

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

Listen to the music, to the language, called higher education.

But what does God declare it?--The mystery of iniquity.
An Appeal For Missions, p. 11.

Neil C. Livingston

The apostle Paul warned that before the coming of the Lord there would be a "falling away" in the Christian church. The man of sin would be revealed. He would exalt himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God" would sit in the temple of God, "shewing himself that he is God." Then Paul stated that, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5,7).

"Terrible were the trials that were to beset the true church," Ellen White wrote. "Even at the time when the apostle was writing, the 'mystery of iniquity' had already begun to work." (*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 266, emphasis supplied).

We have read the phrase, "the mystery of iniquity" many times in the Spirit of Prophecy. What is the mystery of iniquity? It is simply a man claiming to be God, or a denominational Church leadership or Conference, considering themselves to be the Voice of God on earth to the people.

Undue Church Authority Over Man

The Mystery of Iniquity It has ever been the design of Satan to draw the minds of the people from Jesus to man, and to destroy individual accountability. Satan failed in his design when he tempted the Son of God; but he succeeded better when he came to fallen man. Christianity became corrupted. Popes and priests presumed to take an exalted position, and taught the people to look to them for the pardon of their sins, instead of looking to Christ for themselves.

Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, page 213. (emphasis supplied).

If the mystery of iniquity is man taking the place of God, then the opposite to the mystery of iniquity would be God taking the place of man! It is just that simple, dear reader.

The Opposite of the Mystery of Iniquity - God Becomes A Man

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," the apostle Paul wrote, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5-7, emphasis supplied).

"And being found in fashion as a man," Paul concluded, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8, emphasis supplied).

The Papacy would exalt the Pope of Rome as God on earth. Protestant churches would later claim that their tribunals would be the Voice of God to the people. *This assumption by man is the Mystery of Iniquity!*

"Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts," Ellen White prophesied. "This is the mystery of iniquity, the devising of satanic agencies, carried into effect by the man of sin." ("The Final Test of God's People,," *Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1910, emphasis supplied).

Now, for the Papacy and Protestant tribunals to make a valid claim to the authority that belongs only to God, they must first establish that the "opposite" of the mystery of iniquity did not take place. They must establish that Jesus, the Son of God, *did not really become a man like as we are!* This assumption by the Church tribunals of man, however, flies directly in the face of Scripture.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," the apostle Paul wrote, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8:3, emphasis supplied).

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For both he that sanctifieth [Jesus] and they who are sanctified [man] are all of one [flesh]: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, forasmuch then as the children [mankind] are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; For verily he [Jesus] took not on him the nature of angels; but he [Jesus] took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him [Jesus] to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 2:9, 11, 14, 16-18. (emphasis supplied).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," Paul concluded, "but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15, emphasis supplied).

This false teaching of the "mystery of iniquity" also involves the heretical doctrine of the Nicholaitans, which we studied in a previous chapter. The false doctrine that Jesus did not come in fallen human nature, such as we have, makes Christ our substitute only, without Christ being our example. Justification without Sanctification is a false doctrine of the Nicolaitans and is also a portion of "the mystery of iniquity.". Then the "new theology" Christian would simply say, "Christ is my substitute, not only for my past sins, *but also for the sins I am planning on committing tomorrow!*" Can you not see, dear reader, that there is no victory in this false doctrine?

The Mystery of Iniquity

1. The contemporary Seventh-day Adventists Church teaches that Jesus did not become a man like unto His brethren.

Although born in the flesh, He was nevertheless God, and was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam.

Questions on Doctrine, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957 (page 383) (emphasis supplied).

He [Jesus] was like Adam before his fall. . . .

Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971 (page 428).

The Voice Of God

2. The General Conference, While in Session, Considers Itself to Be the Voice of God to the People.

"The General Conference, while in session," William Johnson stated, "*is the voice of God on earth to Seventh-day Adventists.*" (William G. Johnson, editor, *Adventist Review*, quoted on the John Ankerberg television program, CBN, 1984, emphasis supplied).

The voice of God to the people? What does the Spirit of Prophecy address this papal assumption?

The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work. Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I have thought it was almost blasphemy. The voice of the conference ought to be the voice of God, but it is not, because some in connection with it are not men of faith and prayer, they are not men of elevated principle. There is not a seeking of God with the whole heart. . . .

Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 37*, 1901, p. 8. *Manuscript Release 365*. (emphasis supplied).

We are not to turn from One Mighty in counsel to ask guidance of men. Let those who are inclined to do this read and receive the Bible as the word of God to them. The Bible is the voice of God to His people.

Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Vol. 5, p. 224. (emphasis supplied).

The Warning of Jesus

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," Jesus warned, "stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)." (Matthew 24:15, emphasis supplied).

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," Jesus warned, "standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:" (Mark 13:14, emphasis supplied).

Daniel In Vision

Then I heard one saint [in heaven] speaking, and another saint [in heaven] said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days [2,300 years]; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed [457 b.c.-- 1844 a.d.]. (Daniel 8:13,14) (emphasis supplied).

And then shall that Wicked [Satan] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him [Jesus], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause [reason] God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles [nations], until the times of the Gentiles [nations] be fulfilled. (Luke 21:20, 24) (emphasis supplied).

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations [Gentiles]; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14) (emphasis supplied).

No Concession to the Mystery of Iniquity

Let not those who have the truth as it is in Jesus give sanction, even by their silence, to the work of the *mystery of iniquity*. Let them never cease to sound the note of alarm. Let the education and training of the members of our churches be such that the children and youth among us shall understand there are to be no concessions to this power, the man of sin. Teach them that although the time will come when we can wage the war only at the risk of property and liberty, yet the conflict must be met, in the spirit and meekness of Christ; the truth is to be maintained and advocated as it is in Jesus. Wealth, honor, comfort, home -- everything else -- is to be a secondary consideration. The truth must not be hid, *it must not be denied or disguised*, but fully avowed, and boldly proclaimed.

Ellen G. White, "No Concessions to the Mystery of Iniquity," *Selected Messages*, Book 2, pages 369, 370. (emphasis supplied).

The Mystery of Iniquity In the Closing Work

God has presented to me the dangers that are threatening those who have been given the sacred work of proclaiming the third angel's message. They are to remember that this message is of the utmost consequence to the whole world. They need to search the Scriptures diligently, that they may learn how to guard against the mystery of iniquity, *which plays so large a part in the closing scenes of this earth's history*.

Ellen G. White, "Comment on Revelation 14," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, page 980. (emphasis supplied).