

In The Days – Revelation 10:7

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Finishing Things*

1. I've discovered that people tend to fall into one of two categories in a lot of things.
 - a. some are morning people while others don't really wake up till after Noon and find the late evening to be their best time.
 - b. some are reserved, others are outgoing.
 - c. some like to plan everything out, while others live by the moment.
2. One area in which people tend to fall into one of two categories is in *finishing things*.
 - a. some people work at *one project at a time*, carrying it all the way to completion before they start another.
 - b. others start a project, stay with it as long as it remains interesting, but then as soon as it gets tedious they drop it.
 - 1) now, in their minds they think, "I'll just set this aside for now, and come back to it late."
 - 2) but what usually happens is they start some *other* project, and then another, and another, and pretty soon they have a half dozen unfinished projects sitting around.
 - c. I'll bet if we were to take a tour of our garages this morning we'd find ample evidence of this –
 - 1) how many of us have workbenches with half completed tasks on them?
 - 2) how many exercise bikes, treadmills, stair steppers, & weight sets?
 - 3) how many of our yards are a work in progress – sort of?
 - 4) how many of our houses have rooms that are only partially completed?
 - 5) how many of us have in-baskets packed with papers that need to be filled out and filed away or sent in?
 - 6) how many books on our shelves have only had a chapter or two read?
 - d. on and on it goes – even those who *like* to complete a task before starting a new one are prone at times to pulling the plug

on something before it's done.

B. God Finishes

1. While it may be human nature to leave things undone – God *always* completes what He begins.
 - a. He never gets tired and gives up.
 - b. what He has begun, He will finish.
2. We see that in our text this morning –

II. TEXT

A. V. 5-7

⁵The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

1. We'll be taking a closer look at these verses on Wednesday; today I want to focus on what John says in v. 7.
2. First, we need a little background –
 - a. John has heard the sounding of 6 of a total 7 trumpets.
 - b. these trumpets are blown by angels who have a special place near the throne of God.
 - c. the first 4 trumpets blow in rapid succession and the Earth reels under the trouble and turmoil that is set loose upon it.
 - d. then there's a slight pause and the pronouncement comes forth that the last 3 trumpets are even *more* harsh.
 - e. chapter 9 tells us of the 5th and 6th trumpets, which are indeed, terrifying judgments.
 - f. then we have a slight pause just before the sounding of the 7th & final trumpet.
3. During this pause, John sees a mighty angel come forth from heaven.

- a. he plants one foot on the land and the other on the sea.
- b. he cries out with a loud voice and utters an oath to God as the Eternal Creator.
- c. the oath the angel makes is that the time for the *consummation of history* has finally come and will be delayed no longer.
- d. look at the last part of v. 6 -

. . . that there should be delay no longer, ⁷but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

4. What the angel was saying is that there comes a point in the Tribulation when the *mystery of God*, meaning His plan for the ages, will no longer remain hidden; it will be *fully revealed*.
 - a. God *Himself*, Who's invisible and Whose eternal plan has remained hidden from the eyes of rebel man, will finally become *crystal clear*.
 - b. all the excuses sinful men and women have used for generations to defend their *rejection* of God will be wiped away.
 - c. God will no longer be a *mystery* – His plan for Planet Earth and the human race will finally be made manifest to all.
5. Up to this point in the Book of Revelation, most people will attribute the terrors that are taking place on Earth to *natural causes*.
 - a. they see them as the forces of nature run amok;
 - 1) there's earthquakes & celestial disturbances
 - 2) plagues and pestilence and such
 - b. some of them might even be understood as scientific experiments, like genetic research, gone haywire
 - c. and most people will attribute the troubles that have descended upon them to these natural causes.
 - d. but the angel says that with the sounding of the 7th trumpet, rebel man will no longer be able to attribute what's happening to just nature run amok.
 - e. everyone will know that what's happening is God moving definitively to reclaim what He created and what belongs to Him.
 - f. the time has come, finally, when history will be wrapped up and the plan of God will be consummated.

6. This plan, while a *mystery* to rebel man, has been revealed to God's servants, the Prophets.
 - a. it's found in the pages of the Old Testament.
 - b. there we discover that the time will come when The Messiah, the Heavenly King, will come to bring an end to evil and rebellion and will establish the righteous Kingdom of God on earth.
 - c. Jesus will be visible to every eye and will rule from His throne in Jerusalem.
7. This angel John sees in Chapter 10 is announcing that what was foretold 3000 years ago is now going to be *rapidly* carried out & brought to completion.
8. Again – look at the last part of v. 6 -

. . . that there should be delay no longer,

 - a. the original Greek is even more clear –
 - b. “there's no more time”
 - c. we could say, “Time has run out!”
 - d. if you've ever done any cooking, you know how important the timer is.
 - 1) you mix up a batch of cookies, put them on the cookie sheet and then slide them into the oven.
 - 2) you set the timer and when it dings, remove them from the oven.
 - 3) when cooking, *timing is everything* – and when the time is up, it's up!
9. What we're reading about here is the point at which the angelic forces of heaven, who have been waiting for their cue for 6000 years, finally hear the ding on the prophetic clock that signals the end of evil and the consummation of God's plan.

B. The Mystery of God is Finished

1. My message this morning is a simple one.
2. Take careful note of what v. 7 says –

7 **but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.**

3. God WILL complete what He began!
4. The Earth and human race are not some project that He began and then when it got a little tough and didn't work out as He had planned, He tossed aside.
5. All things are progressing to the end *He has ordained*.
6. This is the great value of the Book of Revelation and why those who read and study it are promised a special blessing.
 - a. it's here that we see the end.
 - b. here's the climax and conclusion to all of history.
 - c. the last chapter has been written and what we discover is that God wins!
7. As bad as it gets, we can be confident knowing that when all is said and done – it comes out right!
8. Revelation tells us things are going to get downright hairy before it's all over, but all that happens is in fact a part of God's plan to bring it to an end – THE end He's ordained and planned.

C. Going Somewhere

1. Friends, never forget this – God is in Control and history is going somewhere –
 - a. not just *anywhere* – but **SOMEWHERE!**
 - b. time is not just an endless series of 24 hour days.
 - c. each day that dawns and each sun that sets brings us one day closer to the End.
2. Time is not going to just go on forever with the things we read about in Revelation being fulfilled over thousands of years in abstract and symbolic ways.
3. John is absolutely clear in this regard.
 - a. in the very first verse of Revelation he says –

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.

- b. or, more literally – “things which must take place *rapidly!*”
- c. John was saying that these things would occur in a *short period of time* and would come in *quick succession*.
4. God is in control and history is moving it to a grand & glorious climax - **Never forget that.**

- a. when planes fly into buildings – don't forget it.
 - b. when Enron & WorldCom collapse or the DOW drops 700 points – don't forget it.
 - c. when you turn on the news and hear that *another* little girl has been abducted – don't forget it.
5. Things may be bad and the days dark, but this is not the end.
 6. The end is in God's hands – and it is glorious!

D. Applied

1. One of the lessons I've been learning lately is the *importance* of keeping the end in sight.
 - a. I find myself tempted to get all worked up about something I have no control over
 - b. then I'm reminded that God will set all things right when Jesus comes.
 - c. there are so many things I think *could* be doing –
 - d. then I'm reminded to look ahead and consider the end, and I realize the question is not what I *could* be doing, but what I *should* be doing.
2. This last week, my daughter Karesse & I joined a some friends in Yosemite.
 - a. we went on the short hike to Vernal Falls.
 - b. it's only a mile and a half to the Falls from the trailhead, but it goes up a thousand feet.
 - c. the trail is pretty steep in several places and can be quite tiring, specially when the temperature is in the 90's
 - d. going up, it's easy to lose sight of your destination and only look at the steps right in front of you.
 - e. seeing a long set of rough stone stairs stretching ahead can be terribly demotivating.
 - f. so every so often you have to look at the falls and the top where the trail skirts the very edge of where the falls plummet over the side.
 - g. that's the goal, the end of the trail.
 - h. with that vision renewed, it makes the steps before your feet easier to overcome.
 - i. then, once you're standing on top and looking back down, you have a new vantage point that makes sense of everything

- you've done on the hike up.
- 1) now you can see the whole trail, and all the points along it when you stopped and thought about quitting.
 - 2) the trip up was a challenge – but looking back down you realize every step was worth it!
3. Keep the end in sight – Keep your end in sight!
 - a. you are destined to stand before God.
 - b. you are destined to rule and reign with Christ – that is your end!
 - c. and no matter how bad things may get, God is in control and is working all things to that end!
 - d. your marriage is part of God's plan to mold and shape you for the end.
 - e. your job is part of His plan to prepare you for the end.
 - f. the trials you will face today and tomorrow are all like those rough stone stairs that lead up to the top of Vernal Falls.
 - 1) they may be tiring and difficult to negotiate
 - 2) but they are carrying you closer and closer to the end
 - 3) and one day, when you've reached your end, your glorious destination, you'll be able to look back and see the whole trail, the whole path your life has taken, and how God has indeed worked all things together for good!
 4. My message today is a simple one – Keep the end in sight!
 - a. God is in control and is working all things forward to His will and the end He has ordained.
 - b. no matter how bad it gets, don't lose faith in God.
 5. What He has begun, He will complete.
 - a. Hebrews 12: 2 says that He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.
 - b. in Chapter 1 or Revelation, John calls Him the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.
 6. In Psalm 90:12 we read

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

- a. now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.
- b. each day that dawns isn't just another 24 hours to endure, but to use!
- c. to prepare, to get ready for our glorious destiny.

- d. on Saturday, I leave for a 30 mile backpacking trip in the Sierra.
 - 1) that means I have about 5½ days to prepare
 - 2) and there's a lot of preparation!
 - 3) each day is precious because of what I know I need to do to get ready to leave on Saturday
- e. one day, and I believe very soon, we'll be leaving this world.
- f. so we count today precious because we see it as preparation to stand before God.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Read The Book

1. In December of last year, the first of three movies was released – “The Fellowship of the Ring.”
2. It was based on Tolkein's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*.
3. Each year in December they will release the next movie until all three are out.
4. The movies parallel the books pretty closely – which means the first movie ended at a point that is *mid-story*.
 - a. I've talked with several people who never read the books and where not at all happy with the way the movie ended.
 - b. the tale is left hanging with none of the various parts of the story resolved.
 - c. they felt cheated having spent nearly 3 hours watching a movie with no real end.
 - d. what they need to realize is that Tolkein's story is bigger than one movie –
 - e. it takes three to tell the whole tale as it needs to be told.
 - f. but when they've seen the end of the last movie, they, like so many who've read the books, will probably be satisfied.
 - g. some people who never read the books, after seeing the first movie, went ahead and started reading them because they couldn't wait to see how the story ends.
5. Well, here's the book on an even bigger epic than Tolkein's story.
6. May I suggest you read the book – don't wait for the movie!