

(THE MYSTERY OF GOD)

The Bible speaks about the mystery of God that was a hidden secret from the foundations of the world, but which has been unfolding through the ages until we come to the end time when the mystery of God will be finished. Note these passages in Scripture: “ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began “ Romans 16:25, “ Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints “ Colossians 1:26. “ But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets “ Revelation 10:7.

In Proverbs 14:12 we read that “ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. “ And that light will shine with increasing luminosity until the angel of Revelation 18 will come down and lighten the whole earth with the glory of God. Habakkuk 2:14 tells us that “ The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. “ So we need to be ready to receive the light that is to shine more and more unto the perfect day when Christ will have a people who will have the mystery of God finished in their lives.

Inspiration tells us that “ The world is a second Sodom; the end is right upon us, and **is it reasonable to think that there is no message to make ready a people to stand in the day of God’s preparation?** “ 11MR p. 295. To prepare a people to stand in the day of God’s preparation, He sends greater light on the plan of redemption. That is how He will purify His people and perfect them in character. 1 Peter 1:22 tells us, “ Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. . . “ And Jesus told His believers, “ And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free “ John 8:32. Praying alone won’t do it. Any 10 days of prayer or 40 days of prayer that have been organized without a searching of the Word of truth to discern the message that God has sent us for this crisis hour, will not meet the needs for this time. We need to combine Bible study with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discern the message of preparation for the great day of God.

When sin and rebellion began with Lucifer, it brought a pall of darkness with it that has tended to obscure the knowledge of God’s character and the laws which He has established for the good of the universe. Lucifer has worked to present a distorted view of the truth about God and His law, and to enlist the intelligences of the universe in rejection of the truth. In John 8:44 Christ stated that Satan “ abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. He is a liar, and the father of it.”

It is tragic to read what happened to Adam and Eve and the darkness that overtook them when they sinned. The following is from Sons and Daughter of God, p. 25. “ Had Adam and Eve never disobeyed their Creator, had they remained in the path of perfect rectitude, they could have known and understood God. But when they listened to the voice of the tempter, and sinned against God, **the light of the garments of heavenly innocence departed from them; and in parting with the garments of innocence, they drew about them the dark robes of ignorance of God.** The clear and perfect light that had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer trace the character of God in His created works.”

Sin has had its tragic results, yet amazingly, through it all, God has wrought by His great wisdom so that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose “

Romans 8:28. " Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain " Psalm 76:10

We can see by the developments in the great controversy how God has used it to reveal more and more of the truth about His character and His law which were not revealed before sin began. That unfolding of the truth is absolutely necessary before the universe can be eternally secure. God has marvellously worked to make " all things work together for good to them that love God." In this study, we want to trace the unfolding of the truth about God and His government in the continuation of the great controversy which will reach its climax when God's seal is placed upon His people. Inspiration calls that seal " . . . the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . " 3T p. 267.

Inspiration tells us that "**Our little world is the lesson book of the universe**" DA p. 19. Sin and salvation are new things to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds which they are earnestly seeking to understand.

QUESTION: Before Lucifer aspired to occupy the position which Christ had in heaven, did he or the angels actually know who Christ really was? Consider that Christ was known as Michael, the archangel (Rev.12:7 & Jude 9), which seemed to suggest that He was the highest of all the angels, just a step above Lucifer.

This unexplained mystery of who Michael, the archangel really was, eventually developed into an issue in the mind of Lucifer. Some questions began to present themselves to his mind which he should have dismissed immediately, but he didn't. GC p. 495 gives us an insight to what he was thinking. " In all the councils of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?" GC 495. PP p. 35 tells us a little more about this developing problem.

" Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." . . . Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel **came to regard it as pertaining to himself**. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor **to secure their service and loyalty to himself**. "

Lucifer wanted to change the status quo. He reasoned that, if that was the way that the government of heaven was structured, then it needed to be changed. That would allow him the opportunity to rise to a higher position. He coveted the position that Christ had. And so he set about to discredit the order and laws that governed heavenly beings.

" Working with mysterious secrecy, and **for a time concealing his real purpose** under an appearance of reverence for God, he **endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings**, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will " GC p. 495.

He also tried to show that by these laws God was " seeking merely the exaltation of Himself in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures " GC p. 502.

Lucifer worked very subtly and imperceptibly in gradually working out his plans. We sometimes think Lucifer's rebellion became manifest soon after he defected in his heart. But that is not so. In 4BC p. 1143 we are told that " This condition of things had **existed a long period of time before Satan was unmasked** and the evil ones expelled."

Sin and lying and misrepresentation were previously unknown elements in the whole universe. Unfallen beings had a hard time to discern and sort out these things in their minds.

However, as time went on, Lucifer became more bold. GC p. 499 tells us, “ **He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty** and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, **freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence.** ”

Here we see his logic being carried out: If the laws of God’s government keep Christ in His position higher than Lucifer, than the only way to attain to Christ’s position was to get rid of those laws. Of course, in aspiring to do that, he was also casting doubts about God’s character. It was God who established those laws. They are a transcript of His character. So in his desire to attain to the coveted position of exalting his throne above the stars of God and sitting in the sides of the north, Lucifer cast a stigma upon the laws and character of God.

When things began to come to a head, the Father called all the angelic hosts together for an important meeting. He was to explain more fully who Christ really was, and why He was preferred above all the hosts of heaven, including Lucifer, in the councils of heaven.

“ The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence **He might set forth the true position of His Son** and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. . . . Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. **The Son of God had wrought the Father’s will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven;** and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants ” PP p. 36. This seems to indicate that the heavenly intelligences did not really understand who Christ was and that He was their Creator.

This apparently was a test for the angels, like the tree of knowledge was for mankind. And we know that 1/3 of the angels failed the test. It is hard for us to comprehend that 1/3 of heavenly beings, dwelling in the light of God’s presence and worshipping Him face to face, should become rebels by listening to some doubts instilled into their minds by the highest angel. But such is the pernicious nature of sin.

What happened in heaven was a terrible thing which has had repercussions throughout the whole universe and eventually brought down the Son of God to earth in order to provide a way of escape from slavery to sin and Satan. Yet we have this amazing text in Romans 8:28 that we need to keep in mind as we approach the climax of the great controversy which began in heaven.

“ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ” And furthermore we have the assurance in 2 Corinthians 13:8, “ For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. ” Whatever evils Satan creates in the universe, God makes some good come out of it.

Since the rebellion of Lucifer, the universe has had a greater revelation of who Christ really is. It seems that from the days of eternity, Christ followed the principles described in Philippians 2:5-7 “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation. . . ” In His assumed role as Michael, the archangel, Christ did not consider it a thing to be seized upon to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation. That was in sharp contrast to the spirit of Lucifer.

The universe also received a fuller revelation about God's law. In MB p. 109 it tells us that " When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** " Now the angels and other world began to see that the law is a transcript of God's character – a transcript of divine love. For the first time in their existence, they saw more clearly that the law and character of God combine both justice and mercy. They had only seen kindness and goodness revealed in God's character heretofore, but when rebellion came to a head, and the rebels had to be cast out of heaven, the whole universe saw a manifestation of divine justice for the first time. Sin and rebellion had to have a deterrent for the peace and good of the universe.

Furthermore, the universe began to see the terrible results of transgression. They saw what it did to the beautiful angels which God had created. They saw the dramatic changes in character, from being God-like in love and goodness, to becoming demons in cruelty and heartless afflictions of the human race. This must have been a terrible revelation happening before their eyes. We are told that " The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. – (Prophets and Kings p.148) and that "Our little world is the lesson book of the universe" DA p. 19.

But Lucifer used the terrible results of sin to justify his allegation that God's character and law were at fault. " He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God " DA p. 22.

When he and his angels were cast out of heaven, he could point to that as a manifestation of justice without mercy. When, after his fall, Lucifer called for an interview with Christ, as recorded in SR p. 26, to tell Him that he repented and was willing to take his assigned place in heaven, Christ had to tell him that he had hopelessly ruined himself and the angels with him, that the seeds of rebellions were still within him, and that he could never be reinstated in heaven. That could also be interpreted by the rebels to be a manifestation of justice without mercy. And so we find all through old testament times, Satan represented God as cruel and vindictive, all justice and no mercy.

At this stage, the loyal universe had to follow God by faith. They needed more light on the issues at stake. Neither Lucifer nor the loyal universe knew anything about Calvary. They could never imagine that Christ would actually come to earth and take the stroke of justice upon Himself to extend mercy to the sinner. At this point the other worlds and loyal angels could not answer all the allegations of Lucifer. All these things were new to their minds. They never knew what sin and lying and deception were, and it must have been difficult to sort these things out in their minds. It seems that the defection of Lucifer and the doubts he raised about God and His laws was a test for the angels and the unfallen worlds like the tree of knowledge of good and evil was for Adam and Eve.

But when Christ came to earth to manifest before men and heavenly beings the true character of God and the goodness of His law, Lucifer's lies and misrepresentations were swept away. They saw a wonderful manifestation of God's mercy in combination with His justice. When Christ died on Calvary, in mercy for the sinner taking the stroke of justice upon Himself, the demonstration was so convincing that the last link of sympathy in the unfallen worlds for Satan was broken. He had fully manifested himself as a murderer.

But why wasn't Satan then destroyed? Why wasn't the great controversy brought to a speedy end? There was more to be revealed about the two mysteries that were vying against each other, the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of God. The final generation will reveal the truth about God and His law so fully that every

lingering doubt and question raised by Lucifer will be fully answered. And the wicked will in these end times fully manifest the diabolical character of the leader they have chosen. Those who have followed Lucifer will be stamped with the mark of the beast. Those who have followed Christ will be sealed with the seal of God. The contrast will be so dramatic that all the heavenly intelligences will see the stark contrast between the two principles.

Christ in His humanity was the perfect prototype of the kind of character that can be developed by following God's laws implicitly. But the universe has to have a demonstration that it can also be reproduced in fallen humanity. Does the redemption Christ has provided really work? Will it keep redeemed sinners safe from another defection for eternity? That will be fully answered by the 'fit man,' the 144,000 fully redeemed sinners. That will be the final outcome of the experiment which Christ has been performing on the hearts and minds of His followers. It is called the 'mystery of God.' Revelation 10:7 tells us that the mystery of God will be finished when the 7th trumpet begins to sound. The experiment which Christ has been making is described in the following:

" The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. . . The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display " TM p. 18.

This is describing the 'fit man' the 144,000 who have received all the benefits of Christ's redeeming grace. That will make them eternally secure from ever falling back into transgression of God's law. There has never been a people like that in all the history of this world. Satan will refuse to admit that anyone who has ever succumbed to his temptations will ever be secure from ever being overcome by his sophistries again. And as a witness to the universe, God allows Satan to try them to the utmost during the time of trouble. That will be a fearful ordeal. Why? There is no intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, no more forgiveness available and no imputed righteousness to make up any deficiency or to cover any ignorant sins.

The fit man stands before God in the same position and with the same spiritual facilities which Christ had in His humanity. And as Christ bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom to the ground by His steadfast obedience, even to the point of death, so the 'fit man' will lead the scapegoat to his ultimate doom by his steadfast obedience even in the face of death under the death decree. That will drive the final nail in the coffin which will hold Satan incarcerated for 1000 years before his final destruction.

The eternal security of the universe is dependent on the outcome of the great controversy between Christ and Satan which is being acted out in this world. We are told that " The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama " Evangelism p. 622. All the wicked act out their part in support of Satan's claims against God and His law and receive his mark, and God's people will act out their part in support of the claims of God and receive His seal. When it is all over, God will have a universe that will be loyal to the government of heaven for the rest of eternity. The mystery of God will be finished. " Affliction shall not rise up the second time " Nahum 1:9. " The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. **A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance** to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom " GC p. 504.