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Bible Study No. 1: "On the Mysteries of God!"

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As we have already said, we may rejoice in the grace and privilege that God has drawn so close to us and revealed His Word and His will, indeed, His whole counsel, as we have said several times before, in a way that has never before been seen on earth. We can say this with complete confidence, for that is how it is. Prophets and Apostles wrote, but much was still in the future in their days. Today we can look back and say, Scripture has been fulfilled before our very eyes in manifold ways, and what remains to be fulfilled will certainly come to pass when the time is right.

It is on my heart to hold Bible studies this weekend. And you can go ahead and get your Bibles out now, and we will move from one scripture to the next. For it is very important that we are firmly grounded in the Word of God, so that nothing and no one can lead us astray from the path upon which God has set us, or steer us away from pure Bible teaching to places where we do not belong.

From the Prophet Isaiah, I would like to read a few verses from chapter 63. Isaiah 63, verse 15. Isaiah 63, from verse 15:

[15] ***Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?***

[16] ***Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.***

[17] ***O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.***

And now comes the verse:

[18] ***The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.***

[19] ***We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.***

When we read the Psalms, and sometimes the prophets too, we find a multitude of thoughts expressed; situations and events are brought before our eyes. And men of God always had God's cause at heart. There was no one who would have taken trials lightly, or passed over them in times of drought; rather all longed from the heart for God's gracious visitation, that good might be done to those who have placed their trust in the Lord. ***"The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while."*** [Isa 63:18]

If we consider the New Testament Church in early Christianity, we can say the same. It was only for a brief period that the people, so wholly devoted and wholly consecrated to the Lord, experienced God's supernatural blessings in their midst, pure doctrine, the pure working of the Holy Spirit, pure gifts. No one did anything of their own accord; it was the Spirit of God who brought everything about and worked all things. And then, as we all know, there came a time which was no longer like the beginning.

But now we have the promise in the Word of God that everything is to be restored and brought back to its original state. And that is in fact the message of the end times, to call out the Bride of Christ, to cleanse her in the washing of water by the Word, to give her the scriptural orientation delivered from all confusion, so that she may be the Lord's own. As I said, I would like to share this meditation on the Word with you today, and, God willing, tomorrow morning as well.

Let us begin with 1 Corinthians chapter 2. 1 Corinthians chapter 2. And I would like to say this right away. When we mention Brother Branham from time to time here, we are not presenting him as a particularly great man. There were no great men at all. There was only the great God, who made use of His servants and prophets, whom He could use as His instruments.

I have just been reading today about Elijah, who after his great victory on Mount Carmel said: ***"Lord, take my life. I am no better than my fathers were."*** [1Kin 19:4] And James certainly saw it that way too, writing in chapter 5, verse 17: "***Elijah was a man just like us***", a great prophet, a man of God, a man just like you and me. Of course, God had instruments, and He still does today. Moses and Elijah were then allowed to come down from the Mount of Transfiguration and speak with the Lord. [Mat 17:3] They were men who found grace before God, but they were not great in themselves, rather the great God was able to glorify Himself through them. And when we look at Brother Branham, especially those who knew him, a humble man, simple, yet the power of God worked mightily through him.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 5, the following is written, perhaps verses 4 and 5:

[4] ***And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.***

And then comes the explanation:

[5] ***That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.***

The proclamation of the Word is accompanied by the power of God, which is manifested to all who take the preached Word into their hearts and believe from the heart. We can experience God in this place today. We can experience the supernatural power of God at work amongst us today.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 18 we find the words familiar to us all:

[18] ***For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.***

Praise be to the name of the Lord. It is not merely words that are proclaimed, but the words that are proclaimed, the message of the cross in itself, unleashes the power of God, which has been manifested through redemption, through forgiveness, through liberation. Wherever the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, what He accomplished for us on Golgotha is to take place in the hearts of those who hear it. If we preach Jesus Christ, the crucified one, then He who became a curse for us on the cross shall bestow upon us the fullness of God's blessing. For on the cross, indeed, the curse was turned into a blessing. The curse has been taken away from us, and God's blessing has been given to us by grace. We believe this, because it is written.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 1 and 2 it says:

[1] ***Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

[2] ***Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.***

This evening we shall draw a comparison between Amos chapter 3, verse 7 and the text we have just read. Let us now read Amos. Amos chapter 3, verse 7:

[7] ***Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.***

The revelation of God's Word takes place through the prophetic ministry, but what is revealed, which is then stewarded, taught, and passed on. Do you understand that? Let me read the verse again:

[1] ***Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

I could not have stewarded a mystery of God if God had not caused these mysteries to be proclaimed through the mouth of those He had called. Do you understand that? Not everyone is a prophet. The Word is not revealed to everyone, but the Word is revealed for the purpose of being passed on later, just as it was proclaimed. So:

[1] ***Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

If we were now to list the mysteries, beginning with the fall and extending to the Revelation, which have remained hidden over the centuries and which God has revealed to us in this generation by His grace, there would be a long list. Is that right? God has His Word. He has made known the mysteries of His Word. Now it is our task, as it is written here:

[2] ***Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.***

In 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 9, 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 9:

[9] ***For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.***

When a company comes along and is working on the building, I have heard this in recent months, one person will often ask another: "How many employees do you have?" Here it says: ***"For we are labourers together with God."*** So God, I almost said, also has a business. God has a church. The church has tasks which it has taken on and must carry out. And when it is written: ***"For we are labourers together with God, we are God's husbandry, we are God's building,***" then we have been given a task, a commission from God for the church, and we must simply fulfil this task faithfully.

Let us turn to some mysteries mentioned by Paul and then by other men of God. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 51, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 51:

[51] ***Behold, I shew you a mystery.***

We are familiar with the text.

[51] ***Behold, I shew you a mystery.***

What is a mystery? A mystery is a matter, a process which is not publicly known. It is still secret, yet it has already been revealed, made known. And it was Paul, after all, who could say that the mystery of Christ concerning the church had been made known to him by revelation. [Eph 3:3-4] Here it was revealed to this man of God what will happen at the end of the time of grace, namely in connection with the Lord's return and then also with the rapture. So he writes here:

[51] ***Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.***

Do you realize that God has entrusted mysteries to us? Go through the churches and denominations today and ask them about such scriptures, and you will soon realize that there is not much light or clarity amongst people. However, the mysteries that God has already revealed in His Word are no longer mysteries, but have been made known to us, so that we no longer need to puzzle over them, but can know what God intends for us in His eternal plan of salvation. But I simply love this:

[51] ***Behold, I shew you a mystery.***

One question: Has anyone before him ever been able to set this out and present it in this way? God appointed him, this apostle, to reveal and emphasize this, to give it to the church as comfort and instruction, as guidance right to the end. Of course, we now benefit by grace from all these mysteries. We shall, after all, be considering a few more.

Ephesians chapter 5 is a very special passage. [Eph 5] There we are taught about the relationship between husband and wife and between wife and husband, about marriage, a great deal is written there. ***"For we are members of his body,"*** so it says in verse 30, Ephesians 5 verse 30:

[30] ***For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.***

I shall now skip the passage relating to the wedding ceremony and read verse 32:

[32] ***This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***

If we were to ask now: What does this great mystery consist of? It is not merely a mystery, but a great mystery that we have here. And Paul says: ***"I am applying this to Christ and the church."*** We see that God through the revelation of the Spirit guides the church and has by His grace shown it the right Word at the right time and the correct connections and contexts. Of course, always through called messengers, always through those who do not wish to put forward their own doctrinal views, but who by virtue of divine calling waited for the revelation themselves so that they might then pass it on.

I have probably mentioned this here before. A nice man, a U.S. citizen, gave a sermon on the seven thunders. I have it here in my office; it lasts almost two hours. And when he had finished, he said: "I've told you all this, but I can't tell you if it's really true." And I thought to myself: Nearly two hours have passed, and he has proclaimed these things with great power, and then right at the very end he says: "I've told you all this, but whether it is so, I do not know myself." That must not happen.

The Word of God is not "yes" and "no", but "yes" and "amen". [2Cor 1:19-20] And that is why we must always ensure that the things which are proclaimed remain irrefutable and unshakable, so that no one can come along and say: "A correction is needed here." Someone might say: "My dear friend, you are certainly full of yourself." Not at all. I am convinced only of God and of the Word of God and of the absolute guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We would indeed be fools if we relied on ourselves. We and others have long since realized just how fallible we are. But God is infallible, and His Word is infallible. And if we have now been appointed as stewards, as co-workers in the mysteries of God that have been revealed, then we shall not overstep the mark, but remain within

the bounds of God's Word, so as to be ever certain that what is presented can stand up to scrutiny before God and man.

You know, I have just returned from a trip to Africa lasting almost three weeks, traveling through five African countries. Around 6,000, 7,000 people heard God's Word. It was very wonderful. But time and again I met people where corrections were necessary. And the joy among the brothers who accepted the Word and accepted the corrections was indeed very great. And we believe that all who are of God will correct themselves and allow themselves to be corrected by the Word of God. The Word will convict us, and the Spirit will rebuke us, so that we may see that things are exactly as they are written in the Word of God.

In Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1 verse 9, it says:

[9] ***Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.***

He has made known the mystery of His will, so the will of God is no longer hidden from mankind, but has been revealed. And all those who are prepared to do the will of God will align themselves with the Word and take it as the standard for faith, doctrine, and life.

Now, when it comes to the mysteries, there is that wonderful passage — I shall be brief — there is that wonderful passage in Matthew chapter 13, which our Lord spoke at that time. I shall read verses 10 and 11, Matthew 13 verses 10 and 11:

[10] ***And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?***

[11] ***He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.***

Look, only those who truly come to the Lord and follow in His footsteps will have it revealed to them. They will not remain in darkness, for thus it is written in the Gospel of John, our Lord says: ***"Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*** [Joh 8:12] If anyone remains in darkness, this bears witness to the fact that they are not following Jesus. How could anyone follow the Lord and yet remain in confusion, in uncertainty, in darkness? That is not possible. Our Lord's way is a way of light, a way of truth, a straight path, a way in accordance with the Word of God.

We read on from Colossians 2, Colossians chapter 2 verses 2 and 3:

[2] ***That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God [...] This mystery is Christ;***

[3] ***In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

Surely all attentive readers and listeners will have noticed that the text here does not speak of mysteries in the plural, but of the mystery of God in the singular. And the answer is given to us straight away: "***This mystery is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***"

So when it is written in Revelation 10 that in the days — perhaps I shall read it out straight away, so that everyone may know that it is also written there in the singular, Revelation chapter 10 verse 7:

[7] ***But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.***

So, singular, there are the many mysteries of the kingdom of God, of the world, and then there is the one mystery of God in Christ, the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, to transform human beings into children of God, to reconcile humanity which had been separated from God, to remove the middle wall of partition, and to establish peace between God and humanity through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Eph 2:14]

And so we are grateful to God that on the one hand we recognize the many mysteries, we understand what is meant by them, for they have been entrusted to the church. On the other hand, it must be said even to this day, unless the revealed mysteries are also made known to the children of God, they will not see even what has been revealed.

I would like to read two or three passages from the book of Revelation, specifically Revelation chapter 1. Revelation 1. Everyone is familiar with what this is about. It is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We are primarily concerned with verse 20. Revelation 1, verse 20:

[20] ***The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.***

[20] ***The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.***

One question. If this passage is written as follows, ***"As for the mystery of the seven stars…"*** Please listen carefully. Listen carefully. I will read it again. "***As for the mystery of the seven stars…***"

Before that, seven churches are addressed to whom what God would reveal is to be sent. They are named one by one. You can read all about it in verse 11. Yes, all in verse 11:

[11] ***Saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.***

We come here to a very special point, an important point that I would like to emphasize. If back then and today it had merely been a matter of seven local churches with seven local church leaders, what would the great mystery be? Then everyone would know, in the church at Ephesus such and such a brother is the leader. Just as here Brother Russ is in the church at Krefeld and others elsewhere. Everyone would know; there is no great mystery as to who is the leader of a local church.

You see, here we encounter the mystery of the prophetic vision through which the New Testament church will pass, namely through its seven periods of time. And Brother Branham received this revelation directly from the Lord in such a marvelous way. I do not know whether all of you who have read the book or the individual booklets on the Seven Church Age messages have noticed, Brother Branham drew seven moons, I will call them moons, and then divided this circle roughly into black and white, showing how much light and darkness there might have been at a particular time or in the respective age until it was almost completely dark. And we read in the last church age that the Lord stands outside the door and knocks. And only those who hear His voice… I mentioned this here recently, it does not say, "whoever hears my knocking…"

Generally speaking, one might say that if it is written, ***"behold, I stand at the door and knock,"*** then we would think that someone is there and is using their hand or fist to knock. God does not knock with His hand, nor with His fist, certainly not. He knocks through His revealed Word. I shall read it to you, namely through His voice. Revelation chapter 3, verse 20. Revelation 3, verse 20:

[20] ***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door...***

So how does He knock? Pardon? How does He knock? Through His holy Words in these days. God has spoken to us. He has revealed His Word and His will. We may well read that again:

[20] ***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice...***

not my fist, but my voice,

[20] ***and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.***

We see how important it is that we listen to what the Spirit has to say to the churches. And the Spirit always speaks through the Word that He reveals. So when John saw the Lord, the exalted Lord, walking amongst the seven golden lampstands, it is written here in verse 16:

[16] ***And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword...***

The important point here was, what do the seven stars in His right hand signify? The sword of the Spirit is God's Word, a two-edged sword. [Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12] But

the question here was, in His right hand He held seven stars. And then in verse 20, ***"As for the mystery of the seven stars…"*** Firstly, these men were not chosen by others. They were not in the hands of men. They were appointed by the Lord for the whole church, and that is why He symbolically held them in His hand. No one could direct them. It is His right hand that is exalted, and His right hand upholds the victory, and He holds the seven stars in His right hand. [Ps 118:16; Rev 1:16]

But you notice here, I am saying this for the third time, when it is written, ***"As for the mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks…"*** there is, after all, only one church, so one lampstand would have sufficed. There are not seven churches; there is only one, namely the church of the living God. But this one church passes through these seven ages within the New Testament period, and that is the great mystery here. Is that right? That is the great mystery here.

I will say it for the fourth time. If it had merely been a matter of seven local churches, what would the great mystery consist of? There would not be one at all, for everything would already have been known. No, here we are very grateful to God, who so wonderfully revealed precisely this Word to our beloved Brother Branham. And I do not know whether it is common knowledge, but Brother Branham did indeed have a blackboard and drew these circles himself, or had his daughter Rebekah draw them, as he once said. She was probably better at it, under his guidance.

In any case, we all know what happened right at the very end on the last evening. The supernatural light, as we see there in the cloud, as we see it in the pillar of fire and cloud in the picture, visibly descended in the presence of the whole congregation, moved towards the platform, and began to trace out every single circle, just as it had been drawn out beforehand. It was a divine, a supernatural confirmation that it was not a man who had invented something here and then set it out, but that the mystery of the seven stars and the seven churches had been bestowed upon him through divine revelation. And we simply rejoice in this, because we believe that God, in this age, indeed specifically in this age in which we are living in the book of Revelation, He is also revealing the things written therein.

There is something else, and indeed something quite different, in Revelation 17, but it is also connected with the term "mystery". In Revelation 17, we read in verse 5 and then again in verse 9. Revelation 17, verse 5:

[5] ***And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.***

But this mother and this harlot was at the same time a woman. And then it says in the next verse:

[6] ***And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with***

great admiration.

Now let us read verse 9. Verse 9:

[9] ***Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.***

I said earlier, even if things have already been revealed by God, they are not understood unless the Holy Spirit reveals them to everyone personally. We can look today at the preachers, at the ranks of the great evangelists, and if we were to ask what is meant here, there would be various answers that would be given. But then we are once again grateful to be able to say that God, through revelation from a called mouth, in accordance with the whole of Holy Scripture, has revealed to us precisely this mystery which the whole world is puzzling over, so that we do not live in darkness, but know by grace what this is all about.

So you see that mysteries can have different natures. They may be directly related to the kingdom of God. They may relate to the revelation of God's will and the church. But they may also relate to the revelation of who it is that now exercises this worldwide power over all the kings of the earth.

Take for example the last verse here in chapter 17, Revelation 17, verse 18:

[18] ***And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.***

And there is really no need for anyone to speculate or guess. Everyone knows the answer once it has been revealed to them through the Word and the Spirit.

And let me read on briefly and quickly. The point is that in these last days we as the Lord's Bride have been called out, that we are being prepared, that we cast aside all teachings which do not agree with God and God's Word so that we may be made completely new.

The promise to which our attention has been drawn, and often enough at that, is found in the prophet Malachi. Namely, in the German Bible we have three chapters, whilst in most editions there are four. Here in Malachi 4, verse 1 it says:

[1] ***For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.***

There will therefore also be some of whom absolutely nothing will remain for all eternity. But that is not our subject here.

Verse 5 reads:

[5] ***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:***

We read in verse 1:

[1] ***Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven...***

And then we are told:

[5] ***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet...***

I really would like to say something today. When I sometimes hear what people call the message, it makes me feel sick to my stomach. When it is said here: ***"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet,"*** what and who was Elijah? What was his task amongst the people of God? Let us please read 1 Kings 18 so that we may understand what the prophetic ministry was to be like now at the end of the time of grace.

1 Kings chapter 18, verse 21. 1 Kings 18, verse 21:

[21] ***And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.***

The prophet Elijah did not come with special teachings. He appeared to lead the people of God back to the Lord. He rebuilt the altar of the Lord. He restored what had previously been destroyed.

In 1 Kings 18, verse 36 we read:

[36] ***And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and prayed.***

He had earlier done what the Lord God had commanded him, and now he directed his prayer to God in heaven, in whose commission and service he stood. He was certain that God had appointed him to this ministry, had entrusted him with a task, and that God Himself would stand by him. He was a co-worker with God. He allowed himself to be used by the Lord, and I say once again, not to present new, fanciful teachings, but to restore the original Word, the worship service, and the entire divine order amongst the newly converted people who had returned to God.

And that is precisely the task which is now to be accomplished through the divine message. And tomorrow I shall bring another sermon in which Brother Branham actually says that it need not be him, but that it will be the message that will accomplish what God has sent the Word to do. And we believe with all our hearts that the Lord will have and bring home a pure Church, one consecrated to Him, restored to the divine standard, to the divine order.

It goes on to say here in 1 Kings 18, in the latter part of verse 36, in the prayer:

[36] ***Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.***

Other translations say here: ***"I have done all this according to Your word"***, for His Word is indeed our command, and His command is indeed His Word. And then verse 37:

[37] ***Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.***

We all know how the story continues. Fire fell from heaven. After such a brief prayer, the Lord God answered. I believe that the hour is coming when God will answer, and immediately afterwards the latter rain will fall.

I shall read to you from the same chapter, 1 Kings 18, verse 41. [Please keep in mind and in your hearts everything that happened. The altar was built, twelve stones, and so on. And then came the answer. God responded with fire and confirmed it supernaturally. Verse 41 reads:

[41] ***And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.***

After that the rain came. The drought came to an end. I believe what Holy Scripture foretells to us, not merely that an Elijah will come and that we will make a great fuss about him. It is not about Elijah at all. It is about the divine purpose of his ministry, namely the return to God amongst all His people, so that He may respond with fire and restore the Church to its original position, that there may be no more limping or lame amongst us, as was the case amongst the people of Israel when the Exodus took place.

Do we realize what this is all about? When I hear people saying, "The prophet, the prophet" or "Branham, Branham", then I cannot go along with that. We must grasp the divine purpose. When God says, ***"I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes"***, namely the day that will burn like an oven, then we know for certain, once the day of grace and salvation has come to an end, this day of God's judgment will dawn. [Mal 4:1, 5] And tomorrow we will hold a Bible study on this subject, the like of which you have never experienced before. The Word of our God is so marvelous. You will see things you have never seen before.

That's what this is all about. It is not about making a fuss over a particular prophet or messenger, or perhaps even about utterances that are put into his mouth or interpreted and phrased differently or taken out of context. It is truly not about any of these things. It is about the whole people of God realizing that we have now reached a turning point in history and in the history of the plan of salvation, and that God has sent a man like Elijah among His people, not so that we may erect a monument to him and bring him flowers from time to time, but so that we may take the divine message that came from the Word, take it into our hearts, be brought back to the Word, so that we may become a Word Bride, enabling God to respond with fire.

And just as Elijah took those twelve stones back then, so too have these twelve stones, the doctrine of the twelve apostles, as it was in the beginning, it has been rebuilt and restored through the end-time message. When it says: ***"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine"*** [Act 2:42], then this applies to us now at the end just as much as it did to the people in the beginning. So the divine purpose of this final, mighty ministry and of the entire message is that we, as the whole Church of the Living God, just as the whole of Israel, should be led back to our God, to the Word, to the clear teachings of Holy Scripture, and not to some speculations, but truly to the Word of the Lord.

I really shocked the people in Lusaka. There were also a number of people who thought the Lord had already come. You know, when a guest speaker comes, people flock in from all directions. And when I then said it with a fair bit of divine authority: "Revelation 10, 1 to 6 has not even begun yet. It has not even been touched upon. It is still awaiting fulfillment."

Huh, and you can well imagine what is going on in the minds of these people who believe that the Lord has already set foot on land and sea and so on. But God then helps in a truly wonderful way, so that the authority does not lie with the speaker, but in the Word that is being proclaimed. We believe in the divine authority of His Holy Word. And so we already possess divine authority, namely the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit.

But just two or three more scriptures and then we'll conclude for today. We see that after the fire fell, after God's answer, after God had turned the hearts of His people back to Himself, the same Elijah was able to say: ***"Get up, I can already hear the sound of the rain."*** [1Kin 18:37-38, 41] At the very moment, and you can take my word for it, at the very moment when God begins to work in a supernatural way, it will be like a chain reaction.

At the very moment, and you can take my word for it, at the very moment when God begins to work in a supernatural way, it will be like a chain reaction right through to the end, and it will not cease until we move from faith to sight and experience the completion. [

As for the rain and the blessing that are also promised to us for the end times, there are corresponding passages in both the Old and New Testament. Joel chapter 2, Joel chapter 2, verse 23:

[23] ***Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain...***

So both, one before the sowing, the other before the harvest. And just as surely as the early rain fell at the beginning of the New Testament church, so surely will the latter rain fall now at the end. And just as surely will the same things then happen at the end as happened at the beginning through the same power of God. And then

we shall exclaim with the greatest joy: ***"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever!"*** [Heb 13:8]

Then the familiar words from Zechariah 10, verse 1, Zechariah 10, verse 1:

[1] ***Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain and of the early rain. So the Lord shall make bright clouds and give them showers of rain.***

It is the Lord. So prayers should be offered at both times, at the time of the early rain and also at the time of the latter rain. And our prayers are not in vain.

The prophet Elijah might also say now: ***"I see a cloud rising from the sea as big as a man's hand."*** [1Kin 18:44] Who knows the story? That is how it began. The whole sky was not immediately covered. The cloud rose up like a man's hand. Perhaps it was the outstretched hand of the Lord that brought the cloud into being.

Then there is Acts chapter 3, the word concerning refreshing, for these things simply belong together: the rain, the blessing, the refreshing that has been promised to us. Acts chapter 3 from verse 19:

[19] ***Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;***

[20] ***And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you;***

[21] ***Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.***

Do you see? We have after all spoken at length about the mysteries of the Word, of the kingdom of God, about the mysteries in Revelation, about the mystery of God, which is Christ, which will be finished, as indicated, namely in the verse we have just read from Revelation 10, verse 7. There it is merely hinted that the mystery of God will then have been finished. In Revelation 11, verse 15, we then see its fulfillment:

[15] ***And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.***

You will notice, although it says "Lord" and "Christ" here, anyone thinking in terms of the plural would then have to read on, "And they shall reign as kings forever and ever." It doesn't say "they". "He" is the Lord. "He" is the Christ. "He" is the Redeemer. These are different terms, each necessary for different purposes.

If, for example, we take the passage to the Corinthians, "***no one can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord except by the Holy Spirit.***" [1Cor 12:3] You see, it must be revealed to a person by God. Only then do we see it, and not otherwise. And as I said earlier, may God grant grace that all the things which have been

revealed through the prophetic Word and through the prophetic ministry by grace, may they be made clear and revealed to each person individually by the same Holy Spirit.

For this is precisely where the great difficulty lies, where brothers have no revelation and are not in the same spirit. They do not understand which has been set forth, but give it their own interpretation. One must be in the same spirit, in the same Word. One must simply, as the saying goes, be on the same wavelength, and then revelation flows to us from the revelation.

Then mystery upon mystery is made known to us, not only all the mysteries of the Word and of the kingdom of God, but also the great mystery of God, which is Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. [Col 2:9] Then we recognize it through revelation and give thanks to our Lord for this, that he came to us so that we might come to him, that he became man so that we might become God's offspring, as it is written.

Let this be addressed, after all, to all those who have not yet experienced conversion or a personal encounter with God. Let it be made known to all that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, forgiving all our transgressions, counting them not against us and fully justifying us. [2Cor 5:19]

I have read that too. Brother Branham says: **"It means as though we had never done it."**

We simply fell into the trap, but we did not belong there at all. That is why we have been brought out of it again. He has pulled us out of the mire, set our feet on higher ground, had mercy on us and accepted us. [Psa 40:2]

Blessed is the person who has had an experience with God. Blessed is the person who has received a connection with him through the Spirit, so as to receive, see and understand the revealed Word and the parables and the mysteries set forth, indeed the entire Word through revelation and to have it transfigured to them. Then we are all taught by God and no one needs to teach anyone else.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery..." Paul said, many mysteries, and by grace we may say, everything that was revealed to him and to the other apostles has also been revealed to us by grace. [1Cor 15:51] Blessed and praised be our Lord. The question here is not whether a great apostle or prophet should come. The question here is whether the great God can have his way and his will with us all. That is the question. For God intends to do even greater things than he has already done. Blessed and praised be his glorious name. Amen.

Let us stand and give thanks to the Lord together.

Faithful Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God of Israel, Creator of heaven and earth, you are our God. You live. You are present. Today, in simplicity, you have shown us what matters. Not the celebration of a great prophet, not discussions

about what is said, but that we as your people have been brought back to you, to your Word, to your ways, to your teaching.

Great God, you have turned our hearts back to you. Our own way has come to an end. Now we walk with you, who are the way, the truth and the life. [Joh 14:6] We know no other truth but you alone, no other life, you alone.

Beloved Lord, today we see with anointed eyes what it is all about. Your altar has been erected. The apostles' doctrine has been proclaimed as the only valid one for the church of the living God.

Beloved Lord, may it now come to pass that the sacrifices may be laid upon the altar, so that fire may then fall and confirmation may come, yes, the rain may pour down upon us all, so that we must cry out: "Hurry, for I can already hear the rain." Beloved Lord, I thank you for the clarity of your Word. You have sent your prophet in the mold of Elijah to turn the hearts of God's children back to that of the fathers, to set everything in order, to restore all things. And Lord, you are still at work bringing this to completion. Take away all resistance from your people. Make us so united in you, O Lord, that we may allow ourselves to be guided by your Spirit in accordance with your precious and holy Word.

Thank you, O Lord, also for the reflection on your Word. This evening, the mystery of the seven stars has also taken on new significance for us. Seven messengers, seven epochs. Beloved Lord, we are living in the final church age, Laodicea. Everything is lukewarm and sluggish. But do not spew us out, beloved Lord, grant us the fire anew. For you are the God who responds with fire. Lord, it is you who baptizes with the Spirit and with fire. Worship and honor to your marvelous and holy name. Hallelujah. Amen.