

W377_The_Mystery_7.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number seven of the series dealing with the mystery. It is our custom at this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. Those of you who are listening, if you care to join us, will you switch off while we read together? Ezekiel Chapter 28. Those of us who have read this, Ezekiel 28 must be very conscious of the extreme difficulty of attempting to explain some of its passages. You remember that Babylon, the King of Babylon, is addressed as Lucifer, son of the morning, who said, I will set my throne above the stars. I will be like the most high. And here we have a king and a prince, a prince of Tyre, and then a king of Tyre. The prince of Tyre is evidently a man. It says so. But the king of Tyre is said to be an anointed cherub that had a place in creation long before a man was here, as though he were a high priest. He'd got all the gold and Topaz and Beryl and Jasper that we associate with the breastplate of the high Priest and the heavenly Jerusalem. And then he fell. The point is that scattered through the scriptures, there are hints of a dreadful fall that took place long before man and the fall is associated with worship. And as soon as the Bible commences. The first blood that was shed was shed because of differences in connection with worship.

[00:01:49] Cain and Abel only quarreled in relation to the right way in which to approach God. Cora. The earth opened and swallowed him up and all within because he dared to usurp the priesthood. As I, the King, dare to link together kingship and priesthood and died a leper. And so right the way through the New Testament, Satan's climax temptation to our savior is you can have all that you've come to do without the cross for one act of worship to me. And in the book of the Revelation, the Beast. It. He's going to dominate the earth at the end. All the world wondered and they worshipped the beast and they worshipped the dragon that gave him his authority. You cannot eliminate worship from the Bible. It's the one great controversial thing. And all this is associated with it. The Ten Commandments. We have great moral commandments, but the first one has to do with thou shalt have no other gods beside me. And if you break the first one, the rest don't matter. You. Have. You broken the lot. Well, now that's going to impinge upon our subject this evening. We have already in this series looked at two Thessalonians two, where it speaks about the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of iniquity is focused upon a man who sets himself up in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Iniquity will be abounding and diabolical, but it cannot leave out

worship. Whatever men do, they will have a temple and they'll have a god and they'll have someone representing God.

[00:03:33] That is, as it were, impossible to avoid. And so the two mysteries walk through scripture, one headed by Cain, one headed by Abel, right the way down until the end. A controversy indeed. Are you not thankful already that by the mercy of God, you have been delivered from compromise and connection with that which will ultimately end in Ezekiel 28 and two Thessalonians two and Revelation Chapter 13. There are so many things that are saddening, even when we look at it from a Christian point of view. If anyone came as they did, as they do in the storybooks from one of the other planets and asked to be directed to the church, what a terrible difficulty it would be to know how to answer the question which church to represent? The one company of redeemed worship is still a controversial matter. But one day, One day, the last chapter of the Bible. No temple for the lamb is the temple. No, son. For the lamb is the light thereof. And it's the person and work of Christ, which is the ultimate and only answer. And for that, our hearts rejoice. Well, now we're going to consider one passage in one Timothy chapter three. I don't think we shall be able to include any other references to the mysteries of the Scriptures. We've got enough before us in this one verse. Let us look at one Timothy Chapter three.

[00:05:10] I would like to like you to notice that it commences with a bishop, verse two and hospitality and having children under his care. And it goes on about a deacon. And then it says in verse 15 that if I carry along, that thou mayest know how thou ought is to behave thyself in the house of God. So it's not merely the church in the spiritual sense, but it's a house, Any church in which there is a bishop and a deacon and people attending. Now, the other version says that that House of God is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth. That makes you stop and think, doesn't it? A church in which you can behave yourself or misbehave yourself is the pillar and ground of truth. Other foundation can. No man lay says the Scripture, then Jesus Christ. But you say, what are we to do about it? Oh, well, sometimes it's wise to look again at the original and see whether even a full stop, comma or semicolon might be in its wrong place. So will you let me once more attempt a translation and get a little bit nearer to what it actually says? But if I tell you long that thou mayest know how thou ought to behave. Thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God. Full stop.

Now, it doesn't say the pillar is a filler. Stop. I'm going to talk about something else now, he says.

[00:06:45] A pillar and ground of truth and Confessedly great is the mystery of God in His. A pillar and ground of truth. Now the essence of the mystery of godliness. For the word you say, Godliness is the word that means to worship acceptably. You see, right at the heart of things, to worship acceptably needs the true mediator. Will you look at one Timothy Chapter two? Verse five and six. Though there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. A pillar and ground of truth and Confessedly great is the mystery of godliness. The mystery of true acceptable worship. The answer to all the clash in the battles and the controversy and the bloodshed that has stained this earth since the blood of Righteous Abel Right until the days in the book of the Revelation. Our need for it is for us to stress this essential fact one God and one mediator. I was only able to see a cut out of the paper. Just a little clipping here. It said. A seminarist of the Archdiocese of Westminster. After studying for the priesthood for over four years, has recently suffered an illness as a result of which he is threatened with blindness in both eyes. There is no known medical cure. Now we can sympathise with that, can we not? You'll notice I have a bother with my spectacles.

[00:08:28] I take them off when I want to put them on and I put them on when you expect me to take them off? Well, we know that Cardinal Godfrey invites prayers. Listen to this. To the 40 martyrs for the restoration of this seminary right side. Would you believe that in a day like this, a man like that could ask prayers to 40 martyrs? When the scripture says there is one mediator. The 40 martyrs were English Roman Catholics who died for their belief that the Pope and not the sovereign in this rightful is the rightful head of the Church of England. And that's today. And it's only echoing what has been order by down. The antagonism of Satan is directed primarily indirectly at his great intercessory mediator mediator position. If that's attacked, all the rest goes with it. If that's held fast, much will be preserved. So here we have it. This emphasis upon the mystery of godliness. You say buyer being the word acceptable worship, which of course, is a wider thought than godliness. But there's another thought that I think we do well to stress. You and I are keenly interested in the scriptures. We are keenly interested in anything that throws light upon the mystery, because the dispensation of the mystery is characteristic of our calling. It belongs to these teachings and so on. But

you do notice, don't you, that both the mysteries, the good and the bad. Are both focused upon the moral side.

[00:10:15] It's the mystery of iniquity. Over against the mystery of godliness. And there is a warning given us in one Corinthians 13 that though we speak with a tongue of men and angels, though we know all mysteries and have not love, it's sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. So the more we stress the mystery in the true sense of the word, the more we should stress the need to watch our steps with regard to eusebeia, godliness and acceptable worship. Now, I'm up against a problem here with regard to what we call textual criticism. I'm not a textual critic myself. It needs a lifetime study. But you perhaps would benefit by just a little word of explanation as far as I can go. If you read the revised version, it says without controversy. Great. Is the mystery of godliness, who was manifest in the flesh. And other translations are which was manifest in the flesh. And you might say, well, what's it matter? Well, anything that tampers with the center of our calling, hope and doctrine of scripture does matter. You say how did this come about? That some read God and some read Witch and some read who don't know whether it's possible for me to demonstrate one feature about it. Can you see at your distance those strange symbols? Well, Theos is the word God, but it's practically never written out full in the in the old manuscripts it's theos. That's nothing to be surprised at because if you sat down and started writing from Genesis one, it ended up with Revelation and then started another one you'd soon start writing for Would and for Good.

[00:12:14] You see only natural writing it by hand. So Theos was always t.h.s. Now that is the theater. It's got a thin bar across the middle, but it's the thin bar, isn't there? It's horse. Which means who? You see what else the case of the state of the affairs is this that there is one very important manuscript in the British Museum, the Alexandria manuscript, over which there has been a controversy. If you see that manuscript, you'll discover that the ink is a golden brown. It's not black. Now, through the course of time, a golden brown. And if you were using a cruel pen and you came down, you get a thick stroke. But if you made a horizontal one with a very thin, it'll make an exceedingly thin hairline. And that's what happens. A thin hairline. Now. The curator who received this in the year 1628 onwards, Patrick Young observed that some of these thin lines were vanishing. So we put a thick black line against it. There was no attempt to falsify. Anybody who looks at it knows that somebody has done it. He drew attention to the fact

that this important word might be misunderstood. You didn't paint it in brown. He just drew it in black. And then he writes about it and tells you what he's done.

[00:13:44] But apart from that. We should discover that. There is a tremendous testimony. Of the early writers to the version that we have, the authorized version. But there's one further test been made. And this, I think, settles it. Not only is the little bar. God in the of the word to us. But the little bar is gone in two letters in the word eusebeia. You see, the letter E in the in these letters is like a letter. The letter C with a little line in the middle. Well, as you look at this manuscript, you read e y, c, c, b, c a, and that's nonsense. So in the very verse, there's another word that everybody says it must be use, even though the bar is in there. And then the photographic test was put upon it recently. And although you cannot possibly see the marks, the photograph is revealed of all through the various properties that are connected with photography, It's all Baradei. So there's been a ballyhoo over nothing, although it was a most tremendous problem. I think we ought to be grateful to think that it's been restored without the possibility of controversy. Now, if anyone wants to go further into it, they must look that up for themselves. There is an article in the Berean Expositor Volume 30. Volume 32. And on the top there you will see possibly theos and the word eusebeia with no bars in it and it doesn't make sense. So that very fact seems to be in harmony with the fact that it's painted out in the course of time.

[00:15:45] I just give you this testimony, the reading of one Timothy 316. God was manifest in the flesh is witnessed by 289 manuscripts, by three versions and by upwards of 20 Greek fathers. And all those go back to antiquity. So I think that so far as I'm concerned and you're concerned, we shall just let it be that this is what the Scripture says. Now let's look at one Timothy itself. The whole epistle. First of all, we notice. That when he gets near to the end of chapter one. He has a little dogs on. It's very hard to see the apostles in the midst of all his labors and his writings. He suddenly breaks into a sort of hallelujah. He's got two doxologies, I think, in Romans, and he's got two here in Timothy. Now he's the first one, Chapter one, verse 17. Now unto the King, Eternal, immortal, invisible. The only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. Well, there we have the first. And then in chapter two, verse four. He says, who will have all men to be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth. And then in chapter four, verse ten. He says. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust

in the living God who is the saviour of all men. So we're back again on the word save and men.

[00:17:33] And now we have the second doxology in chapter six. Now let's remind ourselves in chapter one, it was the King Immortal. Invisible. Now we have here. Verse 13, Chapter six. I give thee charge in the sight of God who created all things and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilot witnessed the good confession that thou keep this commandment without spot, unreviewable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings and Lord of Lords. As anybody here, any hesitation in believing that the king of kings and the Lord of Lords is our Lord Jesus Christ, that is very titled in the Book of the Revelation. And the Father is never going to have a manifestation. He is never going to appear, but Christ is. So we have the King of kings and Lord of Lords who only hath immortality. This is a different word from the one in chapter one. This word means. That he is not now susceptible or touched by death. Now, if you were going to say all the things that God isn't, you'd never be done with it, would you? Is there any need for anyone to tell us that God in his absolute invisible, abstract spiritual condition is immortal? Will you say if it means that he's not susceptible to death? We don't need anything to be told that. But supposing our saviour is here, the king of kings and Lord of Lords, who in the book of the revelation says, Behold, I am alive and was dead and I'm alive forevermore.

[00:19:25] He only hath immortality. He's the only one who has passed through death and come back into immortal life. That's the Saviour. All our immortality draws from him. So he says, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. That his own right. You remember in John 17. Father glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. He stooped, he died. He rose again. And he's going to be given the name which is above every name. And here it is. Well, now you see. Is a invisible. No man has seen. And watch the mystery of godliness that he who was invisible and no man hath seen has been manifest in the flesh. John's first chapter says the same thing. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So with that again, then, to this mystery of godliness, mystery of acceptable worship without Christ stooping down to become man, we should have no mediator for it. Stresses the fact that the mediator must like Job's

request, lay his hand upon both and represent both God and man. An angel cannot represent God and an angel cannot represent man, but Christ represents God.

[00:21:06] It is invisibility. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared him. Have I been so long time with you and you have not known me, Philip, either Seen me, hath seen the father. So we've got God manifest in the flesh. Now this as a series of statements looking back again in chapter 316. And without controversy. Great is the mystery of godliness. And chapter four. Now, the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Now, you would be very much surprised if you weren't acquainted with it to know that there were devils here. The word demons was a word that was not a bad word in the days of the apostle, in the sense that we understand it. It was a mediator. Between God, the gods and men. And Saint Augustine. Writing about what the fourth century devotes about five chapters in one of his books to argue and prove that the church today doesn't need demons. When you say that's nonsense until you know it doesn't need mediators, martyrs, saints, it doesn't need anyone except the Son of God. So you see immediately balancing the one mediator in chapter 316, it says giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. That's introducing the false mediators. Those who were taking and usurping the place of Christ.

[00:22:59] I think that it would be wise before this series is over if I make an appendix. At the at the close and consider the signs of the times that are indicated in one Timothy and two Timothy with regard to some of these things. So just giving that hint for the moment, we'll pass on to another aspect of this truth. As I've said earlier, this is not the end of the mystery. This is the mystery of godliness, the mystery focusing our attention upon acceptable worship. And so I'm turning for a moment to Titus. The companion epistle to this. And I've got a little diagram here, which you will have with this tape recording. It may need a little bit of working out. But I've had to do some puzzling, so you might as well do a little bit as well. And you will see, I think that in the middle of this star, you know, that that is the traditional Morgan David. I know it's been adopted by other societies like the Freemasons, but the Morgan David is the shield of David, which you will see on a good many things to do with the people of Israel. I've simply adopted it without any reference to that. In the very center is the mystery of godliness. Well, then

on these various points of this apart, I've got the references to first of all, we've got the I'll have to put this bit goes on now to look at a distance.

[00:24:38] Excuse me. We overcome our difficulties as best we can. We have, first of all. Manifest in the flesh. And then we have justified in spirit. You remember Romans that declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness. Son of David, according to the flesh. Spirit of holiness in resurrection. So there is the manifest in the flesh. Justified in the spirit. Uh, believed on in the world. Seen of angels. Seen. He was invisible. In first chapter. He's invisible. In the last chapter. But he been seen because they saw him in the flesh. Seen of angels, preached of in the world and received up into glory. The climax is the manifestation of Christ in glory received up into glory. Well, now, associated with that, you will see other terms. And I've tried to show that the word godliness and the words to do with appearing our see our sort of tacked on to this. And I think we'll just look at these passages as we go. Will you look at Titus Chapter one, Verse one. I've got down the bottom there under that word grace, the little word doctrine. Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness. Godliness is a word of which Paul is insisting on in these last epistles. We shall see it again presently. And. If you look at I think the bottom one is a contrast to Timothy chapter three.

[00:26:43] Two. Timothy Chapter three, verse five. He speaks about the perilous times that are coming. Chapter one. And he says that in spite of the fact that they're lovers of their own selves and covetous and boasters and proud and blasphemers and I don't know what. I can't leave Godliness alone. You notice it in verse five having a form of godliness. But denying the power thereof. The whole world is associated with godliness or worship. And some of it is the form without the power. And the only thing that matters is the power. Without it. It's a travesty. You see, it's everywhere. So even those in the perilous times that are coming who are traitors and heady and high minded and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, they got a form of godliness. So you got to be watchful lest you be snared by the travesty, the form of godliness. Well, then we notice. Do we have that godliness is associated with gain one Timothy six. Verses five, six and 11. One Timothy six five. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth. That What have I got to do with godliness? Oh, they've got great arguments about it. Supposing that gain is godliness. So you wouldn't believe unless you read the

scriptures that perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth would bother about godliness. But they got their philosophy about it.

[00:28:37] They got their arguments about it. Supposing that gain is godliness? From such withdraw thyself. Then he says, speaking about the truth. But godliness with contentment is great gain. But you must have the right thing in the right way. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. It's pretty sad to read a notice in the paper that a certain man died worth £500,000. He died worth £500,000. It was anything. Was it? At what we must remember to put a different color on some things. Well, then the next thing is we have a series of exaltations while we're looking at this passage. Shall we look at two Timothy 4:18. Two Timothy 4:18. And just. I just want to make sure I got the right reference here. 4:18. I'll have to look at closely. Oh, no. I see a microscopic full stop. Two Timothy, four, one and eight. I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Preach the word. He is appearing. And then in verse eight, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day. And not to be only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. He say, Why are you emphasizing appearing? He was manifest in the flesh. And that's an alternative translation to the word appearing.

[00:30:43] He was manifest in the flesh. And that manifestation here and that manifestation there is the one great absorbing thought in all our hearts covers all our teaching. We shall live looking for that blessed hope and the appearing as we shall see. So that's Timothy two Timothy four and not 18, but two. Timothy four one full stop and eight. So I'll put my glasses on and saw the full stops. That's a good, good thing to do. Sometimes better than many other ways. So now we have this emphasis that. Those who keep his word and love his word. They have that in prospect. Well, then we have in Titus chapter three. Thus. One two, seven. These words, put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work. One of the words which is emphasized in Titus is the word good works. We are told in this chapter, as you will see, um, verse five, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us. But it also says in verse eight, This is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. So we're not saved by good works, but we should manifest them. But now let's come back again. Therefore this is

introduced. But after that, the kindness and love of God, our Savior toward man appeared.

[00:32:24] If if Christ had never come in the flesh. It looks from the Scripture as though the kindness and love of God would never have appeared to man. You see, you get Romans Chapter three. The mercy seat through faith in his blood that he might be just. God is concerned that his justice should never be questioned in your salvation and mine. And so here he came in the flesh to live, to die, to rise again on our account. And so we got an emphasis there. And then further. Just to make sure I want to get sure of this in. Chapter two of Titus. We still got this great emphasis, this focus upon the appearing. Verse 11. This is the word grace. Verse 11, for the grace of God that brings its salvation hath appeared unto all men. The appearing. Disappeared when Christ was manifest in the flesh. And it will appear in its fullness when he is manifest in glory. And that's what's going to be the climax of this. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. Teaching us the denying ungodliness. He is the word, you see. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live soberly. Now, that word soberly, accurately has got the idea of a mind that is a salvation mind. It's not so much what we call old sobersides, but it's the word a life that's in harmony with being saved by grace. A salvation mind.

[00:34:13] Righteously godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing it is again the appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to do two things that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto thee. Deliver from and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Are those are missed out any of these features I wanted to introduce? I think we've touched upon them. The emphasis upon the glory. Verse 13, The Grace. Verse 11. The godliness in its form and formalism and all the various things that are round about this mighty subject. We come back now to to the first of Timothy, just to tidy up before we finish. You will notice, among other things, that the apostle is concerned about these believers. He says in verse 19 of chapter one, after he's spoken about the king, Eternal Immortal. Holding faith and a good conscience which some, having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck. He. That is the figure. Shipwreck. Then if you look at Chapter six, after he speaks about godliness, he says, but in verse nine. But they that will be rich. And it's not the future. That word will. It's it's their will that's involved. They will to be rich. They that will to be rich fall into temptation

and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts or desires which drown men. So the first chapter says that a shipwreck at the last chapter says they drown.

[00:36:21] Because of this. Alternative, which is to be the guide and goal in front of us. This act of worship which draws near to God or this pleasure and self seeking which drives us away from him. The two epistles, one Timothy and two Timothy. Are both linked together. About second Timothy. There's the state of prison. One Timothy and Titus seem to have been written in the interval between the first imprisonment of the Apostle Paul when he was liberated and the second epistle when he was taken captive again and was led out to execution. He used the opportunity of going round the churches and seeking to put them wise with regard to some of these things, warning them concerning what was coming. Speaking about the order that shall be observed in the churches. Realizing, as he said, that the day would come when men would not endure sound doctrine, but would endure would heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. They turn away their ears from the truth and they shall be turned unto hour version, says Fables. The word is the word myth, which belongs to the same family as the word mystery. It's just like Abraham having two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The Ishmail is the myth and the Isaac is the mystery. And the sad thing is there's many, many, many a person die who's a believer, who, having shut his eyes to the teaching of the mystery, is swallowing all the myths that they are giving him as an alternative.

[00:38:09] In this present time, we want to keep very, very close to the testimony of the Lord through Paul the prisoner. And the essence of his teaching is found in all these various passages which speak of the word's mystery. Now, the remaining passages before us will have to be those which are used by the Apostle Paul in epistles like Ephesians and Colossians. There is no reference to the word mystery in Philipians because it has to do with working out our salvation. The Ephesians and the Colossians are giving us definite positive teaching. There we read about a dispensation of the mystery entrusted to Paul as the prisoner. There we should have to differentiate between the mystery of Christ, which in other ages were not made known to the sons of men as it is now revealed. And the mystery which was never revealed and shared by anybody but that anticipating our subject for next time, and I think the subject has been exhaustive enough. It's been deep enough, and I think we'll leave it there, too, in the hands of the Lord. And grant that those who have been stirred up to consider this teaching, both in this meeting and in the tape recording, will not at the end of the story,

but rather take the hints that have been given and go through the books, go through the scriptures, balance passage by passage, search and see and so be established as far as it humanly possible, by the grace of God in the faith.