

# The Grace of Wrath

Studies in the Revelation of Jesus Christ

Text

Chapter 10:1-11

Topic

John is told that the mystery of God  
He had declared to the prophets will be finished

Title

*"Come On the Biblical Mystery Tour"*

Introduction

One benefit of getting a degree is showing-off the letters after your name.

We're all familiar with abbreviations like AA, BA or BS, MA or MS, MBA, or PhD.

Did you know that there are over 125 graduate and post-graduate degree abbreviations?

I read an article about a Michigan man, Michael Nicholson, who in 2012, at age 71, had earned twenty-nine degrees, and was pursuing his thirtieth.

He has one bachelor's degree, two associates degrees, twenty-two master's degrees, three specialist degrees, and one doctorate.

If you have neither the time, nor the resources, to earn a degree or two, you can visit [www.phonydiploma.com](http://www.phonydiploma.com).

I'm not joking; it's a real, phony site. They even hypocritically offer both a Masters and a Doctorate degree in theology.

There *are* genuine ministry degrees you can earn from accredited schools, e.g., MDiv (Master of Divinity), and DMin (Doctor of Ministry).

(We sometimes joke about seminary, calling it 'cemetery,' but we have nothing against continuing education in general).

It might surprise you to learn that, if you are a Christian, **you already have at least two degrees**. In First Corinthians 4:1, the apostle Paul said,

1Co 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

You have an SC with an emphasis on SMG - Servant of Christ (SC), with an emphasis on Steward (of the) Mysteries of God (SMG).

I was reminded of this verse because the word "mystery" is prominent in our text:

Rev 10:7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, **the mystery of God** would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

Bible teachers must always explain the use of the word "mystery," because it isn't used in the Bible the same way we commonly use it today.

A "mystery" in the New Testament sense is not something that cannot be understood, but is some plan or purpose of God that has been known to Him from the beginning, but which He has withheld from the knowledge of men until the time came for Him to reveal it.

The "mystery" and the "mysteries" of God will be our theme as we work through these verses. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You're Told That The Mystery Of God Will Be Finished, and #2 You Tell The Mysteries Of God Until You're Finished.

## #1 You're Told That The Mystery Of God Will Be Finished (v1-7)

If you're a fan of '80's TV, you'll remember the classic line from *The A-Team*, "I love it when a plan comes together."

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, *God's plan comes together*.

We read, in verse seven, that "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, **the mystery of God** would be finished..."

We can take a quick peek ahead at the sounding of the seventh angel to see exactly what mystery will be finished:

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have

become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

God's plan, revealed progressively, one step at a time through the ages, by the prophets, **comes together**. Every mystery that has been revealed along the way culminates in the revelation of Jesus Christ reigning "forever and ever."

Why is Jesus Christ reigning a mystery? It is a mystery because God has delayed the establishment of His reign for six thousand years - four thousand years counting from Adam to Jesus, and now two thousand years counting from Jesus to the present day.

During the delay other kingdoms have reigned: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome are the kingdoms prominent in the Bible.

You're also told that the kingdoms of the earth are themselves ruled by Satan, who is titled by Jesus the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31). When Satan offered to give Jesus the kingdoms of this world, in exchange for worship, Jesus didn't dispute Satan's claim to them (Matthew 4:8-9).

It prompts nonbelievers to scoff and say, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (Second Peter 3:4).

It prompts believers and nonbelievers alike to ask the "Why God?" questions about the wicked prospering while the righteous are suffering.

What was concealed is now revealed. It is revealed in the pages of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. You see that, despite arguments to the contrary, God has been in charge all along.

Through the delegated authority He has granted to the human governments God has raised-up, and by His providence, He has, without violating man's free will, furthered history to accomplish His purposes to prepare for the reign of Jesus.

Revelation 10:1 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.

Revelation nine left off with the sounding of the sixth of seven trumpets, which usher in the end of all things. Now, instead of the seventh trumpet, we have another interlude until Revelation 11:15.

Remember: The Revelation is chronological if you follow the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. In-between God gives you important details to fill-in your understanding.

This chapter, through verse fourteen of chapter eleven, is a parentheses, describing events surrounding the seventh trumpet.

Some commentators believe this great person to be Jesus. It isn't; it is an angel. The word "another" which qualifies angel means *another of the same kind as before*.

Why is he so much like Jesus in appearance - "clothed with a cloud... a rainbow... on his head, his face like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire?"

Do you remember when Moses came down from meeting with God? **He glowed.** Being in God's presence changed his countenance.

This angel had been in the presence of Jesus and he took on some of the characteristics of Jesus.

Guess what? **You take on the characteristics of Jesus, too, if you spend time with Him.**

The rainbow might be a natural occurrence since he is clothed with a cloud. It also serves to remind you of God's covenant with mankind. God is keeping His promises.

Revelation 10:2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his left foot* on the land,

What is this "little book?"

- Some say it is another name for the seven-sealed scroll, now fully open.
- Some say it is the account John gives from this point forward.
- Some say it is the formerly sealed portion of the Book of Daniel, now opened.
- Some say it is the angel's orders or mission plan.

Since the text no where says, we can't say for sure.

It's probably not the seven-sealed scroll since an entirely different word is used to describe it.

What we can say for sure is that it is the Word of God. All of the suggestions of what it is agree with that.

The symbolism of setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land is that he was claiming the whole earth – land and sea - for the Lord.

Revelation 10:3 and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

We don't know what he cried with a loud voice, but since it is described like a lion's roar, we know it is a message of conquest and certain victory.

A lion's roar is one of the loudest noises any animal can make. It is so loud that it can be heard over five miles away from the lion.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ, is coming as King to rule His kingdom and none will be able to withstand Him.

It's why C.S. Lewis portrayed Jesus in the character of Aslan the Lion in his series, *The Lion, the Witch, & the Wardrobe*.

*Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,  
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,  
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,  
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.*

Revelation 10:4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

We don't know exactly who or what are the "seven thunders," nor do we know what they say.

Even in this book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, some things remain unknown.

There are things which you will never know in this life. While not knowing often seems to confuse or frustrate you, sometimes it's good not knowing.

- Not knowing keeps you **humble**. If you think you know everything, and have all of the answers, you have a tendency to get puffed up with pride. Not knowing some things keeps you humble as you must depend upon the Lord each step of the way.
- Not knowing keeps you **moving**. God has a plan for you, but the road can take some weird twists and turns. If you knew some of the difficulties you faced you might draw back. Not knowing keeps you trusting God through each one.

It's better to know Who rather than how or why. I love this verses from the Psalms:

[Psalms 103:7](#) He made known His ways to Moses, His acts [works] to the children of Israel.

Moses was intimate with God and thus God revealed His ways, not just His works. It's always better to be *intimate* than merely to be *instructed*.

[Revelation 10:5](#) The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven



Revelation 10:6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,

Revelation 10:7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

We looked ahead, in chapter eleven, and saw that the "mystery" being revealed was the consummation of God's plan with the forever reign of Jesus.

"That there should be delay no longer" ought to be highlighted with all the colors you have, as well as underlined. As we survey the terrible plight of this world, the volume of human suffering, man's inhumanity to man, the only firm hope is that it will be brought to an end by the return, then reign, of Jesus Christ.

Here, in these words, we are promised the time is coming when the delay will be over.

Why the "delay" at all? Since we believe God to be love, and to be good, we must also believe that His plan to save mankind after our original parents sinned was and is the best possible plan of redemption. We must believe it is the only way for our holy yet merciful and forgiving God to solve the dilemma of creating a being with free will, risking sin, but wooing them back to salvation.

It's the kind of thing that takes a few thousand years.

On a more individual level,

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The delay of the second coming of Jesus allowed most of us to become Christians.

I mentioned there were other mysteries involved in the mystery of Jesus' forever reign. We can take a quick tour of them.

In First Timothy 3:16 we read, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory." It is no mystery that God should reveal Himself by speaking from the heavens, as on Mt. Sinai, but that He should take on human form, and live among us - **that** was a great mystery. This He did in the person of Jesus Christ.

In Colossians 1:26-28, Paul speaks of another mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, but was then made manifest to the saints. He calls it the mystery of "Christ in you." It's what we commonly call being born-again. That this was a mystery can be seen in the reaction of Nicodemus when Jesus first mentioned it. He was startled, overwhelmed, unbelieving. He'd never heard of it before it was revealed by God to him.

In his letter to the saints at Ephesus (3:1-11), Paul says that God by revelation made known to him the mystery which in other ages had not been made known, "that the Gentiles should be 'fellow heirs,' and of the 'same body,' and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel."

It was a revelation that God was going, in this dispensation, to take some Jews and some Gentiles and form of them a "new body" called the Church.

The rapture of the church is a mystery revealed. "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" (First Corinthians 15:51-52).

Writing to the Romans Paul says, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until, the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25). The revelation of this mystery to Paul accounts for what otherwise would remain a mystery - the miraculous survival of the Jewish people as a race while scattered among the nations.

There are other mysteries, but I think you get the general drift. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself by means of a plan no one could ever have begun to imagine.

It culminates, it comes together, in the end, with the Lord reigning forever and ever.

Knowing this,

## #2 You Tell The Mysteries Of God Until You Are Finished

(v8-11)

A couple of the guys in the Old Testament had to eat God's Word:

- Ezekiel was commanded to eat a scroll (Ezekiel 2 & 3).

- Jeremiah said he found God's words and ate them (Jeremiah 15:16).

It's a simple illustration. You are to take-in the Word for yourself before you can give it out. In; then out.

### **In-then-Out.**

Ideally we are to ingest God's Word, be nourished by it, then grow in order to show others its power.

It's like those ads for NutriSystem (in a sense). There is a before and after. The product has a sufficiency, but you want to see it have real results.

If current spokesperson, Marie Osmond, says, "Eat NutriSystem," but looks just the same after as she did before, or worse, you're not going to be inclined to sign-on.

If God's Word isn't changing us – why would folks sign-on?

John was a first century disciple called upon to reveal a mystery to the world. **You** are God's twenty-first century disciple who is called upon to reveal the mysteries of God to the world:

- In Matthew 13:11 and Luke 8:10 Jesus tells **all** His disciples that "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God..."
- Then, as we saw at the beginning of our study, the apostle Paul tells you in First Corinthians 4:1 that you are "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

We are the ministers of mysteries.

Revelation 10:8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

John had been transported "in the Spirit" to Heaven. Now he was back on the earth.

We live in both realms, the earthly, and the heavenly. We are described as seated in heavenly places with Jesus while simultaneously walking on the earth as ambassadors for Him, commissioned to tell about Him.

They're not two separate ways of living. The heavenly should dominate in terms of how you approach the earthly.

Revelation 10:9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.

The Bible nourishes our spirit the way food nourishes our body. Let's talk about that for a moment.

You know that you need food to survive. The Bible is just as necessary to your spiritual survival. It is even more necessary than your daily food. Job said,

Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary *food*.

When I was first saved I heard a radio Bible teacher say, “No Bible, no breakfast!” It’s a good attitude to have – but it's one that tends to fade over time.

I can’t eat for a month all at once. I can't eat once a week. I shouldn't eat one large meal daily. Nutritionists, in fact, tell you to eat several – as many as six – small meals each day.

Whatever your actual eating habits, compare your time in the Word to them. Which, really, is **your** priority?

Revelation 10:10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

The description of the Word as bitter-sweet surprises us at first. But God's Word is always that way.

- John himself was experiencing the sweet joy of having Jesus revealed to him. Yet he was exiled on the Island of Patmos, being persecuted for the Word of God.
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ is bitter-sweet. It is full of beasts and bowls and battles while simultaneously promising a blessing for reading it. Everything in it reveals God’s mercy towards Christ-rejecting men, but also His wrath against sin and His judgment upon it.

All of God’s servants in the Bible were called to this bitter and sweet experience. **You will be no exception.**

There are as many as fifty English versions of the Bible. You probably know the more popular ones, e.g., the KJV (King James Version), the NKJV (New King James Version), the NIV (Non Inspired Version), the NASB (New American Standard Bible), and the ESV (English Standard Version).

*Star Trek* fans often like to display their linguistic prowess by speaking, writing, and reading Klingon. So it only seems natural that a Klingon translation of the Bible would come into being.

If you've ever wondered how to say "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God" in Klingon it's quite simple. "Daq the tagh ghaHta' the mu', je the mu' ghaHta' tlhej joH'a', je the mu' ghaHta' joH'a'."

Regardless the Bible you use, we all, as God's living letters to the lost, are the BSV - the Bitter-Sweet Version.

Revelation 10:11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

John had been told (in verse four) to "seal up" a portion of the revelation he was receiving. He may have thought his visions were coming to their end.

Nope. There was a lot more to come. We're only at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

- We haven't met God's two witnesses; or the antichrist; or the false prophet.
- We haven't seen the global, cashless economic system; or the attempt at a one-world government and religion.

- We haven't seen the rise and fall of another mystery, Babylon, as both a city and a system.

Most importantly we haven't seen the return of Jesus Christ in His Second Coming to establish His kingdom on the earth. Or the final disposition of the saved and the lost to Heaven and to Hell for all eternity.

You and I are Servants of Christ, Stewards of the Mysteries of God.

I wouldn't go around claiming those titles. It's like that scene in the recent blockbuster movie, *The Guardians of the Galaxy*, where the hero says, "There's one other name you might know me by: StarLord," to which his captor says, "*Who?*"

Simply serve the Lord by telling others about the mysteries once concealed, now revealed.