

DTGministries Prophecy 101

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8

- *What does Paul mean in verse :7 when he writes, "the mystery of iniquity already works"?*

- *What was restraining, or holding back, the man of sin?*

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AUGUSTUS

Take from [pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/Augustus](https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/Augustus)

Having fought his way into power, Augustus used religion as a tool to protect his position and promote his political agenda.

Having gained power by force in a bitterly fought civil war, Augustus was aware that he could easily lose it again. He was prepared to use any tool at his disposal to strengthen his claim to the imperial throne and thereby make it harder for his enemies to overthrow him.

A PIECE OF HEAVEN

An important part of this strategy involved religion. The Emperor of Rome was already the most powerful man on earth, but this wasn't enough. Augustus wanted a piece of heaven too: he was determined that his people would see him as their supreme spiritual leader.

Roman religion had many gods and spirits and Augustus was keen to join their number as a god himself. This was not unusual: turning political leaders into gods was an old tradition around the Mediterranean. There was also precedent in Roman history – Aeneas and Romulus, who had helped found Rome, were already worshipped as gods.

HALLEY'S COMET

Aside from their many gods, Romans were deeply superstitious, so when Augustus was handed a huge piece of luck, he took full advantage of it.

Early in his reign, Halley's Comet passed over Rome. Augustus claimed it was the spirit of [Julius Caesar](#) entering heaven. If Caesar was a god then, as his heir, Augustus was the son of a god and he made sure that everybody knew it.

Now regarded as part-god, Augustus encouraged stories of his frugal habits. He let people know that he lived in a modest house, slept on a low bed and, when he wasn't fasting, ate only very plain food, like coarse bread and cheese. In a letter, he boasted to his stepson, Tiberius, of how he had not eaten all day.

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TRADITIONAL VALUES

Promoting himself as the man who would return Rome's past glory, Augustus claimed that only by restoring the traditional values that had first made Rome great could he hope to make it great again. One writer commented: 'He renewed many traditions which were fading in our age and restored 82 temples of the gods neglecting none that required repair at the time.'

As ruler of Rome, Augustus had to lead by example. He re-established traditional social rules and religious rituals, sacrificing animals to Rome's gods. In 12 AD he made himself Pontifex Maximus, the chief priest of Rome and head of the Collegium Pontificum, the highest priests in the land.

These initiatives were very popular. To many Romans, the reign of Augustus marked the point at which Rome had rediscovered its true calling. They believed that, under his rule and with his dynasty, they had the leadership to get there. At his death, Augustus, the 'son of a god', was himself declared a god. His strategy had worked.