

MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A SERMON

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“How long shall it be to the end of these wonders.” Daniel 12:6

THE things which are here called wonders are in the New Testament called mysteries, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And Daniel, as we see, was intensely interested in the revelation unto him of these eternal mysteries, which mysteries he saw into; not to comprehend the whole in their full extent and depth, but to apprehend their excellency and adaptability to the salvation of a sinner. But as to the time when these mysteries should be ended, that is, as the next verse shows, established, finished, completed, that time Daniel did not understand. Hence, he says, “I heard, but I understood not.” We are not from that to infer that Daniel did not understand what these mysteries related to, because in the 9th chapter the angel said, “I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding, for you are greatly beloved;” and all the people of God are greatly beloved, even as Christ Jesus is beloved. And so, in the 10th chapter Daniel says, “This was revealed unto me, and I understood it;” yet in this chapter he says, “I heard, but I understood not;” that is, he did not understand when this mystic period of seventy weeks terminated. He knew they were not to be literally understood, and he knew he dared not put them into any shape he might devise, taking a day for a year, and so making the seventy weeks, as the modern learned men do, into 490 years. Daniel would not do this; he knew that the periods of which the Lord had spoken were times and seasons which the Father had put in his own power; so that the termination of these mystic periods could be known only when the time should arrive. And not only was Daniel interested in these mysteries; but here was, as it appears to me, the presence of the Eternal Three; for Daniel looked, and he saw other two besides the person that was clothed in linen, and that stood upon the waters. This seems in a strong analogy to the river Jordan, where Jesus appeared, and where the Father appeared, and where the Holy Spirit descended. Here was the presence of the Eternal Three, interested in Christ’s typical baptism, to show the infinite and eternal interest which the Eternal Three had in that baptism that Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. So here is the presence of the Eternal Three. “And one said to the man clothed in linen,” that is, the Divine Person in human form, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” And to show that these wonders or mysteries are something that infinitely concerns us, this same Divine Person “held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven,” thus taking the most solemn position, “and swore by him that lives forever,” as to when these wonders should be completed, “that it shall be for a time, times, and an half.” Then, in the 10th of the Revelation, this same Person there appears in investment as

divine, declares the accomplishment of those wonders, puts an end to Jewish time, establishes Christian time, sets aside every other time, establishes his own time, his time being, as we have had occasion upon this subject before to observe, for ever and ever. There are a great, many other very interesting things in this chapter, which my time this morning, or for one sermon, would not allow me to meddle with.

I therefore come at once to the language of our text; and I shall notice, first, *these wonders*, these mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, what they are. And you will, recollect, it is said to some people, and only to some, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto others it is not;" and those that know these mysteries have in and by them eternal life, and all that is implied in those beautiful words. And then, second, *the signs of their accomplishment*, or rather their accomplishment, will be self-evident as we go along; but still, if time and space permit, I should set forth the three great signs that existed at that period, which signs the Jews did not understand; they could look upon the face of the skies, but they could not understand the signs of the times. There were three existing signs before their eyes of the times, but those signs they did not understand; and yet the Christian can understand them as clearly as he can understand his A B C. But perhaps we shall not have time this morning to say much about that.

First, then, *what are these wonders?* I have no doubt but this word *wonders* does embrace all that is said relative to the kingdom of God in the preceding parts of the book, but I will give only a sample of these wonders, of these mysteries; and I am sure every one interested in these mysteries, those wonders, will look upon each as a wonder, and will say, What a wonderful thing that is, and that I should be interested in it! and, What a wonderful thing that is, and that I should be interested in it! And so, you will go on through every wonder, and through every mystery. And happy, happy the man who can thus behold the beauty of the Lord, to realize the character of the Savior, who embodies, establishes, and carries out the glory of all these wonders. He himself may well be called The Wonderful.

Now, then, the first mystery or wonder is the entire termination of sin, "He shall finish transgression, he shall make an end of sin, and he shall make reconciliation for iniquity." Recollect, at the time when Daniel lived, none of this was done. God had promised it, but it was not yet done. And there were, no doubt, people in that day so deluded as to put some conditions into God's absolute truth, and make the coming of the Savior, and his finishing transgression, his making an end of sin, and his making reconciliation for iniquity, to make this conditional. Hence a poor trembling sinner in that day that went to hear such a doctrine, Is it certain Jesus Christ will come? Will he really come and finish transgression? Will he really make an end of sin? Will he really make reconciliation for iniquity? Will he come? Yes, if you exercise your free will, and do your part. Yes; it is your duty to believe it, and if you do your duty, he will come; but if you do not do your duty, you cannot expect him to come and to do that work. Why, the Jews hold just such doctrines at the present day. If you ask them, How is it your Messiah is not come? Because we have not done our duty; because we have deviated from the commandments, have not exercised our freewill, and done our part. Now we will suppose that an Old Testament believer could have received such a doctrine as this; see what a miserable plight he would have been in. But the devil cannot get any conditions into that department now because the work is done. But then Daniel would say to such, Read, for yourself; there is not breathed a syllable about the goodness or

badness, or doing or non-doing of the creature; there is the positive, the absolute, the unconditional, the infallible assurance that he *shall* finish transgression.

“Nor aid he needs, nor duties asks,
Of these poor feeble worms;
What everlasting love decrees,
Almighty power performs.”

Come to the next point. He shall not only finish transgression but make an end of sin. There is the positive declaration, he shall do it; and that he shall make reconciliation for iniquity; that by him mercy and truth shall meet together, and righteousness and peace shall embrace each other, Daniel, who longed to see, not that he doubted the truth of it, but nevertheless longed to see the actual accomplishment of it, might well say, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” And I ask if it is not a wonderful thing? I say it is a wonderful thing that Jesus Christ has put an end to everything that is against us. And I know not any chapter in the New Testament that more beautifully illustrates this part of the 9th of Daniel than the 5th of Romans. Why? Because the apostle, in that chapter, sets the death of Christ over against our sin, our ungodliness, our weakness, when we were without strength, and over against God’s wrath, and over against everything that stood against us, and over against our enmity. And then the apostle in that chapter descriptively brings us up into sweet reconciliation to God, answering very beautifully to what the Savior has done. Ah, this one truth! one might meditate upon it, and say, No fault laid to my charge, no blemish, no condemnation, no accusation, no reproof, no rebuke, not the shadow of a fault found; it’s all gone, and matters as clear between my soul and God as though sin had no existence, as though it was a nonentity, as though it was gone, and gone forever. Ah, believer, here your comfort stands. Hence the apostle’s beautiful words, “The life that I now live is by faith of the Son of God.” Here we stand; here we can live in hope, here we can die in peace, and here we have all that we can need for time and eternity. Now, as I said just now, the accomplishment of these wonders will, as we go along, show for themselves. Whether we are interested feelingly in this matter or not, is the great essential. You observe, in the 9th of Daniel, that this wonder is placed first, because the first thing needed was the removal of sin, pardon of sin, putting away of sin, casting out of sin. That stands first. Never can be happy if there is a sin left unatoned for, unforgiven. I know the gospels of the present day are, Ah, if you die with one sin unrepented of, you will be lost. Then, sir, whoever you are that assert that doctrine, you will be a lost man if what you say be true; as sure as I am standing here this morning, you will be a lost man, for it is easy to prove that you have ten thousand times ten thousand sins in your heart that you have never repented of, and never will. Oh, how eager that infernal old serpent is, I cannot help saying it, by his agents, to take sin away from the Savior, and to make it in some shape, some form or another, the business of the creature to put it to rights; whereas the Bible declares he has done it. If I die under one sin unatoned for, if I die under one transgression unatoned for, if I die under one iniquity unatoned for, then I am lost. But if I am one with this achievement of the blest Redeemer, for me to die under one fault, wrinkle, spot, or blemish, is a literal and an eternal impossibility. Bless the Lord, then, the leviathan is slain, the dragon is slain, the piercing serpent is slain, the enemy is slain; the work is done, the prisoners free; grace reigns, and God must be glorified. But then, who will appreciate this? Why, the man who feels what a poor creature he is; the man that has from time to time to say, “Oh, wretched man that I am!” that’s the man that will appreciate this gospel. Second, he shall bring in everlasting righteousness; that is, he shall make things everlastingly right; a righteousness that shall last

forever. It was put to the test in his person, and sin could not spoil it there, though sin was laid upon him; and Satan and his agents, all their subtlety against him could not spoil it, nor blemish, nor tarnish it. And so now he has reconciled us to God, brought us by his blood and righteousness to God, and made things everlastingly right between us and God; can never get wrong, never; the thing is Eternally impossible; “there is no separation from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.” Ah, believer, if you could look back to twenty years ago, and your soul was then brought into reconciliation to God, to enjoy the blessedness in some measure described in the 32nd Psalm, and you have been in the house of mourning ever since, and have been in the house of rebellion, and doubting, and fearing, and misery ever since; yet that justification which you did then realize, that reconciliation into which you did then enter, stands as firm on your side now, has done ever since, and will while eternal ages roll. He has brought in eternal righteousness. No wonder that Daniel says, “How long shall it be to the end (or completeness) of these wonders?” Why, who would not long, when they saw that sin was eternally making things wrong between God and man? See what sin had done with man in the fall; see what it had done in the heathen world, what it had done in the Jewish world, and what it does in the eternal damnation of an immortal soul. And then to see the dear Savior step in, and put sin out, and bring everlasting righteousness in; fill up the mighty gulf with his own mediatorial work, and establish a peace never to be violated; bring in a life that can never die, a light that can never be clouded, a liberty that can never be circumscribed, a holiness that can never be tarnished, a plenty that can never turn to famine, a blessedness intermingled with no curse. Here it is “the blessing of the Lord makes rich, and addeth no sorrow.”

But people tell me not to make such a noise; I should preach more quietly and gently. Very well, I will try. Well now, he has brought in everlasting right. You will perceive one grace of the Holy Spirit we need in these things, that is, faith; the faith that is associated with understanding; the Son of God is come to give an understanding, and that faith that has in it an understanding of these things, is sure to have love to God in it. I defy any man to have from his own soul’s experience a sight and sense of his need of these things, so as to apprehend and understand them, and so believe them; it is impossible for a man to have such a sight as this, associated with understanding, without love being there. There is the importance of the understanding being opened, that we should understand the Scriptures; it endears the Savior. So here then is this righteousness brought in, and the Christian is always right. Cast down, perhaps, some of you are this morning, but you are not destroyed. You may apprehend, or quite think, that your hope and strength are perished from the Lord, but your hope is not perished from the Lord, because you desire still to know the Lord, and you can see these mysteries, and understand them so far as to know that if Jesus Christ had not done these things, none other could. Is not, then, the entire destruction of sin a wonderful thing? And is not the bringing in of this eternity of righteousness, this eternity of peace, as the result of it, a wonderful thing?

The third mystery was to seal up vision and prophecy. I understand there, *to seal up* means *to confirm, to establish*. And how self-evident this is. Ah, my hearer, when you and I read the Bible, we come to some scriptures that, in consequence of what we feel within us, in consequence of what we are as sinners, we tremble at, and we say, That is a terrible scripture; that is a terrible denunciation. I seem to tremble at it; I seem to shudder. What if that terrible scripture should fall upon me? And where is there a Christian that so walks as it is written, that he can come before God and say, O Lord, I can range over your blessed book, from Genesis to Revelation, and there is not one scripture that stands against me; I do always those things that please you. We dare not

say so; we should have the testimony of all the prophets, and the apostles, and the Lord himself against us. One wondrous man of God said, "With my flesh I serve the law of sin." But oh, how sweetly different with the blessed Redeemer! He could not find a scripture in the Bible that could even reprove him, much less condemn him; he could not find a scripture in all the Bible that spoke against him. He could look every commandment in the face without blushing; he could look every description of excellence in the face without blushing; for he felt, while he looked at those solemn scriptures, his superiority. Ah! the law is majestic, but I am more than the law. And the commands of the old covenant relative to conformity to God are such as man, through weakness of the flesh, could not meet; but I can meet them, and smile upon them all. And as to the precepts of the gospel, promises, and doctrines, and ordinances of the gospel, would he slight baptism, as some Christians do. Would he slight that which he was commanded to institute, the Holy Supper? No; he could range over all and smile upon it all. Ah, then, what perfection of truth we have in Jesus; not only putting away sin, not only bringing in righteousness, but sealing up and confirming vision and prophecy; confirming the truth, that is the thing that he confirmed, the truth; and the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, then, my hearer, he has confirmed the truth; and before you, I refer to it again, before you can stand before God condemned, Christ himself must be condemned. Oh, how complete is the escape of the Christian, the believer! Precious faith bringing us into this oneness with Christ; how complete is our escape from everything that is against us by the universal integrity of the Lord Jesus Christ! He then sealed up, confirmed, and established vision and prophecy. What commandment did he not honor? What prophet did he not honor? What heavenly dispensation did he not honor? What item of the new covenant did not the Savior eternally establish? And we are in the habit of thinking, and a very good habit it is, that Moses and Elias, and perhaps we have no scripture exactly to authorize the idea, but the idea forces itself somehow or another upon our minds, and there cannot be much harm in the thought, that Moses and Elias appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, one representing the law, and the other the prophets; and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ, by his decease at Jerusalem, should thus honor the law, honor the prophets, honor God, and save a number of souls that no man can number. That is wonder the third; then, end of sin, righteousness brought in, and the truth confirmed, all the branches, and parts of it.

The fourth mystery was the anointing of Christ. "And to anoint the most holy." There were three anointings of Christ, but I think it is the last of the three referred to there, because it follows upon what he had done. First, there is his anointing in covenant, in purpose. "I have found David my servant," my beloved servant; "with my holy oil have I anointed him." That was done in covenant, in purpose. Secondly, there is his anointing in his humiliation, as described by himself. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me." And then, third, there is his anointing with the oil of joy in his ascension to glory. And his ascension, if we look at it in its association, what a wonderful thing that was. He was so anointed, he had plenty to spare for his brethren. And so, when the day came on to demonstrate the fact, that Jesus Christ had entered into a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, and anointed with the oil of gladness, when the day came, some said one thing and some said another but Peter, by the Holy Ghost, explained the whole, and now he says, Mark, it is that Jesus, ah, would you believe it! that Jesus that lived among you, despised by you, reviled by you, crucified by you; that solitary man, Jesus of Nazareth, that had not where to lay his head, whom you crucified and slew. Look at your conduct! see yourselves now he whom God raised from the dead! It is that same Jesus that has shed forth this which you now see and hear. Wonderful! Thousands were awakened up to see and wonder. Oh, this is Jesus Christ, this is his Spirit, this is

his power, this is the travail of his soul, this is the result of his work. And they were pricked in the heart. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Ah, bless the Lord, it is all done; believe in what is done. And so, they did, and were brought vitally and experimentally into the knowledge of the wondrous achievement of Christ, and they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, in prayers, and in breaking of bread. Look at the contrast between the cross and the crown; look at the contrast between the tomb and the throne; look at the contrast between the Savior, when he was reviled by enemies around, and now, when he is encircled with the eloquent hallelujahs of an innumerable company of angels and of souls innumerable redeemed surrounding his eternal throne, and crowning his brow with those amazing hallelujahs, rolling forth as mighty thundering, and the sound of many waters. How great the contrast between the cross and the crown! "How long to the end of these wonders?" Ah, the angel lifts up his hand in this chapter, and binds himself by solemn oath, that the accomplishment of these wonders shall not surpass a certain time. It was Christ that in this chapter, believer, look at it now, just watch me here a minute, it will do you no harm, this same person, that had to achieve these wonders for our eternal welfare, in this same chapter binds himself by solemn oath to accomplish these wonders within a given time. "He swore by him that lives forever that it shall be for a time, times, and an time;" it shall not go beyond that, "the vision is for an appointed time" and at the end did speak, and did not tarry. Hence the dear Savior himself knew the day of his death. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem;" as though he should say, I know the solemn oath in which I stand bound, and tremendous as the scene is I have to go through, I will pursue my enemies; I will not return till I have beaten them small as the dust, made them as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. It shall never be said of an incarnate God that the warfare was not accomplished; it shall never be said of him of whom it is said, "He shall not fail," that he did somewhere fail; no, nor even be discouraged. Thus, then, these are some of the mysteries end of sin, bringing in of righteousness, confirmation of the truth, and the anointing of Christ.

The next wonder is to build a street and a wall. "The street shall he built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." What street? Well, allow me a little latitude, and do not think me even playful when I say *Union Street*. That is the street that is to be built. The Jews had forsaken the covenant of the Lord, gone out of union to God into union with the devil. They had dug down the altars of the Lord, and had sacrificed unto demons, and gone out of union with the Lord's sacrificial order of things. They had slain the Lord's prophets, and adopted man made parsons, that suited their own purposes. So that the great truth of eternal unity between Christ and the people, as set forth in the 54th of Isaiah and many other scriptures, this great truth was thrown down: "Truth is fallen in our streets." But this Union Street shall be built up again; and so, the apostles did build it up again, in troublous times. So, it is now; if you keep to Union Street, you will have plenty of disunion, depend upon it. Keep close to this heavenly Union Street. All the rest of the streets of the city must lie at right angles with Union Street, must all come out of that street, and lead to it. Redemption Street must lie at right angles with Union Street; Justification Street, Regeneration Street, Baptism Street, Lord's Supper Street, Election Street, Predestination Street, they must all lie at right angles with Union Street. Well, say you, what sense is there in that? Why, they must all come from it, and lead to it. Now, universal redemption does not lead to Union Street, certainly not; for that is a doctrine that does not admit the existence of a Union Street, in the true sense of the word. And duty-faith, where does that lead to? I have my opinion about that, where it leads to. I know where it does not lead to; it does not lead to Union Street; it does not lead to that eternal relationship that the blessed God has constituted in Christ Jesus between himself and his people. Now, the street

shall be built; that is, this same truth shall be raised up. Ah, my hearer, where in all the New Testament, at least among the evangelists, is there a part that more beautifully takes up, builds up, establishes the great truth of eternal unity with Christ than the 17th of John? There are other chapters that do the same, but is there one to surpass that? Why, it is the very theme of the chapter. Here, then, the street is built, bless the Lord for it, never to be thrown down, Not that it could be thrown down in reality of old; but the doctrine was thrown down. "Truth is fallen in our streets." The same as thousands are employed now, that try to hide this great truth of sovereign, gracious, eternal, vital, indissoluble oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ, "And the wall," Why, dear me, what wall is that? Ah, I know; yes, and you know. We can get the wall from the Old and New Testament, which you like, or both. If I go to the Old Testament, it will be, "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Ah, good old Simeon clasped the Holy Child in his arms: "I have seen your salvation." , Ah, the walls of salvation have been thrown down, kept out of sight; I have not so much as seen the walls before, but now my eyes have seen your salvation. I see the foundation; I see the walls are impregnable; no enemy can ever enter it; no, the citizens are safe. No wonder the advice should be given to go round about and to mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, and to rejoice that this God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death. Is it said to be a wall great? Is not salvation great? Is it said to be high? Is not salvation high? Are the walls said to be of jasper? What can be more enriching, what can be more precious, than God's eternal salvation? Now then, this street, Union Street, for Jerusalem must be built compact together, all the other streets must go at right angles to it. If I get into a street which does not lead to Union Street, I bundle out of that street as fast as I can, because then it leads to where I do not want to go. Now, these are to be built in troublous times. Ah, what a troublous time it was to the dear Savior when he died; yet in his death he built up, as it were, this street, and built up the walls of salvation. And what troublous times with the holy apostles; what troublous times, for centuries after, with thousands of the people of God! And on what ground did those troubles come to them? Because they denied all human centers of unity, and abode by the unity of the Spirit, and not the unity of the flesh. Troublous times! And so, it is now. I solemnly believe that the truth of God and the people of God are as offensive to the carnal mind now as they ever were. Now, I say that this unity is a wonderful thing, and that this salvation is a wonderful thing. How long shall it be to "the end of these wonders"? You see the Savior achieved them.

Shall I go on again? There are several more. I may just name one more. I have said nothing yet concerning the covenant of grace. Very remarkable, that is brought in at the end of these wonders in the 9th of Daniel, and it is generally brought in at the end of a good deal of experience, Oh, how long it was before I saw into God's everlasting covenant; but now I see it I love it; it is my life, my light. Now how many of us in this assembly this morning can solemnly, in the sight of a heart-searching God, say with the Psalmist concerning this new covenant, confirmed by the Savior, that "this is all my salvation and all my desire"? It is to me eternal, satisfaction, even when I cannot enjoy it, taking that customary view of it. If this be true, that this covenant was all David's salvation, and all his desire, O God of heaven and earth, God of truth and mercy, what must become of that man that despises doctrine, that thinks he can have Christ without doctrine, Christ without the covenant? The Lord help us to lose sight of men altogether, and to look the blessed truth of God in the face, and let us see what it is, watch the very movements of its lips; let us not lose a syllable, nor misunderstand an item, but understand the whole of it. Now then, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." Of course, it was confirmed with them forever; but the one

week, there is a mystic period during which time the Lord would confirm the covenant with many Jews. And so, you have a hundred and forty and four thousand Jews; a definite number, very likely, for an indefinite, with whom the covenant, during a certain period, was confirmed. And there is a note of time, that at this period when this covenant should be confirmed with some of the Jews, "for the overspreading of abominations." If you want to know what these abominations are, read the 23rd of Matthew, and there you have the abominations, and the eight woes upon them. "He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that" which is "determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The learned render that like this, "shall be poured out upon the desolator," and they think the desolator is the Roman army that destroyed the Jews. There may be some truth in that. I would not exclude that; but I should think it has a meaning prior to that; I should think it has a greater meaning than that. Why, say you, if the Roman army destroyed the Jewish nation, that Roman power was a desolator. Can you find a greater desolator? Yes, sir; that man that takes Christ from me is a greater desolator than all the armies that were ever brought into the field since the foundation of the world. The Jews were the desolators that crucified Christ; that took Christ away from sinners, as far as they could do it; and took Christ away from the disciples. And I say now that that man, let him be what he may, that takes my Jesus Christ from me, that man that comes with a combination of things that would take Jesus Christ from me, he is the greatest desolator under the sun, because he desolates the soul. Bless God! it cannot actually be done; but the enemy would go so far, if he could. And therefore that which is determined shall be poured out upon the desolator, the Jewish nation, and so it was; they are desolate to the present day, and will remain so. Well, then, these are the wonders. Now, are these wonderful things in our estimation? Mind, I am not quite so far gone, or so weak, as to ask you whether you think I have spoken wonderfully of them: I am not quite so far gone as that, I am not asking that question. All I am asking is, Are these things wonderful things to us? Is the word of God a wonderful thing to us? Is it a wonderful thing to us, in our estimation, that we should know the way in which sin is ended; that we should know the way of justification; that we should know the way of truth's confirmation; that we should know the way of the Savior's exaltation; and that we should know the way of the city; and that we should know something of this covenant; and that we should know that in this covenant there is nothing but blessedness, and nothing but misery out of it.

Well, then, I said at the beginning that these wonders would tell for themselves as to when they were accomplished. "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" You observe, in the next verse, we have the word "finished" applied to these wonders. That shows that the word "end" does not mean the termination of the wonders, except that of the judicial wonder, the destruction of the Jewish nation; but in the mysteries of the kingdom it does not mean termination, but accomplishment, achievement. So, the Savior said when he died, "It is finished."