# THE MYSTERY OF GOD WOULD BE FINISHED

## A journey through the book of Revelation

[Chapters 1 to 11]

Written by Nicholas Jackson

## Revival Ministries Australia an apostolic ministry to the nations

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## **Part 1**

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## An amazing declaration

An amazing angel, literally *messenger*, made known to the apostle John on the island of Patmos that, "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished..." Revelation 10:7. This verse is cosmic in its scope! The mystery of God would be finished! All God's eternal purpose and His revelation and manifestation of Himself will be complete! The mystery of who He is and His purpose will have been fully accomplished in the earth! What an exciting declaration! To fully appreciate this proclamation let us have a look at the context of the Book of Revelation itself. It is an unfolding revelation to us.

## The purpose of the Book

Many have attempted to explain the meaning of the Book of Revelation and interpret it in the context of the period of time we live in, rather than simply interpret it according to the Word of God and in its own context. The apostle John wrote, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants" Revelation 1:1a. Here is the purpose of the book! It is the revelation of Jesus Christ! The word revelation is the Greek word apokalupsis which means: a disclosure, an immediate and progressive unveiling, taking the cover off.

The purpose stated in the first verse of the book is that primarily this is an immediate and progressive unveiling of Jesus Christ. He is revealing Himself to us. He is the "faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth...who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" Revelation 1:5. So, do not jump to try and see "what will happen in the end times". Instead, look for the revelation of Jesus to take hold of you, encourage you and edify you for the days ahead.

## Things which must take place

The next part of verse 1 says, "things which must shortly take place" Rev.1:1b. The word shortly could be translated quickly or swiftly. So, yes, there is an aspect of revelation of things which must swiftly take place. But always see this in the context of Jesus Christ being revealed and His purpose coming to pass through all the "things which must shortly take place"! Notice also that these things must take place. It is of necessity and under the guiding sovereign hand of God and of the Lamb! It is God's eternal purpose coming to manifestation. To understand these things we must be "in the Spirit" Revelation 1:10.

## In the Spirit

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" Revelation 1:10a. Where was John? Physically he was on the "island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" Revelation 1:9. But more importantly than that, John was in the Spirit. The Book of Revelation is a book of heavenly vision, filled with Scriptural prophetic symbols. To fully understand the Book we must be filled with the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him [Christ]" Ephesians 1:17. We, with John, need to be in the Spirit!

Intellectual, academic, and worldly knowledge will not give us the message of the Revelation. Reading the newspapers to align it with the Book of Revelation is not how to understand it. It is a revelation and vision into the eternal spiritual reality of Christ, His kingdom, His Church, and the victory they experience over the world and Satan. Let us be moved in these days to seek God and worship Him in the Spirit. God has revealed His awesome unknowable plans for those who love Him, "to us through His Spirit" 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

## A voice like a trumpet

When John was in the Spirit he says, "I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet" Revelation 1:10b. This is important to know as it helps us prophetically understand the trumpet. It was a voice. It

was someone speaking, but it was *as of a trumpet*. The word that is to be declared is to be like a trumpet – calling people to attention to hear the announcement being made. This is helpful to see later on where more and more trumpets are mentioned throughout the Book.

## The Son of Man revealed in the midst

When John turned to "see the voice that spoke" (Revelation 1:12) he ended up seeing seven golden lampstands and "in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man" Revelation 1:13. This was an awesome revelation of Jesus the Messiah as He is now, "head and hair were white like wool...His eyes a flame of fire; His feet like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters" Revelation 1:14-15. This is Jesus glorified. This is Jesus as He appears now, in victory and triumph!

And where is He? In the midst of the seven lampstands. What are the seven lampstands? Jesus interprets this for us in Revelation 1:20 by saying, "The mystery of the...seven golden lampstands...the seven golden lampstands which you saw are the seven churches". Now we know that the symbolism of the lampstands is interpreted by Jesus for us as churches. Lampstands are churches! Jesus is in the midst of His church! Jesus said, "For where two or three gather together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" Matthew 18:20.

One of the first revelations of Jesus that John received was that He is found in His glory in the midst of the church!

## The Seven Churches

"The seven golden lampstands which you saw are the seven churches" Revelation 1:20. For the next two chapters, in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, John records Jesus' message for the seven churches. Number seven is significant in the Bible. God rested on the seventh day, when creation was complete and finished. Seven days make up one whole week. John also records that there are "seven Spirits of God"

Revelation 4:5. The apostle Paul records that "there is One Spirit" Ephesians 4:4. This is not a contradiction. Seven Spirits speaks of the fullness or completeness of the Spirit of God. Isaiah 11:2 gives a picture of the seven Spirits of God, which helps us understand what the fullness of His One Spirit looks like; the Spirit of Yahweh, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. The seven churches then is the complete church. The seven messages Jesus has for the churches are the complete message to His church and the encouragement to overcome all the spiritual and doctrinal obstacles we face.

## Seven angels/messengers

Jesus also interpreted what the seven stars in His right hand are; "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand...the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" Revelation 1:20. It is important to mention this word angels as it is often used in the Book of Revelation. The word angels is the Greek word aggelos and does not inherently mean a heavenly spiritual being. It literally means: messenger. It can mean a heavenly or earthly messenger depending on the context that it is written in.

The *seven angels* (*messengers*) in Revelation 2 and 3 are delivering the message that Jesus has given for those churches. Who in the New Testament is given the responsibility to bring the Word to the churches? Not heavenly angels, but earthly messengers, even apostles and other ministers of the gospel. Through the Book of Revelation it is important to look at the context and leave yourself open to who the *angels* may be – whether human beings or heavenly angels. Jesus has sent from *His right hand* His messengers to share with the churches the message they need to overcome and receive His rewards!

## The message to the Church

Many have tried to teach that **Revelation 2 and 3** shows a progression down the ages of the message to the church in different eras since the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. However,

anyone who reads these seven messages honestly can see that they are all relevant to the church of every generation for the last two thousand years.

- We are to keep our "first love" and stay committed to the "first works" (Revelation 2:4-5).
- We are to stay "faithful until death" in the face of the trials of the devil (Revelation 2:10).
- We are to repent of the "doctrine of Balaam", ministering for money and thinking the gospel is a means to worldly wealth, only to find ourselves eating at the table of idolatry (Revelation 2:14).
- We are to repent of the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (Revelation 2:15). This is where a clergy class of priesthood emerges to rule over the people a division and separation between the "clergy" and the "laity", which is prevalent in Catholic, Protestant and most other church systems of today. "Nico" is Greek for "conqueror or victory" and "laitans" is Greek for "laity the people". The Nicolaitan doctrine teaches that there are elite and superior Christians who are the ministering class to whom the people must obey.
- We must not "allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My (Jesus') servants" Revelation 2:20. Jezebel is a false prophetic voice that undermines the God-appointed ministries and elders in His church. The Jezebel spirit is still an issue we face today.
- We are to be truly alive and not only having "a name that you are alive, but you are dead" Revelation 3:1. Many churches today are trying to be trendy and "contemporary" and with their high energy music look like they are "alive" but it is not the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- We are to have our "works perfect towards God" Revelation 3:2.

- We are to walk through the open doors that Jesus has for us and "keep His command to persevere" Revelation 3:10.
- And we are not to be "*lukewarm*" due to our comfortable lifestyle but receive Jesus' love in "*rebuke and chastening*" to go after the eternal riches which come through revelation and refining of faith (**Revelation 3:16-19**).

This summary of the complete message of Christ to His church, through His messengers, is still relevant today in its entirety as it reveals the challenges that face the church of every generation!

## The Overcomers

We are exhorted and invited to overcome these challenges. The rewards are great for His church that overcomes. If we will overcome, we will:

- ➤ "eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" Revelation 2:7. Not a reference to a life in heaven, but a reality of life right now as we are restored in our first love and continuing in the first works
- ➤ Be given "the crown of life" and will "not be hurt by the second death" Revelation 2:10-11. This is if we are faithful even until death not "fearing any of the things which you are about to suffer" Revelation 2:10
- ➤ Be given "some of the hidden manna to eat...a white stone...a new name written" Revelation 2:17. This is being given the mysteries of God, the "hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory" 1 Corinthians 2:6-7. If we overcome wrong doctrine we will have revelation of the mysteries and walk more fully in the new creation which we are!
- ➤ Be given "power over the nations" just like Jesus (Revelation 2:26-27). Overcoming the Jezebel spirit will cause us to walk in

- the authority of Christ so we can be effective in "making disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:19.
- ➤ Not be blotted out from the "Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father" Revelation 3:5. We are to overcome the temptation to look "alive" but not have the reality of His life. We are to stand and "confess Me (Jesus) before men" (Matthew 10:32) no matter how degrading in the world's eyes that is.
- ➤ Be a "pillar in the temple of My God" and we will be part of the New Jerusalem, the Bride (Revelation 3:12). This is if we persevere in the face of severe religious persecution of those of the "Synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie" Revelation 3:9. We must stand in the truth and not be intimidated by religious Christianity to be part of the pure Bride!
- ➤ Be granted to "sit with Me (Jesus) on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" Revelation 3:21. We are to Overcome lukewarmness and allow Jesus to come in our "door" Revelation 3:20. We then learn to "reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" Romans 5:17.

## Overcoming is the door into another realm

In **Revelation 2 and 3** we are in the realm of the *seven lampstands*. In the Tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build, the golden lampstand was to be placed in the **Holy Place**. This was the second compartment entered into by priests from the **Outer Court**. This is the realm of the Church learning to overcome. It is the place where the Church is growing up and being sanctified by the Spirit and the Word. The Church is hearing the message of Jesus and receiving His instructions on how to overcome the challenges so as to grow into more maturity and revelation.

Revelation 2 and 3 are in the Holy Place. Then John says, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.

And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this" Revelation 4:1. As a result of overcoming, we are called up into a new realm! From the Holy to the Most Holy Place —a door opened in heaven! The Trumpet Voice was heard. We "speak a wisdom among the mature" 1 Corinthians 2:6. The mature hear this voice. The "things which must take place after this" is not speaking of chronological time. It is as we are called up into maturity to have the mysteries revealed that "the things which must take place" can begin to unfold! Jesus is calling His church to "Come up here".

It is time to enter the Most Holy and see beyond the veil!

## Part 2 THE DOOR IS OPEN

## The Door is open

The apostle John "looked, and behold, a door open in heaven" Revelation 4:1a. What an amazing revelation! Saints, the door into the heavenly realm is open! We are invited to enter through the door, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this" Revelation 4:1c. As New Covenant people of God we have "boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" Hebrews 10:19-20. This is the realm that goes past the flesh! This is the realm of seeing the glory and being changed into the same image from "glory to glory just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor.3:18).

This is a new realm that we are invited to come up into. In order to have true spiritual understanding and revelation, we must move beyond the veil of His flesh. We are no longer to view our life after the flesh, "from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet we know Him thus no longer" 2 Corinthians 5:16. It is time to know Christ as He really is and see all things from His perspective.

## The trumpet is sounding

After overcoming in the realm of the Holy Place, the Lampstand (Rev.2&3), we are now invited to go through the door that is open! It is open! We are under an open heaven! It is a trumpet call that invites us to come through, "And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet" Revelation 4:1b. Have you heard the trumpet call in these days? Are you hearing the message of coming into the glory? Are you hearing the message calling us to go on to perfection (Heb.6:1)? Are you hearing that it is time to become sons of God, even "sons to glory"

**Hebrews 2:10?** Are you hearing the message that we are to be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (**Eph.5:27**)?

The trumpet is sounding! *Come up here!* Come up into the place of revelation of the mysteries of God which have been "hidden from ages and from generations, but now have been revealed to His saints" Colossians 1:26. Go through the door!

### The Throne

When John went through the door he was "immediately in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne" Revelation 4:2. It is interesting that John did not see a big mansion for himself. He did not catch a glimpse of a carnal vision of heaven where all his fleshly desires were finally met. He saw a throne! When heaven opens to us, we see a throne! We see One who sits on the throne! Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel all saw awesome visions where heaven opened to them. They also saw a throne (Isa.6:1-3; Ezek.1:1,26-28; Dan.7:9-10). Let us come to "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev.22:1). It is an awesome and terrifying place. It is beauty unimagined mixed with dread and reverence.

There are "twenty-four elders" sitting on "twenty-four thrones" around this throne (Rev.4:4). This is a wonderful picture of the place of victory and rulership His whole church experiences around His Throne. There is awe-inspiring power as "lightnings, thunderings and voices" all proceed from the throne (Rev.4:5). This reminds us of the power demonstrated at Mount Sinai when Yahweh came down in the cloud to give the law to Moses (Ex.19:16).

The "seven spirits of God" are there, burning as lamps of fire before the throne. Daniel saw "His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued forth from before Him" Daniel 7:9b-10. John the Baptist prophesied that the Messiah, Jesus, would baptise us with the "Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt.3:11). "Tongues, as of fire" were seen on the heads of the one hundred and twenty in the upper room (Acts 2:3). The Holy Spirit proceeds and issues forth from

the throne, from the Father and Son (Jn.15:26). He goes forth as a fire for "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb.12:29). The throne is the place of all authority. It is the place of spiritual reality and revelation, where the mysteries are revealed!

## Worship

The rest of **Revelation 4** is a revelation of all creation in worship of Him who sits on the throne. There is the mystery of the "living creatures" who are in the "midst of the throne, and around the throne" (**Rev.4:6**). Their faces represent all areas of dominion in the created world: the lion is the king of the wild animals, the calf, or as **Ezekiel** calls it, the ox (**Ezek.1:10**) is the king of the domesticated working animals, the eagle is the king of the bird kingdom, and the man is the one to whom God gave the dominion over all His creation (**Gen.1:26-28**). These living creatures "do not rest day or night" in worship (**Rev.4:8-9**). Their worship causes the elders "to fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever" Revelation 4:10. We are called to join the worship!

We worship God as a faith-filled response to the revelation that it is Him who sits on the throne. Do you worship God or are you still only "singing songs"? Worship is in the Spirit. John was "immediately in the Spirit" when he was called up to the throne (Rev.4:2a). "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" John 4:24. This is a revelation of true worship! We "come up here" to worship Him who is on the throne. "We are the (true) circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" Philippians 3:3.

Are you hearing the call to worship? We are called to worship Him with all of creation! God is restoring true worship to His church, where we "cast our crowns before the throne, saying: You are worthy, O Lord" Revelation 4:10-11.

## Who is worthy?

John then saw "in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll...sealed with seven seals" Revelation 5:1. John intuitively knew in the Spirit that this scroll had to be unsealed, released. The proclamation was heard, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals" Revelation 5:2. There was no one in all areas of the creation who was able to even "look at it" (Rev.5:3). As we will see, this scroll, when released, will cause the unfolding of God's eternal purpose to manifest on the earth. It was locked up. It was sealed. God's plan and mysteries were "hidden from ages and generations but are now being revealed to His saints" Colossians 1:26.

Why are they being revealed now and not previously? Previously there was no one worthy to unlock them! We lived in the realm of 1 Corinthians 2:9 "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him". Many believers remain in that place: not seeing, hearing, or believing in their hearts what God has prepared for them! Many believers are ignorant of the mysteries that are now opened to us. We must move on to 1 Corinthians 2:10 "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit". But who could unseal the scrolls and reveal the mysteries of God?

## The Lion of the Tribe of Judah prevailed!

John "wept much" that no one was worthy to open the scroll (Rev.5:4). He wept because the plans of God could not manifest on the earth unless that scroll was opened and unsealed. But then good news came from an elder! "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals" Revelation 5:5.

The mention of *Judah* and *Root of David* reveal that it was the promised Messiah! The great Ruler named *SHILOH* from **Genesis 49:10** who would come from the lineage of Judah. The *Root of David* was mentioned in **Isaiah 11:1-10** and He would "*stand as a banner to*"

the people" (Isa.11:10). He would have the victory and bring about God's eternal purpose, which was summed up as, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea" Isaiah 11:9. There is One who is worthy! He gained the victory. He is the Messiah, Jesus, the Lion of Judah!

## The Lion and the Lamb

John then looked to get a glimpse of this *Lion* that the elder spoke about. But when he looked "in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain" Revelation 5:6a. He looked to see a *Lion* but instead saw a *Lamb!* The ruling *Lion* is a *Lamb!* What a revelation of Jesus Christ! John the Baptist had this revelation, "Behold, the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" John 1:29.

The exaltation of Jesus the Messiah to the throne was due to His humility, service and obedience to be sacrificed (Phil.2:5-11). "Therefore, God also highly exalted Him" Philippians 2:9. The "Lamb" also speaks of His priesthood, "He shall be a priest on His throne" Zechariah 6:13. The nature of the Lamb is gentle, sacrificial and reveals His priestly nature, sympathising with our weaknesses and becoming the perfect sacrifice for sins (Heb.4:15)! He is also on the throne and ruling, combining the offices of King and Priest together, in Him (Zech.6:13b)! He is a Lion and a Lamb. He rules "in the midst of the elders", His people! Where will you find Jesus? He rules in the midst of us, as we gather around Him (Matt.18:20)!

## Seven horns

The Lamb had "seven horns" Revelation 5:6b. The number seven speaks of completeness, fullness and perfection. Horns in the Bible represent kingdoms and kings – read Daniel 8 to see the use of horns to represent rulers/kings of kingdoms. This Lamb had seven horns! This is a revelation of the complete authority of the Lamb of God! Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" Matthew 28:18. When Jesus rose from the dead he had

"prevailed" and was now able to unlock God's eternal plan to "bring many sons to glory" (Heb.2:10), restoring the dominion God always intended for mankind in the earth! What an encouragement to know the 'Lamb with seven horns'!

## Seven eyes

The Lamb also had "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" Revelation 5:6. Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" Acts 2:33. The Lamb, Jesus the Messiah, is "He who baptises with the Holy Spirit" John 1:33. Now that there is someone worthy to open the scrolls, we can receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through Him!

Now we have access to the mysteries of God, "yes, the deep things of God" 1 Corinthians 2:10. Now it "has been given to us to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 13:11. Now we can have power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Now what was hidden is being revealed! The seven eyes speak of the all-knowing nature of the Spirit of God. Now we have the Anointing of the Holy Spirit and can "know all things" (1Jn.2:20). The Lamb has the fullness of the Spirit of God, the seven Spirits of God (Isa.11:2). And He is pouring out the Spirit of God on "all flesh" and into all the earth (Joel 2:28).

## The Messiah now reigns

The Lamb then "took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne" Revelation 5:7. John saw in fulfilment what Daniel saw as future. Daniel saw "One like the Son of Man...He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him" Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus the Messiah now rules. He is a Man on the throne! He is the One who has authority over all things and all peoples are now to become obedient to

Him (Rom.1:5). We are living in the fulfilment of this now by making "disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:19.

## The prayers of the saints

When the *Lamb* took the scroll, the "four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb" Revelation 5:8a. They worshiped! They each had "a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" Revelation 5:8b. This is another important interpretive verse. We learn that incense represents the "prayers of the saints". This is confirmed in Psalm 141:2 & Revelation 8:3.

Worship, the harp, and prayer, incense, are to surround the Lamb. We are to give ourselves now earnestly to "prayer and supplication in the Spirit" Ephesians 6:18. This is because we "do not yet see all things put under him (man). But we see Jesus..." Hebrews 2:8b-9a. We are praying for His kingdom to come and manifest on the earth (Matt.6:10). Now that we see Jesus as the Ruler and the One who has unlocked the mysteries of God, we surround Him with worship and prayer until we see all things put back under man's feet as God originally intended. We have great hope now because we see Jesus has conquered. There is a Man on the throne, and He is bringing many sons to glory who will manifest His kingdom on the earth!

## The New Song

As New Covenant people, we have a *new song* (Rev.5:9a). This new song is a song of the *redeemed!* It is a song coming out of "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev.5:9c). It is a song celebrating that Jesus has opened the scroll and has "made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth" Revelation 5:10. We do not sing the songs of Babylon anymore! We sing the songs of Zion! We are now learning to rule and reign with Jesus as kings and priests having been "raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places" Ephesians 2:6. This is an awesome revelation! This is happening now and has been happening for the last two

thousand years! The scroll is unsealed. God's eternal purpose is manifesting in the earth. The redeemed are singing a new song of the victory of the Messiah, and our place of authority in, and with Him!

## Worthy is the Lamb

The rest of **Revelation 5** is filled with exultant worship of the "voice of many angels...the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" **Revelation 5:11.** Even every creature in all of creation is involved in giving glory to the *Lamb!* This is the time we live in! It is a new day! We sing of the *Lamb* and "worship Him who lives forever and ever" **Revelation 5:14.** 

We are now *kings and priests*, and we must understand now the loosing of the seals and what this brings forth on the earth! God is outworking His plan and there is an unfolding revelation to bring us to the point where *the mystery of God would be finished* (Rev.10:7). It is not looking for particular chronological events in history but preparing us for the journey of seeing the new creation finally appear out of the old. There will be disturbances. There will be hardship. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22. We have a Lamb Messiah who will bring us through victoriously (Rev.17:14)!

The seals have been opened and may God give us a heart to understand the revelation of God's purpose now appearing in the earth!

## Part 3 THE SEALS ARE OPENED

## The Lamb opens the seals

"Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals" Revelation 6:1a. The apostle John has gone through the door that was "open in heaven" (Rev.4:1). He has seen the One who was "worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals" (Rev.5:5). He is in the realm of the Most Holy Place. He is at the Throne of God and of the Lamb and now He sees the Lamb open one of the seals! The mystery of God's eternal purpose being outworked is unfolding before his spiritual eyes! When we are caught up in that heavenly realm, we are also in a place to receive much revelation! The Holy Spirit even "tells us things to come" John 16:13b. This is not a picture of some individual event in history but an unfolding of the eternal plan of God. It is an unveiling of how God will bring about His purpose in the earth. The seals are coming off the scroll so that the mystery of God will be finished, and every secret thing revealed!

## A White Horse – the first seal

When the first seal is loosed, John hears a voice say, "Come and see" (Rev.6:1b). We are invited to see! Paul said that he preached the "unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all to see what is the fellowship of the mystery" Ephesians 3:8b-9a. When John looked, he saw "a white horse. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" Revelation 6:2. What is this white horse?

The first seal is very important. It undergirds all the rest of the seals that are to be loosed. Horses in the Bible speak prophetically of "spirits" (Zech.6:3-5). This is a white horse. The colour white in the Bible almost always refers to holiness, purity and cleanness — "Many shall be purified and made white, and refined" Daniel 12:10; "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"

Isaiah 1:18; "and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" Revelation 7:14. This is a white horse. Prophetically a pure spirit or the Holy Spirit! The white horse is mentioned again in Revelation 19:11. Let the Scripture interpret Scripture!

## The Rider with a bow and a crown

The One who sat on the white horse had a "bow, and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" Revelation 6:2. The bow is used in war to shoot arrows. Prophetically the bow can represent people as when God said, "I have bent Judah, My bow, fitted the bow with Ephraim, and raised up your sons O Zion, against your sons O Greece" Zechariah 9:13. God also says that sons are like "arrows in the hands of a warrior, so are the children [literally "sons"] of one's youth" (Psalm 127:4). Sons are arrows that are shot from the bow, God's people, to deal with God's enemies, your sons O Greece!

"And a crown was given to him" (Rev.6:2). The crown referred to here is the Greek word stephanos. It has the meaning of a wreath, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honour generally and is more akin to the victors' crown. This word does not stress kingship but rather victory, winning and overcoming. This Rider of the white horse is going out conquering and to conquer!

### Who is this?

In Revelation 19:11 the Rider on the white horse is called "Faithful and True". He also has a name, "The Word of God" Revelation 19:13. In Revelation 19:12 it says that now "on His head were many crowns". The word for crowns here is the Greek word diadema which are the crowns of kings, royalty! Between Revelation 6 & 19 the One on the white horse has conquered and now carries as His trophies the crowns of the kings that He has conquered! "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 11:15.

The Rider is the Word of God Himself, "the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us" John 1:14. The white horse is the Holy Spirit. The First seal loosed releases the conquering gospel of the kingdom to go forth in the earth, the Word carried and flowing by the Spirit into all the earth through His sons being shot out, sent out to "preach the gospel to every creature" Mark 16:15. The Lord Himself, the Rider on the white horse, was then "working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" Mark 16:20.

## The conquering gospel of the kingdom going forth!

The First seal releases the gospel of the kingdom to go forth conquering, "discipling nations", bringing the nations to the "obedience of the faith" through grace and apostleship (Matt.28:19; Rom.1:5). Through the remaining seals that are loosed, this is the undercurrent of what is happening through them! This never stops! We preach the gospel and make disciples through all the judgements and hardships around us! Jesus the conquering King and Messiah is with us by His Spirit as we give ourselves to the mission of inheriting nations for His name!

## Hardship

The next part of the unfolding revelation of God's purpose is that with the loosing of the next seals, hardship will come on the earth. It is not speaking of individual or particular historical events, but the release of these things on the earth as necessary to outwork God's purpose.

- ➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> seal "to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another" Revelation 6:4. This has been a reality in the earth for the last two thousand years since Jesus died and rose again. We live in perilous times (2 Tim.3:1-5)
- ➤ 3<sup>rd</sup> seal "a quart of wheat for a denarius [about one day's wages], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine" Revelation 6:6. Economic hardship and inflation in different places while at the same time some

living luxuriously. Again, something that has been with us generationally in the earth ever since Jesus died and rose again. As overcomers in these things, we trust Jesus, and the gospel of the kingdom keeps going forth through trials and difficulties!

➤ 4<sup>th</sup> seal – "Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth" Revelation 6:8. A limited ability, a fourth of the earth, to bring death in various ways. Death through war, through famine, unexplainable deaths, and deaths by the beasts of the earth (possibly a reference to witchcraft and demonic beasts – see Mk.1:13; 1Cor.15:32). Again, these things are all around us. They are realities and hardships that we deal with every day in the world we live in.

In view of these difficulties all around us we should say with the apostle Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" Romans 8:35, 37. We are to conquer in these things with the One who rides on the white horse "conquering and to conquer" (Rev.6:2).

## The Fifth Seal – the voice of the martyrs

When the fifth seal was opened John saw, "under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" Revelation 6:9. God does not forget those who have been killed for their testimony of Jesus Christ. They are honoured and we should also honour such ones and realise we live in the days where it is possible that we may have to give the ultimate sacrifice. It is comforting to know that God will bring about justice, as the martyrs cry out to God saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the

number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed" Revelation 6:10-11.

There is a full complement of the blood of the martyrs to be accomplished on the earth. God will avenge at the right time. Apostle Paul encourages the persecuted church in Thessalonica that the tribulations they endure is "manifest evidence of the righteous judgement of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer, since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven" 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7. We are encouraged in days of hardship and trouble all around us, that there is honour in suffering for Christ's sake and God will bring all things into account.

## The sixth seal - Cosmic disturbances

When the sixth seal is opened the types of disturbances that follow are things like: a great earthquake, the sun became black, the moon became like blood, the stars of heaven fell to the earth, the sky receded as a scroll, every mountain and island was moved out of its place (Rev.6:12-14). Fear comes upon people of all statuses of society as they begin to realise that these are judgements coming from the One who is in charge. They want to "hide from the face of Him who sits on the throne and the from the wrath of the Lamb" Revelation 6:16.

Apostle Paul said, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" Romans 1:18. They know the truth, but they suppress it. This is a reality in our world as people want to justify their wickedness by legislating it. They try and make it legitimate, while knowing in their hearts the unrighteousness of it. God's wrath is being revealed from heaven in various ways and causes men to want to hide from the wrath of the Lamb. These cosmic disturbances are evidence that "the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:17.

## The Sealing of the Saints

John then saw "another angel (messenger) ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God" Revelation 7:2. A seal is the Greek word sphragis and means a signet, the stamp impressed. Mr Vines in his expository dictionary defines the word as an emblem of ownership and security. This seal of the living God is very important as it shows who belongs to God. This angel that John saw even cried out to the four angels who would bring some destruction on the earth, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" Revelation 7:3.

It is similar to the time of Ezekiel when God told a man with "a writer's inkhorn... 'Go through the midst of the city...and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it" Ezekiel 9:3-4. It is a spiritual mark. Not physical. It is on our foreheads just like the "signet: Holiness to YHWH" (Ex.28:36) was placed on the front of the turban of Aaron the High Priest, "so it shall be on Aaron's forehead" Exodus 28:38. Apostle Paul writes that the "solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His'" 2 Timothy 2:19. The seal is about whose property you are. Do you belong to God? "For you were bought at a price", the redemption price of the blood of Jesus! (1 Cor.6:20, 1 Pet.1:18-19)

## The New Testament seal

When you believed the "word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...you were <u>sealed</u> with the Holy Spirit of promise" Ephesians 1:13. This sealing is important to understand as it stands in direct contrast to the mark of the beast that many Christians, unfortunately, are afraid of and focus much of their attention on. We must be assured of and secure in the knowledge that "He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has <u>sealed us</u> and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. There is no fear that we may

unwittingly receive the mark of the beast if we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you were <u>sealed</u> for the day of redemption" Ephesians 4:30.

## The number who were sealed

The number that apostle John saw was "One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed" Revelation 7:4. Be careful to assume this means the natural descendants of Israel. Remember that John was "immediately in the Spirit" when he saw these things. Remember that apostle Paul said, "For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham" Romans 9:6-7. The "Israel of God" is a "new creation" people (Galatians 6:15-16). It is a company of sons of God, the true seed of Abraham, "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" Galatians 3:29.

Jesus told the twelve that because they had left all to follow Jesus that they would "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" Matthew 19:28. The twelve apostles did not only govern natural Israelites, but like Peter in Cornelius' house (Acts 10) they apostolically governed the body of Christ, made up of Jew and Gentile, who believe in the Messiah Jesus. So, are you one of the sealed? The number One hundred and forty-four thousand is not a literal number but the number of the company of sons of God, the seed of Abraham, the Body of Christ, the redeemed and sealed with the Holy Spirit!

## Who are these ones in white?

After seeing these glorious and powerful revelations, then John saw "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" Revelation 7:9. This multitude is righteous, having believed, being "clothed with white robes" and they give glory to God and the Lamb! John is asked by one of the elders, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" Revelation

7:13. John does not know but the elder tells him, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" Revelation 7:14.

## Ones coming out of the Great Tribulation

The phrase who come out of the great tribulation is a little misleading. The literal Greek is a present participle and should be translated, "ones coming out of the great tribulation"! [New Spirit filled Life Bible notes for Revelation 7:14]. This gives a much different picture. This is a present and continuous process down the ages! The great tribulation is present and continuous. It has been happening and is still ongoing today!

There is a vast multitude who are learning that we are to "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" Romans 5:3-4. James tells us to "count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience...let patience have its perfect work in you, that you may be perfect and complete" James 1:2-4. The Apostle Paul tells us that it is "through many tribulations that we enter the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22. Peter tells us to "not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" 1 Peter 4:12. There are many more such verses in the New Testament.

## How are you dealing with tribulation?

The question is: how are you dealing with the great tribulation? Are you looking for a way out? Or are you washing "your robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb"? This is the right response to the tribulation, pressure, stress and hardship of the times we live in. The tribulation is to refine us, deal with our flesh and sin, so we can become white and be washed in His blood to become "kings and priests to His God and Father" Revelation 5:10.

## Overcomers - God dwelling with us

The result of dealing with tribulation Jesus' way is that this people, ones coming out of the great tribulation, are "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them" Revelation 7:15. The Presence of God is among the ones who overcome great tribulation! "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore" Revelation 7:16. These ones have learnt to find the "food which endures to everlasting life" John 6:27. These ones have discovered "the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne who will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters" Revelation 7:17a. The Lamb is their Shepherd! He leads them beside still, but living, waters!

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" Revelation 7:17b. They are healed. Having come through tribulation they have been healed, matured, restored and they find sweet fellowship with God and the Lamb, "fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3. These ones have their "heart set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baca [literally 'weeping'], they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion! Psalm 84:5-7. This is to be our reality. Not something to come. It is present and continuous. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

We are living in the time of the Seals being opened – the gospel is going forth during much trouble and there is an overcoming company being revealed!

The Trumpets are about to sound!!

## Part 4

## THE TRUMPETS ARE SOUNDING

## The seventh seal releases seven messengers

The first six seals deal with the conquering gospel going forth amid much turmoil and tribulation. In the sixth seal we saw that there is a company of saints, sealed by God, that comes through the tribulation! With the opening of the seventh seal "there was silence in heaven for about half an hour" Revelation 8:1. This gives the impression of something dramatic about to happen! John then saw "seven angels [literally "messengers"] who stand before God" Revelation 8:2a. The seventh seal loosed by Jesus the Messiah, the Root of David who prevailed, releases seven messengers! Are these the same messengers mentioned as the "seven stars" which are "angels [messengers] of the seven churches" (Rev.1:20)? They stand before God! This is where all God's messengers are meant to stand. Elijah stood before Yahweh and spoke the word of God to his generation (1 Kings 17:1).

## The seventh seal releases seven trumpets

"And to them were given seven trumpets" Revelation 8:2b. The trumpets speak of a proclamation being made. Jesus said that "He will send His angels [messengers] with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" Matthew 24:31. We are in the time of the gospel being proclaimed loudly for all to hear so that all those "who are appointed to eternal life" (Acts 13:48) will hear and be gathered together in One Body! John heard Jesus' voice as a "loud voice, as of a trumpet" Revelation 1:10. The trumpet prophetically speaks of a voice warning, heralding or proclaiming something. Seven trumpets speak of the full message of the gospel. The complete message is being trumpeted by the full complement of God's messengers! The seventh seal releases the full message, "the whole counsel of God" (Acts

**20:27**), to be trumpeted into all the nations by the apostolic messengers being sent out!

## The altar of incense and the prayers of the saints

John then saw another messenger who at the altar "was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the Throne" Revelation 8:3. The *golden altar* is referring to the *altar of incense* that was before the veil and the mercy seat in the Old Covenant Tabernacle and Temple. Prophetically this altar speaks of the place of prayer (Psalm 141:2, Rev.5:8). It is awesome to see that our Spirit-led prayers "ascend before God" (Rev.8:4). The seventh seal unlocks the prayers of the saints to come before God and to avail. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" James 5:16b. We are to "pray without ceasing" (1Thess.5:17), "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph.6:18), "that God would open a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col.4:3), "for kings and all who are in authority" (1 Tim.2:2). In the New Covenant, with the seals opened, there comes a time for God to answer the prayers of the saints!

## The prayers are answered

Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" Matthew 6:10. In Revelation 8 we see that God answers this by releasing His judgements in the earth through our prayers! Paul taught us to pray for "all men, for kings and all who are in authority" 1 Timothy 2:1-2. He then shows that the answer to those prayers was, "for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle...a teacher of the Gentiles" 1 Timothy 2:7. The answer to the prayers was to raise up more messengers of the gospel — preachers, apostles, and teachers! John saw that the answer to our prayers was messengers with trumpets that bring God's judgements in the earth!

"Then the angel [messenger] took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So, the seven angels [messengers] who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" Revelation 8:5-6. The prayers of the saints came down on the earth! There comes a time for our prayers to be answered. Let our prayer be to Him as incense so we can see more of the message preached through His messengers, bringing God's will and judgements in the earth as it is in heaven!

## The first four trumpets

The trumpets are heralding the message and warning the inhabitants of the world to turn to God. "When Your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" Isaiah 26:9b. The first four trumpets bring on judgements that happen in the physical creation like "natural disasters": "a third of the trees were burned up" (Rev.8:7); "a third of the sea became blood...living creatures in the sea died...ships were destroyed" (Rev.8:8-9); "a third of the waters became wormwood" (Rev.8:11); the sun, moon and stars were affected in their ability to give light (Rev.8:12). Awesome cosmic disturbances affecting the natural world. The common thread is that *a third* of these things were affected. It was big, but only partial judgement. A "wake-up call" to bring the inhabitants of the earth to repentance. God's judgements in the natural world do happen and we have witnessed some. The message of these is for us to learn righteousness – to trust in Jesus for salvation and be changed into a new creation!

## Demonic attack but the sealed unharmed

In the unfolding revelation, an angel warns the world of the proceeding trumpets that are about to sound, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels [messengers] who are about to sound" Revelation 8:13. The fifth trumpet takes us out of the natural into the spiritual. Revelation 9:1-12 speaks of a release of demonic power on the earth from "the bottomless pit" (v.1). There is an army of locusts

that were "given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (v.3).

However, they were commanded to only harm those "men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (v.4). This speaks of great witchcraft and demonic attacks, but Jesus said, "Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" Luke 10:19. The scorpion sting of the enemy is not able to harm the ones who are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:13-14). There is a sealed company during these judgements! We are there! Those not in Christ will experience "torment like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it" (v.5-6). This is a demonic army that is allowed to harm men for "five months. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon [Destruction], but in Greek he has the name Apollyon [Destroyer]" Revelation 9:10-11.

## Distinguishing the sealed from the tormented

One of the main points of all this is to distinguish between the sealed of the Lord and those who do not belong to Jesus. We have authority over the spirit world, and we are seen to be unharmed by it. Do those around you see you able to walk in faith and authority, and not fear? Do you know your authority over the devil? Many are fearful of witchcraft and suffer torment in their minds and hearts and feel imprisoned by it. There is to be a people on the earth in the midst of this that know their God and have authority over all the power of the enemy, showing the tormented ones why the devil cannot harm us. The *angel of the bottomless pit* has been disarmed and destroyed (Col.2:15, Heb.2:14-15)

## Another demonic army released to kill

When the "sixth angel sounded" (Rev.9:13) another demonic army was "released to kill a third of mankind" (v.15). The purpose of the plagues to kill mankind is seen in v.20-21, "But the rest of

mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood...and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts". The message of the gospel is sounding through these trumpets, and judgements are released. But people still do not repent. We are called to be sounding the trumpet in these days, warning the inhabitants of the world, telling them of the good news of Jesus Christ and giving opportunity for repentance to whosoever will believe. But many do not and will not repent but remain blinded in their idolatry.

## **A Mighty Angel**

Still amid the sounding of the sixth trumpet John sees "another mighty angel [messenger] coming down from heaven" Revelation 10:1. This mighty angel has the most amazing description. He has an awesome message for us as the church! His description was:

- "clothed with a cloud" (v.1) like the bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration Matthew 17:5
- "a rainbow was on his head" (v.1) like the rainbow around the throne (Rev.4:3)
- "his face was like the sun" (v.1) like Jesus again at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt.17:2) and the description of the Son of Man in Revelation 1:16 "His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength"
- "his feet like pillars of fire" (v.1) like the Son of Man in Revelation 1:15 "His feet were like fine brass" and the Man on the throne in Ezekiel 1:27 "His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around"
- "He had a little book open in his hand" (v.2) this Messenger has a message! This is like Ezekiel 2:9-10, when Ezekiel saw, "there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a

book was in it. Then He spread it before me". In the midst of judgements coming in the earth at the sound of the trumpets, we need to stay focused on the message of the gospel that is given to us!

- "he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land"
  (v.2) This Messenger has all authority and dominion over the earth! He is the One with "all authority in heaven and on earth"
  Matthew 28:18. Just like it says of Yahweh in Psalm 95:5 "The sea is His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry land"
- "he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars" (v.3) It says of Yahweh, "He shall roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west" Hosea 11:10 [see also Joel 3:16, Amos 1:2] and remember that Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev.5:5). He is calling for His sons to come!
- "When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices" (v.4)
  The "God of glory thunders" Psalm 29:3. [see also John 12:27-30 to see the voice of God as thunder]

## Who is this Mighty Messenger?

Who is this awesome mighty messenger? He appears right in between the sixth and seventh trumpet blasts! He appears amid severe judgements in an awesome display of glory. In that moment that we need encouragement, help and strength to go on – He appears! What a revelation! God wants us to make it through! There is an awesome manifestation and revelation coming on the earth of His glory! He is revealing to us the necessary way that He will manifest His glory on the earth, and He comes to encourage us when it does not seem to be looking good! Could this *mighty angel* be a revelation of Jesus the Messiah, sent to encourage us during the spiritual battle raging in the earth? It is often in the most difficult times that the most awesome revelations of Jesus take place in our lives!

## The Mystery of God would be finished

John saw the *mighty angel* swear an oath by the God of all creation "that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel [messenger], when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets" Revelation 10:6-7. This is what it is all leading to. This is where we are headed as the Body of Christ! To come to the place where the mystery of God would be finished! The full revelation and disclosure of who God is will be seen in the earth! The eternal purpose of God will be accomplished!

## What does this look like?

The apostle Paul said that he had a great conflict and struggle for us to attain "to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ" Colossians 2:2. The mystery of God is seen in the "fellowship of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3. It is as we obey Jesus that "the Father will love us and We [Father and Son] will make Our home in you" John 14:23. The Father and the Son, the revelation of God, will be seen in a Tabernacle, a people, His Body, the Church. The mystery of God is to be seen and manifested in us, His people. It will be revealed by the restoration of the hearts of the "fathers to sons and the hearts of the sons to the fathers" Malachi 4:6.

God has given His Spirit to us so that we can come to know the "mystery of His will...that He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him" Ephesians 1:9-10. God is bringing together all things in Christ – this mystery will be finished! The revelation of the mystery will be fully made known among the nations, "Christ in you; the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27. The mystery of Christ leading to the church making known the "manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers" will be finished (Eph.3:1-11). The earth will be "filled with the

knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea" Habakkuk 2:14. The prophetic Scriptures are being made known, "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea" Isaiah 11:9. The Mystery of God would be finished!

John saw an unfolding revelation of how God is bringing His eternal purpose to full manifestation in the earth!

It is time to "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel [messenger] who stands on the sea and on the earth" Revelation 10:8.

We are to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt.28:19)!

The *mystery of God* will be revealed in the earth!

# Part 5 THE TWO WITNESSES

#### Eat the book

In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel [messenger], John heard a voice from heaven which said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel [messenger] who stands on the sea and on the earth" Revelation 10:8. In order for the mystery of God to be finished (v.7) we need to have the message inside of us; the Word living in us and made flesh (John1:14). So, John says, "Give me the little book" Revelation 10:9a. We are to have this attitude. Go after the Word of God. Ask for it and even demand it. The Angel [Messenger] said, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be sweet as honey in your mouth" Revelation 10:9b.

The gospel is sweet but challenges everyone greatly — it goes against the tide of the world and Babylon. We need to eat the book. We need to devour the Word of God so that it becomes "like a burning fire shut up in my bones" Jeremiah 20:9. Ezekiel was also told to, "eat this scroll, and go speak to the house of Israel" Ezekiel 3:1. Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" Jeremiah 15:16. Feed on the Word so that you proclaim it with certainty and be part of the seventh messenger sounding the trumpet!

#### **Prophesy**

When John ate the little book the mighty messenger said, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues and kings" Revelation 10:11. Prophecy in the New Testament has got to do with making known the revelation of the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:2-5). "The Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus" Revelation 19:10. It is making known the Messiah to all nations, proclaiming the mystery of the gospel boldly as we ought (Ephesians 6:19)! The apostle Paul said to the Romans that we will be established

by "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations" Romans 16:25-26. We are to make known the prophetic Scriptures to all nations! The prophetic Scriptures reveal God's eternal purpose in Christ. Eat the book so that you can prophesy the mystery of Christ and the gospel to all nations!

#### **Measure the Temple**

Immediately after John eats the book and is given the instruction to prophesy to nations, he is "given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there" Revelation 11:1. John is filled with the Word and then is given a reed like a measuring rod! The Word of God measures us. John is told to measure the temple of God!

In the New Testament what is the temple of God? "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16. We are the household of God, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" Ephesians 2:20-21. We are growing as the Body of Christ, "till we all come to the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" **Ephesians 4:13.** The Word of God is to measure the *temple of God*. Are we coming to maturity? Are we growing? Are we becoming a "dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph.2:22)? Part of God's eternal purpose is for a house, a dwelling, to be built for Himself. John was told to measure it after he had eaten the book. There is a revelation for us to catch here! We can only measure the *temple of God* if we have devoured the Word and have revelation of the house He is building!

#### Measure the altar and those who worship there

John was also told to "measure...the altar, and those who worship there" Revelation 11:1. The altar again is referring to the altar of incense where prayer is offered (Revelation 5:8). How is your prayer life? Are you learning to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" Ephesians 6:18? Are you learning to "pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18? The altar of incense is measured and it is important especially for apostles and other ministers to be found "giving themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word" Acts 6:4.

Those who worship there are also measured. We are to worship God "in spirit and in truth" John 4:24. We are the "circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit" Philippians 3:3. Worship is to be pure. Worship is to be in the Spirit. Worship is to be in truth! We are to present ourselves as "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, our reasonable service [worship] Romans 12:1. We are accountable for our prayer life and worship. The Word measures us. Are we heeding the instruction of the Word in these lifestyle areas?

#### **Outer Court not measured**

It is interesting that John was told to "leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles" Revelation 11:2. The outer court is not measured, and is finally not part of the temple of God. It is imperative to come into the temple. We are to be the place where the Spirit of God dwells. Do not remain in the outer court with the altar of burnt offering and the brazen laver only. The imperative part that moves us from the outer court experience of faith and baptism into the holy place, the temple, is the baptism or infilling with the Holy Spirit. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, we are going to be trampled by the world. On the Day of Pentecost Peter brought the new believers into the temple, the church, by bringing them into the full experience of salvation, "repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the

remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38. Seek the baptism with the Holy Spirit and desire to be continually filled (Ephesians 5:18-21) to truly be a "living stone being built up a spiritual house" 1 Peter 2:5.

#### **Tribulation**

The Gentiles, the unbelievers, will "tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months" Revelation 11:2b. This period of time speaks of a time of persecution and distress — not a literal number. It is a symbolic number of a time of tribulation, pressure, and hardship from ruling authorities against those who have faith in Jesus [see also Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Rev.12:6; 13:5]. This has been happening throughout the time the people of God have been recognizable in the earth and ever since Jesus died and rose again. In fact, tribulation is a necessary aspect of our faith, and we are "not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings" 1 Peter 4:12-13. Trials test the "genuineness of our faith, being much more precious than gold" so we may be "found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" 1 Pet. 1:7.

#### **Power to witness**

If you read carefully from **Revelation 10:8 to Revelation 11:3** you will see that the angel who is speaking to John to *rise and measure the temple of God* is the same angel who told him to *eat the book*. This is the *mighty angel* who stood on the sea and the dry land (**Revelation 10:1-3**) whose description is much like the description of the Son of Man in **Revelation 1:12-16**. This is awesome because this same angel then speaks to John, "the angel stood saying... 'And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" Revelation 11:1-3.

This is not an ordinary angel! He is giving the two witnesses power to prophesy during much difficulty and opposition. The same symbolic period of time is mentioned here; *one thousand two hundred* 

and sixty days. Even though there is a time of tribulation, there is power to witness and prophesy. He, the angel, even calls them my two witnesses! Who is the One who gives us power to witness? Jesus said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses to... the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8. Jesus is the One who gives power to witness and prophesy to nations! Jesus is the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5; Matthew 3:11). This Mighty Angel who stands on the sea and the dry land, who is clothed with a cloud, is the One giving power to His two witnesses! It is imperative to have the Holy Spirit and not remain in the outer court which will be trodden underfoot. It is only as you receive the Holy Spirit that you will have power to witness in time of great opposition. Let's receive this power from Jesus the Messiah (Luke 24:49)! We need the power of the Holy Spirit given by that Mighty Angel (Revelation 10:1-11:3), the Lord Jesus Christ.

# **Completing the testimony of Christ**

These two witnesses were given power to *prophesy for one* thousand two hundred and sixty days. This is the equivalent to three and a half years. It is generally agreed by looking carefully at the gospel accounts of Jesus and the feasts that He attended, that He ministered for about three and half years – from the time of His baptism till His crucifixion. The two witnesses also minister, *prophesy*, for the same symbolic time as Jesus. Prophecy in the New Testament is centred around "the testimony of Jesus" Revelation 19:10. When put together, Jesus and the two witnesses make seven complete years of the testimony of Christ in the earth. Seven speaks of that which is complete, finished and the full complement.

Jesus and His two witnesses make a complete testimony of Christ in the earth! *The mystery of God would be finished* when the two witnesses complete the full testimony by "preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ" to the Gentiles, nations (Ephesians 3:8) and boldly making known "the mystery of the gospel" Ephesians 6:18! They

testify of the "mystery of Christ...which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" Ephesians 3:4-5! The full revelation of Christ is made known through Jesus and His witnesses! The mystery of God is manifest in the earth through the full testimony of Christ!

#### Who are the two witnesses?

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth" Revelation 11:4. The two witnesses are two olive trees and two lampstands! What does this mean? It is simple to understand the two lampstands as Jesus already interpreted this for us in Revelation 1:20 when He said, "The mystery of the ... seven lampstands: ...the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches". The lampstands are churches! The two witnesses are two lampstands! This means they are churches! They are not individual people, but they represent the *church*. What is significant about *two?* The number two in the Scriptures speaks of witness: "by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter will be established" Deuteronomy 19:15. Together this means the two witnesses are the witnessing church! Are you part of the witnessing church? Have you been given the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to Jesus Christ? We are to be like the apostle Paul who said, "to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come" Acts 26:22.

#### Two olive trees

What does it mean that the two witnesses are *two olive trees?* This was spoken of by **Zechariah** the prophet in **Zechariah 4.** An angel was speaking to Zechariah and asked him what he saw (**Zechariah 4:1**). Zechariah saw an awesome vision of a "lampstand ... with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps" (v.2). Here is the mention of the lampstand again. This has got something to do with the church! "Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left" (v.3). So, there are two olive

trees on either side of a bowl that is releasing oil through seven pipes to the seven lamps of the *lampstand!* Zechariah is not sure what to make of the vision so the angel gives the interpretation, saying to Zerubbabel, the governor and the one in charge of rebuilding the house of God in Jerusalem, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says Yahweh of hosts" (v.6). The building of the house of God will happen supernaturally by the Spirit, not through human endeavour, military, or political might! This is very prophetic for us in the New Testament – the house of God is the church (1 Timothy 3:15) and God's house will be built by the Spirit; the anointing flowing into the *lampstand!* 

#### Two anointed ones

Zechariah then asked, "What are these two olive trees – at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' And ... "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" (v.11-12). The angel answers him, "These are the two anointed ones [literally 'sons of fresh oil'] who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth" (v.14). What are the two anointed offices in the Old Testament? They were the offices of the king and priest. In the Old Testament they were separate offices, the tribe of Levi bearing the priesthood and the tribe of Judah bearing the kings.

In the context of Zechariah, all of **chapter 3** is focused on **Joshua the son of Jehozadak**, **the High Priest** and prophesying of the **Branch** that will come and remove the iniquity of the land. Then in **chapter 4** the focus is on **Zerubbabel** who is of the lineage of **Judah** and is the governor. He would have been king if they were not under the rule of Persia at the time. He is in the natural ancestry of Jesus the Messiah (**Luke 3:27; Matthew 1:12-13**). These two, **Joshua and Zerubbabel**, are representative of the **two olive branches** coming from the **two olive trees**. The **two olive trees** are speaking of the **two anointed** offices of **priest and king!** 

#### The King-Priest anointing

In the vision, the oil (anointing) from those trees flows into one bowl that then fills the lampstand with oil! Zechariah also prophesied about Joshua the High Priest having a crown put on his head so that "he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both [both offices of king and priest]" Zechariah 6:13. Zechariah was prophesying of a time that the two offices of priest and king would come together in One Man, whose name is the Branch (Zechariah 6:12). This happened in Jesus the Messiah who "is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:21. Melchizedek is a revelation of Jesus Christ, the King of Righteousness, King of Peace and Priest of God Most High (Hebrews 7:1-3). The two olive trees drip oil into One bowl which then fills the lampstand! The church, the lampstand, is filled with the kingpriest anointing which flows from the bowl on top it, the Head of the body, Christ! Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:15.

The two witnesses are the church witnessing as "kings and priests to His God and Father" Revelation 1:6. It is the manifestation of the church having been made "kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth" Revelation 5:10. It is the manifestation of the church as the "royal priesthood" 1 Peter 2:9, functioning as a priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek. The two witnesses are the church functioning like Jesus, the King and Priest, in the earth!

### Fire and authority

This witnessing church, flowing in the anointing of the king and priest, carries much authority through the Word they preach. When opposition comes "fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies" Revelation 11:5. This is the fire of the word of God (Jeremiah 23:29). It comes from their mouth. They have "power to shut heaven … power over waters … and to strike the earth with plagues" Revelation 11:6. This is similar imagery to the authority that Elijah and Moses walked in. This is the church walking in dominion

over the earth as sons of God, kings and priests. We have seen God use us to stay flood waters, change the course of rain systems and see droughts break. It is through us that He works in the earth. "The promises of God are in Him, 'Yes', and in Him, 'Amen', to the glory of God through us!" 2 Corinthians 1:20. This is the picture of a mature church, witnessing the authority and power of Jesus the Messiah in the earth!

### They finish their testimony

"When they finish their testimony" Revelation 11:7a. Like Jesus, these witnesses finish their testimony. The apostle Paul said that he wanted to "finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" Acts 20:24. When the witnessing church finishes and completes the testimony of Christ, then "the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them" Revelation 11:7b. During the three and half years of Jesus' ministry no one could kill Him, even though they wanted to and tried (Luke 4:28-30; John 8:58-59; 10:31-39). But when He had finished His testimony Jesus said, "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" Luke 22:53. It was the time to allow the devil to kill Him in the plan of God. The witnessing church is to become like Jesus in every way, "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:13. We are to "know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, we may attain to the resurrection from the dead" Philippians 3:10-11.

# The death of the witnessing church

"And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" Revelation 11:8. An interesting note is that the phrase "their dead bodies" is literally in the Greek, "their corpse". It is singular rather than plural. It is one corpse not two corpses. Again, this is confirming that the two witnesses are a corporate entity, the church

militant that is witnessing to Jesus the Messiah with great power and authority as sons of God! They die in a *spiritual* city. It is *Sodom and Egypt! Sodom* speaks of the violent, rebellious, arrogant immorality of the world filled with its lusts and violent perversion and homosexuality. *Egypt* speaks of the governmental aspect of the world desiring to enslave the people of God out of fear of them taking over. The witnessing church is killed by the beast in the same *spiritual city as Jesus!* We are being *conformed to His death!* It is part of the plan of God to see the *mystery of God finished!* 

# The World rejoices at the death of the witnessing church

Jesus spoke about His death to the disciples saying, "you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice" John 16:20. So the mature church will be seen to die and "peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies [literally "their corpse"] three and a half days...and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" Revelation 11:9-10.

We have seen things like this when the parliament in Australia voted to legalise "same-sex marriage". They rejoiced and hugged each other and acted like it was the best thing in the world. They thought they had defeated the church. They thought they had nullified the Word of God and killed it off. When we live a life of witness to Jesus and walk in maturity as sons we challenge and *torment those who dwell on the earth.* Be a convicting presence wherever you are. It is our job in the earth! Do not let anyone go to hell without a clear witness!

# The witnessing church risen!

"Now after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them" Revelation 11:11. Just like Jesus did not stay dead, the witnessing church that is killed by the beast will come back after three and a half days. Again, this is a symbolic number and showing that we

are conformed to His death, if by any means, we may attain to the resurrection from the dead! We enter the life of Christ fully! We experience what He experienced! "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" John 15:18. This is the church now walking in resurrection power! The full reality of our baptism into Christ, "Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" Romans 6:4. "We have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live but Christ lives in us" Galatians 2:20. This causes "great fear" to come on the world!

#### The church ascended and glorified!

This resurrection life opens a new realm for the church to walk in as then there was a voice that said, "Come up here" Revelation 11:12a. This is like John in Revelation 4:1-2, when he was caught up in the Spirit to see the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ. So, this church that is overcoming and walking in resurrection power is able to Come up here! And then "they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them" Revelation 11:12b. Like Peter, James and John on the holy mountain (Matthew 16:28-17:5) the church that overcomes is invited up into the cloud, to see Jesus in all His glory and to manifest that glory.

Like the overcoming church of Laodicea Jesus "grants (us) to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcome and sat down with My Father on His throne" Revelation 3:21. We enter into the experience of the mystery of Godliness and are "received up in glory" with Christ (1 Timothy 3:16). Just like Jesus overcame, resurrected and then ascended, "a cloud received Him out of their sight" Acts 1:9, so this witnessing church inherits the glory according to the plan of God that "whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" Romans 8:30. This is the church glorified! "Many sons to glory" Hebrews 2:10!

#### The seventh messenger sounds!

This glorification of the sons of God, the witnessing church, causes a "great earthquake" and much shaking (Revelation 11:13-14). "Then the seventh angel [messenger] sounded... 'The kingdoms of this world have become of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever!" Revelation 11:15. The result of the witnessing church finishing their testimony, fully entering maturity as sons, entering the reality of Christ, "being conformed to the image of His Son" Romans 8:29, is that the world fully comes under the government of Yahweh, the Lord, and of His King, Christ! All things have been made a "footstool for His feet" Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25. The mystery of God would be finished! Revelation 10:7.

Great worship proceeds in the wake of this declaration (Revelation 11:16-18) and then "the temple [inner sanctuary] of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant was seen in His temple [inner sanctuary]"! Revelation 11:19. The glory is revealed for all to see! "Christ in us; the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27, is fully seen! "The knowledge of the glory of Yahweh is covering the earth as the waters cover the sea" Habakkuk 2:14.

# Will you be part of this witnessing church?

John saw a revelation of God's eternal purpose being outworked and is encouraging us to enter the full fellowship with Christ in His life, suffering, death, resurrection, and glorification!

Through the two witnesses, **the witnessing church**, walking in the authority of kings and priests, and sons of God, the kingdom of God will fully manifest in the earth!

### Receive and walk in the revelation of His Word!!