobody else knows it, or you can be positive, and nobody else will know it, but in time, we'll see whether you're negative or positive about the results. But you can accept or you can reject, but you are taught.

Then, if you believe the truth, it's stored in your human spirit, and it becomes part of the reservoir of truth. And out of that comes cycling up to your mind; to your emotions; and, to your will, the guidance of the Spirit of God. Without doctrine in the reservoir, you're a shallow twit. And that's what most Christians are: playing little religious games; sweetness and light; and, never making an impact for eternity. They are kidding themselves all the way. They're going to stand on their rags at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and wonder what happened.

It's a great mystery that God has here – the secret of a human being being able to be nurtured upon the Word of God on a regular, consistent basis, but not if you're not sitting in the chair.

So, we come, with that as background of great mysteries in the Word of God, to two more that we will take together, and they are two very sobering ones. One of them is the mystery here in Revelation 17:5 – this big secret about Babylon the Great, the Mother of Spiritual Harlotry, and of all the Abominations of the Earth. Next time, we'll blow your brain cells out with some of the abominations of the earth that God says, "I hate with a determined vengeance," as we look at the mystery of Babylon the Great.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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