

The Revelation of the Mystery of the Gospel

Texts: Romans 1:16; Romans 16:25

I. GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

John 18:25-27

In the episode of Simon Peter's failure we are made to realize that we need a Savior. Everything our Lord was experiencing was for so many great purposes. One of the great purposes in the pain and shame He took for us was because we cannot live without Him. And the only way we can live a life of true victory and happiness is to have the very person of God Himself come within us and live through us. And the only path that would make this available is the pathway of the cross.

II. THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

John 18:36-38

The kingdom of God is not made with brick and mortar, but with the men, women, boys and girls who are birthed into this glorious kingdom. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "...And upon this Rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God informs us in I Peter 2:4, 5, "To whom coming, as unto a Living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but Chosen of God, and Precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house...." A great purpose of His coming is revealed, i.e., to build the Church. The Church, purchased with His own precious blood (Acts 20:28). The Church, the House built upon the Rock in the midst of a world sinking beneath the sands depravity, decadence, decay and doom! The Church, the compass in a world of confusion! The Church, a place of sanity in a world gone mad! The Church, a place of friendship in a friendless world! The Church a place of communion with the Living God in a world that is so sadly bereft of God's voice! The Church, the propagator and proclaimer of salvation in this terribly lost world!

III. CHRIST AND HIS COVENANT

John 18:38-John 19:6

Three times in this passage we hear Pontius Pilate say, "I find no fault in Him." When God introduced the original Passover, He says in Exodus 12:5, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats." The requirement for deliverance from Egypt was the death of a male lamb. Then in the New Testament God reminded us that we "...were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18b, 19). John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sin of the world.” The fact that the phrase, “I find no fault in Him” is declared three times by the heathen Pilate tells us much. Why would the Holy Spirit emphasize the importance of this truth? I would suggest to you, that through the death of Christ on the cross (as the innocent Lamb of God) the most serious covenant on earth is now taking place. Over five hundred years before Christ was born, the prophet Daniel recorded in Daniel 9:26, “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself...” According to this Scripture Messiah will be “cut off,” but not for any wrong He did. The word for “cut off” is from the Hebrew word, “karath” which means to cut off, cut down or to cut asunder. It is also the word the Hebrew people used that means “covenant,” indicating an alliance formed by cutting. This referenced the ancient custom of cutting flesh and passing between the pieces. The English word “covenant” comes from the Latin “convenire,” meaning to come together. The phrases for “cut a deal” and “strike a bargain” appear to have come into English from the wording of covenant-making practices involving animal slaughter. The ancient rite of “cutting the covenant” goes back centuries before Christ was born.

Two Old Testament examples give some detail about how a covenant was literally cut. The first involves Jehovah and Abram (about 1900 BC), and the second involves Zedekiah and the people of Judah (about 590 BC). In both of these inspired narratives we read that at least one animal was killed, cut into two pieces, and that someone (or something) passed between the divided pieces (Genesis 15:7–21; Jeremiah 34:18–20).

IV. THE SAVIOR AND HIS SALVATION

John 19:16-18

There are so many points and applications from the crucifixion event that could be made today. But I bring to your attention the company with whom Christ was dying, i.e., the two thieves or malefactors who died next to Jesus. Initially, both the thieves were joining in with the chief priests, scribes and elders in ridiculing and railing on him as seen in Matthew 27:38-44 and Mark 15:27-32. In Luke 23:32-43 a very important part of the story is given. The Bible tells us that Christ was in the midst or center of these two men. And historically this is true as well. Christ is so centered in history, that our calendar is divided by His presence on earth. And we, like these two men must make the decision about accepting or not accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. Even Pilate said, “...What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22a). Salvation was purchased for us on Calvary. It is a finished product! John 19:30 tells us, “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” Then Mark adds in Mark 15:38, “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” The six to nine inches thick veil was torn by the hand of God, not from the bottom to the top, but from the top to the bottom. Only the Divine hand of Providence could have done this! This salvation costs us nothing, but it cost God the life of His only begotten Son. Hebrews 10:19, 20 gives us this

invitation by virtue of the finished work of Jesus: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Christ's salvation is a glorious offer. In Revelation 22:17 we read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

V. THE REDEEMER AND HIS REDEEMED

John 19:23

Consider the garment that is not torn and the veil that was torn.

Matthew 27:51-53 unveils a marvelous mystery: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." What happened? Paul, quoting from Psalm 68:18 said in Ephesians 4:8, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The angels in Acts 1:11 inform us, "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." What is the same manner? Revelation 1:7 gives us insight: "Behold, He cometh with clouds...." Can there be another interpretation along with the literal clouds? Consider Hebrews 12:1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...." Jude, verse 14 says, "...Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." I Thessalonians 3:13 speaks of "...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Here is what I can see from the revealed Scriptures: Christ dies, the earth quakes and the graves of many of the believers are cracked open. When Christ rises from the dead, these believers, once dead, arise. During the forty days Christ was on the earth bearing witness of His resurrection, a group of resurrected saints are bearing witness to family, friends and all they meet that Christ is risen indeed. And now that the blood is on the mercy seat in Heaven, the saints are permitted to come into closer proximity to the throne of God. Therefore, when the forty days ended, Christ ascended into heaven with this cloud of witnesses. Ten days later He sent the gift of the Holy Spirit and then the disciples became empowered witnesses to the Gospel, which is the death, burial and resurrection!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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