

W376_The_Mystery_6.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and his number six of the series dealing with the mystery. It is our custom at this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. So those of you who are listening to this recording, if you care to join us, will you switch off for a little while and read together with us? The first chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. We have considered in this series the mystery of Israel's blindness and the mystery associated with Adam, which was hushed up and now revealed at the end of Romans. And this evening, we are going to pass in review the references to a mystery in the remaining epistles of Paul, written before Acts 28. And by saying that. I want to say this because there are some folks who, having seen the dispensation of the mystery as revealed in Paul's prison epistles, almost seem to think that God ought never to have used the word anywhere else, that this privately connected with their calling. That isn't so. We shall discover that there is the mystery of the gospel. There is a mystery of Christ, as well as the dispensation of the mystery and its association with the Church of the One body. And while we glorify God and glory in the fact that we have seen some of the wonders of this revelation of the mystery in Ephesians and Colossians, that mustn't be used to close our eyes to the fact that there are others.

[00:01:45] Now, in most cases, the mystery has this touch about it, that it's God's master move against something that was antagonizing him and his purpose by the evil one. A secret part of his purpose only made known when it looked as though the purpose of God was in jeopardy. Now, the first occurrence of the mystery or a mystery in the first Corinthians is found in chapter two. He says in verse seven. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. And then you see somebody says, Oh, well, that knocks the bottom out of your teaching. That before the foundation of the world belongs only to the epistle, to the Ephesians. Well, God was there before the foundation of the world, and he had the whole purpose of the ages, our calling and all other callings in view. But this, if we'll give it a moment to speak for itself, is not a mystery. It's the wisdom of God. That in a mystery. So keep the two together. Now, what is he speaking about? What he says in verse six. And he follows in verse eight. A little bit of an explanation. How be it we speak wisdom among them that are perfect? How be it? Well, that's a bit of an old

fashioned word, but the moment you see how he means to say, Now what I have said is one thing, but don't forget there's something more.

[00:03:18] So you say, Oh, I know what's going to happen, that we have to go a bit earlier in this chapter. Oh, yes. We're going right back into chapter one in a minute. But look at chapter two as it opens. And I brethren, when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or of what? Wisdom. Guess we can't get away from this word wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. Now there are some manuscripts which read the word mystery. Instead of testimony in this verse, I wouldn't deal a great deal on it, but it's there. Some manuscripts read that he was he was coming to them, declaring unto them the mystery of God. But he was not going to clothe it with excellency of speech or of man's wisdom. For a very good reason. And that is the reason why he said in the verse two, For I determined to know nothing, know not to know anything. Among you say Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now that verse has been lifted out with very good intent by evangelical preachers to say The only thing we must know among men is Jesus Christ and him crucified. Well, if that's the case, you're wrong. Why? Well, the very epistle we're looking at says in chapter 15.

[00:04:37] If Christ be not raised from the dead, your faith is vain. You're yet in your sins. So this man in this very epistle doesn't say, I'll never go beyond the cross. He says, No, I can't go beyond the cross to you. Let's read it again, for I determined not to know anything among you. And then notice the next thing. In verse three, and I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. That's not the picture we conjure up of an apostle, is it? We think of him about twice the size of the ordinary man. That nothing could intimidate him. But he said I knew what was going to happen. You were all on tiptoe to hear me speak about the mystery and all these hidden things. But he said you were a carnal lot. You were all divided. You were babes. And I couldn't feed you with. With meat. I could only give you milk. He said so in the next chapter. But he said, I knew that would upset you. Now, I don't know whether you've ever spoken in a meeting and knew full well that the moment you started, you were going to have opposition growing. And although you may not show it, you may appreciate the position that Paul was in. And some speakers, I'm including myself sometimes when on the eve of battle, his knees were rather shaking and he said to his knees, If you only knew where I'm going to make you take me presently, you'll shake more.

[00:06:08] That's bravery, friends. And he was his man, not hesitating and hiding the fact that he felt these things and felt them keenly. How he prayed all he said, Pray for me that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. Let's honor that man who was willing to acknowledge that facing crowds of opposition was not the easiest thing that a man could have in front of him. So he said. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, man's wisdom coming out again, you see. But in the demonstration of the spirit and the power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men. But in the power of God. Then he said, Now don't make a mistake. How be it we speak wisdom among them that are perfect? And that word is going to be translated for you in the next chapter. Those who are not babes, but grown up all. We've got something more. But we've got to start here. That's where we all must start. And it's no good dabbling with mysteries. If you haven't realized the cross of Christ and its bearing upon you, your sin, and your acceptance with God, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.

[00:07:28] Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew. For. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Now you go back into chapter one, which I hope we've all read. And you will see that he is insisting there upon the preaching of the cross. Although he says from the human point of view, and especially these Greeks with their philosophical background, it was foolishness. And yet the scripture itself says this, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than Him. That's a wonderful figure of speech for God to stoop and say the foolishness of God and the weakness of God. And in Corinthians later on, he says, Christ was crucified in weakness. So he says that's the mystery of God. Very, very opposite from anything you might teach or you might think. You might conjure up a conception of God striding through his universe, everything falling before him. But he said it was the other way round. Which side of God he left the glory. He was rich for our sakes, became poor. He emptied himself and he didn't stop there. He became a man. And he didn't stop there. He humbled himself yet further and became obedient unto death. And he didn't stop there. Even the death of the cross.

[00:09:09] Can you imagine a deeper mystery to discover that God before the world began, envisaged not only the birth at Bethlehem and the solitary walker in Palestine,

but the betrayal by Judas and the actual crucifixion. And yet it's here. Don't let's pass this mystery of God quickly. But here we begin. If ever we're going to begin at all as the children of Israel had to begin, if they were ever going to be delivered from Egypt with a Passover lamb and the blood that was shed, there are features that you do well to remember with regard to the preaching of the cross. And otherwise. He says here that although it sounds like a paradox, that it's the wisdom of God and it's the power of God. And he said, if only the rulers of this world had known. Well, they didn't know. They fulfilled the very prophecies by denying them, which seems an opposite way of putting it. But they did. You remember the way in which the Apostle speaks to them in the Acts of the Apostles? Chapter two Just to get a slant on this, the Act of the Apostles. Chapter two. This is Peter speaking and while we are finding it, I would remind you that which you may know that Peter never once in the whole of his ministry uses the word cross. He never uses the word cross. What he uses is a tree. He says. In the acts of the apostles, more than once he hanged, you hanged him on a tree and in his epistle.

[00:10:51] He said that he died on the tree. Now, why does Peter say that? Why? Because Peter was speaking to the Jewish people. And in the Old Testament law, to be hanged upon a tree was to suffer the curse of a broken law. Now, Paul brings them together in the epistle to the Galatians and says he died the curse of the law by hanging on a tree. But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. He brings the two together, but the cross was the Roman punishment and the tree was the Jewish punishment. And in the Old Testament Greek version, the word crucify comes once and once only. And that is in the mouth of the King, in the book of Esther, where he's referring to the gallows upon which Mordecai was to be hanged. But instead Hayamim was hanged instead. That's a wonderful anticipation 300 years before Christ. That once in the Old Testament comes the word crucify. So he next to. He says, verse 22, Ye men of Israel hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Now, after all that and that evidence from heaven, him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

[00:12:21] But it says so. He delivered him up for us all. He freely gave his son. What did you do? You took. And by wicked hands and crucified and slain. Do you see they went in excess of what God did originally intended? If we can speak of God's plans like that. He gave his son and in the 10th chapter of John's Gospel, he said, I lay down my

life for myself. No man taketh it from me. So the cross was the added insult. The added disgrace. The added suffering that was piled upon the head of this willing sufferer. Showing you the enmity in the flesh and in the world, as well as the wickedness that had to be taken away by the death of the cross. Well, having those thoughts in mind, we come back and you say, you see, they didn't know the purpose of God. And there's no mistake about the Scriptures, because at the crucial moment when Christ was going to offer himself willingly without spot. Darkness came down upon the face of the earth for a space of so many hours. And in that darkness where no one saw Christ, did what he came to do, offered himself without spot, and then gave up. The ghost said, It is finished. No man took his life from him. And father was astonished to discover that Christ was dead because they lingered on the cross for five, 6 or 7 days.

[00:13:55] They died of just exhaustion and starvation. So did you see? You gotta weigh these things over and face the fact that here was a mystery. The wisdom of God hidden in a mystery. Which, if they only knew, they wouldn't have done what they did. What are we move because our time will not permit us to dwell on these things too much. But you may have got enough there to start you reading this passage a bit more intimately. We'll turn to the fourth chapter, because there he speaks about mysteries. Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ. Now, the word minister there is the lowest possible rung in the ladder of service. It's the word that was used of the under rower on the ships that were in use in the Apostle's day, and it was a dreadful position to be an upper rower sitting on a bench and chained to it. But to be an under rower meant that you were a doomed man if anything happened to that ship. Well, he says, you account of us as the Of course, the word minister is a very respectable word today, isn't it? Well, he wasn't a respectable man. Look what he says about himself in verse nine nine of the same chapter. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last. And as you've never been to a Roman circus, it may not mean what it meant to the apostle.

[00:15:24] If you'd set up in the Colosseum, you saw one after another come in and do their combats and go out, and then gradually the populace would begin to roar for blood. And then men came in last and they never went out again. Those men. They were all criminals and they were going to die in front of those people. He said, That's where we come in. The apostles last a spectacle, as it were, appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle. And that's the word theater unto the world and unto angels and to men. And this man says, let a man so account of us as of under Rose, the lowest

possible rank of service of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now to balance the idea that this man was in fear and trembling. Just let him speak for himself a bit more here. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. But with me, it's a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment. So he's not in fear of trembling to such an extent. He was going to truckle to them. He said my knees might shake, but they're going to take me into it, whatever it is. So he said, I judge not my own self. I know nothing now.

[00:16:44] Versions as I know No, nothing by myself. Which is a difficult thing to explain. What did he mean? What he meant. I know nothing against myself, he says. I can't for the moment think of anything that I've done wrong. But he said, that doesn't justify me. Because he might. Oh, yes, he might see many things that I gloss over. For he that judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. And every man have praise of God. And Becky is again to the first trouble. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other. And the next reference to a mystery in Corinthians is in one Corinthians 15. Oh, no, I'm sorry. One Corinthians 13. I mustn't skip this one. All you say is the mystery there. Yes, Friends. One Corinthians 13. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. I don't know whether you are listening to me on this tape recording. Wonder if I speak like an angel. I hope not. It's the best I can do. But if I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love.

[00:18:15] I become a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries. That means an encompassing knowledge, doesn't it? And all knowledge. And though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. Not not a bad little bit to bring us up, is it that even though we have been initiated into the teaching of Scripture and we can put somebody right with regard to the dispensation of the mystery and have not love in the ears of God and those principalities and powers are learning by the church the one manifold wisdom of God. It's sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Well, now, having said that, we'll pass on to one Corinthians 15 where we have another mystery mentioned. And here I have a little difficulty. Oh, you say you have a little difficulty. Yes, friends,

because I'm not quite sure what the apostle intended. All I can do is to point out and leave it with you so that we may search and see. It says here in verse 51, Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last Trump. Well, one Thessalonians four had already been written before Corinthians was written. And in one Thessalonians four, he said that the dead in Christ should rise first.

[00:19:48] Then we, which are alive, shall not prevent them which are asleep. And it will be the voice of the archangel and the Trump of God. So they could have said to him, Well, we know all about that, Paul, because we've read the epistle to the Thessalonians. And yet he says it's a mystery. Well, on the other hand, he said. We are associated, first of all, by nature with the first man, Adam, verse 45, a living soul and the last Adam, a life giving spirit. And then he says, verse 49, As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Well, if you're going to change from the image of the earthy. To the image of the heavenly. If this corruptible is going to put on Incorruption and this mortal is going to be put on immortality. Whether you're going to be changed, aren't you? Whether Paul tells you or not, it's obvious. Now this. I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. And yet he says, Behold, I show you, show you a mystery. What did I say? I'm going to go look and see what he did say, because if he showed them a history, we've got to accept it and find some reason. I did find that he is a word.

[00:21:09] Which is translated 1180 times by the ordinary word to say s a Y and translated once only to show fancy all that lot against you. 1180 times, he says. I say, Well, put that in here. Behold, I say a mystery. When you say that is a flat way of speaking, what do you mean? Ah, but you see, there is a possibility that this is a question. Supposing we say. Behold. Am I talking in a mystery? Don't you see? It's obvious you must be changed. So I think this is the one mystery in the scripture, which it never ought to be there. He says, I'm not talking mysteries. Now, this is so obvious that if the Earth is going to be changed to the heavenly and the corruptible, to the incorruption of the mortal, to the immortal one, you've got to be changed. For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. If, on the other hand, you think you've been robbed of a mystery, well, you can have it, friends, because it's not mine to give or take. I'm only telling you just as far as I've got. We shall be changed. Just a word. Because of

apparently little anticipation of this in Romans chapter 123. He's speaking about the heathen who professing themselves to be wise. Notice the wise and the fools coming in again and became fools and changed. Now is the word that we've got in one Corinthians 15 and change the glory of the Uncorruptible God.

[00:22:48] You see, he's got the word incorruptible with regard to the resurrection and he's got the incorruptible with regard to God himself. And we've got the same word changed and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image. We've got the very word image that we have in one Corinthians 15 made like to corruptible man and to birds and fourfooted beasts and creeping things. There is a possible link there which you may like to work out at your leisure. If you have any. Of course, there are two other words it's well to keep in mind so that you don't confuse them. One is meta schema. Iso sounds a long word. Meta schema iso. The operative part of the word is scheme and that means to transform. Two greetings. They are transformed as angels of light, the emissaries of the devil. And there is soon more follow. Morphe meaning the word form. And we shall be conformed to the image of his son. So there's a transfiguration awaiting the child of God. As the last verse in Philippians chapter three suggests. Well, now we are moving to a very different aspect. This is in the epistle to the Thessalonians two Thessalonians, and here we're going to see. There is once more brought to light. The devil's travesty of truth. I think we should be fairly right in saying there's not a doctrine.

[00:24:25] There's not a teaching. There's not a prophecy. But what you can discover that walking with it in the Scripture is Satan's travesty. So much like the truth that if you're not watchful, you'll mix them together. You remember how Jude, when he wrote, is very, very careful to say Enoch the seventh from Adam? Well, why did he bother to say that? Why? Because there was an Enoch who was nearer than the seventh, and some people say, Well, who was he? Well, you search and see. You'll find he was the son of Cain. And if he mix up the son of Cain with Enoch, who walked with God. Well, he's got you, you see, And that goes through the scriptures. In fact, there's one statement in Genesis 11, which is characteristic of the whole work of the evil one. They built a tower and they had brick for stone. In all God's building is stipulated stone. Added the site site added travesty. He had brick for stone. You know. Sometimes you used to see in the shops, beware of substitutes because the assistant was so well trained. He said. Believe me, madam, this is just as good as the other. And the evil ones. Us is just a masterpiece at foisting upon you a travesty. Now you will see. But that is here. And

this is set over against the mystery of godliness. We are going to consider the mystery of iniquity.

[00:25:54] Two Thessalonians Chapter two. Where we have in verse seven these words two Thessalonians chapter two, verse seven. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. Well, it's no good starting their friends because I think this is so important. We want to get a larger view. So I've put up in front of you the whole analysis of two Thessalonians. Those of you who are listening to the tape, you will have it sent to you in the way that you know on the card. So would you look. That Chapter two, verse one in the top part of the structure is just a peace all to itself. A, B, c. Thanks. Count worthy prayer, work of faith, beseech concerning lawlessness. And then he says, Thanks to obtain glory. Prayer concerning good work. Command concerning Disorderliness orders a bit here friends. You wouldn't like to think that any disorderly conduct that you were responsible for could be in any measure aligned up with the mystery of iniquity, that deadly satanic thing. But you see, that's what's happening. The more disorderliness there is in the Christian church, the easier it is for the evil one to get his part accepted and perpetuated. So there's a point for us. Well, now we'll lift up this chapter two, verse 1 to 12, and bring it down here and see the perfect little pattern. It is all to itself, isn't it? You see in chapter one, we have in verse one, we have the parousia of the Lord.

[00:27:41] Let's look at this piece by piece. The second chapter. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That word coming is the word parousia. And you will find it is repeated down here in verse nine. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan. So there are two comings in this one chapter, and both the words are used of the second coming of Christ. He is the travesty. If Christ has a parousia coming. This satanic travesty will have a parousia coming. All right. We must be prepared then. Now uses. There is deception at work in verses two and three. By spirit. By word. By epistle. Let's look at those. That ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us as at the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means. C Deception is strong here for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first. And that man of sin, this son of perdition be revealed. But first of all, let's look here the deception, because I've overshot my reading in verse three. There are three things by spirit. That is to say, in the early church, they had supernatural gifts and they stood up and prophesied and they spoke in tongues and somebody interpreted it.

[00:29:14] And the evil one was not backward in using that. I often think of the words that are written by Shakespeare that the devil can quote scripture for his own ends. Oh, yes. And here we have this threefold deception. There was a there was an epistle circulating among them purporting to come from the apostle Paul. And he gives a little word at the end of Chapter three with regard to that. He says in verse 17, the salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle. So I write, or as you could translate it, I write like this. There was that distinctive twist that he made when he wrote the word grace that you say, Oh, that's Paul right enough. He said, Yes. You look for that in every epistle so that you'll be safeguarded. Well, now these three are given an echo further down. You see, we have the parousia, the lawless one. We have the deception. These three. One, two, three, spirit word and epistle. What about there in verse nine? Are there three there? Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power. And signs and lying wonders. So there was deception again, you see, working along the same lines. And then in the middle. All further down. It speaks about the apostasy there, which is expanded rather large. And then we get. The summing up of it, the reason for it.

[00:30:47] The reason why it takes hold of people. Verse ten. With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. So they had a responsibility. They evidently received the truth or they'd heard the truth, but they were against it and for this cause. Only because of this. Not before. For this cause, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe. Not merely a lie. But the Eli. And you will find in John the eighth chapter, our savior says that the devil is a liar from the beginning and the father of it. The lie in contrast to the truth of which Christ is the exemplar. So he says. As this cause. God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie that they all might be damned who believe not the truth. Not because they were ignorant, not because they never heard it, but because they had pleasure in unrighteousness. And that's a dreadful state to be in, especially when the word has been preached and you resist it, then you're open. You see, the trouble is that some people resist the truth because they're not going to stultify their minds and prostitute their intelligence to believe a book like the Bible. And they think therefore they're immune, but they're just opening their mind to be deceived by the evil one who slip his side in.

[00:32:28] And it will suit their book so much better that they are bringing about their own condemnation. Dreadful thought, but there it is. Well, now we must get to look a little bit nearer to this apostasy in verse three. Verse 3 to 8. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come. So. That die, which is the day of the Lord. Will not come until this apostasy has reached its zenith. Instead of it gradually coming by, passing new acts of Parliament by uniting Europe and the rest of the world by agreeing with them, one man named K and another man named K and all bringing about at last. This is coming and it's all getting ready for that. The urgency that the world feels for their own safety, that they should have a man, they should have one parliament and one sort of army and one sort of police force and one church and all under one rule so that they could be safe. It's just getting ready for the man of sin to grasp the whole situation. And says that man of sin shall be revealed. And he's got a special title. The son of perdition. There is only one person in the New Testament that is called the Son of Perdition beside the Antichrist or the great anti-Christian monster here. And you know who that is? That's Judas. Judas who betrayed Christ. Judas who had heard his teaching.

[00:34:13] Judas who had sat at the table. And the Lord took the SOP and said, Judas, you know what you're doing. Mine own familiar friend who has eaten my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. You know what you're doing? Up till that moment, Judas could have avoided it. Judas could have saved his own soul. But when he took that step, it says Satan entered into him and he was a lost man. Is the difference between Peter and Judas. Judas went out and hanged himself. Peter went out and wept bitterly. They got perilously near it, one and the other, that the one went too far. It was like. The deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. While he is called a son of perdition. Now, what is his character? Who Opposeth and Exalteth himself Above all, that is called God or that is worshipped. And the strange thing about it is that after denying God altogether so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that He is God. Now, this is called in verse eight. Verse seven, The Mystery of Iniquity. And if you'll turn the page in your Bible, you will see on chapter three of the next Epistle, verse 16, The Mystery of Godliness. Verse 16 and without controversy. Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. He is the mystery of iniquity. Saying I am God and is the mystery of godliness.

[00:35:55] Saying this is true. The one the counterfeit of the other. So it looks as though, whether you're belonging to the devil's party or belonging to the grace of God, you can't

get away from that which either looks like Christ himself or is. It's either a false Christ or a true At the end, instead of saying you'd have no religion, you'll have a false Christ. You cannot keep away from it. What a dreadful state to be in. But we're back again in two Thessalonians Chapter two. Verse six. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. Only he who now let it will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed. Now you say to yourself, Don't bother to explain it. It's as plain as a pikestaff, is it? I don't think it is. But I think if we patiently look at it a bit more carefully, we might get something from it. First of all. Another translation. And now he that holdeth fast. He holds fast to something until he or that he might be revealed. It is his time for the mystery of iniquity is already working. Only he who now hold it fast will do so until he become out of the midst. And then shall that wicked be revealed.

[00:37:25] Oh, you say. Thank you very much. He's just about as big a puzzle as ever. All right. Well, now we'll go to the book of the Revelation and see, after looking that way, whether we get a glimpse of the truth here. Revelation Chapter 12. The last verse and the dragon was Ross with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And he stood upon the sand of the sea. Not I stood all to that. It's not somebody like writing the book saying I stood. He says, No, I'm telling you about the Dragon because he's been cast out in Chapter 12, just a bit earlier, verse nine, and the great Dragon was cast out. That old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him. And he, this dragon stood upon the sand of the sea and the beast came up. He's a rising out of the midst. Here he is, this anti-Christian monster who speaks words of blasphemy. Here it is in verse five. Oh, no further. I must say, first of all, verse four, they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast and they worshipped the beast. You see, above all, that is called God or worshipped. They say, who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies and power was given unto him to continue 40 and two months and so on.

[00:39:07] Well to bring the two passages together. Two Thessalonians two says that this mystery is already at work because you remember John in his epistle, he says, My little, my, my, my brethren, he says, It is the last time. And there are many antichrists,

not merely one in the future, but many that are yet to come. Will be already with you and they'll go on. It's already at work. And if it was already work in the Apostles Day when he wrote. You can realize it's working very near the surface now, as we can almost sense as we see the reports in the newspapers and listen to the news. Now, he said. You know, I've told you. I've told you while I was with you. These things, you know, that he that holds fast to these things, he's going to be revealed in his time. And he that holds fast will hang on to his position in the heavens until the war takes place between Michael and his angel that is cast out in the earth. And that when he does that, that's the last throw. Up comes the man of sin, the son of perdition. That's his last role, the Antichrist, in all his blasphemy.

[00:40:25] Well, that's the way in which it seems. One passage helps the other. The Devil's travesty. In one John. Chapter four three. Just in order to give you chapter and verse for the statement that the last time was already beginning and the Antichrist was its character. One John, Chapter four, verse three. Well, I think we'll read the first three verses. Beloved. Believe not every spirit. Now you see at the same thing. Paul had to contend with the same thing as by spirit or an epistle from us. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God. Because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come. And even now already is it in the world? Now an ordinary person. Left to himself. Even though he was an unbeliever, he could say the words Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. But that doesn't mean that here this is a person under the influence of a spirit, speaking with tongues and prophesying in a church. And if he's under the spell of the wicked one, he cannot confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

[00:41:57] God won't allow him. So there was a test, you see, and there was all the time focusing upon the person and work of Christ. Well, we've looked at in passing, we've looked at one Corinthians and we found that it was the cross of Christ. That was the great theme there of the mystery. We have been challenged from two points of view in Corinthians that that if we are stewards of the mysteries, we should at least be faithful. And in the other aspect, it's no good boasting about the mystery. If you don't act and live in harmony with love. And then we've come to this passage in two Thessalonians where

we have the mystery of iniquity. And lastly, notice in verse nine. Even now, even him whose parousia coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and wonders. Notice the three words. Those three words are actually used of Christ's miracles, power signs and wonders, but with one difference. These are the lying ones. He is the lie at work. Now you see quite a number of God's people, if they saw a miracle worked, would accept that as a sign that it was from God. If they had in their church, somebody healed miraculously of some disease, they would immediately say, Hallelujah, this is from God. It may not be, not in our day. And if the devil knows his work, he doesn't mind healing a body.

[00:43:28] If he can captivate your soul, give him enough credit to know that that would be easy for him to do. And it says in Matthew 24 that these things shall be so near the truth that were it possible, it would deceive the very elect. So be on your guard friends, because presently we're going to be faced with miracles almost. We're getting near to the edge of them now with the way in which men are performing their wonderful deeds and tasks. And the evil one is waiting to use all these things for his own ends. What a wonderful thing it is to know we've got one sheet. Anchor If you and I are loyal to the teaching of Scripture that concerning the person of Christ. We renew. But if we got any hesitation with regard to what it says about him, then there's always a possibility of us being side tracked. So may the Lord grant that each one of us will search our hearts and search His word and see to it that at least in this case, we stand loyal and true to him. When we meet together next time, we shall have to. Now go over to one Timothy chapter three. Because the mystery of godliness cannot be disposed of as one of a series, I think we'll have to spend a whole evening considering its teaching. Well, till then, may we be found? As the Apostle says, if we are stewards of the mysteries of God in any shape or form, may be found at least faithful.