

# ***KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES***

*"Teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God..."*

## ***FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE***

**Book Fourteen**

### **The Alpha and Omega And The Holy City**

**By J. Preston Eby**

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***FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE Book 14***  
***The Alpha and Omega and The Holy City*** by J. Preston Eby

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# Chapter 238

## The Alpha And Omega

“And he said unto me, It is done. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.* I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6).

Think of it! NO more death, NO more tears, NO more sorrow, NO more crying, NO more pain, because the former things, *all of them*, **are passed away!** Thus, He that sitteth upon the throne can exultantly exclaim, **“It is done! I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End!** I initiated all things with a grand purpose in mind for mankind, and I have also completed all things and have realized my wonderful plan for planet earth.” This is a prophecy out of the mouth of the Lord Himself who sees all things from the beginning to the end, and counts those things which are not as though they are **because the outcome is secure.**

Our Lord proclaims the superlative, transcendental, all-encompassing truth in five marvelous words: “I AM Alpha and Omega!” Most believers, whatever their native tongue, are aware that Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the alphabet used by the Greeks. Alpha is the name given to the letter **A**, and Omega is the name for the long **O**, the last letter of the Greek alphabet. For Christ to affirm that He is “A and O” is as though He were to say to English speaking people, “I am A to Z.” The English language has twenty-six letters. All the books ever written, all the libraries of the English speaking world, have contained only these twenty-six letters. These are used to program space research, label medicines, pen beautiful classics, write voluminous law books, and give messages to the delivery man. Every newspaper or magazine ever printed in English has used just the same twenty-six letters. Arranged, juggled, and placed in millions of different configurations, only twenty-six letters are used for the communication of information.

Jesus, as Alpha and Omega, likens Himself to the whole alphabet. “I am A, I am B, I am C, I am D and so on all the way to Z — do you get it? Not only is He the letters, He is all that the letters can convey! As one has written, “Is there any need in the whole realm of our experiences, our topics, and our themes that the alphabet cannot be adapted to meet? Has the alphabet ever failed poet or lover? Has the traveler found it lacking, or has any philosopher, author, statesman, scholar, scientist, or theologian proved it inadequate for literary needs? Potentially the alphabet, with its twenty-six letters, contains all that is necessary for the expression of the utmost wisdom and knowledge. If we wish to describe our feelings, disclose our hopes and dreams, or expound upon any subject of interest, we possess, in the alphabet, the full means to do so. Through the medium of words, thought is expressed, so that, in the letters of the alphabet, we possess the key that unlocks every gateway to learning, every door of knowledge, and every treasury of wisdom.”

The declaration of Jesus that He is Himself Alpha and Omega conveys the thought of infinite and inexhaustible wealth. The letters A to Z constitute a claim by which is set forth the absolute completeness of His character, wisdom, and power. Is this not what Jesus was saying when He declared, “I AM THE TRUTH.” And is this not what Jesus is saying: “I AM THE TOTAL REALITY OF ALL THINGS!” I am every letter, I am unique, I am substance, I am shape, I am image, I am form, I am essence, I am all height and depth and length and breadth of Being, not just

words and letters, but the reality of life and power and value of all things, the WORD OF LIFE!” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1,4).

Alpha and Omega is a revelation! It is all that can be said of the Lord Jesus proclaimed in a way that can be seen and understood. It stands for the *revelation of Jesus Christ!* By *this word* He is revealed! Christ is the alphabet — the Word, all that can be said of God. We’ve seen that in the figure of a Man who walked the shores of Galilee. But we have only touched the shell of that man, the outer image, not the inner intelligence. It’s as though we are holding a book, looking at it, flipping its pages, but we haven’t read it yet. The inner intelligence of the Lord Jesus represents His *omniscient mind*, His *omnipotent power*, and His *divine nature*. Until we have personally *experienced Him* in all that He is we have not discovered Him in the A to Z — that is, we have not read the book which He is! In speaking of the inner intelligence of the Lord Jesus, we are speaking of the greatest reality of Being in the universe! The truth we are entertaining at this point will prove that all our eternal hopes of sonship and the kingdom depend upon one thing and one thing alone: that the mind of Christ, the power of Christ, and the nature of Christ *dwelt in us fully*. This is the Alpha and the Omega — all that can be said of God WRITTEN AND INSCRIBED IN OUR INNER LIFE AS CHRIST IN US.

Here then is the truth of truths: *God is the Word — the Word is God*. Language not only describes what has happened and what is seen — it creates. “And God said, Let there be...and there was.” “In the beginning was *the Word*...all things were *made by Him*; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (Jn. 1:1,3). He is the Sovereign Creator of all things, the Fount out of which are all things. And in Him all things have their purpose. Even as all things are out of Him, so they also are unto Him. From the beginning He made all things with a view to the end: the Alpha is connected to the Omega, the one must inevitably lead to the other. And whatever lies between the Alpha and the Omega is through Him. He controls all things in such a way that His counsel and His purpose are accomplished, His design is fulfilled, His end is reached. And that end is “THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST” that God may be fully seen, known, and experienced! God as the Word creates within us the substance of Himself! The Alpha and Omega speaks into our being the reality of God! When we speak of Alpha and Omega, we speak of Christ as the Word. When we speak of Christ as the Word, we speak of that dimension of Christ by which God reproduces Himself within us. If God by the Christ within you, my beloved, is speaking a word within you, it is a *creative word*! Believe that word, walk in that word, live by that word and you will be changed! You will be filled with all the fullness of God! God will take form in you! He will write Himself in living reality upon the tables of your mind and heart! Your life is the pages of the book, and He is the letters of the alphabet, the *message*, the *revelation* written upon the tables of your inner nature! Christ in us, the Alpha and Omega, is our only *hope of sonship*!

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord...the *first* and the *last*” (Rev. 1:8,11). I have heard it said that when Jesus called Himself “the *first* and the *last*” He was claiming to be both the “*first Adam*” who stood in the garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit, and the “*last Adam*” who came to take away the sin of the world. How could this be, my friends? It is always a fatal mistake for any man, regardless of who he is, to add to the words of God. That mistake will lead him into error and many strange and unscriptural absurdities. When men say what the scriptures do not say they are strumming on harps that have no strings. They make a lot of interesting noise, but there is no *harmony* with the rest of God’s revelation. You see, dear ones,

Jesus did indeed say, “I am the *first* and the *last*.” But He clearly *did not* say, “I am the *first Adam* and the *last Adam*.” When you add the word “Adam” to Christ’s statement you have qualified it and changed its meaning altogether! You could add *any* word to His statement and make it mean anything you please! Jesus proclaims that He is the *first* and the *last* — **period!** This momentous statement reaches *far beyond Adam* — first or last! It reaches from eternity to eternity and encompasses all things. The statement corresponds to the other terms that accompany it — the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the *beginning* and the *ending*. How gloriously do the New Testament writers describe what it means for Christ to be *the first!*

It would be of utmost profit for any of us to diligently study the oft repeated scriptural term “in Christ” or “in Him.” With this thought in mind I would draw your attention to some scripture passages which appear to teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. He is, of course! But that is not the specific truth set forth in these particular verses. The first passage we will consider is found in Colossians 1:15-17. I will quote this first from the King James Bible for this is one of the passages that seems to say that all things were created *by* Jesus Christ. “Who is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn of every creature* (way before the *first Adam*, of course!); for *by Him* were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created *by Him* and for Him. And He is *before all things*, and *by Him* all things consist.”

From this scripture we would be led to believe that the creation was made by the Son; but the word translated “by” here in the first instance is in the Greek *en*, and means “in,” not “by,” and this is the way most of the other translations have rendered it. “For *in Him* were all things created.” If you have other translations, check them, and you will see that this is correct. The Greek preposition *en* clearly defines location or position. In the second instance in this passage where the word “by” is used — “all things were created *by Him* and for Him” — the word translated “by” is a different Greek word, the word *dia* meaning “through,” “on account of,” or “by the agency of.” You will find nearly all translations have translated it using the simple term “through.” Weymouth’s rendering of this is lovely, “For *in Him* were created the universe of things in heaven and in earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers, all were created and exist *through Him* and for Him. And He is before all things (the *first*), and *in* and *through Him* the universe is one harmonious whole.” Isn’t that beautiful!

You see, there is a whole world of difference between something being created *by Him*, or created *in Him*, and my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will make this real to you. I think, as we proceed with this thought, we will clearly see what the Spirit has said. It is unfortunate that the translators were so inconsistent in some of the translations. In this statement, “For *by Him* were all things created that are *in* heaven,” the word “by,” and the word “in,” are both translated from the same Greek word *en*, yet in the first instance it was translated “by,” and in the second instance it was translated “in,” as it should be. This is misleading to the reader!

I am not a carpenter by any stretch of the imagination, but when we were on the mission field in Mexico back in the 1960’s, I built most of the furniture we had in our house, crude though it was. From rough lumber I constructed kitchen cabinets, tables, chairs, beds, and a variety of other items. Even I was amazed at how serviceable and attractive some of these articles turned out to be! They were made by me, but when I left the place where they were, they were all sold and left behind, and I was separated from them, never to see them again; for, you see, they were *not part of me*. Though they were made *by me*, they had no part with me. But if somehow they had been made *in me*, rather

than merely *by* me, then wherever I went they would be with me, for they would be a part of me, of my very own being. And if by some tragedy they would be severed from me as an arm or a leg might be, I would have moved heaven and earth to find a surgeon who could restore them back into me. If the creation had been merely made *by* the Son, then it could be a thing apart from Him, and not a part of Him. When we truly see that God the Father created the universe and all things IN THE CHRIST, and the whole of created things was in the beginning an integral part of His Being, then that is an altogether different picture!

Words are totally inadequate to articulate a truth so sublime, so I must leave this ultimately to the blessed spirit of Truth to unfold within your spirit. You see, when God planned the present universe, He planned it in and around His Christ. The Christ is the center and the circumference of all! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The whole vast creation was made *in* Him and *for* Him. Before the sun ever kissed this earth creation began *in Him* and therefore it will also end *in Him*, for HE is the beginning and the end of it. The Christ is the beginning of the creation of God! “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD” (Rev. 3:14). Do you see how this theme is stated again and again in different terms throughout the book of Revelation? Christ is the beginning of creation and He is also the end, all things must begin in Him and end in Him, regardless of what happens in between those two points, for this is the Father’s purpose for His Son! Aren’t you glad!

Our God and Father has been pleased to leave us in no doubt or uncertainty as to how or where all things began, but in clear, unequivocal language stated the source and goal of all things for our assurance and joy. All originated *in Him*, created from the substance of His own divine energy and Being, and held together in a harmonious wholeness *in* His eternal Word, or the Christ. But, for His own wise purposes, all did not remain that way! We have already explained the Greek preposition *en* which means “in” and denotes a position of rest, an established location. According to the scriptures ALL was created IN the Christ! The scriptures are also clear, however, that all did not *remain* “in” Him. We are assured that there was initiated another stage of activity whereby all things were brought “out” of Him. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that “in” and “out” are *opposites*! You cannot be both in and out of any place or thing at the same time! This principle has determined the outcome of many a court case because the defendant contended that he was “in” a particular place at a specified time, but valid witnesses placed him “out” of that place at that time! Coming “out” from a place or position involves a process, an action.

There is another Greek preposition, *ek*, meaning “out of.” It indicates action. If you *come out of* your house — that involves action! The word of God declares that not only were all things created *in* God and His Christ, but there was a process by which all things *came out of* God and His Christ. Let us read it: “We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is *no other God except One*. For even if it so be that there are those things called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless to us *there is but one God, the Father, O-U-T OF (ek) WHOM ALL IS...* (I Cor. 8:4-7). Again, “O, the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or became His adviser? or who gives to Him first, and will be repaid by Him? Seeing that ALL IS O-U-T O-F (*ek*) HIM and through Him and for Him: to Him be glory for the ages! Amen!” (Rom. 11:33-36). Now let us read these last verses from the Emphatic Diaglott: “For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who first gave to Him, and it shall be given to him again? For OUT OF HIM, and through Him, and for Him are ALL THINGS. To Him be glory for the ages. Amen.”

This is without doubt one of the least understood statements in the word of God! And yet, a true comprehension of the real purpose of God throughout the ages cannot be had apart from it. Considering the creation of the heavens and the earth — the universe and all that is therein, visible and invisible — fresh from the hands of the Creator in all its primeval and pristine glory, God being all-wise and omnipotent, the question presses itself upon us: From whence came sin and evil? From whence came darkness and death? Why did God permit these to enter the creation which had been made *in Him*? How did it happen? Why the disruption of the primeval state?

The answer to these monumental questions is to be discovered in the great fact of the creation being “brought out” of God! When God lowered the creation from the realm of pure spirit existence in Christ in the heavenly sphere, to this gross material realm of matter and form, there occurred a mighty disruption, breaking up, or fragmentation. The creation was “made subject to vanity” and the whole downward process of disintegration and dissolution was begun. Just as our ascent back into the image and fullness of God is ever “from glory to glory,” “from faith to faith,” and “from experience to experience,” so the process downward into fragmentation and dissolution continued through various stages and vast ages of time until the lowest depths of frustration were reached.

The first downward step came when creation was lowered from the realm of pure spirit existence in Christ to this physical and material realm. Not only did man begin *in the spirit*, later to be lowered into this material realm *after* God “formed man of the dust of the ground” and then “breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives” (the male and female lives (spirits) that had been brought forth in Genesis 1:26-27), but *all things began in spirit* and were subsequently lowered into this physical world. The magnificent wonders portrayed in Genesis reveal this truth with divine certainty. We read there of “every plant of the field *before it was in the earth*, and every herb of the field *before it grew*: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a (physical) man to till the ground...and the Lord God *formed man of the dust of the ground*, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath (spirit) of lives*; and man *became* a living soul” (Gen. 2:5-7). Behold how great an understanding divine inspiration has placed upon all who have ears to hear! These words teach us infallibly that there were plants and herbs *before* they were in the earth or ever grew in soil; and there was a *spirit man* who was *blown into* the clay model of the man Adam by the very breath of God. The union of this spirit man with the clay model *produced Adam the living soul*! That was the first step downward, even in the glories of Eden! And then the Tempter came, man’s experiment with sin followed, and death seized man with its unrelenting power. Step by step, stage by stage, the whole creation *came out* of Christ!

How obvious today the vast difference between those who are either “in” or “out” of Christ! “If any man be *in Christ* he is a new creation.” “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*.” “*In whom* we have obtained an inheritance.” Of our state *before* we were *in Christ*, it is stated, “At that time ye were *without Christ*, being *aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel, *strangers* from the covenants of promise, having *no hope*, and *without God* in the world” (Eph. 2:12). *Outside* of Christ is naught but ignorance, sin, sorrow, darkness, and death! *In* or *out* — what a great gulf separates these two! The very process of creation’s coming *out* of God produced a disruption and fragmentation of the whole. “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE LORD.” That statement doesn’t mean that Yahweh is the only God, true as that is. In the Hebrew language it signifies that He IS ONE — that is, UNITED, UNIFIED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. All within Himself is harmonized, synchronized and joined in perfect unity. That is God’s nature! Therefore, *in Him*, creation was one harmonious whole without a discordant note anywhere! It was preeminently a *spiritual* creation, vibrating as a symphony of unutterable beauty, a triumphant masterpiece of



dynamic harmonious accord. In the glory of that celestial beginning we were all *sons of God*, there was no trace of sin, no evil, no strife, no carnal mind, no adversary, no death, and no darkness or discord at all. Everything everywhere existed *in Christ* and every spirit stood forth in its full majesty, pulsating the dynamic anthem of exulting creative glory. What a song!

And that is how it is in the **new creation!** For you see, beloved, the new creation is but the old creation re-conciled, re-deemed, re-generated, re-stored to its original place, condition, and state **IN CHRIST!** The new spiritual creation is all that is “in Christ Jesus” in the fullness of what that means. We are *unified again* in Him. Not only are we unified with one another, but each of us is unified within ourself — there is PEACE. The new creation has already begun! Step by step, just as we *came out* of God, we are now *coming back into* God. When the scripture says, “If any man be *in Christ* he is a new creation: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new,” this is speaking of that little firstfruits company that is the first to enter experientially into the new. These become *fully* a new creation *in Christ*. In the life of the one who has truly entered into Christ, and been unified again in Him, all the old has passed away and everything has become new! Now I know this scripture is applied to all believers of whatever stage of spiritual growth and development in Christ, but if we consider this reverently and carefully, we can easily see that this is not the experience of the average believer. When we first believe on the Lord a new beginning takes place. A change has started. Some of the old has passed away, and some new things have taken their place; but how many believers can honestly say that ALL old things have passed away, and EVERYTHING in their lives and experience has been made new? Our restoration is a progressive work! It begins when we first turn to the Lord, and continues until we are completely restored *into Christ!*

The proto-type of this wonderful reality of restoration into Christ is our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what the book of Revelation is all about — it is **the revelation of Jesus Christ!** When Jesus says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last,” — what a revelation that is! Jesus often spoke of His Father being in Him. He said, “It is not I that do the works, it is my Father that is in me.” The Father dwelt in the Son and worked through His Son to accomplish His will. But this isn’t all! He also explained to His disciples this great truth, “Believest thou not that *I am in the Father*, and the Father *in me*?” It wasn’t just that the Father was in Him, but He was also in the Father. The glory of Creation when it was created *in God* is thus revealed in our Lord Jesus the Christ! When Jesus was praying to the Father for those God had given Him, that they might be one, that they might come into this glorious unity, He prayed thus, “That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be *one in us*” (Jn. 17:21). It is such a *union of life* that we think as one, walk as one, and act as one. That’s what Jesus did! One could never tell whether it was Jesus speaking, walking, or acting — or whether it was His Father. Only this mutual “dwelling” can bring the oneness, the unity, the *wholeness* that we originally knew *in Him!*

The only way all old things can completely and forever pass away is through our entrance back into God! John 3:16 is called by many “the golden text” of the Bible. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” There is a marvelous significance in those words that surpasses any sermon I ever heard in my years in the church systems. “...that whosoever believeth *in Him*...” The word “in” here is translated from the Greek preposition *eis*, which means “into,” denoting action and progression. Using the word “into” it reads like this with a literal translation, “...that everyone believing *into Him* should not perish, but have the life of the ages.” *Eis* carries with it a sense of growth, and of going on into something. It suggests a progressive salvation, as other scriptures tell

us. “Now is our (full) salvation nearer than when we believed.” We didn’t *come out* of God in one grand leap, and we are not returning *into* God in one grand leap. We were not delivered from all sin and death, nor did we receive the fullness of His divine life, by “believing *on*” the Lord Jesus Christ one night in a revival meeting. Oh, no! But we are being progressively delivered, changed, and transformed as we constantly believe more and more *into Him!*

It is this same Greek word *eis* that is used in many, many wonderful passages where the true meaning has been concealed by faulty translation. I will quote just one passage for you and capitalize the places where the word *eis* has been used, and will use the word “into” in place of whatever word the King James Bible uses. I think you will see the beauty of this, and perceive its special, deeper meaning. “Till we all come INTO the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, INTO a perfect man, INTO the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...speaking the truth in love may grow up INTO Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ...from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body INTO the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:9-15). In these verses we are told of the body of Christ and how the body grows and is built up by the ministry of every part. We are exhorted to minister in love, so that the body can grow INTO CHRIST. We are to grow up INTO the full stature of God’s Christ!

Paul Mueller has written a precious exhortation. “As we have grown and progressed in the kingdom of God, our understanding of Christ and of the Father also has increased, for we now see ourselves as being a part of Him. We are the body of Christ, and He is the Head of this body. Christ has said, ‘*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*’ Christ is the Spirit of God; He is the beginning of all things. He is the Word that was spoken by the Father that brought all things into existence. And He also is the end of all things! All things shall ultimately be gathered into Christ, to be unified with the Father that ‘*God may be all in all*’ (I Cor. 15:28). By the wisdom of the mind of Christ we now see that we are a part of Him who is the ‘Alpha,’ or the beginning of all things, for we were originally in Him in spirit. So also are we a part of Him who is revealed and seen now as the ‘Omega,’ or as the end of all things. We came out of God in our beginning! And now we are returning into God, but with a redeemed mind (soul) and body. We also are becoming a part of the glory of Christ!”

Our Lord called Himself the Alpha and the Omega in Greek, the Aleph and the Tau in Hebrew, or the A and the Z in English, or its equivalent in any other language, without in the least altering the figure of its significance. Alphabetical languages usually have the letters arranged in a fixed order. The first is often used as a symbol of the beginning of anything and the last for its ending. That is, our Lord claims to be what letters and language were meant to be, namely, the *expression of truth*. HE IS T-H-E W-O-R-D — the expression of the totality of God’s nature, wisdom, power, purpose, and substance from first to last. God is a spirit — an invisible, incorporeal, intangible, unapproachable Spirit. But that hidden and unsearchable One may be uttered, expressed, and manifested in such a way that He may be communicated to man. And that utterance, that expression, that manifestation of invisible Godhead is the Christ, the Logos, the Word — God projected from the plane of the invisible, intangible, and unknowable, and filtered through into the realm of the visible, tangible, and knowable. In that long ago beginning all things were created *in the Christ*, and *apart* from Him, *outside* of Him was not anything made that was made. In Christ Jesus we see clearly our very own origin in God! In Christ Jesus we see perfectly the *original state* of all things! In Christ Jesus we see precisely what kind of a man Adam was before he was lowered into this gross material realm and subsequently into the vanity of sin and death. Oh, my Christ and

my God! In Thee I see how I, and all men, and all things *once were!* I see the *Alpha!* My God and my Christ! In Thee I see how I, and all men, and all things *shall again be!* I see the *Omega!* My Lord, that is the Word that Thou art to me! In God's revelation of Himself and His plan of the ages He has used many characters, but the first one was Christ and the last one will be Christ again. All commences and concludes *in Him!*

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He was the *first*, "before all things." Can I also believe that HE IS THE LAST? If He is *the beginning*, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also THE END? Let us look at some things that happened in our experience in that long-ago *beginning*. Surely Ephesians, chapter one, makes this as clear as it can be at this juncture in our understanding. Paul says that "God...chose us *in Christ before the world began.*" And in another place, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, *promised (us) before the world began*" (Tit. 1:2). And then, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but *according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*" (II Tim. 1:9). Obviously, then, our *beginning* was not in the garden of Eden, nor at Calvary, nor when we were born into this world, nor even when we received our salvation experience! All of these things were experienced by us "in Christ" BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN! Oh, the mystery of it! Paul goes on from that beginning out of eternity to reach forth to that which will be at the conclusion of all ages of time, declaring that God is "making known to us the mystery of His will — of His plan, of His purpose. And it is this: In accordance with His good pleasure which He hath **previously purposed** and set forth **in Him**, He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to **unify all things and head them up and CONSUMMATE THEM I-N C-H-R-I-S-T...***in Him* also we had been **foreordained** in accordance with His purpose" (Eph. 1:4,9-11).

If you can conceive of God taking Eve and putting her *back into Adam*, as she was in Eden, then you may also understand what is this glorious purpose that transcends Adam and Eve — when God takes the whole vast creation and **MAKES IT ONE IN CHRIST AGAIN!** This oneness denotes "harmony," not a loss of identity. Eastern religion teaches that the goal of life is to *lose your personal identity* in the ocean of divine being. Now there's an irony! True religion is supposed to point the way home to God. But some believe that getting "lost" is the aim of spirituality: forget that you exist, that creation exists; just shed these illusions and dissolve yourself in the divine ocean like a grain of salt. But let me ask you, my friend: If all "things" were created "in Him," is there not *identity*? And if God *saw* us, *chose* us, *predestinated* us, and both *promised* and *gave* us things before the world began — did we not possess *identity*? Just as the body is made of many members, and all the members of that body, *being many*, are *one body* — **SO ALSO IS CHRIST!** All of mankind's yearnings and searching after God to fully **know Him** shall find their complete and eternal satisfaction there where all things are *brought back into Christ*.

The First and the Last bring before us both the time element and the substance of creation. "For *out of Him* everything comes; *through Him* everything exists; and *in Him* everything ends! Glory to Him forever!" (Rom. 11:36, Goodspeed). "For *out of Him* and *through Him* and *to Him* are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to *end in Him*. To Him be glory forever!" (Amplified Bible). Truly HE is the beginning and the end of all things! The beginning, precious friend of mine, was not a date on the calendar. The beginning was and is a glorious Person — our Lord Jesus Christ! Christ Himself *is* the beginning! If you consider with reverent honesty these

words of significance and truth, you will understand as never before the spiritual words which open our Bible: "*In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth." ***IN THE BEGINNING!*** "I am the beginning." Can you not see the mystery? Thus, the spiritual translation of the first verse of scripture should read, "IN THE CHRIST God created the heavens and the earth." The beginning is neither time nor place. The beginning is Christ Himself! Men can argue about how old the universe is and when man appeared on earth. It is all irrelevant. In HIM all things were created and set in order in the beauty and unity and perfection and harmony of the Spirit of God!

What has now been provided in Christ is a re-turn, a re-storation, a re-newing, a re-demption, a re-conciliation, a re-surrection, a re-stitution. The prefix "re" means BACK, AGAIN, ANEW — and all the words with this prefix indicate something that LEFT ITS PLACE AND STATE, AND HAS NOW MADE ITS CIRCUIT AND COME BACK TO THE POINT OF ITS BEGINNING. Oh, mighty Christ!

## Chapter 239

### The Inheritance Of The Sons Of God

“And he that *overcometh* shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be *my son*” (Rev. 21:7).

Two young men were enjoying a hearty meal together. One boy was the son of a wealthy rancher; the other was a very likable and reliable hired hand. Both men worked together. Their dress was similar and they frequented the same recreation spots, played on the same local team, and even attended the same place of worship. In many respects there was very little difference between them. However, one morning all this similarity vanished instantly when the solemn faced ranch foreman came to the rancher’s son bearing the news, “Sam, your father died in his sleep last night. I found him just a while ago. You are in charge now, you are the sole heir to his estate.” Immediately a vast chasm of difference separates these two young men. The heir becomes the owner and proprietor while the hired man remains the same as before. The son inherits the provisions of the Will in which the hired man has no claim. *Heirship* is what made the difference! And his *heirship* was rooted in his *sonship*!

Sonship to God is glorious beyond anything our eyes have seen or ears have heard. Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son of God. He is what *sonship is*! And now all His brothers are empowered to follow Him to maturity and into the power of His resurrection. All will follow His steps, becoming what He is. The spiritual life of every son has the same origin as the firstborn, for all are born of God. We are being perfected by the same process, and will ultimately achieve the same result. Jesus Christ was and is the personification of the Father, and so shall we be. The holy and divine nature of Jesus Christ is ours to be raised up within us. The works He did we shall do as well. The authority of Jesus Christ, the power of His throne, even the dominion over the ages and all things, He will share with those who grow up into Him in all things, coming to the measure of the stature of *His fullness* (Eph. 4:13; Heb. 2:5-11). Jesus possesses the totality of God’s essence and substance, and this is the heritage of every manifest son of God. The present resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus Christ is the portrait of our very own destiny! Oh, the wonder of it!

The ministry all creation is waiting for, longing for, groaning and travailing for, is the ministry of *sonship* (Rom. 8:19-23). Only Jesus has demonstrated what it is! The ministry of Jesus was not in the gift realm of Pentecost, it was not a “firstfruits of the Spirit,” it was not “in part,” nor was it “by measure,” but His ministry was the ministry of a MANIFEST SON OF GOD in all the nature, power, authority, wisdom, and glory of the Father! Some tell us that the ministry Jesus demonstrated on earth is *not what manifest sonship is*. If sonship ministry is not what Jesus Christ, the *Son of the living God*, revealed on earth, including His resurrection, then pray tell me, what is it? I never thought I would see what I see today, brethren who received the revelation of manifest sonship now “watering it down” to something far less than what Jesus has shown us, in order to make the message more “palatable” and more easily “attainable” by brethren who have never been sovereignly called to it by God. Let me tell you — the great secret of the ministry of Jesus was that it was not in limitation but in fullness. Jesus Himself said that the Father did not give Him the Spirit *by measure*. He also said that the works the Father did through Him were the proof and evidence of

His sonship! And yet Paul tells the saints that *we* have at this present time received the Spirit *by measure*, that is, the *firstfruits of the Spirit*, and that we now groan within ourselves for our placement as full grown manifest sons of God by which we will receive the Spirit *without measure* as well as the redemption of our body (resurrection). Jesus did not receive a “gift” in the church realm, but He was the incarnation, the embodiment, the personification of the FULLNESS OF THE FATHER! That is the realm of *sonship*. Thus Paul tells us plainly, “Now I say, That the *heir*, as long as he is a *child*, differeth nothing from a *servant*, though he be *lord of all*; but is under tutors and governors *until the time appointed of the Father*” (Gal. 4:1-2). Even though everyone is dear to God, and all will eventually live willingly under His sovereignty, the inheritance of *all things* is for none but the *mature sons* — *the overcomers*. Everyone will enjoy the blessings and benefits of this great kingdom of God, but professions, confessions, beliefs, doctrines, church attendance, good works, or any other religious activity does not make a *mature son*, an *heir*. In God’s economy the heirs are not irresponsible little children who wouldn’t know what to do with the inheritance, or how to handle it should they receive it, but mature ones in the full stature of Christ. Even the noblest ministries of the church age are still merely “in part” ministries (I Cor. 13:9-11). And that is why creation is not groaning for another gift-ministry, another apostle, another prophet, another bishop, another evangelist, another pastor, another teacher, another healing crusade, or another revival!

Creation is in pain and travail waiting for the *manifestation of the sons of God*! Oh, yes! Only the sons of God will possess within themselves the fullness of the **power of the kingdom of God** as did Jesus! They will have all that He had as He ministered to the multitudes *plus* the **power of His resurrection**! Only the sons of God, in the power of Christ’s resurrection, can deliver creation from *the bondage of corruption*. Jesus is not the firstborn among many Christians, or among many evangelists, or many teachers, or even many apostles and prophets. Oh, no! He is the firstborn among MANY BRETHREN! The brethren are *like Him*. They are completely *like Him*! That is what *makes* them brethren, and that is what makes them *sons*. They are not His brethren in the stable in Bethlehem, nor in the temple at twelve years of age, nor in the carpenter shop of Nazareth. They are His brethren in His maturity, in His total victory over the adversary, in His purity and sinlessness, in His consciousness of the indwelling Father, in His sensitivity to the voice of the Father, and in His yieldedness to allow the Father to speak and move and work mightily through Him! Oh, that all God’s elect would realize that God is not bringing many gifted and talented Christians to glory, He is not bringing many musicians to glory, He is not bringing many deacons to glory, He is not bringing many Sunday School teachers to glory, He is not bringing many apostles and prophets to glory, but He *is* bringing many **SONS** to glory! (Heb. 2:10). Aren’t you glad!

The sons of God are destined to inherit all things; they are selected by the Father to become the dispensers of the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God to all created realms. Thus creation groans in sympathetic birth pangs, longing for their arrival! From powerful angels in heaven, to worlds in the farthest galaxy, the universe resonates with anticipation of the glorious unveiling of the sons of God. The sons will share the fullness of the glory of their Father. They will grow up into the attributes of God as a permanent state of being. The sons of God will partake of Godlikeness, and a spiritual inheritance that is incomprehensible to natural men, even religious men, saved men, and Spirit-baptized men! This celestial race of beings shall be endowed with all the authority and capacity of God. Immortal omnipotence will flow from them as the light rays from the sun. In the heaven blest days before us, those who have attained to sonship will be displayed in the blazing glory of immortality. This climatic finale is a fast approaching certainty.

From the difficulties, struggles, testings, and processings of this present time the son company will burst into everlasting splendor, streaming glory, wisdom, and power as a shower of stars. With Jesus as the Captain, this reigning government of God shall invade the bastions of darkness and by war, yea, by *spiritual warfare* shall they take the rule from the kings of the earth. They will not “glean” the little truth out of all the vaunted religions of the world, for their swords will be the sword of the Spirit, which is the living Word of God, and when their warfare is accomplished all the false religions of earth will have been cast down, destroyed, demolished, and obliterated from the face of the earth. There will be no more Islam, no more Moslem extremists, no more Hinduism, no more Buddhism, no more Confucianism, no more Shinto, no more Roman Catholicism, no more Protestantism, no more Judaism — all these and hundreds more will have vanished from the earth in the blazing glory of God’s truth and power through His manifest sons. These are celestial kings and priests, the army of God, trained and tested in conquest. They are invincible in the nature and power of the Father. Nothing shall confound them; no one will be able to kill them; all will succumb to their sway. This company of sons will establish the final world government — the new order of the kingdom of Christ — it will never be overthrown! They will subdue every enemy, deliver every soul, transform every life, renew every mind, and be the fountainhead of every blessing! They are the solution that God has ordained for the travail of earth’s teeming billions. This is the destiny of God’s Christ, Head *and* body!

God has put His hand to the task; He is ready to grasp the *whole world* and, through the sonship ministry, switch it on to another track, changing its course and destination. I tell you, dear ones, as sons of God we are laborers together with God in inaugurating the **next stage** of the kingdom which shall impact every living nation of earth. We are now called to “come up hither” to His *throne*! We shall work and work, minister and minister, deliver and deliver, heal and heal, reign and reconcile and bless and transform all nations and all men and all realms and all worlds and all ages until we accomplish **the end**. “Then cometh **the end**, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Cor. 15:24-26). If it takes a week, a month, a year, a decade, a century, a millennium, or a billion years or a trillion years, it matters not one whit — the kingdom of God shall increase and expand and triumph until that blessed day when from pole to pole and from sea to sea and throughout all the vastnesses of infinity everywhere God shall be ALL IN ALL!

Let the mountains reverberate with the sound of the message, let the hills shout aloud for joy, and all the trees of the forest clap their hands! For we now stand on the threshold of a new dimension of the kingdom of God, and we must be prepared to receive HIM in fullness. As we earnestly look for His appearing, we are to receive ALL THAT HE IS, for when He appears in His glory in His manifest sons, all the traditions of yesterday will be swept away and the realms of limitation swallowed up in His surpassing glory. I cannot overemphasize this great and important truth: When Christ appears in the fullness of Himself in His many brethren, we must be prepared to receive Him on a higher plane than we have known Him hitherto. We cannot tell Him what portion of Him we will receive and what portion we will not receive. WE WILL RECEIVE AND MANIFEST HIM IN FULLNESS, and without any reservations or preconceived ideas, or we will not receive Him at all. Either we will walk in the power and glory of His sonship, or we will miss the glory. We will not bring into that new order of life and power the old ways and traditions of the church systems of man, nor the deceitful and greedy ways of the religious hucksters sometimes called “healing evangelists.” Should we cling to the ministries and methods of the past, we will not be manifest

sons. Vast multitudes of Christians will not stand in this new glory because of their tradition — but their time of visitation will come later. But for those who are willing to pay the price, to be thoroughly purged of all that is of the flesh, and disposed to turn loose of the past religious traditions, the old forms and ceremonies, the former means and methods, the pulpit theatrics, the carnal fund-raising promotionalism, the stagnant remains of yesterday's visitations, there awaits great glory and heavenly wealth, and a world-shaking ministry beyond the comprehension of mortal mind. It is indeed wonderful!

It is not my wish to press the truth of the inheritance of God's sons beyond reason, yet because of our limited understanding on the matter, we must pursue it a little further. There are a number of scriptures which express the truth that the sons of God are the inheritors of "all things." Our present text says the same in the King James Bible, however that is not exactly how it is stated in the Greek text. The Greek text reads, "He who overcomes shall inherit *these* things..." The question follows — What are "these things" which we inherit? It's the very things that are listed in the previous verses, the very things John describes for us in his vision! They are — a new heaven, a new earth, no more sea, the holy city — New Jerusalem bride, the tabernacle of God with men, no more tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, all things new, all that is included in the Alpha and Omega, and the fountain of the water of life. Now, since "all things *new*" includes "all things," it is still true that the sons of God INHERIT ALL THINGS! And it's not saying that the sons will just be a part of all this, or blessed to enjoy its wonders, but that all is their "inheritance," that is, they are the OWNERS AND LORDS OF IT ALL! Why is this important to us? What does it mean to inherit "all things"? One of the questions I ask myself is just this: When I get "all things" what will I do with them? You might be asking the question, What has this got to do with me today, NOW? Will knowing this help either you or me in our daily lives? You had better believe it will — ***if we truly HEAR IT IN THE SPIRIT AND BY THE SPIRIT!***

More than fifty years ago, standing in the darkness of a jungle in South America, many miles from the nearest road or town, and further yet from anything that could be called a city, it seemed that every star and galaxy in the heavens adorned the night with its scintillating brilliance of diamonds. Looking up I could see the immensity of God. On some dark night take a look at the heavens, consider this infinite universe, contemplate the immensity, the complexity, the majesty of it, examine the balance of it, reflect upon the order of it, give attention to the symmetry of it, observe the way everything works by divine law and purpose — in the light of all this consider the deep probings of the Psalmist when he asks, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou has ordained: what *is* man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visiteth him?" (Ps. 8:3-4). Yes, indeed, what IS man, that God cares for him and visits him — do you want to see it? Continuing this divine assessment of man the inspired Psalmist says, "Thou crownest him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:5) He's showing how mindful God is of man, the greatness of His purpose for man. "Thou didst ***set him over*** the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8:6). Do you want to see how great man is in the universal scheme of things? Consider just what are the "works of God's hands" over which man, crowned with glory and honor, is set: "When I consider Thy *heavens*, the work of Thy fingers, the *moon* and the *stars*, which Thou has ordained: ***what is man...***"

"Thou has put all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:6). Now "his feet" in this case is not Jesus, *his feet* are the feet of MAN. It's not talking about Jesus, though it is ultimately fulfilled in and through Jesus, but it's talking about MAN. Quoting this very passage and speaking again of *man*, not Jesus, the writer to the Hebrews says, "Thou hast put *all things* in subjection under his feet. For



in that He put *all* in subjection under him, He left *nothing* that is *not put under him!*” (Heb. 2:8). How broad and all-inclusive that statement is! Can we not see by this that man was created to be king of the universe! Man was designed by God to rule and reign over all things everywhere! Man was destined to have dominion both on earth and throughout the heavens above! Man was to have authority in all realms! Man was appointed to be sovereign — not merely over the earth, but over all the unbounded heavens! Did you know that? Did your preacher ever tell you that? From the very beginning it was the divine intent that man should be lord of all with all created things under submission to him, that man would explore, conquer, control, harness, utilize, bless, rule, and direct all the earth, the elements, the heavens, and all worlds and realms, visible and invisible, and all creatures, visible and invisible — the whole creation of God!

But there is a problem. Although man is destined for universal rule and dominion, the apostle continues: “But now we *see not yet* all things put under him” (Heb. 2:8). Does any wish to debate that? Take a look at the world in which we live! Man was made to reign over the earth, but man broke his covenant with God. When man sinned he brought ruin to the earth, the ruin of sin, strife, the curse, and death. Before sin man’s hair was not turning gray, his teeth were not decaying, his heart was not giving out, his skin was not wrinkled, his bones were not brittle or his body weak and stooped. There was no cancer, no stroke, no disease of any kind. There was no famine. There were no weeds. There was no rust. There were no floods, no plagues. There were no storms — no frightening hurricanes, no devastating tornados. There was no hatred, no greed, no lust, no cheating, no lying, no deceit, no murders, no crime, no wars. God created man in His own image, He placed him in a perfect environment, and he told man that he was to rule and have dominion, and that *all things were in subjection under his feet*. But man violated his union with God. Every broken body, every disturbed mind, every lack and weakness and sorrow of the human race throughout the ages can be traced to man’s violation of his contract with God. Therefore, we see *not yet* all things put under man! Look at the terrors of our world and it is plain to see that *not yet* has even the *earth* been subjected to man, much less the celestial realms above!

But — the apostle continues, “WE SEE JESUS!” (Heb. 2:9). It is interesting to note, there are two prominent words used in Greek for “see” — *horao* and *blepo* — and the writer uses both in one sentence. He says, “We *see* not yet all things put under man,” that is, take an in-depth, studied, wide-angled look, examine carefully — we see not yet all things put under man. That is *horao* — in-depth scrutiny. “But we *see* Jesus” — it’s a fleeting glance, one look is enough to settle the issue — that is *blepo*. Ah, we see not yet all things put under man, but we see Jesus “made for a little while even lower than the angels for the suffering of death, NOW CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR...” (Heb. 2:9). Jesus was lowered for a season that He by the grace of God might “taste death for *every man*,” that through His redemption He might restore all men to the righteousness, joy, peace, wisdom, authority, power, and dominion that was theirs in the beginning.

The world is filled with hopelessness today only because men do not **see Jesus!** All is despair and futility and lack if we don’t **see Jesus!** He is the great Captain of our salvation and the Firstborn among many brethren. He is the Firstborn from the dead, and the first manifest son of God who “inherits all things.” He is the proto-type of God’s ordained destiny for all men who become the sons of God! Oh yes, we who have been quickened by His Spirit, infused with His life, and imbued with His mind — we SEE JESUS! We see Him overcoming sin, self, the curse, and death. We see Him risen, ascended, crowned with glory and honor, exalted to the throne of the Majesty of high, heir of all things, with all power in heaven and in earth, having obtained a name above every name, Lord of all, King of the universe, higher than angels and principalities and powers, the image and

likeness and dominion of the Father over all things **restored in man**. That is what we see! We *see* Jesus and in Him we see our very own sonship, calling, destiny, and inheritance!

The Bible clearly teaches that God's sons shall inherit *all things*. The whole universe shall be theirs! Every world that floats in space shall be subject to their word and at their disposal, as they range the broad fields of the endless vastnesses of infinity. Here and now we are a people in whom there is royal blood; sons of the almighty God, heirs to His throne (Rev. 3:21). We are born to rule over all things, and God is preparing us for that dominion. The rule of one little world is not enough for a man born of the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God of the universe! It may be for a chipmunk. It is not for a son of the Highest, for one born *from above* is too big in his spirit, which is his real divine self. To be a spiritual man, a heavenly man, he must reach out to the future, to eternity, to infinity, and grapple with the powers of the ages to come, and compel them to gird him with strength to fulfill the ultimate intention of our *heavenly* Father!

Oh, the wonder of it! Our Lord Jesus Christ, the **man** Christ Jesus, has been exalted to the right hand of God. He has been given the kingdom and the dominion. The whole universe has been delivered into His mighty hands, and now He tells us that it belongs to us, for we are *heirs of God* and *joint-heirs with Christ*. He tells us that we have been raised to sit together with Him in the heavenly places, at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto us (I Pet. 3:22). We are to sit with Him on His throne, which is the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). We are not only raised up to sit with Him on His throne, but He has been given a name that is above every name, and we are also to share that wonderful Name. Do you think I am making these things up? Listen to this: "To him that overcometh...I will write upon him (inscribe in his nature) the *name of my God*, and the name of *the city (government) of my God*, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God...and I will write upon him MY NEW NAME" (Rev. 2:12).

This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over all the unbounded heavens. They have been proven faithful over few things. Now they shall be made rulers over many things...over ALL HIS POSSESSIONS (Mat. 24:45-47). He has given us His glory because we are His brethren, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, life of His life, mind of His mind. We are of common parentage, brothers by the new birth, becoming like Him in name, nature, and being. We are all "out of one" for which reason He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He has raised us up to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies, hence we belong on His throne. And the place which He has been preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a kingdom of life, and light, and love, but a position, a place of eminence at His side, ruling with Him over *all things*! People get all excited about some "alien" who they imagine steps off a space ship, coming from some advanced civilization in some distant galaxy, coming to teach us wonderful things that we know not. Oh, no, my brother, my sister, that is but a fantasy. It's the other way around. Whoever they may be, wherever they may be in the myriad worlds scattered throughout God's great universe, the sons of God are coming to *teach them*, to *deliver them*, and reveal the almighty Creator *unto them*, and subject them to His righteous rule! That is the inheritance of the sons of God!

Our inheritance is in the Son of God, for we are heirs of God, and *joint-heirs* with Christ! Why is this? Because it was "in Christ" that we had our existence and identity from eternity! We were "in Him" before we came "out" of Him. HE IS THE HEIR OF GOD! Only through our return into Him can we claim the inheritance. How beautifully this is illustrated in the following story.

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Viet Nam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art." The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this." The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up in tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift." The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?" Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?" Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10," a voice responded, "let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming restless and angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!" A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?" "I'm sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was informed of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!" — author unknown.

The message is clear — The Son! The Son! The inheritance is *IN THE SON*, so you see, whoever *gets the Son gets everything!*

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in the last of these days spoken unto us *in the person of a Son*. **Whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of ALL THINGS**, by whom also He made the worlds and framed the ages" (Heb. 1:1-2).

“When the fullness of time was come, God *sent forth His Son*, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive *the adoption — placement as — sons*. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, *then an heir of God through Christ.*”

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one *all things* in Christ...***IN WHOM we have obtained an inheritance***, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:10-11).

“And this is the record, that God has given unto us the life of the ages, *and this life is in His Son*” (I Jn. 5:11). “He that ***has the Son has life***; he that has *not* the Son of God has not life.” Ah, yes! The whole inheritance is in the Son — he who (fully) *gets the Son — gets everything!*

### TO BE A FATHER — TO BE A SON

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will *be his God*, and he shall *be my son*” (Rev. 21:7).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will *be* a Father unto you, and ye shall *be* my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Fathers and mothers want their children to have “the best of everything.” But sometimes that comes when certain things children want are withheld from them. Ann Landers, the newspaper columnist of a previous generation, shared a letter sent in by someone who wrote about what her parents did *not* do for her. They didn’t let her do whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted, and they didn’t shower her with things, things, and more things. They also did not pass up the opportunity to teach her the value of money and the benefits of hard work; they never failed to listen to her when she had a problem; they never refused to give her advice when she asked; and they never left any doubt about their love for her. Whoever wrote that letter understands that parents try to do for their children what will help them grow into responsible adults. The Bible, too, teaches that the relationship between parents and children is based on a natural love that God established when He made them. God even requires this love in one of His commandments. Parents and children must love each other in the Lord. The best expression of this is when loving parents ask for their children’s obedience and children respond by obeying in love. As children honor their parents and parents conduct themselves as worthy of their children’s honor, both parents and children benefit immeasurably.

This principle is just as true in the family of God! There is *responsibility* on both sides — the parent and the child. God has a responsibility to each of His sons, and every son has a responsibility to his Father. This responsibility is powerfully expressed by the Holy Spirit in these words: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And I will **BE** a Father unto you, and ye shall **BE** my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” God can never actively **BE** a Father to you until you receive and walk out the revelation of your sonship. Millions of Christians today call God Father, and pray to the Father. Yet their sonship to God is totally meaningless to them. Not understanding the biblical term “adoption” (placement as mature sons) they view themselves as the “little adopted children of God.” It’s as though God *sees* them as His little children, and they see God as their

heavenly benefactor to supply all their wants and needs, but they have no concept of what sonship is all about, what its ultimate purpose is, what it really *means* to be a son of God! They see themselves as Christians, believers, forgiven, saved, justified, redeemed, sanctified, etc., but they walk not in the consciousness or experience of SONSHIP to God. They live out their lives as believers in Jesus, Christians, church members, teachers, preachers, etc. But God is *not* their Father! He is their Saviour, their Healer, their Deliverer, their Comforter, their Blessor, their Baptizer, and their “soon coming King” — but He is not their Father. They have not *been* sons to Him, and therefore He has not *been* a Father to them.

Now, let me explain what I mean by this. “I will BE a Father to you, and ye shall BE my sons...” There are two levels of Fatherhood. The first is biological, the second practical and experiential. On the first level one hears the title “father” merely because he has biologically generated an offspring. His name will appear on the birth certificate as the father of the child, even if he has never been seen again since the night of conception or the hour of birth. On the second level, however, one is respected and loved as a father because he fulfills all the responsibilities, privileges, and potentials of fatherhood. He is there when the child is born. He is there after the child is born. He provides, cares for, loves, nurtures, disciplines, guides, trains, and counsels that child through all the years of his growth and development into adulthood. His purpose in fatherhood is to produce an end result — a loving, knowledgeable, capable, responsible ADULT! In that process he is *reproducing himself* in the son or daughter. He is not just giving them a roof over their head, food to eat, and some “goodies” along the way. Oh, no! Can we not see by this that there are fathers who are *not* fathers — they have merely contributed the sperm to generate an offspring, but have never had a father’s heart, have never understood or taken seriously the true purpose of fatherhood, nor have they fulfilled the responsibilities of fatherhood. They have not actively, truly, caringly BEEN a father! With what wonder and understanding do we now receive the promise of the Lord: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...and I will BE a Father to you!”

In like manner there are children who are *not* children, sons who are *not* sons. Oh, yes, their name, too, is on the birth certificate as the child of the one who gave them life. They are biologically the offspring of their parents, but they do not relate to the parents in a functional way. Rather than submitting to, obeying, respecting, honoring, and loving their parents, they are rebellious, self-willed, disrespectful, uncaring, and hateful. On the one hand they are legally the children of their parents, but on the other hand they have never BEEN sons and daughters. They have refused to fulfill the responsibilities of sonship. They have refused to walk in the relationship of sonship. They have spurned the spirit of sonship. Can we not understand by this the deep, profound cry of the Father’s heart when He says, “Wherefore come out from among them (the religious idols, the false gods and false ideas concerning the true God, the carnal church systems of man, the childishness of man-made religion — Mystery Babylon), and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing...and ye shall BE my sons and daughters!” Ah, that is just it! There’s something to do, a responsibility to fulfill, a walk and relationship to enter into in order to BE sons to the Father! Often in my prayers, meditations, and consecration I say to my Father, “I want to BE a son to you, so that you may truly BE a Father to me!” That is the deepest desire of my heart. Carl Schwing once wrote, “There is no greater communion than that of a son losing himself in the depths of the Father. There is no greater love than the Father giving and being all to His son. There is no greater testimony than this: ‘I and the Father are one.’”

We have seen that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who could have revealed the Fatherhood of God to us, in fact, that is the very thing He came to do. Truly God is a Father, as far

as He is concerned. His whole attitude toward all men is that of a Father; but the trouble is that our attitude is often not that of sons. Men see themselves as human beings, as sinners saved by grace, as Christians, Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Charismatics, or Pentecostals. They see the forgiveness of their sins as the ticket to a beautiful heaven somewhere where they will sing, dance, and shout their way through eternity. They have no concept that God is after *sons, mature sons*, the *reproduction of Himself* in love, holiness, wisdom, power, authority, and glory to bless, govern, and establish His kingdom throughout all realms of His great universe. They are stuck on being little children to get to heaven — they're just interested in playing forever in God's celestial park! They neglect, or dismiss, or reject, or rebel against any parental guidance that would steer them into DIVINE ADULTHOOD.

It never dawns upon the understanding of most believers that the terms “children,” “son,” “sons,” “daughters,” and “Father,” appear multiplied hundreds of times in scripture, whereas “Christian” appears only *twice* and Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and nearly all the other names churches call themselves *do not appear at all!* The apostles of our Lord knew absolutely nothing of Roman Catholicism, Baptist, Lutheran, Charismatic, or any of the hundreds of other denominations — but they certainly knew a lot about *sonship!* ***Sonship*** is God's revelation in Christ Jesus. Through Him God spoke to us “*in Son,*” is how the Greek text puts it (Heb. 1:1-2). ***Sonship*** is the central issue of God's great and eternal purpose. ***Sonship*** is the longing and the hope of creation. ***Sonship*** is our calling and destiny in God! Let us all truly BE sons to our Father, that He may BE a Father unto us! This is the heritage of the *overcomer!*

# Chapter 240

## The Work Of The Lake Of Fire

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, *shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*” (Rev. 21:8).

You may remember the story of the man who was trying to get his mule into the barn. The man was tugging on the rope and pulling with all his might. He got behind the mule and pushed; he put his shoulder to its back but he could not budge the mule who just stood there, stiff-legged, and would not move. Try as he might he could not get it into the barn! A fellow walked up and watched for quite a while. Finally, he said, “Mister, I’ll get your mule into the barn for you if you like.” The man stopped in astonishment and said, “Can you?” He said, “Of course, it is easy.” The stranger walked over and picked up a two-by-four, came over to the mule, quietly lifted the two-by-four, and whacked him on top of the head, right between the eyes. The mule went a little cross-eyed! Then he hit him behind the ears. Before the mule could quite straighten up again, he struck him beneath the chin. With that he took hold of the rope and with two fingers led the mule into the barn! The owner stood there astonished. The fellow came out again and said, “You see, mister, actually this mule is a very cooperative critter. You just got to get his attention!”

Sometimes God has to GET OUR ATTENTION! And to do that He chooses to use events which are instruments of His judgment. We often think God’s judgments are punishment and vengeance, but more often they are skillfully designed to wake us up. God told Moses that the reason for His judgment upon the Egyptians was to make them know that He is God. Everything God does shows us something about who He is and what His purposes are, but in this instance of judgment God particularly expressed that His intent was to reveal Himself to the Egyptians. And He was successful in this, for in chapter eight of Exodus Moses records the magicians telling Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God!” Our God has foretold the blessed era when He shall be ALL IN ALL. How can God ever be ALL — IN ALL? Properly translated that means that God shall be *everything to everyone!* Are there not some creatures and men too incorrigible to bend to His omnipotence? Let each one who knows Him as their ALL give answer thus: “He who has broken my stubborn will and brought me to His feet can draw the most obstinate to Himself.” Oh, yes! His will is more than a match for any man’s! Were it His decree to become their DOOM, they could not stop Him. But as it is His will to become their ALL (which is a far nobler and greater goal for Him who *is Love*), their ALL He shall become. His indignation may break and destroy pride and rebellion for the ages, but His love will endure endlessly and He will pursue all men until at last they surrender to His love. Not even *one* stray sheep will be lost!

Ah, yes, God knows just how to GET OUR ATTENTION! He can get it here and now. If He doesn’t get it here, He will get it in hell. If He doesn’t get it in hell, He will get it in the lake of fire. He will get it by gracious words and tender mercies, if He can. But if not, He will get it by severe judgments and grievous dealings. But, blessed be His name, He *will* get our attention!

God gives us power, in the positive realm, to get men’s attention, to subdue them to Christ. Jesus has said, in effect, “All *authority* has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye *therefore*,

I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. I give you this authority. I am behind you, and all the powers of heaven are on your side. Go ye therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES!” They were a poor lot to go. They were nearly all fishermen, with one honest tax-collector. If you can find one honest tax-collector in America, I think you might make him an apostle without further investigation. These men whom Christ sent out were uneducated for the most part. They had no political clout and no social rank, until Christ took them in hand. They did not know very much until He took them in hand for three years. It was astonishing what He made of them! Even then they did not realize His mission until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and brought to their remembrance the things which Jesus had said, and showed them the meaning of Jesus’ words after He had risen from the dead, when, on the mountain side in Galilee, He gave them *authority to make disciples*.

But sometimes God has to use more severe means. Many years ago I turned on my car radio while enroute to a meeting on Sunday morning and heard a preacher relate a most interesting and illustrative story. He said, “I remember a friend of mine that I was in school with. He was a pastor in the East Texas oil fields at the time of the explosion at the New London School. I shall never forget that night when word came in over the radio that that school had exploded and that over 300 boys and girls had been killed. I was speaking the next morning on the radio in Dallas, Texas. And that morning I directed everything I had to say to the parents and loved ones of those boys and girls. We received cards and letters from New England, from Mexico, and from all over the country.

“But this pastor friend of mine told me this story. He said, In the parish in which I was the pastor, there lived a man who had become suddenly rich. He was a Texan who had become oil rich, even had put up a small refinery. And he had made already several millions of dollars. He had built a lovely home. He had a wife and two beautiful boys. And the wife and two boys were believers, fellowshiping in our church. And this pastor went on and said, This man was the worst blasphemer I had ever met in my life. I’ve never heard a man talk as that man would talk. He would blaspheme God, curse God. And his wife was so concerned about him and asked me to go see him. I went to see him, and I’ve never been treated like that in my life. He cursed me from the moment I opened my mouth until I got out of earshot. He called me everything that was in the book and some things I didn’t know were in the book. He was vile.

“His wife and one of his little boys took sick during the flu epidemic and both died at the same time. I went over that night to see them. I went in and there sat the father and the little boy that was alive. I went over and sat down beside them and began to talk, and he began to abuse me again. And curse — I’ve never heard anything like it! It was vile beyond description. He blasphemed God’s name. There was nothing left for me to do but get up and walk out of there, which I did. I had the funeral. The man wouldn’t even speak to me. And he became more vile after that. But all of the love that he’d had for his family, and that seemed to be the only thing about the man that was a redeeming feature, was now turned to this one little boy that was left.

That little boy was in the New London School. This man, when he heard of the explosion, went out to that school and went through that rubble like a madman until he found the torn and twisted, broken body of that little boy. Then he took it in his arms and walked up and down that schoolyard like a maniac until they actually took it away from him and carried it to the funeral home. You know, I felt it was my duty to go and talk with him. So that night I went over to that big home, and I went in and there was that little white casket and there he sat, the same place he’d sat before. I just steeled myself for the cursing that I was to get. I was afraid to say anything. I just sat down.



Then that great big hulk of a fellow looked up and our eyes met. He hadn't cried before, he was too tough to cry, but there were tears in his eyes. And instead of cursing me, he said to me, God has been after me all the time. He's tried to speak to me all my life, and I turned my back on Him. He took my wife and my other little boy, and I knew He was talking to me. But I was afraid of what men might say, those I worked with and were associated with. Oh, what a coward I've been! And now He's had to take this one! Well, he said, God can have me now. And that man got down on His knees beside that casket and surrendered his life to God and took Christ as his Saviour. The last time I saw that pastor friend of mine he told me that that oil man was still walking with the Lord" — end quote.

That man did not respond to the POSITIVE witness of the gospel of God's grace, so corrective measures were needed, and God stretched forth His hand and brought NEGATIVE forces into action, thereby *getting his attention*. Oh, yes, God knows exactly what it will take to gain the surrender of every heart! Once broken under the judgmental dealings of God, he knelt before the Lord and received the goodness and mercy and deliverance so graciously proffered. Hallelujah! It should be clear to every thinking child of God that God does not use the same means and measures with every man to bring them to Christ. It would be very simple to fill this message and a dozen more with instance after instance from holy scripture as well as personal experience which loudly and unerringly proclaim the nature and purposes of God's judgments in men's lives from the banishment of Adam and Eve from Eden's fair garden in Genesis to the blazing inferno of the lake of fire in the Revelation. But I would point you briefly to one plain and positive illustration which proceeded from the lips of our Lord Jesus the Christ. "But if that *servant* say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant will APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS. And that *servant*, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Lk. 12:45-48).

In this parable it is plain that Christ is teaching degrees of punishment or correction. The Christ teaches that those who have committed things worthy of many stripes, will receive many, and those who were ignorant, and with lesser light did not know or understand the will of God, yet did things worthy of stripes, shall receive but a few. Here is set forth in the plainest of language not only varying degrees of judgment, but also varying lengths of time for the judgment. Whatever the judgment typified by the "stripes," it takes longer to inflict many stripes than it does to inflict just a few, so it should not be difficult to understand that some men are under God's corrective judgment for a longer period of time than others. The Word of God declares that the Judge of all the earth shall do right, and I believe that He shall do just that. As our children were growing up we did not have one stock punishment for all their misdeeds. We suited the punishment to the disobedience, yet we haven't granted the same privilege to God! We have said that everyone from your lovely next door neighbor who doesn't know Christ to Adolph Hitler is to receive the very same common punishment, hell fire, and that that judgment would endure for the very same length of time for all — *eternity*! How, then, I ask, can some be beaten with "many stripes" and others with "few stripes" if all receive the same punishment of endless damnation in hell fire? How foolish can we be! It is always extremely foolish to hold to a doctrine that clearly contradicts the Word of God.

I can almost feel the holy wrath, I can almost hear the stinging invective of some who think they have me now — "Ah," they say, "but Jesus is not talking in this parable about the condition of

the *lost*: He is teaching about the punishment of disobedient SERVANTS OF GOD!” And you are so right, my friend. I concede the point. We never want to forget it. Nothing could be plainer, for Jesus prefaces His remarks with these significant words: “Who then is that *faithful and wise servant*, whom the Lord shall make *ruler over his household*, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that *servant*, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him *ruler over all that he hath*” (Lk. 12:42-44).

There would be no answer to your argument; I would be forced to throw up my hands and admit that these words of the Lord apply only to the correction and discipline of servants of the Lord, and have absolutely no bearing whatever on the judgment of unbelievers, or on hell, or on the lake of fire, *were it not for one significant statement in verse forty-six*. The Lord says, “The lord of that *servant* will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him off (from his position), and will APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE U-N-B-E-L-I-E-V-E-R-S.” Do you see that? Ah, the punishment of this SERVANT is the SAME PUNISHMENT as the UNBELIEVER receives! He is appointed his *portion* WITH THE UNBELIEVERS! The punishment, therefore, of this servant of the Lord and the punishment of the unbelievers is equal, identical, of the same intensity, for the same length of time, the very *same* punishment — and that punishment is? — “MANY STRIPES”! Not unending stripes, not everlasting whipping, not eternal torment at the hands of the tormentors, for no master ever ordered the eternal beating of his slave! Just *many stripes*. Severe, yes, but restrained, responsible, and purposeful. Now, notice the similarity of the language describing this judgment with that which John records in our present text. The master commands, “appoint him *his portion* with the *unbelievers*.” What is the “portion” of the “unbelievers”? Hear it! “But the fearful, and *unbelieving*...shall have *their part (portion) IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE*.” (Rev. 21:8). The “portion of the unbelievers” in the lake of fire! And not only are the unbelievers, idolaters, etc. judged there, but the unfaithful servants of God are dealt with there, too! And, by Jesus’ own words, this judgment is called “many stripes,” and is shown to be limited in its duration and corrective and remedial in its purpose.

Some years ago the following testimony came in the mail from a preacher by the name of Chuck Johnel who was well known by a certain circle of brethren who considered themselves “end-time” saints. This preacher wrote, “In the very early days of my walk with Jesus I was taken ‘in the spirit’ during abiding time and Father God showed me the damned after the judgment of God, which is the second death. What I was given to see looked like a massive hermetically sealed furnace and I was given to see inside briefly, but the Father would not allow me to know or experience it, only to see and know what He gave me to know. Inside this furnace I saw what at first looked like multitudes of white larva, maggot-like things that were bent over on top of each other stacked to the walls of this furnace. It was pitch black inside, and anyone who was claustrophobic would go nuts as the place was compressed tightly, there was no room or open spaces but everything was jammed onto everything else.

“I saw fallen angels mixed in with these maggots who ripped their way through these creatures trying to find an open space but there was none. Inside this furnace, though it was pitch black, raged a fire so intense that the heat was unbearable, and while it was a raging fire there was no light, only a suffocating heat and dense darkness. I then *knew* that these maggots were the souls of the damned, those who had been cast into the lake of fire, suffering the second death. I discerned an absolute sense of hopelessness in these wretched souls, they had no hope and were eternally separated from God. So horrific was this encounter that I was moved by a strong desire to run down

the streets of Chicago screaming a warning, *'There is a place you must avoid!'* However, I will say this — I knew that these souls were locked inside this fiery, black furnace that was shrinking in time and space forever, getting hotter and more suffocating by the moment for all eternity. No one could see inside this place (except Father God allowed that), it would be no longer visible or part of the new creation — yet the suffering of the damned would never end — only it would not be known, seen, or heard” — end quote.

It brings me no pleasure to say it, but this preacher is a liar. He is thoroughly and completely deceived. I don't know whether he fabricated this story, received it from deceiving spirits, or if he was on some hallucinatory drug, but his story is not true. It sounds like something a distorted mind and a wild imagination would invent as a result of listening to years of hell fire and damnation preaching by the ministers of Babylon who are possessed of a sadistic mindset in regard to God and His judgments. If his testimony were true, the god he serves is a sadistic monster who by comparison makes Adolph Hitler look like a heavenly angel of glory. I have no hesitation in saying that God did not show him any such thing as he claims. If some god showed him those things, it was certainly *not* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Christ who reconciled the world unto Himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*, who is *not willing* that any should perish but that *all* should come to repentance, who is the *Saviour of all men*, and the *Saviour of the world*, who because He was lifted up on the cross of Calvary *will draw all men unto Himself!*

I believe every word that the Bible says about the lake of fire; I don't believe what Rome says about it, nor what the church systems of man say about it, nor what tradition says about it, nor what Chuck Johnel says about it; but I certainly believe what the Bible says about it!

One would think that the lake of fire was a prominent theme throughout the scriptures from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation. It is not. The fact is that the teaching concerning the lake of fire and brimstone does not appear anywhere in scripture *except* in the book of Revelation, the book with the most *signs, symbols, and metaphors* of any book in the entire Bible. If the book of Revelation had not been given us we would have no knowledge of the lake of fire at all. The Revelation speaks of the lake of fire five times. The last passage is our text. There should be no question as to the certainty of this lake of fire; neither should there be any doubt as to the awful consequence of having to be cast into it. The various passages with their dreadful foreboding should be a fearful warning to all unthinking, careless, and foolish people who, because of their love for the world, the flesh, and the devil, have dared to ask why we should serve God now if all are going to be saved eventually. Such people have no love for God nor fear of God, and they manifest by what they say that their professed serving of God is only a pretense, arising — not from any true love for Him — but from fear of punishment. If there were no prospect of hell or the lake of fire these would promptly tell God to go to hell and they would, themselves, go to the devil. It is not thus with those who really *know* God, who truly *love* God, for they serve Him not from fear, but from pure love and devotion. Remove all punishment and judgment completely from the universe, and they would still serve God with all their hearts!

Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the lake of fire, I would like to draw our attention to three words found in our text. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which *burneth* with *fire* and *brimstone*: which is the second death.” The word “BURN” means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation in the absolute and scientific sense. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace

it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely *changes their form*. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example, a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned in your fireplace. When the wood is burning the heat causes the chemicals of which the wood is composed to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree is no longer identified as the form of a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply **changed** into a **different form** and exists in its new form within the atmosphere as water, carbon dioxide, etc. Thus, to burn means to CHANGE! And of course we are not speaking of our bodies being burned up in the lake of fire — the fire is *spiritual fire* and its work is a *spiritual work* upon our stubborn wills, our carnal minds, our flesh nature, our corrupt passions, and all that causes us to be cast into this divine processing of God! Furthermore, it is significant to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. All that it consumes “goes **up** in smoke,” to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go **up** in steam. To burn means to CHANGE, and the change is always UPWARD in motion!

“FIRE” is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really **heat** and **light**. In my study of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone I was very much impressed and helped by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of **brimstone**. He says, “The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word ‘brimstone’ or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word *theion* translated ‘brimstone’ is exactly the same word *theion* which means ‘divine.’ Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer’s *Iliad* (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo* which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a ‘lake of fire and brimstone’ would mean a ‘lake of divine purification.’ The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, the fundamental meaning of the word is completely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it” — end quote.

I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meanings thus: BURN means combustion; to change the form of. FIRE means heat and light. BRIMSTONE means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that the lake burning with fire and brimstone is, actually, DIVINE HEAT (JUDGMENT) AND LIGHT (ILLUMINATION) PRODUCING A CHANGE! Is such a process eternal? All the laws of nature shout that it is not! More than 2500 hundred years ago the Holy Spirit warned the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem that God would kindle a fire at Jerusalem’s gates which would devour her palaces. “But if ye will not hearken unto me...then I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall *not be quenched*” (Jer. 17:27). Did not God say this fire “shall NOT BE QUENCHED”? This prophecy was fulfilled and the fire did occur a few years later when Nebuchadnezzar’s armies devastated Jerusalem (Jer. 52) and the fire did destroy all the houses of Jerusalem. Since God said no person or thing would “quench” this fire, did that mean that it would *burn forever*? That is what most people think when they hear of “unquenchable fire!” The fire at Jerusalem accomplished the work it was sent to do, and since it is **not burning today**, it obviously

went out *by itself* after accomplishing its purpose! Unquenchable fire is not eternal fire — it is simply fire than cannot be put out until it has consumed or changed everything it is possible for it to change! It then simply goes out, for there is nothing more to burn. Yet I hear the preachers ranting and raving about poor souls being cast into hell fire where “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” and this, we are told, means eternal, unending torment. How foolish, illogical, and *deceptive*! Such a view blatantly contradicts the plain meaning of the term “unquenchable” and its use in the Word of God.

If you think the kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that. You cannot war on the carnal minds of men with that. You have to make war on the flesh, the world, and the devil with a sword sharper than any two-edged sword. You have to make war on the flesh nature and self-will with fire, divine fire, that must burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! **OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE!** He is man’s “horse breaker” and He will break you, precious friend of mine, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! Even if long ages of fiery judgment and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, all hostility into surrender, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-saving cross of the Christ, which will never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God. Aren’t you glad!

Let us now explore with reverence some of those conditions that exist in men’s lives which will be dealt with by God’s Holy Ghost Fire. And I think you will see that it is not just the world of incorrigible sinners who are purged and purified in that fire, but indeed the unfaithful servants of God as well! There may not be room for all of them but we will do the best that we can.

*“But the fearful...”* If there was a list of names of every man and woman who will find themselves in the God’s lake of fire, and if we were permitted to scan that list, we might be surprised at all the names that would appear. Certainly the worst of sinners, and the most incorrigible of men, would make the list, but some seemingly very good people would likely be on it as well! Even our own names might be found on the list, for just the offence of being *fearful* would qualify one to make that list! Is it not obvious that fear is a powerful emotion that plagues, torments, and dominates the lives of many, especially of God’s own people? To begin with, many are fearful of displeasing the Lord and therefore being cast into the lake of fire! Others are fearful of missing the “rapture,” fearful of the “end-time,” fearful of the devil, fearful of the mark of the beast, fearful of false doctrine, fearful of being deceived, fearful of getting cancer, fearful about the economy and the future, fearful of dying, and fearful of a thousand other things. GOD has not given us the spirit of fear, my beloved, but of love, and power, and a sound mind! The fearful shall have their part in the lake of fire, for they must die to such debilitating things that rob men of peace, and joy, and victory in Christ!

There are three Greek words for fear. One is *phobos*, from which our English word “phobia” is derived. It refers to fear in general, whether good or bad, and has broad applications. Then there is *eulabeia*, which is always used in a positive sense and refers to reverential fear, godly fear, that is, to revere, venerate, stand in awe of, as in the fear of the Lord. But the word for fear in our text is *deilia*, which is always employed in a negative sense, with reference to a *cringing coward who refuses to take his stand*. Spiritually, this is tremendously significant! The highest courage appears when a man is desperately afraid, but in spite of his fear does the right thing at any cost. What is condemned in this word is *cowardice* which prevents one from embracing the truth, taking a stand,

and moving forward in God as He leads. I remember when I was fearful of taking a stand on the ultimate salvation of all men, afraid that many of our friends and brethren would abandon us; yet at that time the Lord gave the anointing and the courage to write our “Saviour of the World” booklets and begin sending them forth across the land and around the world. I found that my fear was ungrounded, for our stand for the truth God had revealed had just the opposite effect, it opened far more doors to us than it closed! Oh, yes, people hear the Spirit’s urging, “Come out of her, my people,” and yet they are fearful of leaving the Babylon church system, fearful they won’t have any fellowship, fearful for their children outside the church structure, oh, so fearful!

How true are the words of the wise man in Proverbs 29:25: “The fear of man bringeth a snare...” This fear was illustrated in the intriguing statement of the scripture record that the chief rulers “believed on Jesus”; that is, they believed in their hearts that Jesus was indeed the Christ; but they would not openly confess Him because they were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue. Thus they sacrificed a place of glory and honor in the kingdom of Christ on the altar of the “safe,” and at the destruction of Jerusalem they lost both! It is a terrible sin to allow the opinions and favor and support of men to keep us from stepping forth in the new paths of God’s leading, and perhaps this is the reason “fear” was listed first!

George Hawtin, in one of his booklets, asked this penetrating question: “Are we fully persuaded that God is calling us to *sonship*? Are we sufficiently persuaded about Zion to earnestly press toward it? Are we sufficiently persuaded about Babylon, the Mother of harlots, to *come out of her* and be joined to Christ and to Him alone? Are we fully persuaded about the *eternal purpose of God*? Persuaded enough, I mean, to abandon all else and cling only to that? Oh, how often we meet men and women on the way *back*. They become impatient about the road that leads to Zion’s hill, so back they go to Babylon’s tottering tower. They lose *patience* and can no longer believe that the vision they saw is sure and the promise immutable. They start thinking and reasoning in the natural and human wisdom tells them to forget the promise of God and return, so back they go. Can we not hear the voice of Jesus saying, ‘He that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back, is *not fit for the kingdom*?’ And again, ‘Remember Lot’s wife.’ Let us then be *fully persuaded* concerning the promises of God, and, being persuaded, let us *lay aside* every weight and run with *patience* and *confidence* the race that is set before us” — end quote.

“...and the **unbelieving...**” Unbelief is to be void of faith, and the writer to the Hebrews assures us that “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Heb. 11:6). The message is just this: Unbelief is sin! Faith is the spiritual sense by which we recognize the presence, character, and purpose of God; both that He *is*, and that He rewards the seeker. Faith seeks for God; it believes that He is; it keeps the heart open towards Him; it bows in humility and hope for Him to make Himself known. To know God, to see God in everything, and everywhere, to hear in our heart His voice and His teaching, and in our daily life to be conscious of His presence so that we always walk with Him — this is the true nobility of the man of faith! This is the life that faith lives; this is the blessedness that Jesus has now fully revealed by coming by His *spirit of sonship* into our hearts, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father!” Faith can walk with God as a son of God! And it’s not *our faith*, but as Paul said, the life which we now live in the flesh we live by ***the faith of the Son of God who...gave Himself for (and to) us***. Truly, HE is both the author (origin, source) and the finisher (maturity, consummation, fullness) of our faith! Consider HIS FAITH! Jesus had faith to walk with the Father. He had faith to acknowledge and walk out His sonship to God. He had faith to speak as the oracle of God. He had faith to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, feed multitudes with five loaves and two fish, walk on water, turn water into wine, raise the dead, forgive sins, and fulfill

the whole purpose of the Father in His life even unto Calvary and the tomb, and to conquer death, hell, and the grave! Oh, yes! **That**, and much more, is *the faith of the Son of God!* To doubt that faith within ourselves, to neglect the growth and development of that faith, to be *unbelieving* of God's call, purpose, and power in our lives would surely put us in the category of "the unbelieving" who must be purged and purified in the lake of fire! Selah. Pause and think about that.

"...and **murderers...**" The subject is not just homicide, the bloody murderers of this world, although without doubt there will be multitudes of them there, but we must never lose sight of the fact that the Revelation is first and foremost a *spiritual book*, and its realities are *spiritual realities!* The natural figures the spiritual, and we know that a natural man can be killed many different ways — with a gun, a sword, a knife; by starvation, deprivation, suffocation, poisoning, and many others. The very same John who on Patmos penned these portentous words is also the one who wrote, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not His brother abideth in death. Whoso **hateth** his brother **is a murderer:** and ye know that **no murderer** hath eternal life abiding (dwelling as a life principle) in him*" (I Jn. 3:15). No one knew better than the beloved John what, in its spiritual meaning, "murder" signifies! The message is clear — If old Adam is still alive in us we cannot help hating our brother who offends, misuses, or abuses us, and we are in our heart a murderer; to boost our own ego, or enhance our standing with others, we will at least whisper behind people's backs, repeat (with a certain sense of satisfaction or justification) a negative report, carry a tale about someone, engage in idle gossip, thus *assassinating the character* of any brother who appears as a threat to us, or whose place we wish to usurp — that's the way the carnal nature works, even that "devil" who is a murderer *from the beginning!* Like the Inquisition, those who are not in allegiance with a particular church system have throughout the centuries been tortured in dark dungeons, burned on the racks, burned at the stake, boiled in oil, beheaded, or otherwise destroyed by accusations of heresy. Some were merely excommunicated, spiritually suffocated by being cut off from spiritual fellowship and spiritual food, unable to breathe the life-giving breath of the heavens. Don't think it was just the Papacy who committed these atrocities, my friend, for John Calvin and Martin Luther and other Reformers and Christian kings killed and ordered the extermination of the "heretics" of their day! All who retain that carnal mentality, though in other ways they may be great men of faith, still will have to be dealt with by the Holy Ghost Fire of God to purge them of their *spiritual wickedness!*

"and **whoremongers...**" I'm sure vast numbers of the fleshly whoremongers of the world will be discovered in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, but I am just as certain that the whoremongering here is also a *symbol* signifying something spiritual, a joining to that which is not Christ. Women in the Revelation are always symbolic, either positively of the bride of Christ, or negatively of the individual soul, or corporately of religious organizations and activities which are *soulish* rather than *spiritual*. These are those ministries, and multiplied millions of believers, who daily sow their seed, deposit their spiritual life of Christ, into man-made religious systems, mingling the reality of Christ with the commandments of men, joining themselves to carnal programs, promotions, methods, and worldly-minded religious activities, as well as with the political systems, governments, and social programs of the world, satisfying their own soulish appetites and sensual lusts in the name of the Lord. It is *spiritual whoremongering!*

The church is imitating the world! Christians regulate their devotion by the clock. The church schedule is packed with flesh-appeal programs and activities that run day and night, often called "outreaches." They feel that unless every night of the week is taken up with some sort of activity, the ministry is an ineffective thing. They have the strange idea that nothing is being done

unless someone is talking! So they fairly swarm to conferences, seminars, workshops, committee meetings, platform discussions, concerts, plays, ball games, and programs and entertainments of many kinds.

It is distasteful to have to admit it, but the plain truth is that the vast majority of Christians live their lives in *soulish lusts*. The further truth is that God's purposes are not accomplished by intellect and soulical activity! The church systems go forward today like a little Samson shorn of its locks of power. It parades up and down, boasting of its accomplishments, and like Samson, it knows not that the Spirit of God has departed from it. But even as Saul and his armies tremble in fear before the mighty Goliath, the Lord is raising up a little David with a slingshot of the spirit of sonship to meet the enemy with all of his stratagems and come off with a mighty victory! The David company is still in preparation, far out in the solitude of the green pastures of a living word, and beside the still waters of the quickening spirit, learning by faith and obedience to slay their bear and kill their lion in their own experience. It is not unlike Jesus during His first thirty years in Nazareth as He learned the ways of His Father, daily growing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Ah, God's sons are gaining new victories every day and are learning within ourselves the power of God and the ways of His kingdom! Saul's armor will not do! The sons of God are being prepared to step forth in the majesty of the name of the Lord God of Israel! This preparation does not take place with David's seven brothers who appear so tall, handsome, articulate, charismatic, and accomplished, nor in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Bethlehem, but *alone with God* in the pastures of HIS choosing, outside the camp, in the secret place of the Most High!

Amid all the religious ruckus of the hour, and all the fuss of those who run after many lovers, whoremongering with the flesh, the world, and the carnal church systems of man, there is a *little flock* that has climbed the mount with Jesus. They care not for the flamboyant humbug of the gaudy harlot's house, but, having beheld the glories of the kingdom afar off, they are pressing through surging waves of flesh-oriented believers to *come apart* to receive instruction from the King of the kingdom. At His feet they hear the call to the heavenly mark and find a door opened for them to enter in and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth! They lean hard upon Christ! They keep themselves unto Him, and to Him alone. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pant their souls after God! The spirit of sonship to God dwells within them! They are partakers of His mind! They have been given the knowledge of His will! They comprehend His great plan and purpose in the earth, in His sons, and in the unbounded universe! They have laid aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset them! They are running the race with patience! They esteem the hope that is set before them as higher and better than all the pleasures of Egypt and greater far than the enticements, allurements, and prestige of the wanton harlot of Babylon! They are patient in tribulation, knowing that through much tribulation we shall inherit the kingdom! They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness! They no longer have any inclination to find their way on Sunday morning or on Wednesday night to the harlot's house to be entertained, stroked, and seduced by her. The fire of God has here and now purged from them the very spirit of whoredom, so you will not find them in that great day in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone! To them the voice of the Father speaks in words of everlasting hope and assurance, "Fear not, *little flock*, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Isn't it wonderful!

"...and **abominable**...and **sorcerers**..." The word for "sorcerer" used throughout the book of Revelation is an altogether different Greek word than is used anywhere else in scripture. In our



text it is *pharmakeus* and in Revelation 22:15 it becomes *pharmakos*. Then in Revelation 9:21 the word is *pharmakeia*. It is at once obvious that these are but three different forms of the very same word, and the prefix “pharma” reveals that the meaning of the word has something to do with drugs, as in the words “pharmaceutical,” “pharmacy,” and “pharmacist.” No other place in scripture, but in the book of Revelation, is the idea of “sorcery” associated with drugs! The word identifies deadly poisons and those who either make or sell those deadly poisons. That is just what the words mean, nothing else. In the Greek language a Pharmacist is, therefore, a Sorcerer, a maker or a dealer, a vendor or a user of deadly poisons sometimes administered as medicines. Legal, or illegal, in many cases they destroy the brain, weaken the immune system, damage the liver, kidneys, heart, and other vital organs and systems, addict or madden the user, and ruin the spirits, souls, and bodies of countless millions who rely upon them.

Now, our purpose in this message is not to attack prescription drugs, medicines, or pharmacists. The apostle John certainly knew what drugs were and who sorcerers were in his day, and among many cultures they are not so different today. In my encyclopedia, under the headings “MEDICINE MAN” and “WITCH DOCTOR” it states that these treat diseases by appealing to the sick person’s superstition. The medicine man wears fierce-looking masks to frighten away the evil spirits that are causing the disease. He makes up drugs or potions which are strange mixtures of hallucinogenic herbs, lizard’s tails, frogs teeth, and such things. As a sorcerer they have crafted the art of manipulating the human mind. Ah, the apostle John also understood what, in their *spiritual meaning*, drugs and sorcerers signified! All who think with a spiritual mind will perceive the truth that the drugs point to the *doctrines* and *teachings* of religious Babylon which dull the spiritual senses of the Lord’s people and are destructive to true spiritual understanding and spiritual life, giving them a distorted view of God and His purpose, a false hope, a mis-directed goal, and causing them to live by religious superstitions, myths, traditions, legends, and folklore. Do you know how many preachers and religious systems today are masters at *manipulating the human mind*? They are sorcerers! Doctrines about the power of the devil, financial prosperity, the rapture, eternal torment, free will, so-called end-time events, the antichrist, the great tribulation, a mansion over the hilltop, along with holidays, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, and a hundred more delusions ***drug God’s people into a spiritually hallucinogenic state***. They live in a false, starry-eyed, fairy-world of soulical imaginations which they suppose to be spiritual realities! Pleasure! Fun! Thrills! Excitement! Charismatic personalities! These and many more things are the result of a cunning spirit that saturates the church systems as they run after the “high” of soulical programs, concerts, fleshly manifestations, emotionally stirring singing, entertaining preaching — the same as any drug user in the world. In chapter eighteen of the Revelation the Holy Spirit testifies that all nations are deceived by the “sorceries” or the “spiritual drugging” of Mystery Babylon!

I do not doubt for one moment that there will be a great assortment of shamans, medicine men, witch doctors, and sorcerers in the lake of fire. Nor do I doubt that there will also be quite an array of preachers and teachers and ministers of various kinds who administered an unceasing supply of Babylon’s deadly poisons to the Lord’s people! There are not many people who are sufficiently awake to believe it, but at this very moment hundreds of millions of church goers of every sect and creed are walking and talking and acting under the delusions of Babylon’s drugs. They are filled with false doctrines, false hopes, false expectations, false interpretations, false understandings, false forms of worship, and though they profess to be Christians, they would not know the real Christ if they met Him on the street. They are so “high” on their mixed potion that they giddily imagine that they are going to be caught up in the sky where they will sit on a cloud with Jesus eating pork chops,

or some such foolishness, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, while the inhabitants of earth suffer the excruciating pangs of “great tribulation” under the rule of a superman dictator called “the Antichrist.” Ah, Babylon, and the multitudes that are deceived by your sorceries, your psychotic hallucinations are so intense that you actually believe that the vast majority of earth’s billions of human souls will be *lost* to the all-loving, all-wise, and omnipotent God — finally, irrevocably, and eternally — and not only will they be separated from God and heaven forever, but they will be given over to the most sadistic, inhuman, ungodly tortures that could be devised by the vilest fiends — a thousand times worse than anything inflicted on man by Adolph Hitler or any other tyrant of human history.

I once saw a picture which originated as a painting in the cathedrals of Europe which is a picture of hell. I also saw one not so different right in the Vatican in Rome. This picture supposedly illustrates what hell is like and was placed in the cathedrals to teach the people the horrors of eternal damnation. There are little paths running everywhere through hell. There is this huge demon scampering about loose snatching people off the paths and stuffing them in his mouth, eating them alive. There are legs sticking out, arms hanging out of his mouth, while he’s grabbing more people to eat. There are many other little demons running around stabbing people with pitchforks, bringing them to the head demon to eat. And we wonder why the minds of the captives of Babylon are so warped? Millions of people actually think like that — to them it is the “wisdom of God” and the “gospel truth.” No wonder that the doctrines of Babylon are called “abominations and filthiness” (Rev. 17:4). These are the abominations and filthiness of concepts that misrepresent, denigrate, defame, vilify, revile, malign, and impugn the nature, the character, the love, the wisdom, the power, and the purpose of God! Vast multitudes of the Lord’s precious people can scarcely believe that God *loves them*, that God does not *condemn them*, and that God is not out to “get” them because of the *sorcerers* and the *sorceries*, the *manipulation of their minds* by the practitioners of the church systems! In my opinion you have to be either a great lover of “Christian fiction” or very “high” on something to believe such things! I do not hesitate to say that all these shall have their part in God’s great Holy Ghost Lake of Fire to be purged, purified, and refined — delivered from all the errors and delusions of the harlot church system!

“...and idolaters...” Upon hearing about men worshipping idols our thoughts immediately travel to other lands, and other times; either to the idolaters of ancient civilizations and empires, or to religions very alien to our own. Of course the Roman Catholic Church as well as others venerate the images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. The truth is, however, that much that goes on in Christianity and within the walls of church buildings and in the name of God is little more than a refined form of idolatry. An idol is anything that usurps the place of the living God, of His living reality in our lives. In their crudest form, idols are fashioned by men according to their own imaginations out of whatever material they are pleased to use. Christianity’s “refinement” for this practice is still to worship a god manufactured by their own imaginations, emotions, traditions, and will, merely abolishing the manufacture of an artifact. In short, those who present a god who is different than the God revealed in and through the firstborn Son of God are guilty of idolatry. No matter how religious the depiction, how appealing the description, how supposedly “orthodox” the assumptions, any church, minister, or movement that presents a god other than the One revealed in Jesus is guilty of making an idol.

No man lives without a god. The real question is, who or what is his God, or gods. The pronouncement in the nineteen fifties and sixties that “God is dead” did nothing to God. Instead it simply attempted to assert that a certain God or kind of God was dead. It was a false image of God

that men were endeavoring to cast away. All of us have had false images or concepts of God that we venerated which now we have had to cast aside! We have even had to tear down their altars in our heart! If you listen to people speak, and hear what they say, it is easy to see their image of God. The fact remains, our Lord Jesus Christ is the *true image* of God! Any characterization of God that deviates from the revelation of the wisdom, nature, power, compassion, mercy, love, truth, and grace revealed in Jesus is a demon god, an idol image! God has caused us as His called and chosen elect to repent and empty our minds and hearts of the remnants of false beliefs and inadequate concepts of God which most of us had accumulated in our early childhood, or perhaps carried over from an elementary stage of spiritual understanding and experience of God.

What is an idol? It is an *image*. The image may be in our mind, but it is an idol. When we honor, give respect to, pay homage to, that is, *worship* an untrue image of God, we are idolaters! It is the soul that births the false ideas about God — not the spirit. It is the soul that plays the harlot, and it is the soul that creates false “images” of God in the mind and understanding. Our spirit has a true knowledge of God, our soul does not — it has to be taught. Our spirit has a true sense of worship, our soul does not — it worships images. So this great religious Babylon, this great confusion originates not with the outward religious system, but out of the souls of men — peoples, kindreds, tongues, and nations. It comes from the woman inside of us! There are millions of people in confusion today because they have false images of God enshrined in their minds. And there are many gods! In the church systems of man there is a literal pantheon of gods! Religion, yea, Christianity is beyond any doubt a polytheistic system! There is one image of God honored by the Catholics, another image of God revered by the Baptists, a different image of God esteemed by Jehovah’s Witnesses, a further image of God adored by the Pentecostals, a distinct image of God elevated by the Mormons, and so on. Some of these “images” barely resemble one another! But of this I am certain: All of them will go up in smoke as they are burned out of men’s minds and consumed out of their hearts in the lake of fire! That is the mystery!

“...and *all liars...*” The word “liars” in this passage is the same Greek word as “false” in Acts 6:13. It signifies that which is false, not true, a lie. Later in chapter twenty-one of the Revelation John adds this warning: “And there shall in no wise enter into it (the holy city) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or *maketh a lie*: but they whose names (natures) are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). Ah — there are no pretenders in the holy city of God, no fakers, no hypocrites, no imposters, no false doctrines, no traditions of men, no empty rituals, no lifeless ceremonies, no childish immaturity, no play acting. All this religious externalism will be consigned to the garbage heap of history, the dung hill *outside the city*. Crawling around with the liars on that dung hill are the others: “For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and *maketh a lie*” (Rev. 22:15). The more our hearts bow down in meditation upon the seriousness of these spiritual realities, the more we are brought face to face with God’s purpose to make men holy. You will notice that the list of people “outside” the holy city is essentially the same as those who “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” Oh, yes! To be *outside* the “holy” city, whether one is a believer or an unbeliever, is to be headed straight into GOD’S HOLY GHOST FIRE OF PURGING AND PURIFICATION! Can you not see the mystery?

# Chapter 241

## The Holy City

“And there came unto me *one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues*, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will *show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife*. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that *great city, the holy Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:9-10).

The agent who shows John this vision is one of the seven “vial-angels,” one of those who had poured out the seven last plagues. Having charge over the seven last plagues does not seem, to the natural mind, to be an obvious qualification for a messenger who is to act as guide to the glorious city of God. But in reality, it is! This is very appropriate, indeed! It reminds us of the fact that there is a connection between those judgments and the appearing of the holy city, New Jerusalem. Those judgments upon the carnal man, and upon the carnal religious systems of man, Mystery Babylon, had their positive purpose of preparing a holy people to reveal the glory, the holiness, and the power of the New Jerusalem!

Concerning the seven vial-angels we read, “And I saw *another sign* in heaven, great and marvelous, *seven angels having the seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the passion of God” (Rev. 15:1). This verse reveals the deep mystery the Holy Spirit now reveals to the called and chosen elect of the Lord. John speaks here of “another sign,” that is, a similitude, something like a parable, and this sign is in contrast with all the other signs he previously beheld in spirit. The sign which he now sees in the heaven of the Spirit is both great and marvelous. It is, in other words, awe-inspiring and wonderful! And no wonder: for the sign which he now beholds is of the greatest importance. It cannot be looked upon or understood without moving us deeply and filling our hearts with overflowing wonder and joy. John sees the seven angels of God’s presence which have appeared again and again throughout the Revelation, and here again they are operating in the unique action the Holy Spirit sets before John in his visions. They are prepared to pour out the seven vials or bowls of God’s passion!

John beholds seven angels, or messengers. And although, without doubt, the sight of these seven shining heavenly messengers positioned side by side is already breath-taking — for they are glorious and beautiful, resplendent in their appearance, pure, radiant, dazzling, and powerful — yet their purpose and message is still more majestic and sublime! These are the seven messengers who bear the *seven last plagues*. Evidently they do not have the seven plagues of themselves, but the power of these seven plagues is *given them*, and they now hold this power. They possess the power of pouring out these plagues into the earth-realm, the carnal and soulful religious realm of man, and completely devastating it — for the destruction implied in these plagues is complete. We have only to recall that we are dealing here with spiritual realities represented in the form of *signs* and *symbols* to understand the great truth revealed in this scene — the seven messengers in their symbolism represent a seven-fold message, ministry, dealing, and moving of God by His Spirit and by His Word to bring an end to the soulful power of man’s natural life and the soulful religious realm of man. The messengers are seven in number, the number of completion and fullness, signifying that by their seven plagues the work of God’s wrath or passion shall be fully fulfilled, finished, and completed in

a people. All the soulical operations in the lives of God's dear people, all the self-hood, every vestige of the believer's own mind, will, emotion, desire, and inclination to religiosity shall once and for all and forever be brought to its end! Seven is the symbol of completion of the kingdom within the Lord's people! Seeing that in the order of John's visions this wonderful work had already been accomplished in God's firstfruit company, the manchild, the 144,000 on mount Zion, it follows that this dealing of God is now ready to come upon the masses of the Lord's people who still walk in a carnal realm and serve the Lord in the carnal church systems of man, religious Babylon. The firstfruit company have "come out" of Babylon, but for the masses of believers who remain there, they are "partakers of her sins, and receive of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Seven is the symbol of the complete triumph of the kingdom of God in the lives of God's own people!

Furthermore we read, "And the *seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues*, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (Rev. 15:6). The ministry of the symbolic "seven messengers" streams forth from the precincts of the ark within the temple — from the very throne of God — from the very heart of God — the heart-throne of mercy and judgment. Never forget it! The seven plagues come *out of the temple*! "Know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God?" It should be plain to any thinking mind that when we look at these seven last plagues we are not seeing something that is coming from nature, nor from armies of men, nor from the Russians, the Chinese, or the Islamic extremists, nor from a nuclear holocaust, nor from some ecological disaster, nor from some alien attack from outer space, nor out of the bottomless pit, nor from the mouth of the great red dragon, nor from the antichrist in Israel, for these plagues are things which proceed from the very GLORY IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, that is, from the MIDST OF GOD'S CALLED AND SEPARATED ELECT! Those who pour out these vials are clothed in pure white linen which the Revelation itself identifies as THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SAINTS! The vials are indeed judgment vials — and is it not the *saints* who shall ***judge the world!*** Oh, yes! It is a *ministry*! Judgment is coming out of God's temple in the heavenly places of the Spirit where we sit together in Christ Jesus, but keep in mind, my beloved, nothing breaks forth out of the temple of God that has not been first *inworked into* that temple! Ah, yes, His judgments always BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD!

### A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN

"And there came unto me *one of the seven angels* which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, *Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife*. And he carried me away in the spirit to a *great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:9-10).

"And there came *one of the seven angels* which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, *Come hither, I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters...* so he carried me away in the spirit *into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast*, full of names of blasphemy... and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT" (Rev. 17:1,3).

There are two women, a harlot and a bride. It was "in the spirit" that John was "carried away" and *saw* — he received the deep spiritual understanding of who and what the harlot is and who and what the bride is. And I do not hesitate to tell you that if you see what John saw, and understand by the spiritual mind as John understood, and declare to the Lord's people in the church systems the truth about the harlot and the bride, you will certainly be accused of being "carried away!"

John beheld the harlot in a wilderness of spiritual desolation. He saw the holy city, the bride of the Lamb, from atop a great and high mountain — a high and exalted place in the kingdom of God. If the city is literal then the mountain is literal. I can walk up its slopes and touch it with my hands. But the writer to the Hebrews informs us that “Ye are *not* come to the mount that *might be touched...* but ye *are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...*” (Heb. 12:18,22). There can be no doubt that these inspired words reveal to us the great truth that the high mountain upon which the heavenly, or spiritual Jerusalem sits, is the heavenly and spiritual mount Zion, the mount that *cannot be touched* by the flesh! The old Jerusalem was a literal and physical city which was situated upon the physical mount Zion. Can we not see by this that the Old Testament type was *literal*, whereas the New Testament reality is *spiritual*. The city is a people!

In both cases, when John saw the harlot and when he saw the bride, the angel said to him, “*Come hither, I will show unto thee...*” These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word “come” always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION. The whore and the bride are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the spirit what they mean, and I can assure you, my friend, that it requires a REVELATION FROM GOD to see either! The true church of Christ is called a *mystery*. She is presented as a *virgin*. She is called a *bride*. Finally, she is displayed as a *city*, the New Jerusalem, the city of peace, righteousness, glory, and divine order. The woman riding the beast is called a *mystery*. She is not a virgin, she is an *harlot*. She is not an espoused wife, she is the *paramour* and *mistress* of the kings of the earth. Finally, she is that great *city* which is called Babylon, the city of confusion, filthiness, and fleshly disorder.

These prophecies present two broadly contrasted WOMEN, identified with two broadly contrasted CITIES, one reality being in each case, doubly represented, as a WOMAN, and as a CITY; the harlot and Babylon are one, the glorious bride and the heavenly Jerusalem are one. May the Spirit of the living God enlighten the eyes of all who read and give understanding, giving abundantly of the spirit of wisdom and revelation that each may be able to discern and easily differentiate between that VIRGIN CHURCH without spot or wrinkle, and that filthy HARLOT SYSTEM, full of names of blasphemy, with her multiplied sects and denominations, with her abominable false doctrines and idolatrous practices, who seduces the inhabitants of the world with the unspeakable lie that she is, herself, the bride of Christ. One would certainly think that God’s people would respond to the invitation to revelation whereby the Spirit says, “*Come hither*, and I will SHOW YOU,” and that they would look with anointed eyes and readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of Christ and the church! Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of the bride of Christ! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing to do with the tradition-ridden system which all men everywhere believe to be THE CHURCH!

The Spirit is calling us up to a “high mountain” apart (a higher realm in God) from which we can behold the bride, the Lamb’s wife. She is the holy city, the New Jerusalem. When John looked within the gates of the glorious city, he beheld another aspect of the revelation of God’s many-membered Christ. Everything John describes in types and symbols is in reality the magnificence, magnitude, glory, and power of Him who fills the city with Himself. It is a city without a church, that is, having no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it! Even as the Lord Himself fills the city, so also we dwell *in Him* so that we worship in the temple of His presence and life, dwelling in union as the Lamb and His wife. The Spirit was revealing to John the

totality of the Godhead dwelling in One, even a many-membered One. It is the *family* of God! The bride is there as the favored, the choice one of the Lamb; the siblings are there, all who have been purified and made white in the blood of the Lamb; and the sons are there seated upon the throne with Christ. The revelation is just this — We, my beloved, are being drawn, by the Spirit, into oneness with God. Oh, the wonder of it!

One of the keys to understanding the mysteries of the Revelation is to understand why it was written. Like most of the scriptures, the book of Revelation is one of those writings that has been the subject of deep superstitious speculation and carnal minded foolishness which is of no spiritual benefit to those who approach it that way. Tradition makes the word of God of no effect, saith the Lord! Nowhere in all of the scriptures are fairy tales, legends, myths, and superstitions fabricated more than out of the book of Revelation! I grew up hearing that there was a city in space, a *square star*, discovered by some unnamed and unknown astronomer, moving toward the earth from a distant part of the universe. I grew up hearing this as the *gospel truth*!

I was taught that the word of God says that there is a city coming down from heaven, and immediately the carnal mind assumes that it is a huge monstrosity floating down from space which someday will land on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head. Having minds that are darkened by ignorance of divine mysteries, these have not spiritual understanding. Their comprehension of spiritual realities is not unlike that of the Pharisees who were offended, disturbed, and angered when Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). Understanding only with human logic they interpreted His words as a suggestion of *cannibalism*! They were unable to see beyond the letter of the word to grasp the deep spiritual truth of which He spake. Just as Jesus spoke of His *spirit* and His *word* under the symbols of His *blood* and His *flesh*, so the apostle John described the heavenly origin and character of the *bride of Christ* under the figure of a *city* coming down from God out of heaven.

The bride of Christ is not a physical city of gold and stones and streets and gates. The bride of Christ is a *people*, a spiritual people in union with Christ by spiritual life. John says that this city is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. He introduces this glorious city as a bride brought to relationship with her bridegroom. A bride is one who is deeply in love with her bridegroom, submitted and joined in the intimate union of that love. That is why in the Revelation we see the *woman* giving birth to the *manchild*. No one can become a *son* until first he has experienced what it means to be a part of the *bride*! Thus it is brideship that gives birth to sonship! It is as we truly fall fiercely and intensely in love with Christ, submitting to His Lordship, learning His ways, and knowing Him in intimacy of fellowship and vital union, that we receive the seed of God by which we can be birthed out of this relationship into the further and higher reality of *sonship to God*. The sons take on the spiritually masculine characteristics of Christ, in His authority, power, and dominion, thus becoming the *corporate body of the Bridegroom*. The New Jerusalem city is prepared as a bride adorned for her *husband*, and it is from this union of life that the manchild is birthed. Yet we cannot truly separate between the city bride and the manchild who sits upon the throne, for the throne of God is *in the city* and it is from that throne that the river of Life pours forth for all creation! Thus the Lamb, the city, and the sons are all of ONE LIFE. These are great and eternal realities within each of us as we follow on to know the Lord and fulfill His purpose in restoring creation to God. Isn't it wonderful!

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the *name of the city of my God, which is*

*new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from my God...” (Rev. 3:12). The name of the city of my God is New Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a compound Hebrew word meaning “founded peaceful.” I will write upon you the name of the city — I will write upon you the *establishment* or *kingdom of peace*, the rule of the peace that comes through the government of God. For God to write upon us the *name* of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, means that He inscribes in our very nature the peaceful and governmental characteristics represented by this glorious city of God!

The New Jerusalem coming down from the heavens of God’s Spirit is revealed to be a city *foursquare*, that is, a *universal city* that reigns over and blesses all men unto the four corners of the earth! There are other meanings concealed in the term “foursquare” which we will consider at another time. The best way to come to an understanding of the true meaning of the New Jerusalem, is to go back and consider its shadow, the Old Jerusalem. Jerusalem of old was the capital city of the national Israel; and as the old order was but a type and shadow of the new, therefore the New Jerusalem must be the capital city, or the ruling element in God’s Israel today, which is Christ’s kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, and of which our Lord said, it “is not of this world.” In other words, the New Jerusalem is the ruling class, the kings and priests and judges unto God: those who have followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth and have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in the Spirit. It comprises those who will reign with Christ upon His throne, and those who will enlighten, nurture, feed, and bless all humanity with the life of Christ. God’s called and chosen elect, therefore, whether bride or sons, who supremely love Christ, who are submitted completely and only to His Lordship, who are accounted worthy to suffer with Christ and through our trials, testings, and provings grow up into Him in all things, ARE the New Jerusalem which shall rule over God’s infinite realm forevermore, and all nations and peoples shall eventually walk in the light of this city, and shall enter through its gates to partake of the water and the tree of Life!

Thus we see that the New Jerusalem, contrary to the driveling childishness that is taught in the church systems, is not a fanciful monstrosity some fifteen hundred miles high which some day will come crashing down out of the clouds to rest upon the earth, throwing it out of balance and off its course. God made this earth complete and as it should be long, long ago. He created it a perfectly functioning reality, and “nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it” (Eccl. 3:14). Truly, unspiritual men can invent many fairy tales, and alas, all seem intent upon calculating the expanse of this city in cubic miles or cubic feet as though it were nothing more than a huge metropolis slightly more wonderful than those at present on earth! One speaker waxed eloquent about the size of the mansion each inhabitant would possess, replete with a golden bathtub and fountains and other such nonsense. Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the great truth that the body of Christ *is* the temple of God and the city of God and that every room or mansion in that temple and that city is a ***living son or daughter of God***, a literal habitation of God through the Spirit, we have understood nothing at all. Only the Spirit of God can make this a living truth in the hearts of His people!

If John were describing an actual city as we know cities, it would, of course, have some very wonderful features! We all know that the quality of our drinking water in many cities today leaves something to be desired, and in some places on earth the water supply is horribly polluted, but this city would have the best, cleanest, purest drinking water anywhere with the addition of its magical powers — the ability to give you *eternal life*! And a very unique tree growing by the city’s river, its water supply, would *conquer all disease* — no one would ever get sick! Instead of dirty streets with rough, cracked pavement and full of potholes, this city would have smooth, shining streets *paved with gold*! The size of this city would be the most astounding thing of all. It would be laid out in a



square with 1500 miles on each side. But even more amazing — making the former World Trade Center look like a shabby room in a cheap hotel, the height of this city would also be 1500 miles! The wall around it at its base would be 216 feet high. And the building materials! The foundations for the wall would number 12, in which would be very fine and expensive jewels. Admittedly — a city with life-giving water, medicinal trees that cure every disease, buildings and streets of gold, walls of jasper, gates of pearl, and garnished with dazzling jewels would be a fabulous city indeed! Any banker trying to appraise it all would never find a number high enough. I would have no objection to living there! If that were really what the Holy Spirit is communicating to us in these scenes I would want to be among the first in line to reserve my mansion!

Imagine describing a modern skyscraper to a person in remote Africa who has never seen anything more than a small mud hut with a dirt floor and a thatched roof. How would you describe the soaring steel, the thousands of windows, or the high-speed elevators? The angel in John's vision had an even harder job communicating to the Lord's people! How do you describe *spiritual realities* to *carnal minded* people? Only the Holy Spirit can do this! But His practical method is to first picture spiritual realities in terms of things we know on earth: banquets and music; seed and harvest; rivers and trees; mountains and fortresses; temples and cities; armies and horses; swords and shields; shoes and clothing; birds, lambs, and beasts; mansions, walls, and streets of gold. All these are word pictures, not to be taken literally. They are God's way of giving us the nearest hint of what He means in our present understanding. But it gets all confused when people try to interpret it out of spiritual immaturity.

Imagine you had to describe the taste of ice cream to people who had never eaten anything but oatmeal. How would you do it? You could compare it to the best tasting oatmeal they'd ever eaten, and their mouths might water. But no oatmeal comparison could prepare them for the delicious taste of ice cream! Or suppose you had to describe the Eiffel Tower to tribal people who had never seen anything larger or grander than a tree. What would you say? You could compare it to the biggest, most impressive mud hut of their important chief, and that might impress them. But it still wouldn't capture the splendor of the Eiffel Tower! How then can the Holy Spirit describe heavenly things to earth-bound men who have never tasted nor seen the powers of the spiritual world? Ah, only when *heaven comes to earth* do we taste and see what it really is! Spiritual realities are all that scripture pictures — but *much more!* The understanding comes not by what we see with our physical eye or hear by our natural ear. Wonderful words were spoken at the very dawn of civilization, recorded in the oldest book of the Bible, which explain how spiritual truth and reality are communicated to man. "There is a *spirit* in man: and the *inspiration* of the Almighty *giveth them understanding*" (Job 32:8). Can we not see by this that the very being of man has a God-ward or divine side. This reveals man's capacity for God, for divine truths, for heavenly things, and spiritual realities. It is only the quickened spirit within man that knows how to take the word pictures from the natural world and *translate them* into the heavenly language and spiritual understanding. Should we instruct the natural mind forever concerning the things of the Spirit, it would never understand, for the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are *spiritually discerned*. When God calls to man, He calls not to the outer ear of the natural mind. He makes no appeal to human wisdom or to human reason, but rather calls *to the spirit, the inner man, the human spirit*. He speaks things beyond the natural mind, the natural reason, and the natural understanding. He speaks a language to the spirit that the outer man cannot comprehend nor understand. Therefore when a man reads a spiritual vision in scripture and can only see the outer, the physical, the literal of it, we can know that he has not seen nor heard anything *in the spirit and*

*by the spirit.* But when we see the word picture of a golden street, the *spirit within* to whom the Almighty *giveth inspiration* will understand that gold stands for *divine nature*. And streets denote the *walk*. So to walk on the golden street means that I am *walking out the divine nature of God*. Isn't that better and higher by far than merely walking down a natural gold street! As I walk in the divine life of God I find I have a river in the center of my being, yea, out of my innermost being flows *rivers of living water!* Jesus said that this river *is the spirit*. As I walk upon the street of gold, as I walk out the divine nature, the river in me begins to flow, bringing life and healing and restoration everywhere it goes! Aren't you glad!

When you grow in God your revelation grows. There is no physical city anywhere with buildings and streets made of gold or foundations or walls made out of rare jewels. There never will be any literal city having walls of jasper or gates of pearl. This is our final dwelling place — when we have attained to our spiritual glorified state, come to perfection in Christ Jesus, and have *become* the holy city as the prophet has said, "...and they shall call *thee*, The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 60:14). Then we will not go to this city or that city or any city, but God Himself and His whole universe will be our dwelling place. We will be free, free from the limitations of the flesh, therefore free to live in God's vast universe as His shining city on a hill. What good would streets paved with gold be to us after we have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and our vile body has been changed and fashioned anew into a body like unto HIS glorious body? We will have no need to walk on streets or concern ourselves with walls or gates or any such thing. In His glorious body of resurrection Jesus certainly didn't need a road to get where He was going and He paid no attention to walls or locked doors at all! When He wanted to be some place He simply *appeared*. When He wanted to join some disciples walking on the road to Emmaus He simply *appeared* to them there. When He wanted to minister to His disciples in the hills of Galilee He simply *appeared*. He knew *no limitation!* When the disciples were fishing and He appeared to them on the shore, He didn't need to walk there, He was *just there*. Now, the only reason that gold and jewels are so attractive to us now is because we are still so carnal and can think only in natural, earthly terms. Those things have value to *earth-dwellers*, that is, carnal Christians who still "mind earthly things." But when one has attained to that place of the fullness of His stature, gold and jewels will be meaningless to us. Only the *true riches of heavenly, divine, spiritual wealth* will matter to us in the heavenly glory of God.

The city of God began in the beginning of God's dealing with men as a garden. The book of Genesis is probably the most important book of the Old Testament. The word "genesis" of course means "origin" or "beginning," and the book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the basic entities and conditions of the universe and of life. Genesis yields vital information concerning the *origin* of ALL THINGS — and therefore the *meaning* of ALL THINGS! Let every man know that in the whole of the universe there is no greater truth than this one sublime truth: THE FUTURE IS BOUND UP IN THE PAST. A man's belief concerning his origin will inevitably determine his belief about his purpose on earth and his eternal destiny. The first book of the Bible reveals how ALL THINGS and ALL CONDITIONS and ALL STATES OF BEING came into existence. The very first words of chapter one declare, "In the beginning God created..." There is no doubt in my mind but that this marked the beginning of everything that exists in this present cosmos, throughout all the unbounded heavens, except God Himself who is "before all things" and "by whom all things consist."

There were many things begun all at the same time, as the manifold wisdom of God found expression in innumerable ways to bring forth into the realm of visibility the majestic purposes of

God. It was the beginning of the *universe* and of *time* (Heb. 1:2). It was the beginning of every existing life form, even unto the principalities and powers of the heavens, referred to in scripture as *the hosts of heaven*. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all *the host of them*” (Gen. 2:1). “I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and *all the host of heaven* standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And there came forth a *spirit* and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him” (I Kings 22:19-22). “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of *the heavenly host*...and it came to pass, as the angels (messengers) were gone away from them...” (Lk. 2:13-15). It was the beginning of *man* (Gen. 1:26). It was the beginning of *Satan* (Gen. 3:1; Jn. 8:44; I Jn. 3:8). It was the beginning of *sin*, of *death*, of *conscience*, and the whole realm of *duality* — “good and evil” (Gen. 3:5-7). It was the beginning of the *redemptive* purposes of God in Christ Jesus (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8). It was the beginning of the outworking of God’s great *plan of the ages* to reveal the fullness of Himself, through His sons, unto the entirety of the creation (Rom. 8:19-22; Eph. 3:9-11; Eph. 2:6-7). There is neither time nor space to enumerate all that is included within the scope of the “beginnings” in Genesis 1:1, but surely it can be summed up in just two words — ALL THINGS. “For by Him were all things created, that are *in heaven*, and that are *in earth*, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17).

The first several chapters of Genesis lay a ground-plan for the entire revelation of God’s purposes in creation. As a piece of literature the story is sublime; magnificent in range, in profundity of design, and the unparalleled heights of spiritual understanding which it attains. I can confidently say that every revelation of Himself and His purpose that God has ever given from the foundation of the world is contained in those opening chapters of Genesis! There is absolutely no revelation of scripture, spoken by prophets or apostles, or revealed in the depths of the spirits of worshipping men who have come into holy contact with the presence and power of God, which cannot be found in *seed-form*, in *type*, *shadow*, *parable*, or *allegory* in this marvelous book. The entire plan of the ages is there portrayed. Each and every experience, situation, condition, capacity, and potential of mankind, with all the principles and processes by which God shall bring men to perfection in the image of God, is there set forth in awe-inspiring wonder. And nowhere is this more obvious than in the account of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden!

In that long ago beginning we read that “the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:8-9). The story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is the greatest parable in the Bible. It is supremely important because it explains the real nature of life here on earth. It tells us about ourselves, about our state of being, how we bring about the conditions in which we live, and what our eventual destiny is according to God’s plan. It is the blueprint of man’s experience on earth and his destiny in God. When you thoroughly understand the garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of the serpent and the beastly kingdom. This parable is placed at the very beginning of human history because it is the foundation upon which the whole plan and purpose of God is built. What happens to us is what happened to Adam and Eve. It is not just their story, it is indeed our very own story! The entire revelation of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, assumes an understanding of the great principles, characters, and events in Eden’s garden. The fact is, if one should read the book

of Revelation without having first read the book of Genesis, the entire book would prove absolutely meaningless!

There is one thing about which God's people must be absolutely clear. The Bible is not primarily intended to teach history, biography, or natural science. It is intended to teach THE PURPOSES OF GOD AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES. It deals with states of being and the laws of spiritual activity; and anything else is only incidental. Each of the principle characters in the Bible represents a kind of nature, character, condition, or state of being that any of us may experience; and the events that happen to the various characters illustrate the consequences to us of walking in such realms of nature and character, either good or bad. Many of the Bible characters, such as Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, David, Peter, and Paul, are actual historical figures. They were real people who lived on earth and did the deeds attributed to them; nonetheless they represent to us kinds of natures, states of being, and actions revealed in their varying hues as their lives unfolded. Other Bible characters, such as the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, or the Great Harlot in the Revelation are, of course, fictional and never lived on earth as actual persons; but as parables and allegories they express inner conditions and states of being too, and always in a most graphic and effective manner!

When we come to the garden of Eden it is evident that this is more than merely a piece of real estate somewhere over in Mesopotamia! I do not say that it did not literally exist, but as parable and allegory it is superlative. We do know that no such place has ever been found, and among all the mass of ruins that archeologists have excavated in the area over the past two centuries no one has encountered the cherubim with the flaming sword to keep men out. Little wonder that men have sought for it; but they have sought for it in vain. Whatever its original nature, it was not intended to be preserved for the gawking eyes of the curious. The garden of God is something beyond a place located on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING! It is a higher existence for man than this cursed state we find ourselves in by physical birth. It is the state of being that man was in when he was first brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed here upon earth. It represents man — in the image and likeness of God! Man abiding in the presence of God! Man walking in human perfection with the incorruptible life of God available to him! Man as master and lord over all things! Man living above sin, sickness, pain, and death! Blessed realities, one and all! And yet — the garden also represents man together with all the factors and conditions, both internal and external, of being and environment, which ultimately were to ***lead to his ruin and alienation from God and His garden.***

In one sense, man *was* the garden. And yet, man was *in* the garden. The scriptures reveal it as a “garden within a garden.” The Hebrew word for Eden means “a delicate, delightful, pleasurable land.” The “garden” was eastward in Eden! Man in the garden reveals man both in a state of being and an environment — the two corresponding. All the conditions that surrounded man were also obvious realities *within man* himself. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities, and potentials is what we are drawn to see in the garden of Eden. The external conditions of man's environment corresponded precisely with man's inward nature for either good or evil, life or death. This was man in the garden! It is a garden within a garden, a world within a world. Isn't the same true today? All the good and the evil we see in the outer world *originates* right in the hearts of men!

This great truth of man's state of being constituting the garden of God is one of the tremendous themes which courses its way like a mighty river through the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. In the book of Revelation, just as the little serpent of Eden has grown through the

ages to become a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 12:3-4; 20:2), so the little garden in Eden has finally *become* the shining, dazzling, glorious city of God — which city ***we are*** (Rev. 21:9-11; Isa. 60:1-2,14). It is enlightening to view the comparisons between the blessed Eden of old and the wonderful city of God.

## THE GARDEN OF EDEN

River flowing out of Eden ( Gen 2:10)

Gold in the land (Gen 2:12)

Tree of life in midst of the Garden (Gen 2:29)

Bdellium and onyx stone (Gen 2:12)

God Walking in the garden (Gen 3:8)

## THE CITY OF GOD

River flowing from Gods throne ( Rev 22:1)

Gold in the City (Rev21:21)

Tree of life in midst of the City (Rev 22:2)

All manor of precious stones (Rev 21:19)

God dwelling in the city (Rev 21:3)

There is, however, a significant difference between Eden and the New Jerusalem. Eden is a representation of the “beginnings” of God’s purposes on earth, whereas the city is the representation of the ultimate accomplishment of those purposes. We might say that Eden is the new born child, and the city is the full grown adult person. Furthermore, in Eden there is a serpent, and through the cunning of that serpent man was cast out. In the city there is no serpent, for through the dominion of Christ within ourselves, who is the last Adam, the serpent has been cast out! (Rev. 12:1-10). In Eden there is the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the city there is only the tree of life! The soil in this city is not conducive to the growth of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eden is man on trial. The city is man purified and perfected. Eden is man faced with the processings of God through choices and experience, through testings and dealings, for his own learning and development unto wisdom and holiness in maturity. The city is man established in the ***mind of Christ*** having overcome all things. It is the long and tedious route between these two points, my beloved, with which we are presently concerned in the working of God in this momentous hour!

# Chapter 242

## The Holy City (continued)

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, *Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God*” (Rev. 21:9-10).

When you try to imagine a city coming down from heaven, don’t concentrate too much on the physical elements in the picture. To understand what Revelation 21 is telling us, we have to see the landing of the heavenly city as a symbol of something glorious. It symbolizes GOD INDWELLING A PEOPLE AND COMING IN THAT PEOPLE TO DWELL WITH, MANIFEST TO, AND RULE OVER ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH! It is the last piece in a millennia-long puzzle that often made us wonder just what God is doing with this world!

How anyone can think that the holy city is some monstrosity floating down through the galaxies is beyond my comprehension. There are too many symbols connected with this city that reveal divine, spiritual realities. Let us make one thing very clear — the holy city is not a *place*, nor is it a *thing* — it is a *people*. We are not “going up to that beautiful city,” as Little Troy Lumpkin used to sing. This is not about the church system’s hymn book theology of heaven. This city is coming down from God out of heaven! Someone says, “But if it is coming down out of heaven, don’t we have to go to heaven so we can come back down?” The inspired words of Paul the apostle give a precise portrayal of the realm from whence this city descends. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in the heavenly places in Christ*: according as He hath...quickened us together with Christ...and *hath raised us up together with Christ... and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 1:3; 2:5-6). The Greek literal says, “...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in the heavenlies in Christ*,” that is, in the heavenly or spiritual dimensions that exist in Christ our Lord. The city coming down from God out of heaven speaks to me of a descending from the realm of pure spirit and coming into the realm of manifestation on the visible plane of the physical world. There is a people prepared of God to be visible to the men of earth that will have within themselves, in the heavenly, spiritual dimension of their lives, the answer to all the problems of the human family. This people is the expression of His Person and the outpouring of His glory!

With transfixed wonder John beheld the holy city, the bride of the Lamb, from atop a great and high mountain — a high and exalted place in the Spirit of God. If the city is literal then the mountain is literal. I can climb its slopes and touch its rocks with my hands. But the writer to the Hebrews informs us that “Ye are *not* come to the mount that *might be touched...*but ye *are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...*” (Heb. 12:18,22). There can be no doubt that these inspired words reveal to us the great truth that the high mountain upon which the heavenly, or spiritual Jerusalem is seen, is the heavenly and spiritual mount Zion, the mount that *cannot be touched* by the flesh man! The old Jerusalem was a literal and physical city, the government of which was situated upon the earthly mount Zion. Can we not see by this that

the Old Testament *type* was *literal*, whereas the New Testament *antitypical reality* is *spiritual*. The city is a *people*!

When the glorious city of living stones is unveiled in all of its unspeakable majesty and glory, then will the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come,” and the nations of earth will enter through its spiritual gates that they may partake of the leaves of its spiritual tree (the living word of God) that are for the *healing of the nations*. From God’s exalted throne upon which reign the *sons of God* (Rev. 3:21; 21:7) the water of Life (the quickening Spirit) will flow and the ever green tree of Life, bearing its twelve manner of fruits, will flourish on either side of the river for the spiritual nourishment of all nations who hitherto walked in darkness and in the shadow of death. Then shall its twelve gates be open for all who would enter, and never shall they be closed by day, and there shall be no more night.

In the book of Hebrews the writer’s spirit is enraptured with glory, his heart exulting in praise, as he beholds in spirit the transcendent glory of the spiritual mount Zion in contrast with the indescribable dreadfulness of the earthly mount Sinai. From his mouth and his pen pour forth the prophetic pronouncement: “*For ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of messengers, and to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*” (Heb. 12:18-24).

There are beautiful pictures here of God’s dealings with His people on all levels of spiritual growth, development, and understanding. Some people get the idea that we think we are the only true people of God on earth, and that we have no love, appreciation, or concern for the Lord’s people in the church systems. Such is not the case! We seek to fellowship with all the Lord’s precious people, regardless of what level they are on. They are all HIS, and if we can break bread together, or if we can bless them in any way, that is our joy. However — we cannot, *dare not*, fellowship the false religious systems of Mystery Babylon! We *do* need to draw a distinction between the Lord’s *people* and the *system* so many are involved in. We can and will fellowship anyone — but we will not fellowship their carnal, man-made systems. This means that most of our fellowship with the believers about us is limited to a “one-on-one” basis, after we get past those who *won’t fellowship us* at all because they perceive us to be heretics!

Let us go back to the Old Testament and consider the types and shadows of God’s economy among His people. Israel of old was God’s chosen nation, His peculiar treasure above all the people of the earth. Israel was the visible expression of God’s kingdom upon earth. Israel was the whole nation composed of all who were born there, irrespective of their stature, position, station, attainments, wealth, poverty, intelligence, sickness, health — all who were born there, from the blind beggar by the roadside to the king upon the throne, were citizens of God’s nation and came under the care, order, law, and provisions of Yahweh. All who were born of the flesh in Israel were citizens of the kingdom simply by virtue of *birth*. In this more glorious dispensation of the Spirit, each and every son of Adam’s race, who has been born again by the Spirit through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are alike citizens of that kingdom which is called *the kingdom of*

heaven, which is no longer a dusty little country thronging with peasants and cattle who inhabit houses of clay and stone and wood, but an eternal land, a heavenly country of a spiritual order, the inhabitants of which have been born *from above*, not of a corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. In type the fleshly Israel represents all who, under the new covenant, are born into the family-kingdom of God by spiritual birth!

Let us UNDERSTAND! Israel was the whole nation, but Jerusalem was the capital city. All who lived in Jerusalem were citizens of the kingdom, but not all who were citizens of the kingdom lived in Jerusalem! And as that old order of the flesh was but a type and shadow of the new order of the spirit, in this new order the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the capital city, transcendent in glory, on the mountain of His holiness, beautiful for situation, upon the sides of the north, the city of the great King! The new Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel today, which is Christ's kingdom of blood-bought, quickened men and women in all stages of growth and development in Life. The new Jerusalem is a city of redeemed persons, but persons who have not only been born citizens of an heavenly country, but have ***moved onward and upward*** to dwell in the capital city of that country, a realm of surpassing beauty and glory, the inhabitants of which are the embodiment of the glory of God, holding in their hands the priesthood, temple, kingship, and government of the kingdom, and are the light thereof.

The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that there are two Jerusalems. *“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the **two covenants**; the one from **mount Sinai**, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage (to the law) with her children. But **Jerusalem which is above** is free, which is the mother of us all”* (Gal. 4:22-26).

Paul has here been drawing a comparison or contrast between Hagar and Sarah, and the children of the bondwoman and the children of the freewoman, which allegorically represent two covenants and the two Jerusalems. He states that there is a Jerusalem from below, which is physically here on this planet, the Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children, which answers in allegory to Hagar and is fleshly, natural Israel under the law. There is a Jerusalem which is above, which exists in a higher realm, in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord, and the Jerusalem which is above, being free, is not in bondage to external rules, laws, or administrations, and answers to Sarah and her children, the children of God through the new covenant, born from above by the Spirit. This Jerusalem is the mother of the heavenly Israel after the type and pattern of the earthly, and this is shown spiritually in the book of Revelation in the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

We become citizens of New Jerusalem by being born of the Spirit and then brought into a responsible place in the family of God, by the workings of His Spirit within us. The spiritual new Jerusalem is a glorious realm in God, far more glorious and spectacular than anything of the earthly Jerusalem has ever been! It is the *free city*, free from the old Mosaic law, free from the old Aaronic priesthood, free from the old fleshly Davidic kingship, and free from all of religion's traditions, regulations, creeds, liturgies, methods, systems, and bondages of men. And when the new Jerusalem realm has come from God out of heaven to be manifested in all its fullness here in the earthlies, with



all her glorious kingdom parts fully established and spiritually fulfilled, she shall indeed be, in truth and in fact, ***“the joy of the whole earth.”***

All of Jerusalem’s children are born of the Spirit and led by the Spirit! One can be a spiritual Israelite and not be “led” by the Spirit, but one can never be a part of the governmental order of New Jerusalem and not be led by the Spirit, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the full-grown, mature, manifest *sons of God*. And now in this heavenly light, power, and spirit they live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, without the law and the bondages of religion, but in the Spirit and by the Spirit. And is not this the city that Abraham sought for, which hath foundations, whose *builder and maker is God*? Is not this the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, not the old Jerusalem captured from the Jebusites, but the new city built up and made by God Himself *through the Spirit*? Is it not from among this people, born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and grown up in the Spirit, that the Melchizedek Priesthood is revealed? Ah, little wonder that the apostle declared that in relation to the Melchizedekian Order there are “many things to say and hard to be understood” by those unspiritual ears that remain unquickened and uncircumcised by the Spirit of Truth. The *king* reigned in the earthly Jerusalem upon mount Zion, and the *priesthood* ministered in its temple upon mount Moriah — and now God’s KING-PRIESTS in the new order of the kingdom of God occupy the high places of the heavenly Jerusalem! Oh, the mystery of it!

One of the chief errors made by believers of almost all persuasions is the common notion that all saved people belong to the same company, order, or rank in the kingdom of God. If such were true, then all the types and shadows of the Old Testament would be absolutely meaningless. Men like to imagine that *all* saints are “going to the same place” in God, that *all* are the bride of Christ, *all* have the mind of Christ, *all* are sons of God, *all* will rule and reign with Christ, and so on. To assume this is to frustrate the purpose of God in the lives of His people! Do not be deceived by the shallow thinking and senseless prattle of carnal minded teachers and preachers, nor by the childish understanding of baby Christians. There are many *justified* believers who have not been filled with the Spirit of God. There are many *Spirit-baptized* believers who have not grown up into the maturity of the knowledge, wisdom, nature, power, and stature of Christ. And nearly *all* believers fit somewhere *in between* those who are merely “saved by grace” and those who have been fully and completely CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD.

It should be clear to all that have eyes to see that the ***Jerusalem people*** dwell in a brighter glory than do the ***Israel people*** that dwell in the other parts of the land, even as ***Spirit-filled people*** dwell in a brighter glory than do ***justified people***. New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. A bride is one who is no longer a babe and no longer a child, but has developed physically, psychologically, and experientially, reaching a degree of maturity to be able to fulfill all the demands, requirements, and responsibilities of a wife. She is one who has fallen so intensely in love that her only wish is to yield herself to the high desires of her husband, giving herself completely and unreservedly to him as her lover, submitting her whole life to him as her head and lord. Oh! So many of the Lord’s people know so little of what it means to *be the bride of Christ*! Evidently they suppose it to be some kind of “honorary title” conferred on them some day in the sweet by and by! But I tell you that most saints who are today pressing on into the high calling of sonship to God started out earlier in their experience in a “bridship” relationship to Christ, intensely in love with Christ, submitted to His Lordship, and seeking only to fulfill His high desires.

There is more! Not only have we come by our walk in the Spirit to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, not only have we come to the heavenly Jerusalem, but we have also come

unto **mount Zion**. Again we go back to consider the shadow. Israel was the whole nation, Jerusalem, the capital city. All Israelites were alike citizens of the kingdom, but not all Israelites dwelt in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, where stood the magnificent temple of God, the priesthood, the kingship, together with all the governmental administration, and the glory. And while Jerusalem comprised a people of surpassing honor and glory and relationship with God, yet in all Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, and his associates, ***dwelt on mount Zion***. He was the king! Zion is the name of the ancient citadel of Jerusalem. It was captured from the Jebusites by David after he became king. From that hill David and the kings of Israel reigned gloriously, and the ark of God rested there all through the reign of David which was forty years. Mount Zion was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable in Israel!

That Zion, however, was only a faint shadow of **THE ZION TO WHICH WE ARE COME!** David was king over natural, fleshly Israel under the old covenant. Christ is King over the spiritual Israel of the new covenant! David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells upon the spiritual mount Zion! (Rev. 14:1). And this spiritual mount Zion is composed of those who reach the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem: those who, like king David of old, are “a *man* (manchild) after mine own heart, which shall fulfill *all my will*.” (Rev. 14:1-5). This mount Zion company is the ruling class, the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne. They *are the throne* in the new Jerusalem! They are the kings and priests unto God, after the order of Melchizedek, those who have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in the kingdom of God. It comprises those who are such as have gone all the way with their Lord, who have climbed the mount with Him, who have followed the Lamb as a sacrifice whithersoever He goeth, and shall now rule with their Lord upon His throne over God’s infinite realm for evermore. Isn’t it wonderful!

### THE CITY COMING DOWN

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven from God*” (Rev. 21:10).

One of the beautiful symbolisms given us in the book of Revelation is this one of the holy city “coming down from God out of heaven.” When John said that this city comes down from God out of heaven, he wasn’t talking about coming down past Mercury, Jupiter, and Mars. He meant not that it would settle down over the mount of Olives or any other geographical location. In the Bible a city represents a government, and the “holy” city is a righteous government. It is not a man-made government. It doesn’t have a “Democratic,” “Republican,” “Reform,” “Labor,” or “Conservative” party. It emanates from God, out of the celestial or spiritual realm, that is, out of the heavens of the Spirit of God, and is established on earth through a heavenly, spiritual people. We often think with such carnal minds! We hear of a city “coming down from heaven” and imagine it appearing one night in the sky. Jesus once asked the Pharisees whether John the Baptist’s baptism was “from heaven” or from men. With the same carnal reasoning we could picture John’s baptism somehow mystically floating down through the sky and landing in the Jordan River! Of course, that’s not what Jesus meant. When He spoke of John’s baptism being “from heaven” He was simply asking whether it *originated with God*, or whether it originated with men. May the blessed spirit of revelation grant us the clarity to see that this city shall never rule until it has in all truth *become* the “holy” city, prepared, adorned, and “made ready.” Oh, yes, she is *being prepared* and *being adorned*.

New Jerusalem is indeed the “holy” city, the city of holiness. This is not a city of exterior holiness, or a religious holiness. This is the power of holiness when men’s hearts are sanctified

completely unto God, because God is taking and separating unto Himself a peculiar people, dedicated, reserved, and committed as a bride completely and only unto Himself. If our holiness is a matter of what we wear or do not wear, or what we eat or do not eat, or what we drink or do not drink, or where we go or do not go, or what we do or do not do in an exterior way, then the light that we shed forth upon the people will cause them to be occupied with what they are wearing, eating, drinking, and doing. But if our holiness is a separation unto God, a commitment to do the Father's will, if we are sanctified and walk righteously in the sight of God, holy in attitude, holy in emotion, holy in desire, righteous in relationships of mind and spirit, soul and body, then the people who come to our light will not be occupied with *things*, but with serving and glorifying God, with a separation and dedication unto GOD HIMSELF. And when the Lamb's wife has made herself ready, she will come down out of heaven, bringing the heavenly life to be manifested to men. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly — "out of heaven from God." One is reminded of the scripture, "As IS the heavenly, such are they also THAT ARE heavenly. And as we have borne the IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, we shall also bear the IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY" (I Cor. 15:48-49).

My beloved, John said, "And *I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*" "***And I John saw the holy city.***" It must be a personal experience, "And I Preston saw the holy city," or "I Jane saw," or "I Sam saw," "I Richard saw." It has to be individual, you must see the city for yourself, for it is a spiritual reality which can only be known by the spirit of revelation. John saw no physical "rapture." He did not see us going out into space somewhere. God is going to perfect His elect right here upon earth with a divine life that comes out of God from heaven, and they are going to reign upon the earth. Paul said that we have received the "firstfruits" of the Spirit. And of the outpouring of that firstfruits we read, "And suddenly there *came from heaven* the sound of a rushing mighty wind...and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Heaven came down that day in the lives and experience of men. Behold, the tabernacle of God is *with men!* And He shall dwell *with them!* It's not about us "going to heaven," my friend. It's about heaven coming down to earth in the lives of men. That is the power and the glory of the kingdom of heaven on earth!

Yet millions of Christians vainly imagine that they are going to a city up in the sky to live there with Jesus forever. It's not in the Book. Multitudes believe that somehow they will escape the "Great Tribulation" by being raptured, snatched up to heaven. The testimony of scripture is just the opposite of man's childish superstitions. God has always come to man! In the sacred mists of that long ago Eden the Lord God came down and walked and talked with Adam. In another place we find that the Lord appeared on the plains of Mamre and walked and talked with our father Abraham. God came down on mount Sinai in flaming fire and smoke before the face of the whole assembled nation of Israel, and gave them His law. God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness so that He could have a dwelling place in the midst of our Israelite forefathers. In the days of Solomon the Lord came down to dwell in the temple prepared for Him upon the mount Moriah, and the glory of the Lord so filled the house that the priests could not stand to minister because of the overwhelming power of the divine presence. Long centuries later "the Word was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*" (Jn. 1:14). And now He has come again in mighty Spirit-power!

The great mistake of the churches today is that they instruct their people that if they will just live in some kind of holiness here on earth, and endure the misery, pain, sorrow, and trouble for seventy years, then they can die and go to heaven. And then they run on and on talking about the

Christians “spending eternity” in that far-off heaven! I do not say that men do not return to God in the spirit when their bodies die, but I do say that “spending eternity” out there somewhere in the blue is *not* what God is after, nor is it what salvation and redemption are about! God told Moses, when He took him up on mount Sinai, and showed to him the body of heaven in its fullness — He told Moses that the body of heaven which he beheld in the spirit was a *blueprint*, and then said to Moses, “If you will reproduce in the earth the image of what you saw in the heavens, I will come down and live in the midst of you.” The message we are called to proclaim in the earth in this hour is not that God wants us to come and live with Him in some far-off heaven somewhere, but the message is that if we will reproduce in that earth which *we are* the *pattern* in the heavens, God will come and live with man. As soon as the tabernacle was finished, made *according to the pattern*, the glory cloud of the Shekinah descended into the most holy place and the majesty of the Lord filled the house. And I tell you today, my beloved, **THAT IS THE TYPE** of what God is really after! If you will prepare Him a place in that tabernacle which *you are*, **He will come!** And just as that tabernacle of old housed the presence, life, and power of God, and stood in the midst of all the congregation of Israel to reveal God to all, and speak to all, and bless all, so shall the new Jerusalem city of God’s called and separated elect settle in the midst of the earth to reveal God, and speak as God, to reconcile, bless, deliver, and transform all the peoples of the earth. Aren’t you glad!

John saw the city descending from God, and it *is* descending from God. With every message of God that is preached, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every person that is *born from above*, thus becoming a citizen of that city, it is coming down to earth. With every saint who receives the anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every member of God’s elect who grows up another step into perfection, into the image and likeness of the Holy One, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every revelation that comes to us from the Spirit of God, taking us onward into the perfect fulfillment of God’s great plan and purpose in our lives, the Holy City is descending to earth. As the principles of the kingdom of God — righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost — are established in our lives, the Holy City is coming down from God out of heaven. When the nature and character of our heavenly Father are *formed in us*, and His precious mind rules our hearts, the Holy City is descending to earth. With every victory over sin and sickness, over limitation, darkness, and death, the Holy City is descending to earth. Beloved, it will continue descending with the development of the body of Christ into its full stature. All of this that *makes us the city* comes down from God out of heaven! That is the mystery. It will descend and descend and descend until the prayer that Jesus taught for sons is fulfilled: “Thy kingdom *come*, Thy will be done *in earth* as it is in heaven.”

This great city, the heavenly Jerusalem, that started coming down on the day of Pentecost, shall continue to come down from God out of heaven. That is, it shall continue to descend from out of the divine consciousness and life of the Lord into the receptivity, consciousness, and experience of His people on earth. It shall persist until all that dwell upon the earth shall walk in its light and enter in through its gates. Then shall the whole earth be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord. Even now the new heaven — **THE NEW MIND AND SPIRIT** — is descending into our hearts, our nature, creating within us a new earth for the tabernacling of God. Everything that God sends down out of heaven is infinitely good and glorious. Two thousand years ago He sent Jesus as His best gift, and all the world has been blessed by that gift. When He brings heaven down to us we know that He is bringing His best. Every good and every perfect gift *cometh down from above*. A king once gave a diamond to one of his friends, and the friend said, “Sire, this is too great a gift for me to receive.” But the king answered, “It is not too great a gift for a king to give.” In like manner,

if the full manifestation of the life and glory of God in you, His elect, seems beyond what you deserve or are capable of, remember! it is NOT TOO MUCH FOR GOD TO GIVE AND DO!

Another aspect of this “coming down” of the city of God is expressed by Terry Crisp who wrote: “Why is it that this Great City is coming DOWN OUT of heaven? It’s because of the burdened appeal of creation! Beloved, there is coming a GLORIOUS CHURCH in these days, a church which has been caught up to the highest heaven, to the very throne of God...but who, because of the *spirit of sonship* in their hearts, will not be able to ignore the groaning of the prisoners! They will come down from the heavenlies in High Priestly attire, bearing their gem-studded breastplate, which is the burden of mankind upon their hearts...with deliverance, with power, and with authority, to set the captives free! Imagine, if you will, a church so virtuous and bright that the nations of the world will walk in the light thereof, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor to it, submitting themselves to her authority, and seeking wisdom from her mouth!”

The world is to be won for God; there is to be in all the earth a transformed society; in the end the earth will become heaven! Death will be abolished and sin and sorrow will flee away. Paul Mueller once wrote, “The heavens, including the great and mighty glory of the Lord that is in the heavens of God’s Spirit, will indeed fall in torrents upon the earth. That will be showers of blessing upon a world steeped in sin and death. And the skies also shall rain down righteousness, as the word of the Lord has declared. Yet, it is not from the literal heavens or the literal skies that righteousness shall pour down to the earth. It is from the spiritual heavens where His righteousness shall be poured out to the earth, thus transforming this earth and all the people of it and in it into His pure and holy righteousness and the glory of the Lord. It is the new Jerusalem and all its spiritual parts that comes down from God out of heaven to the earth. It is not individual believers who are seen coming down from God out of heaven to the earth; it is a *company* of saints, the hosts of the Lord, who are seen coming from the spiritual heavens. The new Jerusalem includes the spiritual realms of the throne, the temple, and the city. So also are the saints called of God and joined to one another in each realm according to Father’s call on their lives. When those heavenly messengers of the Lord come down from God out of heaven to the earth, they do not come as individuals. They come together, in holy union with one another, by the Spirit, as an anointed and transformed *spiritual body*. When we climb this last spiritual mountain to ascend the holy, heavenly hill of the Lord, in the Spirit and by the Spirit, we will lose our own personal identity and will find ourselves and our new identity *in Christ*. And when we are fully in Christ, we will no longer be seen as individuals, but as spiritual members of an ANOINTED BODY OF SAINTS, according to our high calling in God.”

One thing is crystal clear. The city “descends” out of the high places of the Spirit to bless and minister salvation unto all the ends of the earth. The bride of Christ and the sons of God are not some country club elite who dwell in a high, holy, and glorious realm detached from the unutterable sorrows, dense darkness, and desperate needs of mankind. Oh, no!

I have no desire to be like the fishermen in a parable I read. It seems that it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish and even the great ocean full of fish was not far away. And the fish were hungry. Week after week, month after month, and year after year, these, who called themselves fishermen, met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing

is always to be a primary task of fishermen. Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. These fishermen built a large, beautiful building called “Fishing Headquarters”. It became the primary training center for fishermen. One thing they didn’t do, however — they didn’t fish!

In addition to meeting regularly, some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing. Some also said that they wanted to be part of a fishing party, but they felt called only to furnish instruction and fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know how loving and kind they were was enough. After one stirring meeting on “The Necessity of Fishing,” one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have the time to tell about the experience to other fishermen.

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don’t catch fish were really not fishermen, *no matter how much they claimed to be!* Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? The message is just this — claiming to *be a son of God*, and talking about *delivering creation from the bondage of corruption* is not enough! We can attend all the sonship meetings, seminars, and conferences; we can read all the sonship books, articles, and newsletters; we can fellowship with one another and share all the deep insights and beautiful revelations of sonship — but until what we are learning becomes experiential within us, in the spirit, compassion, and power of sonship, and then begins to flow out to touch, bless, reconcile, deliver, and transform lives around us — we are still just theoretical, *armchair sons!* There must come a moment when the power of sonship like the rays of dawn begins to shine out from us, dispelling the darkness that hangs as a pall over mankind. That is why the city **MUST COME DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN TO ENLIGHTEN, HEAL, AND RESTORE THE WORLD!** Let it begin in us today, my beloved, in whatever measure the life of sonship has been raised up within us!

# Chapter 243

## The Holy City (continued)

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*” (Rev. 21:10-11).

The Queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon’s greatness and glory and wisdom. Others had tried to give her an idea of it. They had pictured it to her so vividly and strongly that she would not believe it. She determined to investigate for herself. She beholds the glory of the king. She listens to his words of wisdom. She explores the greatness of the kingdom. And she returns with the confession that in spite of all the glowing reports she had been given, the half had not been told her! The same will, no doubt, be true with respect to the things described in the passage we are about to discuss.

The city, John says, HAS THE GLORY OF GOD. His first impression was that its radiance was like a scintillating gem. Its light could only be compared to the most precious stone John knew. He called it (as the people of that day did) a crystal-clear jasper stone. This was different from the gem called jasper today. The name for it in English today would be a giant blue-white diamond, a most beautiful gem. There is a dual reality we must take note of concerning this “jasper stone.” It relates both to the Lamb upon the throne in heaven, and to the holy city that comes down from God out of heaven. “And HE that sat (upon the throne) was to look upon *like a jasper stone...*” (Rev. 4:3). “And HER (the holy city) light was like unto a stone most precious, even *like a jasper stone...*” (Rev. 21:11). The jasper stone signifies and reveals the nature and glory of the One who sits upon the throne. Then in our present text it signifies that those who comprise the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, have now come to the glory of Him who sits upon the throne!

To look upon Him who sits on the throne is like looking at a dazzling jasper stone. To look upon the light that emanates from the city of God is like looking at a dazzling jasper stone. The light, the splendor, the majesty, the beauty, the glory of Him who sits on the throne is like a jasper stone. The light, the splendor, the majesty, the beauty, the glory of the city of God is like a jasper stone. It is the same light, for “her light” is identified by John when he says, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and *the Lamb is the light* thereof” (Rev. 21:23). Therefore — HIS LIGHT is HER LIGHT! When I look at Jesus I see a life, a nature, a truth, a ministry that is *clear as crystal*. When I look at God’s called and chosen elect I am beginning to see the same thing! The message is clear — the Lord Jesus Christ is the jasper stone! The truth and the life that He is, is as *clear as crystal*! He is described as a stone *most precious*. That is the glory of our Lord Jesus the Christ! But now John sees something else — he sees a whole city, a great city, a beautiful city, invested upon with all the scintillating brilliance of the jasper stone — the glory of God revealed in Jesus now is given to the saints of the Most High!

The twenty-seventh Psalm begins with this word, “The Lord is *my light*.” This phrase is found frequently in the Psalms, as for instance in Psalm 36:9, “For with Thee is the fountain of life; *in Thy light shall we see light*.” And again, “O send out *Thy light* and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles” (Ps. 43:3). The wonderful significance

of this One who is the light of the city is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, *in the light of Thy countenance*” (Ps. 89:15). Light is the very substance of God, it is the essence of His own person, being, and nature. It is embodied in Him. Light originates, emanates, and radiates from our heavenly Father! From the brightest star in the universe to the tail of the tiniest firefly — all light comes from God!

The glorious Son of God is the One in whom the unapproachable and incomprehensible light of God is made manifest! As we only know the sun by the light that shines from it, so is God’s Christ the *outshining*, the revelation of God’s glory! As the light that shines from the sun is one nature with it, so every son of God is of one nature with the Father! As the light that shines from the sun is one substance with it, so the sons of God are the very substance of God in the earth! Friends, Christ is the light, the light is within, it must break through, it must *arise* and *shine*, it must have pre-eminence in our hearts. The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and as we are filled with His glory we radiate His nature to creation. This is the real purpose of our calling! The Christ within — not the doctrine of sonship, not the truth of reconciliation, not the word of the kingdom, not another man’s revelation, not another man’s faith, but your own INDWELLING LIGHT enables you to manifest as the One who *is the light of the city*! Other people can follow the wandering stars and the falling stars, vainly chasing after the illusive light within them, but, praise God, there is a people in whom the God of light is being formed and birthed, partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, a new life found within, even the *light of life*. As the light of God increases in the elect in this hour, we are being brought to the place where all our need is fully met by the INNER SUFFICIENCY of the indwelling Spirit, not from that which comes from without. Christ is not doing for us from heaven, or from anywhere outside of us, for He who is the light of the city dwells *in the city*!

“Arise, shine; for *thy light is come*, and *the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall *arise upon thee*, and *His glory shall be seen upon thee*. And *the nations shall come to thy light*, and *kings to the brightness of thy rising*” (Isa. 60:1-3). These words are almost identical to what is said about the new Jerusalem in the vision of John! It is clear — there is a people UPON WHOM OUR GOD IS ARISING! He isn’t going to arise in the skies of the physical heavens, as the church world ignorantly expects, but *upon His people*. His glory will not be seen streaking across the physical heavens, but *upon His people*. Darkness does cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but in spite of the abounding desolations of wickedness and trouble, we live in the most glorious hour of all time for the people of God! The prophetic voice of the Lord is in the earth proclaiming with a great voice as of a trumpet that God is preparing His king-priests for the great task of bringing reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to the whole fallen world order. Nothing that man has done has so desolated the world that it is beyond hope! One glorious Son of God came into a world of pagan darkness, debauchery and sin, and ruthless power, and by the Spirit of His Life conquered all the gods of the pagans, transformed the lives of millions, and altered the course of world history. The divine seed that fell into this earth has sprung forth in the hearts of multitudes and is now ready to bring forth its harvest — *many sons* brought to His glory! For two thousand years the world has seen the flickering light of the seven golden candlesticks; now is the time for them to see THE GLORIOUS CITY OF GOD!

In the very midst of this darkness upon the land and gross darkness upon the people, God is arising upon His chosen ones. He is arising in my heart! How joyful we are that God, who is the Light, gets right down where the darkness is! He does not come from afar to chase the shadows



away and dispel the night, for “God, who commanded the light to *shine out of darkness*, hath ***shined in our hearts***, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6). First, God has met us right where we are. Some of us have been in some pretty dark places in our lives! But God commanded the light to shine out of our darkness, and the dawning of God’s day within us has blazoned our sky and made us a body of light to usher in a new day for all creation. The brightness of our rising brings the dawning of the new day! In fact, *we are the dawning!* As we shed His glory abroad, we are lights in humanity’s sky — so let no shadow of self keep your light from shining, but fill the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

We are appointed to shine as the sun! We have now come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, as a shining scene of great splendor and brightness and dazzling beauty. It is not our desire to merely see the light, or tell of it, or paint it, or even to walk in it — as fine as all that is. We must BECOME THE LIGHT! “YE ARE the light of the world.” “YE ARE light in the Lord.” How unworthy and unprepared for such a calling we feel sometimes! But, precious friend of mine, you may be poor, weak, unknown, unheralded, unlettered, despised and rejected of men, but if, through grace, there is a link connecting you to that One who *is* “the light of the city,” then you are, in very deed, a son of the day, even the day in which there is no night, and destined, in Father’s purpose and time, to shine in that celestial sphere, the region of glory, of which God’s Christ will be the central sun forevermore. It is not your own doing. It is the result of the counsel and operation of God Himself who has given you the light of life, joy and peace, triumph and glory, in Jesus Christ. And should you inquire as to what you can do to hasten the fullness of this divine reality I say, “Continue to expose yourself to the presence and power of HIM who is the light, soak up the light, until no darkness remains in any corner of your being.” That is the mystery.

Yet, should you be a total stranger to the hallowed action and influence of divine light, if your eyes have not been opened to behold any beauty in the face of the Son of God, and no attraction to that place in Him in the city of our God, then, though you possessed all the wealth of the nations, though you had the power of a king, though you had all the learning of an Einstein, though you were enriched with all the treasures of human philosophy, though you had drunk in with avidity all the streams of human science, though your name were adorned with all the learned titles which the schools and universities of this world could bestow, though you were piously devoted to the grandest creeds, the most honored traditions, the most lavish rituals, the most beautiful ceremonies, and service of the revered religious systems of earth, yet you are A SON OF THE NIGHT, A CHILD OF DARKNESS; and are just as dark, just as void, just as formless and empty, just as cold and dead as was the desolate earth and the dark abyss, from which you came, before that memorable day in which God first commanded, “Let there be light,” and there was light. “For ye ***were sometimes darkness***, but ***now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light***” (Eph. 5:8).

We must first see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts and then it will be radiating forth to enlighten the earth. Isaiah said of the wilderness places, the desolation of the earth, “And they shall see the glory of the Lord.” Oh, yes! ALL shall see the glory of the Lord as it was upon the countenance of Moses, as it radiated forth from the whole being of Jesus Christ upon the holy mount, as it shone in the face of Stephen. And the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former! There must be a sense that the glory of the Lord is filling His temple. The glory of the Lord so filling the temple that the priests will not be able to minister. All that is of ourselves, all that is common and ordinary, all that is done by rote, and even all that pertains to the passing “in part” church order must be hushed and fall down in prostration before the very presence

of the glory of God, in this new Kingdom Day. As the Lord finishes His work in His called and separated elect in this significant hour, there will be that expression and that shining forth of the brightness of the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. The beautiful expression of His life, the marvelous operation of His spirit, the authority and glory of His power — WILL BE SEEN UPON THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM!

We were all born into a world of darkness and death. Christ is appearing within us as Light to begin to dispel the darkness and give us hope. His light within us is making it possible for us to trust our Father to lead us in the new paths of this new Kingdom Day and bring to us a *complete transformation*. The darkness of this world shall become light all around us, for Christ, the source of all light, is shining brighter and brighter within us to dispel the darkness of the carnal human realm. His light within us is manifested as a greater revelation of the truth, by increasing His faith within us, by raising up His nature of peace, joy, love, confidence, peace, and victory in all the happenings of our lives. Do not discount this time of His preparation within us! We now see things in the world more positively, for we know our Father *is in control*. We have learned this experientially, by His great faithfulness in our own experiences, testings, and circumstances. We now see all men in a different light by the true spirit of unconditional love, mercy, grace, reconciliation, and restoration. This is all the LIGHT OF CHRIST! And Christ is the LIGHT OF OUR CITY! The more positive outlook we now have is not due to a new teaching, a new mindset, a new form of meditation, psychology, biofeedback, hypnotism, mind control, or mental imaging. Those are all *soulish* things! The kingdom of God, the nature of God, and the glory of Christ do not come by *soul power*! But it is the direct result of a greater degree of the Light of Christ within us, in the Spirit and by the Spirit. IT IS THE LORD!

God wants sons and daughters today who are not caught up in world events and prophecies of gloom and doom, not worried about the desperate needs everywhere, but who are occupied with the Father's words and the Father's works. God is raising up a people in these days who do not have to explain anything, defend anything, build anything, promote anything, protect anything. God is merciful to us in saying to us, that the reason we can declare this, the reason this commission is coming, is because the burden is not of ourselves, but the Father is sending us. He is saying to us, "I am setting you to be lights. I am ordaining you to be saviours. I am forming you to be the habitation, the tabernacle of God. I am anointing you to be kings to reign and priests to minister my salvation. I am sending you forth to be bread to be broken and fed to the hungry multitudes. I am pouring you out as a flowing, surging, bounteous river of life." Let us not sell creation short in these days. Let us not deny the Lord who has purchased us to be a people with a purpose for the ages. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill all the will of God. You never lose with God!

"Clear as crystal" signifies that which has within it no impurities. It is uncontaminated by any mixture. There is nothing hidden, nothing concealed, nothing of self, sin, carnality, or the world that hasn't been dealt with by His cross. There is no deceit, no false pretense, no mask, no outward façade covering a hidden agenda or false motive. It means that our life is an open book, we *are* what we *appear* to be — what you see is what you get! And what you get is all the love, grace, holiness, peace, purity, nature, and glory of the Christ within! It means that His life is being reproduced in us so that we all become as *clear as crystal*!

The prophet Jeremiah described the process of purifying wine. "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to

vessel...therefore his taste remained in him, and the scent is not changed” (Jer. 48:11). In the olden days, in the process of making wine, they would pour the wine from vessel to vessel. Each time as the impurities would settle to the bottom, they poured the wine off, repeating the process again and again, until the wine was pure, clear, and sparkling — all the impurities removed. This not only improved the looks of the wine but it refined the flavor, for the taste of the impurities did not contaminate it. This speaks to us of our spiritual lives progressing from experience to experience, from dealing to dealing, from purging to purging, from stripping to stripping, and from glory to glory, emptied from vessel to vessel until our lives are cleansed from all carnality and error, pure, clear, and sparkling, *clear as crystal!* Some who read these lines have had your lives turned upside down and you don’t understand why the Lord has allowed this. Ah, my beloved, God *hasn’t allowed it* — He Himself has ***done this!*** When one is poured from vessel to vessel he has no control over the process. A strong and mighty hand lifts that vessel and pours the contents into another vessel, that is, into a new and different circumstance. IT IS THE LORD! And he pours us from vessel to vessel, again and again, in each experience removing from us something that no other experience could have removed, of the corruption of our human consciousness, our old religious traditions and delusions, the self-will of the soul, and the motions of the flesh.

The light stood for the emanation of the glory of God. What is the glory of God? Ezekiel in his visions did not see the Lord. He saw “*the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*” (Eze. 1:28). Ezekiel caught just a glimpse of a glimmer of divine radiance, but that was enough to cause him to collapse, falling upon his face. The Lord is awesome! He is “God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no (natural) man can approach unto; whom no (natural) man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting” (I Tim. 6:15-16). God gave hints of His glory to the prophets, but His ultimate revelation to us came in His Son, Jesus the Christ.

I have often wondered what it really would have been like to be there when Moses had finished the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the record states: “The *glory of the Lord* filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” The same thing happened when Solomon had finished the temple upon mount Moriah, and had prayed the dedicatory prayer. “Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering, and the sacrifices; and the *glory of the Lord* filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house.” Sometimes in a gathering of the Lord’s people, or during seasons of private prayer and worship, the very atmosphere seems charged with the Divine presence. The place where we are seems impregnated with the power of God. We often refer to this as the glory of God. What did the Israelites experience when the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle and the temple? Was it just a tremendous consciousness of His presence, as we sometimes experience? Or was it an experience of a different sort? What all did they see? What did they hear? What did they feel? I have often tried to visualize just what it would have been like to be there!

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word for glory is *weight* or *substance*. In the eyes of men this literal meaning frequently lent itself to the idea that the person possessing glory was laden (heavy) with the substances of this world. Jacob’s flock was his “glory” (Gen. 31:1). The Assyrians’ power was their “glory” (Isa. 8:7). Joseph’s high position in the kingdom of Egypt was his “glory” (Gen. 45:13). The Israelites thought that they were living to the glory of God by acquiring weight of material wealth, power, and position. Today, a number of “prosperity preachers” have the very

same idea! They think God is glorified in the heaping up of the weight and substance of worldly possessions and earthly blessings upon His people. Yes, God has promised to supply all our need, but Jesus also made it plain that “a man’s life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the *things* which he possesseth” (Lk. 12:15). And again, “Lay *not* up for yourselves *treasures on earth*, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures *in heaven (the realm of the spirit) ...*” (Mat. 6:19-20). The prophet Jeremiah warned God’s people that they should not consider such human values their glory. Rather, they were to glory in the fact that they knew the Lord, whose glory was His kindness, justice, and righteousness! (Jer. 9:23-24).

When “glory” was applied to God, it was meant to bring out the weightiness of God’s nature, character, attributes, and power. His love, His wisdom, His knowledge, His righteousness, His justice, His truth — all these *weighty spiritual substances* are the “glory” of God! His glory is the emanation of what He is. All Bible dictionaries agree that “glory” is “the exhibition and display of the excellence of the subject to which it is ascribed.” Thus, in respect to God, it is the *visible manifestation* of His attributes. The glory of God is not a bright light shining out of His person like we see in pictures; rather, it is THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF WHAT HE IS. The glory of God is God *revealed*, God *put on display*, the *emanation of His essence*, all that is true in God brought into demonstration on the visible plane so men can perceive what God is like. That is what men saw when they beheld the glory of God! God is love, God is light, God is truth, God is life, God is peace, God is power, God is righteousness. When God brings what He is into expression so we can either see or perceive it, we then “*behold HIS GLORY.*” It was with this same sense of glory that Jesus spoke about how He would bring glory to the Father. Jesus would not acquire worldly wealth, fame, power, or position. On the contrary, His life would be “heavy” with the glorious heavenly qualities of love, mercy, goodness, purity, truth, compassion, wisdom, and spiritual power. And that is the call and aim of *every son of God!* ***These are the city that HAS THE GLORY OF GOD!***

To me it is a wonderful thing to hear John say that the new Jerusalem “has the glory of God.” It speaks to us and of us. Now Christ shares His glory with His bride, the Lamb’s wife, and He also has given His glory to His “many brethren” — the sons of God. For has not the Lord “called *us* to His kingdom and *glory*” (Col. 2:12)? Paul says that we have been called “to the obtaining of the *glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thes. 2:4). Again, “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in *bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory that shall be revealed in us*” (Rom. 8:18). “When He shall come to be *glorified in His saints*, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:10). “And the *glory which Thou gavest me I have given them...* that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me” (Jn. 17:22-23). Can any doubt remain in any mind that the saints *are indeed* the holy city, New Jerusalem, “*which HAS the glory of God!*”

As we have pointed out, God’s great glory is His wonderful nature and character, the substance of His Being. Some people foolishly talk about dying and “going to glory” as if glory were a place, an astral location on a planet called heaven. But one doesn’t “go” to glory — the Bible says nothing about such a crude notion. Glory is *given!* Glory is *obtained!* Glory is *attained!* Glory is *revealed!* Glory is revealed *in us!* Glory is not a place you go to, glory is something you become! When the glory of the Lord is fully revealed in His people “all flesh shall see it together.” That is the scriptural testimony about glory! If you don’t apprehend and experience God’s glory here on earth, forget about “going” somewhere to find it! As the bride makes herself ready for her

Bridegroom, and as the sons of God ascend into the spiritual dominion of His throne, the glory of God emanates through us and out from us — and as the holy city of God WE HAVE THE GLORY OF GOD! It is indeed wonderful!

Jesus Christ the firstborn Son of God is the *brightness of God's glory*, the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). That's why in Old Testament times when the glory manifested, God covered it with a cloud. He had to protect mankind from it to keep it from obliterating them. In Jesus, however, the light of God was bent, broken, so that men beheld the light as a rainbow rather than a blinding sun. John saw the same thing in vision when he beheld the glory of God's throne in the heavens — there was obviously a cloud, for he says, "And there was a *rainbow* round about the throne" (Rev. 4:3). The bow is in the cloud, the Lord told Noah. Under the Old Testament economy God covered His glory with a cloud, and then revealed it in the bow in the cloud. When Jesus came the rainbow appeared in the cloud! He was not only the shining forth of God's glory, but also the rainbow of promise — the promise of redemption, blessing, and life for all men!

While living here on earth our Lord was extremely kind. He picked up little children and blessed them. He healed all who were suffering with pain. While relatives were weeping over dead loved ones, He raised four of them to life again. The Saviour of *all men* said to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). His *kindness* made an evangelist out of the wicked woman at the well (Jn. 4:29). Because Jesus really loved the weak, helpless creatures whom He had created, He wept over them, prayed for them and taught them continually. Except those religious Pharisees, Jesus never spoke *one cross word* to the unconverted masses. He was very tender and kind in all His dealings with men, even the most wicked among them. He sat at meat with the rich and ungodly and never upbraided them for their sins, shortcomings, and moral failures. His approach to them was very gentle, delicate, and considerate. Surely then, we are safer in His hands than anywhere else! The things He has in store for every one of us are far greater than we could plan for ourselves! He is indeed GLORIOUS!

When John saw the holy city descending down from God, God was giving him a vision of the bride of Christ as she would be in her perfection. We see that twice here, the new Jerusalem, the holy city, is called the Lamb's wife, or the bride of Christ. In other places we find the true church presented as the bride of Christ. There are not two brides of Christ revealed in scripture, nor three nor four. The scripture does not make Christ a bigamist. So therefore when we see that scripture calls the church the bride of Christ, and also the holy city the bride of Christ, we see that the two are one, and that the church is the holy city, and that the holy city that John saw is simply the bride-church having *come to perfection*, the glorious perfection that God planned and purposed for her. If we follow John in the magnificent view that was given him of the holy city, and study the various parts of the city as John saw them in the vision, and if we let the Spirit of God show us the spiritual realities of which these parts or portions of the holy city are symbols, then it shall be revealed to our hearts how true it is that the holy city is the bride in her perfection.

When God reveals this new Jerusalem people in all His fullness the world will know this wonderful fact, that "the glory which Thou gavest me, I have *given them*." The glory of God is the LIGHT of this great city! Not only is it the light of the city, but also of the whole world, for "the *nations* of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. 21:24). "YE are the light of *the world*," Jesus said. The light of Christ is the *true light* which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (Jn. 1:9). "His *life* is the light of men" (Jn. 1:4). The light of God is pure light, total white light, for "in Him there is no darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5). The light which God is, is the light of the

city! And yet, we are not talking about any kind of natural light, an aura or brilliance or emanation that can be seen by the natural eye. That kind of light may be beautiful and impressive, but it ministers nothing *spiritual* to any one. All through scripture we find that light has been the symbol for truth, understanding, and reality. When the Bible says of the holy city that “her light is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal,” it simply reveals the true church as having come to all light, perfect light, all truth, purest truth, absolute understanding, with the divine nature, wisdom, and power, and walking and living and expressing and manifesting that truth and reality — the formation of the mind and image of Christ within! THIS IS THE HOLY CITY OF GOD!

# Chapter 244

## The Holy City (continued)

“...and he showed me that *great city, the holy Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God...having a *wall great and high*, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:10-14).

As the entire city symbolizes the perfected bride of Christ, the glorified sons of God, and the fully established kingdom of God invested, manifested, and operating in and through them, so the several parts of the city described signify special attributes, characteristics, and conditions that will obtain in the divine kingdom in its perfection.

One of the beautiful symbols given us in the new Jerusalem is that of its majestic wall. John testified the wall was built of jasper, or, as it would be called today, of blue-white diamonds. John used the beauty and brilliance of these diamonds to describe the glory of the city as a whole (21:11), but verse eighteen indicates the wall is totally built of these diamonds. Here is glory indescribable! The scene is one of luminous splendor! The idea is not one of mere physical appearance, but of *spiritual* wealth, beauty, power, and glory! How beautifully they reflect the glory and power of God!

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the messenger. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper...” (Rev. 21:15-18). According to this passage the city lies foursquare, 12,000 furlongs each way, which translates into 1,500 miles wide, 1,500 miles long, and 1,500 miles high with a wall around it that is 144 cubits high. Twelve is the number of divine government. 12 X 12 is 144 — that is, divine government squared, brought to its ultimate fullness. The measurement of the wall (144 cubits) means that the city is surrounded and protected by the divine authority and omnipotent power of God! That makes the wall, in our measurements, 264 feet high. Now, if this is a literal city in heaven, who are the enemies this wall is designed to keep out? What would be the purpose of a wall 264 feet high? Or, if we understand this city carnally, will the new heavens and the new earth *wherein dwelleth righteousness* be so wicked that walls are needed to protect and defend it? Even in our time, what protection would a wall 264 feet high provide? Would such a wall hinder demons, or terrorists, or jet planes loaded with bombs, or missiles carrying warheads?

The literal interpretation of these beautiful symbols cannot explain any purpose for this wall. But understood spiritually, the wall has deep meaning and wonderful significance. The walls of this city are SALVATION. “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*” (Isa. 26:1). “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call *thy wall Salvation*, and thy gates Praise” (Isa. 60:18). “For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a *wall of fire* (the

scintillating gems) round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (Zech. 2:5). “The *name of the Lord is a strong tower* (literally: a walled place)...” (Prov. 18:10). The mighty power of God’s salvation in our lives is the wall of the city of our God! God is raising up this wall within us from glory to glory. The wall has a measurement — there were 144 cubits, according to the measure of a *man*. John said that the *man* was the angel, or the *messenger*. So the man was not an angel as we think of angels, for he was indeed a *man*. The *man* is Christ Jesus! The *man* is the *measure* of the wall of the city! That is the measure of the second man, the last Adam, the perfect man, the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is the *measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Eph. 4:13). This measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ IS THE SALVATION that brings every son and daughter of God into that safety where no enemy can harm! As we come into the perfection of Christ we dwell within the walls of His salvation! The power of the Christ formed within is our defense, His life becomes the strength of our life! It is the raising up of His life within us that overcomes sin, defeats Satan, dispels darkness, subdues carnality, and vanquishes death. This is the eternal salvation that has been brought to us by the man Christ Jesus!

This “so great a salvation” is our inheritance in Christ. Where is it? “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled*, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven for you*, who are kept by the power of God *unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” (I Pet. 1:3-5). This great salvation is “reserved in heaven” for you, that is, *in the realm of the spirit*. It is reserved not in some far-off heaven out in space, but in the heavenly, spiritual dimension of our very own lives from whence it is raised up in power within us. And it is reserved for *you* — for each individual who will enter the kingdom. It is reserved for *you* and for *me*! It means that it is kept in this treasure chest of the Lord, reserved, labeled for each saint predestinated unto the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us not cheat ourselves out of our inheritance! Let us not *neglect* so great a salvation! The inheritance is our FULL SALVATION in spirit, soul, *and* body. It already exists in the spirit within us, reserved for us to appropriate in the totality of our experience!

This great salvation is “ready to be revealed in the *last time*.” The “last time” is not a date on the calendar. It signifies the completion, the fullness, the consummation, the final crowning work of God in His people. Everything in our spiritual walk and experience in God is moving us forward toward that “last time,” the ultimate maturity and power of Christ raised up in us! The Emphasized Version expresses it so beautifully, “...ready to be revealed at the *ripening time*.” The ripening time is the season in our lives and in all of the Lord’s elect when the full fruit of God ripens in our experience. The Father has waited long for the precious fruit of the earth to come to maturity — fully ripe. God wants His people to be perfectly ripe so that all the nourishment, strength, victory, power, and life of Christ is reproduced within us, the beautiful fruit that He will present to creation to partake of. Think of it!

This inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, is reserved in the heaven of our spiritual reality to be revealed in the last time, or in the ripening time. Dear ones, are we afraid to ride the rocket of God? Are we hesitant to venture to believe that something is reserved for people now that no other people has been able to reach? Are we afraid to believe that? Or do we wish to believe that this age is just like every other? Will we venture to ride on God’s rocket and soar away by faith in God and say, “Lord, I am not going to look at my weakness or consider my unworthiness, but I know you have something for me which has been reserved in my name far beyond anything I have ever dreamed of, and I do now arise to possess my inheritance.” It is reserved in heaven “for you,” *ready*



*to be revealed.* All things are ready, ready to be revealed, manifested in us. It is just as though we had something beautiful, something that eyes had never seen which was veiled, and the veil would be removed and all could look upon it. What God has for His people is ready to be revealed. God wants to lift the veil from our eyes so that we might see the full salvation that He has prepared for those who love Him. That is what was happening to John when he saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. And there he beheld in transfixed wonder the great and glorious WALL OF SALVATION by which every enemy is shut out, even the last enemy, which is death, forever shut out from us by the mighty, impregnable wall of His victorious life!

You see, beloved, walls are not for protection only, but for exclusion. The purpose of a wall in Bible times was for protection and defense, to keep out enemies. Every garden had a wall. Every city had a wall. To be inside the wall signifies protection and freedom from enemies. It means to have no enemies! Are you still struggling with enemies, dear one? Then get inside the city! Realize that you *are* the city and God has a great and strong wall about you! There are no enemies there, for every enemy has been put under foot! There is no sin there! There is no flesh there! There is no immaturity there! There is no misunderstanding there! There is no sickness there! There is no pain, sorrow, or death there! Oh, what a wall of salvation! Everything is excluded that defiles! “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). Nothing can come into the city but that which is of the life of Christ. Anything that is not of *incorruptible life* is excluded.

Those who inhabit this glorious realm are separate from the filth of Babylon and the flesh-pots of Egypt. They abide in union with Christ. They put on His glorious mind and are transformed into His wonderful likeness. Nothing else is permitted entry into their world! “Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127:1). Thank God, the Lord Himself is the keeper of the walls of salvation in the city of God! The wall of salvation has nothing to do with so-called “coverings” of elderships, headships, fellowships, rules, regulations, laws, or doctrines. If there was really “safety” in any of those orders you wouldn’t see so much confusion, divisions, disgraced ministries, and fellowships falling apart. The wall of salvation reflects the glory of God in the life of the child of God as the faith and strength and power of God Himself is formed as a nature in him. Isn’t it wonderful!

## THE GATES

“And had a wall great and high, and had *twelve gates*, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the *twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl...and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.* And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it” (Rev. 21:12-13, 21, 25-26).

The beautiful type is seen in Solomon’s temple of which we read, “*And he set the porters (answering to the twelve angels at the twelve gates in the passage above) at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in anything should enter in*” (II Chron. 23:10). Something more than a mere “gate” is understood by the word in Hebrew. It signifies a porch or a structure enclosing the gate, sometimes containing chambers. We may take our conception of what John saw from the gates of cities in ancient times which were often elaborate affairs, massive gateways which

form entrances, not simply gates as we know gates. The same is seen in the temples of Egypt. It was something like entering through the “customs house” at the border of a foreign country.

Rare indeed is the man or woman in the religious systems of earth who has a true and spiritual understanding of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb. In one remarkable prophetic word the prophet Isaiah carries us beyond the symbol to the reality, saying, “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call *thy walls Salvation*, and THY GATES PRAISE” (Isa. 60:18). How clear that the idea of a material city is but a product of carnal minds and childish understanding, as the Holy Spirit pulls aside the veil and identifies for us just what the walls and gates of the city of God really are. The WALLS are SALVATION and the GATES are PRAISE! Salvation and praise are wrought out through a *people* — not through stone walls or pearly gates. There are twelve gates of praise — twelve aspects or dimensions of HIS PRAISE lived out through the lives of those ministries through which men are ushered into the realities of the city. Again, twelve is the number of divine government, thus the rulership of the spirit in our lives evokes the praise by which HE is glorified. Jesus, our elder brother and pattern, was ruled by the mind and will of the Father at all times and in all things. His whole life *was a praise* unto God! His life, in all its words, attitudes, and actions GLORIFIED GOD! Praise is often associated in our minds only with verbal singing, thanksgiving, and noise — but true praise lies beyond what one speaks — it is a state of being. Christ’s life *was a praise* to God. It was in harmony with the purpose of God and revealed the character and glory of God.

The gates are the *entrance* into the presence, majesty, and glory of God! “*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise*” (Ps. 100:4). The gates are also the *entrance* into the kingdom of God! “There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it” (Job 28:7-8). “It shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err and go therein” (Isa. 35:8-9). It is only by and through the wisdom, grace, and Spirit of God that we can find an entrance in through the gates of the holy city. Nothing that is unclean or that defileth, nothing of the world, the flesh, or the devil can enter into this eternal divine relationship with the Lord. The *holy city*, the *divine government* of the Lord, is composed of only those that have been made fully *one in Him*, filled with His fullness, invested with His nature. They have laid aside the corruptible things of this life and have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, being granted an abundant entrance into His kingdom and glory. These are they whose life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who *is their life*, appears, they appear with Him in His glory (Col. 3:3-4).

Since the gates are never closed by day, and there is no night there; and since “entering in” by the gates is mentioned, while there is no suggestion of anyone exiting through the gates, we can conclude that there will always be access to God’s presence, power, and glory; and always access to enter (become a part of) the bride! Think of that! Night is caused by the earth turning away from the light. In this realm there will no longer be a turning away, no longer a vacillating back and forth between light and darkness, truth and error, spirit and flesh. And there is no more a dependence upon any light of any kind from *without*, for the Lamb who *is the light* dwells within! Every man has His *own light within* and no longer draws any light (receives any ministry) from anything or anyone outside himself! What a word that is!

The twelve gates of the city bear the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. This fact has led some to erroneously assume that the natural Israel, the fleshly seed of Abraham, the

multitude of nations that have come out of his loins, the thousands of millions of physical descendants of Rebekah and Leah, are the bride of Christ. But such can never be! The book of Revelation is entirely a book of symbols! A symbol is *never* the reality, it merely points to the reality. Should we begin to interpret the book literally, we would start down a slippery slope indeed, which would land us in an abyss of innumerable absurdities. If the term “children of Israel” signifies literally the fleshly descendants of Israel, then why would the term “gates” not signify literal gates of a material city? One simply cannot “pick and choose” what is to be taken literally and what is figurative and metaphorical.

The city as seen by John in holy vision is not a literal city — it is a symbolic city — a people. The gates are not literal gates — they are spiritual entrances into the presence, holiness, glory, and power of God. The river of the water of life is no babbling stream like the rivers of earth — it is the eternal outflowing of the life of God in the spirit. The wall is nothing like that wall which surrounded the ancient earthly Jerusalem — it is the almighty defense of His salvation-power in our lives. The throne is not a golden seat in some far-off heaven somewhere — rather, it is a symbol bespeaking the realm of His omnipotent power and sovereignty, and His universal dominion. Thus, when we read of the *names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel upon the gates of the city it cannot mean the literal names written with letters of the alphabet, nor can it signify the fleshly Israel — else the symbolism breaks down and what is intended as merely a figure becomes in fact the very reality. It must point beyond the outward and physical to the inward and spiritual. The things pertaining to the city of God, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, which comes down *out of heaven from God*, are both **heavenly** and **spiritual** — not of the earth, earthy. They belong to the new creation — not the old!

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are deeply meaningful to us in the spirit. An understanding of the tribes reveals to us ways and means by which we are able to enter into the new Jerusalem today. The first is RUEBEN, meaning, “Behold a son.” God is perfecting the spirit of sonship in a people, and this spirit is one of the entrances into the governmental realm of God. The throne is within the city, and it is the manchild, the manifest sons of God, who is caught up into that throne. Therefore, the spirit of sonship in our hearts by which we cry, “Abba! Father!” is the first gate of our entrance into the city! The second tribe is SIMEON, meaning “Hearing.” The admonition to the overcomer always is, “He that hath an ear, let him *hear what the Spirit saith* unto the churches.” Faith comes by *hearing* the word of God, the *living word* of God, and this spiritual capacity to truly *hear* in the Spirit and by the Spirit is the second gateway into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. LEVI, the third of the tribes, means “Unity” or “Joined,” and truly “he that is *joined* unto the Lord is one spirit.” It speaks of the principle of *abiding* in Christ — experiencing a *divine union* with Him. “I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that *abideth in me*, and *I in him*, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” Those of the spiritual tribe of Levi have discovered the secret place of the Most High!

The fourth is JUDAH, and means “Praise” — not “praisers” per se, but a people transformed to show forth HIS PRAISE, that is, HIS VIRTUES AND HIS EXCELLENCIES, TO BECOME His praise in the earth. “This people have I formed for myself; they shall *show forth my praise*” (Isa. 43:21). “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till *He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*” (Isa. 62:6-7). “That I may *show forth all Thy praise* in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in Thy salvation” (Ps. 9:14). Being changed — becoming His praise — is the fourth gate of entrance into the kingdom of God! The fifth tribe, ZEBULON, means “Dwelling.” It speaks of possessing our possessions, of apprehending that for

which we also have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, actively entering into and laying hold upon that which has been promised. It means to no longer just “talk the talk” but begin to “walk the walk”! This principle is another mighty gate of entrance into the power and glory of the city! The sixth tribe, ISSACHAR, means “Bearing a reward.” This bespeaks of *attainment* — that which surpasses grace and gifts and imputation — something bestowed in recognition of actual accomplishment and qualification. The gifts of the Spirit are given, not because of the goodness of the recipient, but because of the goodness of the Giver. They are free gifts, not merit badges. But in Issachar we receive a “reward,” as the Lord has said, “Behold, I come quickly; and *my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be*” (Rev. 22:12). As we begin to receive His reward for our growth and development in Him, we discover another gate of entrance into the governmental realm of God!

GAD, the seventh tribe, denotes “A seer” — the spirit of prophecy, the opened heavens, divine wisdom by which one understands the true nature of all things. All truth, spiritual understanding of all mysteries of the kingdom, fullness of revelation — without doubt these are an important prerequisite for rulership in the kingdom! ASHER, the eighth of the tribes, means “Happy.” “The *joy* of the Lord is our strength” — no longer that soulish joy often “worked up” in meetings by singing, clapping, and praising, nor yet that bubbly, giddy, superficial excitement of spiritual *children* over God’s goodness and blessings; but that deep, confident, abiding joy of spiritual maturity which is undisturbed by anything that happens in the outer world of appearances. If something bad or disappointing happening can rob us of our joy, then it is not this *kingdom joy* that comes down out of heaven from God! This is the *mind of Christ* and the *kingdom attitude* that is unmoved and unshaken by events, the fundamental quality that admits us into the inner calm and stability of the Christ in the face of all situations and circumstances. That is one gate we *must* enter in order to reign with Christ and enlighten the nations! The ninth tribe is NAPHTALI, meaning “Wrestling.” This denotes victory in spiritual warfare, not just in our own personal battles, but on behalf of others and on behalf of creation. It is an aspect of overcoming, but not merely the overcoming in our own lives, but overcoming the powers arrayed in the outer world — “for *we wrestle* not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high (exalted, entrenched, heavenly, spiritual) places” (Eph. 5:12). What an accomplishment that is for showing forth the glory, authority, power, and majesty of the Christ!

The tenth tribe, EPHRAIM, means “Double fruit” — that which becomes provision for all men out of the abundance of HIS LIFE. It is provision and sonship ministry. As Jesus went about healing, delivering, casting out demons, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes, speaking to the elements, His ministry was not out of the “in part” measure of the church age, for He received the Spirit *without measure*. His ministry therefore was not out of the “gift” realm, but out of the spirit and power of *sonship to God*. Every apprehended son of God must eventually move out of the old “church order” into the *kingdom order*; and out of the “five-fold” ministry into the *sonship ministry*, as Paul the apostle has taught us, “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, UNTO A PERFECT MAN (SON), UNTO THE **MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST**” (Eph. 4:11-13). This “perfect man” and this “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” ministry bears the fruit of the tree of life in the

midst of the city, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, and the fruit of which will satisfy the hunger of all creation!

The eleventh tribe, MANASSEH, means “Forgetfulness” — representing the *ministry of reconciliation*, unconditional love, mercy, forgiveness, and blessing — God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*, wherein He says even to the rebellious, “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for ALL shall know me, from the *least* to the *greatest*. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sin and iniquities will I **REMEMBER NO MORE**” (Heb. 8:11-12). All God’s sons must enter through this gate of reconciliation, mercy, and love, partaking of the spirit of the firstborn Son of God who “came *not* into the world to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be *saved*.” It is here that we *forget* the “sin” message as it is preached in the church systems, and go forth in the power of the true “salvation” message — *saviours* upon mount Zion! The twelfth tribe is BENJAMIN, meaning, “Son of the father’s right hand.” Benjamin is the youngest son and the figure of authority and power, revealing the great truth that all the foregoing principles, characteristics, and attainments must be thoroughly established in one’s experience and life *before* he qualifies to share THE DOMINION OF HIS THRONE!

There are twelve gates to the holy city — three gates on each side — and each gate is one great pearl (Rev. 21:13,21). Think of it, beloved, the seer of Patmos does not tell us that the gates are *made of pearl*, but that each of the gates IS ONE PEARL! What kind of pearls are these! Why is every gate a pearl? You remember the heavenly merchant man in Jesus’ kingdom parable of the pearl of great price. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went out and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Mat. 13:45-46). You may say, “That is the sinner seeking the Saviour. Jesus is the one Pearl of great price, and we must sell all we have and all we are to obtain that priceless stone.” Indeed! a sinner *selling*? What has old Adam got, what has the natural man got that is of any value to *pay for the Christ*? What has the natural man got to sell but his sin, lack, ignorance, limitation, darkness, and death? And what does the carnal, baby Christian in religious Babylon have to sell but his wood, hay, and stubble? Nay, the pearl of great price in this parable is not Christ Jesus, but the church! Not that filthy harlot system which calls itself the church, but the true elect of God born from above!

I do not hesitate to tell you that the Christ went and sold all that He had, He emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, being made in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, laying aside the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross — truly He paid ALL for the church which is the new Jerusalem! The inspired writer has borne divine witness: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves...to feed the church of God, which HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD” (Acts 20:28). “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be *holy* (the holy city) and *without blemish* (as the pearls and gems of the city) before Him in love” (Eph. 5:25,27). The pearl of great price is the true church in her unity, beauty, perfection, and completeness — the *bride* adorned for her Husband, the *wife* of the Lamb, the exalted *queen* of heaven, the glorious city of God! The bride so fascinated with the Lord Jesus, was of such value and preciousness unto Him, that He parted with “all that He had,” to get that pearl! Aren’t you glad!

The pearl was the most precious substance known to the ancients. A large pearl is almost priceless. A single ordinary pearl's worth may be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. And there is a reason for the pearl's great value. Some one hundred years ago, a common mussel living in the Tennessee River, began feeling mighty uncomfortable. A fragment of shell from some other mussel, long since dead, had washed into its housing. This shell fragment became an irritant within the mussel. Immediately the mussel began a response, a *healing* response, to the irritation. Because of the irritation and hurt, a juice or fluid began to be exuded by the mussel to "coat" the foreign substance. Secreting streams of pearly saliva or *nacre* — one of the things mussels as well as oysters do best — this particular mollusk managed to cover all the rough edges of the shell fragment. This provided some temporary relief. But each time the substance hardened it again created suffering, renewed pain, on the part of the mussel. Another layer of nacre was added. As the years passed, it added more and more coats of nacre until the fragment became deeply hidden in the pea-like object. Each layer added hardened into a spherical form of lustrous beauty. Thus was born an authentic North American fresh-water pearl.

The value of a pearl more than an inch in diameter is fabulous. The world's largest natural pearl found anywhere (recorded by Guinness) turned up in a giant killer clam off the coast of the Philippine Islands. It weighed a little more than 14 pounds. The pearl is baroque in shape, a little larger than a man's head, and was (at that time) valued at \$4,080,000. In the light of all this, how staggering is the statement that the portals of the new Jerusalem are each a single pearl! Each one represents the wealth of a world! Twelve of them matched! It stuns the imagination. But the type speaks powerfully to us of the immense heavenly value of our *process of entrance* into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

The pearl is formed within a living creature by a living process. Pearls do not grow in the open air, or exposed to the outer elements. Most are formed within an oyster, hidden away within the depths of the seas. The oyster is certainly not a beautiful creature on the outside, yet God has ordained a spiritual lesson for us in that on the *inside* of the oyster, through processes that He has ordained, something BEAUTIFUL and of GREAT VALUE can be formed. Thus a pure heart, a divine mind, a heavenly nature is formed in the center of the ugliness of an outwardly earthly creature. It is a living thing — a living process — and has its seat at the very center of the life. As already pointed out, the creation of the pearl is initiated by the introduction of an irritant, a piece of shell, or in most cases just a grain of sand. When the irritant arrives, there seems only one thing for the lowly creature to do. To deny the existence of the sand is futile, for it is there. To rebel is useless, for there is no way to extract it. So, slowly and patiently, the oyster begins to build layer upon layer of that milky substance, leaving a lovely coating over all, which then hardens to become a beautiful pearl. In the life of the overcomer that irritant is THE CROSS. It is produced out of suffering, and the crucifixion of a life. The "sea" is a type of our fleshly, human nature, and the living process involved in making the pearl is the living, dynamic work of GRACE that flows out from our spirit within in response to the inworking of the cross, producing the beautiful character qualities that give us an entrance into the higher dimensions of God's kingdom. Our hearts are made pure, the new creation life is formed in soul and body, through the crucifixion of the natural life and the outflowing of His grace. The cross enters our lives as something that *hurts* — we may see it as a trial, a difficulty, a hard place, a crisis experience — but it pierces the flesh-life, evoking streams of the pearly nacre of HIS LIFE, GRACE, AND GLORY, forming the beauty of the Christ within. Thus the trials, testings, and difficulties are conquered and the seeming misfortune turned to blessing. All who enter

this fair city pass through the gates of pearl, and by the abundant grace of God they turn their trials into triumphs. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

The city has twelve gates and each gate is a pearl. This reveals the great truth that every gate of entrance into the blessedness, righteousness, life, power, and glory of this city will bring you pain, irritation, and the fellowship of His sufferings as you experience the work of His cross within yourself. Is it any wonder why most people would rather “look for the city” up in the sky than to “enter into the city” in their own experience? As we enter the city we *become* the habitation and expression of God in the earth! The pain we experience as we enter the city is the crucifixion of our old nature, our old creation man, our fleshly, soulical life, and our natural understanding. At each gate we lose more and more of Self and gain more and more of Him! Once we have experienced all of the gates of the city all the shadows have flown away, all the in-part realm has been swallowed up, there is no more seeing through a glass darkly, for in union with Christ we see face to face.

Never forget, precious friend of mine, that each gate, each means of entrance into that city, is a PEARL — we cannot be admitted to the heavenly Jerusalem unless God has produced something in our lives akin to the *beauty* and *value* of the pearl. As someone has pointed out, pearls can be found anywhere in the world, even in waters that are somewhat shallow, but the best quality pearls are found in the *depths* of the sea, speaking to us of a *deep* work of God in our lives. “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these are the works of the Lord, and His *wonders in the deep*” (Ps. 107:23-24). The deeper the work of God in us, the more astounding it is to us! Without a doubt a pearl is one of “His wonders in the deep.” As God does a deeper work in us, piercing to the very depths of our life, then truly “deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts” (Ps. 42:7).

Leland Earls wrote: “A pearl cannot be produced without suffering in the oyster. Hebrews 2:10 says that Jesus was ‘made perfect through suffering.’ The Greek word used here is *pathema*, meaning ‘something undergone, i.e. hardship or pain.’ Another Greek word is used in Hebrews 5:8 where we read that Jesus ‘learned obedience by the things which He suffered.’ The word in this passage is *pascho*, which means ‘to experience a sensation or impression.’ Thus it was ALL the experiences that Jesus went through which prepared or *perfected* Him for His role or ministry as **King-Priest** in the kingdom of God. And remember — Jesus is not only our Saviour, but also the **Pattern Son** for *all* the *sons* who are to be brought to His same glory and share in His King-Priest ministry and rule. We are now being prepared for future roles of responsibility. And the experiences of life correspond to the ‘irritants’ that ‘invade’ the oyster! How we respond to them is important! If we let the spirit ‘exude’ divine grace within us, even as the oyster exudes a living substance that forms a pearl, then our right and grateful response to every experience can be used by God to form the pearl-like beauty of His nature and character in us. Pearls may be rose, cream, white, bronze, brown, or pastel shades of lavender, blue, green, etc., depicting the various ‘hues’ of the Lord’s work in us by His Spirit. It is not the irritants (experiences) themselves that make us overcomers, but rather our drawing upon His grace — His divine life substance, that builds layer upon layer of pearl-like beauty in us. The appealing iridescence and the luster for which pearls are prized are due primarily to the reflection and refraction of light on the surface of the translucent gem. Ah, beloved, the light of the new Jerusalem is the GLORY of God! Can we be ready for that city unless when that glory shines upon us there is a reflection and refraction of HIS VERY OWN beauty and image developed within us? — end quote.

In ancient times, pearls were regarded as a symbol of perfection. This came about because of their pure color — predominantly white with other hues and tones. Their appearance was also regarded as softer, more feminine, than that of mineral gems such as diamonds and emeralds. Because they are softer and vulnerable to scratches, pearls need gentle treatment. A modern comparison of pearls and other precious gems, made by a woman's magazine some time ago, stated in a mock-serious vein that, while diamonds make a woman appear harsh and mysterious, pearls make her more sexy and sensuous. Is it not remarkable, in the light of this worldly evaluation, that two millenniums ago the Holy Spirit used the pearl as a symbol of entrance into the company of the prepared, adorned, beautiful, and glorious *bride* of the Lamb! She is prepared, perfected, matured, adorned with goodly pearls as a bride for her Husband. Corporately, it is the feminine qualities of God formed in a people and united to Himself. Individually, it is the soul cleansed, sanctified, and transformed, made one with the spirit. O glorious city of God!



# Chapter 244

## The Holy City (continued)

And the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the foundations of the wall of the city were *garnished with all manner of precious stones*. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, a crysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst” (Rev. 21:14,19-20).

As we read these wonderful words it becomes at once clear that the use of gems in the description is not by chance but instead by divine purpose, because it specifies the kind to be used in relation to each foundation and the gates. What wealth of joy and instruction for God’s elect is contained in this highly figurative language! Here we are told that the twelve apostles of the Lamb are the foundations of the city. This alone should be ample evidence to us that God never intended to present that this new Jerusalem is a literal city. For it says that the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are written upon the foundation stones, associating them in a living way with the foundation. By inspiration the apostle Paul has told us that we who are the temple of God are *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). So we see that the apostles and prophets *are the foundation* and that we are to build upon this foundation. The very truth I am proclaiming to you today is rooted in the word and ministry of those early apostles! The very work that God is doing in you today to bring you to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is rooted in that foundation laid down by the apostles of both that day and this day! And we, the body of Christ, are God’s building, God’s house, God’s temple, and we are the Holy City that He is building in the heavens of His Spirit!

There are twelve foundations — not separate foundations apart from one another supporting different parts of the city, but twelve foundations laid one upon another, giving perfect and full support to the whole. This, furthermore, indicates that in John’s vision the foundations of the city come to rest on the surface of the ground, signifying that this heavenly city is to touch the earth — its ministry, light, glory, life, and dominion are all prepared to bring heaven down to earth in the midst of men! One might suppose that, according to human custom, rougher material would be selected for the foundation. Not so, however. The most brilliant and costly gems were chosen to lay these courses. Nothing cheap nor common had anything to do with the raising up of this marvelous city. It is God’s handiwork, and we cannot but admire its wondrous beauty. Since these foundations are adorned with dazzling stones it is evident that they are not beneath the ground, but underneath the city in a heavenly realm, clearly visible for all to see.

In rearing earthly structures men seek such materials as combine durability and beauty. Look at this wall with its foundations! For *durability*, it has the most indestructible material that can be found on earth. For *beauty*, the language of man cannot even convey a meager description of its exquisite loveliness. Oh, wonders of God’s handiwork! How inexpressibly glorious! Jewels are brilliant. How often the clear sparkle of a gem set in a ring or as an ornament of adornment catches

our eye, and almost without thinking our gaze follows the every movement. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hues the rays of light that fall upon them. Oftentimes the large, well-cut gem seems to possess an inner light apart from that which strikes it. However, this we know is merely an optical illusion, because no jewel possesses light within itself. So with the saints of God and the gifts and graces that are conferred upon us! The light that shines out from us is not a self-generated light; rather, it is the same light *which He is*. Apart from God we are nothing, even as the brilliance of the jewel darkens and dies when removed from the light.

Jewels are beautiful. Precious stones have a beauty of form and color that delights the eye. Stones capture light. Diamonds sparkle in the light and it is the light that gives each stone its brilliant form and color. Walk into any jewelry store and you will notice that the stones are all displayed under light. A stone has only little beauty apart from light! The stone captures the color in the white light that we cannot see. It gathers it, intensifies it, and reflects it. Visualize spread out before you on a cloth of midnight blue velvet, some jewels of beauty. The clear, icy sparkle of the diamond, the warmth of glowing red of the ruby, the cool green of the emerald beside the regal purple of an amethyst. See also a sapphire reflecting the blue of heaven; a chalcedony, pale blue, translucent, and wax-like; and interspersed among them all, lustrous pearls, warm glowing spheres so strikingly different from the sharp facets of the other gems, all reflecting the *same light* in gloriously different hues, none detracting from the other, but all enhancing the beauty of the whole.

In its spiritual application, those many-hued stones bring out the varied qualities of the nature and glory of God, made known through His people. Your life in Christ has infinite possibilities, but you must *walk in the light as He is in the light* for it to be seen! There will be different rays of His glory revealed through different members of the Christ-body, illustrated by these different precious stones, which are the emblems employed, to set forth the luster of God's elect, in heavenly brilliance and glory, and the way in which He displays the beauty which He has formed in them. Put a light through an emerald, and it is quite different from that of the ruby, and though we are all partakers of the same grace and glory of God, that grace and glory will shine through each differently, and no two are alike. It would be an immense pity if all the saints were like a truckload of bricks — all the same shape and color. What a dull, drab city it would be! Just as there are no two leaves of the forest alike, and no two snowflakes alike, so there are no two sons and no two daughters of God alike! All are alike in being perfected in His image, but all are different in the expression of that image, just as children are different expressions of their parents.

Many years ago Bill Britton sent out a little writing titled A PARABLE OF TRUE RICHES. It went like this:

Two men were going through a dark forest one night when they heard a cry for help. They were on a long journey, with only a certain amount of time to complete it, so they were in a hurry. The path they were on was narrow, and rather hard to follow. They pondered the question as to whether or not they should answer the cry for help. It might be a trap. Or they might get lost in the dark forest. In any event, they would lose a lot of time. But they decided that if someone was in need of help, they really should find time. So they plunged into the forest, following the sounds of the cry for help. Deep in the forest they found him. He was a little old man pinned under a large tree limb that had fallen upon him. One of the wolves of the forest had also heard him, and was almost upon him. But the two men drove the beast away with clubs. They lifted the limb and

released the man. He was bruised and sore, but there were no broken bones, and in a few minutes he was feeling much better.

He was very grateful, and thanked them profusely. He said, “You men have saved my life, and I want to do something for you that will make you very happy.” They laughed at this, and said, “Why old man, what in the world could you do to make us happy? That is very foolish talk. You must be joking.” They laughed some more. This angered him very much. He said, “You should not have laughed at me. I am not joking. You saved my life and I am going to make you very happy. But because you laughed at me, you will also be very sad. Tonight on your journey, you will come across a dry creek bed. Stop and pick up some of the stones from the creek bed, and tomorrow you will be very happy and very sad.” They were puzzled by this, and asked him to tell them the answer to this riddle. But he would only say, “When the sun comes up in the morning, look at the stones from the creek, and you will know the answer to the riddle.”

As they continued their journey, they talked about the riddle and tried to figure out the answer, but to no avail. Finally, during the night they crossed the creek. They remembered what the old man had said, and each one picked up a handful of stones from the creek bed and put them in his pocket. They continued on till morning. As the sun was rising, they stopped and sat down to rest for a few minutes. It was then they remembered the riddle, and how they were to look at the stones in the light of the sun, and know the answer to the riddle. To their amazement and joy, when they examined the stones, they found them to be precious jewels — rubies, diamonds, pearls, and emeralds. With only a handful of these gems, they were richer than they had ever dreamed of being! They each had wealth enough to build a house of their own, and money to live on. They were very happy, and danced around in joy and glee.

But suddenly they became very sad. For they only had a handful of these precious gems. And had they only known what was so near and available to them during their journey through the dark night, they would have emptied their packs of all their other baggage, and filled their packs with these riches. Had they done this, they would have been a hundred times richer than they were now. Instead of having just a comfortable living, they could have had anything they wanted and a life beyond their wildest dreams! The very thought of what they had missed on their journey, made them very sad.

This is a parable, dear friend, of your life and mine, and of our journey into the kingdom of God. There is One who has made great riches available to you, obtainable as you make your journey through the dark night of earth's sorrows, trials, and testings. But you must “lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you, and *look unto Jesus*,” in order to appropriate what has been set aside for you. There is much baggage that must be unloaded from your life, and great and glorious things of the spirit which must be acquired in its place. But it is worth it! Nothing in this earthly life is so precious as to compare with that which God has prepared for them that love Him! “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up treasures in heaven,” Jesus said. Paul tells us that all the heavenly treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *hid in Christ*. Only as you acquire these spiritual treasures *on your journey* will you have the beautiful gems of divine nature, wisdom, power, grace, and glory with which to be adorned in the city of God!

Simply by believing the truths of sonship and the kingdom, you will not just wake up one fine morning to find yourself *adorned* with the priceless jewels of the bride of the Lamb and the glory of New Jerusalem. Oh, no! These wonderful heavenly and divine virtues and excellencies must be acquired on your journey through this age of darkness on planet earth. Cast aside all the useless weights of carnality and flesh and self and religion that hold you down to the earthly realm, and apprehend the treasures of heaven that will make you rich with heavenly wealth! Neglect not so great a salvation, neglect not such a divine provision, neglect not such a high and holy calling — or you will be very happy and very sad. You will be very happy that you have made it into the kingdom of God — and you will be very sad that you have arrived there a spiritual pauper! You don't think so? Then let us heed the sobering words of Paul the apostle wherein he wrote, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man *build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED, YET SO AS BY FIRE*" (I Cor. 3:11-15). If what you have gathered in this life and adorned yourself with, and built up upon the foundation of the city of God goes up in smoke, you will only be able to stand in the ashes of God's great bonfire and let God "wipe the tears from your eyes."

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, scientists came to understand gems as "rare and noble productions of nature." They are distilled from duller rocks by processes that often involve the play of fierce heat and pressure deep within the earth's crust. And they derive their loveliness from a variety of prosaic sources. For example, precious ruby and the common abrasive emery consist of the same basic mineral, corundum; the difference between them is accounted for by the presence of minute traces of other substances. Diamond is chemically identical to graphite, only a different crystalline structure gives the diamond the hardness, clarity, and flash for which it is so highly esteemed.

As diamonds and other precious stones pass through long seasons of intense heat and cold and pressure in nature's laboratory before they reach their perfection of beauty, so must every member of God's elect pass through pain and suffering and dealings and challenges before we can be perfected. And though chemists can make diamonds and other precious stones artificially, yet when we apply careful tests to them we see their defects. That's why a zircon, though it superficially resembles a diamond, has very little value when compared with a genuine diamond! So we cannot reach in a single day, or without the heat and cold and pressure of life's experiences, such perfection that we will have no defects in us, but by continually living in the presence of our Father, and subject to the deep dealings of God in our lives through the crucible of experience, we will become perfect even as He is perfect! Our Lord Jesus is the pattern and example for every son of God, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings,*" for, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being *made perfect,* He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9).

Let us, therefore, meditate upon the precious stones of earth and see by the spirit the analogy that the Lord draws between them and His elect people who become His holy city, His perfect and

heavenly government over all things. Let us notice some common characteristics of precious stones and see how beautifully they illustrate the spiritual characteristics in the lives of God's sons.

Jewels are RARE, PRECIOUS, PURE, BRILLIANT, BEAUTIFUL, AND VALUABLE!

First, jewels are *rare*. Think about it — if you went out in search of precious stones how long and painstakingly must you search before one is found? The majority of stones are common and therefore of very little value. Lorain and I have through years past enjoyed hiking and camping in the mountains of the southwest, and it is impressive to explore the high and numberless mountains of solid stone. And yet, it is awesome to think that the stone revealed through upturned mountains is slight in comparison to the vast quantity of stone buried deep beneath the surface! Our son, Andy, since he was a teenager has been a rock hound. He can tell you that the occasional precious piece is rare indeed! And is this not an appropriate illustration of the rarity of finding a mature and perfected son of God among the hundreds of millions of professed believers in the world? Rare indeed is a saint who has seen the vision of God's truth and is yielding himself under the dealing hand of the Father to become a son indeed! No wonder Jesus said to His small group of footstep followers, "Fear not, *little flock*, it is the Father's good pleasure to give *you* the kingdom!"

Then, too, jewels are *precious*. One could actually hold in his hands precious gems which would be worth more than half a billion dollars! Some jewels, because of their history, are virtually priceless. To illustrate the immense value of gems think of the Empire State Building in New York City. Thousands of skilled artisans worked for many, many months erecting this architectural masterpiece towering over one hundred stories high. Incomprehensible amounts of steel, concrete, wood, and other materials were gathered from many quarters to go into its construction. At last this gleaming masterpiece was completed, a monument to man's ingenuity, at a cost of some twenty-eight million dollars those many years ago. Yet — just one small handful of gems could be worth many, many times the present value of this marvelously imposing structure! Of such value are God's elect in His eyes! For you see, the powers and processes that go into making a priceless gem exceed by millions of times the work and powers that were involved in the construction of the Empire State Building. This speaks to us of the great value of the dealings, pressures, tribulations, processings, testings, quickenings, blessings, and workings of God in the lives of His called and separated people! Is this not what Paul meant when he wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy to be compared* with the *glory* which shall be *revealed in us!*" (Rom. 8:18). Those radiating His glory, as the result of all His deep and powerful processings, are His *precious ones*! That is why the trial of our faith is declared to be *more precious* than fine gold! That certainly puts it in the *gem* category!

The best jewels are *pure*. Geologists tell us that precious stones were once part of the surrounding elements in which they are found. Through the ages earth movement, pressure, and heat began a separating work, and finally that which was once mixed and impure became crystal, free from alloy, and that which was commonplace became a jewel! How often does the call of a son parallel this process! The intense pressure and heat of our trials and tribulations, and Father's crushings and provings, separate out of our lives the flinty disposition of self-will and the clay of carnality and instability. We know that the diamond was once carbon, black and soft in comparison to the clarity and hardness of the final product. In the depths of the earth, lumps of carbon are subjected to intense heat and terrific pressure, and a miracle is performed! That which was black

becomes crystalline clear, and the hardest substance known to man. What a lesson! Truly the power of God can take that which is weak and black and worthless and *transform it* into the very image and likeness of God! Oh, the wonder of it!

All of nature in the material creation, as designed by the wisdom of our heavenly Father, is a precise natural picture of the spiritual workings of God in His new creation. Every one of God's jewels, the bride of the Lamb and His company of sons, is to become pure in the kingdom of the Father! The very first call of the apprehended one is to separate himself from the contaminating elements of the world in which he is found! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a *Father* unto you, and ye shall be my *sons* and my *daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Jewels are *brilliant*. As I mentioned earlier, now and then the clear sparkle of a gem someone is wearing in a piece of jewelry catches our eye. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hues the rays of light which fall upon them! The various hues represent different aspects or facets of the divine nature such as love, goodness, grace, peace, faith, strength, wisdom, and power. All these are contained in the *white light which He is!* We are called to radiate the multi-faceted glory of God! Paul speaks of the "manifold wisdom" of God. Manifold means "many-splendored" or "many-sided" or "multi-faceted." Every part of God's glory is many-faceted, meaning that all are revealed in different ways in the lives of God's chosen ones just as light is reflected by a diamond. This can be done only by a people processed as a priceless gem! Common stones radiate nothing of His many-faceted glory! All you see is the stone, not the beauty in the light it reflects. Only to a processed, pure, gem-like people is the word of the Lord sent, declaring, "Arise, shine, for *thy light* is come, and the *glory* of the Lord is *risen upon thee*...His glory shall be *seen* upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

Jewels are also *beautiful*! So is the city of God! "Out of Zion, the *perfection of beauty*, God hath shined" (Ps. 50:2). And to the bride of Christ, the holy city, the word comes, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King *greatly desire thy beauty*: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Ps. 45:10-11). Our Father is clothing us with the *beauty of holiness*, which is the emanation of the glory of His *light of life*!

In one of his excellent little papers Vern Goss wrote: "Peter declares that the true temple of God is built of lively stones, stones that are not hewn of men, but set by God as it pleases Him. A lively (living) stone is a building block of *life* — it has within its centrality the essence of life, that being God. A lively stone does not come from the natural order, the world, but comes from the supernatural order, God. A lively stone has been born of God and is not a product solely of the earth realm. Jesus told the Jews that though they were the children of Abraham they were not to be smug in that knowledge because God is able to take *stones* and raise them up into being the children of the kingdom! *Risen stones*, were once common and lifeless stones, but the resurrection power of God has caused them to arise into a state of life."

My heart has been stirred and thrilled beyond measure as I have mused upon the glories of the Holy City of God's great and eternal kingdom. It has stood out to me that the *names* of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are inscribed upon the twelve foundations of the city. Time and space do not permit us to explore the deep meaning within each of the names of these apostles, but each bespeaks of a foundational principle in the governmental realm of God. Some who read these lines may want to search this out for themselves. In the various symbols of this city we see different representations of truth and the purposes of God in His people. The walls speak to us of the strength of the Christ within as our defense against every enemy of the spiritual life. The gates portray those precious truths and experiences in God by which we are given an abundant entrance into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The foundations figure for us those foundational truths, experiences, ministries, and characteristics upon which the whole economy of God's kingdom in our lives rests. The temple of God, the city of God is built upon the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. This means that Christ is *foundational* in the life of the new creation — there is that of Him that is laid in us as the basis, underlying principle, substratum, and support of all that is raised up in our lives. Christ Himself is *the apostle and high priest* of our profession, says the writer to the Hebrews. The apostles, that is, the *apostolic ministry*, is the underpinning of God's house, God's temple, God's city. Great is the mystery!

Our English word "apostle" transliterates the Greek word *apostolos* which means "one who is sent." During the earthly ministry of Jesus twelve disciples were called "apostles." These are the ones called in our text "the twelve apostles of the Lamb." This means that the twelve were specifically those who followed Jesus and were sent forth by Him as an extension and projection of His role as the "Lamb" of God. He came as God's Lamb, as God's sacrifice, not dying in our place, but dying "for us," that is, on our behalf, pouring out His life *for us* and *to us*, thereby giving us life! To give our life, to pour out our life, is another expression for dying in a sacrificial way, the principle and power of the LAMB. In Christ we see the pouring out of life without measure. It is a dying, and yet not dying, for the supply of life is inexhaustible, yet there is an eternal pouring out of that life. Thus eternal life is the LAMB LIFE, and in this pouring out the law is fulfilled, "Whosoever *loses his life, lays down his life, pours out his life, shall save it.*" These apostles of Christ were the first after Jesus who lived out this principle of the laid down, poured out life, and therefore are called the twelve apostles *of the Lamb*. But ultimately, the symbol is not pointing exclusively to these twelve, for while we cannot explore the details of it now, the fact is that there were many apostles in the church in those days. The twelve are a symbol, signifying a greater truth! And the message is just this — those who are *sent* by the Father, who *lay down their lives in sacrificial dying, pouring out torrents of divine, eternal life to the people of God and to creation, ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO THE CITY OF GOD, WHICH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD!* Oh, the mystery of it!

May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God grant us understanding in this unique and momentous hour at the transition of the ages. It is my deepest conviction that God is raising up and sending forth an entirely *new apostolic ministry* in this present day. I do not hesitate to declare to you that the apostles' ministry has always been essentially that of bringing in a NEW ORDER. A friend has shared the following insights into this great truth: "Apostles build where *no other man has built*. So if a man is doing what others have done for years before him, or what was done two thousand years ago, I do not see that as a true apostolic ministry today. Moses, as an apostle, brought in an entirely new order. He went up into the mountain and brought down the 'house law' for the

new dispensation. Jesus, as the ‘apostle of our profession’ ushered in a whole new age, and the church age apostles established that new thing. Apostleship is associated with NEW THINGS, foundation layers, those who CRACK THE FORM OF THE FORMER AGE and bring forth the essence of it and build the essence. Jesus, as an apostle, cracked the form of the Old Covenant and brought forth the essence of it in Himself.

“Many brethren have felt an inward call to apostolic ministry in this hour, and not yet understanding the fullness of what the Lord is doing have tried to apply this call in the wrong realm — moving under ‘church order’ in an attempt to fulfill it. The sun is now setting on the church age and the transcendent glory of that brighter and greater age when the body of Christ has been brought to its fullness, the manifestation of the sons of God, and all nations brought under the dominion of the kingdom of God, is even now dawning upon us. It is now time for *the apostles of the kingdom* to be sent forth, and these apostles will CRACK THE FORM of the church age and bring forth its content as an essence that the church has never yet known. These can be naught but the *first of the firstfruits company*. These must be brought forth prior to the establishing of the kingdom, as the *foundations* of the kingdom are laid in them” — end quote.

## MEASURING THE CITY

“And he that talked with me had a *golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof*. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he *measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs*. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he *measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel*” (Rev. 21:15-17).

In his vision, John now observes the angel or messenger about to measure the city with his golden measuring rod. The city is tetragonal — foursquare — in shape. In fact it is a perfect cube since its width, length, and height are equal. There were several kinds of “cubits” used in those days as units of measurement. The ordinary cubit in use among the people of Israel was six handbreadths (spans), corresponding to the length of one’s forearm from the elbow to the center finger. But in Ezekiel 40:5, the messenger measuring the temple in Ezekiel’s vision uses a cubit measure with a span (handbreadth) added — the six-span cubit (six: the number of man) that symbolized *human imperfection* being *changed* to the seven-span cubit that symbolized the *spiritual perfection* of the temple of God. Ezekiel tells us, “And behold, there was a wall all around the outside area of the house of the Lord, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed six long cubits in length, *each cubit being longer than the usual one by a handbreadth*: so he measured...the wall” (Eze. 40:5, Amplified). So the messenger in Ezekiel’s vision used what he called the “long cubit,” or the seven-spanned cubit signifying *divine perfection*.

The King James Bible says of this measurement that it was “*according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel*.” But that is not how the Greek text reads! The words “according to” are not in the Greek, but are added by the translators. The literal rendering is, “And he measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits — the measure of *a man, which is, a messenger*.” It should not be difficult to tell that the reference is to “a man” and not “the man,” that is, “the messenger” that John saw measuring the city. It points to *another man, another messenger, beyond* the one having the golden reed that John saw in vision! It should also not be difficult to see that that man



is THE CHRIST! Always in scripture, when we find someone being sent forth with a measuring reed, to measure the temple of God, or the house of God, or the city of God, they are being sent to measure the spiritual condition of that temple or that city. So we see that the messenger was sent with a measuring reed to measure the holy city or to measure the spiritual condition and stature of the Lord's elect.

May our heavenly Father now give understanding to all who read these lines! To "measure" the city signifies inspection, examination, to take inventory, an evaluation of just how much we have experienced of Christ and the life of sonship, to determine just where we are in our growth and development in the spirit, the state of our progress into the fullness of God. Trying to accomplish any of this by human effort, natural understanding and logic, fleshly ability, or religious exercises is a most heinous pit into which to fall! The "measuring" can only be done by the Spirit who searches all things! "For the *Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God*. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:10-11). The message is clear — only the Spirit of God can determine our *spiritual stature*!

Is this not what is meant when John says, "And he that talked with me had a *golden reed to measure the city*." Oh, yes! God is the One who initiates the action, and the Lord Himself is the One who gives the empowerment for measuring, who searches out the line, who plumbs the depths — not us! John wasn't told to measure the city, he could only report the result of the measuring. Until we can see all people and all things as *God sees them*, we form opinions and make judgments about people and spiritual things and moves of God by outward appearances or by our own preconceived judgment! It is not the measure by the reed in the hand of the messenger sent from God, that is, the Holy Spirit! Those who walk in the living truth and in the Spirit and by the Spirit, judge all things by the *mind of Christ* — hence the measuring reed! Only in the Spirit and by the Spirit are we able to perceive and see the true reality of all things.

When John sees the messenger measuring the holy city we must understand what the measure is. Christ Jesus Himself is the measure! He is the golden reed! Truly, He is the measure, for all God's elect are being brought unto "a *perfect man*, unto the *measure* of the *stature* of the *fullness of Christ*!" Now the only thing we can measure by when we measure the bride of the Lamb and the city of the great King is the nature, the character, the wisdom, the glory, and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter eleven of the Revelation John was given a reed like unto a rod and told to rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein (Rev. 11:1). Now it does not say that the temple at that time measured up to the full stature of Christ. It is my conviction that it did not! You see, John was given a reed like unto a rod with which to measure the temple. The reed was just a very common measuring rod, of ordinary, plain, weak, and destructible material, signifying that the standard for this measurement was not extremely high. But when we come to the holy city at the close of the dealings of God throughout the book of Revelation, the messenger who measures the city has a ***golden reed***, indicating that it is now time for the elect of God to be found perfect. Gold is the symbol in scripture representing the incorruptible, divine nature of God. Just as gold is the perfect metal that cannot be tarnished, so God's nature is perfection and cannot be tarnished!

Therefore, when the *temple of God* in chapter eleven becomes the *golden city of God* in chapter twenty-one, John reveals to us that “he that talked with me had a *golden reed* to *measure the city*, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.” Ah — now the rod is no longer a simple reed, it is a *golden reed*. Gold, as I mentioned, speaks of divine nature, revealing to us the great truth that the city has now become no longer a temple of ordinary stones, measured by an ordinary reed, but it is a city of gold and precious gems — it has attained fully to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and is therefore *measured to a higher standard*, even the gold standard, as indicated by the golden reed. Full measure! The quality of the measure and the quality of the city correspond — both are gold. As the temple we are measured to a lesser standard, and are even measured by our brethren (John), for we are still growing, learning, developing, maturing, and becoming. But that is an imperfect measure as Paul has written, “...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (II Cor. 10:12). This is not the measure of the city! The city is a people that has attained to the full perfection of God’s nature and glory! Only the Spirit of God can measure the city by the standard of God’s Christ! Isn’t it wonderful!

### THE CITY FOURSQUARE

“And the city lieth *foursquare*, and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The *length and the breadth and the height of it are equal*” (Rev. 21:16).

In reference to this beautiful description Ray Prinzing has pointed out that “foursquare” and the “equality” of all its sides denote that there is COMPLETENESS IN EVERY PART. Quality is not sacrificed for quantity. There are no highs and lows. Equality is revealed in every dimension and inworking. When every individual member of the Lord’s elect is brought “*unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*” all will be equal — God ALL *in all!* When He is THE ALL in you, and He is THE ALL in your brother — that’s true equality!

Another has pointed out that in ancient times the cube was held to be the most perfect of all geometric forms. In keeping with that, the only thing in the whole Old Testament economy of types and shadows that was foursquare, or a cube, was the Holy of holies in the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. The outer court was rectangular. The holy place was rectangular. But the most holy place was a cube — ten cubits by ten cubits by ten cubits. All spiritual truth and reality embodied in the typology of the Holy of holies is ultimately fulfilled in this city. The new Jerusalem is a people that has come to perfection in the full stature of the Son of God! There is no temple or sanctuary in the holy city, and no varied courts, rooms, or compartments. The entire city itself IS ALL SANCTUARY, THE GLORY OF GOD FILLS THE WHOLE! As a cube, full of the divine presence and power, the city stands as the ultimate Holy of holies — hence the name — the *Holy City*. The immediate presence and glory of God is no longer in a reserved place in His kingdom, for it floods all who comprise the city. It is the full and complete revelation, the unveiling of the glory of God in and through His GOVERNMENTAL PEOPLE. It is indeed wonderful!

# Chapter 246

## The Holy City (continued)

“And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he *measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs*. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he *measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits*, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel” (Rev. 21:16-17).

The heavenly messenger measured the holy city and it was twelve thousand furlongs or fifteen hundred miles: the length and the breadth and the height of it were equal, as we have pointed out — a cube. Some have supposed that a literal city must be meant since various measurements are given. However, we must always keep in mind that this city *is* the bride, the Lamb’s wife! Therefore such dimensions must necessarily have a symbolical and *spiritual meaning* in relation to the body of Christ! The measurements are in multiples of twelve which are a symbol and signature of God’s purposes in His elect. The number twelve often enters into the symbolism of the book of Revelation — twelve tribes, twelve stars, twelve apostles, twelve angels, twelve foundations, twelve gates. So here the number twelve is found in the measurements of the city: each side is twelve thousand furlongs and the wall is one hundred and forty-four cubits, which is twelve times twelve.

Twelve is the number of *divine government*. One thousand is the number signifying the *day of the Lord* (II Pet. 3:8). Twelve times one thousand is God’s light and illumination (day) multiplied by God’s authority and rule (government) — the perfect and full dominion of God by the revelation of His glory without mixture, limitation, or darkness. The Holy of holies of God’s eternal kingdom is, therefore, in type, 528,000 *times more glorious* than the Holy of holies in the Mosaic tabernacle that was a cube of only ten cubits or fifteen feet each way! The true measure of the city is the Lord Jesus Christ: “...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). The people who come to *this measure* will be the glory of God, the perfection of beauty, and the light of the world in the fullness of what that means, and will bring the total restoration that God, who cannot lie, has promised to all creation. Hallelujah!

Some years ago, as I waited before the Lord, a precious and hidden truth began to be opened before the eyes of my understanding. The Spirit of God in His own singular way shined His light of revelation upon an incident in the life of Jesus. The Spirit brought to my attention the scene in the garden of Gethsemane on that horrendous night when the mob stormed into the solitude to arrest our Lord, and Jesus declared that He could call for TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS to come to His rescue. But He refused to summon them because He was born to die for the sins of the world and the scriptures and the plan of God must be fulfilled.

I wondered why “twelve legions” when there were *innumerable companies* of messengers comprising the heavenly hosts (Heb. 12:22). If in the Spirit of God we can sound the fathomless depths of wisdom and knowledge that inspired our blessed Lord when He spoke of the “twelve legions” of messengers, I believe we shall have in our possession the explanation of things that have remained secret and have been hidden from our understanding for centuries. It is significant to note that “legion” is a *military term*, for in ancient Rome a legion was the largest single military division composed of several thousands of foot soldiers, with additional cavalry,

under the command of a general. It should be clear, first of all, that when Jesus referred to twelve legions of angels that could be summoned to His defense, He was identifying THE ARMY OF GOD! These were messengers, mighty in power and glory, trained, disciplined, prepared, and equipped for the specific purpose of *spiritual warfare* — to bring deliverance! Then, too, it should be plain that since Jesus had the authority to *command* these “twelve legions,” He Himself was THEIR GENERAL! Can we not see by this that Christ is revealing to us in the simplest of terms that He Himself is “the angel of the Lord,” the “Captain of the Lord’s host,” appearing throughout the Old Testament — thus He is THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF GOD! The seer of Patmos beheld with wonder the same great truth when in spirit he saw the Christ riding out of the heavens of the Spirit of God on His white horse of conquest, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, followed by the royal armies of heaven!

Then I was made to know that the “twelve legions of angels” of which Jesus spoke is a *symbol* for the army of God. This knowledge stirred me tremendously! Think not, dear friend, that Jesus meant that He could call an *exact number* of heavenly messengers, for the number of soldiers in a legion was not fixed — it could run anywhere from about 3,000 to more than 6,000 men. Twelve is a symbolic number, a perfect number, a meaningful number, signifying GOVERNMENTAL PERFECTION. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with RULE. Ed Vallowe, in his splendid book KEYS TO SCRIPTURE NUMERICS, has written, “This number, twelve, symbolizes God’s perfect, divine accomplishment actively manifested. It shows a **completeness** of a **growth** or **administration**. Twelve marks **governmental perfection** and is used as the signature of Israel. The number is used 187 times in the Bible. It is used 22 times in the book of Revelation. Twelve is the number for **government by divine appointment**. Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon *twelve* thrones, judging the *twelve* tribes of Israel’ (Mat. 19:28). The twelve apostles shall sit upon their twelve thrones and judge and rule in connection with our Lord’s rule upon His throne. They will occupy those twelve (symbolical) thrones by **divine appointment**.

“Genesis 17:20 states that Ishmael begat *twelve princes*, and in Numbers 1:5-16 there are *twelve princes* named over the *twelve tribes* of Israel. ‘And Solomon had *twelve officers* over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household’ (I Kings 4:7). There are *twelve months* in the year. The sun which *rules* the day (Gen. 1:14-18), and the moon and stars which *govern* the night, do so by their passage through the *twelve signs* of the Zodiac, which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year. Dr. Seise, in his GOSPEL IN THE STARS, claims that the *twelve signs* of the Zodiac have been accepted by the astronomers throughout the centuries, and that none of them know where the mapping of the stars started. Some claim that it came from beyond the Flood. In the opinion of Dr. Seise, it was revealed by the Lord to such men as Enoch and Noah. The *twelve signs* of the Zodiac were mentioned as established divine truth in the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible. God Himself said to Job, “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth *Mazzaroth* (Heb.: the *Twelve Signs*) in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the *ordinances of heaven*? Canst thou set the *dominion* thereof in the earth?” (Job 38:31-33). Even the testimony of the stars is numerically and symbolically in harmony with the Bible use of the number twelve. No wonder the Psalmist said, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day *uttereth speech*, and night unto night *showeth knowledge*’ (Ps. 19:1-2).

“It is also significant that only *twelve* judges — who judged Israel — are mentioned in the book of Judges. There are things more startling yet to come, before which the puny minds of men seem as nothing, and the greatness of our God eclipses all things else. In John 19:11 Jesus told Pilate that he could have no power, or authority against Him except it were given to him from above. This was expressed by *twelve* Greek words! Here is the *authority* (governmental perfection) that *comes from above*. If it comes from above, then it is authority that comes from God. These *twelve* Greek words which Jesus used in telling Pilate that he could have no power, or authority against Him, unless it came from *above*, is exactly the number that has been found to stand for *divine authority*” — end quote.

## THE CITY OF PURE GOLD

“And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: *and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass*” (Rev. 21:18).

Gold fully tried in the fire is *pure gold*. The gold of the tabernacle in the wilderness was required by the Lord to be *pure gold*. The gold in Solomon’s temple was also *pure gold*. The gold of the new Jerusalem is likewise described as *pure gold, clear as crystal*. That is what God is after! To be “pure” means to be “unmixed, single, free of anything that adulterates or taints, containing nothing but its own reality.” *Pure* water is water without any contaminants; *pure* air is free from any pollutants; *pure* silver is refined until it contains no tinge of alloy, no trace of impurities, no residue of dross. The Lord has promised to purge, refine, and remove *all mixture* from the lives of those who become His kings and priests, called and chosen to rule with Him and restore creation unto God. In the city (government) of God there is no mixture, and there is nothing hidden. Apparently and actually, outwardly and inwardly, in any way and in every way, it is *pure gold*. The word is sure, “The Lord...shall suddenly come to His temple...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (His priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver...” (Mal. 3:1-3).

The Lord, when He comes to His temple of living stones and purges the sons of Levi, or His kingdom of priests, first of all purges out *one man* — old Adam! He comes to cleanse us from the carnal, Adamic mind, nature, and ways. He comes as a consuming fire to burn out of us all that is contrary to the righteousness and wisdom and purposes of the Lord. He is coming to each one of us personally, His elect, in this new day of the kingdom of God, and is purging the old fleshly nature and worldly and religious ways out of us! On a corporate level He is also coming to those who have received the call to sonship and is separating out all who *talk* the kingdom but do not *walk* the kingdom! Only the ones who have truly surrendered to His will, have walked in His ways, obeying each sound of His voice, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will reign with Him in His kingdom.

As we respond to God’s call to become pure gold we are casting our lot for the highest and the best! There is gold and all manner of precious stones and we yield ourselves under His mighty hand to both become and be adorned with the materials that comprise the city, for we are the city of God. Our hearts are filled with gratitude to the Lord for His invitation to enter in through the gates of the city to become the expression and manifestation of His glory and power in the earth! God Himself has offered us His *best* — His own divine nature. It will just be something more real and wonderful all the time because God’s gold is not limited and He has asked of us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire (Rev. 3:18). As we build up this city within ourselves we are building with real, spiritual, heavenly bricks, gold bricks, and the city is raised up one golden stone upon another golden stone as the Father produces each of them in our experience.

We also learn in the formation of this city of gold and putting nothing in it but the best, that we must begin with the foundation just as every builder does. Paul tells us about the foundation, that it is Jesus Christ. In another sense, in the Revelation, it is the apostles of the Lamb. Now how can both be true? The answer is not difficult to find. When the life, nature, faith, wisdom, and power of the Lord is *laid in our lives* the foundation is laid *in us* — that is Jesus Christ. Paul well knew his calling. It had been from heaven and after God revealed it to him, Paul didn't go and ask the other apostles what they thought about it, but got busy right away with getting the foundation laid first in his own life, and then in those he ministered to. Thus he said, "I am determined to know *nothing* among you save *Jesus Christ* and Him crucified." And that is the foundation for every saint of God who will press on to the glory and majesty of the holy city, the precious stone that has been laid in the earth, the tried stone, the sure foundation that will never fail. The dread infirmity of the Lord's people is just this — that not only are they oft times building with inferior materials of wood, hay and stubble, but many are not building on the true and only foundation of JESUS CHRIST. The foundation is not a generic Christ, nor some cosmic Christ, nor the Christ principle — it is JESUS CHRIST and none other. It was Paul's lot to lay the foundation in men which is *nothing else* but Jesus Christ the Lord!

Years ago a dear sister had a dream. In this dream she wanted something very much. She didn't seem to realize just what it was she wanted, but she wanted whatever it was more than anything else in the world and was looking about to see what she could find of any value that she could sell in order to be able to buy this that she wanted. There was no regret in giving up anything, no matter how precious, and after she had sold everything she had she found herself in the chapel where she attended services, kneeling at the front, and there before her was a heap of pure gold nuggets and she realized that was what she had been seeking for. Then she looked toward the congregation to see who else was there and she saw the people in their places and at their feet also was a heap of gold nuggets and she realized that all had been doing the same as she, selling all they had that they might obtain this gold. She then tried to see the different faces to see just who the people were, but the gold shone in their faces so radiantly that they had lost all identity and there was just the reflection of the pure gold upon each one. Ah, gold is the nature of God Himself and His reflection shall be upon all His people as they buy the gold until they will no longer be seen in any aspect of their humanity — only the radiance of the Lord Himself will be upon them!

*"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich...to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne"* (Rev. 3:18,21). "Buy of me gold" means to *pay the price* for the divine nature of our Father to be brought forth in our lives! "Tried in the fire" means that His nature has become an experiential reality within us and has been put to the test. It speaks of an intimate, direct encounter with God that causes all that is contrary to His nature to be consumed by the all-consuming fire of His Spirit, resulting in our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. Our Lord has called upon His elect to buy of Him this gold tried in the fire that *we may be rich!* Now we know what the *true riches are!* The riches of which He speaks are not the riches of the world, either of money, material things, or of stature, position, fame, or self-glory. The riches of this world corrupt the spiritual man and prevent a manifestation of the true Life of God. The gold that we are to buy of Him represents a life that has been tried and tested, even as gold is refined, to bring forth the qualities of the Christ life within all who are His called and chosen ones.

The gold of which our Lord speaks is symbolic of the divine nature and the divine life of those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gold of the realm of the spirit represents the spiritual

riches of the saints, for Christ said that we should buy this gold tried in the fire, “that thou mayest be **rich**.” Therefore gold represents our true wealth, that is, our true value! Jesus pointed out to the multitude gathered at His teaching, “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth” (Lk. 12:15). The gold of the realm of the spirit is the true riches!

Bill and Elaine Cook, when they were still publishing their paper, printed a dream that the Lord had given to Martin Paulet. He wrote, “I looked and I saw something coming down from heaven. The Lord said He was giving this to me. It appeared to be **a large block of gold** coming down to me. The size was seven by five feet by three feet high. As it came down, I discovered it shone like it had light in it. It reminded me of the transparent gold, ‘...and the city was *pure gold*, as it were *transparent glass*’ (Rev. 21:18). It was impressed upon me that this was *very valuable*, so I chipped off a piece about one inch by one inch by ¼ inch, and called some jewelers together for an evaluation. The jewelers offered me a million dollars for this small chip of gold. I replied, ‘Oh, that’s not enough,’ for I knew the value was greater than that. They then offered me *ten* million for it and I went home without selling it and knowing the true worth. As I pondered this before the Lord, He made me to know **the gold block He was giving me was none other than His nature**. This is such a valuable thing He is giving us! It is *more precious* than gold! His nature in us is far more valuable than all the gifts and miracles He has given us. It is greater than *any gift* He has ever given us!” — end quote.

Speaking of the day when He would bring His kingdom and show forth His glory in the earth the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, **“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a MAN than the golden wedge of Ophir”** (Isa. 13:12). The MAN the prophet speaks of is God’s Christ, Head and body, even the *new creation man* in the image and likeness of God! A man is growing to maturity in this day, it is the manchild company, the sons of God, or the body of Christ. This corporate man will be made more precious than fine gold by the Lord Himself, for He dwells within them in all the fullness of His divine life and glory. The reference to the “golden wedge of Ophir” is to the source of the finest gold available in that day, which was the gold of Ophir. From the mines of the land of Ophir in Arabia the Israelites obtained the most precious and highly refined gold in the days of Solomon. This gold was for the temple of God! The temple of God today is a living temple of *living stones*, raised up a *spiritual house*, the dwelling place of God from which He rules in kingdom authority and ministers to creation through His king-priests after the order of Melchizedek. The temple of God is the same as the body of Christ, the sons of God, the city of God, and the MAN who is **made more precious than fine gold!** When the Lord completely delivers us from the old fleshly nature of sin and mortality we shall then *fully become* that MAN that is more precious than the finest gold of Ophir. Of what great *value* is this MAN both to God and to all creation! This MAN, totally delivered from the bondage of corruption, shall then be the deliverer of creation! He shall shed forth the spirit and power of reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to all mankind, bringing deliverance to the whole, groaning creation. A MAN who can bring universal salvation, health, life, purity, peace, and glory — oh! how *valuable* is that MAN!

Even as gold is purified by fire, so are we purified by the fiery trials the Lord sends into our lives. Like the intense heat that causes the impurities to rise to the top of the molten gold, so the many tribulations we face in life, and the blazing fire of God’s dealings that accompany them, draw from us those things that pollute the pure nature of God within our spirit. One pass through the furnace is never sufficient to remove all the impurities in gold, neither can we become pure in one season of testing. God allows us to be tested and tried by the Holy Ghost and fire for however long it takes because He wants us to be pure vessels to manifest His glory. Those who hunger and thirst

for Him will not be devastated by this fire, but purified. They are those who heed the apostle Paul's warning to examine the materials with which we are building as the temple of God is raised up within us, for "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3:13).

Gold fully tried in the fire is *pure gold*. To be "pure," as we mentioned earlier, means to be "unmixed" with anything else — no foreign substances, no adulteration, no pollutants, no contaminants, no impurities, not even anything *different*. Under the law of Moses people were not permitted to wear garments of wool mingled with linen. Not that there is wrong in either one, but the *type* is meaningful, for wool is derived from animals while linen comes from a plant. Israel was called to be God's *holy* people and were not to become mixed with the false gods, pagan customs, and gross sins of the peoples and nations around them. So by His law the Lord taught them by object lesson what it means to be *pure* and *holy*. They were prohibited from sowing two kinds of seed in the same field. They were not to plow with an ox and an ass in the same yoke, for an ox is a *clean animal*, but an ass is *unclean*. God was showing them that there are things that are not to be mixed! Flesh must not be mixed with spirit. Truth must not be joined with error. Righteousness must not be mingled with unrighteousness. The will of the Father must not be combined with the will of man. The means and methods and exercises of religious Babylon must not be added to the move of God's spirit. Even the ministries of the outer court and the holy place are not to be conglomerated with the ministry of the most holy place! Purity of heart means that the Adamic heart is put off; the old religious heart is put off as well! There is singleness of vision, purpose, hope, and motive; the mind of Christ which is the nature of the Father is the only reality. This is the glory of the *city of transparent gold*, the new Jerusalem! This is what brideship to Christ is all about! And this is what sonship to God is about!

The Lord has promised to purge, refine, and remove *all mixture* from the lives of all those who become His kingdom of priests in the earth (Mal. 3:1-3). In the natural world, in this wonderful process of refining the miner first mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner! I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. It's the refiner who goes after the ore. Someone says, "I sought the Lord." Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you! He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. It was HE who did it! Yes, you responded to His call, but it was He who purposed, initiated, and completed the action!

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but never in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various kinds of rock, minerals, and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into sheets. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, silver and gold as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is called *refining*. Our lives, dear ones, are like that! We are spirit, soul, and body — and within our spirit, which is the offspring of God, there is so much that is worthwhile in us, but in our outer life of the flesh and the carnal mind there is so much that is worthless. And how we have wound up mingling these things all together! There is so



much that is of God, and so much that is of self. There is part of us that is out of heaven, and part of us is of the earth, earthy.

So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has mixture! There is, at this juncture, no glorious city of *transparent gold*! And that is why there has to be a furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure or glory at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful purpose in His plans. Of these He says, “With them I am not well pleased.” Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner’s fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a form that we did not expect. Yes, ‘tis the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, who dug us out of the darkness and depth of the earth, but He comes now, not to forgive and bless and coddle and wink at our carnality, but He comes as a refining fire, to purify the sons of Levi. He comes now because He has a *great purpose for us*!

## THE STREET

“...and the *street of the city was pure gold*, as it were *transparent glass*” (Rev.. 21:21).

As we have stated again and again, in the symbolism of scripture, gold signifies the divine nature of God. Just as gold is the perfect metal that cannot be tarnished, so God’s nature is perfect and cannot be tarnished, faded, or oxidized in any way. From times immemorial men walked on streets. Cain built the first city, and of necessity it had streets. So the street of the city speaks of our *walk*. The fact that the street of this city is of pure, transparent gold reveals to us the great truth that in our walk, we will have to come to the perfect walk in the spirit, the perfect walk in the nature of our God, having attained to the perfect nature of our God, and therefore walking in absolute purity, absolute holiness. We cannot overemphasize the fact that so many Christians, in their spiritual immaturity, entertain a completely carnal and erroneous concept of this street — supposing that some day by death or by rapture they are going to fly away to a literal, physical city, out in space somewhere, having streets paved with literal gold — but any spiritual mind discerns at once that such a notion is merely the product of spiritual childishness. There is no physical city prepared for us as our “heaven” anywhere in God’s vast universe having streets paved with literal gold. Should there actually be such a city on some planet in some far-distant galaxy, it certainly is *not* the one John saw in his vision descending from God out of heaven! Our heaven is revealed to us by the apostle Paul when by revelation he wrote, “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS: that in the ages to come He might show (display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Jesus Christ” (Eph. 2:1,5-7). We all know that Jesus is “in heaven.” And the “heavenly places” where we now dwell are *there* IN CHRIST JESUS. To be “in Christ” is also to be “in heaven.” In the words of the old hymn, “Where Jesus is, ‘tis *heaven there!*”

To become exactly like Christ — this is our “heaven,” no matter where we happen to be in God’s vast universe. “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that *He might be the firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom. 8:29). This is our final dwelling place, our ultimate state of being, when we have arrived at our glorified spiritual state in spirit, soul, *and* body — we will, in all the fullness of Christ, know for certainty that heaven is a *condition* and *spiritual state of being* rather than some limited, physical location out in the galaxies

somewhere. When we have truly attained that *unlimited eternal state of being* we shall have come to our full perfection in Christ Jesus, and will have become the Holy City. Then we will not have to go to any city and look for a hotel to spend the night, for we will dwell in the *power of His resurrection* and the whole universe will be our dwelling place. We will be free — free from the limitations of flesh, free from the tyranny of sin, free from the power of death, and therefore free to live in God's universe as citizens of God's universe. Of what benefit would streets paved with gold be to us after this vile body has been changed, and fashioned anew like unto *His body of glory*? We will have no need to walk on any kind of streets then! We will have attained, in our whole being, to the resurrection life of Jesus. This has already become reality in our spirit, but must also become true in our soul and in our body.

After the Lord Jesus was resurrected, we don't find that when He wanted to go somewhere He had to walk down streets. When He wanted to go to the upper room where His disciples were gathered, He simply appeared to them there in the upper room. When Father led Him to join some of the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, He simply appeared to them there. When He wanted to meet with His closest disciples in the hills of Galilee, He simply appeared there. If He didn't need a key to open the locked door, where the disciples were hiding in fear, He certainly didn't need a road to get there! When the disciples were fishing on the sea of Galilee and He appeared to them on the shore, He didn't need to walk there, He was just there. Streets *in heaven*? The very idea is ludicrous!

When we have attained to the full resurrection power of Christ and we want to transport ourselves from one place to another, we won't have to walk down any literal street of gold, or asphalt, or gravel, or anything else. We will simply think the thought in the will of the Father and we will be there. The light of our sun is a physical, material thing, part of the natural creation. Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. The light of our sun travels over 93,000,000 miles to arrive on earth in precisely eight minutes. But *spirit* travels at a speed that is incalculable by physical standards or measures! So streets of gold would be of no value to us, or walls of jasper, or gates of pearl, because our dwelling will not be in the physical realm. Our dwelling place will be in God by the spirit! The only reason that gold and jewels are so attractive to us now is because we are still physically in our carnal state and these things are beautiful to our natural vision and also have real monetary value. They have carnal value here on earth.

When we have attained to our spiritual state in spirit, soul, and body — sons of God just like Jesus — such things will be meaningless to us because all things will be ours. Not one physical thing will have more value than another to us. That's why God in Christ could come down and be born in a stable and laid in a manger! He could be raised up in the dusty streets of a country village, rather than in the palace of a king! Such things meant nothing to Him, for His mind and nature were spiritual and heavenly. So we see that there never has been, and never will be, a literal city in some far-off heaven somewhere having streets paved with gold. These are simply symbols, as it were *object lessons*, the Holy Spirit employs to teach us spiritual realities! That spiritual reality is the holy city which is the body of Christ in the perfection and full stature of Jesus the Head. Oh, yes! We actually do see that street of pure gold when we see the body of Christ having attained to the perfect nature of God, and *walking in the perfect and divine nature of God*. We see that street of gold *walked out* in the lives of our brothers and sisters who walk out the nature of God even here on earth. That is the mystery.

## THE CITY WITHOUT A TEMPLE

“And I saw *no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*” (Rev. 21:22).

The idea of the temple is that it is the house of God, the dwelling place of God in fellowship with His people. In the earthly Jerusalem in the Old Testament period there was a special temple, a separate edifice, distinct from the rest of the city. Although Jerusalem as a whole was the city of the great King, yet the Lord did not dwell and manifest His presence throughout the whole city; but He had His dwelling place in the city in a special building, and then in a special part of that building, in the Holiest of all, behind the veil. The people were required to go there to worship, to pray, to sacrifice, and to be blessed. And this is what it means when we are told that in New Jerusalem there is no temple — there is no special house of God. How interesting! A city without a single temple spire! And the reason for the absence of a special temple is just this: “*For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*” You see, my beloved, the text does not mean that the concept of temple is done away, but rather that it has come to its fullest and highest realization. There is no need for a specially designated temple mount, for God Himself is the temple of His people in Christ. That God and the Lamb are the temple signifies that God through the Lamb is the temple. The Lamb’s presence and glory fill the city! God is *in the Lamb*. And we who dwell within the city are the body of the Lamb — we are therefore “in Christ” — and there “in Christ” we are also *in the temple* where God dwells! Can you not see the mystery? God, by His Spirit, perfectly and completely fills each and every member of God’s elect, and there God is with us in perfect and constant fellowship. In the state of perfection the city and the temple are one, all that was true in the temple is *now fulfilled in the whole city*! They are completely *made one*, so that not a special building will be His temple, but in the truest sense the entire city *becomes* the expression and revelation of God in His temple! Oh, the wonder of it!

As long as there is a temple in a city, it shows that God does not yet dwell in fullness in the entire city, but merely in that particular house which is called the temple. There He lives in isolation from the rest of the city. Ah, yes, He dwells in the city, but not in the entire city. He does not fill the city with the fullness of Himself. The city does not know the full majesty, nature, wisdom, purpose, power, and glory of the One who dwells in the Holiest of all! Someone may object, “But we don’t have an arrangement like that today — that was just in the Old Testament.” The truth is, however, that the Old Testament mentality has been brought over into our New Testament experience on a huge scale! So many Christians refer to a church building as “the house of God.” On Sunday they “go to church” to worship the Lord, to be blessed, to hear from God, to get a touch from God, as though God dwelt in some unique way in that building. And then — many almost worship ministries, they see God in a much greater measure in certain preachers, apostles, prophets, or healers. They admire God in those people, and often it becomes sort of a “cult worship.” The ministry becomes their “Holy of holies,” that place where God dwells outside of and beyond themselves, localized in the ministry, and *there* they can hear from God and be touched by God.

That is no longer the case when the city has “made herself ready” in the state of perfection. When the holy city, which is the bride of the Lamb, shall have been purged, cleansed, purified, matured, perfected, and completed, there shall be no special dwelling place of God in the city, for the simple reason that He shall fill the whole city equally with the fullest glory of Himself, that is, in the mind, heart, and life of every citizen. You do not have to enter the city and ask, “Where is the house of God?” Or, “Where is the preacher,” “where is the prophet,” “where is the healer,” “where is the church meeting,” “where is the crusade,” for the city itself is God’s habitation, and the temple and the city have become identical. All dwell in the fullest glory of God and the Lamb. It is indeed

wonderful! Every elect child of God is a citizen in this city. The entire church, including each and every one of the Lord's people held in the bondage of religious Babylon, is a citizen of the holy city. We must be very clear about that. But the city is *still in preparation*, "*making herself ready*," and "*adorning herself*" for union with the Lamb. The city is not yet ready for the Lord of glory to manifest His full majesty in their midst! We all know that the city has not yet reached its state of perfection. That state must be reached. And all history, and God's unfailing dealings, serve to bring the city of God to perfection!

Think of it! We still tend to "localize" God in the temple within the city. We compartmentalize God's workings, and highly esteem certain manifestations of God over others. I know people today who instead of worshipping God, worship worship. It is not the Lord Himself they delight in, but the soulish sensation or a kind of "high" they get on by entering into "worship." Others worship a message — the faith message, the life message, the brideship message, the Pentecostal message, the serpent-seed message, the death-to-self message, the end-time message, the reconciliation message, the sonship message, the third day message, the kingdom message, and on and on the list goes. They may not have laid hold upon any of the reality, but they surely do love the "message"! Many worship experiences, and can only find God in the particular "temple" of a certain experience. Wherever God has brought us in previous dealings, God is progressively moving forward. Today He says, "Build it." Tomorrow He says, "Destroy it." Today He says, "Plant it." Tomorrow He says, "Pluck it up." Today He says, "Get a harvest." Tomorrow He says, "Let the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die." He who has a right to build has also the right to destroy when He is through with a thing. And, woe! unto the man who cannot discern the times. But the great truth which the Holy Spirit would now reveal in power within our hearts is just this — God is not in the business today of raising up TEMPLES. He will tear down every temple until there is literally "not one stone left upon another!" God is destroying, demolishing the temples and calling us to come up higher — to come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God — THE CITY THAT HAS NO TEMPLE! In that city of gold God is ALL IN ALL!

What we have witnessed to for years was a "work" of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His healing in us, His victory in us, His revelation in us; we had become a product of the work of God. But God's purpose is not that we shall be a testimony of the work of God, but that there shall be a revelation of A PERSON, that the revelation will BE CHRIST. It will not be a revelation of the work of God, but the revelation of the Person of God in us. It is right there that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT!" God is talking to His sons about PERSONIFICATION, MANIFESTATION, REVELATION, AND IDENTITY. In the city without a temple you are going to PERSONIFY CHRIST as you have embodied the works of Christ. Christians represent the work of God: Saved from this, having received that, changed into something else, but it is still "ME." What you see is a marvelous expression of the handiwork of God.

But God intends that the hour should come when there shall be a revelation of the Person of God, the identity of God, so that HE IS OUR LIFE. Not: we have become because He has wrought life in us, but "Christ who *is our life shall appear*." He no longer gives us peace, He becomes our peace, our righteousness, wisdom, redemption, sanctification, ALL THAT HE IS until we are no longer a witness to a work, or a word, or an experience, but a witness of His Person, His Identity as our reality. Are you ready to have nothing but the Person? Are you willing for God to be your life, and you His life, until HE IS ALL THERE IS? Are you willing to forget the work and the experience, to bear HIS IDENTITY? In our moving on into God, God is saying to us: What I did for you yesterday, the works of God, must now become just GOD IN YOU. When this reality becomes

established in God's people we will then understand with divine clarity what John meant when he cried out, "I SAW NO TEMPLE THEREIN, FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT." Come, my beloved, let us go up to THE CITY THAT HAS NO TEMPLE!

# Chapter 247

## The Holy City (continued)

“And the city had *no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*” (Rev. 21:23).

These words of illumination and power do not infer that when God displays His holy city in all her glory there is no longer the literal sun nor the moon in the starry heavens above. For the reference here is to *spiritual realities*, not to the natural order of things. The holy city is not a literal city of material gold and precious stones, therefore its light is not a natural light of the physical creation. The text does not state that there will be no sun or moon, but that the glorified elect of the Lord will have no *need* of it. In other words, the sun and moon have nothing to contribute to this realm of light and glory where God’s people dwell, for their light is the *spiritual light* of understanding, revelation, truth, and glory — the *light of Life*. For that kind of illumination any kind of natural light is unnecessary and irrelevant. In the light that the Spirit brings we see God face to face. The glory of God, that is, the radiation of all His perfections, lightens the city, that is, the minds and hearts and lives of the saints who constitute the city. And this is through Christ, the Lamb, who Himself is the light of Life and the Shekinah radiating and illuminating the entire city, His Holy of holies for the ages to come.

In the long ago beginning God said, “Let there be light.” Nothing happens on any level in any creation without light. Darkness covered the face of the deep, the record states, therefore light was the first prerequisite for God’s great plan to be set in motion. If we think of that darkness that covered the earth only as natural darkness, that is, the absence of physical light, we miss the point altogether. There may be reference here to natural darkness, but if so it is only in the form of a type or shadow. The real reference is to another kind of darkness. Isaiah tells us that just before the unveiling of God’s Holy City darkness will cover the earth, and gross darkness the people (Isa. 60:1-3). Now, the prophet is not speaking of natural darkness here, but of spiritual darkness. So in the beginning there was something more than natural darkness that covered the earth. In the Hebrew text of Genesis 1:2 we find the inference that sometime after the “beginning” in which God had created the heavens and the earth, the earth suffered some tremendous judgment or cataclysmic catastrophe, falling into chaos, formlessness, and dense darkness, both natural and spiritual. Then it was that the divine fiat came, “Let there be light!”

What was this light that God introduced into the world or the kosmos? If the Spirit of God will help us we will put this in words that will clearly help us to understand the great truth that God would teach us. Let us then take heed to the words of our faithful Lord when He spoke, saying, “*I am the light of the kosmos,*” and “*I am come a light into the kosmos, that whosoever believeth into me should not abide in darkness.*” Jesus claimed that He Himself was the light of the world, the kosmos, and if His claim was true, when did He become the light of the kosmos? Speaking of our Lord Jesus, who from the beginning was the Word, or the Logos, John by inspiration wrote, “In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God. The same *was in the beginning* with God. All things *were* made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that *was* made. In Him *was* life; and the life *was the light of men*. And the light shineth in darkness, and

the darkness is not able to put it out. There was a man sent from God whose name was John (the Baptist). The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. HE WAS IN THE KOSMOS, AND THE KOSMOS WAS MADE BY HIM, AND THE KOSMOS KNEW HIM NOT” (Jn. 1:1-10).

Here we have Christ Jesus presented as the Light, the true Light, who was the Light from the very beginning of the kosmos, and the Light today. Jesus *was* the Light of the kosmos, and Jesus *is* the light of the kosmos. There is no other Light but our Christ! As all types and patterns, the things material and physical, the things seen, are only figures of the true, so all light, no matter from what source it comes, is only a type of the Light which is ***the true Light***, and that Light is Christ the Lord. Christ Jesus is the true Light! All other light is only a shadow of this which is the true Light. So there is the figure, the type, and there is the true. So whatever natural light may have shed its rays into the thick and dreadful darkness of the earth realm in that primordial beginning when God said, “Let there be light,” the great and eternal truth is that “In Him WAS life, and the life WAS the light of men!” The light of the world has always been Jesus! HE was the light that shined out of darkness, and it is just as true today as John tells us, “Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true *in Him and in you*, because the darkness is passing, and the TRUE LIGHT now shineth” (I Jn. 2:8).

Let us return now to the thought about the holy city having no ***need*** of the sun, neither of the moon. It is here that a great secret is revealed. Let your spiritual mind grasp this truth: In the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness, as well as in the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, there were three different kinds of light. And by this light there were three different kinds of orders. The Outer Court had no covering, so in the Outer Court the sun was the light, but there was night in that realm too, for when the sun set in the western sky the Outer Court was veiled in darkness, except for the light of the moon. Then in the Holy Place there was the candlestick, and there was a glimmering light in that compartment, not a very bright light, but a light ever burning and sufficient to illuminate that realm by day and by night. That light was produced out of an indwelling, out of the oil that was *in the candlestick* producing light. It was not a perfect light because the wick had to be trimmed daily, and the oil must be continually replenished. There was a necessary service rendered to that candlestick by the priests to maintain the light, just as we have needed the ministry of the word, the function of the gifts, the dealings of the Spirit, and seasons of refreshing and times of revival in order to rid our lives of recurring carnality, keep a supply of oil, and maintain the light of God burning in our lives. That is the Holy Place! But you know, when you enter in to the Most Holy Place, the Holiest of all, the light of that realm is the Shekinah, the blazing, penetrating fullness of the glory of God, and there are no shadows and there is no night there! It is eternal light! The Shekinah is not dependent upon anything! It waits upon no dawn for its sun to rise, and no dusk for its moon to shine. It is not drawn or derived from any earthly substance. It doesn’t have to be serviced. There is no wick to trim, no oil to pour, no priestly ministration of any kind to maintain it. It simply ***is***, because God ***is***! As the bride of the Lamb and the sons of God come to perfection and the fullness of Christ, the lights and luminaries of the old spiritual heavens truly become darkened, so that the word of the seer of Patmos becomes wondrously fulfilled in us — “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: ***for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.***”

The sun that shone upon the Outer Court was a figure of the word of God that came to Israel through Moses, the word of the Old Covenant. It *was* indeed a word from God Himself, who is often

in scripture spoken of as a “sun.” And yet, in the fullest sense, it was not the pure and full revelation of the Lord Himself, for it was “a” word from God, but not “the” word of God in its fullness. It was “light,” but not the full light, not the pure light, nor the *true light* which Christ Himself is. Therefore the sun of the Outer Court signifies a partial revelation of God when contrasted with the Shekinah of the Most Holy Place. The sun can never compare in either its brilliance or its glory with the light of the Most Holy Place! The sun of the Outer Court signifies a partial revelation, whereas the Shekinah of the Most Holy Place represents the TRUE LIGHT of the Lord Himself in all His glorious and eternal reality!

The new Jerusalem does not need the light of the sun, nor of the moon, because in this eternal Holy of holies dwells the fullest presence of the almighty Father and the Lamb who are the light of it. It certainly doesn’t need the light of the *moon*! Through the summer months Lorain and I enjoy sitting on the front porch of our house in the late evenings listening to the night sounds and watching the stars, moon, satellites, airplanes, and occasionally a meteorite in the heavens above. We especially like to be out there at the full moon and see it rise up over the Hueco mountains in all its brilliance. What do we know when we see that beautiful moon shining so brightly? We know the sun is in the heavens; we can’t see it, but we know it’s there because the moon is shining, reflecting the light of the sun!

May God open the eyes of every reader of these lines to clearly see and understand the great mystery that we now unfold. Israel of old with her outward law, outward sacrifices, outward temple, outward priesthood, outward feasts, outward rituals and ceremonies — all these external ministrations were merely a *sign* that Yahweh was in the heavens! Like the moon, all these things merely *reflected* the light of God, the Spirit, but they were not the light and not one of them had any light within itself. The moon shines so that we know the sun is there, and it helps to guide us through our night of darkness. The great truth that the Holy Spirit would make known to us is that external religious ordinances of every kind are typified by the moon — they are not the true light of Christ, they have no light within themselves, they merely reflect light. As the writings of the New Testament progress, we see a theme unfold before our wondering eyes which eventually bursts forth in all the splendor of an opening flower of truth. The writer to the Hebrews exudes the fragrance of this truth when he writes, “*Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect...which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (Greek: baptismos — baptisms), and carnal ordinances, IMPOSED ON THEM UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION (CHANGE)*” (Heb. 9:9-10). These externals were needed when men could neither see nor know God and needed to be assured that God was there. But now, praise His name, He has sent the spirit of His son and we are *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, we are being immersed in and clothed upon with the light of the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ! Therefore we no longer have need for the reflected light of the moon of external forms, rituals, ceremonies, creeds, ordinances, baptisms, programs, or any other work of man FOR THE DARKNESS IS PAST AND THE TRUE LIGHT NOW SHINES! Isn’t it wonderful!

In nearly every religious church system today we have a lot of *reflected light* of outward rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, and ordinances. The people who walk in this light are living in the Outer Court of spiritual experience. Water baptism, for example, is merely an outward symbol of reflected light, for it is an external exercise which *stands for* and *represents* and *portrays* the spiritual reality of that *true baptism* into the depths of Christ whereby our sins and our old Adamic nature and flesh life are washed away by the washing of regeneration, and our new creation life is raised up



in the power of His resurrection! Earlier we quoted a passage where the apostle John tells us that John the Baptist, who baptized with water, was *not the true light*; he came only to *bear witness to that true light*, which is Christ. John the Baptist himself said of Christ, “He must increase, I must decrease.” And again, “I indeed baptize you with *water* unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worth to unloose: He shall baptize you with *the Holy Ghost, and with fire*” (Mat. 3:11). Can we not see by this that water baptism is *John’s baptism*, whereas Holy Spirit baptism is *Christ’s baptism*! The former is the light of the moon, it merely bears witness to Him who is the light, but is not the true light; those who walk in the city of God, and in the light of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, have no *need* of the light of the sun, neither of the moon, for THE TRUE LIGHT NOW SHINES!

Someone says, “But brother Eby, the Lord Jesus Himself told His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, *baptizing them...*” But, I ask, baptizing them *into what*? Oh, how God’s people need to cast away from themselves the vain traditions of men and pay careful attention to what the Spirit is saying! What the Lord said was just this, “Baptizing them *into the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mat. 28:19). Is baptizing them *into the name* the same as baptizing them *into water*? Certainly not! Nothing is said about water in this wonderful passage! In scripture “name” signifies “nature.” “Preach the gospel and baptize them *into the nature of the Lord.*” Ah, that is not something that happens in a tank of water, my beloved, it can only be wrought by the inworking of the mighty power of God’s Word and God’s Spirit! It is a spiritual work, not a sacramental one. Another aspect of spiritual baptism is found in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians wherein he says, “For *by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...* and have been all made to drink of that one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:13). Is “the Spirit” baptizing us into the “body” of Christ the same as “the preacher” baptizing us into “water”? I think not! This baptism places us in our position and function in the body of Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can do this! Therefore Paul says later to the Galatians, “For as many of you as have been *baptized into Christ HAVE PUT ON CHRIST*” (Gal. 3:27). Has everyone who has been “baptized into water” *put on Christ*? Absolutely not! In fact, the admonition to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” is made to believers — not to sinners just coming to be saved! Truly it is the work of the Spirit and has nothing whatever to do with any kind of water baptism!

The Lord’s supper or communion is but an outward symbol or reflected light of that deep *spiritual experience* whereby we *truly* eat the flesh (word) of Christ and drink His blood (spirit) in reality. The whole Christian world, including some who profess to be sons of God, continue to walk on in the semi-darkness of the reflected light of the moon, practicing superstitious external rituals which they suppose have some magical, mystical, spiritual power. But those elect saints of the Lord who become the holy city of God LIVE AND WALK IN THE REALM ABOVE ALL TYPES AND SHADOWS AND SYMBOLS, ABOVE ALL THE REFLECTED LIGHT AND THE EXTERNAL REALMS, WALKING IN THE UNDIMINISHED GLORY OF THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB, WHO ARE THE LIGHT OF IT! That is the mystery.

The new Jerusalem has no need for the light of the sun nor the light of the moon, nor yet for the light of the seven-branched candlestick, for this holy city has no Outer Court and no Holy Place! Those holy sons and daughters of God who dwell there have no need for the *outward light* of the Outer Court, the light of creeds, ceremonies, rituals, sacraments, or any other work of man, for the very presence, mind, life, and nature of God Himself *as their very state of being* is their illumination! Nor do they need the *dim light* of the Holy Place, the light of gifts or any other ministry of the “in part” realm. The Holy Place experience in God is entered through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

When we stepped into this Holy Place of the *indwelling Spirit* the light of His presence released in our lives permeated the whole room! How we thank God for the light produced by the candlestick in the Holy Place, though it is limited in its power and range of illumination, for it is not “the Spirit without measure,” as Jesus received, but merely the “firstfruits of the Spirit,” that is, the first installment or the down payment. There is more to come! We’re grateful for the “in part” realm, for only by passing through the dim light of the Holy Place can we enter on in to the blazing Shekinah glory of the Holiest of all! This blessed truth that the Holy City has no need of either the light of the Outer Court or the light of the Holy Place is confirmed absolutely in verse five of chapter twenty-two wherein we read, “And there shall be no night there; and they need no *candle*, neither light of the sun...” The word “candle” is the Greek word for *lamp*; tallow and wax candles as we know them were not invented until long after John wrote. With a slight variation it is essentially the same word used in the Revelation for the seven golden *candlesticks*. Thus, this city has no need of the light of the sun of the Outer Court, nor yet for the light of the candlestick in the Holy Place!

The revelation of the Lord in this Holy Place (Pentecostal realm) is always calling us onward. The revelation of the Lord within ourselves will never leave us in the same position where we receive it. This should let us know, that as wonderful and glorious as this Holy Place is, it is not the ultimate in God! He is ever calling us onward towards the Most Holy Place, unto Himself, in that dimension of fullness where it is His glory alone that fills the room. In the Most Holy Place there are no common priests, no in-part ministries of gifts and graces, no distractions of sacrifice slayings, of laver washings, of wick trimming, and making sure there is adequate oil in the lamps — that is, no re-consecrations, re-fillings, or revivings. There is only the High Priest ministry, and the constant, unchanging, undiminished, brilliantly shining glory of His all-consuming presence and power! In the Most Holy Place there is no more labor of baking and replenishing the bread on the table. There is now the eternal, incorruptible manna within the ark of the covenant, that is, eternal, incorruptible life! In the Most Holy Place there are no more efforts of periods of burning incense — times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord — seasons of God’s movings as we labor in the travail of prayers and intercessions and the ministry of praise and worship. There is only the abiding *law of the spirit of life* in Christ Jesus, the state of *being His nature* by which we *are all that He is!* The Holy Place of Moses’ tabernacle was oblong in shape, being twenty cubits in length, ten cubits in width, and ten in height. The Holy of holies, on the other hand, was ten cubits in length, width, and height, or a perfect cube. The only other cube described in the scriptures is the holy city, New Jerusalem! **The perfect cube of the Holy of holies now finds its ultimate fulfillment in the city of God!** “*And the city lieth foursquare...the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal*” (Rev. 21:16).

Now a cube is the most perfect figure, being equal on every side — finite perfection. It is what you call finality, it is the most comprehensive, and it holds the most — nothing contains as much as a cube — and therefore it is given here as the expression of *perfection* and *fullness*. It is divinely inwrought perfection and fullness — the very glory of God — and therefore it is spoken of as a cube. The message is clear — one can never know the glory, illumination, and power of this city in the Outer Court of popular religion, nor yet in the Holy Place of a Pentecostal economy. Only those who by faith enter in beyond the veil into the glorious and eternal reality of the “Most Holy Place” can ever begin to touch and know the surpassing glory, perfection, and fullness, of this realm of God’s life! Turn to see the fading of the old orders, and your back is to the dawning of the new. Turn to see that new light arising, and your back is to the diminishing former lights. Pass through, experience these former realms we must, but when the high priest went beyond the veil into the

Holiest of all his back was to the vanishing glories of both the Holy Place and the Outer Court. If he was only *one step in* to the Holiest, he was *every step out* of the Outer Court and the Holy Place. O, to behold Him, and with a single eye to follow on, for *“the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”* (Prov. 4:18).

### THE NATIONS SHALL WALK IN THE LIGHT OF IT

*“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it...and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it”* (Rev. 21:24,26).

Nothing is more evident in the word of God than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out among the nations of earth. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose for each of His called and chosen elect, an appointed end for the multitude of Israel nations, a glorious purpose for the church, the bride of Christ, and a foreordained plan for the manifest sons of God. We must also understand that the Lord has a determined plan and purpose for ALL NATIONS of mankind! God is actively dealing with NATIONS! Many wonderful prophecies reveal God’s ultimate purpose for the nations of earth, when *“ALL the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord’s and HE is the governor among the nations. Yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM”* (Ps. 22:27-28; 72:11). It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. China does not serve the Lord, neither do its rulers acknowledge Him. Turkey does not serve the Lord. Egypt does not serve the Lord. Vast numbers of nations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and even in the Americas do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before Him. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Redeemer!

From the first dawn of human history God has had the formation, development, and destiny of nations in mind and purpose. The present nations of earth had their origins in the early days following the Great Flood. In Genesis chapter ten is found a most remarkable and comprehensive list of the descendants of Noah who became the heads of the families and tribes which subsequently developed into nations. Even so-called higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. You would do well to read the entire chapter.

The descendants of Noah migrated over the whole face of the earth, which possibly was one great land mass before the separation of the continents, forming tribe after tribe, city after city, and nation after nation. Let all men know that it is the Almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world! The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by the will of Him who *“worketh all things after the counsel of His own will”* (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses when he declares, *“When the most High **divided the nations** their inheritance, when *He* separated the sons of Adam, *He set* the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel”* (Deut. 32:8). Paul refers to this very passage when he says, *“And hath made of **one blood all nations** of men for to dwell on the face of all the earth, and **hath determined the times before appointed**, and the **bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord**”* (Acts 17:26-27). How plain it is that it was GOD who, from that long-ago beginning, set the bounds of habitation or the national boundaries of

**all nations.** These boundaries were established in relation to the vast multitude of Israel peoples and with a view to their being able, when the time is ripe, to *seek after the Lord*.

Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel of old at the crossroads, to the end that ALL NATIONS should seek after the Lord. Out of Israel came the Christ; out of Christ has come the church, the bride of the Lamb (Eph. 5:21-33; Rev. 19:7-8); out of the church comes the manchild, the overcoming sons of God destined to reign with Christ and deliver the whole creation that it might be fulfilled which God promised father Abraham: “And in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED” (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS *shall be blessed!* What a prospect! From the very beginning God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth; He also planned and purposed to *bless them* — each and every one of them! To “bless” means to *put something there that wasn’t there before* — resulting in a sacred usage. This signifies not merely the blessing of Israel, or the church, nor the blessing of the saints of God within the nations; it is THE NATIONS THEMSELVES that must come under the gracious hand of God in blessing and quickening. Oh, the wonder of it!

The sweet singer of Israel sang of this blessed hope in the spirit of prophecy: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy **saving health** among ALL NATIONS. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee! O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY, and GOVERN THE NATIONS UPON EARTH” (Ps. 67:1-4). What a word! Many precious “fragments” reveal God’s ultimate purpose for mankind, as when the heavenly Father addresses His Son and His sons, saying, “Ask of me, and I WILL GIVE THEE THE NATIONS FOR THINE INHERITANCE, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Ps. 2:8). Surely the will and plan of God are revealed in this most gracious request, and certainly this was the purpose for which Jesus was *sent* and *came*. “The Father *sent* His Son to be the Saviour of THE WORLD” (I Jn. 4:14). With this divine plan in view, well may David triumphantly sing, “ALL NATIONS shall call Him blessed...and blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let THE WHOLE EARTH be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen” (Ps. 72:17-19).

We now come to the most important part of this truth. The ways of the kingdom of God are not at all like the ways of the church. The ministry of sonship is not in any way like the church age ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Sonship and the Holy City are the *new administration* for the *new age* when the elect of the Lord have reached their perfection and fullness in Christ. The order of the new age will be altogether different from the order of the passing age, just as the order of the church age has been altogether different from the order of the age of the law which it eclipsed. George Hawtin graphically articulated this wonderful truth when he wrote in one of his papers, *The Page*, “Some years ago it was revealed to me that the evangelization of the nations during the coming age would be accomplished in exactly the *opposite way* to the method used in this age. In the church age the commission has been, ‘Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.’ In the next age entire nations will come to Jerusalem and to Zion to seek and find the Lord. What could be more certain than the words spoken by Micah the prophet when he said, ‘But *in the last days* it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (Zion) and it shall be exalted above the hills; and *people shall flow into it and many nations shall come* and say, *Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord (Zion)...*and (there) *He will teach us His ways*, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of *Zion* and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’ (Mic. 4:1-2).”

During this church age, by the ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers the Lord has sent His messengers out and *sought the people*. The Lord has sought the people in this way because the members of His body must be *gathered out of* the world and *out of* the nations. But in the new age, when the kingdom of God comes upon the nations, He will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication and the billions of earth will come, as families, and tribes, and nations, to seek the wisdom, goodness, salvation, deliverance, life, and glory revealed in His holy city people — the bride of Christ and the sons of God. What an indescribable wonder! You see, when the Lord removes the *veil*, the *covering* that has been cast over the minds of all people (Isa. 25:7), then all men will see in a clear light and will come to God's holy nation to seek His face and His ways. Centuries ago the prophet Isaiah wrote with great clarity of this same wonder, saying, "Behold, thou shalt *call* a *nation* that thou knowest not, and *nations* which knew not thee *shall run unto thee* because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath *glorified thee*" (Isa. 55:5-6). This is a glorious promise revealing that *entire nations* will *run to seek the Lord*, because He has *glorified His sons* upon the spiritual and heavenly mount Zion!

What a marvel that will be when the "Great Commission" of the church age has fully come to an end! No longer will the Lord say, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." It is an historical fact that each of the first apostles to whom that word was spoken, left Judea and carried the word of Christ to different parts of the world. According to histories I have read Peter went to Babylon, Thomas to India, James to Spain, Andrew to Scythia, John to Asia, Philip to France, Thaddeus and Bartholomew to Armenia and Persia, Matthew to Ethiopia and Parthia and Macedonia, James the less to Syria, Jude to Armenia, Syria, and northern Persia, and Simon the Zealot to Armenia. The dispensing of the Word in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome by Paul is a well-documented fact and there is some evidence that he went as far as Britain in his spreading of the gospel. Thus, the Great Commission was fulfilled in the days of the early church and continued to be carried out to farther frontiers throughout the age of the formation of the body of Christ.

That was a wise and wonderful plan for this age when God was "calling out a people" from among the nations for His name. Those who were sent were never able to reach all the people, and it was only "whosoever believeth" that responded to their word. That is how Christ built His church! No one could improve on that method for doing the job the Lord required for that age! But now in this new day of the Lord the residue of men, earth's teeming masses, and all the nations of the world are being called upon to COME TO THE LORD. Then, God spoke to His disciples, "Go ye!" Now, the Lord will speak to the nations, "Come ye!" Billions of the world's darkened, dejected, deceived, weary, and oppressed souls shall come streaming up to the city of God seeking an entrance into the kingdom of the Lord. The elect of the Lord are the Light that shall shine upon them (Isa. 60:1-22; Rev. 21:24) and the voice that shall bid them come. "And the Spirit and the bride say, *Come!*" (Rev. 22:17). We are also the "gates" through which the multitudes of earth's needy shall enter the new Jerusalem city of God (Rev. 21:25).

It is significant to note that nowhere in the description of New Jerusalem is anyone seen *going out of the city* to minister to the nations or anyone else. Nowhere! Rather, the testimony of the Spirit is this: "And the nations of them which are saved *shall walk in the light of it*: and the kings of the earth do **bring** their glory and honor *into it*. And the gates of it shall *not be shut at all*...and they shall **bring** the glory and honor of the nations *into it*. And there shall in no wise **enter into it** anything that defileth...and the Spirit and the bride say, **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**...let him take of the water of life *freely*." There can be no doubt that the New Jerusalem Order reveals to us the new and different order of the kingdom of God for

the *coming age*, and *not* the order for this age of the Great Commission. That glorious order shall so overshadow and eclipse all previous spiritual visitations, outpourings, missionary efforts, evangelistic crusades, healing and miracle campaigns, and revivals of every sort, that none of our old church age terminology will be adequate to describe it. God will indeed need to give us a new vocabulary!

In this new age of the kingdom all our former ideas, opinions, and methods of evangelism will have to be discarded. The emphasis of the past age has been upon GO and DO. Constantly we are *going* places and *doing* things for God! But, thank God, the order is changing! God is doing a new thing! He is establishing a new order in the earth! And we will have to change with God! And we *will* change, because we will *be changed*! All the old religious methods of the past age are passing away! The time of raising money and sending missionaries and establishing churches is even now entering its twilight time. I do not say that it *has ended*; it is a good plan as long as God is *calling out* a people for His name. But the new age demands an intensified program of God to harvest all the *nations* into the kingdom of God! And even now He is calling some aside to wait in holy submission and expectation before Him, to be thoroughly processed, purged, prepared, and strengthened for that new and glorious unveiling of Himself.

Only a while back the Lord spoke to me in a dream and told me clearly and powerfully that there will be a sudden, sovereign, world-wide, universal outpouring of His Spirit, the spirit of grace, supplication, and revelation as the veil is washed away off the minds and hearts of literally billions of people. As it were overnight they will behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! The masses will awaken as from a dream and the Lord Himself shall appear to them in His glory. In that instant they will *know* the truth and abandon all their false philosophies and religious delusions. THEN, the Lord spoke to me, the sons of God will be manifested and these peoples will flow to them to be taught and instructed, and the sons of God will establish the new order, life, and power of the kingdom among the people of the whole earth. Until the Lord spoke this word to me I had supposed it would be the other way around, that the sons would go forth in incorruptible life and power throughout the earth and *then* there would be a mighty moving of the Spirit of God upon all people. But the Lord said, “No — I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and *then* the sons will be manifested to establish the kingdom in their midst.” We may think we have witnessed mighty manifestations of God’s power and glory in the past, but we haven’t seen anything yet!

Even with the light of divine revelation it is difficult to imagine the wonderful sight of entire nations coming to the Lord! Think of what it will be like! One day a nation is communist, filled with people spouting by rote the godless line of Lenin or Mao. The lives of the people are tightly controlled by that totalitarian system, with all its oppression and tyranny. But then, the Lord God Almighty speaks a word from His throne in the heavens of His Spirit and there is released a mighty flood, a deluge of the Spirit of the Lord over that nation; the glory of the Lord appears to every man in power as He did to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, and the whole nation is set free by the power of God. All the people of that nation turn to the Lord to love, worship, and serve Him. Then the indestructible, incorruptible sons of God will appear in the earth and the people will seek God in the person of His sons, and there will be a dispensation of life, light, and power unto them. In the sons of God they will see and learn and know the ways of the Lord, the will of the Lord, and all aspects of their national life will become transformed by the wisdom and nature of God. With one mighty sweep of His Spirit, God has changed a communist nation into a nation that loves and serves the true and living God! The kingdom of God has then come to that people and nation!

Throughout church history the Lord has given us little “previews” of just how such a wonderful work can be accomplished. I know of several, but will share this one. I do not have the name of the person who first reported this incident, but it was shared by responsible brethren, therefore I pass it on to my readers. In 1983, a remarkable incident took place in a North African village located some 125 miles east of the city of Algiers. On one unforgettable night — with no prior warning and for no immediately discernible reason — God sovereignly descended upon this township in a divine visitation. Moving from house to house, and communicating through a combination of dreams, visions, and angelic visitations, He did not rest until every member of this Muslim community was properly introduced to Jesus. Come daybreak, nearly every villager had a story to tell! As the Holy Spirit lingered and these simple citizens managed to piece together the magnitude of what had happened to them, a sense of spiritual awe settled over the entire village. In the weeks that followed, their conclusion led to a dramatic wholesale conversion of some 400 to 450 Muslim villagers. There were only about 25 believers in the *whole nation* before this incident. In the area thousands more Muslims have now been converted to faith in Christ, and nearly all reported some type of supernatural intervention!

We have come to a period of history, and to a condition, for which there are no precedents. There are no instructions left for guidance in the details of the restoration of all things, beginning with the deliverance of all the Lord’s own people from the tyranny and folly of religious Babylon, followed by the deliverance of the nations from every kind of sin and delusion and their entrance into the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit has given no exact direction concerning the manner in which His holy priesthood for the nations is to minister or its work be effected. We have, in the scriptures, abundant instructions for the “in part” realm of church age ministry. It is not difficult to learn how to function in the body of Christ as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, deacon, bishop, elder, or to move in the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. But I defy any teacher or theologian to find anything that will give direct help, even in the words of Jesus Himself, concerning how to reign as a King-Priest over the nations! He left that for the Holy Spirit to teach to the elect company of overcomers who should be the heirs of the kingdom of God. We have come to that hour. Ah, we can only learn these sacred and secret things by being TAUGHT OF HIM! “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME” (Jn. 16:12-13).

We think we have seen some wonderful moves of God, and we have, but we haven’t even scratched the surface, we haven’t seen anything yet that faintly resembles the glorious things God will do in the days that lie before us. With all its multiplied missionary programs and evangelistic efforts the church has not yet even started on world evangelism. God is laying a groundwork and teaching, processing, qualifying, equipping, and empowering His people for this coming invasion of all the world. He must do something unprecedented for us first, so that we will be ready. Today if a country refuses to accept missionaries, such as all the communist and Muslim nations, we simply can’t send any. These countries are closed. So we need a power and a life *greater than any of us have seen or experienced before* in order to walk in those lands without being either promptly expelled or martyred. Indestructible, incorruptible, glorified bodies would certainly be the answer! And that’s what manifest sonship is all about, as Paul so clearly said, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which *shall be revealed in us*. For the earnest expectation of creation *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same *in hope*. *Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the*

*glorious liberty of the children of God.* For we know that the *whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (placement as mature, fully empowered sons), to wit, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY*” (Rom. 8:18-23). Obviously, we don’t have all that we need for this great work, but God is quickening us for it. He is stripping away our dependence upon money, methods, materials, and all the conventional ways of the old church order and the traditions of religious Babylon, drawing us to move out of that and into HIS REALM. The realm of God is the realm of *spirit* and of *life*. It is the realm of *being*. God is teaching us the ways of *sonship to God*.

What wonders shall be wrought when our Father has glorified His sons with the glory of Christ! All the nations of the world shall *remember* and *turn* unto the Lord, bowing before the feet of this glorious Christ, confessing Him as their Saviour, Redeemer, Lord, and King, to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And since it is *nations*, and not *individuals*, that shall come to the Lord, it is obvious that they shall not come to a geographical location. There will be no literal, physical throne nor any literal, earthly city. The government of God is a *glorified people* reigning in the Spirit and by the Spirit from heavenly places in Christ Jesus! But they shall COME to the mountain of the Lord’s power, to the beautiful and spiritual temple of living stones, to a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, glorified in the midst of the earth. It is an absurd impossibility to imagine whole nations coming to a literal mount Zion, or to great crusades in stadiums or buildings, which are all so limited. Such carnal thinking is a remnant from the old age now passing, and has no place in the new order of the kingdom of God upon the nations. God will not repeat the limited methods of the past, for they cannot prevail to do the work that must be done in this new Day. The world-wide outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of the sons of God is the next significant event on the agenda of God’s kingdom program. What a marvelous plan, revealed and confirmed now by the Spirit of the living God within our hearts! We know God’s purpose because He has called us and chosen us to be a vital part in the redemption and restoration of all things. And we will be there — whether by transformation while we yet stand upon our two feet, or whether by resurrection — we wait in holy expectation!

### NOTHING THAT DEFILES SHALL ENTER

“And *there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27).

That scripture passage need not scare us. It’s not a message of fear and condemnation as the church systems often teach! It signifies our calling as overcomers — called to obtain the victory over all the works of the flesh, the world, and the devil. It is my conviction that the reference is not to those hungry, thirsty, and needy souls who come to the city to enter in through its gates in order to be blessed, delivered, and to drink of its living waters of salvation. Rather, it speaks to those who are called, chosen, and apprehended to *be a part* of this city and its holiness and its glory. The inwrought victories of the overcomer is what qualifies one to be a *part* of this glorious city of gold! Neither is John trying to tell us in this passage that if we haven’t overcome everything we will miss heaven and wind up in hell. That interpretation is just another example of the shallow thinking and mis-guided understanding of religious minds! The Holy Spirit is pointing out to every child of God that we can reveal the nature, glory, and majesty of our God in the fullest measure only when we have completely *put off* the old man with his deeds, and have *put on* the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. The nations of them that are *saved* walk in the light of the city,



signifying that they are *not the city*, but they are healed, saved, and enlightened by it. Multitudes of believers, because they have no vision to overcome all things or to grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, settle for a lesser calling in God. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, that is, those in whose lives the nature of the Lamb has been *inscribed* by the power of His indwelling life — these are truly they who radiate the glory of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb!

No one whose nature has not been thoroughly changed shall be a part of this city. Since this city is the body of Christ in its perfection and fullness, only those who have been redeemed by God, and are walking in the Spirit of God until He has transformed completely their nature, so that they have come to perfect purity, perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, perfect love, and perfect power, shall arrive at this STATE OF PERFECTON which IS the holy city! This is the wonderful plan that God has devised whereby *nothing that defiles* can enter into this city. For all who have come to this state have arrived at perfection and there will be no sin, sickness, or death left within them. Aren't you glad!

My heart has been greatly stirred and fortified by these words from one of brother Bob Torango's writings. "This Day is going to challenge us like no other word from God ever has. Put your seat belts on, put all loose objects under the seat in front of you, and get ready for the ride of your life! We are leaving the earth realm, and we are soaring into the heavens of God. It is here that angels fear to tread. No *flesh* can survive in this place, nothing that loves a lie, nothing that hurts or destroys, nothing that seeks its own glory, nothing that is prideful or arrogant, nothing that is spiteful or jealous, nothing that draws its existence from darkness or death can abide here. This is reserved territory, by invitation only, kept back from former ages until now, set aside for a people that God has ordained from the foundation of the world. It is for the dead in Christ, those that have been sown in weakness, sown in death, that have borne the image of the earthly, these are the same ones that know the plan, that whatsoever is sown in death, will be quickened by life, that life comes from death, that out of weakness comes strength...our loss is His gain, our death is His life, our surrender is His victory!"

We cannot be too emphatic now in saying that the new Jerusalem is the HOLY CITY. There is a lot of uncleanness in religious circles, not the uncleanness of drunkenness, or nicotine, or adultery, but the uncleanness of jealousy, criticism, pride, self-exaltation, worry, fear, and unrighteous judgment. No wonder the prophet said, "The sinners in Zion are afraid" (Isa. 33:14). Not the sinners in China, not the sinners in the night clubs, not the sinners in the prisons, but the sinners *in Zion!* And then the prophet adds, "...fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites." Not the hypocrites in politics, not the hypocrites in business, not the hypocrites in religious Babylon, but the hypocrites *in Zion!* What is a hypocrite? A play-actor, a pretender, a faker — playing at spirituality, acting as though he were something that he is not, pretending that he is everything in God's sight, committed completely unto God, spirit, soul, and body, the select of the elect, ready for entrance into the kingdom and the city — but playing at it. Then, in the same passage, the prophet asks the burning question, "Who among us (in Zion) shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, that speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions...that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; *he shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: not one of the stakes thereof*

*shall be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. **But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams...for the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king: He will save us***

# Chapter 248

## The Holy City (continued)

On a long sea voyage a ship frequently takes its bearings in order to determine its exact position and direction. We have come a long distance on our spiritual journey through the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We are now almost within view of our ultimate destination though the waters are still deep. As we prepare for our arrival at the not-so-distant shore, let us reflect upon a few of the highlights of this remarkable journey.

We have mentioned previously that John actually saw throughout the visions of the book of Revelation *three* series of dramas, each with *seven* parts. There is the drama of the seven *seals*, then that of the seven *trumpets*, and finally the seven *bowls*. As we meditate upon these great truths, surely we can see that the opening of the seals is *the revelation of Jesus Christ!* HE is the one who breaks the seals, and a revelation signifies an *unveiling*, and it is Jesus Christ Himself, the firstborn Son of God, who is unveiled unto us and within us as the seals are broken. Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorious sonship, is the first of this trinity of dramas. The real truth is that all our wonderful Father wrought out in the life of Jesus in order to reveal the fullness of God in Him — in sonship — must now be wrought out also in God's firstfruit company of "many sons" brought to His very own glory. God's called and chosen elect, purified, perfected, grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, is therefore the *second company* to be brought to full and complete redemption, restoration to the life, glory, wisdom, and power of God! The *third company* brought unto perfection and the fullness of God is the rest of the Lord's people who are presently enslaved in the bondage of religious Babylon.

The point we wish to make is just this: As the loosing of the *seals* brings the revelation of *Jesus Christ*, the first Son, so the blowing of the *trumpets* accomplishes the very same work of God in His called and separated elect, the *many-membered body of Christ*, or the *manifest sons of God*. And just as the trumpets show the work of our Father in His chosen firstfruit company, so the pouring out of the seven *bowls* depicts the deep and awesome dealings of God with the *rest of the Lord's redeemed people — the church!* Thus the seals represent the work of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the pattern and proto-type of our sonship; the trumpets show the work of God in His many-membered son company; and the bowls reveal the work of God in the rest of the Lord's saved people — the seven churches of chapters two and three of the Revelation. These, in their ultimate perfection, become the *bride of Christ* who has made herself ready for union with the Lord. Three series of dramas, each with seven parts! Three is the number of completeness, seven the number of perfection. These three dramas with their seven parts reveal the great truth of God's COMPLETE REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION OF HIS PEOPLE, BRINGING PERFECTION, LIFE, AND GLORY!

There are three stages in the redemptive program (in relation to the church), and a full and complete redemption (revealed in the *seven* steps) wrought in each stage. Jesus has already been perfected, resurrected, ascended, glorified, enthroned, and come to dwell in the midst of His people! Multitudes who read these lines are even now in the *process* of full perfection, redemption, and glorification as sons of God! And our gracious Father has a wonderful plan and purpose to restore

all His precious people back into the perfection and glory of God! He will, in fact, restore the **whole creation**, but the three series of dramas now under consideration speak of His dealings with His church prior to the restoration of the world and all things in all realms. God must first bring forth the perfection of glory within His manifest sons and within the beautiful and glorious bride of the Lamb, so that the **nations** can then come to their light and walk in their light, even the light of salvation! Isn't it wonderful!

Never lose sight of the beautiful progression in the succession of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. Each is greater and more far-reaching than the one before! In connection with the seals there is no mention of the *scope* of their effect — for the seals are the unveiling of ONE — the unveiling of Jesus Christ! Under the trumpets, however, we find that their work affects *one third* of everything! One third, but far short of *all*! Beyond doubt, this signifies a select company! But under the bowls *everything* is affected — the whole earth, the entire sea, all the rivers and fountains of waters, the full sun, the very seat of the beast, the full length of the great river Euphrates, all the kings of the earth, the whole biosphere, the great city Babylon, all the cities, all the nations, every island and every mountain — absolute totality — all of EVERYTHING that relates in a spiritual way to the vast company of the redeemed people of God. This by no means indicates that all those *literal* things will be transformed by the ministry of the seven plagues, for the literal things themselves merely point to and represent ***spiritual things in the lives and experience of God's people*** — and it is ***they*** who are meant, it is ***they*** who are delivered, changed, and perfected!

In Psalms 120 through 134 we are introduced to what are called *songs of degrees*. In school science classes we learned a concept of degrees which tells us that in relation to the weather degrees are calibrated in Celsius or Fahrenheit on thermometers which measure the movement of degrees according to temperature. The degrees can go up or down. The *songs of degrees* in the Psalms, however, present a different understanding, for these degrees are ***always going up!*** Each of the Psalms or “Songs of Degrees” represents a degree or step up the ascending pathway to Jerusalem and the house and throne of the Lord. The people of Israel sang these songs as the caravans of pilgrims made their way up the mountains to attend the three annual feasts of the Lord in Jerusalem. Psalm 84 explains that these people go from strength to strength until they appear before God in Zion.

On what we know as Palm Sunday Jesus began the ascent to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Passover. It was there that as He drew near and saw the city He wept over it, saying, “Would that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” (Lk. 19:41). One still “ascends” to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is a city set upon the seven mountains, and from all points of the compass you have to climb to get there. To the spiritual Holy City and Throne of the Lord one ascends also in a spiritual sense! This spiritual ascent from the lowlands of the flesh, the natural mind, the human consciousness, and carnal, man-made religion, is being fulfilled in the lives of the Lord's people today. In this wonderful hour at the junction of the ages, a company of chosen ones is ascending in the Spirit up to the heights of divine life, perfection, and glory!

*Seven* churches speak to us of different dimensions of spiritual growth and development which all of the Lord's elect must pass through. The Greek word for church (*ekklesia*) means “the out-called” and speaks of people coming out of one realm to come into another realm; a people coming out of one world to enter another world; a people coming out of one mind to possess another mind. Seven churches are *seven stages* of moving out of one realm into another, out of one state of

being into another state of being. The reason the Lord selected those seven churches is because He worked out in them the mystery of the overcoming life, giving us seven promises whereby we can be more than conquerors through Him. Each church represents a step *upward* in God! And each promise to the overcomers in these churches is greater than the one before, ending with the promise to sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne! Ah, as we ascend up the holy mount of God experiencing more and more of His righteousness, power, and life, we sing within ourselves the glorious songs of degrees! As you ascend you will see in the seven churches the unveiling of Jesus Christ! You will also see the veil that hides Him in these churches! And you will see the process by which the veil is removed that HE might be revealed in your life in all of His splendor! This is what is being dealt with all through the book of Revelation — the book of the Unveiling. God is dealing with the veil and the un-veiling of Jesus Christ! Here you see seven stages of the rending of the veil in the hearts of the saints in order to reveal Jesus Christ in His body. Seven is the symbolic number of **completion** and **perfection** — representing *all it takes to complete the process!* Furthermore, each dimension of God's dealings with His people contains these same seven steps — the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials.

Each step in the process of overcoming brings us closer to the authority and power of Christ's throne. We now see a new generation of Israel's pilgrims walking and climbing these steps and degrees to glory! They are the firstfruits, the pilgrims of the new order of the kingdom of God. They are nearing the highest step of the seven, and will soon make their grand entrance into the full glory of God's Christ. Each promise to the overcomer reveals a definite and powerful step in the realization of Christ in our lives. All who are apprehended of the Father unto the fullness of God are diligently walking up that ascending pathway. They are daily applying themselves to this walk! By the strength and power of the Christ within, they are climbing upward one step at a time. As we walk up the ascending pathway to the throne, we experience within ourselves all that each promise to the overcomer embodies. When we have arrived at the last step, we will have experienced within ourselves the authority, power, and dominion of God's omnipotent and universal throne! We will be able by the Spirit of God to rule over all things as sons of God! And, oh yes, we are singing the songs of Zion as we ascend from one degree to another!

As we now approach chapter twenty-two of the Revelation, even a cursory glance will show that it opens as a continuation of the vision in the preceding chapter, and it constitutes the close of what John was shown concerning the new Jerusalem. In chapter twenty-one we witnessed scenes unfolding the blessedness of the life of the new Jerusalem, its dazzling stones, its gleaming gold, its brilliant light, its radiant glory, its holiness, its power, and its victorious, abundant life. And now in reference to this glorious city John says, "And he showed me..." It is the same messenger continuing to open to our vision the wonders of this same holy city. However, there is a new and additional view in this portion. In the previous chapter all was pictured under symbols of beauty, splendor, richness, and unspeakable glory. But now something is added. In this section the life and blessedness of the overcoming saints is described under the imagery of the original garden of Eden, the Paradise of God. The symbolism of the city is not abandoned, as is evident from the reference to the street of the city and to the throne of God and the Lamb and to the nations. But into this vision of the new Jerusalem is injected the symbolism of Paradise, the Garden of the Lord.

There was mention of this already in the letter to the church at Ephesus wherein the Lord Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the *paradise of God*" (Rev. 2:7). And here the Paradise of God is presented as being central to the fulfillment of every promise of God within the holy city, New Jerusalem. This Paradise with its

various details, such as the river of water of life, and the tree of life with its fruits and leaves, is not, of course, a literal garden with a literal river and literal trees, but like the rest of the city portray in symbol beautiful and wondrous spiritual realities fulfilled in and through the elect of the Lord. The idea that each of us had as a babe in Christ, our spiritual childishness, of looking forward to that city where we could sit on a park bench by an effervescent river eating celestial fruit from an immortal tree, was used of God to attract us and to lead us into seeking more life in the Holy Spirit, so that He might lead us to the place that He has prepared for us. Just as the Barbie doll little girls play with eventually gives way to the reality of a living, human baby, so, as we make the transition from the carnal, fleshly-minded being that we were, to the heavenly spiritual being we are becoming, let us leave behind the child-like instruments and ideas which must pass away. Let us see beyond the literal letter of the Word and behold the spiritual realities that are God's plans and purposes for our lives. Then let us allow the blessed holy spirit of truth to lead us into the *experiencing* of those spiritual realities!

I once read the account of a man of God who presented a great truth. He said, until Jesus came, in the temple at Jerusalem, every piece of furniture, every curtain, every one of the golden plates and platters, all the incense, the sacrifices, the rituals and ceremonies, and every priestly administration — every one of these outward symbols held a meaning, a value, and a power for the people of God. But when Jesus came, He replaced the temple, He replaced every piece of furniture, He replaced the priesthood of Aaron, He replaced every sacrifice, ritual, ceremony, and ministration and all of those things actually became so much “junk.” They had no more meaning, no more value, and no more power whatsoever in men's lives; therefore, in A.D. 70 the Lord moved and destroyed them all and wiped them forever off the face of the earth so that the people could no longer cling to them and those who truly loved God could move on into the spiritual realities that Jesus brought into our world. So it is also in our lives! So it is with the ideas and experiences that we had as spiritual children. They have become so much “junk” and have no value and no power whatsoever anymore, but are as instruments that must perish with the using. They are to pass out of our lives when they are no longer valid in our lives. We are not to look back to them nor esteem them, for we are admonished to *forget* those things which are behind and press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! May God make it real to the heart of every person reading these lines, may each and every one let pass away the childish understanding, the carnal, fleshly desire for a physical, material heaven somewhere, built of precious stones and gold, with a literal river and a literal tree of life! LET IT GO!

I have shared the following before but feel to share it again because of its great relevance to this subject of the garden within the city. Some years ago Gene Edwards ministered a word of revelation with which I heartily concur. In the following paragraphs I will seek to share as faithfully as I can from memory the concepts he set forth. I will also expand and enlarge upon his original thought as the Spirit has opened it to me. In that wonderful day when the Lord God planted a garden in Eden for the man in His image, God stood at the boundary between heaven and earth, that is, between the spiritual world and the physical creation, and did a most incredible thing. He stretched forth His hands of omnipotence and took this terrestrial ball in one hand as with the other He grasped the heavenly realm. He moved the two toward one another. He brought the spiritual realm, the timeless realm, the dimensionless realm toward planet earth while He moved earth toward the heavenly realm. The two moved closer and closer until they kissed each other. The two realms met and touched — thus entering into union with one another.

The area where heaven and earth met together and overlapped He called Eden. The place where these two realms met, overlapped, and interfaced became unlike earth and unlike heaven, that which had never existed before — not heavenly and not earthly — the kingdom of heaven on earth! The only thing it can be likened to is the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was visible, even tangible, but utterly spiritual. He brought His physical body out of the tomb and appeared in a body possessing an earthly form and appearance, but it was a glorious *metamorphosed body* limited by neither time nor space. It was neither a *body* nor was it a *spirit* — it was a *spiritual body*. Here in this realm of which I speak, where heaven and earth meet and mingle, all that is visible becomes spiritual, and all that is spiritual becomes visible. Great is the mystery! Everything upon this earth which is seized upon by the spiritual is transformed by the spiritual, and there is created here the kingdom of heaven on earth. When you take the heavenly and the pristine earthly and join them together, what is formed by that blessed union is far more beautiful and glorious than either!

Consider with me, my beloved, What is the natural habitat of man? He is spirit — therefore his natural habitat is the heavens! He is dust — therefore his natural habitat is the earth! Both? No! Neither? Yes! Neither. And yet, in some strange, mystical way — *both*. This glorious creature God created in His own image and likeness — where is his “home”? Ah — God prepared the place for man as soon as He created man. He created a realm that corresponds to man’s true state for man to inhabit. The earth, dear one, contrary to all that you may have been taught, is not the natural habitat of man. And neither are the heavens the natural habitat of man! The *garden* — and *only* the garden — and no place but the garden is your natural habitat. That’s where you belong — that is your true world, your homeland, your motherland — that unique realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle — the kingdom of heaven on earth! The garden was not heaven, neither was it earth. It was a realm where God could walk, and where man could walk and talk with God in the spirit of the day. It was the dimension of the *spiritual body* — spirit *and* body, heaven *and* earth, visible *and* invisible, tangible *and* ethereal, celestial *and* terrestrial, blended into one. The greatest of the glories of heaven was in that garden — the tree of life was there. And that was man’s habitat. It was not merely *where* man was — it was *what* he was!

This great truth of man’s STATE OF BEING constituting the garden of God is one of the tremendous themes which courses its way like a mighty river through the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. In the book of Revelation the garden of Eden finally becomes the wonderful city of God — which city *we are* (Rev. 21:9-11; Isa. 60:2,14). “And I saw the new Jerusalem...having the glory of God: and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal...and He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 21:10-11; 22:1-5).

How do you suppose the tree of life was transferred from the garden of God to the city of God? The simple truth is — it wasn’t! The garden still exists. The garden is in the city. The garden *is* the city. Have you not been to a village, a small town, and returning forty or fifty years later you find it to be a giant metropolis? The original village is still there — in the metropolis! The garden has grown, increased, expanded, changed, and now it is New Jerusalem! That’s why men have never

found even a trace of the original garden over in Mesopotamia though many have searched for it. It's not on earth *as earth* — for in this city two realms interface once more — the new heavens and the new earth — not two separate entities, but that place where heaven and earth are joined, the Land of the Interface! The garden was there, therefore the city is there. This is where righteousness dwells — the new mind and the new body. That is *your world*, my beloved. You and I belong to an interface. We *are* an interface. We are part heavenly and part earthly; part spiritual and part physical; part visible and part invisible. And no man on earth really knows or understands where we dwell!

What is the new Jerusalem? It is the bride with the Bridegroom, the place of *union* with God in the interface where heaven and earth overlap. We are a colony from the heavens inhabiting the earthlies. We belong to neither and we belong to both. We are *of* the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are *in* the Lord Jesus Christ. He, more than any other man, is an interface of these two realms. *Very* God and *very* man — only the interface can explain that! He is the second man, the last Adam. He reveals within Himself the true purpose of God in man. Only in Christ can one understand the true nature of all things. He is of both these realms and He is in both of these realms. He is in both and He is in neither. It is a great mystery. Oh, the wonder of it! He is a MAN seated in the higher than all heavens! He is a SPIRIT poured out into all creation to fill all things! We who have been born of water and the spirit are of His species. We are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, mind of His mind, spirit of His spirit, life of His life. We belong to His realm. We walk with Him today in the garden of God, in the city of God, in the LAND OF THE INTERFACE, for it is the only place where we can comfortably move in both realms. And yet it is not both realms — nor is it either realm — it is a combination, a union of the two — a NEW CREATION IN CHRIST JESUS! That's what you are! You are spirit and you are body. That is our destiny — to be both in union in one in the power of HIS RESURRECTION! That is our habitat. And redemption progressively brings us into our inheritance in this blessed Land of the Interface. The salvation of the soul, the redemption of the body, will complete the work. Let us press on, saints of God! The full splendor and bountifulness of this precious Land lies just before us! As the crab lives in two elements — water and land — so the *new creation man* lives in two elements: the earth and also the heavens!

In the early 1980's the Spirit gave me the following song which sums up within it the deep mystery of the city of God.

The city is a people  
Shining forth in God's glory,  
The gates are an entrance to the presence of God;  
The walls are salvation,  
Bringing a revelation —  
Of the strength of the Christ in whom we abide!  
The city is a people  
Shining forth in God's glory,  
The street is a walking in the nature of God;  
The river of life,  
From within you it flows —  
Now vanquishing death wherever it goes!  
The city is a people  
Shining forth in God's glory,  
Each stone an abiding in the temple of God;  
The tree by the river,



Living Word of the Giver —  
Of health for the nations, all things are made new!  
The city is a people  
Shining forth in God's glory,  
The throne is the power of the kingdom of God;  
The Lamb on mount Zion  
Is Judah's strong Lion —  
And they that are with Him are the sons of God!

## THE RIVER

“And he showed me a *pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*” (Rev. 22:1).

The **river** of the water of life is symbolic of a profuse and constant flow of life, of the continuous operation of the life-giving spirit of God in Christ and in all who are made one in Him. The glorified saints receive and appropriate this divine flow of life, and they also become a source of its life-giving properties for all men and all creation. We are reminded of the well-known words of the Lord Jesus recorded in John 7:37-39, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and *drink*. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall *flow rivers of living water*. But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” In the light of this revealing passage it is clear that this river of the water of life refers to the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ within those who believe *into Him*.

In beautiful harmony with this great truth of the river of the water of life are the other details mentioned by John in our text. First of all, the water of this river is *clear as crystal*, signifying this life is unmixed, pure, and undefiled. In the second place, John beholds this river as *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*. This signifies that this energizing stream of pure, divine life has its source in God through Christ within all those in whom God and the Lamb dwell and rule as the power of their life. It is the life of God in Christ within the in-Christed that flows through the city of God! And the fact that the *throne* of God and the Lamb is mentioned as the source of this river emphasizes that this stream of life flows out from the *power* and *dominion* of the *kingdom of God within the elect of the Lord*! The life of the kingdom of God, the power of His dominion within, fills the city and flows out from the glorified saints. This river is represented as flowing through the midst of the street of the city. That, of course, is not to be taken in a literal sense to mean that down the center of Main Street in the new Jerusalem flows a river like the canals which flow through the center of the streets in Amsterdam. Oh, no! It simply expresses the centrality of divine, incorruptible life in the city of God, that is, the life of the Almighty Spirit flowing through the very heart of those who walk in the spirit and in the divine nature of God! And, in addition, the tree of life is pictured as growing on the banks of this river; therefore the tree of life derives its life from the waters of the river, and in turn produces the *fruits of a divine life*. It is life out of life and on top of life — LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY!

“And he *showed me* a pure river of the water of life.” To every elect saint of God the message is just this: **Show me! Show me** a pure river of the water of life flowing out of your vessel! **Show me** a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out of any vessel! Show me a water that is so swift, so powerful, and so pure that it will wash away all filth, all carnality, all weakness and

failure, all sin and death, and impart the properties of incorruptible and eternal life! I can *show you* where the river originates and where it flows — it flows out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. That's *within you*, my brother, my sister! Ah, the Spirit of God is today *showing us* this mighty river of the water of life, not in some far-off heaven somewhere, but right within the glorious city of God which we are! Aren't you glad!

God gave the prophet Ezekiel a prophetic vision of the glory of the Lord to be revealed at the coming of His kingdom. This vision revealed what the body of Christ would become when its members have been perfected and matured in the fullness of Christ. It is so mighty, so overwhelming in scope, that at the time Ezekiel could neither comprehend it nor explain its meaning. In fact, half way into this prophetic vision the Lord stops, turns to Ezekiel and asks, "*Have you seen this?*" (Eze. 47:6). It is as though the Lord is saying to him, "Do you comprehend the magnitude of what you see? Are you able to grasp the prophetic power of this vision? Do you yet see what the rising of the waters speaks of — how it is going to end? Do you see My glory coming, and the immensity of it? It is so awesome, so mind-boggling, that I don't want you to miss the true significance of the revelation!"

The Holy Spirit of Life was shown to him as a small stream which periodically increased and continued to rise until it became a mighty river. In this vision the prophet was conducted along the river by the angel of the Lord — in the form of a man. Hear now the beautiful description of the river of God in the words of the prophet himself. "Then my guide brought me again to the door of the house of the Lord — the temple — and behold, *waters issued out from under the threshold of the temple* toward the east, for the front of the temple was toward the east; and waters came down from under, from the right side of the temple, on the north side of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around outside to the outer gate by the way that faces east; and behold, waters were running out *in a trickle* on the right side. And when the man went on eastward with the line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were *ankle deep*. Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that *reached to the knees*. Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that *reached to the loins*. Afterward he measured a thousand; and *it was a river I could not pass through*, for the waters had risen, *waters to swim in*, a river that could not be passed over or through. And he said to me, Son of man, *have you seen this?* Then he led me and caused me to return to the bank of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then he said to me, These waters pour out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah (through the Judean wilderness, into the valley of the Jordan) and on into the Dead Sea. And when they shall enter into the sea of putrid waters the waters shall be healed and made fresh. And wherever the river shall go, every living creature that swarms shall live, and there shall be a very great number of *fish*; because these waters go there that the *waters of the sea (of death) may be healed and made fresh, and every thing shall live wherever the river goes*" (Eze. 47:1-9, Amplified).

What is the meaning of Ezekiel's vision? What is this rising river which flows from the temple eastward to the Dead Sea? The entire scene is freighted with keen interest and deep significance when we realize the river is a prophetic picture. We are looking upon the stream of Divine Truth and Life. I have stood on the temple site on mount Moriah and from Jerusalem I have looked upon the same view which Ezekiel saw in his vision. It is an incredibly dry, lifeless, barren desert area that stretches down the Judean hills to the Jordan Valley and finally to the Dead Sea where nothing lives. How many times throughout the scriptures God is spoken of as a flowing

stream of water! “How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men... shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them *drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures*. For with Thee is the *fountain of life*” (Ps. 36:7-9). These words relate to one thing — that God Himself has flowed out and is still flowing on this earth into humanity as LIFE!

We may ask, In what form has God flowed out? He has flowed out first in His Son, in Jesus Christ; and then He has flowed out as the Holy Spirit. Let us see God’s divine order! It is set forth progressively in the book of Revelation. First the Lord says, “*I will give unto him that thirsteth of the fountain of the water of life*” (Rev. 21:6). At first sight this seems no more than that of: “*And he showed me a pure river of water of life*” (Rev. 22:1), or “*Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life, freely*” (Rev. 22:17). Read it again, my friend, and see if you can discern the intensification, the increase from one statement to the next. A moment’s consideration will reveal a difference in each successive statement. First we have “the fountain.” Secondly we have “the river,” and thirdly we have “the water” without reference to either river or fountain. The order is certainly reminiscent of the vision of Ezekiel where the waters increased from a trickle coming from under the threshold of the temple to waters so vast they could not be crossed!

God Himself is the spring, the fountain, the reservoir, the very source of the water of life. “For with Thee is the *fountain of life*.” Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the gushing forth from under the threshold, the first visible out-flowing of this divine water. And the Spirit of Christ, flowing through the body of Christ, the church, is the living stream, the river flowing all the time. The “waters to swim in,” the river so vast and so mighty that it cannot be crossed, which brings life to ALL far and near, until all death everywhere is swallowed up in victory, is the new Jerusalem people, the perfected and matured bride of Christ and the manifest sons of God! A river is a large stream of water that flows downhill through a channel, within banks. To explain this subtle but penetrating mystery, let us consider the case of electricity. We know that a river has *currents* and is a *current* because of its flowing through a channel. We also know that the electricity flowing into our homes is referred to as *electric current* because it is a flowing energy force that must be contained within some sort of cable for it to be useful. In the case of a fallen power-line or broken cable, there is the danger of electric shock or fire, since the current is no longer contained within its channel, and anything with which it comes into contact will be unable to contain this naked energy. In like manner, the destructiveness of a *flood* is due to the river overflowing its banks — no longer flowing within its channel.

The water is the life, the out-flowing of the Spirit. The banks are the earthen channel, the limits or direction of the flowing. The earth of *your body* and *your life*, precious friend of mine, is the channel through which the stream of God’s life flows! In nature there is water in every part of the atmosphere and in bodies of different magnitudes upon the earth, but a river is a *concentrated* and *channeled current* or *stream* of water. Can we not see by this that while God’s love, and life, and light enfold and embrace all things, and all people, the River of Life is that River, that special provision and flowing of GOD’S CONCENTRATED and CHANNELED LIFE, intensified and magnified in its movement and power. These currents of God’s Spirit which flow out through the people of God are the powers of heaven’s own divine life and have the wondrous ability to wash away the very *power* and *effects* of sin and death! Every saint of God should seek that the Lord would open his eyes to show him that those who drink deeply of Him ***become the channel by which God flows out to humanity!***

Some years ago I read *The Parable of the Bamboo*. The parable is as follows:

On the hillside in Kushing District the most valuable trees are often marked with the owner's name. A common way of conveying water from the mountain springs down to the villages is in channels made of lengths of bamboo fitted one to the other. A beautiful tree stood among scores of others on a lovely hillside, its stem dark and glossy, its exquisite feathery branches gently quivering in the evening breeze. As we admired it we became conscious of a gentle rustling of the leaves, and a low murmur was distinctly heard:

"You see my beauty, you admire my tall stem and graceful branches, but I have nothing to boast of. All I have I owe to the loving care of my Master. It was He who planted me here in this beautiful hill, where my roots, reaching down and dwelling in hidden springs, and continually drinking of their life-giving water, receive nourishment, refreshment, beauty, and strength for my whole being. Do you see those trees to one side — how miserable they are? Their roots have not yet reached the hidden springs. Since I did find these hidden waters I have lacked nothing. You observe those characters on my stem? Look closely! They are cut into my very being. The cutting process was painful. I wondered at the time why I had to suffer but it was my Master's own hand that used the knife, and when the work was finished, with a throb of unutterable joy, I recognized it was His own name He had cut on my stem. Then I knew beyond any doubt that He loved me and prized me and wanted all the world to know I belonged to Him for some special purpose. I may well make it my boast that I have a Master."

Even as the tree was telling us of its Master we looked around and, lo! The Master Himself stood there with us. He was looking with love and longing on the tree and in His hand He held a sharp axe. "I have need of thee," He said. "Art thou willing to give thyself to Me?" "Master," replied the tree, "I am all thine own but of what use can such as I be to Thee?" "I need thee," said the Master, "to take My Living Water to some dry, parched places where there is none." "But Master, how can I do this? I can dwell in the living springs and imbibe the waters for my own refreshment. I can lift up my arms to heaven and drink in Thy refreshing showers, and grow strong and beautiful and rejoice that strength and beauty alike are all from Thee, and proclaim to all what a good Master Thou art. But how can I give water to others? I but drink what suffices for my own nourishment. What have I to give others?"

The Master's voice grew wondrously tender as He answered, "I can use thee if thou art willing — I would fain cut thee down and lop off all thy branches, leaving thee naked and bare; then I would take thee right away from this thy happy home among the other trees, and carry thee out alone to that far peak of the mountain where there will be none to whisper lovingly to thee, only rocks and grass and tangled growth of briars and weeds. Yes, I will again use the painful knife, for all that tough, fibrous core within thy heart should be cut and torn away, until there is free passage for My Living Water to flow through thee. Thou wilt die, thou sayest in thy heart; yea, my own tree, thou wilt die, but thou wilt awaken to a greater purpose on a higher plane, and My Water of Life will flow freely and ceaselessly through thee. Thy beauty will be singular indeed. Henceforth no one will look on thee and admire thy refreshment and grace, but many will stoop and drink of the life-giving stream which will reach them so freely through thee. They may give no thought to thee, it is true; but will they not bless thy Master who has given them this water through thee? And will thou not give thanks unto Him for thee? Art thou willing for this, My tree?"

I held my breath to hear what the answer would be. "My Master, all I have and am is from Thee. If thou indeed hast need of me then I gladly and willingly give my life to Thee. If only through

my dying Thou canst bring Thy Living Water to others, I consent to die. I am Thine own. Take and use me as Thou wilt, my Master.”

And the Master’s face grew still more tender, but He took the sharp axe and with repeated blows He brought the beautiful tree to the ground. It rebelled not, but yielded to each stroke, saying softly, “My Master, as Thou wilt.” And still the Master held the axe, and still He continued to strike till the stem was severed again, and the glory of the tree, its wondrous crown of feathery branches, was lost to it forever. Now indeed it was naked and bare, but the love light in the Master’s face deepened as He took what remained of the tree on His shoulder and amid the sobbing of all its companions, bore it away, far away, over the mountains. But the tree consented to all for the love of the Master, murmuring faintly, “My Master, where Thou wilt...where Thou wilt.”

Arriving at a lonely and desolate place the Master paused, and again His hand took a cruel looking weapon with sharp pointed blade, and this time thrust it right into the very heart of the tree, for He would make a channel for His Living Water; and only through the broken heart of the tree could it flow unhindered to the dry, thirsty land. Yet the tree repined not, but still it whispered with breaking heart, “My Master, Thy will be done.” So the Master with His heart of love and face of tenderest pity dealt the painful blows and spared not, and the keen edged steel did its work unfalteringly till every barrier had been cut away, and the heart of the tree lay open from end to end and the Master’s heart was satisfied. Then again He raised it and gently bore it, wounded and suffering, to where unnoticed it lay till a spring of living water, clear as crystal, was bubbling up. There He lay it down, one end just within the healing waters, and the stream of life-giving water flowed in. It flowed right down the heart of the tree from end to end, along all the channel made by the cruel instrument. The Master smiled and was satisfied. Then the Master returned to His tree and lovingly asked, “My tree, dost thou now regret the loneliness and suffering? Was the price too dear, the price for giving the Living Water to the world?” And the tree replied, “My Master, no, a thousand times no!”

The great difference between one being a *channel* for God’s blessings and life rather than merely a *container*, is that when one takes for his own needs from a stream or flowing channel, the amount left for him to draw from is not diminished, nor depleted, but all fullness remains as before. But when one draws from a container, or vessel, then the supply is diminished by the amount withdrawn. The wonderful city of God does not have *vessels* or *tanks* of Living Water, but a mighty ***flowing river!*** When we become a channel for the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God, then from out of our innermost beings flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER! Water that ceases to flow becomes stagnant. Let us be vigilant that we do not let the River of God’s blessings and Life Giving Water stagnate in us. It must flow out to creation if we ourselves would continue to drink! God is calling for channels, not containers! We face a dry, parched world! — Author unknown.

I would draw your reverent attention to the source of this river and how it increases as it flows. It begins at the altar of the sanctuary of the temple where the presence and glory of God dwells. It flows out under the threshold of the door. The source of the river is in the glory of the Lord in the heights of the mountain of God! Sir Samuel Baker, many years ago, was endeavoring to find the source of the Nile. Suddenly, while he was traveling up the bed of a tributary of the Nile, he lost it completely. The river disappeared. There was no water. He kept on traveling day after day, day after day, but there was no water. It was simply a dry water bed — a water-course where the water once had been. Where was the source of the Nile? He was talking with Lady Baker about it one night, camping in the bed of the dry river, when suddenly in the middle of the night they heard

a cry, “*El Athara! El Athara!*” and someone pulling at the tent poles. “Get out quick! The river! The river!” They all rushed up the banks, and scarcely had they gotten on high ground before they heard the thundering noise of the river coming down the dry bed in which they had camped. In a moment there was a mighty river filling the dry water-course, giving in a moment the answer to the question. Where is the source of the Nile? Away in the distant mountains where snow had melted the water came down in floods!

In like manner, the glorious river of God is first seen flowing out from the exalted heights of the Paradise of God. Since all rivers flow downhill until they reach the sea, Eden in its type would necessarily have been located at a high altitude, in the mountains or on a plateau. The high altitude or “higher realm” of the garden of Eden typifies the kingdom of heaven on earth. The garden is Canaan, the promised land. “A land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deut.11:11-12). Ultimately, it is New Jerusalem, viewed from atop the “great and high mountain.”

God placed Adam the first in the garden of Eden, or the kingdom of heaven, a place of light and beauty, from whence flowed the springs of the fountain of the river of life, the source of living water. Without the garden lies the “lower realm” of earth, bespeaking the human condition apart from union with God, the whole dreadful realm of darkness and death in which is contained every sin, sorrow, tragedy, pain, trouble, sickness, heartache, fear, and torment known to man. The higher realm of Eden extends upward into infinitude, glory ascending above and beyond glory, for Eden is the gate to the unbounded and inexhaustible heavens. The lower realm includes this world and everything in it and all that lies beneath it. It descends into the lowest realms of the bottomless and embraces the outer realms of darkness. And flowing from the highest realm of the kingdom of heaven to the lower realms of the kingdom of darkness is THE BLESSED RIVER OF LIFE! Its incorruptible waters of Spirit and Truth are more real and sparkling and alive than any river of earth. It pulsates with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost and vibrates with the sheer, exquisite beauty of the divine nature of our great and glorious God and His Christ that is impossible for my poor pen to describe. Its glory surpasses the shining of a million diamonds in the sun, for it is the glory of the Lord God Almighty!

I have shown that the river of life is the stream of the flowing of God’s ***concentrated*** and ***channeled life*** through the river-bed of the body of Christ. The invisible, unapproachable, and unknowable God is Himself the eternal spring, fountain, and source of the divine life; Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the out-flowing from that spring and reservoir of divine water; the body of Christ, the church, is the living stream, the river flowing all the time; and the city of God, which is the wife of the Lamb together with the manifest sons of God, are the mighty waters that flow through the valley and into the sea bringing life to all in every realm, until there shall be “no more curse” and “no more death” anywhere! Under another type we have seen, as did Ezekiel in vision, that river flowing out from the sanctuary or temple of God. This is the temple built of *living stones*, each son of God a stone in that glorious house not made with hands, an habitation of God through the Spirit. There is but one temple, one great high priest, and one priesthood.

The book of Revelation tells us that this stream of living water flows from the new Jerusalem, out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is another picture showing us the source of this living water and the channel through which it flows. The water (spirit) flows into us, through us, and out from us. This mount Zion, this new Jerusalem, this city of the living God, this temple of the Holy

Spirit, this kingdom of God is composed of MANY SPIRITS that have been quickened by HIS SPIRIT merged into ONE GIGANTIC WATERFALL — ONE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE! That is the mystery of the river's increase! Take the shoes from off your feet, O saints of God, for the ground upon which we stand is holy ground. Put away all lightness of mind and foolishness of religion that with heads bowed down and hearts lifted up in worship God's Holy Spirit may reveal how the life of God flowing in and through Christ and the life of Christ flowing in and through His many-membered body is ONE STREAM OF THE WATER OF LIFE!

This is the river flowing out from under the threshold of the sanctuary and down into the desert and the sea. It is also the river flowing out of the garden in Eden and down into all the lowlands of the earth. It is, furthermore, the river flowing out from the throne of God and the Lamb, flowing as far as the curse is found, as far as death reigns. The Holy City flows with ALL that God is; even NOW this river and all that it possesses is flowing through the channel of our lives by the moving of God in the spirit. This is the eternal river of the Spirit of Life that flows in the heart and life of every believer and eternally from the throne of God and the Lamb until all creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Already we are drinking deeply of that water of life; by its power we are able to overcome death. The last enemy we must conquer! The complete and final fulfillment of these things is yet to come because we are still growing and maturing. Even now we are beginning to experience a foretaste of the glory that lies before us!

But notice, my beloved, at the center the living waters begin to rise and issue from “under the threshold” of the sanctuary. Not an *overflow*, but an *underflow*, an under-current, deep, mighty, and strong, portraying the real power and depth of the Spirit of Life within, as it surges upward from our innermost being to flow out to the dry places. How silently it rises under the threshold of the house, the stream unperceived at first, but growing deeper and deeper as it flows onward. How imperceptively the work of God begins in us! How silently yet steadily it increases from realm to realm, from stage to stage, from experience to experience! How mighty it becomes ere we are aware of its immensity!

# Chapter 249

## The Holy City (continued)

“And he showed me a *pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of* the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High” (Ps. 46:4).

“If any man *thirst*, let him come unto me, and *drink*. He that believeth on (Greek: into) me, as the scripture hath said, *out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water*...this spake He of the *Spirit* which they that believe on (into) Him should receive” (Jn. 7:37-38).

“He brought me again unto the door of the house (temple); and, behold, *waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward*...and it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth...*whithersoever the river shall come, shall live*...” (Eze. 47:1,9).

THERE IS A RIVER! Jesus explained that this river comes out of the innermost being of those who have believed *into Him*. In Revelation it comes out of the throne. In Ezekiel it comes out of the temple. There is His Spirit within us that is sufficient. There is a fountain, there is a river of life within each saint of God. You don’t have to be dry, parched, and thirsty or have any lack. I want to tell you today what a powerful thing you have within you in this river!

The dispensationalist view tells us that this temple Ezekiel saw is a “Millennial Temple” that will be built over in the land of Israel during the thousand year reign of Christ. I do not hold that view. It is my conviction that under the new covenant God has only *one temple, a spiritual temple*, and that the temple Ezekiel saw is the same temple the New Testament speaks of when it says, “Know ye not that ***ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*** If any man defile the temple of God (the abomination of desolation), him shall God destroy; for ***the temple of God is holy, which temple YE ARE***” (I Cor. 3:16-17). “What? know ye not that ***your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you***...” (I Cor. 6:19). “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ***ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I WILL DWELL IN THEM, AND WALK IN THEM***...” (II Cor. 6:16). “Ye are built upon the foundation...Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together ***groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord...habitation of God through the Spirit***” (Eph. 2:20-22). “Him that overcometh will I make a ***pillar in the temple of my God***” (Rev. 3:12).

In the New Testament the Greek word for temple is *naos* meaning an “inner sanctuary,” that is, the most holy place of the temple. God has never been too excited about temples made with hands. God has always been concerned with the temple of *living stones*, for He promised that under His new covenant, “I will dwell *in them*.” In view of the fact that you are the temple I would remind you of the greatness of the river that flows out from within you! Oh, yes, there is a river in the temple! We need to know what it is, why it is, how it got there, and what its potential is. And when you understand the purpose behind the powerful truth that there is a river in the temple, you will comprehend as never before the deep mystery of our sonship to God.



The Holy Spirit of Life was shown to the prophet Ezekiel as a small stream issuing out of the temple of God, from under the threshold, which periodically increased until it became a mighty river. In this vision the prophet was conducted along the river by the messenger of the Lord — in the form of a **man**. This man held a measuring line in his hand, and with it he measured the greatness of the river. In another vision Ezekiel said, “In the five and twentieth year of our captivity...in the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was... a city...and he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a **man**, whose appearance was like the appearance of **brass**, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed...” In the opening chapter of the book of Ezekiel, in his first vision, Ezekiel saw the **glory** of the Lord and it also had the appearance of a **man** (Eze. 1:1-5). When John the Revelator in vision beheld the glorified Lord he said that His feet looked like burnished brass. John saw a **man of brass!** Brass throughout scripture is a symbol of judgment. He saw the **Judge** who stood in the midst of the seven churches! So who is the man of brass — the judge? Christ! Who is the man of brass Ezekiel met? The same one he met in chapter one as the glory of God — Christ! Everything in the whole prophecy of Ezekiel is governed and measured according to the measure of the **man** that is in the **throne!** He is the governor. He is the one who measures the temple, the churches, the city (Rev. 22:15-17), and the river! There can be no river out of the sanctuary until there is a man in the throne. Nothing gets governed until HE governs it. Nothing gets measured to determine its spiritual stature until HE measures it. Everything must measure up to the “measure of the stature of the *fullness of Christ*.” Everything in these scenes is governed and measured by the man in the throne — the glorified Christ!

There is a river flowing out of the sanctuary. The source of the river is the Man in the sanctuary. One of the New Testament writers calls Him “the hidden man of the heart.” The writer to the Hebrews tells us that when this Man ministers in the ability of His priesthood He ministers after the *power of an endless life*. The Greek word indicates that this is the power of an **indissoluble**, **indestructible**, and **inexhaustible life**. Who is the source of the river that’s in you? The Man in the sanctuary! Know you not that YOU are the temple, the sanctuary of the living God? This is the Man within you who sits far above all that assails you or troubles you! The source of the river that’s in you is the Man in the sanctuary and that source is endless, inexhaustible, indestructible, and undefeatable! In every situation and circumstance He’s always bubbling up. He’s always flowing, invigorating, cleansing. He’s always sufficient. You don’t have to be upset, confused, fearful, tormented, oppressed, hindered, bound, overcome by anything within or without. The waters that flow out of the sanctuary of your spirit are living, life-giving waters! They are sent out to cleanse from all sin and conquer all death and cause the tree of life to grow up out of your reality. There is only one thing that can minister to lack, carnality, disease, and death — that’s the **river!** Thank God that in the midst of my fear and weakness and need there is a river in the midst of me — there is a river in the temple, which makes glad the city of our God.

In what direction do the waters flow? They flow **out** of your belly, **out** of the temple, **out** of the throne. But which direction do they flow? Eastward. The east is the land of the rising sun. It bespeaks of a **new day**. God has a new day for everybody and everything. No matter what you have been through, or are passing through at this very moment, my beloved, there is a new day, a new beginning, because God makes all things new! When the river began to flow, the Man began to measure. How far did he measure? How many cubits? A thousand (Eze. 47:2-6). One thousand is the symbol for *the day of the Lord*. “But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that **one day** is with the Lord as a **thousand** years, and a **thousand** years as **one day**” (II Pet. 3:8). Day to day the Man measured, a thousand cubits to a thousand cubits. When you get to the final day of His

measuring THERE ARE WATERS TO SWIM IN, WATERS THAT CANNOT BE CROSSED OVER! That is a dimension in God, a dimension in life of super abundance, of all sufficiency, so deep and so wide you cannot fathom it, an unlimited and inexhaustible supply. Unto the *infinite*! The *unsearchable* riches! The *unspeakable* gift! This is your new day.

Christ is a priest who finished the work and sat down in the throne. He once and for all gained the victory and sat down in the throne. Then He released the outflow of His triumph into all your limitation and sin and trouble and death! Now there's a river in the temple. And the source of the river is the Man in the throne. How deep is the river? Well, its source is infinite, unfathomable, and He wants you to get past the ankle stage, the knee stage, and the loin stage. When the water reaches the ankles we find refreshment in the spirit. When the water reaches the knees we bow in reverence and submission to God. And you will discover, precious friend of mine, that the deeper the water becomes, the less control you have. If you don't believe that, go wade out into the Mississippi or the Nile or the Euphrates. When the water reaches the loins we begin to reproduce life — divine life out of the new creation man within us. It is significant to note that these three areas — the ankles, the knees, and the loins — are the three areas to which the garments of the high priest reached. When he was fully dressed it represented the fullness of God invested in man.

There is a progressive unfoldment of the fullness of the Spirit of Life — from the ankles to the knees to the loins to total inundation and overflowing! “But,” you say, “how can I attain to something so high and so deep?” Ah, when Ezekiel was shown the vision he said of the Man who conducted him, “And *he brought me...*” And when the water began to flow he said, “And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and ***he brought me through the waters...***” (Eze. 47:3). As the waters became deeper and deeper, in each case the prophet repeated the same words, “And ***he brought me through the waters.***” How did you or I get to where we are in God today? How did we get this understanding of God's great plan and purpose, and His call to sonship and the kingdom? How have we overcome so many things that seemed insurmountable in our lives? HE BROUGHT ME! Ah, it wasn't your doing or my doing. IT IS THE LORD!

But note — rivers do not flow in a straight line, they constantly change directions and are full of bends. The Spirit of God does not lead us or carry us in a straight line; His anointings, dealings, unveilings, and His ministries in and through us change directions from time to time. Oh, how many turns we have been through in our lives! The ministry of yesterday is not the ministry of today. The word for yesterday is not the word for today. The way God moved in the past is not how He is moving now, either in general, or in our individual lives. The experiences of former times carried us in one direction, and today we walk a different path. God is not doing today the same thing He was doing in the centuries, decades, years, or even months in the past. One lesson we have learned quite well — we must turn when the river turns! And here is blessed hope and consolation: A river is victoriously persistent, overcoming all barriers. For a while it goes steadily on its course, but then comes to an obstacle and for a while it is blocked, yet in due time it makes a pathway either around or through the obstacle. The river of God overcomes all obstacles! Always! Never focus your eyes, beloved, on the obstacle or the difficulty. The obstacle will be a matter of total indifference and irrelevancy to the river that will flow steadily through you — keep your eyes upon the *source*, and not the obstacle!

## THE OUT-FLOWING OF GOD

In the new Jerusalem city of God there is the florescent river of life. Along this river grows the tree of life. The tree of life in Eden, on the one hand, signifies the *partaking* of divine life by man, the dispensing of God into man. The river of life, on the other hand, signifies the *outflowing* of life from man who has received life, the pouring forth of life out of the kingdom of heaven unto the barrenness of the earth realm. True, the river will also first do its work *in us* before it flows onward *out from us*. All life was to be found in Eden, just as it is in the new Jerusalem — the kingdom of heaven on earth. Eden was constituted debtor to the whole earth to send forth the life-giving streams. To the overcomer is given to enter into the paradise of God and take of the tree of life; but the river of life out of Eden is the profound expression of God's purpose to not only enter into the lives of His elect, transforming them into the tree of life kind of people, but to also cause them to become a RIVER OF LIFE COMPANY, a people out of whom the life would flow! “*Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.*” Ah, beloved, God is bringing forth His elect who live by the tree of life but shall also be a river of life, for the spirit of life within them is an ever-flowing wellspring of life and glory! Wherever God flows out by His Spirit, there He is found as life, victory, and eternal reality!

The manifestation of the sons of God shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read in the Bible or in church history! The River of Life has been flowing in the city of God, for truly “there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.” The river has sprung up within those elect saints who as a firstfruit have experienced within themselves the powers of the kingdom of heaven in the realms of the Spirit. It is accomplishing its mighty work within them, and today the city of God is being made glad! But soon it shall empty into the vast oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness where no water is. “Behold, I shall do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and *rivers in the desert*” (Isa. 43:19). Therefore, let us even now, as the Holy Spirit makes this word real in our hearts, begin to rejoice in the NEW DAY that the Lord is making, as the first rays of hope arise on the eastern horizon; let us arise to plant our feet on the anointed mount and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn!

Hear me now and believe me later — if you cannot believe me now — soon there will come the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for long millenniums and ages. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed from the living, completed temple of His body. His glory shall flow out and fill the earth. His power shall shake the nations and all nations shall come and worship before Him. The harvest of this age shall be gathered. Everything shall live whithersoever the River cometh. The Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, has sovereignly witnessed to many thousands of saints around the world in this hour that a NEW DAY is upon the horizon. This holy vision is not the result of the preaching of any man, nor is it a movement spearheaded or organized by any man or group of men; it has come by the sovereign moving of the Holy Spirit. The next great move of God is even now at hand! There will not be another *revival*. There will not be another *visitation*. It is not the hour for the *restoration* of the New Testament Church. All that has already been accomplished! A new day dawns. God is marching on. He shall do an entirely new thing in the earth. And it is the *only hope* for the world! A new age lies directly before us. The manifestation of God's sons is nigh at hand. That has never happened before! Revivals, stirrings, visitations, reformations, movings of God have happened again and again through the centuries. But now a new and unspeakably wonderful stage of the unfolding kingdom of God is upon us! In this New Day the ministry of the fullness of the Spirit of God shall be released through *many sons* in the power of reconciliation, blessing, and transformation unto all

the ends of the earth! It shall bring a deliverance and change beyond any the world has ever witnessed.

Without doubt the apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, perceived the all-surpassing wonder of this great truth when he penned these words to the Ephesian believers: “Now He that ascended, what is it but He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS” (Eph. 4:9-10). We know that He is “high and lifted up,” and that even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He is *above all*, and yet ever appearing to us right where we are and drawing us upward into Himself. It must also be remembered that this highly exalted One also *descended into the lower parts of the earth*, and then *ascended up far above all heavens*, THAT HIS LIFE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. His descent into “the lower parts of the earth” does not suggest that He lived in the valleys and plains, nor does it speak of Him going to some dark realm of “hell” somewhere down in the heart of the earth, as many teach. Oh, that men would see that first and foremost He descended into the world of “our earth,” that is, into that earth which *we are*, for “dust thou art” the scripture declares and we are assured that the first man Adam *is of the earth, earthy*, and we have all *borne the image of the earthy*. Ah, yes, He descended into the lowest realms of the human condition, made partaker of flesh and blood, taking upon Him not the nature of angels, but the nature of man, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, made of no reputation, compassed with infirmity, tempted in all points like as we are, and suffering death, even the death of the cross. Into all that He descended!

Now He has ascended up far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. Filling the heavens only with His glory is not filling all things. He has purposed to fill the lowest regions with His glory as well! Sweeter than the dews of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion and more blessed than good news from a far country is the wonderful revelation with which He now fills our enlightened hearts, showing that as flowing water always finds the *lowest level*, so the Christ BECOMES THE RIVER OF LIFE FOR THE LOWEST HELL! He both descended and ascended that He might fill all things in the heights and all things in the depths with Himself! If we would be that channel, that river of life people through whom He must flow, then we, too, must be willing to flow even unto the lowest parts of the earth and unto the lowest hell.

I must confess that I am deeply grieved in my spirit when I meet these would-be sons of God who look with disdain upon those who still have a passion for souls and desire to see men delivered from the power of sin, sickness, darkness, and death. I am aware that the hour has not arrived when God shall deal with the nations, to bring forth His salvation in them, but it is my deepest conviction that one of the sure marks of sonship is *the spirit of reconciliation*. Why exult in our great hope of what God shall do in the age and the ages to come if *the spirit of that hope* is not alive in our hearts? It is not the *doctrine* of reconciliation that shall transform the world, but the *ministry* of reconciliation. The ministry of reconciliation springs and emanates from *the spirit of reconciliation*. I mean what I have said, that if ever I am permitted in the good grace of God, there is not a hell in the universe to which I would not ask to be sent as a revelation of the Christ, that He might fill even that part of the “all things.”

There is no hell that could be more vile than the hell I see around me right here in El Paso, Texas, the hell of sin, sorrow, violence, fraud, fear, torment, demon possession, hatred, murder, strife, rebellion, disease, cursing, godlessness, and wretchedness. We have a great deal of hell here in El Paso, and across the river in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and there are no hells that could be worse than Hollywood, San Francisco, Calcutta, Port au Prince,, Mogadishu, Amsterdam, Baghdad, and

ten thousand other cities of the nations. “Oh, but there is a hell that is full of murderers!” you say. Well, these cities today are full of murderers. “But there is a hell that is full of fornicators, whoremongers, adulterers, and sex perverts!” you say. Well, these cities today are full of fornicators, whoremongers, adulterers, and sex perverts. “But there is a hell that is full of devils!” you contend. Well, these cities today are full of devils. “But there is another hell that is full of liars, idolaters, thieves, and blasphemers!” you assert. Well, these cities today are filled with liars, idolaters, thieves, and blasphemers. We have lots of hell around us and lots of hell beyond us, but our work is to follow Christ, to be willing, as sons of God, not only to ascend the throne, far above all heavens, but to be ***poured out as the River of Life INTO THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH***, into all the hells, and clean them out, cleansing, purifying, quickening, and transforming them by His all-conquering life, until there is no hell anywhere. Oh, the wonder of it!

What father would not go to any of the hells of this world, what father would not trudge through the saloons of the Bowery or the sex-filth of Amsterdam in the hope that he might run across his son or his daughter who is captive to the devil there and bring them back to God and to the kingdom? This is the spirit of the Father who “so loved the world” and it is the spirit of the Son who “descended into the lower parts of the earth” and it is the spirit of every son of God, born of the incorruptible seed of a Divine Hope, a Divine Faith, and a Divine Love. Oh, yes! If you would not walk across the street to see some poor soul delivered and converted by the redeeming power of Christ, don’t waste your time relating to me how you have been chosen by God to play a part in the delivering of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. The Spirit of Reconciliation, the Spirit of Redemption must reign within our hearts. Rivers of Living Water must, even now, pour forth out of our innermost being!

Let it be thoroughly known that God flows as life only through those who walk in conscious union with Him in the spirit. Except the river bed be joined and connected to the source of the water there can be no flowing of the river. Our heavenly Father has never throughout the centuries since Christ died, rose, and ascended left Himself without a channel through which to pour forth His life into humanity. He always has a people of His own, even if it is but one man. The stream of the river of life has in every age poured out through those who were walking in the Spirit. God has always accomplished His work through those who walked in the stream of His purposes. Where the stream flows, there is the work of God! This is clear in the book of Acts, a book which speaks to us of the work of God through the Spirit. What is that kind of work which is the work of God? Is it toiling to build larger and larger church buildings, temples, and cathedrals, bigger Sunday Schools, more attractive programs and outreaches, and more dynamic television ministries? God’s work is always in the stream of LIVING WATER. It has nothing whatever to do with well orchestrated programs, entertainment, or charismatic personalities. Where the stream of Living Water flows, there is the work of God! God works by the flowing of the stream of His DIVINE LIFE. If you consider the whole record of the book of Acts, you will see the picture quite clearly. On the day of Pentecost this stream of divine life flowed out of God Himself in Christ through the channel of those apprehended ones of God with ruling power from the throne. It began to flow in Jerusalem. From there it flowed to Antioch, and then from Antioch it turned to the west; it flowed to Asia, and through Asia it flowed to Macedonia, and onward to Europe. From Europe it flowed to the New World, and it has flowed to practically every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people on the face of the whole earth! What a river!

Nothing can stand before, over, or against one who dwells in union with God the Almighty. Oh, praise God, He is knitting His own called and chosen elect together in Himself in the united life

of His Spirit — and not merely a unity of spirit with our brethren in the flesh, but unity with CHRIST and a unity with all who are IN HIM — that great company of Elohim on both this side of the veil and the other — for it is written, “*Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of messengers, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant...*” (Heb. 12:22-24).

This mount Zion, this city of the living God, this heavenly Jerusalem, this innumerable company of messengers, this church of the first-born, the spirits of just men made perfect, this Jesus...**this** is the voice of the many-membered **son**, the voice that has the sound of **many waters**, **many spirits**, merged into ONE GIGANTIC WATERFALL — ONE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE! Take the shoes from off your feet, O saint of God, for the ground on which we stand is holy ground. With heads bowed down and hearts lifted up in worship to Him who sits upon the throne, may the blessed Spirit of Truth make crystal clear to every consecrated heart how the life of God flowing in Christ and the life of Christ flowing through His body is ONE STREAM OF THE WATER OF LIFE. This is the river in Eden, this is the river Ezekiel saw issuing from the temple, this is the river Jesus said would flow from our innermost being, this is the river proceeding out from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the holy city, New Jerusalem — ONE RIVER, the flowing out of God Himself as reality and life from within those consecrated sons of God who are UNITED IN HIM.

It should not be difficult to understand that this great river is the answer to all the world’s need. For this purpose the elect of the Lord have been going through all the dealings and workings of God, particularly during the last several years, in order that Christ might be fully formed in them AS LIFE. The river must first flow *into us in all its fullness and power!* We learn to know the fullness of His power within by the crucible of experience in order that God may have a people through whom He can manifest Himself WITHOUT INHIBITION, WITHOUT LIMITATION, WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE TO THE FULL FLOW OF HIMSELF, SO THAT IT WILL BE THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE, GRACE, POWER, LIFE, SALVATION, AND DELIVERANCE TO ALL HUMANITY. A people no longer conscious of any self-effort or even of God’s works — wonderful though His works are — but conscious of GOD HIMSELF. A RIVER OF LIFE PEOPLE not proclaiming doctrines, creeds, methods, experiences, ordinances, or works of any kind, but just the Lord Himself as Life and Light and Love — GOD manifest in the flesh!

### THE THRONE

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding *out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*” (Rev. 22:1).

“And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a *throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne*” (Rev. 4:2).

“And I beheld, and, lo, *in the midst of the throne...* stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the *seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*” (Rev. 5:6).

The relation of the Lamb to the throne of God in this drama of the Revelation is unique in all the writings of scripture. There is not the slightest intimation elsewhere in the Bible of one who might share the throne with God. Christ Himself is the first to suggest such a conception. The first indication appears early in the visions of John when the Lord Jesus pledges that all His disciples who

*overcome* will share His throne with Him, just as He, having overcome, now sits upon the throne with His Father. As the Lamb He appears in two later episodes “in the midst” of the throne of God. In chapter twelve the “overcomers” are presented under the figure of a “manchild,” Christ’s “many brethren,” the manifest sons of God, “*caught up to God and to His throne*” from whence they rule all nations with a rod of iron. Near the close of the drama there are two further references to a shared throne — the “throne of God and of the Lamb.” The great wonder is that He sits upon the throne not as Master or Lord, not as Christ or Jesus, not as King or the Son of God, but He sits upon the throne as the Slain Lamb, pouring out the stream of His precious blood, His very own divine life.

The One upon the throne is “the Lamb” — and He rules not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life! John saw by the spirit of revelation that the only way to power is the way of sacrificial love — that is ultimately the only power in the universe. We would have thought that in calling our Lord “the Lamb” this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation and death in His earthly walk. However in scripture it is most often used in reference to His eternal glory in the heavenlies! Peter saw Him as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. John saw Him as a Lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world, highly exalted, standing in the midst of the throne, and yet — in some mystical and mysterious way — *still slain!* This *slain Lamb* is ***in the midst of everything***: in the midst of the throne, in the midst of the four living creatures, in the midst of the twenty-four elders. The Lamb is peculiarly the One who is ***in the midst***, just as the tree of life was ***in the midst*** of the Garden of God. As the Lamb stands ***in the midst*** of each one of God’s called and separated elect we are enabled to express and manifest, out of our innermost being, the life, nature, and power of the God of the throne!

The term “Lamb” is used of Christ no less than twenty-eight times in the Revelation, and has two vital characteristics. Christ is the *sacrificial* Lamb and He is the *conquering* Lamb. He is seen as *slain* yet *standing* in the midst of the *throne*. He does not reserve the power of His divine life unto Himself, but His life is forever, continuously, being laid down and poured out in a never-ending stream of love and redeeming grace. This principle of the laid down, poured out life, is the reality of all who share His Lamb nature. And throughout the book of Revelation it is the Lamb who overcomes and conquers all! It is the Lamb who gets the victory over the beast, and the false prophet, and the whore, and the dragon, and the kings of the earth; over the world, the flesh, the devil, death, hell, and the grave! So glory to God and the Lamb forevermore! The Lamb shall have the victory! Christ is Lord over them all, for He was slain before they were, and will be reigning when they are gone! The wonder of it all is that THIS LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is *within!* Oh, that our eyes might be opened to behold HIM! HE is the most powerful, courageous, majestic, and yet kind, gentle, gracious, loving, and life-giving Lamb of all! In absolute power and strength He reigns with love, mercy, grace, and goodness until every enemy in us is destroyed and the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer — the image and glory of God in human flesh! And when His work in us is finished and by the spirit we look in God’s great mirror and behold the image of what He has formed us, we see nothing but a ***slain Lamb!*** We will rule as He rules, by the cleansing, transforming power of that life-blood that flows from Immanuel’s veins, proceeding out from the throne of God and of the Lamb!

The message is just this. Not brute power, crushing and compelling, even were it the power of God Himself, can bring to pass the purpose of God in redemption for all creation. But the slain Lamb, and all that the Lamb stands for, and all who possess the spirit of the Lamb, are lifting up man from the depths, and bringing to fruition all God’s gracious purpose concerning him. The slain

Lamb, by His poured-out life, melts the stubborn hearts of men, and takes them willing captives. The highest power of the Godhead is manifested in the Lamb that was and is slain!

In the light of the truth we are now considering many things take on new meaning. I would draw your reverent attention to the fact that in the Greek text the *diminutive form* for “lamb” is used, indicating that it is a “little lamb.” Truly this is *Mary’s Little Lamb!* The use of the Greek diminutive *arnion*, the “little lamb” or the “lambkin,” is the only word used in the Revelation for the Lamb. He reigns as a Lambkin-King, and God is raising up in the earth His body, the body of the Lambkin, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to establish in each member of the body of the Lambkin the nature, and the character, as well as the authority of the Lambkin in the throne. John did not see many lambs in the throne, only one — for the Lambkin is a *corporate Lambkin*, for every lamb must have both a head and a body, and those who share the Lambkin’s throne are the body of the Lambkin. Can we not see by this that any man or any ministry which does not speak and act out of the nature of the Lamb is not reigning upon God’s throne but on his own little throne. God’s throne is *only* the throne of God AND THE LAMB! It is the work of the Holy Spirit to so inwork in each son of God all that pertains to the exalted Lambkin, that He might be here in the earth to be to you and me, yea, to be *through* you and me ***everything that Jesus is upon the throne!***

The first Little Lamb was none other than our Lord Jesus, the Christ. The Spirit of the Lambkin was poured out upon a little company of people on the day of Pentecost, the first of a new spiritual race of men destined to fill the earth to redeem and restore creation into God again. The Lambkin has developed in the saints of God from that small and unimposing beginning to become a vast company of lambs upon the pinnacle of mount Zion! Ray Prinzing expressed the spirit of this beautiful truth when he wrote, “Freely, gladly, joyfully Jesus Christ faced the hour of sacrifice, pouring out His life, that it might be diffused and spread over the whole earth. Now God’s elect are being brought to the same consecration, so that they give everything, for the joy of beholding His life quicken those around them. Willing to spend and be spent, until HIS LOVE THROUGH THEM has conquered all, and creation is restored into perfect harmony with its Creator. He gave His life for the world! Now, this lambkin company, can freely share it with creation.”

All who understand the deep things of God know that God doesn’t exist in a physical form, neither does He sit on a physical throne. God is not a limited physical being that can sit on a tangible throne in one restricted locality somewhere out beyond the blue. Many carnal-minded Christians question the idea of the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb not being a literal, physical throne somewhere in God’s great universe. I don’t know how many believers will be true overcomers, but I suppose there could be thousands or even hundreds of thousands or millions. The question follows — will all those thousands or millions of overcomers be able to sit with Jesus in His throne? If so, that is going to have to be a mighty big throne, or else Jesus is going to have a very big lap for all those overcomers to be able to sit with Him on some literal, physical, material throne!

The one great truth that nearly all theologians agree on is that God is *omnipresent spirit* who not only *created*, but *upholds* and *fills* the whole universe and all things! You cannot put a God who is that great and everywhere present and bottle Him up on a physical throne in one confined spot. Oh, no! *He is everywhere and His throne is everywhere*, for He rules wherever He is. And since the river of life flows from the throne of God, which is everywhere, it cannot be a literal river. The river of life is the Spirit of God, which is also the blood of the Lamb, and He flows everywhere from the throne of God. The throne bespeaks the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND DOMINION; and our Lord Jesus Christ, the *firstborn son* of God, has been



exalted to the glory of that rulership. The throne of God is a sphere of authority and power, a position of eminence, a condition and state of being. The reign of God's Christ is the assumption of the almighty power and universal dominion of the Father. It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation in specific ways.

"All authority in heaven and in earth is given unto me," Jesus said. The ascension and enthronement of Jesus was the supreme event of world history. He ascended not to a place, but to a condition, disappearing into the spirit realm that is all about us and was raised up into an office in and by the Spirit. He departed from the arena of humiliation and limitation to enter into His glory. He has invited us to share that throne! He has beckoned all who have received the call to sonship to ascend in Him in the Spirit and by the Spirit to that place where all authority and power are accessed. That is the destiny of every manifest son of God! The authority is present everywhere by His Spirit. It is not a matter of *going* anywhere! But it must be accessed, appropriated, embodied, and expressed through a people who attain to the FULLNESS OF GOD!

The Greek word *thronos* means "the place and seat of authority" and refers not to an actual physical seat, but to all **executive authority** that is committed into the hands of God's Christ, Head and body. Understand that the throne is here now; here is infinity; here is eternity; here is omnipotence, waiting for you to enter into your heritage in God! Again and again in the Psalms and in the Prophets David and others make this beautiful and significant assertion: "*The Lord reigneth...*" The Lord reigneth over the heathen, the Lord reigneth over the nations, the Lord reigneth in Zion, the Lord reigneth in the midst of His people! It is always present tense. The Lord reigns *now*! That doesn't mean that He has purposed to deal with everything and everybody now, but He has assumed the dominion of the world and all things, and all is safe in His care and all will experience His sovereign purpose in His timing and according to His program and will. And His program and will is just this — HE **WILL DEAL WITH EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY THROUGH HIS MANY SONS BROUGHT TO GLORY!**

The Hebrew word translated "reigneth" is *malak* and means to reign, that is, **to ascend the throne, to be inducted into royalty**. Thus, when we are called to share His throne, we are called to spiritually ascend the throne and be inducted into the royal authority and power of that throne! Therefore, as the elect hear His voice and hasten to His call, we are ascending to the very throne of Christ in a greater relationship with Him and in Him. We have been *inducted* into the royalty of the throne of Christ — into His *reigning realm*! When this reality awakens within us we then understand that through the experiences we encounter in this earthly life, with all their testings, trials, learning, overcoming, and provings, thereby being made strong and wise in Him, we are becoming overcomers and are experientially *learning to reign* over all things by His royal mind, will, and life! When you are caught up in the spirit you behold a throne in you, and Self will no longer sit upon the throne, but He, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will sit upon that throne, and you are raised up and made to sit together with Him upon His throne. His nature and your nature are made *one*. His will and your will are made *one*. His mind and your mind are made *one*, and His authority becomes your authority. As we hear His call to come up into the **throne zone**, we know that He is rising up to reign in our lives to redeem us fully and completely in spirit, soul, *and* body. He shall reign more and more in us until His throne is fully established within us, and then we shall be empowered to restore all things unto Him until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea! That is the mystery.

## JOINT DOMINION

“For as a young man marrieth a virgin, *so shall thy sons marry thee*: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa. 62:5).

The passage above is one of great significance and deep meaning. In the natural this would never take place, sons would not marry their mother, and God would not rejoice over such a union. But we are dealing here with spiritual realities which are not bound by the laws of the natural world. In its spiritual sense, the Lord is speaking to the *virgin church*, the *betrothed wife* of the Lamb. This is the “woman” of Revelation 12 which bears a “manchild” who is caught up to the throne of God and rules all nations with a rod of iron. The woman, the corporate bride, is pregnant with the manchild, the manifest sons of God, in the same order of Mary when she was pregnant with the firstborn Son — Jesus. Do you not remember that it was while Mary was betrothed (engaged) to Joseph, *before* their wedding, *before* she moved in with Joseph as his wife, and *before* they came together, that she was found with child by the Holy Ghost? In like manner the virgin church becomes pregnant with the sons of God, being found with child by the Holy Ghost, *before the marriage of the Lamb and His wife*. Surely we can see that the manchild is birthed in chapter *twelve* of the Revelation, and the marriage of the Lamb does not take place until chapter *nineteen*!

So the spirit of revelation is telling us in this passage that even as the virgin church, the company of God’s people who bear the feminine aspects of God’s nature — tenderness, gentleness, caring, nourishment, love, succor, etc. — brings forth the manchild, the manifest sons of God, who bear within themselves the masculine aspects of God’s nature — strength, power, authority, dominion, etc. — and these sons are separated from their virgin mother at their birth to go forth and fulfill their unique destiny, and they are caught up to the rulership of God’s throne, THERE IS A TIME WHEN THE SONS WILL COME BACK TO THE VIRGIN CHURCH AND TOGETHER WITH JESUS THE HEAD OF THIS SONSHIP COMPANY WILL AGAIN BE JOINED IN UNION WITH THE CHURCH — FOR THEY ARE THE **BODY OF THE BRIDEGROOM!** At the marriage of the Bridegroom to His bride, the company of the sons of God who are *one with the Bridegroom in His sonship*, are with Him and in Him joined to the church in intimacy of fellowship and vital union. *In Christ* the sons marry the bride, their own mother! And in that day when the virgin church’s sons come and marry her, God will rejoice over the church as a bridegroom rejoices over the virgin he is to marry! That is the mystery.

At the time of this glorious reunion of the woman-church and the sons joined to Jesus, the woman-church will have passed through her wilderness experience (Rev. 12:6,13-17) and been processed and purified and made ready for the marriage of the Lamb. While the church is in the wilderness of trial and testing she will be prepared for her marriage and taught God’s ways and will be adorned in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints. In verses eleven and twelve of the same prophecy of Isaiah, he says, “Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion (the church), Behold, *thy salvation cometh; behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him*. And they shall call them, *The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken*” — that, THE HOLY CITY! It is the New Jerusalem Bride.

Those who read these lines should meditate deeply upon this mystery of Christ and His bride. The deep mystery is rooted in the wonder of man’s primordial glory — male and female — *set together* in splendor over the works of God’s hands. It is impossible for me to explain the glory of such a thing as this because we are blinded to the impenetrable mystery of a realm that long ago passed away. Nevertheless, the moment we understand that man in the beginning was created *in the*

*image of God*, male and female, and that *male and female IS the image of God*, then we can understand for the first time the awesome glory, power, and exaltation of the bride of Christ. The image of God is not a body with a torso, two legs with two feet and ten toes, two arms with two hands and ten fingers, and a head with two eyes, two ears, a nose and a mouth. The image of God is the emanation of the *nature* of God and that nature is expressed as *male and female*. All the feminine characteristics of the woman and all the masculine characteristics of the man are spiritually resident in God. We know this is so because everything in the whole vast universe came out of God, and if God had not been male and female within Himself in the beginning we could not have male and female in the earth today — IN HIS IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS.

All creation being set in order, one was needed to take the headship, to bring the authority and blessing of God's kingdom dominion over all things. "And God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness; and let THEM have dominion...so God created man in His own image...male and female created He THEM. And God blessed THEM, and God said unto THEM, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and HAVE DOMINION over...every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28). My reader will observe the change from *him* to *them*. We are not presented with the actual process of the formation of the woman until the next chapter; though here we find God blessing *them* and giving *them* JOINTLY THE POSITION OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All realms from the lowest of the bottomless to the highest of the heavens were set under their joint dominion, as typified by the fish of the sea, the beasts of the earth, and the fowl of the heavens. These three realms symbolically encompass all spheres of existence from the lowest depths of darkness unto the highest dimension of light and exaltation. Jesus confirmed the true scope of man's dominion when, as the last Adam, He descended into the lowest parts of the earth and then ascended up far above all heavens. He descended also into the lowest habitations of the most wicked and vile of Adam's race; He liberated the captives in the prison house of darkness, those who had been disobedient in the days of Noah (I Pet. 3:18-22; 4:6), and ascended up above all heavens to reign over all things. ALL POWER is given unto Him, both in the heavens and in earth. THIS, precious friend of mine, is the magnificence of that dominion given to Adam the first — male and female — in that long ago beginning.

Eve received all her blessings in Adam; in him, too, she got her dignity and position and power. Not yet called into separation out of Adam, she was, in the purpose of God, part of the man. Universal dominion was not given to Adam alone, it was not said, "Let *him* have dominion," but "Let *them* have dominion." There was no other creature so near to Adam as Eve, because no other creature was part of himself. What affection did not Eve owe to Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in all of his thoughts! In all his dignity, and in all his glory, wisdom, and power, she was entirely ONE. He did not rule *over* her, but *with* her. He was lord of the whole creation, and she was ONE WITH HIM! THEY were king and queen of the universe! All this will find its full antitype in the ages to come. Then shall the True Man — the Lord from heaven, the corporate man composed of "many sons brought to glory" — take His seat upon the throne, and in companionship with His bride — the New Eve, the cleansed and perfected church — rule over a restored creation. This church is quickened out of the grave of Christ, taken from His riven side, being thus "of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." He is the Bridegroom and she is the bride, making ONE NEW MAN, as we read in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, "Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the *fullness of Christ*" (Eph. 4:13). And who is this "*Perfect*

*Man*”? CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE, CHRIST MALE AND FEMALE — THE LAST MAN ADAM AND THE NEW EVE!

There is a wealth of revelation contained in the holy city, New Jerusalem. The bride of Christ is the *city of God* (Rev. 21:9-11). The sons of God are the *throne of God* (Rev. 12:5; 3:21; 21:7). The mystery is just this — the throne is in the city! The city and the throne are one! That city is the holy city, New Jerusalem. Every stone of that city is a living stone, a glorified CHRIST-BEING. Every stone is a living, ransomed soul just as every member of the body of Christ, which is the temple of God, is a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. We cannot fully explain nor understand a mystery so awesome as this, but the eye that sees by the spirit sees the temple as a living thing, composed of living saints. In that temple redeemed men, the sons of God, are the pillars and foundations, and Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone, from whom the whole body fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded to become the habitation of God through the Spirit.

In holy vision the apostle John was transported in spirit to a great and high mountain, the majestic heights of the kingdom of God, from which he was permitted to see the perfected bride of Christ in all her beauty and glory. From his lofty vantage point the eyes of John were ravished with the electrifying sight of the unequalled majesty, infinite splendor, and unsurpassable beauty of the bride adorned for her Husband. Not a city of dead stone as was the old Jerusalem, but a *new* Jerusalem, a **living city**, a bride beyond compare, a virgin pure and holy, composed of incorruptible saints, brought forth out of the living substance of Christ. Words utterly fail me to describe the wonder of such unexcelled glory, for ours are but the words of men, but that holy and beautiful city belongs to THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT.

Now at last the perfection, the image of God, male and female, bridegroom and bride, sons and daughters, throne and city, of which Adam and Eve were but a frail shadowy type, has come; the many-membered Bridegroom, the last Adam, with the many-membered Bride, the Holy City, Adam and Eve, the first and the last, in the image and the likeness of God, JOINTLY RULING ALL THINGS! The nations shall walk by the light of this city and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. The tree of life is in the midst of it and the water of life flows from the throne of God in the midst of it. This is GOD, male and female, united with the image of God in man, male and female, ruling over all the endless vastnesses of infinity unto ages of ages! May the Holy Ghost unfold these things more fully and powerfully to our hearts, that we may have a deeper sense of the conduct and character which are worthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called.

# Chapter 250

## The Holy City (continued)

*“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life...”* (Rev. 22:2).

You will observe that there is but *one street*. One street in a city fifteen hundred miles square! The literalist would have trouble here. A literal city fifteen hundred miles square and fifteen hundred miles high with but one street would hardly provide for traffic, and especially for the *hosts* of the redeemed. Whatever this street symbolizes must be pure as gold and clear as crystal! That which is symbolized must be perfectly transparent. It must endure the fire test of the Holy Ghost fire of God. There must be nothing counterfeit, false, or impure about it!

Let us see now and take note that in reality there *is no street!* We would think there would be a great number of streets in so vast a city with twelve gates of entrance. Yet here there is only one! However, there may indeed be many streets in the city, but that is not what John is showing us here. It is not in the midst of the “street” that the tree of life grows. How to translate the Greek word rendered in the King James Bible as “street” is really not difficult. “Street” is not a correct translation. The Greek word used here is found *only* in the book of Revelation. The word is *plateia* meaning “plaza,” “square,” or “broad space.” Simply looking at the Greek word should reveal the close resemblance to our English word “plaza.” In Greek cities it was the “square,” the market place where all the business was done. This is an arrangement much adopted in many parts of the world. We have all seen the “square” of a town, the center of the town, not only the geographic center but also the *center* of commerce and the *seat* of government. Often one finds the most central part of the business district as well as the County Court House and other government offices on the city square. To this central location all the other streets would lead. In the “center” or “square” of New Jerusalem also is the seat of divine government — the *throne* of God and of the Lamb!

There are many wonderful truths to embrace, abundant revelation to inspire and thrill our hearts in the scene John presents to us, but one of the most blessed is the great truth that the street or plaza of the city is pure gold, as it were *transparent* glass (Rev. 21:21). The Greek word is *diaphanes* meaning “to shine through.” It means that the glory of God is to shine through our *walk!* The glory of God is to shine through all that we do and all that we are! Someone says, “I don’t believe that’s what it means — I believe we are going to literally walk on a street of pure gold, transparent like glass.” Well, my friend, if you would rather walk around on a transparent gold street than to have the beauty and glory of the Lord God Almighty to shine through your spiritual walk, go right ahead. As for me and my house, we prefer the glory of God to SHINE THROUGH US! I see that transparency coming in God’s sons today, a people so transparent that you can’t see them, you only see HIM SHINING THROUGH. Oh, yes! I see the light and the beauty of the nature of the Lamb of God shining through and how I rejoice to see this Day!

### THE TREE OF LIFE

*“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month...”* (Rev. 22:2).

Up to this chapter the new Jerusalem seems to be all mineral and no vegetable. Its appearance is as the dazzling display of a famous jewelry store, but there is no soft grass to sit upon, no green trees to enjoy, and no water to drink or food to eat. However, here introduced are the elements which add a rich softness and personal refreshment and sustenance to this city of elaborate beauty. First, get the picture! In this broad open space and on either side of the river of life is the tree of life. The literal meaning of this word “tree” is wood, timber, or forest, for it is a collective noun just like the words “city,” or “church,” — the idea is not that there is just one single tree. No, there is an entire park; whole rows of trees alongside the river and the plaza. The plaza is literally *filled* with trees! And this forest, or if you please, this forest of men, is on either side of the river. Trees throughout scripture signify *men*. Of the righteous man the Psalmist said, “And he shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3). The prophet Isaiah adds this testimony, “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord*, that He might be glorified” (Isa. 61:3). This forest of trees (men) brought forth fruit in each month, or continually, and the leaves were for the healing of the nations.

In the first Paradise there was one singular tree of life (Christ) and that tree had a two-fold significance. First of all that tree and its fruit had the power of giving incorruptible and perpetual life to man. But the significance of the tree of life did not lie merely in the perpetuation of Adam’s earthly existence. It was a sign of that higher aspect of Adam’s life, life in the spirit, which consisted in his oneness with God. The tree of life was more than a mere physical means for the extension of man’s physical existence. It was the tree of *life* — TRUE LIFE, SPIRITUAL LIFE, DIVINE LIFE. Although Adam had an earthly aspect of his life, nevertheless life for Adam implied something greater and higher than his earthly consciousness. Eating of the tree of life would mean sustaining within him the constant and unwavering consciousness and power of the *divine spiritual life* within.

In my meditations upon the holy city in the Revelation, I often return to the book of Genesis. And there, at the very beginning of the mystery of God and man we discover remarkable truths. It is significant to note that when God first spoke and caused the light to shine out of darkness the record then states simply, “*And God saw the light, that it was good.*” And then with each successive creative work He continues to reaffirm it:

*God saw that it was good.*  
*God saw that it was good.*  
*God saw that it was good.*  
*God saw that it was good.*  
*God saw that it was good.*

It is repeated six times for each of the six days. And then, the resounding conclusion on the seventh day, the seven of perfection, when the creation was complete — a creation which *included* man... “God saw that it was *very good!*” Let those words flow over and into you... *very good...very good!* Ah, yes, there was within man a quality of human goodness — but man needed to walk in a higher consciousness than mere goodness, he needed to walk in the **POWER OF LIFE!** So there were two trees, that is, two experiences of life, two realms of consciousness, two states of being available to this “good” man and woman — evil mixed with good — or *life*. So you see, God had already pronounced man good; therefore, when he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good *and* evil, he added evil to his goodness, thereby introducing him to a realm of duality, an admixture. Now

there were two sides of man! The tree ministered to man a *knowledge of good* as truly as it ministered to him a *knowledge of evil*. The fallen, natural man is both good and evil! Many natural men do choose the good rather than the evil. The world is full of unregenerated *good* people! It is for this reason that the philosophers and psychologists have discovered that within man are some “illustrious virtues” and “innate goodness” and have reached the mistaken conclusion that the nature of man is good. They have merely discovered that within man there is still the principle of good which naturally causes us to want to do good. The knowledge of good and evil concerns itself only with *external behavior*, judging all things on the basis of whether they are “good” or “evil.” Man, as long as he walks in the consciousness of this tree can understand and judge only within this framework: Is a thing good or is it evil? He then presumes that if a thing is “good” it must be acceptable and be godly. Nothing could be farther from the truth! If “good” was acceptable to God then man could surely be justified by “the works of the law.” The law is *good*, Paul tells us. But the good of man is the good of the creature — not the good of the Creator! It is the good of the *soul*, but not the good of the *spirit*! It is the good of man, but not the *righteousness of God*! Millions hope to be “good” enough to make it into heaven, not realizing that heaven is not about “goodness” — it’s about LIFE!

The problem is that when man came into the knowledge of good and evil he did not come into a better condition. He was able to distinguish between good and evil but he didn’t come to KNOW GOD! He partook of a tree that gave him a power of soulish discernment in the natural world, but in so doing he forfeited THE LIFE AND GLORY AVAILABLE IN THE OTHER TREE — THE TREE OF **LIFE**! He chose good and evil — but missed **Life**! In the garden of Eden we have two revelations from two kinds of trees. First, *life* is the nature of God, whereas *good* is the nature of man. Second, life contains good, but good is not life! The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil show us that *life* and *good* are definitely different. Good is not the same as life. Life is not good, neither is life evil. *Life, good, and evil ARE THREE DIFFERENT AND INDEPENDENT THINGS*! The good of God can only be experienced through participation in the life of God. Therefore, even before man fell, all of his good, of itself, could not give him *life*. If man had been eating from the tree of life he could not have fallen. Can we not see by this that “good” and “life” are things that pertain to two different worlds! Therefore all the “good works” of man’s self-effort and religious excitement really have nothing to do with *divine, incorruptible life*!

Let us consider with care the great truth that good was not the same as life. Life was something better, greater, and higher than goodness! And, thank God, in the new Jerusalem city of God there is only one kind of tree — the *tree of life*! There is no tree of the knowledge of either evil or good, there is only the consciousness, power, and reality of LIFE! Aren’t you glad!

The truth of this is powerfully presented in the following vision given to Pablo Manzewitch. He writes:

In November, 1986, I was in the little town of Paraiso, Argentina. It was our usual weekly service there and I was trying to encourage the people to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit so that the life of God would be able to flow out to them. I noticed that the congregation was separated into two groups, one completely different from the other. One group — most of them very new in the Lord — were very simple and without very much instruction in doctrine. They immediately began to open their hearts without any fear or resistance, and the Lord began to reach out to them in a beautiful way. While this group of mostly new believers reached out to Him, rejoicing in God, the other group of people — most of them more knowledgeable in doctrines because of more years in the church — were still standing there with their hearts closed to God. They tried to say their usual

pious prayers, but their faces reflected the dryness and hardness of their hearts. I invited the congregation to join in a time of prayer, so all began praying. In my heart I asked the Lord, “Why is this? Why do these who have more doctrinal knowledge and more years in the way of the Lord lag behind instead of advancing? Instead of being the first to open their hearts to the Lord, they are judgmental and their hearts are so hard and dry. The others — in their simplicity — are going on ahead and they open so easily when God draws near to them.”

Then God opened the eyes of my spirit and a voice from within said, “I will show you why.” Suddenly I saw a beautiful leafy tree with many different fruits of diverse colors and sizes. I saw this group of people who were not flowing in the service: they were sitting under the shade of this strange tree avidly eating of its fruit. One thing drew my attention: those who were eating of those fruits tried very hard to share them with others. They persistently tried to convince those around them to eat of them, telling them that it would make them possessors of great gain. I drew near to observe more closely this unusual tree which was before me and somehow I understood the significance of the difference in the color and size of its fruits. I observed and understood that one of them signified “good doctrine”. Another was “decency and order in the service”. Still another — and the most outstanding of the fruits — I understood was “knowing how to do things right” or “how to avoid ridicule”. Each one of these fruits looked so lovely and was so attractive and desirable.

The voice within me again spoke and said, “This tree is called the *Knowledge of Good and Evil*. He that eats of it shall die, because he puts himself in the place of God, judging by his own criterion what seems to be right or wrong.” Then he said to me, “Look what will happen to them.” I saw that this tree produced monsters. As these people ate of the different fruits of the tree, a terrible transformation occurred in their beings. Their bodies disappeared and I could only see their heads and their hearts. In the beginning, their size and aspect were normal, but as they partook of those different fruits from that strange tree, their heads began to grow in an exaggerated manner and their hearts noticeably shrank. They became more and more hardened until they were changed into beings with enormous heads and hearts that were minuscule and hard.

Immediately after that, I saw a narrow path that became more and more narrow as one advanced upon it. All of these people were walking upon this lane and each step they took caused it to become more narrow. Because of the great multitude of people in this condition who were walking on this path, they began to experience some real difficulties. With their huge heads they began to bump against each other very violently. This gave them terrible headaches. At the end of this path I saw a very large cross about seven feet tall by about three feet wide. Behind the cross flowed a beautiful river with cool and clear waters. He who would have access to this river would have to go by way of the cross. I saw that the cross had a very small door which was quite narrow. He who wanted to get to the other side and enter this place of refreshing was forced to pass through that narrow little door through the cross; there was no other entrance except through there.

I saw all these people draw near to that little door of the cross because all of them wanted to pass through to the other side to the place where the river was. But the problem was that their heads were so large and hardened there was no way that they could get through the little door. I saw these people persistently pounding on that door with their heads, but they could not pass through. They wept much because they couldn’t enter. Some even wanted to break their heads to pieces to be able to go through the door, but the effect of eating the fruit had hardened their heads too much and they only hurt themselves. They were filled with great bitterness and resentment and all of them were terribly injured. Of all the multitudes I saw, none of them were able to pass through to the other side.



They all remained on this side of the cross. What a terrible scene it was of many creatures with monstrous heads, and hearts that were very little and hard!

Suddenly the scene changed and I saw another tree. At first sight it didn't seem nearly as attractive as the first and I had to look very closely to be able to appreciate it. This second tree had lots of fruit, but it seemed to be of only one kind which was very large. A voice told me, "This is the tree of Life." Then I saw this other group of people who were simple, without much instruction in doctrine and without pretensions. They were under the shadow of this second tree and all were eating of its fruit. Soon I was able to observe a transformation taking place in them, also. But it was totally contrary to that which had happened to those I had seen before. While they were eating the fruit, their heads — which had been of normal size before — began to shrink. At the same time that their heads became smaller, their hearts began to grow until they were as large as the heads of the first group had been. These, too, were walking on that narrow path which led to the narrow little door of the cross. Moreover, their hearts bumped against each other in the same way that the heads had bumped in the former group, but these people did not hurt themselves. On the contrary, they seemed quite comfortable. Then I thought in my spirit, "What a problem! These won't be able to go through the door of the cross either because of their huge hearts. What will these people do to be able to enter?"

As these drew near to the cross, they could very easily get their heads through the narrow door. And when their hearts merely touched the cross, they immediately melted and became as water. In reality, this water was their melted hearts which simply flowed into the river which ran on the other side of the cross. Every heart which touched the cross and melted caused the river to increase in its flow and it became bigger and bigger. These creatures with small heads got to the other side with no difficulty at all. Their hearts were completely mixed and made one with the waters of that river which flowed ever more abundantly on the other side of the cross.

Again when I looked within my spirit, I saw those beings with their huge heads and little, hard hearts. It seemed to me that I could still hear them praying and crying on this side of the cross. Their prayers went something like this: "God! We are your servants and we want to work for You in Your vineyard." Then I heard, as it were, someone speaking to them: "But the only thing you are able to do is to plow the ground. The rest of your lives you will have to wallow in earthly things until you change your attitude and repent of having eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because now you believe that you can judge between what is right and wrong (choosing the *good*, of course!), you will never have access to the tree of Life...unless you will repent of having disobeyed God. Instead of OBEYING HIM, you have chosen to UNDERSTAND HIM."

Finally, I saw those monsters in a very large field, working the soil and sowing their seed, but the field was dry and sterile. The only thing that would grow and that they could harvest were thorns, thistles, and foul-smelling weeds. I saw that they were very tired, bathed with sweat, and filthy from the dust of the earth, but they still insisted on plowing the field. They were content because they were doing it for God, but the only thing they reaped was pain and bitterness of spirit — end quote.

From the garden of Eden where our Lord called, "Adam, where art thou?" to the new Jerusalem where "the Spirit and the bride say, Come," our blessed Lord has ever been yearning to bring man back into union with His life. The wonderful river of life that flows out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the kingdom of our Father flows right through the river-bed of the soul and body of every son and daughter of God. As water has always been essential for the growth of

vegetation, so also the river of life is related to the tree of life. In a desert land, where there is limited rainfall, the flow of a river through the land can easily be discerned by the green vegetation growing along its banks. In lands where the rainfall is normal, the vegetation is far more copious along the banks of the river. So also in this city: where the river of life flows, there grows the tree of life on both sides of the river! This life-giving tree represents the Living Word of God which proceeds out from the Spirit of God. When one speaks *by* the Spirit, and in the *power* of the Spirit, his words are fruit of which men can eat and receive life. And the wonderful tree of life, the whole forest of trees of life, only grows and bears its fruit by the banks of the river. The tree grows out of the river, signifying that the life of the *tree* of life is derived from the life of the *river* of life! All who would be trees of life must first access the river of life!

Can we not see by this that the “fruit” of the tree of life is just what Paul calls the “fruit of the spirit.” These trees which stand in the midst of the plaza and on either side of the river not only bear the fruit of righteousness, that is, righteous acts, but their fruit is the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. That is fruit that tastes good to anyone! And it is fruit which will sooth the hearts of those who are under a cloud of condemnation and oppression; it will gladden the hearts of those who are sad and sorrowful; it will calm the spirit of those who are agitated and fearful; it will encourage and strengthen those who think their battle will never end; it will quiet and silence those who are offensive and hostile; it will bless those who are in desperate need; it will inspire, lift, and bring victory to those who are weak and captives to sin, sickness, limitation, and want; and will serve as an example to all who are proud, haughty, and lacking in self-control. The fruit of the spirit! What a help it is to people to come in touch with the trees of life who are producing the fruit of love! How good it is for them to come in touch with such a tree and such a fruit when they have had such a long, weary, and difficult journey!

There are times when we are in the midst of trouble and turmoil and the adversary would make us feel we are defeated, but the Lord would make us to be such strong, vibrant trees and bear such wonderful fruit that no matter what comes we will always have fruit. In every situation and circumstance He is able to make all grace abound toward us in such measure that we will always have all the good fruits of the spirit. Not that men might admire our tree and say, “My, isn’t that a beautiful tree,” but that they may partake of its fruit and be quickened thereby. I have observed in my walk with God through the years that some people have been believers for many years and begin to be puffed up with pride. They think that for so many years they have served God and been faithful and therefore they deserve recognition and God’s favor because of what they are. They become trees to look at, and when you come into touch with their lives they can’t give you a morsel of anything, and when it comes to the leaves on the tree the medicinal properties have evaporated, there is no healing balm, no remedial, restoring power — they are barren. They are just trees to look at.

What a street, what a plaza, what a square is this! “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.” What would you expect to find in the midst of the plaza? Multitudes of people, the hurrying of eager feet! In the plazas of great cities a thousand interests concentrate themselves. Men of all stations of life meet and pass. There the joys and sorrows of the human experience jostle each other unsuspectingly. Innocence walks by the side of guilt. The deadliest of sins and the holiest of souls tread their way through in close proximity. Every human passion, ambition, hypocrisy, and need might be seen any day in the midst of the street by one who could read beneath the lines upon the faces. What better place could there be than the middle of the plaza to grow flourishing trees of life!

Why do men not see the city? Why do they not eat of the fruit of this tree of life? Is it because they are so far away? Someone says, "But there are no sinning, sorrowful, needy people in the city of God!" Indeed? Nothing can enter into this city, that is, *become a part of the city*, that defiles, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: only those whose natures are written in the Lamb's book of life. But we must distinguish between those who *are* the city and those who *come* to the city. If none who are vile and bound and needy can *come* to the city, then why would the call go forth, "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*." Nor would it be said, "...and the kings of the *earth* (soulical realm) shall bring their glory and honor *into it*. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

This city, remember, is not in the far-away heavens; it is a city that comes down from God out of heaven. The heavenlies descend into the earthlies! Call it, if you like, a dream city; but it is a dream of God's provision for men in this world, not in the skies. For note, there are nations to be healed! There is a great work yet to be done for the nations are sick; the mind and the heart are not sound; darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people; sickness, pain, confusion, lies, murders, violence, addictions, perversions, crime, hatred, bigotry, and a thousand more woes plague the world of mankind. They need healing! And they find it in the leaves of the tree in the midst of the plaza of the city of God! The city speaks of a great crowd, hence it suggests needs, desires, demand. And the plaza, the garden in the city reveals the abundant supply! In that long ago beginning man was driven out of the garden. Ever since that day the city, as it were, has been crying for the garden; the garden for the city. Finally, here, in New Jerusalem the garden is found inside the city! So it seems that the vision that enraptured the heart of the seer of Patmos was that of some heavenly city in this world. There radiates upon this city a wondrous light, such as never has been seen upon any city built by human hands. Yet, it is a city established in the earth, inhabited not by spirits, but by redeemed, glorified men, with the living God among them.

I *know* that I shall never see  
 A Poem lovely as *this* Tree.  
 This tree that now I know to be  
 The life of Christ that's within me.  
 All other trees may come and go,  
 But this Christ Tree — I love Him so!  
 This tree in me is shining bright  
 Because its fruits are love and light.  
 This fruit of love that transforms all  
 Removes all trace of Adam's fall.  
 O Tree of Life, I climb thy boughs,  
 And there we make our wedding vows.  
 From vows, conception brings to birth  
 The sons of God upon this earth!  
 Those sons for whom creation groans  
 Shall rule and reign from out His throne  
 Till all mankind is free from strife  
 And all become a tree of life.

— Audrey Schaffer

## TWELVE FRUITS OF THE TREE

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, *which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month...*” (Rev. 22:2).

We have already learned that the river of life is not a literal river, and since we don't have a literal river, we cannot have a literal tree of life with physical fruits — be they apples, or oranges, or apricots, or something else that give life when they are eaten. The vision is not talking about physical life or existence, but divine, incorruptible, spiritual life. The vision tells us that the trees bear twelve manner of fruits. Surely we know that when the scripture uses the term “fruits” it is not talking about physical things but spiritual things, for we read of the fruits of the spirit, which are not peaches or strawberries, but love, joy, peace, etc. — not physical fruits but spiritual fruits. The tree of life signifies the Living Word of God, and since twelve is the number of absolute fullness, and also of divine government, the twelve fruits from the tree of life bespeak man taking into himself the full power and life of the incorruptible word of His kingdom within us. It also represents to us all the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God that come to us by His word working mightily in us — perfect health, perfect peace, perfect victory, perfect provision, perfect understanding, perfect power, perfect love, perfect joy, perfect faith — perfect everything! That is why the vision employs the ultimate number twelve to designate these fruits to us. It is the blessing of God that comes to us by coming to that spiritual attainment where we truly *live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!*

As to the fruits of the tree, the King James Bible refers to them as “twelve manner of fruits.” Similarly, the Revised Standard Version says “twelve kinds of fruit.” Actually, the word “manner” is not in the Greek text and should not be used. The Greek text simply speaks of the tree as “bearing twelve fruits.” The idea conveyed is that the tree bears twelve months in the year so that there are twelve fruit-harvests or twelve fruit-crops. It is not like most trees that bear but once a year, or in one season only, or in rare instances twice or three times is the extreme limit, but it *constantly* bears fruit — there is no time of the year when there is no fruit on the tree. The thought is that of *abundance*, not *variety*. The supply never fails! The fruit does not have to be frozen or canned; the tree is never barren. How great the superiority of this tree above any on earth!

The plaza of the city speaks of its movement and activity; the river speaks of the Spirit of God as the blessed current of its life, pure in crystal brightness; but in the midst of both the plaza and the river is the tree of life! Every movement in that city centers in Christ; He gives impulse to everything there. And He is in the midst of the river too, the very power of all that quickens, of all the Spirit's flow. And He is not only “in the midst,” but “on this side and on that side.” Whichever way you look you see the tree of life there, and it yields its fruit perennially. But now we meet a strange arrangement. God's life is for ALL! Yet the scripture declares with absolute certainty that the tree of life is accessible only to the *overcomer*. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, and the river flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, bringing life whithersoever it goes, but the fruit of the tree is “to him that overcometh” (Rev. 2:7). “Whosoever will” may take of the *water of life* freely” (Rev. 22:17). But only he that “overcometh” may eat of the *tree*! And now, all of a sudden we feel as Tantalus must have felt in his beautiful garden, when each time he stretched forth his hand to reach the luscious fruit with which the trees of that garden were laden, a blast of wind blew the branch away, and Tantalus was left desolate — hungry as before. In a similar way we sometimes feel that the power of the incorruptible life and the glory of the kingdom dominion has been withdrawn from our reach. But it is not withdrawn, we have only to finish our journey into His fullness. You see, my beloved, everything God has is for EVERYONE! But there is a progression in our apprehending of it. And every man must come the same way! The first step is to

experience the healing leaves. Oh, we must be healed! Our blind eyes must be opened, our deaf ears must be unstopped, our lame legs must be strengthened, our leprosy of sin must be cleansed! Once healed, we are then enabled to walk in the light of the city, and in that light we are led to come to the river. What a further cleansing! What refreshing! What an uprising of life and victory! It is there, in the flowing of the river, that we are empowered to *become* the *overcomer*. And now, at last, we have access to the fruit of the tree — our complete and eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God and of the Lamb! Isn't it wonderful!

### THE LEAVES OF THE TREES

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and *the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations*” (Rev. 22:2).

The emphasis in recent decades on the use of herbs for healing and health may seem new to many, but it is not. It is rather a renewal of the ancient medicinal methods of healing that stretch back to the very beginning of the human race. Herbs were the first “drugs” that mankind had at their disposal. The world over, nearly all tribes and cultures had some knowledge of the plants that can relieve pain and restore wholeness. In most cases what ancient civilizations learned about treating illnesses with herbs has been proven correct by modern researchers. The first herbal “drugstore,” then, encompassed all of nature, with its amazing array of medicinal plants. There are many herbs that will work equally as well on one particular disease; some work better for one person than another, but there are many alternatives given. Various parts of the plant may be used — the root, bark, flowers, berries, leaves, and sometimes the whole plant. Leaves are used for many, many different conditions, and that brings us to the exciting symbolisms of the tree of life in the city of God, for John informs us that the spiritual leaves of this spiritual tree are “for the healing of the nations.” Besides water and food (the river and the fruit) sick people need healing and restoration to health!

There has never been anything given to mankind for the healing of the nations, healing of the dread sickness of sin and death under which all are cursed. There has been no medicine, no philosophy, no governmental arrangement, no social order, no set of laws, no religious system — nothing that has healed or can heal. Healing comes only through the regenerating power of the Living Word of God! So the leaves of the tree are that *word of God* which is “living and powerful” that enters into us by the Spirit of God, which is the river of life, by which we partake of the tree of life, and of its leaves which are the truth and power of God's Word, which truth and power alone can bring healing to the nations. We have said that the tree of life *is* the Living Word of God. Therefore, both the fruits and the leaves of the tree are different *administrations* or *operations* of that Divine Word. We know that Jesus by His word *taught* the multitudes the principles of the kingdom of God. We know that by His word He also *healed* the sick, *raised* the dead, *calmed* the storm, *cast out* devils, and brought *judgment* into men's lives. So there are indeed various functions and operations of the Living Word of God! The leaves signify the Word of God in its power of healing, deliverance, regeneration, restoration, and transformation. The healing of the nations! What a prospect that is! Now, let me make this as plain as possible. The river is the Spirit — the tree is the Word. The Spirit and the Word! The tree grows out of the river, for it is out of the Spirit of God that the Word of God issues in its power. The Spirit is life, Jesus said. The Word is an incorruptible seed which sprouts out of the river. We are born again of the Spirit, and we are also born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. “Whose leaf also shall

not wither” (Ps. 1:3). We drink of the Spirit, whereas we eat of the Word. When the ministry of the Spirit in the Lord’s matured and perfected body brings forth the Word of life in all its authority and power — the nations will be healed! That is the mystery.

In that mingled beauty of city and garden, the pure river running through the plaza, the forest on either side of it, our eyes are attracted to the healing leaves of those trees of life. It has been thought to be one of the incongruities of John’s picture that there should be provision for healing in a city where all is pure, vibrant life and perfection! But as we have shown previously, there is no inconsistency at all, for the provision is made for all who have *newly arrived* from the sins, bondages, hurts, and cruelties of human life, who come with wounds long open, with griefs that nothing on earth could soothe, with terminal disease of long standing, that need assuaging and healing so that *new life in Christ* can begin. Healing for all, John says — for all comers! Mighty cherubim with a flaming sword kept (guarded) the way to the tree of life in Eden, and man was prevented from entering again. But now, thank God! through the work of the Christ of Calvary, the cherubim have been removed, the flaming sword has been sheathed, the wall has been broken down, the handwriting of ordinances that was against us has been taken out of the way, the gates have been swung open wide never to be closed again, the pathway has been bathed in brilliant light, and upon entering the city there is no longer a “tree,” but “trees,” — a whole vast forest of them — super-abundant, complete and perfect reconciliation, healing, and wholeness for all who come, no matter what gate! Oh, the wonder of it!

The Christ, who is the Living Word of God, is the tree of life and His *words of life* are the *leaves*. He says that His spirit and life are in His words. People are often compared in the Bible to trees. How like leaves falling from a tree are the words that drop from our lips! The life of the tree goes into the leaves as our life goes into our words. Many people are unaware that Jesus was a Teacher of teachers. They think of Him when He showed His power by great healings, miracles, signs, and wonders — but fail to realize that He was a Master Teacher. He taught a certain way, He taught certain things, and He went about doing this teaching through His entire ministry. And the things He taught have, century after century, transformed the lives and society of His redeemed people!

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, *preaching* the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mk. 1:14). Jesus taught the gospel, the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD. But think about it — when you listen to the preachers today the kingdom of God is BAD NEWS for just about everybody except a handful of elect saints! The kingdom of God can hardly be mentioned without prefacing it with dire warnings about judgment, plagues, the antichrist, world war, death, destruction, and billions consigned to eternal torture in hell-fire. But the fact is, the gospel of the kingdom is not *bad news* for anybody, it is *good news* for EVERYBODY! “Peace on earth, *goodwill towards men*,” the angelic hosts proclaimed. Jesus was a teacher of the kingdom and it was good news for all men everywhere. “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying, The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe *the good news!*” (Mk. 1:14-15). As old as these words are, they are as fresh today as the dew-laden lily. It’s just as though Jesus walked into the place where you, dear one, read these lines right now and said to you, “The kingdom of God is at hand: *change your mind, and believe the good news!*” It is my conviction that the sons of God and the bride of Christ, which are the holy city of God, will not only be mighty miracle workers, but will also be the great teachers of the kingdom of God unto all the tribes, tongues, kindreds, and nations of earth, and the gracious and powerful words that fall from

their lips will be *leaves of healing* for the sick and sin-weary multitudes of the whole world. Oh, yes! THE NATIONS SHALL BE HEALED!

# Chapter 251

## The Holy City (continued)

“And there shall be *no more curse...*” (Rev. 22:3).

These words have been a star of hope to all who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and to all who contemplate the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God. They promise the consummation of Christ’s redemption in each individual life as well as in humanity as a whole. They describe the new conditions brought about by the unbounded outflow of life and victory from the glorious city of God! What an awesome pronouncement that *the day of the curse is past*. To imagine what that means, we shall have to think back to that long ago beginning in the swirling mists of beautiful Eden and see what the curse was and what it did. The curse is both within and without. First, it perverted human nature, disposing men to the faulty reasonings of the carnal mind while drawing men irresistibly to the lower choices of fleshly desire and indulgence, as against the higher reality of the spiritual mind and the exercise of spiritual aspiration and the pursuit of righteousness. It gave sin a foothold in human life, from which vantage ground it has opposed the good we would do, and exercised itself to deceive, pervert, defeat, and ensnare us in the follies of our own selfhood.

The curse fell upon the world as well as upon the heart, creating around man a hostile environment. Some entertain the notion that “no more curse” is limited to the holy city. Not so! For the assertion is the one immediately following the declaration, “...and the leaves of the tree are for the *healing of the nations*.” Adam was given kingly dominion over all the earth and everything within it, and when the king fell into corruption, his whole domain fell with him into futility and chaos. The world, as conducted by human nature, has not been friendly to love, joy, peace, or righteousness. Its influence is degrading and destructive. Virtue and truth find countless snares and temptations, and men who would walk safely and righteously must walk carefully and prayerfully. All the vast and terrible consequences of sin partake of the curse. Even the animal kingdom and all nature having lost the restraint of Adam’s godly and spiritual dominion, released all their fierceness, brutality, cruelty, savagery, ruthlessness, and destructiveness upon the earth-realm. Sorrow, suffering, disease, pestilence, storms, floods, fires, earthquakes, avalanches, tyranny, war, heartaches, troubles, betrayal, and death are but a few of the prolific outward offsprings of the curse. But now the promise falls like heavenly music upon the ear: “*There shall be no more curse,*” and with it shall pass sorrow and sighing, crying, and pain and strife!

So now we see that God has provided for the healing of the nations by means of a race of men — the trees of the city — that He has brought forth from out of all men. Now there is life for all and nothing shall defile! And God gives the guarantee of this wonderful outcome with His sovereign promise: THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE! This word “curse” in the original is derived from two other words, the prefix *kata* joined with the word *anathema* of which the meaning is simply “a religious *ban*; *excommunication*.” We all know exactly what a religious ban is, and we also know what it means to be excommunicated from a church system! All contentions to the contrary, that is the simple, plain, precise, and exact meaning of the word. THERE SHALL BE NO MORE RELIGIOUS BAN OR EXCOMMUNICATION! Now, what can this mean?



Isn't that exactly what happened to Adam and Eve after their transgression? First, the Lord explained to them the horrific results of their disobedience: the woman would conceive and bear children in pain and sorrow; her husband would rule over her; the ground was cursed; thorns and thistles sprang forth in abundance; man would labor to eke out an existence; man would weaken and finally die and go to the grave. But that was not all! No sooner had God laid this sentence upon mankind, than we read, "Therefore the Lord God *sent him forth from* the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He *drove out* the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep (guard) the way of the tree of life — *lest* man put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:22-24). Can you not see the mystery? There was a religious *ban* and man was *excommunicated* from the garden of God! The Greek word used here for "curse" implies the idea of *estrangement, disfellowship, alienation, breach, separation, expatriation, deportation, expulsion* — **BANISHMENT!** All the other tragedies and sorrows that befell man in the world outside the garden were also part of the curse — the sad *result* of man's banishment from God's life and glory and from his kingdom dominion!

And now comes the promise — there shall be no longer any excommunication or banishment from the presence and glory of God! Instead of excommunication, the Cherubim are gone, the flaming sword has vanished, the gates have swung open wide, and God is providing a way into the garden in the city and a free and full access to the tree of life for all men! There is healing for the nations! There is no more curse! All of this is coming from the plaza of the foundation of the authority and power of God and the Lamb! There is room for ALL, for the plaza of the city is broad enough, and God's power great enough to take in all the nations and no one is ever again cut off or driven out. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

Write it between your eyes and never forget it. The Good Shepherd who came from heaven, and gave His life, will seek, and seek, and seek, and save, and save, and save, until He has brought all men back to God. This is the work of the Redeemer and the redeemed. I desire to make this perfectly clear, because it is necessary to do so. When Jesus came He sought for sinners, wherever sin and death had gone. He sent His disciples into the world to seek even farther for them. He seeks for sinners still. And He shall seek for them throughout ages yet unborn. The Good Shepherd will seek them until He finds them. If He didn't, He wouldn't *be* the Good Shepherd! He will seek them on earth and He will seek them in hell. "*Whither shall I go from Thy presence?*" the Psalmist asks. That question is unanswered and unanswerable. It has stood upon the page of scripture for three thousand years, and no one yet of all the myriads that have read it has been able to devise a reply. Heaven says, *Not here*. The uttermost parts of the earth and sea say, *Not here*. Hell says, *Not here*. It is not among angels, or demons, or the lost, or in the vast silent spaces of eternity. There is no creature anywhere not manifest to His sight. He who created eagles, able from immense heights to discern the smallest creature on the desert floor, has eyes better than they. Then the Psalmist continues, "*If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!*" (Ps. 139:8). Thanks be to God that He will seek His lost ones who have wandered far since man's expulsion from Eden's fair garden, He will seek them everywhere they have roamed — through all the Earths and all the Seas and all the Hells until He has found and saved them all. He must seek until He finds!

"Where are you going Shepherd?  
To find My sheep.  
How far will you go?  
As far as My sheep.  
How far may that be?

To the world's end.  
How long will you seek it?  
Until I find it.  
When you find it, will it come to you?  
No, it will flee from Me.  
Where will it go then?  
To the rocks and the sand.  
When will it stop?  
When it can run no more.  
What will you do then?  
Carry it home."

Friends, you will never get away from Jesus. Jesus will follow you everywhere and demand your heart's surrender. I am so glad for a Gospel that is coextensive with, and greater than, the devil's work in spirit, soul, and body. I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to this age, but reaches out to all ages! I am so glad for a Gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even HIS BANISHED MAY RETURN. *No more curse!* I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to earth, but reaches into the depths of death and hell. I am so glad for a Gospel of Everlasting Hope, of Everlasting Expectation, and for the conviction and divine revelation that the miserable and the wicked shall at last be brought to repent of their sin, and find their God and Father. Isn't it wonderful!

Hear now these words of the prophet Isaiah quoted from the New English Bible. "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will prepare a banquet of rich fare for ALL THE PEOPLES, a banquet of wines well matured and richest fare, well-matured wines strained clear. On this mountain the Lord will swallow up that veil that SHROUDS ALL PEOPLES, the pall thrown over THE NATIONS; He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears FROM EVERY FACE and remove the reproach of His people from THE WHOLE EARTH. The Lord has spoken" (Isa. 25:6-7).

In the preceding chapters the prophet tells us how that God will destroy all that has ever oppressed the people of the earth. His power will be used to take away every degrading thing and everything that binds and this power is spoken of as THIS MOUNTAIN in the passage quoted above. "This mountain" signifies the authority, dominion, government, and kingdom of God! Having destroyed the oppression, this mountain will then turn to be the place where God will prepare a very wonderful feast for ALL THE PEOPLES. Everyone is included in this, for when this morning comes, none will be left out. The work of reconciliation will be completed and now will come the time of rejoicing. All who "in Adam" departed from Eden on that sad day in the long ago will now return with singing and everlasting joy upon their heads!

After the preparation of this feast, this mountain, or this power of God, will do another wonderful thing. The veil that shrouds ALL THE PEOPLES will be swallowed up of God. The pall that hangs over ALL THE NATIONS will be taken away and swallowed up of God. Nations and their officials today are seeking how to do away with all that plagues humanity from sickness, to poverty, to crime. But they cannot find the way! Just when the nations feel they are making some progress, something happens to upset the program and the trouble starts all over again. Of course they know nothing of this veil that is upon all nations and peoples. They know nothing concerning the covering that God Himself has thrown over all the nations, therefore they cannot know how in any way to even look in the right place for a solution. There is no solution outside of God Himself,

and that is why the people keep voting for “liberals,” then “conservatives,” and then some other group that they imagine have the solution — and *every time* they are disappointed! There *is no* political solution! GOD will reveal the solution in His own time! He is progressively and meticulously forming a kingdom of sons of God who *will have the answers*. Even now the feast the Lord is to prepare for ALL PEOPLES is in the process of preparation and when it is completed, God will lift the veil and the covering from all peoples and nations and reveal the wonders that He has formed for everyone who has ever lived or ever shall live!

Instead of preparing a terrifying, eternal hell to bring to a close this age as we have been told by the churches, we find that God is preparing a wonderful feast for the opening of the coming age. But the carnal mind or the human nature always looks upon the negative side of anything and it actually forgets there is a positive side. For instead of preparing for destruction, God is preparing for a *new day*, the dawning and opening of a new age in which there will be no more weeping, crying, pain, sin, death, or curse! And here is a beautiful truth. “Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law (that is, all the fruit, guilt, and punishment for breaking the law), being *made a curse for us*: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*” (Gal. 3:13). The message is just this — no matter how many curses there may be, or their many avenues of expression, THEY ALL END IN CHRIST. Because of Christ the blessed promise shall be gloriously fulfilled — *no more curse!* But there is even much more than that included in the passage now under consideration. The promise of “no more curse” occurs in the midst of a delineation of a seven-fold perfection:

“There shall be no more curse” — perfect wholeness.

“The throne of God... shall be in it” — perfect rule.

“His servants shall serve Him” — perfect service.

“They shall see His face” — perfect vision.

“His name shall be in their foreheads” — perfect likeness.

“No night there” — perfect day.

“They shall reign forever” — perfect authority and power.

### HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and *His servants shall serve Him*” (Rev. 22:3).

When we come to this thought of *servants* there is a great deal of misunderstanding among the Lord’s people. When we speak of servants, some boast that this calling does not apply to them, for they are no longer servants, but sons. That is true in the spirit in which Paul argues in Galatians 4:6-7 wherein he says, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, *thou art no more a servant*, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

It is far from the truth, however, to say that there is no sense in which those who are sons are also servants. Paul is speaking in the passage above of *our relationship to God, the Father*. Under the Old Covenant the people of God had not received new birth by the Spirit, to live in the Spirit and walk after the Spirit, but were placed under the rule of law. They were not a house of sons, but a house of servants. Their relationship *to God* was the relationship of servants. They were not sons. God had not sent the *spirit of sonship* into their hearts. By the New Covenant God has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive placement as sons and has birthed into our hearts the

Spirit of His Son, the spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, "Father!" This has brought a change in our relationship to God. *Unto Him* we are no longer servants, but sons. As sons, however, we become related not only to God, but we also become related to men. Jesus is the Son of God, but He is also the Saviour of men, the Redeemer of men, the Reconciler of men, the Blessor of men, the Deliverer of men, the Sovereign Lord over all flesh. It is here that we must be very clear in our understanding. *Unto God* I may be a *son*; but *unto men* I must be a *servant*. I am God's servant, sent of the Father to serve mankind. I cannot be a servant *to* God, for I am His son; and I cannot be a son *to* men, therefore I must approach unto men in a relationship through which I can minister unto them the life of the Son who dwells in me. The only way I may minister Christ unto men is as a servant. To minister means "to serve," and both minister and servant are a number of times translated from the same Greek word.

Can a son be a servant? Jesus, the pattern Son declared, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto (served), but to minister (serve) and give His life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:28). It is the SON who SERVES! The Son is a Servant-Son. The very same Jesus of whom the Father witnessed, "This is my beloved **Son** in whom I am well pleased," of Him the Father also witnessed, "Behold my **servant** whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the nations" (Isa. 42:1). Matthew 12:15-21 shows unmistakably that this **servant** of the Lord is **Jesus**. The Son came as a Servant-Son. In like manner, we are not servants *to* God, but we are indeed servants *of* God!

John understood this significant truth, for the same John who wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the **sons of God**," later stated, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto **His servants** things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His **servant John**" (Rev. 1:1). Paul understood this truth, for the very same Paul who wrote, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son," also said, "Paul, a **servant** of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." "Apostle" means a "sent one," therefore Paul was **sent to serve**! To God he was a son, but he was the servant of men. Is Jesus a Son or a Servant? Was John a son or a servant? Was Paul a son or a servant? And lest the elect of God in this Day should exalt themselves above John, or Paul, or even Jesus, we further find that of the 144,000 overcomers, that glorious company of the sons of God who stand with the Lamb on mount Zion, having the Father's name in their foreheads, it is written, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS" (Rev. 7:3). So there you have it! The sons are the servants! Not servants to God, but sons who are servants to men, humble ministers of the mercies and goodness of the Lord.

You will never be a king-priest without the servant-nature. The story is told of a farmer who had just sat down to the table and prayed, "Oh Lord, bless the poor people in this neighborhood, and feed them." Very soon after, there was a knock at the door and a poor neighbor came in and asked the farmer for a bushel of potatoes. The farmer began to make all kinds of excuses. He had fifty bushels of potatoes, and his little boy said, "Papa, there is a chance to answer your own prayers." That is the servant-nature, and the spirit of kingship and priesthood. Then there is the fable of the Arab mystic Sa'di. A man walking through the forest saw a fox that had lost its legs and wondered how it survived. Then he saw a tiger come in with game in its mouth. The tiger had his fill and left the rest of his meat for the fox. The next day God fed the fox by means of the same tiger. The man began to wonder at God's great goodness and said to himself, "I too shall just rest in a corner with full trust in the Lord and He will provide me with all I need." He did this for many days, but nothing happened and the poor fellow was almost at death's door when he heard a Voice say, "O you who

are in the path of error, open your eyes to the Truth! Follow the example of the tiger and stop imitating the disabled fox!” So many in this hour want to be sons and kings and priests while living in their own little world, studying the deep revelations, singing beautiful kingdom songs, but never having any practical outworking of the servant-nature in the nitty-gritty of everyday living where the needs of creation are met. May the Spirit of God make very real to all our hearts the great truth that he who will not serve cannot be a son. “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life...” The sons come for the same purpose!

What a blessing there is in giving! Even on the natural plane it is a part of the makeup of everyone that they feel good when giving or helping others. But in many people, and even in some who aspire to be kings and priests of God, this attribute is never developed into becoming a part of their life-style, so the opposite takes place. However many wonderful people spend their lives in giving service to others. When analyzed, the servant-nature is the most prized possession of the human race. What a joy is the restaurant waitress who gives true service. To be a real nurse requires this above all else. The secretary in an office can be an inspiration to everyone through her ability to be of help and support in every situation instead of merely doing what is required of her. Then there is the teacher who is vitally concerned for every member of her class. In such as these is the servant-nature revealed even on the earthly level. Serving those about you will never of itself *make* you a king-priest of God, but **YOU CAN NEVER BE A REIGNING SON WITHOUT THE SERVANT-NATURE!** HE makes us kings and priests! Because we have priestly hearts we shall stretch forth our hands to heal the nations and speak forth the word that brings them life!

Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples when they aspired to greatness in the Kingdom? “Now an eager contention arose among them, which of them was considered and reputed to be the greatest. But Jesus said to them, The kings of the Gentiles are deified by them and exercise lordship, ruling as emperor-gods over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors and well-doers. But this is not to be so with you; and on the contrary let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and he who is the chief and leader as one who *serves*. For which is the greater, he who reclines at table (the master), or he who serves? Is it not he who reclines at table? **BUT I AM IN YOUR MIDST AS ONE WHO SERVES**” (Lk. 22:24-27, Amplified). The one who serves the people well as a priest is the one who will also reign well as a king. “They shall be *priests*... and they shall *reign*.” That is the order! Though He is calling us to be kings with authority over all, yet our inner spirit must be that of a servant, that we might freely minister, loving, touching, doing good, speaking kindness and encouragement, healing, reconciling, restoring, with mercy, compassion and love. The problem with many people is that they have never learned to live for anything other than themselves and their own — me, my wife Mary, my daughter Sue, my son John, these four, no more.

God by many and varied experiences brings preparation into our lives to teach us the attitude of a servant. Pride shows that that person has failed to grasp that rulership is rooted in God, who is Love, and not in ourselves. Jesus was the most lowly and humble of all men, and also the most powerful and authoritative. He was not a super-duper-elite-country-club Son of God. He didn’t bounce onto the platform under the lights with a flare of worldly showmanship and then disappear out the back door to escape contact with the people. “Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a *bond-servant*, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:6-8).

## THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE

“And *they shall see His face...*” (Rev. 22:4).

In order to understand the deep mystery that the Holy Spirit would reveal to us in these words we must realize that God has had a specific purpose in man from the very beginning. In the very first chapter of the Bible we find, “And God said, Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*: and let them have dominion” (Gen. 1:26). And then in chapter five of Genesis we have these words, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, *in the likeness of God* made He him” (Gen. 5:1). We have to understand that God doesn’t waste words and God doesn’t make mistakes. God doesn’t care for poeticism or literary flourish of any kind. So when God states that He had the purpose to make man *in His image* **and** *after His likeness*, can we not then conclude that these are two things that have different meanings? Back in chapter one of Genesis it is written that God created man *in His image*, but it fails to say that man was also made *after His likeness* (Gen. 1:27). It means that He is revealing to us He didn’t fulfill a part of His purpose in man in that early beginning.

God created man. At the beginning, when the animals were created, God did not give them names — it was given to Adam by the wisdom of the Lord to name them according to their natures. There can be no doubt that Adam had fellowship with the animal kingdom on a certain level. There was a measure in which he was able to share with them. I’m sure many who read these lines have a dog, cat, or some other animal and you know that, to a certain extent, you can have a kind of friendship with him or her. But Adam was missing a partner, a helpmeet, someone equal to him with whom he could share in the fullness of his mind, will, and nature. Have you ever wondered why God created Adam and Eve in such an order? It would be no problem to God to create Adam as well as Eve at the same time and in the same manner and they could have named the animals together. It is my conviction that God wanted to show Adam the need that Adam had. And because Adam was made in God’s image, this suggests that God Himself had the very same need! God saw Adam’s need for a partner equal to him, that he was missing something vital in his life, someone to whom he could express his love and who would respond to that love. It is the same way with God! His desire from the beginning was to create someone who would be equal to him, whom He could love, with whom He could communicate, plan, work, and accomplish, and who would respond to Him on that level.

If we stand back and get a correct perspective of the sweep of the entire picture I think we will understand it. You go back to the very beginning — marriage was the first institution that God made for man. And it was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (the Word, the Voice of God) that brought the first woman to the first man. How significant, then, that when Jesus began His ministry on earth His very first revelation of His sonship was at the *wedding* in Cana of Galilee! He introduced Eve to Adam and performed the marriage for them Himself and made them one. In that long ago beginning, at the dawn of human history, the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). What fathomless and holy truth lies buried in this remarkable statement! While God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” I would like to give another rendition and it goes like this: “It is not good that GOD should be alone.” You see, my beloved, God’s creation is the mirror, the reflection, the expression of God’s own personal character and state of being. How can we know this? Because God said, “Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*.” Would you like to know what God is like in His state of being? You can see it in man! God did not create just a *male*! “Male *and* female created He *them*.”

And God blessed *them*, and said unto *them*, be fruitful and multiply...” (Gen. 1:27-28). The message is just this: If it was not good for man in the image of God to be that image *alone*; if the man needed a wife to complement him and reproduce their life in the world, then does that not reveal to us the great truth that it was not good for GOD to be alone! All who are *born of God* know that God is likewise reproducing Himself in sons and daughters; and they also understand that the *sons of God* are the *brothers* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, and the *new Jerusalem daughters of Zion* are the *bride of Christ*. That is the mystery! It takes the mind of the Spirit to understand that when God saw Adam in his loneliness and said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” God was expressing the great mystery of His own Being within Himself. God had need for companionship and relationship! God had need for a ***union of love!*** This divine need is expressed by the apostle Paul in these words of revelation and truth: “According as He hath *chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world, that we should be...before Him in love: having predestinated us...according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Eph. 1:4-6).

God’s ultimate desire and need was for the companionship of beings like unto Himself, of His own kind, born of His own Spirit, with whom He could share His mind and heart and through whom He could expand Himself, incorporating them into the outworking of His own eternal purposes. As we view from the Father’s heart it becomes obvious that God in His own social and paternal nature has “marked out for Himself” a vast family which shares His own life, nature, mind, spirit, purpose, and power. I do not believe that any creature or entity that existed before man either in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, even came close to providing what God needed. This is the condition which prompted God in that distant beginning to issue the wonderful fiat, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...” (Gen. 1:26).

Little wonder, then, that we read from the literal translation of the Hebrew text these remarkable words: “And Yahweh Elohim saith, Not good for the man to be alone, I do make him an helper — as his COUNTERPART” (Gen. 2:18, Young’s Literal). The Goodspeed translation reads, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I must make a helper for him WHO IS LIKE HIM.” Another interesting translation says, “...and God made for Adam a COMPARABLE helper.” There we have the very first symbolism of the bride of Christ! God made for Adam someone with whom he should have complete and total correspondence and intimacy. This only mirrored the desire within God Himself, so we find that He came in the cool, or *spirit* of the day, as it reads in the original, to fellowship with this man and woman made in His image and likeness. The message is just this — if the Christ is to have a bride then the bride must be COMPARABLE to Christ! She must be HIS COUNTERPART! She must be one who is in every respect LIKE HIM! And that’s awesome, isn’t it!

How could Christ become intimate, on all the levels that intimacy implies, with anyone who is not comparable to Him? A human would not marry a monkey, a horse, a dog, or a chicken. There is no correspondence! There are no grounds for union of mind, desire, emotion, knowledge, hope, understanding, body, or love. And even within the same species, not everyone is suited for the marriage union. Would Christ become intimate with a little girl who is not mature either physically, mentally, or emotionally, and has no comprehension of the ways of love and responsibility? Would He share all He is and has with any kind of creature incapable of returning mature love, relating to His deepest thoughts, intents, and heart, or participating in His divine activities and purposes? I think not!

This is a purpose all religions are missing, including traditional Christianity. Religion separates God from man. It says that God is somewhere up there; He is holy, exalted, and His mind cannot be comprehended. A man, then, is small, low, sinful, limited by time and space and his mind is limited too, and he was created almost on the level of animals to, like a faithful dog, obey God's commands and keep His laws. But this is not true! God has decided, because of His need, to come down to man and lift him higher — to Himself. We have been *born of God*. God is our *Father*. Christ is the *brother* of every son of God and the *husband* of His bride! Don't tell me that we are something less than God-beings! You will contradict a thousand scriptures if you maintain that!

Now let us return to our text. *“And they shall see His face.”* Ah, is that not one of the most blessed things that Adam lost when he departed from the garden of Eden? When Adam turned to his own expression of self-will and sank into a carnal consciousness and earthly lifestyle, he turned from the face of God, and hid himself *“from the presence of the Lord God.”* And so the curse, the separation, the estrangement, the banishment had begun! The Hebrew word *panim* translated as “presence” is also translated as “face.” It comes from the root that means “to turn,” thus, to FACE. Because of the action of his self-will, becoming identified with, and consumed by, his lower nature, Adam could no longer look directly eye to eye, nor openly commune with God, nor participate in His high purposes, so he hid himself. There would needs be a tremendous processing before there could be a TURNING so that he could FACE God again and return to intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him.

The whole redemptive process through the ages has been designed to bring man back to behold the face of God in all that it means. In the Old Testament dispensation God gave only a *partial* revelation of Himself. It is written in Exodus chapters thirty-three and thirty-four that long ago, when Moses became discouraged with the children of Israel, he went to God in prayer, and in desperation for some sign or proof that God was with him, he told God that if He did not show him His way and His glory he could not take the children of Israel into the land. God answered that He would cause all His goodness to *pass* before Moses and that He would declare His name (nature, being) unto him. “But,” God said, “thou canst **not** SEE MY FACE...behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will *cover thee with my hand* as I pass by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt SEE MY BACK PARTS: but MY FACE SHALL NOT BE SEEN.”

Now, that does not mean that a physical God passed by Moses and Moses saw His back end. For Moses had not prayed for a physical experience, but for a revelation of God. God gave him a revelation of Himself, the Old Testament revelation., and here God is proclaiming the great truth that prior to the coming of Jesus He only gave a *partial revelation* of Himself. Men were able to catch only a faint glimpse of what God is really like. He did not fully disclose Himself. We see the example of this in the natural life of men today. A man goes out into the business world fully dressed and no one sees him the way his wife sees him in the privacy of their bedroom. He does not fully disclose himself to other women. On another level, to his neighbors, friends, work associates, and others he does not share everything he has experienced in his life, or all that he thinks, knows, or plans. There are always many things that we do not disclose to people when it is none of their business. We disclose to those who need to know, and the closer the relationship, the more they learn about us. Therefore, under the Old Covenant, man's revelation of God *fell short* because man was not yet restored to God's fullness. There was a *lack*. “For all have sinned and *come short* of the *glory of God*.” To Moses and the prophets God revealed the FORM of Himself, the FORM of truth, the FORM of His nature, and this produced the LAW — the external legal code which revealed



something about Him but was void of the Spirit of His Life! The letter of the word, the form of truth, always falls a little short of the **glory!** A doctrine or a ritual, a program or a ceremony, a commandment or a law — none of these are sufficient to cause men to SEE THE FACE OF GOD. They are one and all a partial revelation — the backsides of God!

But in the hour of the new Jerusalem the Holy Spirit testifies of that people who *see His face*. That people is now the body of Christ, but in the great consummation when God is all-in-all, everything to everyone, ALL shall see His face! How significant, then, is Paul's statement to the Ephesians: "And He has...appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the church (a headship exercised throughout the church), which IS HIS BODY, the FULLNESS of Him who fills all in all — for in THAT BODY lives the F-U-L-L M-E-A-S-U-R-E of Him who makes everything complete, and who fills everything everywhere with Himself" (Eph. 1:22-23, Amplified). I cannot emphasize too strongly that the New Testament revelation is that Jesus is not all of Christ. Christ means "**the anointed.**" "Christ" is **not one person**, but a **corporate body** as it is written, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: **so also is Christ**" (I Cor. 12:12). You see that he does not say, "so also is the *body of Christ*," but simply, "so also IS CHRIST." Jesus, too, is a member of that Anointed body, that Christ body — He is THE HEAD!

Our text says that His servants shall *see His face*. This of course does not mean that we will literally look upon the face of God as an individual person up in the sky somewhere. We have already seen that God does not exist in a physical form except in and through His body on earth. The apostle John tells us that "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed Him, has made Him known, has led Him forth into view" (Jn. 1:18). Jesus affirms this same fact in John 14 when He says, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye *know Him*, and have *seen Him*." Philip saith unto Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER; AND HOW SAYEST THOU THEN, SHOW US THE FATHER?" The scripture says that God dwells in the light that no man can approach unto. But when the Holy Spirit tells us that "we shall see His face," it simply means that we shall **see God as He truly is**. We shall understand Him perfectly. We shall see and comprehend all the aspects of His nature. We shall see and comprehend His character and His wisdom. The apostle Paul, speaking of spiritual maturity, put it this way, "Now we see through a glass darkly, then we shall see **face to face**. Now we know in part, but then **we shall know even as we are known**" (I Cor. 13:12). Today God's saints who walk in the Spirit of the Lord see God and behold His face in the *revelation of Jesus Christ*. When the sons of God are revealed in their full manifestation, and the bride of Christ has been joined in union with her Bridegroom, THE WHOLE CREATION WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THE FACE OF GOD IN HIS PEOPLE! Today they can only see Him in the measure that He has been formed in us, but in that glad day THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE!

As one has written, "'Beloved, we are God's little children now. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we *shall be like Him*, for we shall *see Him as He is*. And everyone who has **this hope** within him, purifies himself even as He is pure' (I Jn. 3:2-3). 'This hope' which is making us purify ourselves is the hope of this glory coming to us, the hope of *being like God* and *seeing God as He is*. Millions who only hope to see Jesus coming in the clouds are doing nothing about purifying themselves as He is pure. But a company that has become anxious and hungry to *see God as He is* is setting to work to purify themselves. When we receive the

revelation that God plans to again fully manifest Himself in some human tabernacles, we immediately make ourselves candidates for that demonstration, and begin to purify ourselves (become single, unmixed, unadulterated), as He is pure, that we might *be like Him* and thus qualify to see God as He is, and be of the company of sons and daughters in whom He will be glorified, and through whom He will manifest Himself to the waiting world. When you inspect the company that today is attempting a purification of themselves in the inner man, you will find it to be the people that has **this blessed hope** — not of Jesus in the clouds, but that once more God is going to descend into tabernacles of flesh, into a people that have *become like Him*, and therefore shall both *see Him as He is* and *reveal Him as He is*. This time it will not be just one Son, but a company of ‘many sons brought to glory’” — end quote.

### HIS NAME IN THEIR FOREHEADS

“...and *His name shall be in their foreheads*” (Rev. 22:4).

All the way through scripture when we find the name of God mentioned, it signifies to us the *nature* and the *character* of God. It is not just a title so that we know what to call Him, as we would with a person or a pet. Each name has a meaning, and the meaning discloses something of His nature and character. Here on earth, when we speak of a person’s good name, or of one who has a bad name, we are speaking of their character by which they are known. When the scripture speaks of God’s name being written in our foreheads, this is where our minds are, and it simply signifies that we will have come within ourselves to the nature and character of God. We will understand Him perfectly and will be walking in perfect oneness with Him and perfect expression of Him. HE will be our only mind-set and our very *state of being*.

The key to receiving His name in our forehead is *overcoming*. The starting point in overcoming is with the little things, those “little foxes” that spoil the vine. You will be defeated if you start with the giants. Like David, you must first slay your bear and kill your lion before you take on Goliath. Start overcoming the little things, those little quirks and egocentricities in your personality — those things you think, those words you speak, those attitudes you manifest from time to time, sins of omission — those little things that fall short of HIS mind, will, and nature. God wants us to be changed! We will never be changed just by hearing the message and giving assent to it. A whole new mind-set, an entirely new way of thinking, a completely new set of emotions, new ways of responding, new kinds of desires, a transformed life-style — a brand new nature that is absolutely contrary to human nature! I’m not talking about warring with the “old man” or wrestling with the “devil.” I’m talking about so putting on a new nature until all that is contrary to that nature is put to death. People speak of “doing what comes naturally.” Oh, yes, it is *natural* to get angry, it is *natural* to be greedy, it is *natural* to lie, it is *natural* to become frustrated and curse at something or someone, it is *natural* to lust, it is *natural* to hate and fight and war — it is *natural* to be carnal, fleshly, and to sin! Now think about it — when it truly becomes *natural* to love, and have peace and be peaceable, and do righteousness, and be truthful, honest, pure, kind, gracious, gentle, modest, giving, and uplifting — when it becomes *as natural* to be like God as formerly was to be like Adam — *then* HIS NAME IS WRITTEN IN OUR FOREHEAD!

This is not attained in one grand leap, but HE must increase, and WE must decrease — and it can only be in that order. The other way won’t work! You do not die in order to live, you live in order to die. Adam doesn’t die in order to make way for Christ. Rather, Christ rises up within us to dispel the Adamic life. By accentuating the positive you eliminate the negative. By turning on the light you drive out the darkness. By the infusion of life you abolish death. Truth cancels out error.

To try and get rid of error does not mean you have found the truth. Reality eliminates fantasy. That is the law of conformation into the image of Christ! Fill your mind with the Truth of Christ, flood your life with the Word of God, expose yourself to the Spirit and the Presence of the Lord! At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. The “name” denotes the *nature*. As you partake more and more of the nature of Jesus every knee, every unyielding thing within you, will bow before that nature and every tongue, every voice within you, will confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father!

My beloved, until this happens within us we are not Saviours to the world. We can talk about manifest sonship and brideship all we please, we can confess it, name it and claim it, blab it and grab it, teach it and preach it, and pride ourselves in our high calling — but until the nature of Jesus rules within we are not one whit beyond the religious world around us. Every enemy within must be rooted out and cast out by the power of His divine name. Do you want power to cast out devils? Begin by having the devils cast out of you. That’s the starting point, you see. You say, “I don’t have any devils in me.” That may be true — but it’s amazing, isn’t it, that when just the right testing, temptation, problem, pressure comes our way, or something or someone pushes just the right button, what kinds of *spirits* can rise up within us! Sometimes it takes very little. And I’m not talking about going to some “deliverance” ministry and spending hours coughing up demons! I’m talking about the mighty name of Jesus being raised up *in your life* to conquer and dispel every adversary within!

Many scripture passages speak of believing *on* the name of the Son of God. In the vast majority of cases the preposition in the Greek text is *eis* meaning *into*, not *on*. Thus, “Whosoever believeth *into* the name,” is the correct translation. This means more than believing on the name of the man Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee two thousand years ago. It speaks of *believing INTO HIS NATURE* so that His nature becomes our nature. It is an entrance, a penetration *into His life*. It is “putting on” the Lord Jesus Christ! “...and His name shall be in their foreheads.” May God make it reality to all those blessed ones who read these lines today!

# Chapter 252

## The Epilogue

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I am coming quickly: *blessed is he that **keepeth** the sayings of this book*” (Rev. 22:6-7).

God fulfills His words of prophecy because His people are made the bearers of the prophecies. Now, if those who are made *heirs* of the promises in prophecies do not hold, fulfill, or *keep* the prophecies, will God fulfill them anyway and give them the promised blessing, power, and position? We have an unerring example of this in Israel’s experience at Kadesh-barnea. They were all ready to go over and take the kingdom. God’s time for them to possess their land was “*now.*” God’s time had arrived. The vile nations in the land were ripe for the judgment, and God was ready to give the land to His people, but they failed to believe and trust His promise because of the negative testimony of the ten spies, and the time was prolonged for forty years. What was the cause of this delay? Nothing that we read of except the *unbelief* on the part of the ten spies and of all those that were swayed by them. Even the righteous and faithful ones like Joshua and Caleb had to suffer too because they had to wait until God dealt with these issues and His time came again.

God always has a *time* for His purposes! But God also requires *faith* and *obedience* on the part of His people to possess the promises! Let every one who has ears to hear stop and take earnest heed, because the Spirit of God now warns His called and chosen elect of the folly of not fully believing and embracing His promises and purposes in this significant hour. “But Christ as *a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief...*but exhort one another daily, while it is called *Today* (the appointed time)...for we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*” (Heb. 3:6-14). How unspeakably sad it is to find that in our day there are also those who hear the call but do not give all diligence to make their calling and election *sure*!

The individual believer as well as the entire company of God’s elect who does not *keep these words of the prophecy* is not armed with God’s whole armor and therefore will meet with defeat in carrying out the full will of God and to inherit the promise of sonship and the kingdom. We are out of harmony with God’s highest will if we do not *keep* these words of prophecy in the Revelation! To “keep” them simply means to believe them, yield to Father’s dealings, embrace all His processings, and follow on to experience within ourselves all that is set forth in the vision. That is what God is waiting on in order to cause all these words to come to pass shortly, that is, *speedily*. Every son and daughter of God will be experientially led through every stage of growth, processing, and development laid out in this prophecy. We must go through them! We are made heirs of these promises from God through Christ. Israel was made the heir of Canaan through Abraham; we are

made the heirs through Christ. Our elder brother is to us what Abraham was to Israel; so we have received the promises from our heavenly Father through the faith and obedience of His firstborn Son!

### SEEING THESE THINGS

“And I John *saw these things, and heard them...*” (Rev. 22:8).

To *see* is to *understand*. I saw, I *understood* these things after hearing them as one who has an *ear to hear* what the Spirit is saying. Sometimes when I am driving around the city of El Paso I see the person in the car next to me moving their head or body in rhythmic response to the music coming from their audio speakers. I cannot respond in like fashion because I don’t *hear* the music — I’m not “tuned in” to the same thing! John was tuned in to the Spirit — wisdom and revelation flowed into him, and he responds by saying, “I John *saw* these things, and *heard* them...” It is very clear then that John is telling us in the plainest of language that he *experienced* these things! It was not a vague, mysterious, inscrutable, undecipherable vision that he beheld in wonder and with curiosity — and not some set of external world events reserved for a time many centuries in the future — but he truly heard with anointed ears and saw with the deep comprehension of its reality within himself. This was John’s experience, and it is ours too! May we each be able to say, “I John, I Richard, I Sally, I Preston SAW THESE THINGS, AND HEARD THEM!

### WORSHIP NOT THE ANGEL

“And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel (messenger) which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, *See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God*” (Rev. 22:8-9).

Let us now look at another particular — the effect that these revelations and experiences had upon the apostle John at that time. So wonderful were the visions, and so glorious was the knowledge, understanding, and experience which the messenger communicated unto him, that John was overwhelmed with rapture. Twice he fell prostrate before the messenger to worship before him. The blessed apostle certainly meant no idolatry — he was far too mature in the spirit for such a thing; but so wonderful in wisdom, intelligence, and glory was this heavenly messenger, and so transcendent were the things he was shown, that he could not but think it was the Christ Himself. The beauty and depth of the revelations were so powerfully communicated as to make it hard to distinguish whether it was the Lord Himself speaking, or whether it was through an anointed messenger. And in this instance particularly, it certainly was the very words of the Lord Jesus he heard saying, “Behold, I come quickly...” And not distinguishing between Him who spoke, and the messenger through whom He spoke, John fell down before the feet of the messenger. Promptly came the word: “*See thou do it not! for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book! Worship God.*” The misapprehension being dispelled, the apostle of course desisted. The incident speaks powerfully to us that we must never *worship the messenger!* It is easy to become so esteeming of those who minister the things of God until we become more centered in them than in the Lord. It is distressing to see those who cherish the deep things of God and His wonderful purposes in sonship and the kingdom fall into the same old Babylonian error of becoming FOLLOWERS OF MEN! ***See thou do it not!*** Honor them, but do not so reverence them that they, rather than the anointing within you, dominate your life, becoming as a little god unto you.

## SEAL NOT THE BOOK — THE TIME IS AT HAND

“And he saith unto me, *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand*” (Rev. 22:10).

In the case of Daniel’s prophecy he was told to “*seal the book, till the time of the end*” (Dan. 12:4). There was to be a long period before the time of the end. But now, “the time is at hand,” that is, presently available and accessible, able to be appropriated and experienced, therefore the words are not to be sealed. I have heard people say this is a sealed book, but they contradict the word of God and that is just what it is **not**. The title of the book shows that it is an unveiling, an opening up of things that are to be seen, understood, and participated in. “Unveiling” and “sealed” are contradictory terms! It is impossible for both to be true. “Seal not” means you can’t stop the purpose of God! The Lord intended the things revealed to be an ever-present and on-going experience within His people, the *church* to whom the prophecy is sent. There is nothing to suggest a prolonged interval before these things would begin to be fulfilled in the Lord’s people, and the word “blessed is he that *keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*” clearly proclaims that it is FULFILLED WITHIN GOD’S PEOPLE — not in Israel, China, Russia, Iran, or any other worldly power!

The vast majority of believers today hold to the time-worn notion that the Revelation is about world events — the activities of nations and empires, the appearance of antichrist, great tribulation, apocalyptic war in Israel, pestilences, earthquakes, economic collapse, famines, tsunamis, and various other cataclysmic events all heralding the “end time.” A Christian lady in the Midwest wrote to a friend in the summer of 1936: “Flood — forest fires — earthquakes — famine — depression! I wish I understood exactly what our Father is saying by all this unprecedented disaster, but the *end* must be near.” Now — think of what has happened *since* then! A world war of unparalleled ferocity unleashing unprecedented suffering and untold millions slaughtered; disasters in the natural world around the globe; crimes and atrocities by ruthless dictators that make the blood run cold and hearts fail; the reign of terrorism that strikes fear into men’s hearts world-wide, and war after war. Does it all mean that we are living in the “end times”? People in previous centuries all through the church age have seen world troubles and distress of nations and thought these were the “signs” of the end of the age and the coming of God’s kingdom. Time and space prohibit us from enumerating them, but believe me they are numerous and notable! But are there really any such “signs of the times,” and if there are is it safe or right for us to attempt to interpret them? Ah, men are forever looking for *outward signs* pointing to the “end time.” My dear brother and sister, I believe it is my duty before God to tell you that in the whole book of Revelation there are only *three* signs given (Rev. 12:1; 12:3; 15:1), and all three are *signs “in heaven,”* that is, in the realm of the Spirit, having to do with heavenly, spiritual realities, and therefore SPIRITUAL SIGNS. Not one of them is the kind of sign that millions of Christians, who are still babes at the breast, are looking for! Only in the Spirit and by the Spirit can one see the *true signs* which reveal the purposes of God for our day or any other day!

“The time is at hand” can signify either that which is drawing near or has already arrived. It is not inconsistent to translate it as “the time is near” or “the time has come.” Our Lord, here, however, is not using the word “time” in the sense of hours, days, weeks, months, and years. If He were, the word for “time” which He would have used would be *chronos* from which we get our English word “chronometer,” which is any instrument that *measures* time, such as a clock, watch, or dial. Instead, He uses the word *kairos*, which has to do with the proper time, the opportune moment, the correct season. Thus what He is saying to us is that now the prophetic truth is to be unsealed;

God's people are to be made aware of it; now is the time for it to be fulfilled and the things here foretold, are actually occurring; and knowing this we can enter into the experiencing of it with trust and confidence!

"The time is at hand" signifies that wherever you are in your journey, your progression into God, you are right on target and God will see you through. You may feel like you're a failure, that you've missed God, and can never attain, but even all this is part of the process and God's trumpets will keep right on sounding in your life until the work is complete. The truth is, you *have* changed! You *have* grown! You *have* gained victories! And you SHALL! The word and work are "not sealed," but are active, operative, powerful, certain, and unstoppable! Aren't you glad!

### **FILTHY STILL...RIGHTEOUS STILL...**

"He that is *unjust*, let him be *unjust still*: and he which is *filthy*, let him be *filthy still*: and he that is *righteous*, let him be *righteous still*: and he that is *holy*, let him be *holy still*" (Rev. 22:11).

These words have been variously interpreted. Some explain them as referring to the confirmed and irrevocable state of the wicked and the righteous after the final judgment. But there is nothing in the context to suggest this. Neither the final judgment, nor the eternal state of the righteous in the kingdom of God, nor the supposed eternal state of the damned in hell are under consideration in the verses surrounding this one, nor indeed in the entire chapter. The meaning, however, is quite clear if we see these words in their close connection with the statement in verse ten that the time is at hand and that therefore the book must not be sealed. In order for the process of redemption and transformation to be completed in each of the Lord's redeemed people, the root-sin of Adam and the righteousness of Christ must both be revealed in our lives. The one is the revelation of the Christ within, the other is the exposure of the man of sin who sits in our flesh-life. In this light we can understand the words of verse eleven, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be." The work of God in us will draw the lines. It will strengthen and emphasize the great difference between the Adamic man and the Christ man, between the natural man and the spiritual man. It will make us conscious of this one incontrovertible fact: Adam cannot be reformed nor transformed, and Christ cannot be defiled, contaminated, or polluted! The "he" in "he that is filthy," is old Adam. The "he" in "he that is holy" is Christ! That is the mystery.

I shall not hesitate to explain to you, my brethren, that this passage reveals to us the deep mystery of life and the way to victory in Christ. It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of the Lord could have an open vision that would enable them to see and understand this one simple yet exalted truth — that the nature of the natural man is incorrigibly corrupt and the nature of Christ is unchangeably holy. This is an *eternal fact*. Matters not how hard you try you cannot make the nature of the Adamic man holy, nor can the nature of Christ ever or in any wise be corrupted. The nature of the first is of the earth, earthy, and will always be fleshly, whereas the nature of the second man is heavenly and will always be pure and divine. Neither can ever be **changed!** And when we thoroughly learn this single blessed truth we will be able to let he that is filthy be filthy still, and he that is righteous be righteous still, for it is impossible as long as we are struggling with the man of sin, trying somehow to reform or transform him, and constantly being defeated in our efforts, for us to be purged, obtain the victory, go on to perfection, and grow up unto the full stature of Christ!

Adam gave us no choice in bringing his progeny under the workings of iniquity. When Adam went into sin, he did not consult with any one of us as to our desire concerning anything he

did. None of us had any power or any choice in the condition in which we entered this world. WE WERE NOT SINNERS BY CHOICE, as we have erroneously been told. We are “born in sin, and shapened in iniquity,” with the carnal nature and the earthly human consciousness in us from the moment we leave the womb. Being “dead in trespasses and sins,” dead to God, dead to truth, dead to purity, dead to reality, the Adamic race was no longer capable of making a choice or decision for salvation or righteousness. How truly Paul wrote, “And you...were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh *in the children (offspring) of disobedience*; among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and WERE BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH, even as others” (Eph. 2:2-3).

The message is clear — we were *not* sinners by choice. We were sinners by NATURE! We were *born into* this condition, simply because the first man, Adam, put us all into slavery to sin. “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am a creature of the flesh, having been SOLD INTO SLAVERY UNDER THE CONTROL OF SIN” (Rom. 7:14, Amplified). The unregenerate man is a slave to sin. He is a slave of the devil. He is a slave of his own carnal mind and deceitfully wicked heart. He is a slave of his own vile passions. And none of us had anything to say about it! We did not in any way will it, consent to it, or choose it, for we were born into it. We were born *slaves*! And believe me, it didn’t take long after our birth for the truth to begin to be manifest! Should this not teach us the truth that the natural man is completely incapable of discerning Truth. In fact, unregenerate man thinks of the things of God as being ridiculous! “The natural man *receives not* the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. *Neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). Again, “The carnal mind is *enmity against God*: for it is *not subject* to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7). Consider now how absolute this statement is: “Let him that is filthy, *be filthy still*.” That is the incontrovertible truth about the natural man! The persistent, perverse, unholy disposition in the natural man and the carnal mind does not change itself. Refinement will not change it. Education will not change it. Social and rehabilitation programs will not change it. Prison will not change it. Evolution will not change it. “Deliverance meetings” will not change it. The perfidious hearts and lives of unregenerated men can no more be changed by these means than an Ethiopian can change his skin or a leopard his spots. The only way a change can be brought about is by being *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever* (I Pet. 1:23). A new man, a higher life, a new creation must be raised up within us “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10).

Gary Sigler stated it so well when he wrote: “You see, those who are ruling from the earth are still trying to take this earthly image of themselves, and make it more acceptable to God. I tried that way for years. I prayed every day. I read ten chapters in the Bible each day. I prayed in the spirit for at least an hour a day. I did all those things that I was supposed to do to take this image of myself that was so alienated from God, and make it acceptable, make it more godly, make it presentable unto God. That is the spirit of antichrist. It is a hard concept to accept, but if you are taking a human image of yourself and trying to make it into God, that is the abomination of desolation! That image of yourself will never become God! Oh, you can make it better. You can dress it up. You can quit smoking and chasing women. You can go to church, sing and dance, clap, be all you want to be. You can make it better. But it will still be what it is. When you finally realize that all of the old creation Jesus took to the cross and raised us all up as the new creation, then there



is nothing you need but *the unveiling of who God is in you*. In this new creation you are not a human being; you are a spiritual being. *You are God manifesting in the flesh*. Now if you say that out of your ego or your carnal mind, that is the abomination of desolation the scriptures talk about. But if the ego or the carnal mind is removed, what else can you be but the manifestation of God?" — end quote.

Once we truly understand the condition of the natural man and the condition of the spiritual man we come to the place where we have no confidence in the flesh! We are able to let Adam be Adam, let flesh be flesh, let the bad tree be the bad tree, let the corrupt seed be the corrupt seed and cease trying to make it behave. That which is *born of the flesh is flesh*; and that which is *born of the spirit is spirit*, Jesus explained to Nicodemus. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his (God's) seed remaineth in him, and he *cannot sin, because he is born of God*" (I Jn. 3:9). Therefore you can only let the spirit *be spirit*, for it can never be flesh; let him that is righteous be righteous still, because the seed of God can never be filthy; let the new man be the new man, let the new creation be the new creation, let the divine seed be the divine seed, and cease trying to mix these. Let each receive their reward! The *wages* (reward) of sin is death! When the Lord says, "Let him that is filthy be filthy still," and then directly follows the statement with, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give to every (each) man according as his works shall be," there should be no difficulty for even the most sluggish and unspiritual mind to see that the promise here is DEATH TO ADAM! That is Adam's reward! Not reformation, not transformation, but death. And the reward to the new man, the spiritual man, the Christ man is every promise made to the overcomer in the book of Revelation including the CROWN OF LIFE.

The cross has declared the death of the old Adamic man of sin, yet that death must be "wrought out" in our experience just as the life of Christ must also be wrought out in us experientially. We do not fully live out the life of Christ in us the moment we become aware that we are a new creation in Christ Jesus. A human baby does not live out the fullness of human life the moment it is born into the world. That life must progressively unfold, being appropriated, strengthened, and matured day by day, month by month, and year by year. The sentence of death is on the Adamic nature, therefore, in thought and deed leave the old carcass behind and enter with boldness *in your spirit* into the presence of God. There is no sin at all in your regenerated spirit! Your regenerated spirit has *never sinned*! And that is who you now really are! As a new creation you haven't done anything wrong! This new creation man *is the righteousness of God* in Christ! There is therefore now *no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus!

Someone says, "But my flesh still wants to sin. My flesh still flies off the handle, cusses, thinks evil thoughts, makes bad choices, criticizes, is fearful, deceitful, selfish, lustful, and hurtful. Sure it does — for "that which is born of the flesh *is flesh*." That's how flesh is! Flesh can't act any other way! You can't make flesh holy! It's born of the wrong seed! Somewhere along the line you are going to have to realize the bitter truth and simply "let him that *is filthy, be filthy still*." But there is a further truth. "That which is born of the spirit *is spirit*." Oh, yes! That which is born of the spirit is your regenerated spirit and it is *like Christ*. You don't have to make it like Christ. *It is!* And that's the *real you*! That's the new man that *you are*! That's the spiritual man, the heavenly man, the divine man, the *holy* man — Christ. And somewhere along the line you are going to recognize the beautiful truth and simply "let him that *is holy, be holy still*!" Embrace the new man that you are and turn from the old man of flesh — leave him on death row and begin to walk out of his prison house.

Paul describes the distress that is characteristic of many believer's lives as they vacillate back and forth between FLESH and SPIRIT. "For I do not understand my own actions — I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe. Now if I do habitually what is contrary to my desire, that means that I acknowledge and agree that the Law is good and morally excellent and that I take sides with it. However, *it is no longer I that do the deed*, but sin which is at home in me and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, *in my flesh*. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out; for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds I do not desire to do are what I am doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is *no longer I doing it* — it is not *myself* that acts, but the sin (flesh) which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law of my being that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands. For I endorse and delight in the Law of God *in my inmost self — with my new nature*. But I discern *in my bodily members* — in the sensitive appetites and wills *of the flesh* — a different law at war against the law of my (new) mind and making me a prisoner to the *law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs* — in the sensitive appetites and wills of *the flesh*" (Rom. 7:15-23, Amplified).

Our experience in this physical realm is certainly no different than the apostle Paul's. "I know that in me, that is, *in my flesh* (outer man), dwelleth *no good thing*." The question follows — If there is *nothing good* in the flesh, how could one ever make the flesh holy! Paul divorces "HIMSELF" from his flesh man. He speaks of "sin in my members." Sin in my members is simply a euphemism for "the desires of the flesh" or "the carnal mind." And don't tell me *you* don't have them! Many of the Lord's people are in *denial*, claiming that since their old man is dead, the fear, anger, covetousness, lust, deceitfulness, and other carnal and ungodly emotions they feel are just an *illusion*, a *habit*, a *hang over*, a *mistaken identity* from their former old man who is now really dead, gone, and non-existent. Let me tell you the truth! Yes, the sentence of death is on that old nature, but if he was non-existent *the war would be over!* Perhaps for you it is, and I rejoice for you if it is, but I seem to still get involved in a skirmish now and then!

If the flesh man were non-existent, we should all be perfect, sinless, pure, undefiled, and overcomers in every sense of the word. We should not need to *mortify*, or *put off*, or *put away*, or *cleanse ourselves from*, or *overcome* anything because all those things would be **non-existent!** Dead men don't lie, dead men don't deceive, dead men don't cheat, dead men don't fly off the handle, dead men don't gossip, dead men don't fight, dead men don't covet, criticize, lust, make mistakes, get depressed, or struggle with anything! If uncle Charlie has died and is lying in his coffin, I can walk up to him, tell him what a splendid fellow he is, flatter him, and heap praise upon praise on him, and he will never smile, appear pleased, puff up with pride, or say, "Thank you!" He's *dead!* On the other hand I can stand there and swear at him, abuse him, slap his face, rant and rave about what a scoundrel he is, and he will not swear back, strike me, or jump out of his coffin and grab me and wrestle me down. There will be absolutely no response — for he is *dead!* Dead men don't do anything!

Dead men don't keep on doing fleshly and evil things and then excuse it by saying that they just didn't *know* they were dead, it was just such a *habit* that they must remind themselves that they are dead so they can *learn to act like dead men!* What drivel! Yet, I have heard great preachers proclaiming such foolishness, in an effort to rationalize why believers have fleshly, ungodly emotions and desires, and do bad things, when their old man is *dead!* It should be clear to any spiritual mind that there is some inconsistency and confusion here. Paul actually makes four

different statements relative to sin, the flesh, and the old man. First he says, “Knowing this, that our old man *is* (Greek: *was*) *crucified with Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). It is evident that in a symbolic and mystical sense we *were* crucified with Christ upon His cross. I say symbolic and mystical, because we all know that we, literally and physically, as we exist today in this flesh body, were *not* hanging with Christ on His cross! Furthermore, it is evident that, in this present life, before we were converted, there was no sense in which our old man had literally been crucified with Him! If everybody’s old man perished with Jesus on the cross two thousand years ago, then nobody today, saint *or* sinner, would even *have* an old man! You see, beloved, we need to think *spiritual sense* about these things. Let all God’s people know and thoroughly understand that the answer to every spiritual question lies in the correct understanding of ALL that the Holy Spirit has to say — not just in one isolated passage of scripture.

Now, the next thing Paul says that we must take into account in order to understand the deep mystery of our crucifixion with Christ is this: “Likewise, ***reckon ye also*** yourselves to be ***dead unto sin***, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). The question is just this: If the old body of sin *is dead*, then why are we called upon to “reckon” ourselves to be dead? Does a dead man in the morgue have to “reckon” himself to be dead to the world? The man who is actually dead doesn’t have the power to “reckon” anything! Furthermore, the fact that sin is still alive in us is stated in the plainest of words in the very next verse! “***Let not*** sin therefore ***reign*** in your mortal body, that ye should ***obey it in the lusts thereof***” (Rom. 6:12). Can we not see by this that the lusts of the old nature are still very much alive and remarkably active? Now consider the next thing Paul has to say about this old man. “That ye ***put off*** concerning the former conversation (lifestyle) the ***old man which IS corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...and that ye put on the new man...***” (Eph. 4:22). Does this not teach us that the “putting off” of the old man of sin and the “putting on” of the new man of the spirit is an *on-going, progressive work*? And yet many call it the “finished work” of Calvary! It may come as a great and startling surprise to many to learn that the scriptures do not teach *that kind* of “finished work.”

So now we have these three remarkable truths. First, our old man “was crucified” with Christ. Secondly, we are to “reckon” ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God. Thirdly, we are admonished to “put off” the old man who is corrupt, and “put on” the new man. And now we come to the fourth thing Paul teaches us about this process. “***Mortify (put to death)*** therefore ***your members*** which are upon the earth (that is, *earthly*); fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry...” (Col. 3:5). The Spirit of God alone can “take the things of God and show them unto you” (Jn. 16:13-16). Let us then pause in our path, abandon all human theology and philosophy, and there in utter abandonment to God and the spirit of truth cry as David cried, “Lord, *open my eyes*” (Ps. 119:18). Our human theories concerning the things of God count for nothing. Truth unfolds in our hearts only as we wait upon the Lord for the understanding that the Spirit brings.

It seems incongruous to the natural mind that we are instructed to ***put to death*** the very thing we assumed was already put to death on the cross of Christ! The secret, I believe, lies in the words of the first statement of Paul that we considered. But we looked only at the first part of it! This is what he says: “Knowing this, that our old man *was crucified with Him*, ***that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.***” Now consider this, my beloved. Our mystical crucifixion with Christ upon His cross was ***unto an end***: THAT THE BODY (OUR BODY) OF SIN MIGHT BE DESTROYED, THAT **HENCEFORTH** (FROM THIS TIME FORWARD) WE SHOULD NOT SERVE SIN.” Oh, yes! We were, in God’s view, crucified with Christ, but

the reality of that, the wonder of that, the power of that, must now be worked out in us experientially in our walk in the kingdom of God. “That the body of sin might be destroyed.” When? Two thousand years ago on His cross? It cannot be, for if that had happened there would now *be no* “body of sin” to be dealt with. The death of that old man of sin would already be a blessed, accomplished fact. The truth is, the body of sin is destroyed IN THE HERE AND NOW BY THE PRESENT OUTWORKING OF HIS CROSS WITHIN US! And how is this accomplished? In three ways! **Reckon ye** yourselves to be dead. **Put off** the old man with his deeds. **Mortify, put to death** your members which are upon the earth, that is, the flesh man. This precise process alone can accomplish within us the reality and power of that which was pre-figured upon Christ’s cross two millenniums ago! Great is the mystery!

As this process of overcoming begins every child of God must know that God’s love and acceptance of them in the Beloved is *unconditional*. Until we *know that*, we have underestimated His love! How many times can the prodigal return home? Only as many times as the Father’s love will accommodate! You say, “But I sinned!” Yes you did. You say, “But I miserably failed God!” Yes, you did. You say, “But this is the one-hundredth time I have flunked the same test!” That is true. To which your heavenly Father responds, “My grace is sufficient.” Nobody taught or manifested the all-sufficient grace and the all-encompassing and totally unconditional love of our heavenly Father more than Jesus. He came, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and He knew as much as any man what is in man and where the battle lies. He also knows what we also must know — Only His life within us *can* overcome! If He withdraws His life because we fail — even if we fail four hundred and ninety times in one day — then we are hopeless! But He doesn’t! He freely forgives *every time* and continuously floods us with His love and His life in the expectation that eventually His life within us will become strong enough in us to conquer all! He knows the power of His life, and He knows that He has begun a good work in you and that HE *is able to perfect it unto the day of Christ*. **That** is His way! And it is the only way it can be if we are to be completely saved, matured, and perfected. What a plan! What a Saviour!

Then what are you supposed to do? The greatest thing you can do, precious friend of mine, is to expose yourself to the abiding *presence* of God. The more deeply we fall in love with Jesus, the more time spent in His presence, the more we fellowship with Him and eat at *His table*, the more empowered we become to subject ourselves to Christ and let the Spirit lead us. As we commune with the Lord and listen to His voice, this teaching is *life*; this teaching gives us spiritual food; it gives us spiritual drink; it raises up within us spiritual substance so that we can grow up into the nature of the new man. The more the new man is raised up within us the easier and more natural it becomes to “reckon,” to “put off,” and to “mortify” the man of flesh. A lifetime of experience has taught me that victory over sin and the flesh is not our own doing! We cannot produce it! But Christ raised up in our lives will lead us to it.

Jesus *overcame* all things, lived out the nature of God, and manifested the power and glory of God. But even He did not do it Himself! He said, “I can do nothing of myself” (Jn. 5:19,30). His complete victory came through His fellowship with, and subjection to, the Father. “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, *He doeth the works*” (Jn. 14:10). And that is also where our power and victory are! Christ in us must do the work! And we cannot *make* Him do it; we can only *let* Him do it. And He *will* do it as we live in His presence! Come, come, my friend, into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, in the power of His life within your inner man, come right on in and experience His abundance! All weakness of the flesh and sin will then, in due time, take care of itself.

Paul, at one time in his experience, felt what we all feel in our struggle with the flesh. In desperation he cried out, “O unhappy and pitiable man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24). And then came the revelation of the glorious solution! “O thank God — HE WILL! through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, our Lord!” (Rom. 7:25). And right on the heels of this the explanation of *how* the mighty Christ within deals with, and gains the victory over, that old man of flesh. “For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has *freed me* from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law (commandment, self-effort) could not do, its power being weakened by the flesh. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, God condemned sin in the flesh — subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power. So that the righteous and just requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the spirit — our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit. For if you live by the dictates of the flesh you will surely die. But if *through the power of the spirit* (within) you are *habitually putting to death* — making extinct, deadening — the deeds prompted by *the body*, you shall really and genuinely *live...*” (Rom. 8:2-4,13, Amplified).

Oh, yes! The *overcoming One* is within us, and as we walk in His presence, soaking up His life, yielding to His spirit, communing with His mind, drawing from His power, submitting to His leading, the flesh nature is trapped, starved, neutralized, rendered ineffective and powerless. Only the mighty, living presence of Christ raised up within as life can subdue this old man of flesh! This is what is happening in the life of every son of God! Much depends on our entering into the glory of our sonship to God. The fullness of God is at hand! The sons of God in this very hour are experiencing the finishing touches of God’s great redemption in preparation for the outflowing of His glory unto creation!

# Chapter 253

## The Epilogue (continued)

“And, behold, *I come quickly*; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

It was the last night of the revival in the sleepy little south Alabama town. The congregation was softly singing, “Just as I am,” and the preacher was standing in front of the pulpit with both arms raised in invitation. He knew there were people present who needed to receive Christ as Saviour. “Jesus Christ could come tonight,” he urged. “Will you be ready for Him? The trumpet may sound before this meeting is over, or before you awake in the morning. When that happens the graves in the cemeteries will burst open and the dead rise, and those living who are ready will go soaring off into space to meet the Lord. Everywhere people will suddenly be missing without any clue as to where they may be. Husbands will miss their wives, and wives, their husbands; parents will miss some of their children, and children will miss father or mother or both. They will be searching for them in all possible hiding places, but will not be able to locate them. Loud wailing will ensue, and hearts will be filled with the dread of unknown and hostile powers. Finally, after days of fruitless searching, they sit down in dumb resignation and despair. The Antichrist will then appear and the Great Tribulation will begin. Those of you who are left will have to go through seven years of hell on earth. The scenes of earth will be indescribably bewildering and terrifying. Oh, why not make things right with God tonight so you will be spared from such a time of trouble and punishment!”

I was just a boy at the time, but it made a profound impression on me. In fact, when I saw my first *aurora borealis*, it nearly scared me to death. I was sure Jesus was coming at last, and I knew for a certainty that I was not ready for it. On another occasion I arrived home from school one late afternoon. I stepped off the school bus in our rural district and made my way up the embankment to the house. The house was open, the windows up, the doors unlocked; but no one was to be found. Mother wasn't there. My brothers weren't there. The house was empty! I called but no one answered. I checked across the road at the neighbor's house and they were gone, too. Suddenly a terrible fear seized me and my blood ran cold. “Oh, my God!” I thought, “the rapture has taken place and I have been left.” There is no doubt that I was the happiest little boy in the whole world that afternoon when my mother came walking across the hollow. Of course, Jesus hadn't come that day nor has He come (in that manner) any other day in the past seventy-two years. Looking back, I wonder why it took me so long to question what the preacher said.

Of course, among those who believe in the return of the Lord, most simply take it for granted that His return could take place at any moment. But is that true? Is it possible that you might step out the front door of your home tonight, see a bright light flashing across the sky, and suddenly realize that Jesus IS RETURNING, and He is returning NOW? After all, Jesus did promise to return. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go... I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto myself” (Jn. 14:2-3). “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Mat. 24:27). “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...” (Rev. 22:12). Make no mistake about it! Jesus did promise to go away and to return to planet earth.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ left this earth to ascend into the heavens of the Spirit, He said, “I will come again.” He, as the glorified Christ, repeated these words to the apostle John on the lonely isle of Patmos in our present text. Twenty-one times, at least, Jesus speaks of His coming again, and most of these references are made on the eve of His departure. It was in the shadow of the cross that He foretold His advent in glory. He declared, “The Son of man shall come.” “They shall see the Son of man coming.” “Your Lord doth come.” “When the Son of man shall come...” “When He cometh in the glory of His Father...” “Ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,” etc., etc. Our Lord did clearly — not once or twice, but repeatedly, and at definitely marked crises in His ministry — declare that He would come again.

Plain as Jesus had made the promise of His coming to His disciples, at the time of His ascension, they still did not seem to grasp its significance. A faithful group of His followers stood looking upward on that historic occasion. As the Lord ascended, He perceived their consternation and sent messengers of assurance: “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 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” (Acts 1:10-11).

No subject in the entire Bible has gendered more interest, study, speculation, and theological debate than the return of Christ. It has been interwoven into practically every theory, creed, or doctrine expounded by man. Through the centuries it has been the object of scorn and mockery by enemies of truth, and not a few times has it, through ignorance and carnal reasoning, suffered abuse and distortion by well meaning friends. No subject has been more misunderstood or misconstrued than this great truth; and yet it is the hope of the ages. The focus of the entire scriptures is upon this wonderful event. It is significant to note that when men drew near to God they would receive glimpses of this truth. Certainly the scriptures have much to say about it but only the blessed Spirit of Truth can make it substance in our lives.

Most of the differences in scriptural interpretation among Christians is the result of an incomplete knowledge of the plan and purpose of God. Much of what is taught and believed in Christian circles today is derived from the wrong source — Bible study! That statement may astound you, and you may demand to know why I say that the great mass of confusion in Bible *teaching* stems from the wrong source — Bible *study*. What’s wrong with Bible study? Isn’t this very article an effort in Bible study? Ah, there is nothing whatever wrong with Bible study IF WE HAVE THE RIGHT TEACHER TO TEACH US! Christians gather together in Bible Schools, Bible study groups, Sunday Schools, etc., to study the Word of God, but the problem with the vast majority of such groups is that they have the wrong teacher — the human understanding, natural reasoning, and the carnal mind! They try to decipher the deep and wondrous spiritual mysteries of the Word of God with the human intellect and fleshly logic, instead of allowing the One whom God sent to be our teacher, the Holy Spirit of Truth, to unveil to spiritual minds and transformed hearts the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, His ways, and His great plan and purpose. If we all have the right teacher we will all be taught the same thing, and what we learn of Him will be the truth. What He teaches is truth; He cannot give us anything else but truth.

When we think we know it all, we shut ourselves off from further revelation, and make it impossible for the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all truth. We need to pay heed to the Biblical injunction, “If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (I Cor. 8:2). Yes, we still have a lot to learn, there is yet much of the total picture to be revealed to us,

and as the beams of divine revelation stream from the glory above, let us ever walk in that light, and as we do, it will be fulfilled in us what the scripture says, “The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18). There are many precious Christians who believe, and have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, who try to fit into this one initial experience with the Lord, all the parts of the Word of God that pertain to further experiences. The infilling of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, stages of growth and development in Christ, overcoming, maturity and brideship, sonship and reigning with Christ, and many others; they think these have all been incorporated in this first experience of regeneration. Yet, those of us who have received the infilling of the Holy Spirit as a further experience, know what blessing and reality they are depriving themselves of when they assume that they have received the gift of the Holy Spirit when they first believed. The baptism in the Spirit is not the ultimate either, as many seem to believe, it is merely the gateway into a vast spiritual world where there await more and more wonderful experiences and attainments in the Lord, as we continue to walk in the Spirit and grow up unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the *fullness of Christ!*

In entering upon this grand and wonderful portion of God’s Word we desire to do so with profound reverence and humility of spirit, dreading to rush in where angels fear to tread; and anxiously desirous to bring out of the inspired words what is really in them, and to put nothing into them that is not really there. As I have said, there is no subject where there seems to be more of the confusion that attends carnal minds conjuring up inaccurate and half-stated and fancifully conceived theories than this subject of our Lord’s coming again. It will take intense spiritual effort, and much prayer and holy brokenness before God, to lay aside all one has heard and hears, to lay down all preconceived notions and ideas, to find out just what the Holy Spirit teaches. The one question ultimately must be, What does the Word of God actually teach? And not, What have men taught? We must be determined to be committed to the Spirit of Truth and the Word of God only, in receiving an understanding of Christ’s coming, irrespective of any and all traditional views which might tend to influence a forced or unnatural conception. We must be willing to let inspiration lead and interpretation follow. Some will be tempted to stop and ask, “Why! how can that be!” regarding some particular point. And perhaps nowhere more than at the point of truth we shall now set forth!

It may surprise some of my readers to learn that the Bible nowhere speaks of the “second coming” of Christ. Interesting, isn’t it — how some of the major and most commonly accepted doctrines and practices of professing Christianity cannot even be found in the Bible? There is no mention whatever of such things as Christmas, Easter, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Mass, Popes, Cardinals, a man called “the pastor,” infant baptism, Trinity, holy relics, candles, prayer books, church buildings, or — the “second coming”! The Spirit of God has dealt with me powerfully through many years that the Lord’s people should purge their vocabulary and terminology, and remove even from their consciousness the multitude of non-scriptural and extra-biblical expressions carried over from the house of the harlot, Mystery Babylon. We have both parroted and coined a great many unscriptural terms that have been so misleading and have lead us astray in our understanding of the scriptures and the wonderful plan of God.

We have been so completely saturated, so thoroughly brain-washed in the errors of the carnal church systems of man that we do by rote and speak by habit the ridiculous absurdities imbibed in the pews of Babylon. How astounded we are when once we learn the truth and discover that the cherished teaching or hallowed practice we have unwittingly *assumed* to be godly and spiritual truth is not only unfounded in the holy scriptures, but actually an abomination in the sight of God! And this term — “the second coming of Christ” — is not scriptural, either, and cannot be found anywhere



in the Bible; yet it has influenced the thinking and teaching of most Christians to accept and believe concepts that simply are not true. We have been so confused in our thinking that everything in the scriptures pertaining to the coming of the Lord, His appearing, His manifestation have to fit into His coming as a man two millenniums ago, *or* to His so-called “second coming” when every eye shall see Him. This is wrong. Very wrong.

May the blessed Spirit of God come speedily with His coal of fire from off the holy altar of Eternal Truth and forever sanctify our speech! The “second coming of Christ” is not a biblical phrase. It has no scriptural warrant. It is my deep conviction that it should be discarded altogether, for it is the cause of much confusion of thought and not a little outright error. Many texts speak of the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of man, the coming of the Lord, or similar phrases. But if you consult any Bible Concordance such as Strong’s and look up the word “second” you will find that it *never* occurs with a word that can be translated “coming.” There is one passage in Hebrews that does say this: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He ***appear the second time*** without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28). This beautiful passage, however, is not referring to Christ coming to earth a “second time.” The writer is drawing the picture of the ministry of the Old Testament high priest when he went into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle on the day of atonement to offer the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat for the remission of the sins of the people. It was there, in the Most Holy Place, before the throne of the Lord, that the high priest “appeared” in the presence of God on behalf of the sins of every Israelite. He is saying that Christ is now our great high priest, and just a few verses above the passage we quoted above he shows how our Lord, after His death as our sacrifice, took His own blood and entered in, not to the Holy Places made with hands, but into heaven itself, ***now to APPEAR in the presence of God for us*** (Heb. 9:24). Christ “showed up” as it were, before God, with His atoning blood, on behalf of the sins of all humanity. And just as the high priest of Israel went into the Most Holy Place to “***appear***” before God with the blood, and once the sacrifice was accepted, he came out of that Most Holy Place to “***appear***” a ***second time***, not this time in the Most Holy Place ***before God***, but now in the Outer Court ***before the people***, sin having been dealt with; and just as he “appeared” this second time before the people free from sin and bringing salvation, ***SO shall He appear this second time UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM, WITHOUT SIN, UNTO SALVATION!*** It is in the “Outer Court” of our spiritual experience that we “see” Christ as our Saviour. Can we not see by this that this “second appearing” has nothing to do with His “second coming” to earth — instead, it is His high priestly appearing before the Father in heaven *contrasted* with His appearing unto us bringing His full and free salvation! HIS PRIESTHOOD is the whole theme of the book of Hebrews. That is the mystery.

How often our hearts have thrilled as we have read the many wonderful passages concerning the coming again of our Lord! But the preachers, when preaching from these texts, always *add* the word “second” to each one, and proceed to preach on “the second coming of Christ”! They invariably add the word “second” to every “coming” in the New Testament, and then add the “second coming of Christ” to nearly every chapter in the Bible — even in the Old Testament. Adding “second” to the word “coming” does violence to the meaning every time. Jesus did not say, “the second coming of the Son of man.” James did not say, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the second coming of the Lord.” Peter did not ask, “Where is the promise of His second coming?” Paul did not say, “Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy...with the brightness of His second coming.” Jesus did not tell John on Patmos, “And, behold, I come the second time quickly.” There is no justification whatever for adding “second” to any of these inspired passages

or to the scores of others that speak of His coming. I have all the confidence in the world that the Holy Spirit inspired them to be written exactly as they should be written — without the word second! You will have to rewrite the entire New Testament to support the doctrine of the “second coming” of the Lord. The “second coming” is not a scriptural expression and first occurred among Christians as late as the middle of the second century after Christ. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the word “second” is *never* used in holy writ with the word “coming.” That is the simple and plain and incontrovertible truth, and this fact is elementary and basic to a correct understanding of the coming of the Lord!

We have been led to think in terms of the first coming and the second coming, whereas the Bible speaks in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. Our God does not talk about the “first coming” and the “second coming” — He talks about the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For example, let us take a look at that thought in Micah 5:2, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose *goings forth* have been of old, from everlasting (Hebrew: from the days of antiquity).” Notice, His “goings forth.” The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of “goings” has to do with the onward marching of God — the on-going revelation of Himself and the progressive unfolding of His purpose, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the marching forward of God, visitation after visitation, revelation after revelation, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man.

The term “second coming” implies that there has been only one coming of Christ thus far. That is not true! It may surprise you to learn that the scripture does not treat His coming at Bethlehem as an isolated event. Although it is important, it is not considered out of proportion to other and comparable events. His coming as a man was a step in the development of God’s plan for redemption of the world. Actually, Bethlehem is *one* in a series of appearances of Christ into the world! The pages of the Old Testament are literally sprinkled with the accounts of the Lord’s comings, beginning in Eden’s blest garden and continuing through all generations of old. On the very day that man sinned he heard the Voice (the Word, Christ) *walking in the garden* in the cool of the day” (Gen. 3:8). The casual way in which this is stated indicates that this was a normal event, perhaps a daily appointed time at which the Lord manifested His presence to communicate to the man He had placed on this planet. We know of a certainty that the Lord had appeared to both Adam and Eve before this because, when the Lord formed Eve, He then “brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:22). The Lord freely conversed with them following their transgression, and the Lord still walked among men even after Adam was banished from the garden, for Cain, after he slew Abel, “went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod” (Gen. 4:16).

In Genesis 17:1 we find that “The Lord appeared unto Abraham.” In Genesis 17:22 it says, “God left off talking to Abraham, and *went up from Him.*” Interesting, isn’t it, that the mount of Olives was not the first time or place where the Lord *ascended*! In Genesis 18:1 we read, “And the Lord appeared unto him.” Then in Genesis 18:33, “The Lord *went His way*, as soon as He left communing with Abraham.” In Genesis 26:24 we see that “the Lord appeared unto him (Isaac) the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee.” In Genesis 35:7 it says, “And he (Jacob) built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el (the house of God): because there God appeared unto him.” The Lord appeared unto Moses in the burning bush and spoke to him out of the fire (Ex. 3:15-16). After Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt Christ walked among them in mighty manifestation of power and glory and provision. When the

tabernacle in the wilderness was erected, “the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud (His coming in a cloud is nothing new, either!)” (Deut. 31:15). He did not just visit them, He *dwelt* in their midst in the Holiest of all, appeared there continually in His glory, and communed with Moses and Aaron. And then we read that “they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them: and that Rock *was Christ*” (I Cor. 10:4). The “rock” which gave water to the thirsty multitude was not a native rock of the desert where they were, for it was a *special rock*, it was a *traveling rock* which went along with them, it was a *spiritual rock* — it was a *Christophany* — an appearance and manifestation of Christ! And just as Jesus in Galilee fed five thousand people from five loaves and two fish, so He supplied water out of the Rock *which He was* to two million Israelites in the desert! So, it’s a little late, my friend, to tell me that the coming of Jesus in flesh two thousand years ago was the “first coming” of Christ!

The Lord again came to Israel in the wilderness in another form. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, *I come unto thee* in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto thee...and mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it...and the Lord *came down upon mount Sinai*, on the top of the mount” (Ex. 19:9,18-20). In the days of Samuel the prophet “the Lord appeared...in Shiloh: for the Lord (continually) revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh” (I Sam. 3:21). In II Chronicles 3:1 the “Lord appeared unto David...in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.” In I Kings 3:5 the Lord appeared to Solomon. And this star-studded record of the Lord’s comings in the Old Testament times takes on special significance when Israel exclaims, “The Lord *hath appeared of old unto me*, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). Ah, yes — “His goings forth have been of old, from the times of antiquity!”

We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearances. We have limited the comings of Christ strictly to two because of our unscriptural terms “first coming” and “second coming,” whereas the truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; and He will continue to come! There are also numerous “comings” and “appearings” of the Lord in the New Testament. BUT THEY DO NOT ALL REFER TO THE SAME EVENT. The word “coming” is very often used in scripture of a visitation or manifestation of the Lord to judge or bless or accomplish some specific aspect of His great plan and purpose among His people and in the earth. One would think, listening to the preachers carrying on about “the second coming of Christ,” that every time the Lord says, “I will come,” He is speaking of one, specific, particular, singular event sometime out in the future. I do not hesitate to tell you that this is a great error.

Revelation 2:5 tells of a *coming* of our Lord. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else *I will come* unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Since Jesus had gone, a *coming* of Jesus would certainly be a *return*. So what does the Lord say? He warns the church at Ephesus that if it does not repent, “**I WILL COME...QUICKLY!**” “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” Have you noticed that the terminology the Lord uses is precisely the same as in our text? “Behold, *I come quickly*.” And yet — almost any preacher on earth will tell you that the Lord’s coming quickly upon the church at Ephesus is *not* the “second coming,” but His promise to come quickly in Revelation 22:12 *is* the “second coming”! There can be no doubt — the childish traditions of the church systems have clouded men’s minds with darkness and have hung a veil of blindness over their eyes!

There is neither time nor space to discuss in detail all of these comings and appearances of the Lord in one brief article, so we will mention them only briefly in passing. On the day of Pentecost Christ came again as the Comforter. “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the *Spirit of Truth*: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He *dwelleth with you* (in the person of Jesus), and *shall be in you*. I will not leave you comfortless (orphans): **I WILL COME UNTO YOU**. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but *ye see me*: because I live, ye shall live also. At *that day (when I come unto you)* ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and **I IN YOU**...if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **WE WILL COME UNTO HIM, and make our abode with him**” (Jn. 14:16-20,23).

Ten days after that little group of ardent disciples stood gazing up into the heavens in bewilderment, wondering at the phenomenon of their beloved Master rising bodily from their midst and disappearing into the cloud, they were startled by another manifestation of the miraculous. It was the day of Pentecost, and as they were waiting and praying in the upper room in Jerusalem, the power of God manifested itself in their midst. Had not the messengers declared, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner **AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO HEAVEN?**” And now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, suddenly “there **C-A-M-E F-R-O-M H-E-A-V-E-N** a sound as of a rushing mighty wind...and there **APPEARED UNTO THEM** cloven tongues (the Logos, the Word) like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...” Ah, it was the fulfillment of the messenger’s promise unto them, this **SAME JESUS** had returned in mighty Spirit power, they heard Him come, *He came from heaven*, and they **SAW** Him come, even as they had seen Him go into heaven! Can you not see the mystery?

Their minds were now enlightened with a better understanding of those things yet to come in the outworking of the Father’s plan and purpose. They had been assured that their Lord would return. The messengers had said that “this same” Jesus would so come “in like manner” as they had seen Him taken into heaven. But not until the Spirit of the ascended Lord came upon them and into them at Pentecost did they begin to understand the meaning of His “return.” Their faith had been strained by the fact that His ministry had come to such an abrupt and fatal end, and before many of the promises of God concerning the work of the Messiah had been fulfilled. But now He was here again — and this time **IN A MANY-MEMBERED BODY!** Please don’t write to me explaining that the disciples were still expecting the Lord to come years after the day of Pentecost had come and gone, certainly they were expecting the Lord, for He comes in many-faceted ways, just as He did in the Old Testament, as we will show more plainly in a moment; but this particular coming of the Lord on the day of Pentecost was clearly prophesied by the Lord Himself, and He came just as He promised, praise His wonderful name! “I will not leave you comfortless: **I WILL COME UNTO YOU.**” And Paul says, “Now **THE LORD is that Spirit**: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Cor. 3:17).

As our spiritual senses are awakened, the Christ comes to us within ourselves. His comings are many and the timings and purposes wrought out in us by them are of Him. But they are all designed to cause us to cast off the earthly image and to grow up into the heavenly image. They are to cleanse, purify, judge, correct, encourage, strengthen, mature, and transform us into the full stature of the Son of God. Let us look at some of the many facets of His coming. In Mark 13:26 He comes with **CLOUDS**. In Matthew 24:27 He comes as **LIGHTNING**. In Revelation 16:15 He comes as a **THIEF**. In Matthew 25:6 He comes as the **BRIDEGROOM**. In Revelation 2:28 and 22:16 He comes as the **MORNING STAR**. In Malachi 4:2 He comes as the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISING**.

In Malachi 3:1-3 He comes as REFINER'S FIRE and FULLER'S SOAP. In Philippians 3:20-21 He comes in RESURRECTION POWER. In II Thessalonians 1:7-8 He comes in FLAMING FIRE. In I Thessalonians 4:16-17 He comes IN THE AIR. In Hosea 6:3 and James 5:7-8 He comes as RAIN. In Revelation 19:11 & 14 He comes ON A WHITE HORSE IN WARFARE. In Matthew 25:31-34 He comes as KING. In I Peter 5:4 He comes as the CHIEF SHEPHERD. In Matthew 16:27 He comes WITH HIS ANGELS. In Jude 14 He comes WITH HIS SAINTS. In John 14:18 He comes TO HIS SAINTS. In II Thessalonians 1:10 He comes IN HIS SAINTS — GLORIFIED. In Jude 14-15 He comes in JUDGMENT. In Revelation 22:12 He comes WITH REWARDS. Time and space fail me to tell of how He comes leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills, He comes with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God; He comes to the mount of Olives, He comes to His temple, He comes in glory, He comes as Lord, He comes in His kingdom, He comes as seasons of refreshing, and on and on and on... Oh, He comes in ever so many ways, when we think not, but in His every coming He comes to take us away from our personal sense of self and bring us into union with Himself. He comes to make us *sons of God*!

Like a choir of many voices and as the sound of many waters, the testimony of the Word of God resounds with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not a single event, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to each of us is a many-sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. He becomes their salvation but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They have only a superficial knowledge and experience of Him. To others He appears as Chief Shepherd and Bridegroom. They hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to purify and prepare themselves to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. To others He appears as a Thief. He comes into their world uninvited and unannounced, He overtakes them unexpectedly and breaks up their life style and smashes their religious games. He apprehends them as He did Saul of Tarsus suddenly on the road to Damascus, and calls them to a walk they never even dreamed existed. And unto others He appears as Fire, consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God, and refining the gold of their inner man. Oh, yes! The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth or the most beautiful diamond known to man!

If the coming of the Lord is not a progressive revelation in many manifestations, then, pray tell me, **which** of the many "comings" enumerated above IS THE SECOND COMING? When He says, speaking of the Comforter the Father would send, "I will not leave you orphans: **I WILL COME TO YOU**," is **that** the "second coming"? Or when He says, "I will come unto you as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth," is **that** manifestation His "second coming"? Or is it when He comes as lightning — as sudden, bright flashes of revelation — or as the sun of righteousness rising with healing in His wings bringing in the full day of the knowledge and power of the Lord? Or is it when He comes as the Bridegroom, or as the King, or with a shout, or with His saints, or in His saints? Paul said that Jesus would come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Yet the Lord Jesus Himself declared that He would come as a thief. Certainly thieves do not blow trumpets and shout! Nor did Jesus blow trumpets and shout, nor did He ride a white horse with armies following Him, nor did He have a sword coming out of His mouth when He ascended from the mount of Olives, yet the literalist preachers are sticklers for the idea that He must return literally and physically "in like manner" as the disciples saw Him go into heaven. And it would seem that if He came as rain and as fire at the same time, the rain would put out the fire!

But these are not contradictions. They are word pictures to help our finite minds comprehend more clearly some of the great factors involved in the on-going coming of Christ and what His coming means to the whole creation. When we put all these together and add to them all the other illustrations of the Bible pertaining to Christ's coming, we begin to understand that what we are to look for is not a human being coming down through the literal clouds, setting fire to the earth and toppling the mountains, but mighty manifestations of the risen and glorified and ascended and enthroned Lord of heaven and earth, leading to the transformation of mankind from selfishness and hatred to compassion and love; from war and destruction to peace and reconstruction; from dead in trespasses and sins to alive in Christ; from the carnal mind to the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus; from sickness, sorrow, and death to health, happiness, and life; from funeral processions to the quickening power of His resurrection!

And hence it is that so very few Christians have really scriptural or spiritual thoughts about the coming of their Lord. They are looking into prophecy for the church's hope — but they confound the “sun of righteousness” with the “morning star” — they mix up the coming of Christ “*with His saints*” and His coming “*in His saints*” and then speak mostly of Him coming “*for His saints*,” which expression is not even *in the Book!* They have not the foggiest notion what is the difference in time or manifestation between His coming as Rain or His coming as Fire; His coming as Saviour or His coming as Lord; His coming as Lightning or His coming with Clouds; His coming as Bridegroom, or His coming as King. Not very many know when or how the Lord comes in any of His manifestations, therefore, they cannot know how to MEET HIM!

These are not things we can figure out with the natural mind for we must *spiritually discern* and respond to the Lord's comings in our midst and in our individual lives. Jesus said, “Occupy till I come.” In the midst of all our activity we are to ever look for His comings! We must be spiritually perceptive and awake at all times. Then, recognizing His presence and turning aside from all that would distract, we can move with Him in His visitation. As we respond to His comings, be it in blessing, refreshing, quickening, enlightenment, Lordship, fellowship, transformation — or in correction, judgment, stripping, purging, or cleansing — we shall come to KNOW HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality and be made like Him as His very own sons and daughters in the earth. Oh, listen for the sound of His comings!

Jesus is coming again and again,  
Coming in glory and power —  
Not just the future, and not just the past,  
But coming each moment and hour.  
He is a river of Life flowing free,  
Has no beginning or end —  
He never leaves or forsakes us because  
He's coming again and again!  
— Anne Ashworth Speegle

—  
“Behold, *I come quickly...*” (Rev. 3:11; 22:12; 22:20).

There is an important and sublime truth contained in these beautiful words. The word “quickly” is from the Greek *tachu* meaning shortly, without delay, swiftly, speedily, or suddenly. While there is significant truth, little understood by the average Christian or preacher, in each shade of meaning of this word, it is to the thought of the *speediness* or *suddenness* of the Lord's coming

that I would now draw your reverent attention. When John uses this word, he is not using it in the sense of time in terms of hours, days, months, or years, but in the sense of events happening suddenly and in rapid succession once they begin. This principle of *suddenness* adheres to almost all the “appearings” and “comings” of the Lord. Look closely for a moment at the following examples: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to His temple...He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. 3:1,3). Here is a great one: “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming *suddenly* he find you sleeping” (Mk. 13:35-36). “And *suddenly* there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Lk. 2:13-14). “And *suddenly* there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:2-4).

Then there is poor Saul of Tarsus, who ran headlong into a blinding “suddenly.” “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, *suddenly* there shown from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me?” (Acts 22:6-7). It was there that the Lord “appeared” unto Saul, transforming him into Paul the apostle. The angels’ sudden appearance at the birth of the Christ child was “in the fullness of time.” Centuries of prophetic voices accumulated until one night they poured out on a Judean hillside, scattering excited shepherds into a hasty search for the Messiah’s birthplace. Pentecost took place because its time had “fully come,” and suddenly the Spirit of the ascended and glorified Christ Jesus swept gloriously into the lives of those waiting for the promise. Things happen swiftly, speedily, suddenly in our individual lives, in the midst of the Lord’s people, and among the peoples and nations of earth because the time comes when God is ready to act, and suddenly *He comes!* And we are admonished by the Lord to watch diligently for His coming, “lest coming *suddenly* He find you sleeping!”

Thou shalt know Him when He comes,  
Not by any din of drums,  
Nor the vantage of His airs,  
Nor by anything He wears;  
Neither by His crown,  
But His presence known shall be  
By the holy harmony  
*Which His coming makes in thee.*

“And, behold, I come quickly; and *my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*”

Two things are said concerning “works” in the book of Revelation. Of the overcomer it is stated that their works “follow them.” “Blessed are the dead which die (to self and the world) in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from *their labors; and their works do follow them*” (Rev. 14:13). Rest from “our labors,” ***His works*** raised up in us — these are the works that “follow us,” just as signs are said to ***follow*** those who believe! The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that this glorious gospel “at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them which heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with ***signs*** and ***wonders***, and with

divers *miracles*, and *gifts of the Holy Ghost*, according to His will..." Then we read, "These *signs* shall **FOLLOW THEM** THAT BELIEVE..." (Mk. 16:17). When John writes that "their *works* do follow them," the Greek text reads, "their deeds, business." Their business is *the Father's business*; thus we could say of these sons, **THEIR MINISTRY FOLLOWS THEM**. It is not that they are out "beating the bushes" trying to stir something up for the kingdom of God. Rather, like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him," the "taking" was the result of his "walk" with God, it was just naturally that which "followed." When we cease from our own labors, becoming workers together with God, results will automatically follow such a resting and relationship with the Father.

The second thing said concerning "works" in the book of Revelation is that the Lord comes to reward every man *according as his work shall be*. Please notice, my brother, my sister, God is not here speaking of work that is in the past, work that has already been accomplished, but of work that *shall be*. The traditional view has been that we work for the Lord throughout our lifetime on earth, then at the end of the age Christ comes and hands out rewards for our faithfulness. There is undoubtedly truth in that thought too, as Paul says in II Timothy 4:6-8, but clearly here, in the Greek text of the passage now under consideration, the work is *future tense* — according as his work *shall be*. Oh, yes, God still has much work to be done in His great and eternal kingdom, for His plan is the plan of the ages, and in the ages yet to come every son and daughter of the Lord will be about their Father's business until all creation is redeemed, restored, transformed, and brought into the full measure of His Life — God *all in all* — **EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE!** Christ will be present in every work we do, for we rest from "our labors," to be about our Father's business. And every kingdom work we perform will immediately yield its own "reward," Christ present and glorified within us will advance us from glory to glory unto glory indescribable and incomprehensible! Isn't it wonderful!

In a very real sense, God owns us. The apostle Paul reminds us, "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). The great King of this kingdom expects to see a profit for all of His time, effort, and sacrifice. God, of course, is not interested in making money. He already owns everything. God is in the business of developing His family — sons with *character*. If those of us who are called now succeed in qualifying for positions of rulership, we will in turn be able to help millions of others become worthy citizens of the kingdom. We are not power hungry, seeking position for position's sake. Oh, no! But in any kingdom, the higher one advances in the government of that kingdom, the more potential and ability he possesses to serve and bless others. To put it in business terms, our future profit to the kingdom of God will more than make up for our present losses — if we stay with the organization and apply the new lessons! Saints are capable of making costly mistakes. Have you ever felt that God has given up on you? Do you feel like you are wasting His time? Sometimes our mistakes can be very costly to us, too! Have you ever felt that the cost was too high, and that you are wasting your time? Let's see what God says: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you *will complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 1:6).

God has great plans for us! I feel sure that, unworthy servant that I am, my reward for what I have done thus far will be small and paltry indeed! But our Father is investing in us today with every intention of making a profit, an increase in His investment, and expanding His kingdom. Our all-wise Father sees our potential. He knows our capacity to grow and develop. He is keener at discerning it than we are. He is also very aware of our weakness, and is ready to help. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," said Paul. The children of God make a lot of mistakes,



for children are children. Our ability to learn from our mistakes is part of what God uses to build character in us. In the Revelation we read that it is the overcomers — those who don't leave God's school or resign from His calling — who ultimately are given power in His kingdom. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (Lk. 12:48). Have you made costly mistakes? Have you been stumbling and seemingly wasting God's time? Don't give up! Don't resign! Don't drop out of God's school! His investment in you is too great! He will see you through! Graduation day is coming! Then the *real work* will begin! Right now we're just "working our way" through school! The positions in His authority and government and glory are waiting! Learn the lessons that will help you to better serve in the kingdom of God. If you do, great heavenly wealth and power and opportunity lie ahead for you in the age and the ages to come. Through you creation will be lifted, redeemed, restored to life and liberty and glory — and that's where the real profit begins! "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work *shall be*."

Let us learn our lessons well — and let us never presume that we have attained to something in God that we have not yet qualified for. And let us never grasp after a place or position the Father has not conferred upon us. There is no need to DECLARE OUR OWN SONSHIP — the Father Himself declares His sons. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This is my Son, hear ye Him." Some today have grown weary of waiting for the manifestation God has promised, so they have "watered down" the hope and settled for a lesser reality, declaring themselves sons of the kingdom on a lower plane than God has called us to. Some have settled for a "revival" realm, some for a "New Testament Church" realm and now speak disparagingly of what they term "classical sonship." These impetuous and unreliable souls just can't *wait* for the Father's *appointed time*! The place that God has called us to will be in His time, not ours. "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors (in God's school) and governors *until the time appointed of the Father*" (Gal. 4:1-2). Press on, saints of God!

# Chapter 254

## The Epilogue (continued)

*“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. 22:13).*

I am certain that most of the readers of these lines are aware that *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and *Omega* is the last letter in the Greek alphabet. Since the book of Revelation was translated from the Greek language, the translators brought over into English the names of the Greek letters. If the book would have originally been written in English Jesus would have said, “I am the A and the Z, the beginning and the ending (of the alphabet), the first and the last.” What He’s saying is just this — “I am THE WORD — I am the totality of the alphabet, I am everything the alphabet can express, I am the full and complete and total revelation of God!” Think of all these titles as verbs — not nouns. We think of the “word” of God as a noun, and the word itself is indeed a noun, but there is *activity* expressed from it. “For the word of God is *quick* and *powerful*, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). The literal translation of the phrase “quick and powerful” is *living* and *energetic*. This denotes action — it is *moving* and *working*! The Lord wants us to know Him as living; that He is action, which really just comes down to who He is. He is Love! Love is never static, it is living and active. Just as you can know a man’s faith by his works, so you will know love by its actions. Let me say it this way: If we could approach every title of our Lord as if it is a verb, it would give us a wonderful and transcendent revelation of His nature!

It is my conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the firstborn among many brethren, when He walked on earth, was the Alpha — the first expression of the Word of God in man. I also know and am sure that the Christ perfectly and fully formed in a many-membered body, the manifest sons of God, is the Omega, the Word again made flesh and glorified in man. “I am Alpha *and* Omega.” “I am the beginning *and* the end.” “I am the first *and* the last.” It is all HIM! We have now come to the day when the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to be glorified *in* His saints and to be admired *in* all them that believe *in that day* (II Thes. 1:10). The day of which the apostle spoke by inspiration had not yet arrived at the time he penned these blessed words of truth, for he projected it into the future. It should not be difficult for any to understand that Pentecost with its baptism in the Spirit did not bring this glorious revelation of Christ in all His fullness *in His saints*. A future time was appointed of God for Christ to be glorified on earth again, not this time to be glorified as the Son of God with power in the body of one manifest Son called Jesus of Nazareth, but glorified on earth through the ministry of manifest sonship in and through a vast company of sons who are one and all His brethren, sons of God as He is the Son of God, all perfected in His image and grown up into the maturity and fullness of His life, nature, wisdom, and power. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called* the *sons* of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear *what we shall be (when our full maturity and manifestation has come)*; but we know that when HE SHALL APPEAR (in us), *WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM...*” (I Jn. 3:1-2).

“*Called* the sons of God!” The truth is, my friend, that very few of the Lord’s people are routinely *called* “the sons of God.” They are called Christians, believers, saints, church members, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and many other things, but not “the sons of God.” This is due to the

fact that very few of God's people have any knowledge or revelation of *sonship*. The unique thing about this manifestation of *sonship* is that we will still appear as men. But men will confess of us as they did of the firstborn Son, "Truly these *are* the sons of God!" "Thou art the Christ, the *sons* of the living God!" A great number of people confessed Jesus' sonship and we today proclaim Him as the Son of God. But we wouldn't dare say it of anybody else we know — we might confess that they are in some "reckoned" or "honorary" sense considered sons of God but we would not call them sons of God on the basis of the almighty power, the divine wisdom, the surpassing glory, and the infinite knowledge they demonstrate clearly and without measure. Yet, when He shall appear to be glorified in us we shall be *like Him, exactly like Him, fully like Him*, and we shall be **called** "the sons of God." We will not be called Baptists! We will not be called Pentecostals! Neither will we be called Christians! What kind of work must be wrought in us to so change and transform us until men looking upon us will with recognition and wonder exclaim, "Truly *these are* the sons of God!"

### THE BEGINNING AND THE END

"I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end...*" (Rev. 22:13).

Not only is Christ the *beginning*, He is the *end* of all things! Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He hath appointed a day — O glorious day! — when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle saith, "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated *in Christ*, that *everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him*. IN CHRIST we have been given an inheritance, since we were destined for this, by the One who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-11, Phillips).

Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus shall have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of dirt before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the prison house and also set forth His great purpose: "Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended up far above all heavens* THAT HE MIGHT FILL A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S" (Eph. 4:9-10). The message is clear — redemption includes the complete transformation of the entire universe and all that is within it so that God in Christ shall truly FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe, nor one creature in it, where He shall not be Lord and King. Everything everywhere shall be restored to the beautiful harmony and order of the love of God. Indeed, He shall fill all things that *God may be all in all!*

All that God has ever done or ever will do, all that He has said or ever will say, will ultimately redound to His glory, that He may be "All in all" — *and why not?* "In the beginning GOD..." Everything else is *because* of God — God's love, God's wisdom, God's purpose, God's power, God's righteousness. And for all things to find their purpose, their reality and their end in Him, is the final goal of salvation's history. It is an extraordinary thing, yet sublimely true, that the Lord Jesus gives us to understand that what He is doing on earth today and throughout the ages to come *is only a beginning*. What He has given us is a root, and not yet a tree; a foundation, and not yet an edifice. The Kingdom Seed must grow, the branches spread out, the blossoms appear, and the fruit be formed. The little stone cut out without hands must grow and grow and grow until it becomes a

great mountain that fills *all* the earth, having broken in pieces and consumed *all other kingdoms*. In the end the kingdom of God will have filled all realms everywhere, from the Milky Way to the outermost galaxies, from the caves of Afghanistan to the government halls of Beijing and the worshipping throngs bathing in the waters of the Ganges River — and God *will* be *ALL in all*! Those who on earth are now being perfected in Christ are the *firstfruits* of this marvelous revelation of GOD ALL IN ALL!

In these days many people are seeking to know what and when the *end* will be. At this time of frustration and confusion, men want to know what God will bring to pass in the end. Many years ago heaven shed its light in my spirit and I saw clearly that if we could know something of God's beginning of things, we could then understand something of the end. A clearer conception of the *beginning* would give us a clearer knowledge of the *ending*. In connection with this, I would like to quote from a book called The Gospel of Thomas. While it has not been accepted as being inspired, along with many other apocryphal writings, there is still truth to be gleaned if we can separate the meat from the bones. The Gospel of Thomas consists of a series of sayings attributed to Jesus. On one occasion Jesus is reported to have said, "I will give you what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what hand has not touched, and what has not arisen in the heart of man." The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what our end will be." Jesus said, "Have you then discovered the beginning, so that you enquire about the end? FOR WHERE THE BEGINNING IS, THERE SHALL BE THE END. Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning and he shall know the end and he shall *not taste death*." Here is blessed confirmation of what we have known from the scriptures and by the spirit of revelation from God! Jesus says that if we know the beginning and stand at the beginning, we shall know the end, and we shall not taste death! What a word!

Is it not true that in the beginning there was no sin, no sorrow, no pain, no tears, no limitation, and no death? Behold Jesus Christ! HE is the beginning and HE is the end! Are they not both the same? HE abolishes death! HE wipes the tears from off all faces! HE swallows up all sorrow and crying! HE brings life and immortality to light through the gospel! It is *in Him* that we *have life*, and have it more abundantly! All that is happening now came out of the Beginning and will bring us to the Ending. If Jesus Christ *is the End*, then this does away with all this teaching in the church systems about everlasting hell and damnation being man's final end, for HE IS THE END. Sin is not the end, death is not the end, judgment is not the end, hell is not the end, fire and brimstone are not the end, damnation is not the end, for CHRIST IS THE END! Though men be processed by judgment "unto the ages of the ages," neither that judgment nor those ages are the end — they are merely a *means* to the end, there is an end that lies *at the conclusion of the ages* — and that end IS CHRIST! Aren't you glad!

"God sitteth upon the *circle* of the earth," said the prophet Isaiah. While the word for "circle" in the Hebrew text denotes the *sphericity* of the earth, it may also denote the *cycles* of nature. These cycles are the continual goings and comings of the seasons, days, months, and years, ordained by God in the beginning. Everything in nature moves in cycles: winter and summer, seedtime and harvest; generation after generation all show the might and wisdom of God. Even electricity must have a circuit. There are positives and negatives in all of nature, and everything flows through them. The earth spins upon its axis while it revolves around the sun; the sun moves in its own circuit in the heavens as also each galaxy moves in a broad circular sweep through distances that defy the imagination. SO IT IS WITH GOD'S WORK. In the spiritual realm there are the positives and negatives of life and death, good and evil, spirit and flesh, blessing and curse, temptation and triumph, strength and weakness, light and darkness, truth and error, God and Satan. It is in the

interplay between these that we are brought to perfection! It is therefore reasonable to conclude that man, the highest of God's creation, came out of God, but was then lowered into the world of vanity, darkness, and death, but will return to God, thus completing the cycle, not in part, but in full. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the supreme illustration and example of this wonderful truth, for He *came out of God*, descended into the *lower parts of the earth*, that is, into the very depths of human nature and experience in the fall and the curse, overcame in it, and then arose and returned back into God.

This great principle has been called "The Law of Circularity." Some would have us believe that this is a "New Age" concept, but I do not hesitate to tell you that such a notion is *far from the truth*. If it is a New Age concept then they *borrowed* it from somewhere, for this great Law *originated* with GOD! It is found written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit all through the scriptures and is inscribed as well upon every law of nature within the cosmos. "For *from Him* and *through Him* and *to Him* are all things — for all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to *consummate and to end in Him*. To Him be glory forever! Amen" (Rom. 11:36, Amplified).

The Law of Circularity requires that just as all things began in Christ, all shall end in Christ. "I am Alpha and Omega, the *beginning* and the *end*, the *first* and the *last*, saith the Lord." Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He is the *first* — "before all things." Can I also believe that *He is the last*? If He is the *beginning*, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the *end*? Ah, He is the *end* because He is "the appointed *heir* of *all things*" (Heb. 1:2). All that existed in Christ before the ages began, shall return into Him again that He may be the First *and* the Last. All that came out of Him, lowered into the realm of the negative, completes its circuit, through redemption returning once more to its former estate — IN CHRIST! This is not New Age philosophy, my friend; this is sound, fundamental *biblical truth*. The first Adam had power to take ALL with him into sin and death, without their knowledge or consent; therefore the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, gathers up the same number in His great redemptive work and ALL MEN who came out of God shall return, that the circle may be unbroken. There is an old song that asks the question, "Will the circle be unbroken, by and by, Lord, by and by." We now have God's answer to that question: "YES!" The circle will be *unbroken*, the circle will *not* be broken! God's great Law of Circularity will bring all men back into God!

## THE FIRST AND THE LAST

"I am the *first* and the *last*..." (Rev. 22:13).

The word "last" is the Greek word *eschatos* meaning "the farthest or final" of place or time. The theologians have added the suffix *ology* to this word, creating the term *eschatology* which is a fancy word indicating prophetic "end times" or "last days" events. But the book of Revelation is not merely a book about the end-times! It is a NOW book! In this very same chapter the messenger instructs John, "*Seal not* the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for *the time is at hand*" (Rev. 22:10). This isn't, by any stretch of the imagination, an *eschatological* work! This is no end-time book! This is how the church systems have kept the Lord's precious people ignorant through the centuries of the true message of the Revelation, for they have been led to believe that it's all going to happen out there in the world some day after the saints have all been raptured away to heaven. Oh, that all the Lord's people might come to know that this is truly *the revelation of Jesus Christ!* Nothing more, and nothing less! "When He shall *come* to be *glorified in His saints*, and to be

admired *in all them* that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:10). How can the Lord Jesus COME to be REVEALED AND ADMIRER IN HIS SAINTS if the saints continue to look outside of themselves to see the vision fulfilled while the work of God is *within*? Thus the book is about mankind being redeemed and restored, and the Lord’s called and chosen elect being brought to the full stature of the Son of God — so that HE BECOMES THE LAST! Isn’t it wonderful!

### THEY THAT WASH THEIR ROBES

“Blessed are they that *wash their robes*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

Oh, have your eyes truly seen the city of God? Have you seen the river, that pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb? Have you seen in the midst of the river, and on either side of the river, the tree of life and the branches meeting together and covering the river? Have you tasted its fruits? Do you know the power of the leaves of that tree for the healing of the nations? There is a beautiful picture in the opening chapters of Genesis, there is the river that flows from the highlands of the enchanting garden of Eden, flowing out of the garden with its cleansing, life-giving waters to all the lowlands of earth. In symbolism it is the same river, the river of life, and the Holy Spirit is that river; the imagery speaks to us that the river *flows out of the city*, out to all who are *outside* the city, and to all the nations who shall walk in the light of the city. The unclean and the unholy may be made pure in heart, in spirit, yea, in soul and body, and be made partakers of the inheritance of the pure in heart, above and here on earth. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

There’s a story in Greek mythology about a king named Augeas, who owned a stable with 3,000 cattle in it. The stable had not been cleaned for decades, and the king was seeking for someone to thoroughly clean the stable, a monumental task for any man. Hercules accepted the challenge to clean the stables. But he did not use a shovel. Instead, he changed the course of two rivers and made them flow through the stables to wash all the filth away. The Greek word for “pure” in the phrase “the pure in heart” is the same word from which we get the word “catharsis.” When you go through a catharsis, you go through a cleansing that flushes out impurities. Jesus says that if you want to see God, you must have a pure heart, a heart that has been purified, washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. “Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow,” prays the psalmist.

How may we enter the city and *see God*? How may we get there now, now, now, this very day? Listen! I can tell you because I know! I know! There are many things I do not know. The things that I do not know — well, there are no books that would contain them. But I know how to get to that river, how to enter that city, how to get to that tree of life, and I know how to eat of the fruit of that tree. That is something worth knowing! Now, I *know*! I do not say that I *think*. I am not guessing. How do I know? I point you to the words of our text. “*Blessed are they that wash their robes...*” I call your attention to that reading. It is not the old reading, as in the King James Bible. The old reading of that passage is, “Blessed are they that *do His commandments*.” That is not according to the Greek text at all. I do not know why these old translators put that in; but the fact is this, that it is absolutely different from the original, which is properly translated in many other versions just as I have quoted, “*Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*” The way, then, to enter in through the gates into the city, and to have the right to get to the tree of life, is to WASH YOUR ROBES! Wash your robes? I tell you there are some of them that need lots of washing, too.

The spirit of every man has two robes — the *soul* and the *body*. The soul is the personality with its components of mind, will, emotion, and desire. The body is the outer vehicle through which either spirit or soul expresses itself. You must be clean vessels. You must get your blood cleansed, and your body cleansed. You will never get into that city, and you will never be able to take of the tree of life, until your robes are cleansed, and you can do it now. How may I get to the tree of life? I will tell you. I have been there. I go there often. If I had not been able to get to that tree of life, thousands of you would not be reading these pages today. If I had not been able to go through the gates, and take from the tree of life some Word of the Living God, some power to speak encouragement, understanding, wisdom, revelation, edification, strength, and blessing into your life, you would not be reading these words today!

When a man's heart is cleansed; when his soul, dark and foul as night by nature, is made whiter than snow; when his mind is renewed, his will is exchanged, his emotions are quickened, his desires are transformed; when his blood is cleansed from the impurity of generations; when his body is yielded and made a temple that God can be at home in and use and flow through, then that man's robes have been washed in the river of life, which is the blood of the Lamb! Then he can enter in through the gates into the city, then he can eat of the incorruptible life and the incorruptible word in the fruit of the tree, and then he can bring to this sin-cursed and disease-smitten world leaves of the tree which are for the healing of the nations. Thank God the tree grows still, and thank God the leaves have not lost their power to bring healing for every malady to every nation under heaven!

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stain!

## OUTSIDE THE CITY

“For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15).

Note that there are *six* things mentioned. Six, in the numerology of scripture, is the number of *man*, that is, the natural man, in the totality thereof. These bespeak of the fullness of the flesh nature and the works of the flesh. Those *outside* the city do not signify some future condition into which God shall thrust men. Oh, no! It is descriptive of *where men are right now in their relation to God and His city*. “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for *the time is at hand*.” The time is *now*! The place is *here*! Outer darkness represents that realm which is farthest from the light. Some men, though not entering the city, do walk in the light of the city. But those men who walk far from God and His city are groping about in the gross outer darkness even now. It is not a future state, but a present reality! Billions wander there. But, thank God! men are not eternally confined to that condition, for only two verses later the Lord Jesus, the blessed Saviour of all men, cries out: “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*” (Rev. 22:17). And for how long will they be able to come? “And the gates of it *shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there*” (Rev. 21:25). Isn't it wonderful!

“For without are *dogs*...” Dogs come off rather badly in scripture. This does not mean there will be no literal dogs in heaven! But because dogs were scavengers in the ancient world, they were

considered unclean and impure, and were used by the people of Israel as the designation for Gentiles in general as well as wicked, corrupt, and perverse men (Mat. 15:21-28). Some of you will meet dogs today. You will either meet or hear of men and women who are worse than dogs. You will meet men who are mere dogs, intellectual dogs, moral dogs, religious dogs, big dogs and little dogs, black dogs and white dogs, well-bred dogs that have become corrupted, and dogs that never had any breeding at all, miserable little curs, that almost seem as if they had no right to be born at all. You are apt to become disgusted, especially when you see a mangy dog, a dog that is diseased, and you turn away. Hollywood is full of dogs. The business world is full of dogs. Politics is loaded with dogs. The illegal drug business, the prostitution business, the porn industry, the bars and nightclubs, and a thousand other places are swarming with dogs. And saddest of all, the churches are full of dogs!

Be kind to that dog, but do not give that which is holy to him. If it is baring its teeth and snarling and snapping, be kind. All you can do is to be kind, loving, and gentle. The dogs are part of God's creation! Even the little, nasty, mangy dog that gets kicks from everybody will look up when you say a kind word, and wag its ugly little tail. It will say, "I have found a friend at last." You do not need to give a great deal of pious talk to a dog. There are looks and acts which come from loving hearts which are far more eloquent. If you can only give a small pat, perhaps you might win even that poor little dog; it has need to be both pitied and respected. Truly, if we pity the poor little dog, can we not pity these people who think and act and live like dogs? Can we not take into consideration the fact that oft times they never had a chance of being better? At the same time we do not throw out a great deal that the dogs will snap at. Just speak kindly and pass on, and God will take care of the seed you sow.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the course of His preaching came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. A very remarkable people dwelt there. The Syrophoenicians were directly descended from those who had invented letters. The first written language we know anything about is Phoenician. But they were heathen; they were very enterprising; they were renowned for their industries, and their magnificent houses, and their wonderful enthusiasm in everything they undertook; but, like the ancient Greeks, with the highest culture, and the most extensive commerce, and great valor on sea and land, they were debased idolaters. When the people of Israel came into possession of the land of Israel, they halted in their work, and did not drive these heathen out, and there never was a time when they were not a thorn in the side of Israel. The Philistines, the Phoenicians, and all that bordered upon the sea were a perpetual curse to Israel and a defilement to the land. They were held in great contempt and abhorrence!

Now a remarkable thing about Jesus going into such quarters as these is this, that He never went beyond the borders of Palestine to preach His gospel; so far as we can tell, not a step. Some contend that He did, but their information is rooted in legend and fable, not in the record God has given us. So Jesus came to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He came to His *own* (Judah, for He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah), and His own received Him not, and He came in those three years to minister to His own people, and to die, first for Israel, and then for the world. Now, as we have mentioned, the Israelite had the conception that all nations outside were Gentiles — heathen outcasts; that God would not pay them any heed nor listen to them. Coming into the borders of Tyre and Sidon a woman, who evidently was a woman of station, is attracted by the splendor of Christ. This woman was a Gentile, for the record states that she was a woman of *Canaan*. But she beholds the Christ, His love, His power, His magnanimity; His great personality goes out as He speaks to the multitudes there, and proclaims that He Himself has the power to give rest to the weary, to give



salvation to the sinful, healing to the sick, and out of the depths of despair to guide all humanity into the paths of faith, and hope, and love, and life that lead to heaven here and heaven above.

In that wonderful instant this woman begins to pray to Him. She has a daughter that has a devil, and she is emboldened to ask for healing for her daughter. Oh, I see Him standing there, and He looks at her with great compassion, and yet He utters words that are just the bitterest that can come from His divine lips. He looks at her, and she is pleading, “Oh Lord, you will not send me away. You have healed so many; you have saved so many; please don’t send me away.” He looks at her and He says these words: “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and He walks right off. There she is, and He is gone. Now she is going to give up praying, surely. She has gone in vain to Him; she had gone first in vain to the apostles, and she has come back to Him, and she is told that He is not sent to any except the lost sheep of the house of Israel! Now, she is a Canaanite; she belongs to that accursed race, and, almost in despair, she looks at His retreating figure. Oh, how hard it is! How hard that answer is!

This woman did not know how to stop praying. She had been to Christ, and also to the apostles, and she goes after Christ the second time, and always finds a repulse. Yet she goes after Him again! I like to see that woman. Now, you watch what she says this time. This time she goes right off, and sees where her error has been. She goes after Him, and she seeks Him until she finds Him, and then she falls at His feet; and for the first time she does that which gets her an answer to her prayer — she worships Him. Notice her prayer. The first prayer was a long one, a very long one, and this prayer is a totally different one. It is a very short one. “Then she came and she worshipped Him, saying, LORD, HELP ME!” When she worships Him her prayer comes right down to three words. What are they? When she worships Him she says, “Lord, help me!” And how does He answer her? Oh, how mysterious it is; the most cruel answer that could come from human lips seems to come from His lips that day.

There she is; she is worshipping Him. She says, “*Lord, help me.*” And now the great Lord raises Himself, and points down at her, and says, “It is not right or proper to take the children’s bread, and cast it to *dogs*.” How many American women would go on praying after that? I can imagine how you would react and say, “I thought you were a kind man. I thought you were God, but you call me a dog. I am not a dog, Sir! I am an American lady. I have rights. I have dignity. You are discriminating against me because of my race. You are a male chauvinist pig!” Every bit of the devil of pride and feminism would be aroused. How the eyes would flash hell-fire, and the teeth clinch, and the face become pale with passion, and the heart cry out for revenge, if you, oh women of America, were refused bread and called “a dog!” I do not believe there are a dozen women upon God’s earth that would stand for that, and I tell you that the greatness of this woman’s faith is measured by just that fact, that she lay there at Christ’s feet, and she heard Him lift His voice and point His hand, and say, “You dog!” and go off, and she still loved Him and hoped in Him.

Now, did she stop praying? Not a bit of it. That woman went right after Him quickly. She went to His feet, and she made her last appeal, and I think it one of the most touching things in all the story of prevailing prayer in the scripture. All her heathen pride has gone. She cannot give up the hope that is bound up in her. She hears Him call her, even in the words that repel her, and she goes to His feet, and she says, “Lord, that is true; I am only a dog; but the little dogs” (for that is the word in Greek — the little dogs, the wee little dogs) “eat from the crumbs that fall from their master’s table, and I will take the place of a dog, but I want this crumb. Help me; help my devil-possessed daughter. Give me that crumb.” Now, the Lord looks up, and now He speaks the words that ring

through the ages, “O woman” — His own heart is touched to the deepest depths by her humility — “O woman, *great is thy faith!* It has stood all these testings; it has stood all my hard answers, all my silence, all the apostles’ reproaching, all of my driving you down and back; and now you are willing to take the place of a dog. **YOU SHALL TAKE THE PLACE OF MY OWN DAUGHTER.** O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” She willed her daughter’s deliverance from the devil that grievously vexed her, and her daughter was delivered in that same hour.

It seems to me that the scene above is one of the most outstanding and shining examples of the infinite mercy and unconditional, unrestricted, unbounded, and unending love of our Lord toward every member of Adam’s race that the world has ever known. To the Syrophoenician woman Jesus said, “O woman, *great is thy faith!*” Only one other time did Jesus attribute such greatness of faith to a person He helped — the Roman centurion whose servant lay at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. This centurion was another of the Gentile dogs, and this dog said to Jesus, “I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” When Jesus heard it He marveled, and said to them that followed, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found *so great faith, no not in Israel.*” And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour (Mat. 8:5-13).

How I admire our wonderful Lord and Christ for walking rough shod over the worthless traditions and hypocritic bigotry of prideful and self-righteous men, pausing to minister with compassion and mercy even to the dogs that crossed His pathway. Jesus moved for the dogs! Let everyone who has ears to hear stop and take earnest heed, for these examples reveal powerfully to us the *heart* of our Lord toward the dogs, which also must be the heart of all who become the *sons of God*. And now, in our present text, we come across the “*dogs*” once more. “For without are *dogs*.” Ah, the Canaanite woman was from beyond the borders of God’s favored nation, outside the camp she was but a dog, despised, maligned, hated, cut off from every blessing. But she cried out of her despair and the compassionate Christ received her! Little wonder, then, that once we are shown the dogs outside the city, almost immediately we hear the heavenly sound — how wonderful are the words of our Saviour that come out of the heavens of God’s Spirit: “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!*” The gates of the city are open, though the dogs are without, blessed are they who **wash their robes** that they may enter through the gates of the city. Do you not see what the Lord is saying? Even the dogs — all they have to do is wash their robes! Methinks that as the Canaanite dog got her bread from the Master’s table, so shall a vast multitude of dogs from the outer darkness of sin and death come to the banks of the river of life to drink deeply of the all-sufficient supply that shall meet their every need! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

### THE MORNING STAR

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and *the bright and morning star*” (Rev. 22:16).

Oh, yes, there is a dense and dreadful darkness outside the city, a darkness inhabited by dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and liars. But in the very next breath we hear our Lord’s gracious words of hope, proclaiming, “I am the bright and morning star!” The morning star is a symbol. The rising sun is a symbol. The morning star comes before the sun. It gives no shattering, awakening signs of its coming. It appears at the hour when the night is disputing with the morn. It comes when all the lowlands are shrouded in depths of darkness, when the mountain

peaks stand out against a tremulous sky, and the myriad stars seem like the eyes of watchers waiting for the dawn. It shines with noiseless softness upon the earth, like a golden lamp let down by an invisible chain. It poises itself for a brief moment on the rim of the night and the rim of the morning, like a note of unuttered song. It quivers there for a space as though it were a tear from the eye of God, sorrowing that so many should sleep and miss the breath-taking transition from the darkness into light. Then it disappears and the earth seems full of a strange hush.

Then there are mists that rise like wraiths above the streams. Shadows and shapes come and go. Voices are calling to each other. Things are in motion and undefined. The star has come and gone and the interval between the star and the sun is on. The sun comes after the star is gone, or the star disappears because of the surpassing glory of the sun. The sun comes like one who has a bow, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer. He shoots his gleaming arrows upward and they fall slanting into the eyes of men to awaken them. All the land is flooded and drowned in light, and every mountain, every valley is disclosed. These symbols have been applied by divine authority to the coming of Christ. Do you enquire what is the Morning Star? It is the Lord Jesus Christ! And what is the sun of righteousness that rises with healing in its rays? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus seen, experienced, and known in a totally different dimension. The symbols proclaim it. The coming of Christ is compared to the Morning Star. He comes to us, He comes to all, like that bright and morning star! He is the herald, the harbinger of the full dawn of a new day! He comes while the darkness of our carnal minds is disputing with the morn of holiness and truth. He comes when all the base emotions and desires of the flesh are in deepest darkness and we suppose that the night is the norm. He comes when all our self-will, self-centeredness, pride, and ego stand in contrast to the heavenly ways and divine will of the precious mind that is in Christ Jesus. He appears in noiseless beauty as the star of the morning, gently indicating to us an imminent change, a transformation, that the morning comes, a new day dawns; it is the pledge of the promise, purpose, and faithfulness of God! It is intermingled with the first rays of the light of the sun, it comes as a herald to announce the arrival of a light so bright and so powerful and so glorious that all must be transformed before it.

So what do we see — when does the morning star appear in the natural world? Just before the dawning of the day! Who sees it? The one who has been moving in the dark and dreary hours of the night. Anyone acquainted with natural things, or who has traveled by night, knows that the appearance of the morning star is hailed as the intimation that day is at hand. In the morning darkness it shines with a most wondrous, clear, silver light, dazzling as a gem of rarest hue. Someone once wrote: “At 4:00 A.M. I awakened and looked out my window which was half covered by frost, and half was clear, and there I saw the bright morning star. As I lay there for a while beholding the brilliance and beauty of that star, I slipped away into sleep. When I awoke again the brilliance of the sun flooded my room.” Is it not thus with God’s Christ, with God’s Day? Now we see Christ, the bright and morning star, the firstfruit, the forerunner, the prototype, the sample and first specimen of what God has purposed and planned ***for each and every man and woman of Adam’s race***. The bright and morning star! The star of hope that tells us that the long night of sin and death is almost over, and the Day is not far hence, a Day so bright that all the peoples and nations shall walk in its light and even the dogs will hear the sound of His voice, calling, ***“Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.”***

How plain, how practical the application! There is a remnant of God’s people over the whole earth that has taken heed to the word of this prophecy as to a light that shines in a dark place. We have Jesus’ own word for it — HE HIMSELF is the Morning Star — and that Morning Star has

shined in our hearts, foretelling the approach of Eternal Day at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness. This remnant has fixed their eyes on Jesus, they are looking away from all the darkness of this world, from the chaos of sin, sickness, pain, rebellion, crime, drugs, tyranny, war, hatred, injustice, fear, and death stalking the earth; and they are looking away from the seeming hopeless carnality of their own lives, away from people, away from politicians, away from limitation, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God.

There is to be a restoration! Today we see a terrible lack of things being right, or in divine order. There is a divine order for creation, an order of life and harmony. There is a proper order for animal life, vegetable life, and human life. There is a proper order for every planet, for every world, for every life form throughout the infinite stretches of space. But all things are out of order, in frightful chaos. The curse must be lifted, every enemy put under our feet. All creation is groaning and crying for release from the bondage of sin, decay, and death. And everything hinges on that body of *sons* that is to be manifested in that perfect state of divine order. Jesus is the Morning Star proclaiming the soon arising of the Sun. Christ glorified in His many-membered body, the increase, expansion, and intensification of that *Light of Life* which *He is*, is the ARISING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN HIS RAYS BRINGING THE GLORY OF THE DAWN! Those who receive of His fullness of life, nature, victory, and glory, who put on His wonderful mind, who are conformed to His glorious image, with a full and complete triumph over sin, carnality, and death — these make up that blessed company of the Sun of Righteousness that shall shine His penetrating Light of Life upon all men and all things.

Praise God that we are living in the times of this restoration. It is the greatest day in the long history of man. It is at hand. I know it's at hand because heaven has spoken and I see a people being pressed and processed into the very life of God. Not only you and me, but all creation as well will thrill to what God brings about in this grand and glorious restoration! "The creation itself *also* shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:21). The testimony of scripture, as well as the witness of the Spirit, makes us know that this is not for some other, distant age. It is now! It is here! I see the Morning Star bright and luminous in the heavens of the Spirit of God! Be ready! Prepare yourself! Cast aside all doubt and fear! Today it is the Morning Star, tomorrow it will be the Sun of Righteousness! The nations outside the city, and even the dogs in the outer darkness, shall come to the light of God's great Day! Great is the mystery!

# Chapter 255

## The Epilogue (continued)

“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*” (Rev. 22:17).

A number of commentators who have exegeted this passage of scripture have been of the persuasion that when the Spirit and the bride say, *Come*, and he that heareth says, *Come*, it signifies that both heaven and the church desire the coming of the Lord. The idea is that all these are speaking *to* the Lord and are earnestly *praying* for His coming again.

However, the internal evidence in the verse refutes that view entirely. First of all, if that were true, the Spirit would be calling for the Lord to come. Now, the Spirit does make intercession *for us*, but there is no evidence in scripture that the Spirit prays to the Lord for Him to do that which is only the Spirit’s desire. Secondly, the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” The Spirit in this case is the Spirit of the Bridegroom, for it is the *Spirit* in association with the *bride* that issues the call to come, and as such, if the Spirit were praying to the Lord, He would be praying to Himself! The Spirit of the Bridegroom dwells in the bride. Hence it is *through the Spirit* that the bride says, “Come.” This also shows that it is Christ who is speaking through the bride imploring *men* to come...the Spirit and the soul, the Bridegroom and the bride, for the Lamb’s wife has made herself ready, the union has been consummated, the wedding feast has been lavishly spread, and now, blessed be God! the Spirit *and* the bride say, “Come!”

Now let us notice the next part of the invitation. “And let him that is *athirst* come. And *whosoever will* let him *take the water of life freely*.” The theme of “come” is continued here, and it most definitely is *not* addressed to the Lord nor does it concern *His coming*. The invitation is addressed to the world of mankind — to all who are thirsty, to *come* and quench their spiritual thirst by drinking of the water of life. If the first half of the verse were asking the Lord to come, and the second half asking men to come, we would have an unexplained and unreasonably abrupt shift in focus. Therefore it is better to interpret the first half of the verse by the second half and understand the entire invitation to be addressed to mankind.

We are approaching the conclusion of John’s record of his visions, of what he saw and heard while on Patmos. The final verses of John’s great experience are like the final movements of a glorious symphony. All the instruments of the orchestra join in one tremendous flood of triumph. Many voices are alternately audible; it is difficult to discern at times just who is speaking; sometimes it is the seer who speaks, sometimes the messenger, sometimes a deeper voice from the throne — the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. There are various invitations throughout the book, but in our present text we come to one of the most beautiful and meaningful of all summons in the pages of Holy Writ. This verse can rightfully be called the *final* invitation of God. And how precious, how remarkable that it appears as part of the *Epilogue*, right at the end of the book. How strange that would be were the preachers correct in their contentions that at this point in the Revelation everyone’s destiny and fate is already *eternally determined* and *sealed*. The age of grace is supposedly ended, the day of mercy is over, the saints are all in New Jerusalem and the unsaved are all screaming in the lake of fire without any further hope. He that is filthy is irrevocably filthy and

he that is righteous is eternally secure. The dogs are forever shut outside and the sheep are safe in their heavenly corral. And in the face of such an irreversible end these words ring out with crystal clarity and divine power: “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* (no restrictions or reservations at all), let him *take of the water of life freely!*” Isn’t it wonderful!

A great preacher once said that God’s favorite word is “Come.” It echoes in every chapter of the Bible. One could delete from God’s Book all other passages — the entire history of patriarchs, sages, and prophets — and yet, with only those great passages that pronounce the word “Come,” there would be a full and adequate gospel to preach. The clear, full, resonant note of scripture is “Come.” The word occurs hundreds of times! Down through the ages God has been tolling out the message “Come” like a tower-bell, inviting wanderers to return, the weary to rest, the lost to salvation. Oh, how the Lord Jesus Himself sounded out the peal! It was the word that brought the disciples to Jesus. It was the word that He spoke to the little children, to those who were weary and heavy laden, to those who were in the shadow of darkness, to those who were thirsty, even to the dead! How fitting that the gracious Lord should choose, as His final chord of music, that glorious word, “Come!” It is like the “Hallelujah Chorus” at the conclusion of Handel’s “Messiah”!

Ah, yes, at the time of this invitation to “come” the river of life is issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the holy city. It heals everything that it reaches, removing the curse from the earth. There are no barriers now! No cherubim with flaming sword are here portrayed, as in the first Eden, keeping sinful Adamic man resolutely away from any access to the tree of life. On the contrary, the gates of entrance into this city of righteousness, glory, and immortality are shown to be “open continually; they shall not be shut at all.” And there, with all this as the backdrop, the Spirit and the bride say, “*Come!*” Their voice echoes out from *within the city*. The sound goes out to all flesh, and anyone who even hears it is commanded to repeat it, and whosoever will — with no exceptions — is freely invited to come into the city which stands there continually to receive him. God’s elect leads on, showing the masses of humanity (eventually all creation) the way to forgiveness, salvation, transformation, eternal righteousness, peace, and joy, and immortal life until it can be said, “there shall be no more death.” This most wondrous picture of the final, full, complete, immortal victory of God’s creative handiwork and of Christ’s glorious redemption is that which John saw as the fitting conclusion to the whole panorama of events he was shown on Patmos!

Does it not seem wonderfully significant to you that in the closing pages of the book of Revelation, when the Spirit of God reveals the final and ultimate revelation of God to creation through the glorious City of God, the very last message proclaimed is, “*Come!*” Remember, before this call went out we had seen a great white throne and scenes of judgment. Multitudes were cast into the lake of fire. Our God is a consuming fire! The fire of God is God’s glory. The pillar of fire in the wilderness was the glory of God! Only the Holy Spirit can make this real to us, but a person under deep conviction for sin is tormented. Tormented with what? He is tormented with the fire of God’s holy presence, the fire of His penetrating, burning word. “*Thy word is a fire...*” He has no peace or rest, day or night. His conscience troubles him continually. When you and I were under deep conviction for our sins and past life we were tormented by the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. And we had no rest day or night! I have seen men literally *run* out of meetings in an effort to escape the convicting presence of God. When we were finally broken by the Holy Spirit’s dealing and repented and came to Jesus for mercy and cleansing, we cried and shed many bitter tears of remorse and regret.

The smoke of their torment rises day and night, the scripture says of those in God's lake of fire. If this were a literal lake of fire, filled with the spirits of the damned for all eternity, in that realm there would *be no day or night*. Day and night relates only to our present condition on earth, not the spirit world. The fiery dealings of God are upon the proud, the self-centered, the carnal minded, the rebellious, the blasphemers. Is judgment the *last word*? Is the lake of fire the *concluding word*? Is the torment of the damned the *final word*? NO! Is there no escape? Ah, beyond the judgment, beyond the tormenting flames a voice comes sounding out of the city, "Let him that is *athirst, come!* And *whosoever will*, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY!" That, my beloved, is the LAST MESSAGE! How blessed that "the *Spirit* and the *bride* say, Come!" The bride is the Holy City! At the very end of God's redemptive program we see the bride, not submerged in the world, nor egocentric, basking only in her own unspeakable and eternal glory, but in harmonious concert with the Spirit of her Bridegroom her heart expresses itself in that one word — Come! That is the FINAL WORD! And for how long shall this cry continue? The force of the Greek present imperative *erchou* ("Come") is: "Be thou **continually coming.**" Again, I ask, for how long shall this cry continue? *For as long as the torment lasts*. The voice comes out of the city, and the gates shall *always* be open! Ah, the "day of grace" never ends! That is the message. Should grace end it would mean the destruction of God Himself, for God is love, and He is the God of *all grace* — the fullness and omnipotence of grace. God's grace and goodness and glory shall flow...and flow...and flow...until the last poor hungry and thirsty soul has marched out of the lake of fire and out from all the realms of outer darkness and come through the portals of the City to TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE — FREELY! Jesus is able to save to the UTTERMOST ALL WHO COME and who take of the water of life. What a word!

When the Lord Jesus passed through Samaria He stopped there by Jacob's well. We all know the story of the Samaritan woman who came to the well, whom Jesus engaged in conversation. Talk about an unsavory character! Not only was this woman at the well argumentative and religiously messed up, she also had been married five times and was presently the live-in lover of a sixth man. Would this woman be welcome in most of our churches? I doubt there would be great excitement about her presence. Yet the Son of God makes it a point to not only acknowledge this woman but also to draw her into a conversation. And Jesus is not in the least put off by her sin! Now, that doesn't mean that Jesus *condoned* the woman's lifestyle. He doesn't tell her that what she has done is right; however, I find it significant that neither does He tell her that what she has done is wrong! He was not there to preach sin-consciousness. Jesus was just doing what He always did — hanging around with sinners! When the Pharisees accused Him of being the friend of publicans and sinners Jesus replied, "They that be well need not a physician, but they that are sick." What a revelation that is! That is what a *son* does! God sent not His *Son* into the world to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be *saved*! The sons do not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them! They come with leaves from the tree of life (living words) to HEAL THE NATIONS! They must needs "go through Samaria," that is, they step outside the pearly gates of the City to beckon to all who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, calling with pathos of love, mercy, and redemption, "Come! Let him that is athirst come! Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely!"

An obvious but extremely important point to remember is this: Where you find sinners, there you will find sin. The people Christ seeks for are not generally "nice" people who just happen not to know Jesus. Yet if we are going to reach them and make an impact on their lives we must learn to put sin in its place, as our example, the firstborn Son of God, did. Jesus knew the woman's sin

needed to be dealt with — but not until her heart was won by the love of God. In fact, her sin could *not* be dealt with until she received an infusion of *life*! You see, the preachers get it all backward. As I have listened to preachers by the score striving desperately and even frantically to get men to repent and be saved, my heart is often filled with sadness because the message they preach is made weak and futile by their failure to grasp the infinite purposes of that omniscient mind who prepared so great a salvation in Christ before there was a world or a sinner in it. Those who preach the “salvation message” nearly always begin to laying a “guilt trip” on the people they are preaching to, reminding them of how terrible their sin is, how horribly it offends a holy God, and what its tragic, eternal end is in hell and damnation. After a long discourse of gloom and doom, they then quickly offer them a way out — coming to Jesus. Yet, Jesus never did that to a sinner!

To the woman at the well He *began* by offering her *living water*. He told her that if she would ask Him for this water, and drink of it, that it would become in her a great artesian well of water springing up and overflowing in life more abundantly! Nothing was said about her sin. The issue wasn't sin. The issue was LIFE! She needed life! Only life could deal with her sin. Jesus was not there to condemn her, He was there to save her! And He knew the process. Condemnation will never lead to life and victory. But life will always lead to cleansing and purity. So the voice out of the City bears no condemnation for sin. It is only an offer of life! Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely! It is the very same message Jesus proclaimed to the woman of Samaria. And now it is the same Christ, the Spirit and the bride, who says, “Let him that is athirst *come*!” And what they come to is just what John saw in his vision. “And he showed me a *pure* river of water of *life*, clear as crystal.” The river has two constituents — it is *pure* and it is *life*. Therefore it ministers two things — *purity* and *life*. Only divine life can make men pure! And it is not a crystal river up in some far-off heaven somewhere that makes men pure, but the artesian well of water *within us*, springing up into life. That is why Jesus offered the water first, before He pointed out the woman's sin. Only the water of life can make one clean! There was no need to begin by telling her how dirty she was. Every man, in his heart, already knows how filthy he is! He just needs the solution. That is the mystery.

Many of us today receive unsolicited credit card applications in the mail. The accompanying letters usually begin the same way: “You have already been approved to receive this card!” Being told we have been approved for something we haven't applied for can sound strange. But in a way it can remind us of how God's love is extended to us: unconditionally. We don't have to worry about trying to earn God's favor. God loves and accepts us in spite of who we are or what we have done. Sometimes people make promises accompanied by certain conditions. They say, “I will love you as long as you stay thin,” or, “I will pay your tuition, but only if you enroll at this college.” Sometimes what appears to be a gift is actually a veiled attempt to manipulate someone into meeting certain expectations. God's promises are nothing like that! Paul experienced the unconditional love of God in his life, and he describes it beautifully in these words, “God commendeth His *love toward us*, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). It is the same word we have been sharing — God didn't begin by dealing with our sin — He began with the *pouring out of His life*! Now the message is not, “Forsake your sin and I will give you living water,” but rather, “Come and take the water of life freely!” No matter who you are or what you have done — you have been *pre-approved for this water*! The mighty action of that living spring of water will wash the filth out of you! Stop struggling with your sin, dear one; get to the river!

The following story illustrates so powerfully God's attitude toward mankind.



Once upon a time two brothers, who lived on adjoining farms, fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in years of farming side by side, sharing machinery and trading labor and goods as needed. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and grew into a major difference, and, finally, exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a bag of carpenter's tools. "I am looking for a few days work," he said, "perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there where I could help you?" "Yes," said the older brother, "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my brother's. In fact, it's my younger brother. Last week there was a meadow between us, but he took a bulldozer to the river embankment and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done it to spite me, but I will go one better. See that pile of timber by the barn? I want you to build me an eight foot fence so I won't need to see his place or his face anymore." The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation; show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that will please you."

The older brother had to go into town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day, measuring, sawing, nailing. About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished the job. The farmer's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all. Instead there was a bridge — a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other — a fine piece of work, handrails and all. The farmer's younger brother was coming across, his hand outstretched. "You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done." The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoisting his toolbox onto his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have lots of other projects for you to do." "I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have many more bridges to build." "For if *when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son*, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved by His life*" (Rom. 5:10).

"Oh," someone replies, "the story of Lazarus, and the rich man who in Hades *lifted up his eyes, being in torments*, teaches us that there is no bridge between heaven and hell, between the saints in glory and the sinners in doom, no way to escape the tormenting fire." I shall speak very plainly about that. In the first place the story of the rich man and Lazarus is usually considered without any reference to its setting. Near the close of Jesus' ministry He had eaten dinner with a Pharisee, at which time He not only healed a man with dropsy, but gave some pointed instructions about how to give a dinner party. When He left the house, great throngs followed Him (Lk. 14:25). Many of this crowd were publicans and sinners. In Luke 15:1-2 we read: "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him, and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." It is against this background of criticism from the scribes and Pharisees that the teaching of Luke 15 and 16 is given. That whole discourse is called a parable. "And He spake *this parable* unto them, saying..." (Lk. 15:3). The Greek is very definite in making the word for parable clearly a singular noun. It is "the parable this." Five seemingly separate stories enter into His teaching to proclaim the truth of "THIS PARABLE." His usual method of teaching all but the inner circle of His disciples was by use of parables. "All these things spake Jesus *in parables* unto the multitudes; and *without a parable* spake He *nothing* unto them" (Mat. 13:34). "But privately to His disciples He expounded all things" (Mk. 4:34).

Now, it is not my purpose to explain the meaning of the parable in this writing, for that is another story altogether. I would be remiss if I did not point out, however, that while the story itself *is a parable*, in all parables there must be a correspondence between the type and the antitype or they fail to have validity as parables. Let me illustrate. Jesus spoke a parable, saying, “Behold, a sower went forth to sow.” He then explained how the seed fell upon various kinds of soil, and the result from each. Now, since this is a parable, it is obvious that Jesus is not just relating a series of facts; He is not talking about a certain literal farmer sowing actual seed such as wheat or corn. Each part of the story is a symbol, a metaphor, an illustration of something else, and we know, of course, that the sower is the Christ, the seed is the word of the kingdom, and the soils are different kinds of hearts. But — if there were *no such thing* as seed, and *no such activity* as sowing, and *no actual* soil in existence, then the parable would have no basis, no strength, no meaning — it would not be a parable at all, but merely a fantastic, unrealistic, imaginary fairy tale! It is the FACT of seed, sowers, and soils that gives the parable its strength and meaning.

So, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man, if there is no such thing as Hades, and if there is no sense of suffering of punishment in Hades, then the application of the parable fails. There must be some reality to these things or the parable is not a parable at all! But in the parable Lazarus is said to be “in Abraham’s bosom.” The phrase “Abraham’s bosom” was a well-known one, current among the people of Judea to express the state of the faithful Israelite who had died and been “gathered unto his fathers.” Abraham’s bosom typifies a position of acceptance and favor in the kingdom of God, for, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed*, and *heirs* according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29), and “many shall come from the east and west, and shall *sit down with Abraham* in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 8:11).

The rich man wanted Lazarus to come and cool his tongue. He had been a very bad man, and so was tormented in the hell he had created for himself. But when he asked that Lazarus should cross, Abraham said, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; no one can cross it.” Abraham couldn’t cross that gulf. It was a fixed gulf to him and to those who were with him. Abraham could not cross that abyss, nor could Lazarus. There is no denying that. But, oh, may the blessed Spirit of God give understanding to all who read these lines — THE CHRIST CROSSED THAT ABYSS. There is the difference! You say that Abraham said, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they who would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.” Let me remind you that, though Abraham said that, the Christ did not. That is right, Abraham, you could not bridge it! And even if you could, you did not have the *keys to the gates*. But the Christ, when He arose, grasped the keys of both *death* and *Hades* and He holds those keys in His omnipotent hand. The Christ crossed that gulf, and HIS SALVATION BRIDGED IT. Christ bridged it! The Christ Himself IS THE BRIDGE! It is no use talking nonsense, saying that the gulf was not bridged. It was not bridged at the time Jesus told that story, but when He arose and grasped the keys of death and of hell, He made a way for His banished to return.

It was bridged by Jesus Christ, and there is not any gulf that He cannot bridge. I believe it! If there is, then He is not God, because there is no gulf that God and His love cannot bridge. Jesus Christ has bridged the gulf between God and man, between Israelite and Gentile, between bond and free, between male and female, between rich and poor, and between heaven and hell. He has bridged all the gulfs, blessed be His name, and so “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Thank God! a greater than Abraham is here. He bridges the gulf between heaven and earth and between earth and hell, for it is written, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things *in heaven*, and

things *in earth*, and things *under the earth*; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11). Weymouth translates, “That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in the highest heavens, of those on the earth, and of THOSE IN THE UNDERWORLD, and that *every tongue* should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father*.” The hymn writer captured the wonderful truth of this when he penned these immortal words:

Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan!  
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!  
Oh, the mighty GULF THAT GOD DID SPAN —At Calvary!

But, some will ask, what about all those scriptures which speak of the end of the wicked, how they shall be cut off, burned up, utterly perish, etc.? Certainly, these are very true, and indeed, they are a word of promise. God has purposed to bring the *Adamic man*, the *old man*, the *man of flesh*, the *evil, rebellious, wicked man* — to an end! When you read a scripture about man being destroyed, you must immediately ask, “Which man?” Because there are only two men on earth — the *first* man, who is of the earth, earthy, and the *second* man, who is the Lord from heaven. Every man on earth is a part of one of these corporate men or the other. There is only the first man Adam and the last man Adam. In Christ God brought the first man to the end of himself on the cross. That is why every believer can say, “I am dead, and my new life is hid with Christ in God.” That is why Paul could write, “**I** am *crucified* with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth* in me.” So don’t worry yourself about those scriptures which speak of the *end* of man — we who believe already know just *how true and how wonderful it is!*

In his memoirs, John B. Gough tells of a personal experience when he was addressing the inmates in a particular penitentiary. Among those convicts was a Scotch woman, whose general character is best indicated by the name her fellow-prisoners gave her. They called her “Hell-fired Sal.” Mr. Gough began his address, “Ladies and Gentlemen.” Speaking to a company of felons, including the lowest and the hardest of mankind, Gough remembered that they were his fellow creatures and the creation of God, and called them “Ladies and Gentlemen.” He reminded them that they were all akin by nature; that they started life together as innocent babies; that many of them in their childhood had been told about God and the Saviour of the world, and taught to pray. He told them that, under evil influences, their lives had been wrecked, as his had been; that he had lived for years in the gutter; that the hand of God had delivered him, and that by His mercy and grace there was a chance for them, too, to come back. Gough says that while he was speaking, he noticed Sal listening, at first indifferently, then eagerly, until at last he saw her trying to hide a tear. Then, with no handkerchief, both bare hands began pawing at her wet cheeks. “And when I finished,” he said, “Sal came forward, grasped my hand, and said in her broad Scotch: “Thaat’s so, Maan; ah, I ken thaats so; and there’s anither chaance for e’en the like o’ me.” Oh, yes; another chance for all, even beyond any man’s wildest dreams:

*He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found...*

Robert Schuler related the following. Tony Orlando, a friend of mine, made the song, “Tie A Yellow Ribbon To The Old Oak Tree” famous. Not long after he made it a hit, I said to him, “Tony, do you know where the story of that song comes from?” He said, “No.” I shared with him how the author was inspired by a true story of a man who committed a terrible, terrible deed. He

had violated the trust that his wife and his family had in him. It was so bad that charges were pressed and he was found guilty. He was sent to jail. During his imprisonment, he didn't hear from his wife, nor his family, who still lived in Alabama. He had shamed them all and they cut him off. Then the time came when he was going to be released, so he wrote to his wife. He said, "I am getting out of prison on such and such a day. I'm getting on the train that comes through town." They had lived in a house near the railroad tracts. He said, "If I am forgiven, will you hang a white pillowcase from the old oak tree. If there's a white pillowcase, I'll get off. If not, I'll just stay on the train and I'll keep on going. You'll never hear from me again. I won't give you any more pain. I've given you more than enough for a lifetime." This man boarded the train. As it neared his town, he knew he would see the old oak tree after the next bend. Suddenly, there it was, but there wasn't a white pillowcase from the branch. Instead, there were white bed sheets and white towels and more white dresses and the whole tree was draped in white! He got off the train, and he was welcomed home again. Wow! Can you feel the healing? That is what God has done for us and for all mankind in Jesus Christ!

Several years ago brother Vern Goss shared this word in one of his monthly articles. Years ago a preacher came to this area with a tent crusade declaring, "God will save from the gutter-most to the uttermost." Uttermost means an *extremity, an end, a frontier, an edge, the brink*. Adam ran to the outer parts of the garden to hide among the trees. He had departed from the heart of his Creator, and was now abiding in fear, sin, and death. The Bible is full of instances in which the word uttermost is used. This is recorded in the book of Nehemiah: "*But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I **gather them from thence**, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there*" (Neh. 1:9). This dovetails with scripture in the New Testament. "*That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might **gather together in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*" (Eph. 1:10-11). Ultimately, the Father is in the GATHERING BUSINESS. Adam fled to the uttermost parts of the garden, but our Father went seeking for him to bring him and all who come out of his loins back into the fold. I doubt if any man has ever understood the significance of the price paid by God to bring redemption to man, but our Father fully understands, and He does not have a throw away mentality. In Christ there is not a junk yard for rusting, wrecked, worn out vehicles of humanity — rather, HE MAKES ALL THINGS NEW!

The story is told of a seminary professor who, walking through campus one day, came upon a custodian reading the Bible during lunch hour. The professor asked what he was reading. "The book of Revelation," the custodian replied. "I'm sure you don't understand what it means," said the professor condescendingly. "Actually, I do," he responded. "***It means Jesus wins.***"

Full redemption given, the measure of God's grace,  
 Reconciling unto Him those of every race.  
 In His love and mercy, atonement made complete;  
 The veil of flesh now rent in twain, that hid the mercy seat.  
 The Spirit of life given, according to His plan,  
 To bring His body into one, thus form the perfect man.  
 A seed to bless all nations, and reconcile through grace  
 Those that once rejected Him, will find in Him their place.  
 The restitution of all things, it is God's sovereign plan;

The love of God now flowing in all the barren land;  
Reaching every nation, restoring one and all!  
The dead will rise in unison when they hear the call.  
— Mildred Eslick Garner  
—

The immensity of the measurement of the city of God, New Jerusalem, is in itself a divine revelation of the scope of Christ's redemption. If the city were a literal city, with stories like our modern skyscrapers, it would be able to accommodate untold billions of people! The message is just this — there is ample room in the kingdom of God for *everyone*! Thus the call goes out to all everywhere, "*Come!*" One final anthem swells into four invitations to mankind beseeching and commanding them to come to the City of God and partake of all that God has made abundantly available in His kingdom of Life, Light, and Love. First, the Spirit and the bride say, "*Come!*" Secondly, the one hearing these words — John, a messenger, you, I, or anyone — is admonished to join in the chorus and say, "*Come!*" Thirdly, the one who is thirsty for righteousness, peace, and joy is invited to "*come!*" Finally, with the beautiful English words, "*whosoever will...*" ALL are invited, with no limitation or restriction of either location, condition, or time. The call will never end until every man has responded and the gates will never be shut at all. And they will surely come by the billions, as every person who has ever lived or ever will live shall make their way into THE CITY OF GOD. They will come in a constant procession until the families and nations of mankind shall indeed all assemble to worship the Lord when they see the great victory He has accomplished, and realize that they are specially invited to receive of its blessings and benefits. Ah, both within and without the city the provision of God for all men and every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is indeed abundant and complete, for it has the RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE, THE TREE OF LIFE, and THE LIGHT OF LIFE as well!

*"Let him that heareth say, Come!"* The camel caravans that moved through the ancient world did not usually keep close together. Sometimes as much as half a mile would separate the units. But when the leader saw water in the distance, it was his duty to turn around, and with a wave of his arm, cry, "*Come! Water!*" The next man would do the same, and the next, and the next, until the whole long line of riders had heard the news that water was at hand. Having *heard*, it was the duty of each to pass the word on to someone else. And that is where we are today, calling to our fellow travelers on this earth, "*Come! for all things are now ready.*" All saints are not actually joining in the cry. He that "*heareth*" would apply especially to a believer who is not in concert with the Spirit and the bride, that is, the Bridegroom and the bride. Multitudes of believers do not believe the call is for *every man*, especially those who wander in the outer darkness and those who have made their bed in hell. To all who are of the persuasion that the great white throne judgment and the work of the lake of fire eternally seals the doom of the billions of lost men and women out of the ages, I say today, as the Spirit and the bride say today, and will still be saying in the age and ages to come — forsake your false teaching, get over your limited view of God's great and unconditional love and eternal purpose, and join us in the cry to creation — "*Come!*"

*"And let him that is athirst come."* This invitation is extended to all those souls who are "*athirst.*" Those in whom God has wrought exercises and desires through His dealings which have not yet been met. The answer to them all is CHRIST — and Christ is experienced as the living stream of the water of life and the divine and incorruptible power of the tree of life. God will satisfy the thirsting soul! There is no craving so fierce and intolerable as the craving of thirst. This is due to the fact that the deprivation of liquid is a condition with which *all* the tissues of the body can

sympathize. Each atom of the body joins in the cry, and the expression is concentrated in the parched mouth and the dry feverish lips. The great craving of thirst is used in this verse to symbolize the craving of the soul. How intense and utterly demanding it is! The thirsting one is called to come and find the deepest satisfaction of all his lack and need in the City of God. All God's glorious and eternal reality — His invigorating, animating, enlivening, vivifying, vitalizing, strengthening, and restoring power — is continuously available for thirsting hearts!

I am deeply impressed that in the Revelation, only a few verses after we are told that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," a great voice out of heaven announces, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. *I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely*" (Rev. 20:15; 21:6). Permit me to ask with all reverence — What would make ones soul thirst for the satisfying and life-giving spiritual water of life more than *anything*? The answer is not far to find: FIRE! And once one has been subjected to God's Holy Ghost Fire long enough he will certainly desire this water of life, he will, in fact, cry out for it, he will be willing to *come* for it! And just as the blazing pillar of fire that led Israel by night was, in the heat of the day, transformed into a covering, protecting cloud that shaded them, so the flaming dealings of God will suddenly become as a refreshing rain in due season, and a gigantic waterfall bathing the soul and quickening the life. Where there was once searing pain in the soul, the spirit of life will be as the healing balm of Gilead, to cleanse from sin, and make a man a new creation in Christ Jesus. Oh, the wonder of it!

*"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* Finally, grace goes out to the widest limits: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!" He may not even thirst. It supposes one with whom there is little depth or earnestness of desire, but he needs this life whether he knows it or not, and the invitation reaches even him. It is not even said that he is to *come*. He has not to move even a single step; the water of life is flowing freely close to him; he has but to *take* it. It is the all-inclusive call of infinite grace! The final emphasis is on the word *freely*. Glorious sovereign grace! The love of God, so touching and tender, is addressed here to all those who even faintly have been made conscious of the need of living water. Let them not hesitate. Let them *take* it. It costs nothing. It costs *them* nothing! The price has been paid, the provision has already been made. There is no qualifying, for it is a *gift*, and a gift is given, not because of the worthiness of the recipient, but because of the goodness of the Giver. Hence, let them take and drink freely! It is indeed wonderful!

As we approach the conclusion of the Revelation Jesus comes on stage, as it were, in front of the curtain for the *epilogue*. Through the visions of John men are privileged to look behind the curtain of time into the drama of the ages. We have seen a God of love who reveals Himself in the Lamb in the midst of the throne. We have seen a God who rules throughout history. We have noted the judgments which fall upon the Adamic man to bring him to his end. We have witnessed a great white throne judgment from which no man escapes. We have seen the great lake of God's fire which purges, purifies, and refines. Portrayed for our comfort and encouragement has been the glory of the manchild ascending the throne, and the glory of the new Jerusalem bride — the government of God. Only when all this has been fully accomplished throughout this church age (for the book is sent to the *churches*) does the invitation go out to every man, irrespective of his location, position, or condition, to come and drink freely of the water of life. Only then do we see that even as the invitation goes forth the gates of the city will *never* be shut. There is no time limit! It will take as long as it takes, until every man and all creation is restored again into God! Blessed be the Lord!

# Chapter 256

## The Epilogue (Finished)

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (Rev. 22:18-19).

The warning against adding to or taking away from the words of this book is often misunderstood as a reference to the entire Bible. This misunderstanding occurs because these words from the book of Revelation stand also at the end of the New Testament canon of scripture. One brother said that many years ago when he was a young man away in school, living in a dorm, he would write letters to various people and he always filled them with scripture quotations. Before mailing each letter he would proof it four or five times to make certain that every i was dotted and every t was crossed, every colon, semi-colon, comma, and period was in its proper place, and every word was spelled correctly — because he didn’t want to add to or take away from even one jot or tittle, lest God would add to him the plagues of the book of Revelation, or take away from him his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the blessings conferred in the book. Years later, when the Lord visited him and began to open to his understanding the true message of the kingdom of God, he saw clearly that that was not what the Lord Jesus was talking about!

Precisely because of misunderstandings like this we have urged that our interpretation of the Revelation begin first of all with John of Patmos and his intentions, and in John’s day the New Testament had not yet been compiled; indeed, John was still in the process of writing letters which later became part of the New Testament. It was not until the second century after Christ that the New Testament was organized into the collection of books in the order we have them today. So the warning in our text is speaking *only* of what John wrote on Patmos. The words “this book” and “this prophecy” refer to the book of Revelation, not to the entire Bible or even the entire New Testament.

Our text is one that strikes fear into the hearts of many who have approached it. It is doubtful that in all the Bible there is any passage that was more frightening to me in my early days than this one! For many years the words written above were an enigma to me. It has come to me so powerfully, however, that these words are not referring to the *understanding* of the book. Men have myriad theories and numberless interpretations of the events portrayed in this book. One thinks, for instance, that the “beast” was the Roman Empire, another that it was a particular emperor of the empire, another that it is an end-time European Confederation, another that it is Russia, or China, another that it is some historical or future personality such as Nero, Hitler, Gorbachev, or Saddam Hussein, and there are many others. The question follows — have those who have espoused such interpretations *taken away from* or *added to* the prophecy of this book? That’s not what it’s talking about! I don’t think it indicates that if I missed the boat in some of my interpretation of the book the judgments of God will come upon me. It is not a matter of understanding or efforts at interpretation. It is a matter of adding to or taking away from THE SPIRITUAL PROCESSES IN MEN’S LIVES

REPRESENTED BY THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY. It's talking about adding to or taking away from the REALITY.

Experientially entering into the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the only way that leads to life, perfection, and glory. That is how our name or nature becomes inscribed in the "book" of the "Life of the Lamb." Only by failing or refusing to yield and submit to the full and complete operation of the *life* of God within ourselves can our part in the "book of His life" be taken away from us. John describes in this book all the stages of growth and development in Christ and all the states of being through which God brings us on our way to perfection. Anyone who would produce other processes different from these would need to be corrected or suffer loss. If we *subtract* (take away) from the dealings and movings of God in our lives for our salvation, perfection, and maturity, the growth and development of His life within is stunted and diminished. If we try to *skip* some of the process on our way to the throne, we will come up short! That is the message.

If, on the other hand, we *add to* the words of the prophecy of this book, that is, if we add to the operation of the Spirit within our own human works, fleshly efforts, carnal methods, religious traditions, rituals, ceremonies, rules, laws, or any other thing not born of the Spirit, God will have to *add unto us the plagues* of this book, that is, the corrective judgments, strippings, purgings, and processings necessary to purge the error out of us, break our carnality, and deliver us from ourselves. God doesn't need our help! As we have said a thousand times, these are not external events; they are *spiritual realities*. So it is something far deeper than mere theories and conjectures about the meanings of the symbols. It's more than the literal *words* of this book, for the words are merely the symbol, the surface, the letter. The reality is found in what the Revelation of Christ *does* in the spiritual dimension of our lives! It is right there that we either add to or take away from the prophecy. The Lord has left no room for doubt that only as the things written in this book are fully appropriated, made 100% reality within our lives, only then can we truly lay hold upon divine, incorruptible life! If we try to cut corners, shorten the process, escape some aspect of the dealings, by-pass the processings, or substitute some other method and climb up some other way, we will surely rob ourselves of His perfection, life, and glory and incur even severer dealings in the process. That is the mystery!

This is truly wonderful, because it means that if we are not experientially in the revelation process, if we are not personally *experiencing* and *living* these prophetic words and moving in the direction of greater unfoldment in harmony with them, then we are either adding to them or subtracting from them. There is no other way for us to go! This is the goal, the revelation. This last book of the Bible brings us to the place where we *become the revelation*, each one attaining as we yield under the mighty hand of God. We sometimes speak of having the courage of our convictions, but what we need to have is the courage of our revelation. We must have the courage to recognize the revelation — the unveiling of Christ — taking place within us, to accept it and *be* it. If we depart from this God-ordained process within ourselves, then we shut ourselves off from the tree of life.

The book of Revelation is undoubtedly the hardest book in the Bible to understand. However, I also believe that once you grasp by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God what it's *really* talking about, it is the most thrilling book of all! This book is the hardest to understand, perhaps, because it is communicated entirely by means of signs and symbols. "And He sent and *signified* (sign-i-fied, communicated by means of signs and symbols) it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). When you come to this book you meet the most incredible characters. They sound like the kinds of things you would expect out of Alice in Wonderland or Star Wars. You meet



animals and other creatures that you've never seen on this earth before, you meet dragons that dance across the stars, you meet seals that release horses whose hoof-beats thunder and echo around the globe, you meet a celestial woman standing on the moon, clothed with the sun and crowned with stars, you meet vials poured out of the sky, angels flying through the atmosphere, locusts swarming out of smoke from a pit arrayed like soldiers going to battle, trumpets blasting, a harlot riding a scarlet beast, a city 1500 miles across and 1500 miles high, and scores of other unusual and strange things. Oh, yes, it is an *incredible* book! Incredible, that is, to the *natural, carnal* mind!

Even though the book is puzzling to the natural man and bewildering to the carnal mind, yet the apostle wrote with blessed assurance to the enChristed these words of divine surety, "*Blessed* is he that *readeth*, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). That is one of the most amazing things about this wonderful book — it is the only book in the Bible that promises a unique blessing or happiness to all those who will read it, and who truly *hear* what it is saying, and to those who *keep*, or have fulfilled *within themselves*, the things that the book has to say. The message is clear — if one reads this book and is not *richly blessed* and made *extremely happy* — then he failed to truly *hear* its message in the Spirit and by the Spirit! There are many other books of the scriptures that are much easier to understand, but they don't contain that promise! This book promises you before you begin that if you *read*, and *hear*, and *keep* what you hear YOU WILL BE BLESSED! Immediately that gives me a clue to what this book is about. Obviously this book is written to a people who will "keep" its sayings, who will have fulfilled *within themselves* its message, who will be enabled to *experience* in their very own lives the things it proclaims! How else could those who read and hear be said to "keep" all the things which are written in the book?

If the panorama of events that unfold within these pages is mere *external* events, *historical* events, or future literal *world* events, then how, pray tell me, can those who read and hear *keep* or *fulfill* ALL THOSE THINGS? If the things written in this book are fulfilled in Nero, or the Roman Empire, or the Jews, or the Papacy, or Germany, or Russia, or China, or the United States, or an end-time empire of Antichrist, then how under God's great heaven can *all these things be fulfilled in those who read, hear, and keep these things!* Can you not understand the mystery? It should be clear even to a child that the events of the Revelation happen *within the experience of God's people!*

Some people's interpretation of the Revelation says that the church disappears from the earth at the beginning of chapter four, and that after the church is out of the way — "raptured" — the rest of the book happens to that unfortunate world of unbelievers left on the earth. If that be the case, I'm not interested. I have heard that all my life and most of the people that preached it are now dead and none of it happened in their lifetime. So how could any of them, and the millions who lived before them throughout the church age, have *kept* the sayings of this book? How could I keep or fulfill any of the things, much less *all* of the things, written in the book if the vast majority happen to other people while I'm sitting on a cloud eating prime rib or dancing on the streets of gold beyond the blue? I'm not concerned with events that transpire on the earth when I'm gone, however I would leave here. I cannot *keep* any of those things! The knowledge of those things would be of no benefit to me, nor would they serve any purpose to me, nor to any man that has lived from John's day until now. Therefore, the message of the book of Revelation cannot be centered in world events at the end of the age, nor can it concern events that transpire after the saints have flown away to that bright glory world above. It cannot have to do with the world and its masses of unregenerate men. It can only concern saints who are able to *read* what it says, *hear* with the spiritual ear, and become glad *partakers* of the blessed realities it proclaims. The book was not addressed to the national Israel, nor

to the Jews, not to the kings of the earth, nor to the people left after the “rapture.” Oh, no! It was addressed to and sent to — *the churches!* This is a book that, wherever I stand throughout the age of the church, has a blessing for me. And this book is speaking *to me* if only I can *hear* what it says! And if I do hear, what it says will be gloriously experienced, inwrought, and outworked THROUGH MY LIFE! Aren’t you glad!

Now honestly, if this book is entirely about an age that has not yet dawned, do you think that the poor persecuted Christians in Asia in John’s day would be the least bit interested in it? Come with me to the churches in that long ago, come with me into their midst as ambassadors of the apostle John who has been banished to the desolate slopes of the isle of Patmos, and let us share with them the message of this fantastic book, which promises them a blessing in the midst of their persecution and pain. When we get there where all these persecuted people are meeting together, and will lose their lives, and we with them, if we are caught meeting together, and we take out of our briefcase a long chart showing how the church age will last for another 2,000 years, and we begin to lecture about the Antichrist and his covenant with the Jews in Israel in the last days at the close of the church age — do you think that is going to be a ***blessing*** to these dear saints? Are they going to somehow be able in some mystical way to *keep* or have *fulfilled within themselves* the things we are telling them about? NO WAY! You see, beloved, when I come to this book the first key to understanding is the great truth that it is addressed to ME! It is addressed to YOU! And it is not a book to be just read and heard, but a book to be EXPERIENCED!

The book of Revelation is a book that is written for kings and priests. It is not intended for the world to understand, nor will it be understood by carnal Christians. To be a king-priest doesn’t mean that we will walk around in splendid robes and all who meet us on the street will bow their heads and genuflect, acknowledging that we are great and mighty ones. God isn’t interested in recognition! At the very outset the book is addressed to a particular class of people: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His *servants* things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1). The term “servants” here does not mean *servants* as contrasted with *sons*, but *sons who are servants* as was our Lord Jesus Christ. There has never been a greater servant than King Jesus! “Behold, my *servant* shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. And many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: so shall He sprinkle many nations; and kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard they shall consider” (Isa. 52:13-15). “The kings of the Gentiles exercise *lordship* over them...but *ye* shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth *serve*...I am among you as he that *serveth*” (Lk. 22:25-27).

The main thrust of the book of Revelation is directed to the *overcomers* and the overcomers are the kings and priests that rule and reign in the kingdom of God. “And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth my works (that is, submits to my processings) unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26-27). “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made *us* unto our God *kings and priests: and we shall reign on (over) the earth*” (Rev. 5:9-10). “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they...*reigned* with Christ a thousand years...and they shall be *priests* of Christ, and shall *reign* with Him” (Rev.

20:4-6). “He that *overcometh* shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my *son*” (Rev. 21:7).

If you read the book of Revelation and the book begins to *speak to you*, that is a good indication that it is *for you*. The book cannot and does not speak to the person it is not intended for. Even then, the understanding of the book does not come all at once, you don’t open the book at chapter one, verse one, following on to verse two, three, and so on, figuring it out verse by verse as you go along, each event falling into place and making sense. Oh, no! It doesn’t work that way. As you seek the Lord in the book different parts will speak to you that are for you at that appointed time. The book will be revealed in your *experience* as you grow and progress into God. In my own experience the very first thing the Holy Spirit opened to my understanding was near the close of the book; then other things were opened piece by piece, a little here, a little there, in various parts of the book, like putting a puzzle together. It was only after many years that the entire puzzle began to fall into place and the full picture emerge. The wisdom of man is *foolishness with God*. The wisdom of man would seek an understanding of the book verse by verse and chapter by chapter, in the letter of the Word. But the wisdom that comes from above teaches it ***experience by experience!*** Don’t try to understand it by figuring it out, but pray for obedience, that you might apprehend the ways of the Lord. Pray that your mind and heart will come into that relationship with God where the Spirit of God can reveal. Then the book will begin to speak to you out of your relationship to the Father. Instead of mere head knowledge the message of the book will begin to apply to your life in the power of kingship and priesthood.

Much of the book is rooted in the symbology of the Old Testament. You find there the temple, the sacrifices, the worshippers, the sea of glass, the ark of the covenant, mount Zion, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the city Jerusalem, the prophets, the priesthood, the archangel, the serpent, the trumpets, and many more. None of these are literal for all are *symbols*, and now by the spirit of wisdom and revelation all these things begin to relate to ***your experience, your life, and your walk in God***. You cross over the thresholds of spiritual reality where all that was natural and external to Israel under the Old Testament now becomes spiritual and internal as the revelation of Jesus Christ in the saints. The symbols of the Revelation appear to be highly complicated, and to the carnal mind they are. How crude and presumptuous is the darkness of the carnal mind that would lift its voice in pretentious wisdom to *understand the deep mysteries of God*. We must consider such mysteries with reverence and godly fear, remembering above all else that God has willed that we be *partakers of His mind*. I have no hesitation in saying that just as surely and truly as the mind of the Father dwelt in that firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, so also that same mind that dwelt in Him will dwell in all that blessed company becoming sons of God. The deep mysteries of God, the unfathomable riches of wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus Christ cannot be discovered by the natural man or the carnal mind, but God *hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*. The secret then is not in studying, burning the midnight oil, pouring over musty volumes searching out information, but the divine secret that unlocks all the depths of understanding of divine things is *walking in the Spirit*. The same Spirit that ***inspired*** the book ***reveals*** the book, opening the precious truths of the kingdom of heaven to the sincere and seeking heart.

The visions of the book of Revelation are very systematic and each of the keys to the book testifies of itself. The idea that we are kings and priests suggests that our ministry is to bring people out of an old world into a new world. Noah was commissioned by God to bring his family out of an old world into a new world. He established a new age and a new order in the earth. When we come to the book of Revelation there is so much that looks like judgment, retribution, and destruction

poured out in apocalyptic and cataclysmic fury upon the earth — the grass, the trees, the rivers, the seas, the mountains, the valleys, the cities, the nations and peoples — but these are mere figures for the passing away of a *realm of life*, a sphere of existence, the system, order, society, and institutions of the *fleshly mind* and the *Adamic life*. Ultimately the judgments of God must be experienced within us, or they accomplish nothing purposeful or redemptive in our reality. The Spirit is speaking of the coming into being of a new heavens and a new earth within ourselves. Changing the outer heavens and earth will contribute nothing to regenerating and transforming men! Putting old men into a new heaven or a new earth will only sow the same old seed of corruption into the new. That's what happened when Noah came out of the ark! The old wicked world had perished, but the problem lay in the fact that the same old *seed* of wickedness was still lurking in the nature of Noah himself, his wife, his sons, and their wives. God is raising up in the earth a *new people* of a *new covenant*, with a new mind and nature, a new spirit, a new heart, a new temple of God, a new city of God, a new habitation of God, a new revelation of God, a new and divine order of God *within men*. Once we see these great principles the warfare that takes place, and all the judgments, begin to make divine sense!

Vast multitudes of believers are still looking for Armageddon over in the Middle East. But it is not unlike the conflicts that arise in a home as parents raise their children. There are problems, commotions, corrections, disciplines, judgments, and sometimes open hostilities and warfare. But there is also love, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, admonitions, blessings, prayers, and sacrifices. What makes it all worthwhile is the finished product — children that grow up with love and respect for their parents, and with purpose, ability, wisdom, values, integrity, understanding, maturity, and responsibility in the world. God is raising up and bringing forth a new life in the land, a new people, a new world, a new kingdom, a new creation in Him. And what conflicts, what dealings, what purgings, strippings, refinings, processings, and judgments take place within us as our corruption meets His holiness and the old passes away and all things are made new!

God makes war because He loves us. Because He has a wise and wonderful plan and purpose for us! All that appears in the book of Revelation as devastation and destruction is but a picture of God's love, correction, and instruction that is consuming the ignorance, self-will, and foolishness within the heart of a child. The more you love your children the more you will reflect upon how to confront them and deal with them in order to change them from their immature and sometimes rebellious state of being, to bring them to a higher and wiser state of being as mature and responsible citizens. Your purpose is not to destroy them, but to eradicate their childish and selfish and destructive ways and bring their minds and emotions into captivity to the obedience that leads to nobility of life, wisdom, understanding, and skill. The childish mind sees correction and instruction as its enemy — the child will huff and puff and chafe and resist under the chastisement, because he cannot see the mature and experienced purpose. Children can't see why they have to go to bed, why they have to take a bath, why it is necessary to share, why they can't go here or there and do this or that, why they are forbidden to hang out with certain friends, why the homework must be done first, why there are chores and responsibilities that cannot be shirked, why they must keep their room clean, why they must always obey their parents, and a hundred things more. They fail to perceive the beauty and blessing and purpose of the life you are preparing them for, or the molding of their personality you are working in them, or the realm you are bringing them into. The reason you make war with them is to raise them up into a wonderful adult life that will be abundant with possibilities and rich in rewards. You are shaping their characters to be honored among men, to be leaders, to have and provide for their own families, to hold their heads high with accomplishment,

purpose, and dignity. When the course is finished they rise up and call you blessed and eternally thank you and honor you for your steadfastness, faithfulness, care, concern, and indefatigable persistence in guiding them to that beautiful world.

Can we not see by this that if the judgments of the book of Revelation are merely God's method of punishing and destroying the wicked people and godless nations and corrupt systems of earth, then they are not redemptive at all and have little bearing on the glory that is to follow. Even the sweet little Christians that long to make heaven their home are for the most part immature, unperfected, and filled with carnality and corruption. If this were not the case all the churches today would be *perfect* in every way! There would be no sin in the camp, no preacher running off with his secretary, no strife resulting in ugly church splits, etc. But once the understanding dawns that in order to reign with Christ in His kingdom all the things in this book must be *kept*, that is, *experientially fulfilled within* by those who read and hear the prophecy of the book, then we know with divine certainty that the great purpose in the judgments is to prepare our hearts for the revelation of His glory in us. The judgments do not merely *make way* for the city of God, rather they *produce* the city of God!

Multiplied thousands of elect saints in this hour have received the call to sonship and been appointed to be kings and priests in God's New Day — but before that there are mighty conflicts, the Lamb warring against the beast! The Lamb nature birthed within by the washing of regeneration now declares war on the beastly character of the carnal mind and the flesh nature. This is the supreme message of the Revelation! It is the story of God's dealings with *sons* (and ultimately with all His people) to bring them to perfection in maturity, to the very throne of the universe as overcomers in Christ. How do I know this? I know this because the subject of the book is KINGSHIP AND PRIESTHOOD! I know it because the book is addressed to the SERVANTS OF GOD and sent to the SEVEN CHURCHES. I know it because every single thing in the book is to be *kept, personally experienced*, by those with a spiritual ear — who HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK. All the promises to the overcomer speak this great and eternal truth!

It is the mind of man that keeps the world in *continual turmoil*. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron and the wisdom of man is powerless to help it. The earth abounds in forms of godliness, yet justice and equality have taken wings and righteous judgment is scarcely known. In spite of plenty, hunger stalks the earth because of the mis-rule and greed of covetous men. Men both in church and out of it are lovers of pleasure *far more* than lovers of God. For six thousand years man has struggled with various political and economic systems to bring about a sort of Utopia, but the human mind and the fleshly nature, prone as they are to self-interest, self-will, greed, lust, arrogance, bigotry, and violence have at last usurped all the idealistic dreams and have filled the earth with corruption and evil. The natural man can never deliver the world or bring a reign of righteousness.

The world must be delivered up into the hands of a new and different and higher race of men who can in turn lead all men into the power of regeneration and transformation. It is not a new *system* the world needs — it is *new men*! Systems have no power to change the hearts of men, and only a new heart, a new mind, a new nature, a new spirit can make all the wrongs right. The message of the Revelation concerns the dealings of God by which He raises up that superior race of men, men in the image and likeness of God, men filled with the mind and wisdom and power of Christ, men impregnated with the nature and spirit of the Father in heaven. These are the *manifest sons of God*. These are the *manchild* who shall ascend the throne and rule all nations with a rod of iron. These

are the *overcomers* of whom the Lord Jesus Himself testifies in the closing chapters of the Revelation: “He that *overcometh* shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be *my son*.” The book of Revelation is the divine drama of God’s dealings with His sons throughout the age to make them kings and priests for the salvation and deliverance of the whole world of mankind. We must never overlook that fact!

The great truth that is wide open to our understanding is this: No trial that we pass through is merely a trial — it is a battle with God! Some day you will understand that if you are truly called to sonship. The only problem we have is our problem with God. If there was no issue of *our will* and *our ways* versus *God’s will* and *God’s ways*, the test would cease to be a test for there would be no need to *prove* us, no controversy or conflict, no doubt or hesitation, no question of the outcome. The issue in which we are tested would not even exist — swallowed up in the blessedness of a full and unfailing obedience. There are areas of our lives where we still obey God because of the threat of punishment or of reaping what we sow. That is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! In those areas we are yet under law, untransformed in mind and heart, not acting out of *divine nature*. There remains a struggle between our will and God’s will, between our way and God’s way.

I tell you, my beloved, the Lamb will make war with us! Don’t worry about the Lamb making war with Russia, China, or Iran. Oh, no! He will pour out into *our earth* the seven vials of His passion! The *wrath of the Lamb* will be revealed from heaven — the redemptive judgments of God. It is His great all-consuming love revealed in Christ! It gives us a new nature, the divine nature. It creates in us a new mind, the mind of Christ. It corrects us, instructs us, and beats and burns out all the foolishness in the hearts of God’s *children* until they become *sons* of God with sonship righteousness, sonship love, sonship maturity, sonship responsibility, and sonship power. It brings us to the full stature of His purpose and to the beauty of all His ways, no longer trapped in the childish mind that still wonders if God is going to spank us. “Behold! I make *all things new*. Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they (all of them) *shall be His people*.” That is the thrust of the book of Revelation! That is what I trust has been made real to our hearts through these years of meditation and study in this blessed book.

As you read the book of Revelation with the illumination of the Spirit it will speak to you within yourself. You will find yourself experientially in one of the seven churches, with its characteristics either positive or negative; or you will see yourself in the seals, or in the vials of wrath; you will discover yourself in the glory of the bride or in the shame and judgment of the great whore; you will lie in bed with the wicked Jezebel, or stand with the 144,000 virgins upon mount Zion; you will be refined in the blazing inferno of the lake of fire and brimstone, or you will drink deeply of the river of the water of life; your flesh (nature) will be served up as food for the vultures, or you will be clothed in fine linen, pure and white, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Ah, yes! You are *there*, my friend, in every verse and every line. Only the Spirit of God can show us these things, and finish the work, that we may *become* THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EARTH!

### **EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS!**

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely *I come quickly*. Amen. *Even so come, Lord Jesus*. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Rev. 22:20-21).

And so it is, as we come to the end of the book, we hear for the last time the voice of our Beloved saying, “*Surely I come quickly*.” John could only give one whole-hearted response,

**“Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!”** He is not “coming” because the work is finished — He is reminding us that the work can only be accomplished *by His coming within us*. In faithfulness He will come, and come, and continue to come until all things are made new in us and everywhere. We have seen the panorama of events — awesome, stirring, frightening at times, and inspiring, hopeful, challenging, and filled with joy unspeakable at other times — all combining to fulfill their purpose and bring to an end the old creation, that there might be a *“new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* His promise is to *come* and accomplish this. To which John responds with expectation and joy, “AMEN!” So be it! Let it all happen! We present ourselves as candidates, for the end result is so desirable and glorious, we do gladly yield ourselves under the mighty hand of the coming Christ! When we say “Amen” to God’s call He says “Amen” to our sonship.

“Amen” is the word Jesus used when He spoke a deep mystery or revelation which He would impress upon His hearers. The word is often translated in our King James Bible as “verily.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” It is “Amen, amen, I say unto you.” It is the word used by pious Jews in Jesus’ day when they responded to the synagogue prayers. It means, among other things, “It is so!” or “So let it be!” It is an expression of *faith* confessing that God is in control and will bring it to pass. It is the glad surrender of a son to the Father, offering himself that God may fulfill it all in and through him. “Amen” is more than a word — it is a *person*. How wonderful are the words of our Lord early in the Revelation when He says, “These are the words of the Amen” (Rev. 3:14). The word also means more than “It is so” or “So be it.” When one makes a statement or promise and adds “Amen,” he is saying “I’ll back it up; everything I’ve said, I’ll be faithful to.” In Bible days people didn’t usually make written contracts; they made oral agreements. When they completed the agreement, they would say to each other, “I’ll keep my side of the bargain.” It was like an affirmation or an oath. The parties involved knew that they must be faithful to their oral contract and carry out all the things they had agreed to do. They pledged their very word and nature to it. So, “Amen” means a commitment. It means, “I’ll be faithful to this.”

Jesus *is* the Amen! This can mean nothing other than the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself *is the fulfillment* of all that is written in the Revelation! As it is also written, “For all the promises of God *in Him* are Yea, and *in Him* Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (II Cor. 1:20). If we are ever to lay hold upon and appropriate the promises of God in our very own experience it will only be *in Christ* that we will experience them, for the promises are *in Him*, and *in Him* they are Yea and Amen, for HE is the “Amen,” the “So be it!” Christ is *made unto us* wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He is made everything unto us, for He is all! In Him all things were created and by Him all things are held together. In Him all things are ours. Whatever men need today can be found in God’s Christ, for He *is* the AMEN! Christ says, “Amen!” John (and you and I) says, “Amen!” And thus in our union in Him all things shall be fulfilled!

When the Lord Jesus calls Himself the Amen, it means that He is the divine “Yes” to all God’s will and purpose, and to the prayers of God’s elect as they pray according to His will. When the revelation of God speaks within you it is the spirit of Christ in your heart that witnesses, “Amen!” The spirit of Christ loves to do within you that for which He indwells you — to accomplish God’s will on earth. When you step forward to do God’s will and to become God’s will Christ within you is the Amen — not the *word*, but the POWER. He is the divine impetus, the force, the vision, the encouragement and the strength to see it through to the conclusion. Hallelujah! Amen and Amen!

## CONCLUSION

Almost two thousand years ago, John, the son of Zebedee, apostle, prophet, seer, author, lover of God and servant of Jesus Christ, passed from this life to stand with the “great cloud of witnesses” in the heavens of God’s Spirit. How he died or where he was buried no man knows for sure. I saw what was supposedly his tomb near Ephesus, but it is only according to tradition and legend. But this all men know, our hope in Christ is richer and brighter because he lived and walked in the Spirit of God. Before he lay down to sleep after a long life he had bequeathed to the world five priceless manuscripts, a Gospel of love, three matchless letters, and the drama of the Revelation. Taken together or taken singly, they constitute a valuable contribution to the revelation of God unto mankind. The seer of Patmos, the apostle of Love, was fittingly honored with the privilege of writing the closing words to our canon of scripture, and in behalf of all the sacred writers to pronounce the final benediction, “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*”

We bring our study to a close. Have you ever read a book that held you enthralled? Now and then a volume falls into my own hands which is so captivating that I am loathe to lay it aside even at the hour when I should be asleep. Sometimes, after finishing a book, I have leafed fondly through its pages, dipping into its chapters here and there as though an unsatisfied thirst was still calling for fresh draughts from its springs of truth. Something like that is my feeling today. Incredible as it seems, we have been more than twenty years expounding from these visions of John! Yet I have a strange feeling of loneliness as though parting from an old friend or leaving some rare Caribbean Island scene. I should like to go through its chapters again! By no means have we exhausted its messages. We have only touched the high places. But now we must go on — to have it fully written *in our hearts* and experienced *in our lives* until we stand in the full measure of the stature of Christ — *ourselves* THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!



## About The Author

J. Preston Eby was born into a Mennonite family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. While still a toddler his parents received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the witness of some Pentecostal brethren in the area. They were led of the Lord to sell their business and move to Alabama to do missionary work. In his twelfth year Preston was filled with the Spirit – and in that same year the Holy Spirit sovereignly unfolded to his understanding the wonderful truth of the reconciliation of all things and all men unto God. No one else around him – in family or church associations – embraced this revelation. Through those early years he kept this truth to himself and pondered it in his heart. Later he came into contact with, and was touched by, a mighty move of the Spirit known as the "Latter Rain", with emphasis on the body of Christ, gifts of the Spirit, laying on of hands, impartation, five-fold ministry, prophetic ministry, spiritual worship, the kingdom of God, and going on to perfection, unto fullness of sonship to God.

The Lord pressed him into a deeper walk with Him, intensifying within his heart the truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, already planted within as seed through the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain. Along the way he became associated with brother Gerald Derstine and The Gospel Crusade in Sarasota, Florida, serving as an associate minister with him for eight years, first co-pastoring and later pastoring the Revival Tabernacle in that city. His wife Lorain and he, with their family, were on the mission field in Latin America for a total of five years, with ministry in several other areas as well. For seven years, following this, he was an elder in a fellowship of believers in El Paso, Texas where they witnessed a precious move of the Spirit and a body of saints flowing together in the liberty and life of the Spirit.

Eventually the Lord changed even that order, and in 1976 led him into a full-time writing ministry directed to those who are called and chosen as elect of God to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of God. The writing ministry includes a monthly message titled KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES as well as a number of booklets on various subjects. This ministry is greatly expanding throughout the world and our sincere hope and earnest prayer is that this course shall redound to HIS GLORY in encouragement, strengthening, edification and blessing to unnumbered thousands of God's elect sons everywhere – that creation may at last witness the true manifestation of the sons of God, setting all creation free from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things to God, and bringing to pass the glory of the kingdom of God throughout the whole earth and unto the unbounded heavens.

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES are sent free to anyone upon request. God's Word is always free to all. God's way is, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mat. 10:8).