LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART ONE

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THE COMINGS OF THE LORD

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 Savior. "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 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 neighbors 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 forty 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 comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" **(Mat. 24:27).** Make no mistake about it! Jesus did promise to go away and to return to planet earth.

In World War II when General Douglas MacArthur withdrew from the Philippines - after Pearl Harbor and before the surrender of Corregidor - he waded waist deep out into the Pacific and dramatically exclaimed to-the on looking Filipinos, "I will return!" For long months and years these words of General MacArthur echoed in the ears of the people of the Philippine Islands while they waited under cruel enemy occupation. Millions of people hung on these three words as the only ray of light in the darkness of tyranny and oppression. They were words of hope, they were words of promised deliverance for people around the world. MacArthur did return, he returned with a vengeance. Not stopping at Manila, he went on to Tokyo to receive the surrender of

the proud nation of Japan on the deck of the Battleship Missouri. Although he was, after all, a frail human being, he kept his promise. He did return.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ left this earth to ascend to heaven, He said, "I will come again." He, as the glorified Christ, repeated these words to the apostle John on the lonely island of Patmos, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me" **(Rev. 22:12).** 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 does come." "When the Son of man shall come." "When He comes in the glory of His Father." "You shall say, Blessed is He that comes 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 again 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, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven" **(Acts 1:10-11).**

THE PROBLEM

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 ages 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 great event. It is interesting 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 TEACHING 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, natural, carnal mind! They try to decipher the deep and wondrous and spiritual mysteries of the Word of God with the human intellect, instead of allowing the One whom God sent to be our teacher, the Holy Spirit of Truth, to unveil to pure minds and transformed hearts the hidden mysteries of the Kingdom of God, 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 that he knows anything, he knows 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 scriptures say, **"**The path of the just is as a shining light, that shines 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 Savior, 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, the in Christ experience, sonship, overcoming 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 another experience, know what blessing

and reality they are depriving themselves of when they assume that they have received the infilling of the Holy Spirit when they first believed. The infilling of the Spirit is not the end either, as many Charismatics seem to believe, it is merely the beginning of more and more wonderful experiences with the Lord, and we continue to walk in the Spirit and grow up into the image and glory of God.

In entering upon this grand and wondrous portion of the Word of God we desire to do so with profound reverence and humility of spirit, dreading to rush in where angels may 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 return. 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 are determined in this study 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 or all traditional views that might tend to influence a forced or unnatural conception. We must be willing to let inspiration lead and interpretation follow. Some will be constantly tempted to stop and ask, "Why! how can that be!" regarding some point brought out in the study. And perhaps nowhere more than at the point of truth I shall now set forth!

NO "SECOND COMING"!

It may surprise many 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 of professing Christianity cannot be found in the Bible? There is no mention whatever of such things as Christmas, Easter, the "immaculate conception" of Mary, mass, popes, church buildings, the Trinity, or - the "second coming"! The Spirit of God has dealt with me severely and consistently through many years that the Lord's people should purge their conversation, purify their terminology, and remove from their consciousness the multitude of non-scriptural and extra-biblical expressions carried over from Mystery Babylon. We have both parroted and coined a great many unscriptural terms that have been so misleading and have led us astray in our understanding of the scriptures and the wonderful plan of God.

How often we, like the babes in the harlot's house, refer to a minister of the gospel as "the pastor" of our church or some other congregation of saints. To hear all the Christians today constantly talking about "our pastor," "their pastor," "your pastor, "my pastor," and "the pastor," one would certainly be led to believe that this position of "the pastor" must indeed be one of the cardinal doctrines and most highly acclaimed offices in the New Testament! The fact is, precious friend of mine, the phrase "the pastor" is entirely foreign to the Word of God. It is an un-scriptural and extra-biblical term.

There was no man in the New Testament church who ever occupied a position called "the pastor." Not one church raised up by the twelve apostles or by Paul had any such ministry as "the pastor." Oh, yes, there were "pastors" plural (Eph. 4:11), but no single minister of God in the New Testament was ever elevated to the position of "the pastor" of an assembly. The truth is that in every case in the Greek New Testament where the word for pastor (POIMEN) appears in the singular accompanied by the definite article, it is used in reference solely to our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is T-H-E P-A-S-T-O-R of the flock, T-H-E S-H-E-P-H-E-R-D of the sheep! The sweet singer of Israel stated it so aptly in his lovely Psalm when he sang out under the spirit of inspiration, "The L-O-R-D is my SHEPHERD (pastor)!" Can we not see by this that any man who takes to himself this title "THE PASTOR," thereby usurps the place and headship of our precious Lord. I instructed the brethren among whom I labored in years past that they should never call me "the pastor" or "their pastor" because the Lord alone I-S THE PASTOR. I may be "a pastor," but never "the pastor." The saints were taught that if any one came inquiring after "the pastor" they should be told that the pastor is the Lord. If they were asked, "Who is the pastor here?" they should reply, "The Lord is the pastor here." They could then explain that Bro. Eby is one of the servants, an under-shepherd, along with elders and ministries; but THE LORD IS T-H-E P-A-S-T-O-R.

We have been so completely saturated, so thoroughly brain-washed in the errors of the religious systems 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 is not only unfounded in the Word of God, but actually is 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 Mighty 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 positive error. Many texts speak of the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of man, the coming of the Lord or similar phrases. The word "second" never occurs with a word that can be translated "coming." Let us consider a few passages. "For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" **(Mat. 24:27).** "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep" **(I Thes. 4:15).** "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" **(II Thes. 2:8).** "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" **(James 5:7).** "Be also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh" **(James 5:8).**

These texts, and many others, all include the English word "coming." 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." There is no justification whatever for adding "second" to any of these inspired passages. 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 biblical expression and first occurred among Christians as late as the middle of the second century after Christ. I can not 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!

APPEARING A SECOND TIME

Someone will surely raise the question: Can not the expression "second coming" be justified by the closing verse of the ninth chapter of Hebrews? The passage reads, "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 verse can be rightly divided only when taken within the context of the verses preceding it. The writer says, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" **(Heb. 9:24-26).**

Some have tried to find three "appearings" in these verses, but there are only two. And the words are taken by unthinking people as though "appear the second time," or "second appearing" were somehow the equivalent of, or a synonym for, the "second coming." But this is merely playing on the language of our English version. The two "appearings" in this passage not even refer to the so-called "first coming" of the Christ in Bethlehem's manger, or His "second coming" from heaven at the end of this age. As we shall see later, the Lord has had MANY APPEARINGS on this earth. And here TWO of those many appearings are contrasted, the one with the

other, so that one is "first," and the other "second." Here we have His "first" appearing: IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself, now to APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US."

In the types of the Old Testament the atonement for sin was not accomplished with the killing of the animal, and the sprinkling of the blood on the altar, the people and the tabernacle; not until the High Priest presented himself in the Most Holy Place, in the presence of God with the blood of the sacrifice. This was a type of the sacrifice of Christ for our sins. It was not accomplished nor completed with the shedding of His blood and His death on the cross. Before there could be any efficacy to His sacrifice He had to PRESENT HIMSELF IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD by His own blood to make atonement for our sins. This is what this verse is speaking about; Christ entered the Holiest, not of the earthly tabernacle, but into heaven itself, presenting Himself, appearing before the presence of God, in the eternal realm of spirit, as the bearer of our redemption. This verse says that He APPEARED in the presence of God for us. This is the first of the two appearings here contrasted, but certainly NOT His first appearing unto men! As we follow on in this scripture we are told that the Christ needed not to offer Himself often as did the High Priest of the Old Covenant, once a year with the blood of others. Only once did He need to offer Himself, as we read, "But now ONCE in the end of the age has He APPEARED (in heaven - vs. 24) to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Once He has appeared, the first time, IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US!

Verse twenty-eight speaks of another APPEARING, even a second appearing in connection with our salvation. It begins with these words, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (referring to verses 24 and 26 where it says He entered the Most Holy Place in heaven and appeared in the presence of God for us)". Now He appears again the second time: "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Most Christians believe this verse in referring to what is called the "second coming" of the Lord, a visible appearing at the end of this age. This is not alluding to such a coming at all. The word actually employed is wholly different. It is a general word, and it is the very word used with reference to His manifestation to His disciples after His resurrection. It occurs four times in I Cor. 15:5-8 where it is translated "was seen". The Lord appeared to many following His resurrection. The Lord Jesus appeared to the apostle Paul entirely apart from His two appearings set forth in Hebrews chapter nine. The Lord appeared unto Paul in the form of a bright light above the brightness of the noon-day sun. Jesus manifested Himself to Paul in the form of light to commission him to the work of the gospel. And the Lord said., "Rise, and stand upon your feet: for I have APPEARED unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen, and of those things in the which I WILL APPEAR unto you" **(Acts 26:16).**

And further, the definite article must be omitted: "So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, SHALL APPEAR A SECOND TIME, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation." That is how the Greek text reads. The statement is not prophetic, but doctrinal; and the doctrine in question is not the so-called "second coming," but the PRIESTHOOD! It is not the prediction of an event to be realized by those who shall be alive on earth at the time of the end, but the declaration of a truth and a fact to be realized by every elect member of the body of Christ, no matter in what dispensation his sojourn upon earth may fall.

Our Lord Jesus Christ appears a second time to those who LOOK FOR HIM, who diligently seek for Him and follow after Him; not any more as a sin offering appearing in heaven for us, but in the mighty manifestation of His power usward, UNTO SALVATION. And this salvation is the work of our great and wonderful High Priest. This same wonderful truth is set forth in Heb. 7:25 in these words, "Wherefore He is able also to SAVE THEM TO THE UTTERMOST that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." This phrase is given by Phillips as "He can save fully and completely." Young's Literal, "He is able to save to the very end." Amplified, "He is able to save to the uttermost - completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity."

The Greek points out that He is able to save COMPLETELY. He is able to save ALL THE WAY, even unto the valley of the shadow of death. He is able to save altogether, NOTHING LACKING - complete salvation with no flaw, complete as only a holy and omniscient and omnipotent God knows completeness and perfection. This salvation "to the uttermost" is a complete salvation of spirit, soul and body reserved for those who "come unto God by Him" - those who follow all the way, into the Holiest, within the veil, to know HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality. And it is not a salvation effected by Jesus flashing across the sky, but by our great High Priest

ministering from His throne of intercession! "The uttermost" is the strongest and extremist word in all the world. There cannot be anything beyond the uttermost. The uttermost is situated on the very extremist rim, on the very outmost edge, and on the very highest pinnacle of all existing things. It is the limit, the boundary, the completeness, the perfection, the fullness, the summit, the apex and the ultimate of all realities. Oh, the wonder of it! Salvation to the UTTERMOST! What a limit! What a boundary! What a summit!

The "uttermost" salvation cannot be understood apart from our High Priest who has secured it and who now ministers it to us from that higher realm of incorruptibility. Jesus pointed to this day when, on the night of His judgment, before crucifixion, He announced to the startled High Priest, Caiaphas, this amazing proclamation, "You have said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" **(Mat. 26:64)**. To paraphrase, Jesus says, "Though now you see me in this low and abject state, nevertheless the day is coming when I shall appear otherwise. Though you watch me die upon a Roman cross as a sin-offering, you will shortly see me sitting upon the throne of my Father and coming in the clouds of heaven."

How prone we are to view these as two events, separated by a vast span of time. Our conception is of Jesus sitting upon the right hand of God for a couple thousand years, at the end of which time He leaves His throne to "come in the clouds of heaven." NOT SO! "HEREAFTER you will see..." So runs the King James version, translating a Greek phrase which signifies unequivocally "from now on" - or literally, HENCEFORTH. But it is safe to say that the average reader, reading from the Authorized version, generally understands it to mean something very different - not "HENCEFORTH shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," but "in the hereafter," flat some point in the indefinite future," you will see the Son of man "sitting" and then "coming." The correct thought is, "HENCEFORTH - FROM N-O-W O-N you will see the Son of man sitting... and coming." These two events, the sitting and the coming, are simultaneous. They are co-extensive. They transpire at the same time. And they both happen "from now on." He sits AND He comes. He sits upon the throne of heavenly power and He comes in the clouds of heaven! He sits as our great High Priest and He comes as our transforming Savior. He doesn't sit and then come, He comes while He sits. It is not two separate, independent actions, but a two-fold, interdependent action.

Has He not come to you, precious brother, sister, in mighty saving power even as He sits upon the throne on High? Is it not true that He has power to save completely just BECAUSE He is seated upon the throne? Ah - it is not Jesus crashing down through the skies who is able to save to the uttermost - it is, rather, Christ our High Priest on the throne of the Majesty on High who is able to save us to the uttermost, seeing HE EVER LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US. Oh, we read so much into the Word of God that is not there! With our limited and faulty carnal reasoning we distort it all out of shape, making it say what it does not say, and not say what it does say. Why cannot men cease their ignorant pratings and learn once and for all that our Lord Jesus Christ is fully able to sit and to come at the same time! It is high time for all of God's elect saints to learn that Jesus is both High Priest and Saviour at the same instant. He sits and He comes. He has appeared once and for all before the Father in heaven as our sin-offering, and now He sits there continually as the High Priest of that mighty life. And unto all who LOOK FOR HIM He will APPEAR A SECOND TIME UNTO SALVATION. He has appeared in the presence of God FOR US, and now He will appear a second time UNTO US. The subject is not His "second coming," but His glorious saving PRIESTHOOD! It is time for all men to believe the Word of God and cease from following their own shameful delusions.

THE COMINGS 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 you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto Me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

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 unfolding of the purpose of God, 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, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man. The unfolding of end-time events and God's order for the ages to come, which are the main contents of the last book of the Bible, are called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The term "second coming" is as unfortunate as it is unscriptural. It implies there has been only one coming of Christ thus far. This 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. By the same token, it is not His last coming to the earth. In order to get the importance of His birth, let's withdraw from Bethlehem and consider His coming there as just one event in the panorama of the ages. Let us consider this theme under the following divisions: (1) Before Bethlehem (2) Beginning at Bethlehem (3) Because of Bethlehem.

An abundance of scripture supports the fact that Christ was before Bethlehem. He is just as real in the Old Testament as He is in the New Testament. The great difference, of course, is that HE BECAME FLESH. He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Also He said, Is my Father works hitherto and I work." He and the Father were working long before Bethlehem. John opened his matchless Gospel with this majestic statement: "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" **(Jn. 1:1-2).** The prophet Isaiah had made a very careful distinction about His birth at Bethlehem: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, had said, as I have pointed out, that He would come forth from Bethlehem but that "His goings forth have been FROM OF OLD, FROM EVERLASTING." His footprints were manifested in this world before the prints were made in His hands.

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 of the Lord God 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 with the man He had placed on this planet. 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 Gen. 17:1 we find that "The Lord appeared unto Abraham." In **Gen. 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 **Gen. 18:1** we read, "And the Lord appeared unto him." In **Gen. 18:33**, "The Lord went His way, as soon as He left communing with Abraham." In **Gen. 26:24** we see that "the Lord appeared unto him (Isaac) the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham your father: fear not, for I am with you." **In Gen. 35:7** it says, "And he (Jacob) built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el: because there God appeared unto him." The Lord appeared unto Moses in the burning bush **(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, "for they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them: and that Rock was Christ" **(I Cor. 10:4).** Later, the Lord again came to Israel in another form as we read in **Ex. 19:9, 18 and 20:** "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I COME UNTO YOU in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto you ... 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." 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).** In the days of Samuel the prophet "the Lord appeared ... in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh" **(I Sam. 3:21).** In II Chron. 3:1 the "Lord appeared unto David... in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor 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 HAS APPEARED OF OLD UNTO ME, saying, Yea I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you" **(Jer. 31:3).**

We dare not lose eight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of our unscriptural terms "first coming" and "second coming," but 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 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 the scriptures of a visitation or manifestation of the Lord to judge or bless or accomplish some aspect of His plan and purpose among His people and in the earth. One would think, listening to the preachers rant and rave 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 dim and misty future. I do not hesitate to tell you that this is a great error.

Rev. 2:5 tells of a COMING of our Lord. "Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I WILL COME unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent." Since Jesus had gone a COMING of Jesus would 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 you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place." "Candlestick" means lampstand. A lampstand is for holding up a light. Now what is the use of an assembly of believers? That is the purpose of an assembly - "YOU are the light of the world." Christ tells these people that if they do not repent HE WILL COME TO THEM IN JUDGMENT, swift and effective judgment, and remove them from being an assembly of light-bearing children of God. It was a COMING, which might not take place! Jesus said, "I will COME if you don't repent." What would prevent this COMING? Ephesian saints repenting! The Ephesian church was an active and patient, and doctrinally sound church. But it lost its first love for Christ, the pure, virginal love for Him and for Him alone and sadly, never repented. So God allowed the light to go out. Later on the darkness of Mohammedism swept over the land where this church had been located. There is no lampstand in Ephesus today, for there is nothing but the ruins of a once great city. In Ephesus there is no church at all. The site of the ancient temple is now a marsh, inhabited only by frogs. Ephesus, of course, in keeping with the pattern of the book of Revelation, was merely a TYPICAL CHURCH, and the Lord's solemn warning signal flashes out to this day to be heeded by every man and movement that is of the Ephesian spirit and character: "Repent, or I WILL COME unto you quickly!" Is this, then, THE so-called "second coming" of Christ? Assuredly not! But I greatly fear that almost all of God's children hold the childish notion that whenever Jesus says, "I will come," He always refers to one singular event called "the second coming."

The book of Revelation furnishes us with a sequential overview of the comings of the Lord. Its inspired title is found in the first verse - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The Greek word for "revelation" is APOKALUPSIS meaning "unveiling, uncovering," and hence, revealing." This is expressed in Rev. 1:7, "EVERY EYE shall SEE Him..." The error of the unspiritual and unenlightened mind is that it immediately assumes that every eye must see Him at the same time and in the same manner. But the multitudinous ways in which the Lord comes and comes and comes throughout the illuminating pages of this glorious book indicates to me the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the many-faceted and many-splendored appearing of the Lord from one degree of glory to another until, when all is finished, every creature in heaven, earth and hell shall have had a revelation of the Son of God (Rev. 5:13).

With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit on the pages of God's Word portray the living Son of God coming and standing in the midst of the seven churches! This is an earthly scene. The risen and glorified Christ was present in and among the churches. Jesus had promised to come back, and according to chapters two and three of Revelation He HAD come back! Then follows swiftly the tragic scene of Jesus Christ, the blessed Savior, standing at the end of this age COMPLETELY OUTSIDE the Laodicean church! No longer is He dealing with the apostate CHURCH SYSTEM, but knocking, knocking, knocking at heart's door of INDIVIDUAL MEN AND WOMEN, saying to them, **"**Behold I stand at the door and knock: if ANY MAN heat my voice and open the door, I WILL COME in to him, and will sup with HIM, and HE with ME" **(Rev. 3:20).** This passage can only refer to a spiritual presence coming to any INDIVIDUAL, to A-N-Y M-A-N who will open his heart's door to intimacy of fellowship and vital union with the Christ of God.

As one has written concerning this significant passage, "The message is to "any man," a message that abandons the multitude to their religious play, to their church creeds and their church Christs; a message that says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if ANY MAN hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to HIM and sup with HIM and he with ME.' The church of the last days is the church of the INDIVIDUAL. It is the individual believer with a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP to Christ. For the man who will forsake ALL ELSE and sup with Christ this is an age of glory, an hour of preparation such as we have never known. This is a time when the Spirit of God is speaking TO YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL. He seeks to sup and dine and feast with you

apart from all the religious confusion about us. It is a glorious day when we see the promise that is ours in this hour" -end quote. And what is the promise? The promise, wonderful promise! is of HIS COMING. "I WILL COME in to HIM, and will sup with him and he with me." Ah, is this the so-called "second coming" of Christ? It is not the one men preach about or that Christians expect and wait for, but, beloved saints of God, it IS THE COMING OF CHRIST, nonetheless. He does not come once and in just one way. He comes and comes and comes in the progressive revelation of HIMSELF!

There is neither time nor space to discuss all of these comings and appearings fully in one brief article, so we shall pursue these great truths in the months to come. We shall touch just enough at this time to let you see clearly that there are more than two comings of Christ mentioned in the Bible, and that trying to apply all the scriptures on the Lord's coming to just two comings, has caused a lot of confusion and erroneous teaching and has caused the Lord's people to miss completely some of the most marvelous aspects of God's great and wonderful purposes.

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 sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him; for He DWELLS WITH YOU, and shall be IN YOU. I will not leave you comfortless (orphans): I WILL COME UNTO YOU. Yet A little while, and the world sees me no more; but YOU SEE ME: because I live, you shall live also. At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I IN YOU" **(Jn. 14:16-20).**

In Mk. 13:26 He comes with CLOUDS. In Mat. 24:27 He comes as LIGHTNING. In Rev. 16:15 He comes as a THIEF. In Mat. 25:6 He comes as the BRIDEGROOM. In Rev. 22:16 and 2:28 He comes as the MORNING STAR. In Mal. 4:2 He comes as the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISING. In Phil. 3:20-21 He comes in RESURRECTION POWER. In II Thes. 1:7-8 He comes in FLAMING FIRE. In Mal. 3:1-3 He comes to His priesthood company as REFINER'S FIRE and FULLER'S SOAP. In I Thes. 4:16-17 He comes IN THE AIR. In Hos. 6:3 and James 5:7-8 He comes as the RAIN. In Rev. 19:11 & 14 He comes on a WHITE HORSE. In Mat. 25:31-34 He comes as KING. In I Pet. 5:4 He comes as the CHIEF SHEPHERD. In Mat. 16:27 He comes WITH HIS ANGELS. In Jude 14 He comes WITH HIS SAINTS. In Jn. 14:18 He comes TO HIS SAINTS. In II Thes. 1:10 He comes IN HIS SAINTS. In Jude 14 & 15 He comes in JUDGMENT. In Rev. 22:12 He comes WITH REWARDS. And time and space fail me to tell of how 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, etc., etc., etc.

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 us is a many-sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Savior. 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 of Him. To others He appears as Chief Shepherd and Bridegroom. These hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on 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. 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. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth or the most beautiful diamond known to man. In the Old Testament, the rabbis were often confused by the seeming contradictions in the descriptions of the coming of the Messiah. In some of the passages the Messiah was described as coming as a Suffering Servant to be wounded for transgressions and bruised for iniquities. In other passages He was coming as a Conqueror to rule and to defeat the enemies of the people of God. The people asked their scholars for an answer to this seeming contradiction. The rabbis would often go so far as to say that two Messiahs were coming. They were wrong; the same Messiah was coming twice. But more than that! Yea, a thousand times more! The same Messiah comes five, ten, thirty, ten thousand times, in as many and varied ways and manners as there are dealings and operations of God to be wrought in the lives of men and in the destiny of nations upon this earth. My earnest prayer to God is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may somehow make forever plain to all who read these halting lines that we have seen too limited a vision of the truth, but bringing all the facets together, there is the fuller view where it readily appears that there are many-splendored dimensions to HIS COMING.

If the coming of the Lord is not a progressive revelation in many manifestations, then, pray tell me, WHICH of the many comings enumerated earlier IS THE SECOND COMING? When He says, "I will not leave you orphans: I WILL COME TO YOU," is THAT "the second coming"? or is it when He declares, "Behold, I COME as a thief?" 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, or as the sun of righteousness, or as the Bridegroom, or as King, or with His saints, or to His saints, or in His saints? Paul said that Jesus would come with a "shout," also with the "voice of the archangel," and with the "trump of God." Jesus said, "Behold, I come as a thief." Certainly thieves do not blow trumpets and shout! Nor did Jesus blow trumpets when He ascended from the Mount of Olives, yet the messengers said that He would come "in like manner." 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 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 over the mountains, but mighty manifestations of the risen and glorified and ascended Lord of heaven and earth, leading to the transformation of mankind from selfishness and hate 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 and death to health and life; from funeral processions to the quickening power of His resurrection!

And hence it is that so very few Christians have really scriptural thoughts about the coming of their Lord. They are looking into prophecy for the church's hope - they confound "the Sun of Righteousness" with "the Morning Star" - they mix up the coming of Christ "IN His saints," and His coming "WITH the saints" - 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 Savior and His coming as Lord; His coming as Lightning or His coming with Clouds; His coming as Bridegroom or His coming as King. All this is a most serious mistake, against which I am compelled by the Spirit of God to warn my readers. Not very many know when or how the Lord comes in any of His manifestations therefore, they cannot know how to MEET HIM!

Almost all of Christendom teaches that the return of the Lord is one single, future event. They are generally agreed that He will come in a body of flesh, with wounds in His hands, feet, and side, and that He will be suspended in the sky in such a manner that every eye of all human beings living on this earth at that time will see Him and thus know of His coming. How much more reasonable and understandable is the glorious truth! Former misconceptions and crude theories concerning this great event should not be permitted to hinder us now from ascertaining the simplicity of the truth concerning it, as set forth in God's blessed Book and revealed unto His elect saints now by the Spirit. Whenever I long for the Lord to move by His Spirit and make Himself real by His presence, or manifest the greatness of His power in some place or circumstance, my heart cries out, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

There is a principle in the scriptures concerning the coming of the Lord. That is, we must spiritually discern and respond to His 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, transformation, Lordship, fellowship and communion, judgment, correction, stripping, purging or cleansing - we shall come to KNOW HIM in all His wonderful reality and be made like Him as His own in the earth. Oh, listen for the sound of His comings!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWO

MARANATHA
BEHOLD! HE COMES
JEHOVAH - THE COMING ONE

Both secular and sacred history agree that about two millenniums ago there was born in Bethlehem a babe, who was named Jesus; that He grew to manhood's estate; that He was a great teacher; that He was crucified on a Roman cross, and died; and that the church systems of Christendom profess to be based upon the teachings of this great Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth.

The Bible record reveals that Jesus of Nazareth, at the age of thirty years, was baptized in the river Jordan, at which time a voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of God; that He selected twelve disciples, who were His special pupils during the three and one-half years of ministry that followed; that He preached the Kingdom of God and performed mighty signs and wonders and miracles among the people; that His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament; that on the third day after His death He was resurrected from the dead; that forty days thereafter He ascended into heaven and ten days later the Holy Spirit was given to His faithful disciples, who were waiting at Jerusalem as directed by Him; and that these disciples confidently expected the return of Jesus Christ, and that later, in their epistles to the church, they spoke of His coming again. These facts are conceded by all who believe the Bible. Therefore, if the scriptures conclusively establish the fact of His coming again, then we should expect to find therein evidence as to the manner of His coming, the time of His coming, and the purpose of His coming.

Throughout the past several years the Holy Spirit has progressively been teaching me some wonderful and revolutionary things regarding the return of our Lord. It is not new to us to have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, tear away many of our former cherished beliefs; this He has been doing since the move of His Spirit many years ago whereby he began to draw us out of the religious systems of man in order to reveal Himself and unfold this glorious One that we call the Lord Jesus Christ. As we were separated from the static systems of Mystery Babylon we began to be taught by the Spirit of Truth, the One sent by God to teach us all things, and to guide us into all truth. The realization soon broke in awesome solemnity upon our quickened minds that most of what we believed, had been taught, and cherished, was not the truth at all, but just the thoughts and reasonings of the natural mind, the interpretation of the scriptures through the instrumentality of the intellect of man, and not by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

The first prerequisite to being taught by the Spirit of Truth is a readiness to lay down any, and all, preconceived ideas of what the scriptures teach, with a holy disposition to accept what the Spirit teaches. It is an obvious fact that all Christians believe many doctrines simply because they have been handed down from generation to generation. Our forefathers, our church, and our brethren believed them for generations, and we believe them because they did. Much of what we believe, we believe because people for many years and long centuries have believed thus, but not one precious child of God in a thousand ever takes the time or expends the energy or spiritual initiative to discover the origin of his beliefs, and whether they are truly scriptural. We just blindly follow on in the traditional path because father and mother and friends believe that way. But because our fathers, or the majority of Christians, have believed a thing is no guarantee that it pertains to the realm of truth! We made this startling discovery when the streams of light began to flow from the realms above and the blessed Spirit of Truth began to dig down deep beneath the surface of the scriptures, the letter of the Word, opening to our astonished understanding the deeper things of God. We soon found out, however, that when the Spirit begins to bring to light, and uncover the hidden mysteries of the Kingdom of God, that many immediately commence to fight against it. When one tears away time-honored tradition he must be prepared to

be branded as a heretic; and he may be sure that his statements will be misrepresented, his teachings misstated, and he himself regarded as unspiritual and dangerous.

The things the Spirit reveals are always different from what men have previously believed, and how often they are staggered! The Truth is light, and the light reveals the great darkness in the carnal and childish concepts conceived by the natural mind by interpreting through the intellect the dead letter of the Word; and because the truth is so contrary to the ideas treasured and nourished for so long, many are incited to fight against it. Because they are not seeking truth, and not contending for truth, they set themselves to defend to the death their old established doctrines, never taking the time to search out whether they are right or wrong. Oh, how subtle, how deceitful and foolish the heart of man! "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" **(Jer. 17:9)**. Only the Lord knows what is in the heart of man, and He says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." We can be fully convinced in our heart that we are standing for the truth, when the opposite is true. How we need to have our hearts circumcised and broken before God, and our eyes opened, and our ears unstopped, so we can see and hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches!

Most of what is taught in the earth contains some element of truth. Most Christian church doctrine has some truth in it, enough to make it acceptable to some people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that there is so much mixed with it that is not truth at all, and this is what has created all the divisions between the children of God. It isn't the truth that divides, it is all that is false that is mixed in with the truth that separates. Truth mixed with falsehood ceases to be truth. Since the coming of Christ is a major theme of the New Testament, and linked to man's complete redemption, why is it so variously taught and conceived? Who is responsible for distorting the truth, and what gain is made by doing so? Perhaps Paul furnishes an answer in this scripture: "The natural man receiveth 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).**

Let me reiterate here one of the salient points from our previous study on this subject. I am sure it surprises many of my readers to learn that the Bible nowhere speaks of the "second coming" of Christ. Interesting, isn't it - how many of the major and most commonly accepted doctrines of professing Christianity cannot be found in the Bible? Even without the vast and conclusive testimony of scripture, even without the illuminating effect of the Holy Spirit of Truth, we would be inclined to suspect the "orthodox" teachings of the churches on the so-called "second coming of Christ" simply because all of the preachers and teachers and professors of Mystery Babylon are so united in dogmatically proclaiming it! Some will shudder at the very thought of questioning so sacred and orthodox a doctrine. Let them transfer their reverence from such empty shells of human supposition to the living, imperishable Word of God, and their feelings will revolt at that which they now revere. We have long enough covered up the truth with Babylonian babblings. Let us clear them aside so that we may look upon the face of God's holy Word.

The term - "the second coming of Christ" - is not scriptural 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 thousand years ago, or to His so-called "second coming" when every eye shall see Him. This is wrong. Many texts speak of the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of man, the coming of the Lord or similar phrases. The word "second" never occurs with a word that can be translated "coming". The "second coming" is not a biblical 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.

A great deal of faulty reasoning is apparent among Christians when the subject of the coming of the Lord is under discussion. 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. We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings and shall continue to have many more. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of our unscriptural

terms "first coming" and "second coming," but 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 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 the scriptures of a visitation or manifestation of the Lord to judge or bless or accomplish some aspect of His plan and purpose among His people or in the earth. One would think, listening to the preachers rant and rave 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 dim and misty future. I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that this is a great error.

We have seen that on the day of Pentecost Christ came again as the Comforter. In the scriptures Christ is presented coming with clouds; coming as lightning; coming as a thief; coming with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God; coming as Bridegroom; coming as King; coming as the morning star; coming as the sun of righteousness; coming in resurrection power; coming as Judge; coming in flaming fire of judgment; coming as Savior; coming as Christ; coming as Lord; coming as refiner's fire and fuller's soap; coming to His temple; coming on the Mount of Olives; coming in the air; coming on a white horse; coming as the Chief; Shepherd; coming in His Kingdom; coming as seasons of refreshing; coming in glory; coming on His throne; coming with His angels; coming with His saints; coming to His saints; coming in His saints; etc.; etc.

It should be evident to every spiritual mind that Truth is greatly suffering when all the above "comings" of the Lord are crammed into just ONE "second coming" of Christ. Like the sound of many waters the testimony of the Word of God resounds with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of the Christ is not a single event, but includes many different manifestations, past, present and future. His coming to us is a many-sided experience. The confusion on this subject reminds me of one of the six blind men of Hindustan that many who read these lines had in their readers when they went to school. It went something like this:

There were six blind men of Hindustan, to learning much inclined, Who went to see an elephant, though all of them were blind, That each by observation might satisfy his mind. The first approached the elephant, and happening to fall Against his broad and sturdy side, at once began to bawl, This mystery of an elephant is very like a wall. The second, feeling of the tusk, cried, "Ho, what have we here, So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear, This wonder of an elephant is very like a spear." The third approached the elephant, and happening to take The squirming trunk within his hands, thus boldly up and, spake, "I see," quoth he, "the elephant is very like a snake." The fourth reached out an eager hand, and felt above the knee, "What most this wondrous! beast is likei, is very plain" said he, "'Tis clear enough the elephant is very like a tree. "The fifth who chanced to touch the ear, said, "Even the blindest man Can tell what this resembles most; deny the fact who can; This marvel of an elephant is very like a fan." The sixth no sooner had begun about the beast to grope, Than seizing on the swinging tail that fell within his scope; "I see," said he, "the elephant is very like a rope." So these blind men of Hindustan disputed loud and long, Each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong; Though each was partly in the right, they all were in the wrong!

How like the doctrines of Christendom today! Each one seeing only part of the picture; having little or no understanding of the overall plan and purpose of God. Just seeing a fraction and not the total picture; and yet like these blind men of Hindustan, disputing loud and long, each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong. Each one thinking he is right, and contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. You see, each man was closed-minded. And what made him closed-minded? Not that he held an untruth, but that he held a TRUTH! It was true that an elephant is like a rope. However, where the blind man thought that it was the whole truth it was really only a PARTIAL truth. It never occurred to him, nor to his fellows, that ALL of them might be telling the truth and that if they put their pieces of truth together they would come up with "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Only as they put each man's description with all the others could they possibly hope to know what the WHOLE ELEPHANT really looked like. And until they could learn to do that, they would ever be quarreling among themselves about what an elephant is really like, no one ever knowing what an elephant is really like, because each one was blinded by the IN-PART truth that he held.

As we come up through the various stages of spiritual growth, we get hold of a truth. And, like each of those blind men, we jump to the conclusion that what we hold to is THE WHOLE TRUTH when, in reality, it is only a part. It never occurs to us that there might be another side that is equally valid, equally important, and equally

essential to our understanding. We cling stubbornly to the elephant's tail, thinking it is the whole elephant, and then wonder why circumstances contradict our great and wonderful truth. Certainly, part of the elephant was like a spear, part of him like a rope, part of him like a tree trunk, but the total animal was something far more than any of these, and though each of these blind men was right about the little part that he understood, they were all entirely wrong about the whole!

The coming of the Lord is not the simplistic event that many have made it. This explains why so very few Christians have really scriptural thoughts about the coming of the Lord. They are looking into prophecy for the church's hope - they confound "the Sun of Righteousness" with "the Morning Star" - they mix up the coming of Christ "IN His saints," and His coming "WITH the saints" - they have not the faintest idea what is the difference in time or manifestation between His coming as Rain or His coming as Fire; His coming as Christ and 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! Almost all of Christendom teaches that the return of the Lord is one single, future event. How much more reasonable and understandable is the glorious truth! Christ came, He comes, He continues to come, He will come and will continue to come. Nothing - absolutely nothing in the scriptures limits Christ's coming to one singular future event. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ as an event that has never occurred (in recent times) is as fictitious as Henry Kissinger being the antichrist, the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, the infallability of the Pope, or the pre-tribulation rapture! Former misconceptions and crude theories concerning this great event should not be permitted to hinder us from ascertaining the simplicity of the truth concerning it, as set forth in God's blessed Book and revealed unto His elect saints now by the Spirit. Whenever I long for the Lord to move by His Spirit and make Himself real by His presence, or manifest the greatness of His power in some place or circumstance, my heart cries out, "Come, Lord Jesus!" It is a marvel of church history that practically every great move of the Spirit of God has been accompanied by the proclamation of the soon coming of the Lord. In times of spiritual revival there is always a childlike readiness to look and long for Christ. It has been a remarkable feature of the vast majority of spiritual visitations that either by preaching, prophetic utterance, tongues and interpretation, visions, dreams, or other spiritual phenomena the Lord has declared in the midst of His people, "I am coming soon!" It was noted by many, in the early centuries of the church, and during the revivals of the past few centuries, that it seemed to be a necessary companion to the quickening which God was then effecting, that they looked for the coming of the Lord, that they were filled with the expectation of His presence, that it was not merely a mighty blessing that had reached their souls - as indeed it was; but along with this, and above this, there was the fixing of the heart on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They yearned to behold Him and know Him in deeper measures.

During a mighty move of the Spirit in Scotland in the early 1800's the following testimony was recorded: "On Saturday Mr. C came over, and my mouth was again opened (to speak in tongues). He said, 'It is written, Pray that ye may interpret;' he accordingly prayed. I was then made to speak in short sentences, which George interpreted one by one. The first word of interpretation was, 'Behold He cometh - Jesus cometh.'" In a letter dated April 19, 1830, R. B. Lusk of Greenock writes: "I afterwards saw Miss M. and Mrs. J. They both appeared to be in a state of strong excitement. I have never seen anything at all like Mrs. J's appearance - I cannot describe it. But were it not that her words were words of truth, and that I had previously heard what I have now mentioned, I would have supposed her mad. The words she spoke were words of great power, and she seemed in an agony for utterance. I have omitted to mention that the burden of all they say is - that the Lord is near, near at hand." A portion of a letter written on May 18, 1830, is as follows: "Last Saturday night after James had spoken in tongues for a while, he prayed for interpretation, and ... it is very striking that almost all that has been interpreted has been on the coming of Christ."

A great many who read these lines can bear living witness to the fact that in the great Pentecostal outpouring at the turn of this century, the overriding message spoken by divine utterance was just this: "Jesus is coming soon!" The question follows, In all these moves of the Spirit of God through the centuries, where the soon-coming of Jesus Christ was proclaimed, DID HE COME? Did those who prophesied lie, or did "soon" mean two thousand years later, eighteen hundred years later, two hundred years afterwards, or a century thence? The Holy Spirit does not lie, neither does He create illusions, nor does He tantalize us with something, which we have no hope of seeing within our lifetime. Most assuredly HE CAME! Ah - He came not in the way people

expected; He came not in the manner that the saints were looking for Him; but His word was certain, and I can assure you that every time He said He was coming SOON -- HE C-A-M-E!

All through the 1800's, in revival after revival, throughout various parts of the earth, the Spirit of God thundered out the message, "Jesus is coming soon!" Then Jesus came. In Pentecostal power, at the turn of the century, He came! But the sad fact is that the complacent and lukewarm Christians and ministers in the historic churches of that day missed His coming altogether. They were unprepared for such a coming. They were no more aware that the Christ was present among His people in a new and fresh manifestation of His person, than the Jews were aware two millenniums ago that their prophesied and long awaited Messiah walked among them. It happened as the scripture declares of His coming of old**:** "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" **(Jn. 1:10,11).** In the days of the Pentecostal move some eighty-five years ago Christ came in mighty power, but the nominal Christians remained untouched and unmoved by His presence. In fact, like the Jews, they rejected Him. He came in manifest glory, but the church world never beheld His glory. He came with a mighty voice, but none of the religionists had ears to hear. He came and they knew Him not.

Again the Spirit sounded forth the message: "Get ready - Jesus is coming soon!" And all the Pentecostals thought they knew what that meant. Midway through the twentieth century, again there was to be a mighty cry unto God for a fresh and deeper manifestation of His glory. Bands of saints across the land and around the world prayed and interceded for more of God. When God responded this time the glory erupted in a Bible School in Canada and within a matter of months swept across America and around the world. God did a new thing that for a time was destined to shake the church all over America. Christ came as The Prophet in the mouths of His holy prophets, and the prophetic word of the Lord flowed like great Niagara's of Living Water. Christ came as the Song of the Lord in the mouths of vast multitudes as the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and the music of celestial choirs on earth went sweeping up the sky steeps. He came in healing, delivering, and miracle working power and great beyond the telling were the signs and wonders wrought by His name. But the leaders in the old established Pentecostal denominational churches had not prepared their hearts for this coming of the Lord. They perceived not that it was HE. They were too busy building their own petty kingdoms and gazing heavenward, expecting to be snatched away from the earth by rapture. They knew not the hour of their visitation, and all who joyfully drank at the ever flowing fountain of life were rejected and promptly excommunicated from their ranks, pronounced fanatics and branded as heretics. He came to His own, and His own received Him not!

A man was traveling, and issued from a range of hills on to an extensive plain. He crossed a stream that ran off to his right over a long stretch of sand; after an hour or so a thread of water gushed toward him from the right, falling over a cascade of white marble to his left; soon another stream was approaching him from behind, flowing over gravel through pure red soil, and going off into the woods nearby. With the appearance of water again after an hour's riding, the question arose: How many rivers had he crossed one or several? The contours of the region were not decisive against several; the traveler was a stranger in the neighborhood; to find out from an inhabitant of the country was difficult; but he had adopted a method that gave him a definite and accurate conclusion: he had observed that the water at every crossing, in every direction, and over every succeeding bed of sand, of rock, of gravel, of marble, carried always, not only a particular substance of solution, but also a peculiar kind of grass floating on the surface; he drew the conclusion, with such certainty as the Method of Agreement in Inductive Logic could afford him, that the several streams were one: one stream in extremely varied surroundings. He had crossed the same stream several times!

Now in the history of God's dealings there is a stream of the manifestation, appearing, revelation, and unveiling of Himself to men that meets us everywhere - from the heaven blest Garden of God in Eden to the closing verses of the final chapter of the book of Revelation wherein John the beloved cries out with the anguish of love, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" "They have seen Thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary" **(Ps. 68:24).** Now, the idea of "goings" has to do with the onward marching of God as King - it touches the coming of the King, and His kingly rule among the children of men. It passes through the most varied country as the King appears to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Moses, to the children of Israel, to Samuel, to David, to Solomon, to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, to the Jews, to the Church, to Paul, to vast numbers of saints, the apprehended ones in every age. This is what history is all about, the progressive

revelation of Jesus Christ from age to age, from dealing to dealing, from one stage of His purpose to another, the marching forward of God and the unveiling of His glory in our individual lives, in the corporate body, and in the affairs of men and nations. Christ has come and come and come; He came in the Old Testament, He came in Bethlehem, He came in the resurrection, He came on the day of Pentecost, He came on the Damascus road, He has come to His people again and again in seasons of refreshing, in quickening, in judgment, and all these comings will be finally consummated when at last the Christ has conquered every enemy, filled all things with Himself, and God becomes All-in-all. The many comings will then be seen to be but the ONE COMING of the Lord in extremely varied circumstances, stages, and unfoldments.

MARANATHA

It has been asserted that other than the epistle to the Galatians, Paul used a secretary or scribe to write all his letters. Paul dictated a long letter to the saints in Corinth and at last comes to the end. He takes the manuscript away from Sosthenes or Achaicus (whoever it was that was writing) and with his own hand writes the salutation. Then he adds this startling statement: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" **(I Cor. 16:22).** These are strange words, indeed, but without doubt Paul knew by the Spirit that all of the problems that existed in the Corinthian church, which were manifold, would not be solved by anything other than a sincere and intimate and intense love of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the believers.

The word ANATHEMA means devoted to the wrath of God; it means to be lifted up to the wrath of God; it means to be accursed. It is the word found so often in the Old Testament of the accursed thing - that which had been devoted to the curse of God. If anyone love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be devoted to the wrath of God; offered up unto the withering curse of the Almighty, to be duly processed by His judgments. The result of a lack of love for Christ is the ANATHEMA, the curse of God. It begins right here in this life with the withering of the soul, with the withering of its capacity to love those things which are good and true and beautiful and noble.

Paul concludes with a second strange word: MARANATHA! In the King James version that is part of the same sentence. It makes little sense that way, however. Linguistic scholars have concluded that it is properly a separate sentence; that Paul stopped after the word ANATHEMA (accursed), and lifted his pen only to place it down again to write a new sentence composed of two words in the Aramaic language, that form of Hebrew which was the lingua franca of Palestine at that time: Maran-atha. The words mean "the Lord is at hand." The Jews of that time frequently had upon their lips the word "mara" which means "Lord." It was a plea, a prayer, "Lord, come." They looked for the Messiah. But those who rejected the Messiah that came continued to cry out, "Maran! Maran!" looking for the Lord to come, having rejected Him who had already come. And so the Christians took upon their lips the words "maranatha." It can have several shades of meaning. It can mean "the Lord hath come."

We cannot love one who is simply a myth or a legend and so we are called to love One that lived a life of flesh and blood, One who suffered on our behalf, One who endured the agony of the cross for us, One who rose from the dead, One who ascended into heaven, One who came again on the day of Pentecost in mighty Spirit power, One who now dwells in our hearts by faith, the One who has already come. We are not called to love merely a promise, but a present Christ who has lived and died and rose again for us. Furthermore, it means that the Lord is at hand; even now He is with us, always accessible to us. He is present. We cannot love simply a memory, but a living Christ. He is here to work mightily within us in the present. "THE LORD IS AT HAND. MARANATHA." Finally, it calls us to a remembrance that Christ will come again, and even that is at hand. The Lord is on His way. His coming is imminent. He has come and continues to come. He comes and He shall come and shall continue to come. He will come in as many and varied ways and manners as there are needs in your life and mine, dear one, and in the whole world of men and movements and nations. MARANATHA! JESUS IS COMING! THE LORD IS AT HAND!

BEHOLD! HE COMES

I would draw your attention to the book of Revelation, the unveiling of Jesus Christ. This marvelous book contains deep and rich teaching for the elect saints concerning the coming of Christ; symbolic, mysterious,

wonderful, but always to be approached reverently, humbly, with head bowed low and shoes removed from off our feet, as people standing on holy ground. Nineteen hundred years ago the beloved disciple on the lonely isle of Patmos saw unfolding before him the enthralling drama of the coming of his Lord. As the awesome sight began to unfold he cried out in astonished wonder and surprised joy, "Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" **(Rev. 1:7).** The coming of the Lord as revealed in the book of Revelation is complex and progressive, extending through a variety of diverse scenes, stages, events, and manifestations, until He has come in such measure of fullness that we know Him finally in that dimension where HE IS the glorious fulfillment of all that our heart has yearned for, and desired so earnestly. All the lacks swallowed up into completeness, all the voids filled with His fullness, and we know the bliss of HIMSELF as our All-in-all.

BEHOLD! This is the word with which John begins his description of what he saw. Someone has said that the word "behold" in the scriptures is the "Stop, Look, and Listen" sign of the Bible. It always calls for special attention and directs our focus to a truth of unusual importance. The word comes from the Greek IDOU, a demonstrative participle. There are four things we should understand about this word. First, it bids the reader or hearer to give attention to what is being said, as if we were to say, "Now listen!" Second, it is used when an event is specified which seems impossible, yet occurs. Third, it is an exclamation of one pointing out something and calling attention to it. Fourth, it means to observe what is about to be said and consider it thoroughly.

Now let us look at the two words that follow: HE COMETH. "Behold! He cometh." This phrase is from the Greek word ERCHOMAI. It is the third person singular, present indicative. Any reader who knows the conjugation of verbs knows what that means. First, it means HE COMES as a present tense reality. The verb is present indicative. He comes. He is in the act of coming. Behold! He is (now) coming! In other words, He has been coming, He is still in the act of coming, and He continues to come. This is extremely important. More than once the coming of the Lord is spoken of in this tense throughout the book of Revelation. It's not a future thing, not something that shall happen somewhere down the course of history, but it is something that IS. Oh! that God with flames of His holy fire would burn this truth indelibly upon the hearts of all who read these lines.

The church world is either looking back to an historical Christ, or forward to a futuristic coming of Christ, and they miss this word ERCHOMAI which means "Behold, H-E C-O-M-E-S, He is coming, He continues to come, He will continue to come." It is something that can happen right now. It means that He comes from one place to another. He comes out of the realm of spirit to be manifested in flesh, expressed and revealed in a visible, tangible way to the material creation. ERCHOMAI means to come, to make one's appearance come before the public. It means that He comes and appears before the view of the people round about. And this coming, has already happened, it is now happening, and it shall continue to happen. This is the revelation that so captivated the apostle John that he could only stand and in amazement exclaim, "Behold! He comes!"

The coming of the Son of God did not begin with the lowly birth at Bethlehem; it began when time began; it is still going on. The Christ was in the world ages before Jesus was laid in the manger beneath the lowly cattle-shed; He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. And the Christ never went away to stay; He always leaves in one form in order to come in another. He is in the world today, known and loved and trusted by multitudes of those who through Him have received the spirit of adoption as sons. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Christ is born anew every morning, and as many as receive Him to them gives He power to become the sons of God. "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" **(Lk. 1:78-79).**

JEHOVAH - THE COMING ONE

That glorious Name by which God is known in the Old Testament, "Jehovah," is a name, which indicates a Coming God. This is neither the time or place to enter into a lengthy technical and linguistical study, but the word Jehovah, the greatest rabbis will tell you, means the Coming One. For many years I have read various interpretations of the name Jehovah. Some say it signifies, "I am." Others say, "The Coming One." Other scholarship seems to consider "The Eternal" as the most satisfactory. Another definition has been given as "The Self-existent One." Actually there is merit in all of these interpretations. God is eternal just BECAUSE He

is Self-existent and therefore not dependent on any outside help or support. He is the One who in Himself embodies essential life, permanent existence, derived from no source outside Himself, and absolutely dependent upon no other person, thing, or circumstance for its continuance. And because He is Self-existent and eternal He is the One who always has been, who now is, and who always will be. Therefore, He is the One who is always coming, always at hand.

How graphically this grand truth is expressed in the introduction to the book of Revelation with these words, "Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is coming" **(Rev. 1:4).** And again, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who WAS, and Who NOW BEING, and Who is the COMING ONE" **(Rev. 4:8).** The trilogy of holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, refers to the threefold time, past, present and future. The holy One Who was from eternity, the holy One NOW BEING, and the ever COMING ONE. The Lord God Almighty is not someone to come sometime in the distant future. He is the One Who WAS coming, Who IS coming, and Who shall CONTINUE to come, manifesting Himself to His people in blessing and judgment and redemption until every eye has beheld Him and every heart has acknowledged Him, Lord of all.

In the Hebrew scriptures salvation is of Jehovah. No other name is given which His own people could invoke for help. Even when the Messiah came in flesh in order to be the Savior there was no real change, because in Hebrew HE IS JEHOVAH-SAVIOUR, which is the meaning of the name Jesus. Peter could assure the Jews that "there is salvation in no other: for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" **(Acts 4:12).** Does this deny that there is salvation in Jehovah? Quite the opposite! It insists that Jesus IS the Jehovah in Whom salvation is. So that, as a matter of fact, the name Jehovah occurs every time that we find the personal name of our Lord. Salvation is united with the Name in a compound. It is no longer Jehovah, but Jehovah-Savior Jesus.

How few realize the fullness, which is in our Lord's redemptive name! Suppose we spread it out before us and unfold its meaning. Then "Jesus" is the SAVIOUR WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS COMING. How wonderfully this fits into His history! Most of those who saw Him in the flesh saw only the One who is. Of His past glory with the Father they knew nothing. Of His future exaltation they did not dream. They saw little more than His present humiliation. Anyone who really knew His Name realized what He had been, and what He would be, as well as what He was. He is a Saviour who plans and performs and perfects, in the past, in the present, and in the future. Ah, sons of God, the one who has come to you and has begun a good work in you is the same One who will come and come in your today and in all of your tomorrows to perfect that good work, bringing it to completion, and present you faultless in the image of God. It is an on-going process, an ever-unfolding salvation.

Jehovah is the ever-coming One. The Coming One is my Lord and my God. Various Jehovah combinations or compound names are used in the scriptures, each indicating how He comes to us:

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, the Coming One, thy Righteousness.
JEHOVAH-JIREH, the Coming One, thy Provider.
JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the Coming One, thy Healer.
JEHOVAH-NISSI, the Coming One, thy Banner.
JEHOVAH-MEKADDISHKEN, the Coming One, thy Sanctifier.
JEHOVAH-SHALOM, the Coming One, thy Peace.
JEHOVAH-SABAOTH, the Coming One, thy Warrior.
JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the Coming One, Present with thee.
JEHOVAH-ELYON, the Coming One, Most High.
JEHOVAH-RA-AH, the Coming One, thy Shepherd.

Vast multitudes of Christians leave heard of these wonderful covenant names of God and thrill to the things they hear, but their hearts cannot comprehend nor understand the vital truth and reality of the message. They "listen to the music, but never hear the song." How often through the years I have encountered this lack of comprehension among the Lord's people! They have eyes but they do not see. They examine the outer shell, but never taste the kernel within. They say they understand, but their spirit has not grasped the truth. They will talk long and loud about "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory," "the Kingdom of God is WITHIN you," "Ye are the

BODY of Christ," and then turn around and with the next breath say that the "coming" of the Lord is still a distant, singular, future event. When men profess that they have seen this truth of the ever-coming Christ and confess that the Christ is their Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Baptizer, Provider, etc., and then wistfully add, "and my soon-coming King," I know they have not seen it.

They have seen nothing. Do they not make Him their COMING King because they are not sure whether they want this Man to rule over them? Most folk do not mind Him ruling over Castro and the devil and the millennium, but they feel they are free moral agents and have little desire to own Him as King of their present domain. That is why so many have kept Him COMING. The Lord wants to be King NOW. He wants to come to you today and invade the foundations of your heart and life and reign gloriously within the temple of your being. Ah, my brother, my sister, Christ is coming to me constantly. I feel Him near. I sense His presence and behold His glory from realm to realm. He manifests Himself to my consciousness in close and glad communion. He transforms my mind and heart and life and flows from my innermost being so that deep calls unto deep. I am not saying that He is not yet to come, even to me. Certainly He has not come to me, or to you, in all the fullness of Himself! But His coming in God's great tomorrow is not a single, once for all, event - it will be but the consummation of that glory in which He is appearing to us, in us, and through us in our today.

So many people wonder, Will Jesus come in my lifetime? Will I live to see the return of the Lord? Well, start living and allow Jesus to come again in your lifetime! How many lifetimes do you have? You have only this one lifetime - let Jesus come in your lifetime! As someone has said, Let Jesus come in your lifetime and begin to have the TIME OF YOUR LIFE! Then you can cease gazing up into the skies wondering when Jesus is going to come, and you can step into the NOW of God and begin your progression back into God where He is all-in-all in your life. NOW is always the best time to live. TODAY is always the best time to walk with God. THE PRESENT is always the best time to see and know the Lord. I have this peculiar trait of enjoying life NOW. You can dream of tomorrow and you can look back into the past, but all you have or will ever have is RIGHT NOW. It is always NOW. God is NOW. Get into TODAY, into God's NOW and begin living - JESUS HAS COME!

My heart earnestly cries that the day may speedily come when all of God's elect will know assuredly and understand thoroughly that Christ is always coming again, and each new quickening of the eternal Word, and each fresh inworking of His grace brings Christ throbbing upon earth. Christ always comes to hearts that are opened to receive Him. A soldier of World War I told how on the battlefield and in the trenches some saw a white Christ coming to them in their hour of need and they were strengthened by that vision. In our hour of need, if we trust in Him, the Presence is always near. Lift up your heads to the hills, the high places of God in the Spirit. Can you see the Christ there? Isn't it your weakness and carnal-mindedness if you cannot see the Blessed One?

Christ also comes in judgment against our carnal and traitor lives. What a mess we make of the testimony of our Holy Lord, even if we finally never succeed with our carelessness! Christ comes as the Convicting Spirit that calls the soul on the block of judgment and asks why the failure! Christ does come every day to judge, to bless, to transform. Have you not felt that Presence? Been aware of it? Experienced it? "No!" Then, God pity your soul. Some day, you, too, in your far country will come to yourself. Then you will see the Christ and find He was dogging your footstep as you went down and tried to escape Him. Christ is the "Hound of Heaven," and, though we flee Him down the nights and down the arches of the years and through the procession of the ages, He never gives up. Our fears cannot keep us moving fast enough to escape Him and our speed can never outdistance His movement of love. He will pursue us to the lowest hell and there demand our heart's surrender.

God has purposed to reveal every aspect of His purpose through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. So we are living this very day in a progression. God is marching on! He wants to reveal Himself and unfold this glorious One that we call the Lord Jesus Christ. He is standing at the door knocking. Open the door and invite Him and He will come in to you and will sup with you on a plane where you have never before known Him. God is preparing a people at this very time who are waiting for a further revelation of God. These apprehended ones are not saying, "Oh, if I could just tell you about those good old days when God moved in mighty power ... if only we could have continued to move in those days of glory." This people God is preparing today is not lamenting or trying to recapture or perpetuate the glory of the past. It is a true and wonderful fact that for every

day there is fresh manna, there is that fresh unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a time for God's sons to try to recapture the past, or try to warm over the glories of yesterday. There is something brand new for you and me today in the economy of God! The elect of God are now in a time of patient waiting as they are being prepared for the hour when the younger sons of God shall come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the firstborn Son. This is not a time for those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to get excited about doing exploits for God in the waning anointing of yesterday or by the threadbare methods of the past. The glory that fills our expectant souls today is born of the knowledge that the hour of His manifestation is at hand - the hour when the Christ shall come in fullness to be revealed IN HIS SAINTS, and they shall reign over the earth.

I am prophesying a new and fresh revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The night is falling on the present order. Already we are seeing evidence of the dawning of a new day breaking forth upon us and many thousands of the Lord's elect are even now arising to behold the first rays of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. There is a mighty cry in our hearts for the Lord to move in a fresh and altogether new way in our lives and in the earth. Many things are happening in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms today, but I do not hesitate to tell you that all of these things are but stale "left overs" from previous. visitations. We are due for a fresh move and a new work of God in the earth today! So the night is coming, bringing an end to particular forms of the movings and operations of the Spirit of God. Though all the manifestations of the past have been precious and needful, yet our God in this hour is moving on. A new manifestation and revelation of the Christ is coming in the midst of us, and I hear and see the signs that He is beginning to come. We are living in the early dawn of another APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This appearing will be through the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God. This truth is burning within my bones, pulsating within my bosom. I am being quickened by these things. My one desire is to be available to be a part of this appearing of the Lord that is preparing the sons of God for the wind-up of this age and the inauguration of a far greater age of glory.

Every time there is a change in the working of God we are thrown into a crisis situation. There is something about us that is never quite prepared for change. There is always that shock of seeing a cherished order vanish away, while wondering what the next order will be. But this is how it is. The Lord God reveals His glory and it accomplishes a purpose. Then the end of that day comes. The night steals in upon that era. God is ready for a new order, a new day, another phase of His workings. Again, even as I pen these lines, there is a fresh working of God in the earth. Again there is a "going forth" of Jesus Christ, released in another form through a many-membered body of sons of God. God moves on and a new glory is ready to be revealed. It will not be revealed upon those unspiritual souls who sit by saying, "My God delayeth His coming; He has not come and is not now coming; He will come bye and bye and take us up to heaven." Ah, those who for two thousand years have kept Him coming in a singular event away out there in the future some where fulfill exactly the words of Jesus these are the "evil servant" who says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming!"

I must speak very plainly, my friends. This next move of God, the manifestation of the sons of God, will not come through those who are waiting for a rapture to whisk them away to the skies. It will come through a people who are crying out from the depths of their spirits, "Oh God, visit us afresh. Do a new thing! We need YOU! Creation groans for deliverance! Come! Lord Jesus, and meet us on a higher order, in a higher dimension. Come to your temple in fullness. Come! with the power necessary to purge and cleanse us and transform us into your image. Come! that we might behold your glory and be changed from glory to glory. Come! that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, that we may see Thee today in present revelation. The whole earth is waiting with bated breath for the glory of the Lord to be manifested. Come! and cause righteousness and praise and deliverance to spring forth before all the nations. Even so, Come! Lord Jesus!

It is the beautiful time of waiting and watching for His appearing. It is the time to listen for the glad heralds of the morning. "It may be morn, it may be night or noon; We know HE'S COMING SOON!"

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THREE

MISSING HIS COMING
"SECOND COMING" ERRORS
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEASTS

When the end of the second World War, first in Europe and then also in Asia, was announced, wives and brides, and also fathers and mothers rejoiced because it opened up for them the prospect of a rather speedy return of loved ones from whom they had been separated for a considerable period of time. They carefully scanned the newspapers for whatever indications these might contain of the order in which the land, sea, and air forces would be demobilized. And when they heard of the point system, they began to figure out how long they would yet have to wait for the return of their husbands, sweethearts, or sons. Naturally, they were greatly interested in the time of their release and of their home-coming. Every indication of the fact that the time would not be long caused their spirits to rise and filled their hearts with gladness. Sometimes they grew rather impatient with whatever delayed the glad return and the joyous reunion. In that respect they resembled those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who rejoice in the thought of His return and eagerly look forward to the time of His glorious appearing. They are certain that the day of His return will fill the cup of joy to overflowing.

It need hardly be said that in the teachings of Jesus and the early apostles the thought of some future coming of His looms rather large. On a careful consideration of their words, however, it soon becomes apparent that they do not always speak of His coming in the same sense. The study of the teachings of the New Testament on this point calls for careful and prayerful and reverent discrimination. The supposition by the teachers and believers in the church systems that every time the scriptures speak of Christ's "coming" they have one particular and singular future event in mind can only lead to confusion and error. It should be self-evident that Christ's coming as Bridegroom (Mat. 25:1-10) cannot be to the same people, at the same time, in the same manner, nor for the same purpose as His coming as a Refiner's Fire (Mal. 3:1-3). He comes as Bridegroom to His prepared, adorned, and expectant bride in a deeply spiritual relationship of intimate love and vital union, whereas He comes to those apprehended to be His Royal Priesthood in a manifestation of severity - purging and purifying. Both are said to be His COMING. Christ's coming again as the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:16-23) and His coming in Flaming Fire of Vengeance (II Thes. 1:7-8) are obviously not the same coming; not to the same people, not at the same time, not in the same manner, nor for the same purpose. He came as the blessed Spirit of Truth on the day of Pentecost and has continued to come in that precious way to illuminate mind and heart of every man and woman who seeks Him in sincerity and truth; but He has come and shall yet come in Flaming Fire to deal out retribution - chastisement and vengeance - upon those who do not know or perceive or become acquainted with God and upon those who ignore and refuse to obey the Go of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both of these manifestations are described in scripture as the COMING of the Lord. It is useless to try to fit them both into one singular event destined to transpire within a few moments of time at the conclusion of this age. The Word of God is clear in its teaching that the coming of the Lord is a many-faceted experience, including many manifestations. Truly He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He shall come; and He shall continue to come!

As in the rebuilding of the wall, in Nehemiah's time, it was first necessary to remove "heaps" of "rubbish," just so in these days, in order to rightly understand the truth concerning our Lord's return, it is necessary to remove "heaps" of "rubbish" - rubbish of tradition, prejudice, misinformation and misinterpretation. The church world has become so thoroughly indoctrinated with the simplistic, childish and crude imaginations of the natural mind that it is practically impossible to get people to consider the Lord's coming as it really is in the scriptures. They are warned to regard with suspicion and reject all teaching on the subject any different from that which they have been taught. In fact, to think of the venerable doctrine of the church on this subject as being FALSE, strikes them as being blasphemous. There is only one sure path in this important hour, there is only one way to

know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Even now, as in the long ago, our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, standeth, saying, "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" **(Jn. 16:12-13).**

We often miss the truth because too many of us have been relying on our intellect to interpret to us the scriptures, instead of looking to the Teacher sent from God, to do His work, and perform His ministry. Even Spirit-filled Christians depend mostly on commentaries and books by the hundreds, written by men, and often men void of the Holy Spirit, as their source of information and understanding of the scriptures, and the Holy Spirit is relegated to a back room in our minds, and rarely consulted about anything the scriptures have to say. We need to reinstate Him to His proper position and allow Him to fulfill the ministry He came to do. Now don't think I am against books, I am not. I use books. If I were opposed to writings I would not be sending out this article. Many people have been helped by what is written, but far too many saints think that through Bible study, and by searching the scriptures alone, they can come to an understanding of the things of God, and acquire a knowledge of the truth. But if we are really studying the Bible, in the light of revelation, this is what we will find, for this is what the Bible teaches: that apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit, there is no way that we can search out, nor understand, the things of God, and His ways. Hear what the scripture itself says: "O the depths of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how UNSEARCHABLE are His judgments and His ways past FINDING OUT" **(Rom. 11:33).** How can we ever search out the unsearchable, or find that which is past finding out? Impossible by any human means or methods, but not impossible with God, for with Him nothing is impossible. There is a way, His way, and that is by the working of the Spirit of Truth.

Down through the pages of the Bible and the ages of time God revealed Himself to various men and women in their times. The principles were always the same, but the manifestation of His appearing was different in each case. He appeared to Moses as a burning bush; to Israel as a cloud and pillar of fire; to Gideon as the Angel of the Lord; to Isaiah as the glorious One high and exalted upon a throne; to Ezekiel as a wheel in the middle of a wheel; to His disciples as a mortal Man, the Lamb of God; to Mary as the gardener; to Saul of Tarsus as a blinding Light brighter than the noonday sun; to John the Revelator as One standing in the midst of the candlesticks with hair white like wool, feet like brass burning in a furnace, and a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth.

As God revealed Himself in different ways in the Old Testament times, so in the New Testament times He is still revealing Himself in higher heights and deeper depths through the glorified Christ Jesus. As Luke points out in Acts, chapter one, Jesus BEGAN to minister when He walked in a body of flesh on the earth, until He ascended back to the Father. Then as you read on in the book of Acts, you find that He BEGAN to minister through now, not just a single body of flesh, but through a corporate body of believers as the Body of Christ came to birth on the earth. As you read this message, my earnest prayer to God is that He might BEGIN to move and work and manifest and appear in YOUR LIFE in a new and fresh unveiling of HIMSELF! A new manifestation and revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is coming in the midst of His apprehended ones, and I see signs all about that He is beginning to come - again! Truly we are living in the dawn of another and greater and more glorious appearing of our Lord. Praise HIS wonderful name!

MISSING HIS COMING

While there is a widespread belief in the nearness of the coming of Christ, it is a fact that so many false teachings have been connected with this great truth that it is to be feared, when the event itself takes place, precious few who profess to believe in His coming will be prepared to receive Him because of the false views they hold regarding the manner and purpose of His coming. I do not pretend to understand the exact sequence of all things which are soon to come upon the earth, neither do I believe that any man or woman on earth is fully informed of the events that shall mark the end of this present age and the glory of the age to come. But of this we may be sure: the minds of Christians have become so blinded by grimy old tradition they hold as doctrines that they are almost completely immune to truth. They are like the Jews of old who were so set and sure that the Messiah would come and restore the kingdom to Israel that they missed Him when He came and knew Him not. In like manner today millions of Christians are blind to the truth because of their traditions, for while they sit idly by waiting for a rapture which will deliver them from the tribulation and usher them into the

glory of God, they will one day awaken to discover to their everlasting consternation that Jesus HAS COME and they missed Him and knew Him not.

At the time Jesus was born on earth, the Jews had fallen into such slumber and inertia, although outwardly they were religious and self-satisfied, that they did not know the Word of God when He was made flesh and came and dwelt among them. When their Messiah came, for whom they had been looking for centuries, they neither knew Him nor received Him. Because He was born in a stable, and His body, the tent in which He tabernacled when upon earth, was poor and without comeliness; because He did not come in pomp and worldly power and glory, the Jews knew Him not.

At that time the Jewish people were expecting the Messiah. They were students of the prophecies, and were acquainted with those predictions, which indicated the time of the Messiah's coming. They knew that the 483 years of the Messianic prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 9:20-27), which were to elapse between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the Messianic Prince, were expired. The time was fulfilled, and hence they were looking for the Messiah to appear, and eagerly expecting His appearance. But while they were right regarding the time, they misunderstood the character and work of the Messiah. They were looking for a deliverer, not from sin and self, but from political bondage. They wanted a military genius who would save them from the tyranny of the Roman yoke, and had no interest in a Savior who would save them from sin and from themselves.

In the words of the notable English mystic, William Law, writing about the year 1750, "Consider how it is that the carnal Jew, the deep-read scribe, the learned rabbi, the religious Pharisee not only did not receive but crucified their Savior. It was because they willed and desired no such Savior as He was, no such inward salvation as He offered them. They desired no change in their nature, no inward destruction of their own natural tempers, no deliverance from the love of themselves and the enjoyments of their passions. They liked their state, the gratifications of their old man, their long robes, their broad phylacteries and greetings in the markets. They wanted not to have their pride and self-love dethroned, their covetousness and sensuality to be subdued by a new nature from heaven derived into them. Their only desire was the success of Judaism, to have an outward Savior, a temporal Prince that should establish their law and outward ceremonies over all the earth. And therefore they crucified their dear Redeemer and would have none of His salvation because it all consisted in a change of their nature, in a new birth from above, and a Kingdom of Heaven to be opened within them by the Spirit of God."

They rejected the humble Nazarene though they saw His mighty works and heard His wonderful words of life. They were looking for the glorious Messiah to come, put down the Romans, and deliver them from the Gentiles. They expected a king who, taking the throne of David would establish a temporal government more powerful than any on earth, and that all the kings of the Gentiles should nourish and bow down to Israel.

They all were looking for a King
To slay their foes and lift them high
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" **(Jn. 1:4, 9, 10).** A great light shined in the darkness, the greatest light that has ever been upon the face of the earth and yet, to this day, they are dwelling and walking in darkness. There was light all around - the light of God's Christ. The very glory of the Father was revealed to them as the scripture said it would be. All God ever could be or ever shall be was manifested in Jesus Christ. No greater light could have shown unto them than that light, because the Light of lights was there to see. Most of them did not recognize Him, neither did they know that the Lord of glory was in the midst of them, their very God.

Because Christ was not in person, purpose and work what the Jews thought He should be; because He was not the conquering Lion of Judah, but instead He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world; therefore they are still waiting for One to come who will fulfill their earthly-minded desires and carnal concepts and worldly ambitions. How strange it is that one generation will not learn from the mistakes of their

predecessors! Oh, Christian, look not only at the old Jew, but see thyself in this glass, for practically the whole body of evangelical churches today is looking forward with that same intense watching for a rapture or a kingdom that will deliver them from the world's bondage and establish them on temporal thrones of political power and authority in the earth. True, there shall come a day when the sons of God shall be manifested, when God's King-Priest company shall arise in power and authority, when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, when ALL nations and kindreds shall serve Him, when ALL THINGS in heaven and in earth shall be subdued unto Him; but, precious friend of mine, this marvelous work shall be wrought, not by worldly political or military might - but by dynamic SPIRITUAL POWER!

If you entertain the crude notion that reigning with Christ means sitting behind a desk over in Jerusalem with telephone at hand and television cameras running, you know nothing as you ought to know of that blessed Kingdom of God which is "not of this world" and which "comes not by outward show," but is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And I do not hesitate to tell you that when Christ comes in mighty power to bring the triumph of His Kingdom into new and greater dimensions on this earth through the ministry of that body of sons so painstakingly and meticulously formed under His hand of dealing through this age of grace, vast multitudes of Christians will MISS HIS COMING because it will not conform to the manner, purpose or result that they imagine it should be. Like the Jews, these Christians will continue on with their religious games, singing, clapping, preaching, prophesying and waiting for a second coming that will meet their demands and fulfill their misguided expectations. Ah, we blame the Jews for their blindness and unbelief, and of making the Word of God of none effect through their tradition, but are there not vast multitudes of the Lord's people in our own day who are doing this very thing? The Jewish nation was not ignorant of the teaching of scripture concerning His coming - in fact, they were good Fundamentalists, anxiously expecting His arrival but they had drifted so far from the Holy Spirit of God, that when the day arrived they did not know it because it took the Holy Spirit to reveal it. And as the Jews of old and their descendants failed to recognize the coming of the Lord in their day, together with the many related events, even so a similar sleeping church today fails to recognize the signs and events which herald anew manifestation of that same blessed Person!

When Jesus walked in flesh upon this earth there were very few among the multitudes who recognized Him. It was Peter among the disciples that were blessed to know the rerevealing of the Son. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" **(Mat. 16:16-17).** There was a division among the multitudes as to the identity of Jesus. Some said He was a prophet, others said He was a good man or a great teacher, and then there were those who said He was the prince of devils and a glutton and a winebibber. In the religious circle it was noised about that Jesus was a blasphemer and a trouble-maker that stirred up the people. So there were different views as to who the Teacher was. The few who did recognize Him at His birth, during His ministry, and after His resurrection were those who walked with God and whose spirits were open to the light of heaven.

According to the very first statement in the Gospel of John, that kindly Nazarene, that gracious Galilean, that friendly Teacher who walked the paths of Galilee and sat beside its shores, was none other than the living God, the Creator of all things. John goes on to say that by Him were all things made and without Him was not anything made that was made. He is the Creator of all! He is the architect of the cosmos. He is the fashioner of the galaxies. He is the designer of suns, the artificer of planets. He is the framer of the vast eons of time. The eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient God was born a wee baby thing; fie visited this blue-green orb, which He had delicately fashioned and spun off into its orbit.

He who came to His own, was the One who had led them through the wilderness, and who had revealed God to them; He had gone before them in the cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night. It was He who had dwelt in the unutterable and unapproachable glory in their Holiest of all; it was He who had defeated their enemies for them, and had spread His pavilion over them, so that all nations were afraid before them. He it was, who came to His own and THEY KNEW HIM NOT. That, indeed, is such an incredible thing, such a fantastic and sublime truth, you would think that there would have been an unending celebration that would have gone on for centuries, as the welcome was prepared and the red carpet rolled out for Him. But, rather, to our utter astonishment, we read those incredible words: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world KNEW HIM NOT." I think that enwrapped in those simple words we have the entire tragedy of the carnal

mind. "The world knew Him not." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Is not this the essence of the natural mind? The world knew Him not! The Roman world looked upon Him with that unconscious, stupid, bovine stare; it knew not what it saw. The religious world looked upon Him and perceived Him only as a threat to their wicked schemes and hunger for power. Still today the Christ is in the world and the world knows Him not!

Dear child of God, how many times has He come to you in a different wav than you were expecting, and you knew Him not? How many times, in answer to your prayers, He came to you in some humble or mean thing, and you knew Him not. How many times you asked great things of Him, and He commenced to answer your prayers through low, mean channels. He hid behind the wall, He came to you, and you knew Him not. When we become spiritually lazy or stubborn or willful, when we become indifferent or fall asleep, when we walk along the path of our own will and flesh, we will hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Rise up, My love, and come away with Me!" Have you ever come before the Lord, thinking that you were pressing forward into Him, and He convicted you that you were motivated by-self? Has He made you know that you have not been going as fast as He would have you, or as you thought you were going? When we hear His voice let us drop everything and everybody; and let us hasten to the place where the Lord can meet us!

"SECOND COMING" ERRORS

The false teaching that the "second coming" of Christ is one singular event limited to a specific date in the future when Jesus Christ will come in a single body of flesh, with wounds in His hands, feet, and side, and that He will flash through the skies, snatching away His faithful followers, carrying them with Him to some far-off heaven somewhere, has given rise to innumerable speculations, predictions, calculations, prophecies and projected dates concerning when this stupendous event is supposed to transpire. Various dates have been set for the "rapture" or for the "end of the-world." History and the Bible have been so interpreted that this or that ruler or dictator or pope or statesman has been called "The Antichrist" who would hasten the return of Christ and the commencement of the "Great Tribulation." The inspiring promises about our Lord's coming have too often been an issue of sensationalism. Men have quarreled and quibbled and fought over a most precious assurance, and have missed altogether the wonderful blessing and the glorious reality. Because of the distorted understanding of this blessed truth many ridiculous theories have been spawned about the "time" and "manner" of the coming of Christ.

In the past few decades, several small groups, devoutly following the leadership of a would-be prophet, abandoned their-jobs and professions; sold all their worldly goods, and confidently awaited a precise moment when either the "rapture" would occur, or Jesus Christ would return. All such predictions failed, of course. Usually the news media only inform us of the sheepish admissions of such would-be prophets that they will have to restudy the prophecies," but we never hear about the victims of their hare-brained schemes who divested themselves of their accumulated goods only to find that the dogmatically trumpeted prophecies were only so much "pie in the sky." On a larger scale, major church movements have been equally disappointed, their embarrassed leaders frantically attempting to discover some alternative explanation as to WHY their confident prophecies did not come to pass as they had proclaimed! Over the years I have seen some of the most carefully constructed theories collapse like proverbial houses of cards! A peculiar and easily recognizable, identifying stamp of all these would-be prophets (or prophetesses) is some strange "key"; some obscure "clue"; some magic "formula"; some alleged "cycle"; or some private "revelation" which THEY, and THEY ONLY, know!

Emphasis on the nearness of Christ's "second coming," so strong in many Christian circles today, is nothing new. In the early church dates were set for the Lord's return again and again through the first two or three centuries. Augustine set the date for the end of the world at A.D. 1000. History tells us that a general belief prevailed In Europe towards the close of the tenth century that the year 1000 would witness the coming of Christ, the Day of Judgment, and the end of the world. On the basis of the interpretation which some of the early Church Fathers (Augustine, etc.) gave of Rev. 20:4, the conviction gradually gained popularity in the church that at the end of the first thousand years of the church's existence the second coming of the Lord would take place. It was supposed to be the time when the church would be perfected and the natural life of men would come to an end. As the time drew near, a general panic seized the minds of men. Many pious

people reasoned that since the present order was ending it would be folly to further attempt to satisfy their temporal ambitions or fulfill their earthly goals. They simply ceased working, sold or abandoned their homes, farms and businesses, and bought a little plot of ground near some church building or monastery, and not a few moved to the Holy Land, there to await on holy ground the glorious appearance of their blessed Savior and Lord. So vast and intense was this movement that the whole course of ordinary life was violently disturbed and deranged for an entire generation!

In the Middle Ages Joachim of Floris, an Italian monk strongly inclined to mysticism and ecstasy, pondered deeply on the hidden plan of God. He spoke of three dispensations: the first that of the law or the Father, the second that of the gospel or the Son, and the third that of the Holy Spirit. According to his reckoning, the first dispensation belonged to the past, the second was approaching the end since the church had become very worldly, and the age of the Spirit was destined to begin in the year 1260 A.D. Then the church would be purified; Jews and Gentiles would be converted in great masses; a final conflict would be waged against the evil forces of the world; and then the new order would begin under the blessed reign of Jesus Christ. But these hopes were also dashed to the ground.

At the time of the Reformation some of the Anabaptists raised the cry of the speedy return of Jesus Christ. They established their headquarters at Muenster, set up their own government under the alleged direction of the Holy Spirit, and thus founded the New Zion in anticipation of the momentary return of Jesus Christ as their King. The city became the scene of unrestrained fanaticism that knew no bounds, and which was finally forcibly suppressed by the government.

Martin Luther at one time taught that Christ would come in the year A.D. 1530. The Puritans looked for Jesus to set up His Fifth World Empire in the seventeenth century. Daniel DeFoe tells us in his JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR that, in the midst of the Great Plague in London, England in 1665, a woman on a square gained a hearing for her prognostications that the Coming of the Lord was right near; a few gathered, then many, then a crowd, as she pointed excitedly toward the heavens to "A Horseman in the Sky." The Son of Man was coming; could they not see Him? Some thought that they could. And during the Napoleonic wars, when the Man of Destiny was bestriding Europe and the Near East like a colossus, what a hey-day the prophecy-mongers in England had, with the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation in one hand, and the latest mail from Egypt in the other! They were all cocksure that the Antichrist had come, and some of them actually prophesied what Napoleon would do next, just as the same excitable souls are eyeing Henry Kissinger, the World Bankers, or Pope John Paul II today! (1986)

In our own country similar prophets arose. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century William Miller, who became the founder of the Millerite sect, traveled through New England, New York, New Jersey, and Canada, with the announcement that Christ would return in 1843. He thought he saw, plainly, the time indicated, in the scriptures, when our Lord would return. Being a signally gifted and scholarly man, he led thousands to adopt his views. The burden of his preaching was: Christ will soon be here; are you ready to meet Him? There were many conversions born of fear in view of the imminent appearance of the coming Judge. The meetings of the people were often scenes of wild confusion; emotion was aroused, people fell down crying, men shouted and women fainted. Despite all the opposition of the churches to this unbounded sensationalism, Miller continued his crusade with great persistence and assurance.

As the predicted day drew near many took their horses and fodder for two or three days, and went out into the woods, expecting to be all the more likely to see all that was to be seen when once away from the crowded city. All over the States there were people who had made ascension-gowns in which to soar into the air in proper costume. They waited, and they waited, and I am sure that no text could have been more appropriate for them than this, "Ye men of America, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?" Nothing came of it; and yet there are tens of thousands in America and elsewhere who need a fanatical leader and they would run into the like folly. The desire to know the date of Christ's return is a craze with many poor folk whose insanity runs in that particular groove. Every occurrence is a "sign of the times": a sign, I may add, which they do not understand. But when the year 1843 passed by without any unusual occurrence, Miller had to resort to the subterfuge that Christ had indeed come but remained in hiding temporarily because the people had not yet

repented sufficiently; and when the year 1844 also passed by in the ordinary way, he finally had to admit that his calculations, based on Daniel chapter eight, had been mistaken.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century there was another group, an entire American Colony in the city of Jerusalem, who gathered there to await the imminent return of the Lord. These sincere, and in many cases brilliant, believers would go out to the Mount of Olives by night to wait for the Lord's return. They justified their action by the words, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" **(Zech. 14:4).** One saintly lady would take a cup of cold water ready to present it to the Lord "in the name of a disciple" upon His arrival.

In the present century the notorious Pastor Russell, the spiritual father of Jehovah's Witnesses, boldly proclaimed that the Lord would return in the year A.D. 1914. When that year passed by without the expected appearance of the Lord and marked instead the beginning of the first World War, to save face, followed the example of Miller. He maintained that the Lord had indeed come, but was now in hiding because of the wickedness of the people. In due time He was bound to show Himself. Russell's successor, the eloquent Judge Rutherford, kept alive the expectation of the speedy transformation of the living saints. The burden of his message, which was spread over billboards, shouted over the radio, and blazoned to the world in paid advertisements was "Millions now living will never die." It was a rather daring assertion, seeing that it could be so easily proved, or disproved. A leading laundry, which had more humor than reverence, adopted the slogan as its own, making it read in this fashion: "We do the dyeing for the millions now living."

Then there was the Great Pyramid delusion. Back about the turn of the century a man by the name of Morton Edgar published a book titled PYRAMID PASSAGES. The thrust of this book was that the Great Pyramid of Gizeh in Egypt was built by divine wisdom and under God's direction, to be one of God's witnesses to men, the object of its construction being to establish in stone a record and a prophecy of God's great redemptive plan of the ages. The scriptural basis for this was Isa. 19:19-20, "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt." This "altar" and "pillar" was assumed to be the Great Pyramid - often referred to as THE BIBLE IN STONE.

It was conjectured that every passage and chamber therein silently but eloquently symbolized in size, length, structure, etc. the whole wonderful plan of God from the heaven blest garden in Eden down to the times of the restitution of all things when every enemy should be destroyed and God would be All-in-all. Those who studied the Pyramid from that standpoint were able to locate all the major events of history there - Creation was there, Calvary was there, the Reformation was there, the return of Christ was there, and the Millennial Age. It was all laid out neatly and precisely in the measurements, passages, chambers, and symbolism of the Great Pyramid! And, since the measurements from certain well established points to another, for instance, from Calvary to the Reformation, were all quite precise, it followed that the measurements from the Reformation to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom (and hence, the second coming of Christ) were conclusive. The testimony of the Great Pyramid showed irrefutably that Christ would return in 1914!

When Christ didn't make the anticipated appearance in 1914, the theory was later revised by Dr. Adam Rutherford of England. According to Rutherford's careful calculations the entrance into the King's Chamber, typifying the beginning of the Millennial Age, would be reached on August 20, 1953. With 95 per cent of the chronology of the passage system of the Great Pyramid supposedly already verified by history, the attention of thousands was focused upon August 20, 1953. Their expectancy was that the events of that day would demonstrate beyond question that their understanding of the purport of the Great Pyramid revelation was correct. In the summer of 1953 thousands of followers began to anticipate the development of spectacular events to climax, perhaps with the visible appearance of Jesus, on the Great Pyramid dating of August 20, 1953. They hoped that what would occur then would firmly establish their belief in the reliability of the prophecy. But the day came and with it the failure of the hoped-for developments. Jesus didn't show up. The Millennium didn't begin. Armageddon didn't break out. Nothing happened.

Again, the system was revised! According to Rutherford the "mistake" that had been made in his reckonings was "discovered" and duly "corrected". A new date was set: 1978. In July of 1978 I published an article in

which I admonished the Lord's precious people, "Others are proclaiming that the Millennium will begin in 1978-79 according to the revelations of the Great Pyramid in Egypt. I must speak a word against that! I have no fear in offering to buy all your Pyramidology books for .0l each in 1980. I'll even pay the postage on them! Beloved, brethren, I have no desire to be cynical about these things, but the Spirit of the Lord would have His chosen ones to get their eyes off dates, and pyramids, and computers, and newspaper headlines, and world leaders, and world events, and supposed Antichrists, and Beast Governments, and so-called "Mark of the Beast" banking and economic systems, and all the rest of the dime-store side shows which capture the minds of those apprehended to be sons of the Most High. How much more profitably will time and meditations be spent in LOOKING UNTO HIM - in intimacy of fellowship and blessed communion with the Lamb on Zion's holy hill. A correct understanding of all the above mentioned things (and most saint's understanding of them is NOT CORRECT!) can never add one-inch to our spiritual stature nor bring us to perfection in Christ. The finishing touches on God's great building, His house of sons, are not yet complete. 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD' **(Lk. 12:35-36).** Look unto HIM! That is the only act you can perform in this dark hour that will in any way hasten the day of manifestation" -end quote.

The error of these delusions is manifest in their repeated failure. I am sure that all of my readers remember the great 1982 Planetary Alignment hype. According to certain Fundamentalist preachers the "rapture" was going to take place on Sept. 6, 1975. The "logic" for this was that in 1982 all of the nine planets of our solar system would be perfectly aligned on the same side of the sun. Two scientists, writing in Newsweek magazine, Sept. 16, 1974 theorized about the severe effect of this planetary alignment on the upper part of the atmosphere caused by the magnetic pull of this line-up of the planets on the sun, creating an increase in the magnetic activity on the sun with huge storms of sunspots and solar flares, some spreading over fifty million miles. These would greatly disrupt weather patterns Around the world by sharply altering wind directions. This in turn would give our rotating planet a jolt large enough to trigger many major earthquakes in those areas of the world under severe geological strain. It was expected that the earthquakes around 1982 could destroy large populations of the earth. Some even theorized that the sun would "nova" in which case the earth would be completely burned to a cinder.

Therefore, reasoned certain preachers and teachers, since the earth would be purged by fire in 1982, the Great Tribulation must precede that event by seven years, necessitating a beginning in 1975. Furthermore, since Jesus must come, according to their imaginings, BEFORE the Tribulation; and considering that He would come with the sound of a trumpet, and at the "last trump"; it was concluded that He would split the eastern sky on the date of the FEAST OF TRUMPETS in the year 1975 - precisely on Sept. 6! I arrived in Big Spring, Texas on the afternoon of Sept. 5, 1975 and found a large number of the Charismatic brethren weeping, wailing, and repenting in preparation for the rapture the following day. It fell my lot to declare to the brethren assembled in the meeting where I was speaking that night that nothing absolutely nothing - would happen the next day. Of course, Jesus didn't come on Sept. 6, 1975 and seven years afterward the long awaited planetary alignment turned out to be a non-event! The mischief done by these well-meaning men is all the greater when they coolly fix a fresh date when the march of time has utterly falsified their previous dogmatic chronological predictions. It is still a very adulterous generation, which seeks after a sign.

Some months ago I received in the mail a booklet sent from a country in South America, in which certain brethren share that it has been revealed to them in a strikingly supernatural manner, and confirmed through many humble saints and varied spiritual manifestations, that Pope John Paul II is the Antichrist; the "rapture" will take place in 1987; and the consummation of all things will follow in 1991. I do not hesitate to tell you that none of these things will happen, either! Another letter came across my desk bearing this news: "We've met some interesting saints who have been walking in the Spirit since 1948 & 1950. One said (in 1948) a sister had a Christmas cactus and a spider came on it and spun the word: MILLENNIUM 198-. The date was complete to the year, but no one could believe that the Lord's coming would be so long delayed as the eighties. After all, the Lord was moving mightily and the Jews had just come back to their homeland! The words and date remained for three days and three nights and then both spider and web disappeared. But no one could remember the date, though many had seen it."

Though Jesus and the apostles told us there would be a rash of false prophets in the closing days of this age, I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who are claiming that they have some kind of direct

revelation from God about any number of events to transpire in this hour, and the dates on which they are to occur. In 198l Bill Maupin, leader of the Lighthouse Gospel Tract Foundation in Tucson, Arizona, proclaimed that Christ would return on June 28 of that year, and rapture his followers to heaven. He also stated that prior to the June 28th date, Damascus, the Syrian capital, and Lebanon would both fall to Israeli conquest, and Egypt would regain the Sinai Peninsula. Maupin said he would wait in the nude on June 28 for Christ to return and take him and his followers to heaven.

You may smile to yourself at such obvious error, but I will incur the wrath of many well-meaning people when I declare that not a few of these false prophets are in the so called "end-time" or "sonship" message, and in the midst of those sincere saints pressing on into the fullness of God. Over the past several years I have heard countless visions and prophecies proclaiming that the Great Tribulation would begin in 1970, or 1975, or 1978, or on some other date; that the sons of God would be manifested in 1968, or 1974, or 1976, or 1978, or 1982, or 1986, or 1988; many other events I have heard prophesied, none of which ever came to pass! Some of these deceivers required their people to go out into the wilderness places to establish wilderness hideouts, hoping to escape the coming judgment. Some, to this day, are stockpiling guns and ammunition and food and plan to shoot their way through the tribulation.

Every attempt that has been made to fix a date, even approximately, has brought the truth into discredit, and has dishonored our Lord, especially in view of the fact that many predictions have been made, and then changed with startling craftiness, in order that the date might still further be postponed, in view of the previous mistakes. These failures point out not merely that these men are mistaken about the TIME of Christ's return; they prove further that their WHOLE CONCEPT OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED - they know not WHEN He comes; they perceive not the PURPOSE of His coming; and they understand not HOW He comes! The "orthodox" teaching on the "second coming" of Christ gets people into many unexplainable predicaments, out of which they cannot extricate themselves honorably and logically. The system will not work. It will not work because it is a lie. There is not one scripture in the whole Bible to uphold the popular theory. But there are many to prove it false, and much precious and extremely vital truth which the preachers and churches have totally missed.

THANK GOD that He delivers us from all this fantastic nonsense! And in its place he directs our attention to what HE is doing, yes, that which HE IS BECOMING and FULFILLING in His elect. We look, indeed, for HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING, and rejoice with joy unspeakable in that wherein He has appeared unto us, and in the glory in which He shall yet appear in surpassing splendor, praise HIS wonderful name!

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEASTS

It is infinitely necessary that every Christian understand that the coming of the Lord is carefully established and explicitly revealed through the Old Testament Feasts of the Lord. There is a simple order which God has established relative to the unfolding of truth and the progression of His purposes, and it is this: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" **(I Cor. 15:46).** This principle is evident everywhere in the scriptures. First the old creation, then the New. First Adam, the man of earth, then the Last Adam, the Man from heaven. First the Passover, with its lamb slain in Israel, then the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. First the law and then Grace. First the temple in Jerusalem built of stone, then the temple of God which you are, composed of living stones built up an habitation of God through the Spirit. And the wonder of it all is this, that the end of the Old is the beginning of the New: and out of that which is destined to pass away there cometh forth that which is destined to remain.

While men speak of the "first coming" and the "second coming" of Christ, God's program is in THREES. God has promised to meet with man in THREE DIMENSIONS. "THREE TIMES in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which HE shall choose; in the feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD (Passover), and in the feast of WEEKS (Pentecost), and in the feast of TABERNACLES: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty" **(Deut. 16:16).** God says that He will meet with man THREE times - in the three great Feasts of the Lord! "THREE TIMES in a year shall all your males appear before the Lord." To "appear before the Lord" designates not only an action on your part, but a reciprocal action on God's part. Not only must you appear, but HE MUST APPEAR! It is a joint-meeting in which YOU APPEAR B-E-F-O-R-E H-I-M, or as the apostle has so

eloquently explained, "When Christ, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, then shall YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM in glory" **(Col. 3:4).**

The Feasts of Jehovah were but types and shadows of those things, which were yet to come. These Feasts portrayed in their typology God's plan for man even to the very end of the ages. They bring to us the unfolding purpose of God for us from the foundation of the world. An Old Testament type is literally a word picture or living example that prefigures that which is to come. In another sense, it is an exact shadow of that which does not yet exist. The apostle Paul in speaking of those things which happened to Israel in their wilderness journey stated, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (examples, object lessons), and they are written for OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD (AGE) ARE COME" **(I Cor. 10:11).** The apostle Paul again explains to us, "For the law HAVING A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, and not the very image of the things..." **(Heb. 10:1).** The shadows of the law were but school-masters to bring us to Christ. The greater work of a SPIRITUAL NATURE was still to be accomplished to fulfill these Old Testament types and shadows of which the three Feasts of Jehovah are a major part.

The three primary Feasts given to Israel were the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Two of these Feasts have now been fulfilled and are still being fulfilled in the body of Christ today. The last Feast still waits a future fulfillment that will begin at the completion and maturity of the Christ-body at the end of this age. Because of their typical nature, the Feasts have many times been overlooked as to their great significance in the proper interpretation of Bible prophecy. The Bible is full of such great truths that have been given for our enrichment and instruction, it it is up to those who "follow ON to know the Lord" to diligently dig out those truths that will lead us into greater depths in the Lord. Let us consider these Feasts in the light of our forward walk in God.

When God meets man in the first dimension, He meets us in the Feast of Passover. Jesus appears to us, He comes to us as SAVIOR in that realm. "When I see the blood, I will pass-over you!" **(Ex. 12:13).** I dare say every reader of these lines has passed through that Feast, has met and seen and experienced the Lord in that realm. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" **(I Cor. 5:7).** Jesus is the Lamb of God. The Old Paschal Feast is gone forever. We no longer need a Paschal Feast of the old type, we no longer need to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem in the Old Feast, for HE HAS APPEARED unto us as the Lamb of God and has cleansed us with His precious blood. Has God met with you for the first time? Has Christ come to you in the first dimension? Has He appeared to you as the Lamb of God? Have you eaten the Lamb? If so, the Lamb is WITHIN you!

The Feast of Pentecost was a separate Feast and the Pentecostal experience is a separate experience. Has God met with you a second time? Has Christ come to you in a second dimension of His presence and life and glory? Has He come from heaven as a rushing mighty wind and filled your house with power and glory? Has He appeared to you as Baptiser with the Holy Ghost and fire? Have you appeared before Him in the spiritual Feast of Pentecost? Then you are blessed indeed! But God does not stop at Pentecost and the second Feast is but the "earnest" and the "firstfruits" of the final Feast! In Israel the Feast of Pentecost was "the feast of harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labors" **(Deut. 16:9-12).** Under New Testament economy this is the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT. "And not only they, but ourselves also which have the FIRSTFRUITS of the Spirit..." (**Rom. 8:23).**

The last great Feast of the Israelite year was Tabernacles ... and startling as it might seem, this is the Feast that remains to be fulfilled! Tabernacles is called "the Feast of Ingathering, which is in the END OF THE YEAR." Pentecost is only the firstfruits of the Spirit, but Tabernacles is the full harvest - FULLNESS! And this fullness comes in the END of the year, at the completion of our walk with God, and I believe that we have not witnessed such fullness in any save in our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and neither shall we until the very close of this present age, The Feast of Tabernacles could not be celebrated until Israel had left the wilderness behind, and was dwelling in Canaan. Even so, Christ is bringing a great company of apprehended ones, in the END of this age, out of their wilderness wanderings of immaturity, carnality and struggle on into their promised land - the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST. Oh, yes, God shall surely give unto the elect sons of God the FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD of which we, up until this time, have only received the "earnest" or "firstfruits."

I do not hesitate to say that we are still partaking of the Feast of Pentecost. But I have good news for you. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN! He is coming in the Feast of Tabernacles, and BLESSED are they who are called to this great Feast, that which supersedes Pentecost, that which is the balance of the meal of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses. As we leave this Feast in great strength, those who shall represent the Kingdom of God on this planet from that time forth will be abiding in the fullness of HIS RESURRECTION LIFE. It shall mean a new day of hope and deliverance and glory for the whole earth as the Lord COMES AGAIN to meet man in this great and glorious Feast of HIS FULLNESS. This is the coming of the Lord that. the churches and television and radio evangelists know nothing about. The "rapture" crowd doesn't actually believe in the "COMING of the Lord" anyway - they believe in the "GOING of the saints"! While we teach the "APPEARING of Jesus" they teach the "DISAPPEARING of the Church." How much more wonderful and beautiful is the truth! Jesus is COMING! Glory to God!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 4
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEASTS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FOUR

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PASSOVER
THE PASSOVER GOD - OUR DEFENSE

No revelation, doctrine or system of teaching in the Old Testament can be fully comprehended until it has been correlated and integrated with the revelation of the New Testament. Together, the two books form the interlocking halves of one perfect whole. It may be said that the seed of all New Testament truth is found in the Old Testament text. But if that is true, it is equally accurate to say that all truth revealed in the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament. In a word, the flower of revelation, which blossomed from Moses to Malachi, has come to its fruit in the records from Matthew to Revelation. Therefore there can be no contradiction between the teachings of these two sections of God's Word, as one must merely complement the other.

The theme of the Old Testament is "Someone is coming!" Every prophet of the ancient times looked forward through the ages to the Coming One. Moses began the theme when he wrote, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and Malachi closed the continued reiteration joined in by all the prophets, when he told of the Sun of Righteousness which should arise, with healing in His rays. But the New Testament has two themes, both of them centering in one Person. The first theme is "Someone has come!" This, indeed, is borne out by Philip, who sought out Nathanael with the startling greeting, "Come and see! We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write!" He did indeed come, but the shame of His rejection remains as the vilest blot upon the page of human activities. Rejected, cast out, and crucified, He ascended back into heaven, from whence He had come. Then follows the second theme of the New Testament, which may be stated as "Someone is coming again!" Thus the entire scripture centers in the Person of One who was to come, who did come, and who is coming again. He is the coming One of Old Testament promise, and is the object of our present study.

The Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Christ exhibit the same peculiarity as those of the New Testament, in that they foretell many distinct events, but do not usually state the order of their occurrence, or the length of the interval between them, or the manner of their fulfillment. The students of Old Testament prophecy who sought to fix the time of the coming of the expected King would have pondered such passages for example, as **Zech. 9:9:** "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." And in the attempt to fix the order of His coming in relation to other predicted events they would, of course, have noted particularly **Isa. 40:3: "**The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord"; and **Mal. 3:3:** "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"; and **Mal. 4:5:** "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

From these prophecies the expositor might have insisted, and with a show of reason, that the Lord could not "come" to His "temple" until the messenger should first appear to prepare the way "before" Him; and that they who looked for Him to appear before the predicted messenger were indulging a vain expectation. Yet the fact is that the Lord came, on the natural plane, to His Old Testament Temple, thirty years BEFORE the predicted messenger appeared to announce Him; and He was seen by Simeon (the "hearer") who was led by the Holy Spirit, by Anna, who waited upon the Lord in the temple, by the shepherds who were keeping their flocks by night, and by the wise men from the East, who saw His star, and hence must have been watching in the night; and, moreover, His coming was made known "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" **(Lk. 2:38).**

It seems to me that for centuries our eyes have been kept holden to many of the great truths of the scripture. We have read and studied the Bible, taking for granted that our minds comprehended fully what was written and frequently just reading over the passages and understanding little or nothing of the precious gems of divine truth which lay hidden just beneath the surface. We should not berate ourselves for this lack of understanding, always keeping in mind that God never reveals anything to anybody until HE IS READY to reveal it, and He is never ready to reveal anything until the "fullness of time" has arrived in which He is about to accomplish that which He discloses.

For centuries Israel had looked for the coming of the Messiah until their eyes were dim with watching, but who among them had even the faintest idea of how that coming would be accomplished? They did not expect a virgin birth; they did not expect a lowly birth; they did not expect a teacher at variance with their organized religion and their established creeds; they did not expect the supernatural ministry of healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead; they did not expect an ignominious death by crucifixion followed by a startling resurrection; they did not expect an ascension into heaven. All these things were contrary to their expectations and their established interpretations of the predictions of the prophets. Most Jews missed the glory of the coming of Christ because it was so different from their cherished beliefs and because it all seemed too fantastic to be true. They failed to accept the prophesied events when they transpired before their very eyes.

I do not hesitate to tell you that modern Christians are viewing the Bible completely "out of focus" in the same way as did the Jews of old! We will never discover anything that God chooses to hide from us, but our highest concern should be that when God does draw back the curtain and send us light that we receive the hidden treasure, for if we reject it, the light we have becomes darkness and we can understand nothing. When the Spirit of wisdom and revelation illuminates a truth to our heart, it is time to grasp it and pursue it with all spiritual vigor and determination, for if we tarry it will be covered again, and we will miss it. Do you remember that Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even, so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight"? The moment the blessed Spirit of Truth begins to unveil a truth, it is time to earnestly seek Him and beseech Him to instruct us in it. Do not submit God's revelation to the criticism of some dead church member or indoctrinated preacher, for they like the crows that gather to the farmer's field will steal away the seed of the truth before it has a chance to sprout or take root within you.

'There can be no doubt that we are living in an hour when the Lord is revealing many things that concern the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am certain, however, that even now we see them only darkly. We catch only faint and fleeting glimpses of the glory of His many-splendored coming. We are looking for the REVELATION of Jesus Christ. We are looking for the UNVEILING of the sons of God. The revelation will reveal what is hidden. The unveiling will reveal what has been kept concealed. As the lightning flashes forth from the ominous darkness of swirling stormy clouds, so the manifestation will disclose what has been hidden in the darkness.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

I would draw your attention to an enlightening passage of scripture in **Prov. 22:19-21.** "That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee EXCELLENT THINGS in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" The word "EXCELLENT", as used here, is the Hebrew word SHALISH meaning three-fold, or weighty. It is most interesting to note that Young's Literal translation renders it, "Have I not written to thee THREE TIMES with counsels and knowledge?" A free translation would run, "Have I not written unto you THREE-FOLD things?" Three-fold things. These are the excellent things of God. These are weighty things, things which have depth upon depth upon depth in their meaning. This three-fold principle is brought forth again and again as the Spirit unfolds the truth appointed for His overcoming company in this important hour.

While men speak of the "first coming" and the "second coming" of Christ, God's program is in THREES. God has promised to meet with man in THREE DIMENSIONS. He has met man historically and experientially in the first and second realms. I declare to you that He will meet with us dispensationally and experientially yet a THIRD time! The pattern is clear: "THREE TIMES in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God

in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD (Passover), and in the feast of WEEKS (Pentecost), and in the feast of TABERNACLES: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty" **(Deut. 16:16).** God says that He will meet with man THREE times - in the three great Feasts of the Lord! "THREE TIMES in a year shall all your males appear before the Lord." To "appear before the Lord" designates not only an action on our part, but a reciprocal action on God's part. Not only must we appear, but HE MUST APPEAR! It is a joint-meeting in which WE APPEAR B-E-F-O-R-E_H-I-M, or as the apostle has so eloquently explained, "When Christ, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, then shall YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM in glory" **(Col. 3:4).** When this three-fold aspect of His appearing is clearly understood, then the fact that the scriptures nowhere speak of just a "first coming" and a "second coming" takes on new meaning!

The Feasts of Jehovah were but types and shadows of those things that were yet to come. These Feasts portrayed in their typology God's plan for this world even to the very end of the ages. They bring to us the unfolding plan of redemption that was ordained before the foundation of the world. An Old Testament type is literally a word picture or an object lesson that pre-figures that which is to come. In another sense, it is an exact shadow of that which does not yet exist. The apostle Paul in speaking of those things which happened to Israel in their wilderness journey stated, "Now all these things happened unto them for ENSAMPLES (EXAMPLES), and they are written for OUR ADMONITION (INSTRUCTION), upon whom the ends of the world (age) are come" **(I Cor. 10:11).**

It is made very plain by this scripture that Israel's history contains numbers of events that were a figure, a type, a shadow, of those events that were yet to come. The apostle Paul again explains this to us: **"**For the law having a SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" **(Heb. 10:1).** The shadows of the law were but school-masters to bring us to Christ. The greater work of a spiritual nature was still to be accomplished to fulfill these Old Testament types and shadows of which the three Feasts of the Lord are a major part. The Word of God never ceases to amaze as the intricate patterns of the plan of God weave in and out of scripture to produce a perfect plan in the consummation of it all. At first glance, as one reads the Old Testament record, the Feasts seem so insignificant and without further need of reference. They appear to be something to keep Israel busy and happy and their times of observation could fall in any order. The unsearchable riches of God found here are hidden from the eyes of a sin-blinded world and a carnal-minded church, but to those who walk in the Spirit of the Lord they speak of the wonders wrought in redeemed lives by the Spirit of the living God, and of supernal glories yet to come.

The three primary Feasts given to Israel were the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Two of these Feasts have now been fulfilled and are still being fulfilled in the body of Christ today. The last Feast still waits a future fulfillment that will begin at the completion and maturity of the Christ-body at the end of this age. Because of their typical nature, the Feasts have many times been overlooked as to their great significance in the proper interpretation of Bible prophecy. The Bible is full of such great truths that have been given for our enrichment and instruction, but it is up to those who "follow ON to KNOW the Lord" to diligently dig out those truths under the illuminating power of the Spirit, that will lead us into greater depths and heights in the Lord. Let us consider these Feasts in the light of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to understand the coming of the Lord in the Feasts, it will be helpful to trace the origin of the word itself. When we speak of a feast, we are prone to picture a banquet of rich foods and an evening of entertainment. But such is not the original concept of the word. Festival comes a little nearer to expressing the thought. It suggests gala attire, parades, singing, dancing - a holiday spent in celebrating some new event or in commemorating one in the past. The Hebrew word translated feast is CHAG. It refers to a SACRED feast - not an ordinary meal given for entertainment. Its original meaning is a procession, a dance, or a public dramatization of some event. The eating and drinking which accompanied it were of secondary importance. From the earliest times it was the custom of heathen peoples to observe certain festal days. Primarily these seasons were for the purpose of worshiping or appeasing their idol gods. The occasion gave them an opportunity to openly display their beliefs, by various forms of art and ceremony, and thus to instruct all who witnessed the celebration in the tenets of their religion. This custom continues to this very day among primitive peoples. Our own American Indians, though now educated according to our way of life, still preserve their cultural and religious heritage by means of such ceremonies and festivals.

In Old Testament times they had no books or other means of teaching one another. Most of the religions confined their ordinances to a small body of priests, and the common man had little or no religious instruction. However, the feast was the exception to this rule. When the festal season dawned, all work and business were laid aside, and old and young alike donned their finest garments and jewels and joined the great crowds in an open display of "worship" and religious education.

There is no indication that the children of Israel ever celebrated ceremonial feasts until the time of their deliverance from Egypt. It is a matter of profound significance that their feasting began with their deliverance, and that the idea of it did not originate in their own hearts. It was formed in the heart of the Lord Himself! HE desired to take His people into the wilderness, that they might worship Him and keep a Feast with Him. He revealed His will through His servant Moses: "And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a FEAST unto the LORD" **(Ex. 10:9).**

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people - a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His children. It is true that He disciplines, that He leads us in paths of sacrifice, fasting, travail and tears - in their proper place. But He causes the sacrifice to be turned into increase, He exchanges the ashes for beauty, and the tears He turns to laughter! He set a Feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the like of which man has never been able to reproduce, and He communed with them face to face. He ate with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and gave them the very bread of heaven. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts, nor to eat with publicans and sinners. He also attended the Feast of dedication and the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:37; 10:22) during the years of His public ministry. He heartily desired to keep the Feast of Passover with His chosen disciples, and He has established the New Covenant with a Feast, a great spiritual Feast, wherein He has given the redeemed His own body for their meat and His own blood for their drink. He has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He will make a Feast, a great Feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for all nations, upon His holy Mount (Isa. 25:6). And the greatest Feast of all - the marriage supper of the Lamb - will usher a people into the most intimate relationship with their Lord!

The Feast means, that God and man are brought together, the Lord appears unto man to associate Himself with him in an intimate manner, in an extremely close and joyful relationship. Christ comes in three Feasts, three unique and wonderful relationships between Himself and His people, and these relationships become real to us and become His coming and His appearing unto us, praise His glorious name!

The Feasts have at least three aspects to them. They have the memorial aspect, they were done in memory of something, they pointed back to something, back to something God had done. The Feast of Passover was kept in memory of Israel's deliverance from slavery and bondage in Egypt. Every year when the Feast of Passover was observed the children would ask, "What are we doing this for?" Then the father would sit down and tell his children the story of what God did back in Egypt. Thus it was in memory and as a memorial of God's protection in Egypt and their deliverance from Egypt. The Feast of Pentecost was given in memory of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai as the children of Israel passed through the desert on their way to the land of promise. The Feast of Tabernacles was kept in memory of their entering into the land of promise and into their full inheritance and possession. So each of the Feasts were instituted as a memorial to something grand and glorious that God had done for His people.

Every one of these Feasts had also a prophetic aspect. That is, they pointed not just to the past, but they pointed forth to the future. They pre-figured something that God was going to do. They were prophetic in their implication. They pointed toward something that God declared He purposed to yet perform for His people. The prophetic aspect of the Passover was that the slaying of the Paschal lamb pre-figured Christ's death on Calvary as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. The Feast of Pentecost was prophetic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by which the Law of God, written at Sinai upon tablets of stone, would be finally written by the Spirit of God upon the fleshy tables of our hearts.

Every one of the Feasts of the Lord have not only a historical aspect, pointing back to something God did, and a prophetic aspect, pointing forward to something God would do; but every one of them has a personal and individual aspect in our lives experientially. Each Feast finds its fulfillment in our forward walk in God. In Passover we see a picture of our justification. In the Feast of Pentecost we have a picture of our baptism with the Holy Spirit, the "firstfruits" of our inheritance. In the Feast of Tabernacles we find a picture of our glorification, our entrance into the fullness of our inheritance and possession in God, even all the wisdom, knowledge, life, victory, nature and power of the Almighty.

A feast involves an appointed day, a public assembly at a fixed time or season. The feast days were occasions when Israel kept divine appointments; times when they assembled BEFORE THE LORD; times when they MET WITH GOD in great joy and festivity. All their worship centered around these three major religious festivals. Our Redeemer has also set some appointments for us, and He expects us to keep them. Only by keeping these divine appointments can we meet with Him or know and experience Him in His comings and appearings. The sublime truth is not merely that we are called to appear before Him in the Feast, but that HE COMES to the Feast! HE APPEARS in the Feast! In Passover we meet the Son; in Pentecost we meet the Spirit; and in Tabernacles we meet the Father. God in Christ comes to us in three dimensions in the Feasts. Furthermore, there is a complete salvation that God has ordained for man, in spirit, soul and body, and these three Feasts. provide for it all. All three ate necessary for a full salvation.

Another important truth in relation to these Feasts is that they are all HIS FEASTS! There are so many Christians today who are possessed of the childish notion that God is the manager of a great heavenly super market, or that He is a glorified celestial Santa Claus. All we have to do is just quote our favorite "faith scripture," snap our finger, turn our faith loose, and God comes running with a load of goodies with which to satisfy our every whim and fancy. NOT SO! He is LORD. He is SOVEREIGN. He is KING. And these are not our Feasts, they are HIS FEASTS. This is a grand and sublime truth we must understand from the beginning if we would progress into the depths of God. These are HIS FEASTS, the Feasts of THE LORD! He's the Host, and we are the guests. Sometimes people like to appear religious, and they hang on the wall a little plaque that says, "Christ is the unseen guest at every meal." I trust, my brother, my sister, that Christ is NOT the guest in your home! He should be the HOST! He must be LORD!

GOD appointed who would meet with Him in the Feasts. All the males of Israel were to keep the Feasts and appear before Him in the place where He put His name; so the Feasts are especially for sons. Not only did God designate WHO would meet with Him, but He specified WHEN they would meet and WHERE they would meet. God ordained the whole thing and established the order thereof. He commanded that they meet with Him in the place where the name of the Lord was recorded. In Old Testament economy that was first in the tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the temple at Jerusalem. In New Testament fulfillment it is first of all in Jesus Christ and then in His many-membered body. The name of the Lord, which means the nature of the Lord, was recorded in the life of Jesus Christ and now is being sealed in the foreheads of His firstfruits company who are putting on the precious mind of the Christ. Furthermore, God gave commandment concerning what the males of Israel were to bring to His Feasts. He left no detail lacking. HE was the Lord of WHO, WHEN WHERE, WHAT and HOW in relation to His Feasts. You will come HIS way, precious friend of mine, and see Him and know Him and experience Him in HIS APPOINTED FEASTS, or you will never see Him at all!

The children of Israel were delivered from Egypt in the first month and the Feast of Passover was celebrated in the first month. The Law was given at Mount Sinai in the third month and the Feast of Pentecost was kept in the third month. The people gathered in the abundance of their crops for the first time in the land of promise in the seventh month and the Feast of Tabernacles was observed in the seventh month. When God meets man in the first dimension, He meets us in the Feast of Passover. Jesus appears to us, He comes to us as SAVIOUR in that realm. "When I see the blood, I will pass-over you!" **(Ex. 12:13).** I am confident that every reader of these lines has passed through that Feast, has met and seen and experienced the Lord in that realm. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" **(I Cor. 5:7).** Jesus is the Lamb of God. The old Paschal Feast is gone forever. We no longer need a Paschal Feast of the old type, we no longer need to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem in the Old Feast, for HE HAS APPEARED unto us as the Lamb of God and has cleansed us with His precious blood. Has God met with you for the first time? Has Christ come to you in the

first dimension? Has He appeared to you as the Lamb of God? Have you eaten the Lamb? If so, the Lamb is WITHIN you!

The Feast of Pentecost was a separate Feast and the Pentecostal experience is a separate experience. Has God met with you a second time? Has Christ come to you in a second dimension of His presence and life and glory? Has He come from heaven as a rushing mighty wind and filled your house with power and glory? Has He appeared to you as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and Fire? Have you appeared before Him in the joy and glory of the spiritual Feast of Pentecost? Then you are blessed indeed! But the idea entertained by many Christians is that now since we have had Passover and Pentecost, there is nothing left to do but die and go to heaven, or catch the rapture, whichever comes first. That's what most folk tell me. There's nothing more. The only things that remain to be experienced in God beyond salvation and speaking in tongues and blessings are golden streets and harps and palm branches for eternity. But I have news for you, my friend. God does not stop at Pentecost and the second Feast is but the "earnest" and the "firstfruits" of the final Feast! In Israel the Feast of Pentecost was "the feast of harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labors" (Deut. 16:9-12). Under New Testament economy this is the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT. "And not only they, but ourselves also which have the FIRSTFRUITS of the Spirit..." **(Rom. 8:23).** We have had the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost and both of these Feasts have been fulfilled IN THIS AGE IN THE CHURCH which is His body, and right here on the earth. For some strange reason men seek to postpone the last Feast to some future age, or give it to the Jews, or relegate it to some beautiful "Isle of Somewhere," and consequently the real spiritual meaning and import of the Feast of Tabernacles is completely obscured and lost. The grand truth is that like the others, the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the body of Christ. It will be fulfilled dispensationally, it will be fulfilled in us individually, and it will be fulfilled in us as the Corporate Man.

No Bible scholar in the world will dispute the truth that on Calvary's hill and in the lives of multiplied millions of believers the Feast of Passover was and is fulfilled. No Bible scholar on the face of the earth will dispute the truth that in Acts chapter two the Feast of Pentecost came to pass in reality. The Old Pentecostal Feast has gone forever. The Pentecostal Feast can never be reestablished as in olden times, because the promise of the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost has come. We need not implore any more for the Holy Ghost to come, for the Holy Ghost has come and has never gone away, and remains a gentle, gracious, loving Spirit, desiring to enter every heart and impress the Law of God there, And just as surely as these came to pass in the lives of New Testament saints, the body of Jesus Christ is going to experience the Feast of Tabernacles and all that it speaks of. The Feast of Tabernacles is a further realm and a higher dimension of our walk in God. We have no record in the New Testament nor in church history of the Feast of Tabernacles finding fulfillment. If it wasn't fulfilled, then it remains to be fulfilled. Its just that simple. Not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the Law of God till ALL BE FULFILLED.

The last great Feast of the Israelite year was Tabernacles ... and this is the Feast that remains to be fulfilled! Tabernacles is called "the feast of the INGATHERING, which is in the END OF THE YEAR." Pentecost is only the firstfruits of the Spirit, but Tabernacles is the full harvest - FULLNESS! And this fullness comes in the END of the year, at the completion of our progressive walk with God, and I believe that we have not witnessed such fullness in any save in our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and neither shall we until the very close of this present age. The Feast of Tabernacles could not be celebrated until Israel had left the wilderness behind, and was dwelling in Canaan. Even so, Christ is bringing a great company of apprehended ones, in the END of this age, at the consummation of our progression into God, out of their wilderness wanderings of immaturity, carnality, limitation and struggle on in to their promised land - the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST. Oh, yes, God shall surely give unto the elect sons of God the FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD of which we, up until this time, have only received the "earnest" or "firstfruits."

I do not hesitate to say that for the most part we are still partaking of the Feast of Pentecost. How bountifully the table has been spread with His presence and divers gifts of the Holy Spirit! But the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast at the END of the year, is the Feast of Fullness. I have more good news for you. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN! He is coming in the Feast of Tabernacles, and BLESSED are they who are called to this great Feast, that which supercedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses. And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal which will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great things for the Master. And this

Tabernacles Feast, being the last, shall bring perfection! It will bring the consummation of our SALVATION, spirit, soul and body. As we leave this Feast in great strength, those who will be in control of this planet from that time forth will be abiding in the fullness of RESURRECTION LIFE and will be forever free from the curse, spirit, soul and body. It shall mean a new day of hope and deliverance and glory for the whole earth as the Lord COMES AGAIN to meet man in this great and glorious Feast of HIS FULLNESS. In the Feast of Passover He comes as JESUS, the Savior. In the Feast of Pentecost He tomes as CHRIST, the Anointed One, and thus the Anointer, for the anointing, which we have received, we received OF HIM. But in the Feast of Tabernacles He comes as LORD, the Lord of the harvest, the Lord of Fullness! There is a depth of inworking taking place these days in those whom He has apprehended for the realms beyond. They are slowly, but surely, coming to know Him as LORD of all their life. There are depths of truth, which cannot be uttered by voice or inscribed by pen, so may HE grant illumination far beyond what is here written.

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

The people of Israel were under bondage in Egypt. They suffered a physical, economic, and spiritual slavery such as no nation up to that time had ever endured. Then God called Moses to lead them out of that bondage. The Bible records the history of the plagues that came upon Egypt because Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. The tenth plague resulted in the death of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, but Israel was protected from that plague. It would be well to read the whole account, for it has much to do with the subject we are discussing. The record will be found in Exodus, chapter twelve, where the Lord said: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" **(Ex. 12:2).**

God here gave Israel a new calendar. The sacred year, as far as Israel was concerned, was to the begin with the time of the Exodus from Egypt. This caused the first month of this New Year to correspond generally with our present month of April. It was a time of birthing, when as a nation they were thrust forth from the Egyptian womb of bondage and captivity. After 430 years of servitude, they were released at last unto a pathway of freedom and fulfillment. From this date forward Israel was to have a new calendar. This occasion would mark the first month of their New Year because God was going to deliver them from Egyptian bondage, and bring them into a new experience and a new land. Israel's old associations were to be gone forever! They would now depart out of the world system to which they had for 430 years been slaves.

No longer would they serve the Egyptian taskmaster under cruel bondage, but they were to serve the Lord their God. No longer were they to eat the leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt, but they would feast upon the manna from heaven, and drink water out of the flinty rock. No longer would they abide in the houses of their mean world in Egypt, but they would henceforth follow the cloud of glory from one place to another, from one experience to another, even from "glory to glory." Had not the Lord God plainly declared, **"**I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them" **(Ex. 3:7-8).** And so, to deliver Israel from the judgment of the firstborn, and to prepare them for a new life as a separated and holy nation, God instituted the Passover. And the faithful observance of the rites and ceremonies connected to this event would mean the preservation of Israel in the hour of God's judgments upon the land of Egypt, and the beginning of a new era for the people of God. On the tenth day of that month they were to select a lamb from the flock, one without blemish, and they were to keep it until the evening of the fourteenth day. Then it was to be killed and its flesh was to be eaten. Its blood was to be applied upon the lintel and upon the two side posts of each doorway in all their houses. This was to be the means of their salvation in view of the coming judgment that night. The Lord's promise to them was, "...when I see the blood, I will pass over you..." **(Ex. 12:13).**

Every redeemed spirit will shout a thousand hallelujahs at the rich truths portrayed by this prophetic symbolism. Enlightened eyes can readily see Jesus, the Son of God, being selected by the Father to become our Paschal Lamb. We can see Him, laying down His life without murmur or complaint, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Ah, how blessed to have His precious blood applied, to be among the redeemed (Eph. 1:7), to be justified (Rom. 5:9), to be at peace with God (Col. 1:20), and to experience restored fellowship with our heavenly Father (Eph. 2:13)! How very real to every true believer has been this deliverance from the world and a life of sin. Indeed, the Passover experience is a brand new beginning, a new day, a new year, a new calendar, a new life, a new era for the child of God. Old things begin to pass away, and all things begin to become new. The bondage of the world and sin, the old life-style of serving the lusts of the

flesh and of the mind is left behind, giving way to a new walk in the Spirit of God, a life of servitude to the God of our salvation. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" **(Rom. 6:18).** From the time we receive Christ as our personal Savior, and really partake of the power of His blood, from that very hour we begin a new life in God. Historically and experientially the death of Jesus Christ was the first step in the process of producing a spiritual kingdom of people who would eventually rule and reign with the Lord over the earth and all things. Jesus spoke of the fruit of His death in this manner: "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" **(Jn. 12:23-24).** Jesus died that through His death He might become the firstfruits of a vast family of sons of God who would follow Him.

The coming of Christ in the Feast of Passover brought a new beginning for us and for the whole world. Did it really make any difference? Was the world any different for His coming? The coming of Jesus Christ into the world was the greatest boon in the history of mankind. In fact, the coming of Christ so clearly divides the history of the world into B.C. and A.D., that no one can write a letter or sign a check without bearing mute testimony to the incomparable excellencies and accomplishments of the Carpenter of Galilee. Indeed, Jesus makes a great difference! All the world is different because He came. Can you even imagine what the world would be like today had He NOT COME? The entire history of mankind before His coming can be seen as nothing other than a preparation for His advent into the world. All history since His coming has simply been the unfolding of the progress of His Spirit in the hearts of men and the effect of His Kingdom in the world.

I would like to have you consider with me the wonders of the coming of Christ in the Feast of Passover. His coming was an event that caused men and women and even mighty angels in heaven to wonder. How the angels must have wondered in astonishment when they saw, to their utter unbelief, that the glorious Word of God had left His eternal glory in heaven, where unnumbered cherubim and seraphim worshipped Him with unceasing adoring adulation, and now was born in the filth and stench of a stable. It was not a plaster of Paris stable with little white donkeys, but a filthy stinking stable, where the Son of God was born. How the angels must have wondered at that! A time of wonder! Not only the angels, but Mary herself was filled with wonderment. "How shall this be," she said, "seeing that I know not a man?" Her heart was filled with amazement and Joseph must have been overwhelmed with astonishment at the news that his wife had conceived by the Almighty. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Mary's heart was filled with wonder and she kept these things in her heart and pondered upon them - that God Almighty had come and had been born in human form. What amazement, what wonder must have filled her soul when she looked down into the face of that little baby to which she had given birth and knew that this was not just a human baby but was the incarnate God. This was the Creator of the galaxies who had come to dwell in human flesh. Her heart must surely have been overwhelmed with the wonder of that! Consider the Magi who came all the way from the Far East at the sight of that star, knowing that the ancient prophecy had been fulfilled and that the Messiah of the world had come. What awe must have filled their souls as they crept in and bowed down before that little child and offered themselves and their gifts.

How many people down through the ages have been filled with wonder. And all that I have said pales into insignificance beside the surpassing wonder of this blessed One hanging and dying like a common criminal upon a Roman cross. Behold, the Lamb of God! Behold the Paschal Lamb! Behold the blood of Jesus! Beloved, it is the most incredible story in the history of the world! It is tragic that the repeated telling of it robs it of its wonder and astonishment in our hearts. Perhaps one of the most wonderful things about the reality of Christ our Passover is the motive that brought it to pass - a motive of love, infinite love, undying love, unconquerable love, the unconditioned love of God who sent the Son of God into this world.

But there is an even greater wonder than this. John the beloved in his Gospel said, "And the Word was MADE FLESH and dwelt among us" **(Jn. 1:14).** The question follows: Of what substance was the Word before He became flesh? The answer is clear: He was SPIRIT, of course! Didn't Jesus say that God is a Spirit? And did He not also say that HE CAME FROM GOD AND WOULD RETURN BACK TO GOD? As physical men of earth it is difficult to understand the world we cannot see. We have been guided by our five physical senses so long that if we cannot see, taste, touch, hear or smell a thing we cannot comprehend it. To speak of the flesh

body of Jesus brings reference to that which was made to be given in sacrifice. A body was prepared for the Word of God to be manifested in. In the Greek New Testament we read, "Hence when He comes into the world He says ... A body Thou hast fitted Me" **(Heb. 10:5).** We must understand that the Word was not flesh substance until He entered into the world. It was a means of conveyance and also for a SACRIFICE. That body could function in this world but its main goal or purpose was to be the sacrificial offering for all mankind. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 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. 9:27-28).**

In order to understand the coming of Christ to us today, we must first understand His coming in that Passover Feast of long ago. When was it, beloved, that you BEHELD HIM for the first time? Was it not by the eye of the spirit? Did you not see Him by the eye of the spirit hanging on a tree, becoming the sacrificial Lamb on your behalf? But what you saw so clearly by the revelation of the Spirit in your heart actually happened on a hill outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago! The Christ is not here today in that body of flesh hanging on a tree. He has returned to the Father, back into the realm of the Spirit. And it was there in that eternal realm that the Lamb of God was truly given. May the blessed Spirit of Truth somehow help us to understand that He was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world! He had already been slain before Adam was banished from Eden's garden, before Abraham trod the dusty trails of Palestine, before David prophesied of One who would be wounded for our transgressions. What happened on that Judean hill twenty centuries ago was but the dark shadow of an event, which had transpired in the realm of spirit before the ages were framed or ever God said, "Let there be!"

Oh, yes, Jesus died on that hill by Jerusalem on that day long ago, but He appeared to you as YOUR SIN OFFERING in the here and now, and you beheld Him in spirit hanging upon a tree for you. Historically He came as the Passover Lamb two millenniums ago, but by the quickening of the Spirit He APPEARED TO YOU as that same Jesus, the very Lamb of God, and He was brought bleeding and dying into your present, in a manner more real and wonderful than it was to those wondering souls who stood gazing in shocked anguish at the foot of the cross that day at Jerusalem. You see, when He appeared to you as YOUR PASSOVER LAMB, you beheld Him in spirit. It was not the shadow of the Man of Galilee that you saw, but the One who was slain in the realm of spirit from the foundation of the world! He became manifested in power in your life in the true Feast of Passover, not in the shadow, but in the substance. He CAME TO YOU as the Lamb, in the eternal and infinite power of His blood, in the authority of His life, and a new and glorious day dawned for you, a NEW BEGINNING. Oh, the wonder of it! The mystery of it!

THE PASSOVER GOD OUR DEFENSE

God said, "When I see the blood I will PASS OVER you." For years I thought that meant that God would "skip over" them, that when He passed through the land meting out death to the firstborns, he would see the blood and "pass on by." "I will skip over you." But that isn't what He said. Notice **Ex. 12:23:** "The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and over the two side posts, the Lord will PASS OVER THE DOOR, and will NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER TO COME IN UNTO YOUR HOUSES TO SMITE YOU." Now who was doing the smiting? The Destroyer! "I will pass over the door, and will not allow the Destroyer to come in." God was saying, not that He would skip over them, or pass them by, but He was assuring them, "I will become a tent, I will impose my presence over you and you can stand under the tent of My presence and be safe! The Destroyer will be out there but he can't get in - because I will be there! I will pass over you, and will not allow the Destroyer to come in unto you."

Who is the Destroyer that was in the land of Egypt that dark night? The Destroyer was the ANGEL OF DEATH. According to Heb. 2:14, throughout the Old Testament period the devil HAD the power of death. At Calvary Jesus took it away from him and now the Christ of God holds the keys of both hell and death in His mighty hands. None enter or leave those dread realms except at His word. All power and authority over all things in heaven above, and in earth below, and in the nether world has been given into the hands of the triumphant Christ. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, that is, THE DEVIL" **(Heb. 2:14).** Jesus rendered Satan powerless. He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The Greek word here rendered "destroyed" means that He rendered him powerless. The Weymouth

translation reads, "...in order that through death He might render powerless him who had authority over death, that is, the Devil, and might set at liberty all those who through fear of death had been subject to lifelong slavery." The Amplified Bible renders, "...that by going through death He might bring to nought and make of no effect him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and also that He might deliver and completely set free all those who through the haunting fear of death were held in bondage throughout the whole course of their lives."

In Old Testament times Satan was the angel of death, appointed by God to that purpose. "Behold," says the Lord, "I have created the waster to destroy" **(Isa. 54:16).** The Lord unleashed the mad dog, the devil, that night in Egypt. You see, the devil is just a mad dog on the end of God's leash, and God turned him loose that night with command to smite the firstborn. God unleashed that dark angel of death in the land of Egypt, but what did God do? God said, "I'm going to come down in the midst of you, and when I see the blood I will interpose My presence over you. I will pass over you and not permit the Destroyer to come in unto your house." Notice **Ex. 12:26-27:** "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and DELIVERED OUR HOUSES. And the people bowed the head and worshipped."

God passed over their houses to protect them. He became a defense for them. He became a refuge. His power became a strong and impregnable fortress round about them. Ps. 91 is, I believe, an allusion to the Passover. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

If you have met God in the Feast of Passover, if the Christ has come to you in the reality of this wonderful Feast, where are you today? Under His feathers, under His wings! The Passover God has come and has passed over us, when we embraced Him as our Savior. When you took the blood of Jesus and applied it to your life, that blood brought the covering presence of the Almighty God. You have perfect protection against the Destroyer! I have no time for the crowd of fear-mongers that roams our land today. I have nothing in common with those who constantly peddle fear - fear of tribulation, fear of the terrible conditions at the close of this age, fear of the Antichrist, fear of economic collapse, fear of communism, fear of the Illuminati, fear of computer systems, fear of conspiracies, fear of demons, fear of death.

There is a lot of false teaching going around today on demonology, and men casting all kinds of devils out of the saints, and bringing a totally erroneous concept, which is neither scriptural nor right, leaving people in confusion and in fear of demons and the devil. When you come in under the covering of the Passover God, the God who passes and hovers over you as a fortress and a defense, you have perfect protection against the Destroyer and all his forces. I do not hesitate to tell you today that I am not afraid of the devil - the devil is afraid of me! And he's afraid of you, if you have truly experienced the Lord in the Feast of Passover. Nowhere does the Bible state that the Christians fear the devil - it says in James 2:19 that the devils believe and What? - tremble!

It is the devils that are trembling today! God has a people who are marching through the land triumphant above all the fear of demons, the devil, the world, death, and all that business. There is a tremendous need for the Lord's elect to know their place under the blood and in the indwelling and overshadowing presence of the Lord. HAS HE COME TO YOU IN THE FEAST OF PASSOVER? Are you eating and drinking and rejoicing with Him in that wonderful Festival? Ah, GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 5
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEASTS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FIVE

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PENTECOST
CHRIST IS THE SPIRIT
THE COMING OF CHRIST AS THE SPIRIT

I believe every word that the Bible says about the coming of our Lord; I don't believe what the apostate churches say about it, nor what the television evangelists say about it, nor what the tradition-bound preachers say about; but I certainly believe what the Bible says about it!

Briefly, I would again draw your attention to a passage of scripture in **Prov. 22:19-21. "**That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee EXCELLENT THINGS in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" The word "EXCELLENT", as used here, is the Hebrew word SHALISH meaning three-fold, or weighty. It is most interesting to note that Young's Literal Translation renders it, "Have I not written to thee THREE TIMES with counsels and knowledge?" A free translation would run, "Have I not written unto you THREE-FOLD things?" Three-fold things. These are the excellent things of God. These are weighty things, things, which have depth upon depth upon depth in their meaning. This three-fold principle is brought forth again and again as the Spirit unfolds the truth appointed for His overcoming company in this important hour.

While men speak of the "first coming" and the "second coming" of Christ, God's program is in THREES. God has promised to meet with man in THREE DIMENSIONS. He has met man historically and experientially in the first and second realms. I declare to you that He will meet with us dispensationally and experientially yet a THIRD time! The pattern is clear**:** "THREE TIMES in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD (Passover), and in the feast of WEEKS (Pentecost), and in the feast of TABERNACLES: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty" **(Deut. 16:16).** God says that He will meet with man THREE times - in the three great Feasts of the Lord! "THREE TIMES in a year shall all your males appear before the Lord." To "appear before the Lord" designates not only an action on our part, but a reciprocal action on God's part. Not only must we appear, but HE MUST APPEAR! It is a joint-meeting in which WE APPEAR B-E-F-O-R-E_H-I-M, even as He appears in His glory as He did in Jerusalem of old. Or, as the apostle has so eloquently explained, "When Christ, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, then shall,YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM in glory" **(Col. 3:4).** When this three-fold aspect of His appearing is properly understood, then the fact that the scriptures nowhere speak of just a "first coming" and a "second coming" takes on new meaning!

The three primary Feasts given to Israel were the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Two of these Feasts have now been fulfilled and are still being fulfilled in the body of Christ today. The last Feast still waits a future fulfillment that will begin at the completion and maturity of the Christ-body at the end of this age. Every one of the Feasts of the Lord have not only a historical aspect, pointing back to something God did, and a prophetic aspect, pointing forward to something God would do; but every one of them has a personal and individual aspect in our lives experientially. Each Feast finds it fulfillment in our forward walk in God. In Passover we see a picture of our justification, with sins forgiven. In the Feast of Pentecost we have a picture of our baptism with the Holy Spirit, the "firstfruits" of our inheritance. In the Feast of Tabernacles we find a picture of our glorification, our entrance into the fullness of our inheritance and possession in God, even all the wisdom, knowledge, life, victory, nature and power of the Almighty.

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

The Feast of Pentecost was the second of Israel's three annual Feasts, celebrated in the third month. As the scriptures reveal, the Feast had many names. It was called the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Weeks, the Day of Firstfruits, the Feast of Firstfruits of Israel's Labor, and the Feast of Pentecost, which means "fiftieth." An examination of Lev. 23:15-16 will reveal why the Feast is called Fiftieth. It was because the Feast began on the fiftieth day after the Passover Sabbath, or "the morrow after the seventh Sabbath." This, of course, parallels exactly with the fulfillment of the type in the New Testament. When Christ arose from the dead, He continued with the disciples for the space of forty days, "speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" **(Acts 1:3**). Then He departed into heaven, and after ten days (at the time of Israel's Feast of Pentecost), He sent forth the Holy Ghost upon the waiting disciples.

Many are under the misapprehension that the day the waiting disciples received the Holy Spirit, is called the Day of Pentecost because the Lord poured out His Spirit on that day. But the Bible says that the Spirit came "when the Day of Pentecost was fully come." The fact is, the Day of Pentecost had been celebrated annually for 1500 years BEFORE the outpouring of the Spirit recorded in the book of Acts. The Feast Day of Pentecost was a Feast kept in remembrance of an historical event in Israel, which is recorded for us in Exodus chapters 19 to 23. Fifty days after the children of Israel had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb, they came to Mount Sinai. It was at this moment that the presence of God came down in a way that God's people had never known before. It was a new manifestation of God's power and glory. The Bible says that Mount Sinai was shaking and on fire. The voice of God was heard out of the midst of the fire in an awesome way. The words God spoke on Mount Sinai are the Ten Commandments, and various other commandments given to Moses for the people. It is very important to notice the commandments to build the Tabernacle of Moses were given on Mount Sinai. God commanded the people of Israel to keep the Feast of Pentecost to REMIND THEM OF THEIR EXPERIENCE AT SINAI.

The two loaves, the ten sacrificial animals offered with the bread, the new meat offering, and all the details of the Feast of Pentecost pointed back to the power and glory of God when He met with His people at Mount Sinai, and to the LAW OF THE LORD given to them at that time and place. But it also pointed FORWARD in time. It was a shadow of something to come - a New Testament manifestation of God's power and nature.

For fifteen long centuries Israel had kept the Feast of Pentecost. On one Pentecostal celebration, when Jews from many places were gathered together in the city of Jerusalem to keep the Old Testament Feast, suddenly they heard a strange commotion coming from an upper room. While Jews in the temple continued to keep the old Feast, the one hundred and twenty followers of the despised Nazarene were experiencing the New Testament fulfillment of Pentecost. While the Jews were keeping the Feast of Pentecost fifty days after the Feast of Passover, the disciples were experiencing its fulfillment fifty days after the Passover Lamb had been slain on Calvary. God spoke with His people in an altogether new way from Mount Sinai. He did so again as the hundred and twenty received the spiritual experience of which Sinai was but a type. For, it is written, the one hundred and twenty "began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance of God's presence came down in fire upon Mount Sinai. In like manner, as the hundred and twenty received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." God wrote His Holy Law on tablets of stone on Mount Sinai. But at the spiritual Pentecost He inscribed His Law upon the fleshy tables of men's hearts by the transforming power of His indwelling Spirit.

Pentecost! What a vast treasure house of spiritual reality and experience looms before us as we contemplate the tremendous implications of the word! We could not begin to adequately explain the meaning of the Feast without saying that it is the celebration of the receiving of the Law. The baptism in the Holy Spirit certainly begins with the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophecy, miracles, healing, discerning of spirits, etc. It has been said that receiving the Holy Spirit is like buying a pair of shoes - the "tongues" come with it! I believe that. But - speaking in tongues may be the evidence that you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, but it is in no way the evidence that you are walking in the Spirit. Tongues are not the evidence of either a Spirit-filled or a Spirit-led life. But I will tell you what is! In Ex. 19, when the children of Israel came to Mount Sinai, it was there in the third month that God gave them the Law. So the proof of the real Pentecostal experience is THE LAW OF GOD WRITTEN UPON THE TABLES OF YOUR HEART. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel... not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of

Egypt. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" **(Heb. 8:8-10).**

There is the power of a REAL PENTECOST! It is sad that that has not been the experience of most Pentecostals. Someone has said that if you have all "Word" (Fundamentalism) you will dry up, and if you have all "Spirit" (Pentecostalism) you will blow up; but if you have both the Spirit and the Word you will GROW UP! The real Pentecost, precious friend of mine, is not signs and wonders and miracles, but the Law of God written upon the heart. Jesus walked out this glorious Feast upon earth, He fulfilled all the Law as the anointed One of the Father, and revealed the nature, mind, will and power of God before men. Now HE is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit! For us as members of His body, we keep the Feast of Pentecost when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, endued with power, transformed in mind and heart, receiving the earnest of our inheritance, the gifts and fruit of the Spirit ministered by love.

It is important that the Feast of Pentecost occurred at a separate point in time from the Passover and was different and distinct from the previous Feast. For the second time, all males were to appear before the Lord in the place of His choosing (Deut. 16:16). This Feast, like the first, was also associated with the harvest. Whereas Passover was held at the time of barley harvest, Pentecost was held at the time of wheat harvest (Ex. 34:22). Therefore, we see that the Feasts were associated with a PROGRESSION IN HARVEST, and speak of the ongoing process of the development and maturing of HIS LIFE in the life of the believer. There is a continuous process of sowing and reaping throughout the believer's walk with the Lord. We do not receive the life of our Lord in full measure, or full blossom, or full fruitage at the time of our conversion at the Feast of Passover, but we continually "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24). We are to be progressively changed into His image from glory to glory until finally we arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ (II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:19; 4:13).

How sad that good men of God who have experienced the glory and wonder of the Passover experience, should now close the door to further reality in God and deny that the Feast of Pentecost is a second and further appropriation of the presence and working of God in His people. In fact, most of Christendom has never even come into this Pentecostal experience. They have refused to come to the Feast! They have not appeared before the Lord as commanded. We find that their leaders have barred the door, telling the people that both the old Feast of Pentecost in the Old Testament and the glorious manifestations of power in the New Testament fulfillment, are events of ancient history, that the early church enjoyed them for a season, to help get the church off to a good start, but it is not for them today - so they are denied the blessings of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and that satisfying praise and worship which comes by His quickening within. Speaking in tongues is a "no-no", or any supernatural moving of the Spirit as He would anoint those who go on from Feast to Feast. Yes, for many the Lord has come to them only once - in the Feast of Passover - and they experience and know Him only as Jesus the SAVIOUR. So we praise God for the ones who are receiving of His Spirit around the world today, being called to appear before the Lord in the second great Feast of Pentecost, to receive of its ministry to them. The Lord came down and appeared to Moses on the Mount. And the Lord has come down and is appearing to, in, and through His people in the spiritual Feast of Pentecost. We marvel at how religious leaders will acknowledge the COMING OF JESUS as SAVIOUR in the Feast of Passover, and yet refuse to acknowledge the COMING OF C-H-R-I-S-T, i.e. the ANOINTING SPIRIT, which is to abide within us and guide us into all truth, and reality and maturity of His life, in the Feast of Pentecost.

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai and God appeared to him, he received the various commandments as to how the Israelites were to conduct themselves as a family and a nation, how the different Feasts were to be held, and the sacrifices pertaining to the Feasts. He received the Ten Commandments of God's Law on tables of stone. But not only that. He was at the same time given by God the pattern of the Tabernacle, which they were to build, in which God would dwell among them as they journeyed on. And when the Spiritual Israel came to Spiritual Sinai on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter two, God began to reveal His Laws and Commandments, now not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of our heart (II Cor. 3:3). It was at Pentecost that the True Tabernacle of God began to be built, not of acacia wood, brass, silver and gold, but of living stones of men and women who were soft and pliable in the Spirit of God. He began to fashion a dwelling place, the many mansions of Father's house, and He is still working on it today, praise His name. It is at

Pentecost where, when filled with the Spirit of God, we can offer up spiritual sacrifices, which are acceptable to Him; we can minister one to another, building each other up in the faith.

As it was necessary for Israel to come to Sinai and receive from God in the way they did, so it is vital that God's people know the Sinai or Pentecost experience today and have His Spirit moving in their hearts. For in Deut. 1:2, Moses, when counting how many days journey it would be to the promised land, reckons it not from Egypt, nor from Passover, but said it was eleven days journey from Horeb or Sinai; meaning that Israel had to go via Sinai to get their inheritance since it was reckoned from Sinai. And today, for you and me to come into God's inheritance, we have to go via Sinai or Pentecost! When I say God's inheritance, I am not talking about some far-off heaven somewhere, and that if we are not filled with the Holy Ghost we won't make heaven. There are many precious saints who have gone before and weren't filled with the Holy Ghost, but the Lord had come to them in the Feast of Passover as Savior. But I am speaking of an inheritance, which God has reserved in heaven READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME. It is the inheritance of ALL HE IS AND ALL HE HAS. For a people to come into this, they must be filled with the Holy Spirit, not ten or twenty years ago, but a day by day experience of flowing in the Spirit of God and allowing the Spirit to flow through them and be formed in them. Once a preacher was asked by a man if he could get to heaven without the Holy Ghost. The preacher looked at him and said, "Son, I wouldn't want to go to the drug store without Him!" Hallelujah!

We must see clearly from the light of scripture that in the Old Testament period the Spirit of God did not indwell men. In that time the Spirit of God descended upon man to move man to do God's work; the emphasis was upon the Spirit of God being the power to man. In the Old Testament the anointings of God's Spirit came and went, fell and lifted. The Spirit was never completely "given" to any man - prophet, priest or king. This is why we read such statements as these: "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God CAME UPON HIM (Saul), and he prophesied among them" **(I Sam. 10:10).** But later: "...the Spirit of the Lord DEPARTED FROM SAUL" (I Sam. 16:14). When God initiated His great plan to GIVE, to dispense His Spirit into man, Jesus was the first to so receive, but during His earthly ministry the dispensation of God's Spirit was limited to Him alone. Although people in the Old Testament received the Spirit of God upon them as a Word and as Power, yet in reality they did not receive the Spirit of God into them to BE THEIR LIFE. In the Old Testament times, the Spirit of God merely descended upon man as a Word and as Power, but did not enter into man AS LIFE; He only bestowed a divine power upon man, but did not impart to man a divine nature and being. Therefore, in the Old Testament we see a number who possessed the power of God, yet had nothing whatever of God's life, nature or mind. Samson is the best example (Judges 14-16). He had the supernatural power of God upon him, but at the same time he did not have the nature of God in him at all. Here we have a strong man whose power was beyond measure, yet whose nature was totally incompatible with God. Therefore, with respect to power, Samson had the Holy Spirit upon him, but with respect to life, he did not have the Holy Spirit within him. The Holy Spirit of God descended upon Samson that he might have God's power, but did not enter into him that he might have God's nature. It was not until the New Testament times, not until the coming of the Lord in the spiritual Feast of Pentecost that the Spirit of God actually enters into man and becomes man's life that he might possess not only God's power, but also God's life, nature and mind.

The prophet Ezekiel saw this day of the New Testament, of the remarkable regeneration by which men would actually be born of God to become sons of God, and he prophesied, saying, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean... a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put WITHIN YOU: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit WITHIN YOU, AND CAUSE YOU to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" **(Eze. 36:25-27).** In Christ, we not only have our sins forgiven in the Feast of Passover, but as we follow on to the next Feast there is an impartation of a NEW SPIRIT, a NEW LIFE, even the divine life of God. We are impregnated by the Spirit of God, and a baby spirit, a divine nature, is conceived within us. This new embryo is the offspring of God in Christ, so that God becomes, not figuratively, nor creatively, but very literally in a Fatherly way OUR FATHER, the Father of our spirit. Therefore, "If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE" **(II Cor. 5:17).** There is within ourselves, beyond the realm of our conscious knowledge, a divine life, the child of God's Spirit, under His loving care, working in stillness, ever unwearied, never exhausted, ever

growing and maturing, to gain control of our being, and transform us into the image of God. This is the Law of God written upon the tables of the heart - the glory and power of Pentecost!

CHRIST IS THE SPIRIT

Immediately I hear some reader saying, "But why do you say the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the coming of CHRIST - is it not the coming of the Holy Spirit, and is not the Holy Spirit a different member of the Godhead?" But, dear reader, do not be too hasty in your judgment.

In II Cor. 3: 17 we read these arresting and outstanding words: "Now the Lord IS THAT SPIRIT." For comparison and further clarification let us go to additional translations and get their insight into this portion of scripture. From the Jerusalem Bible we read II Cor. 3:15-18: "Yes, even today, whenever Moses is read, the veil is over their minds. It will not be removed until they turn to the Lord. NOW THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, with our unveiled faces, reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is the work of the Lord who IS THE SPIRIT." We are told that we reflect the brightness of the Lord like mirrors, and that we shall continue to do so until we are transformed into that bright image that we now reflect. But, in turning to Rom. 8:29, we learn that we are predestinated to be "conformed to the image of His Son." Therefore, since the "Lord is that Spirit," and we are to become as that Spirit someday, and since we are also told that we are predestinated to conform to the image of the Son, we have no alternative but to conclude that the Lord Jesus Christ is "that Spirit." The Amplified Bible says, "Now THE LORD IS the Spirit." Moffatt's translation reads, "'The Lord' means the Spirit." The Weymouth Translation renders, "Now by 'the Lord' is meant the Spirit." Young's Literal Translation says, "And the Lord IS THE SPIRIT; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

I prayerfully invite all who read these lines to carefully consider the following words spoken by our Lord. "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 were to receive: for the Spirit WAS NOT YET; BECAUSE Jesus was not yet glorified" **(Jn. 7:38-39).** Our Lord promises here that those who come unto Him and drink will not only never thirst, but will themselves become fountains, whence streams of living water, of life and blessing, will flow forth. In recording the words, John explains that the promise was then a future one, that would have to wait for its fulfillment till the Spirit should have been poured out. He also gave the double reason for this delay: The Holy Spirit WAS NOT YET; BECAUSE Jesus WAS NOT YET glorified. You will note that in the King James Version it reads, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." You will also note, however, that in the King James Version the word "given" is in italics, showing that the word is not in the original, but is supplied by the translators in an effort to clarify what they perceive as the meaning. Omitting the added word the passage reads: "The Spirit WAS NOT YET; BECAUSE Jesus was not yet glorified." The expression: the Spirit was not yet, has appeared strange, and so the word "given" was inserted. But the expression, if accepted as it stands in the Greek New Testament, may guide us into the true understanding of the real significance of the Spirit's not coming UNTIL JESUS WAS GLORIFIED!

Jesus promised that if He went away He would send "another Comforter." The basic fact underlying the truth of the Comforter is just this: "For the Spirit WAS NOT YET; BECAUSE Jesus had not yet been glorified" (Weymouth Translation). In other words, this peculiar manifestation of God AS THE COMFORTER did not and could not exist until Jesus had ascended on high. This is intimated in Ps. 68:18 wherein the Psalmist says, "Thou hast ascended on high... Thou hast RECEIVED GIFTS for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM."

Do not misunderstand me. I do not say that the Holy Spirit did not exist previous to the glorification of the Son of man, for the very term "Holy Spirit" signifies "the Spirit Who is holy", even the everlasting God (Jn. 4:24). But I do say that the manifestation of God AS THE ABIDING COMFORTER was utterly impossible until Jesus was glorified; and this because of the very nature of the Comforter, for the scriptures teach that He proceeds from the Father and the Son (compare Jn. 15:26 and Acts 2:33), thereby combining almighty POWER with mediatorial and intercessory GRACE. How clearly this is expressed as follows: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be

made like unto His brethren, THAT HE MIGHT BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to SUCCOUR them that are tempted" **(Heb. 2:16-18).** And again, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the FEELING of OUR INFIRMITIES; but was in ALL POINTS tempted like as we are, yet without sin" **(Heb. 4:15).**

These things were spoken of Jesus in the days of His flesh; what have they to do with the Comforter? Listen! "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, HE hath shed forth this..." **(Acts 2:33).** And now of the Spirit which we have received of Him it is attested, "Likewise the Spirit also HELPETH OUR INFIRMITIES", making "intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" **(Rom. 8:26-27).** Who intercedes for us, Christ or the Spirit? The intercession of the Spirit IS the intercession of the Christ, for "the Lord IS THE SPIRIT." Here, then, is that blessed intercessory aspect of the Spirit which is peculiarly related to the priestly ministry of Jesus developed in Him in the days of His flesh, and without which there would be no consolation in Christ, no comfort of love, no fellowship of the Spirit, no tender mercies and compassions (Phil. 2:1).

May the blessed Spirit of Truth help every reader of these lines to understand the precious truth that when the Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, He came not only as the Spirit of the eternal God, but just as surely the Spirit of the GLORIFIED JESUS, the Spirit of the crucified, resurrected, ascended and exalted Christ, the bearer and communicator to us, not merely of the life of God as such, but of that life as IT HAD BEEN INTERWOVEN INTO THE HUMAN NATURE IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST JESUS. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus, the Son of man become the Son of God - HE could not BE until Jesus was glorified! God IS a Spirit, and there is only "one Spirit." The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are the one Spirit. Now the Lord IS THAT SPIRIT**.** "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the SPIRIT OF GOD dwell in you. Now if any man have not the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, he is none of His" **(Rom. 8:9). "**And because ye are sons, GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT OF HIS SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" **(Gal. 4:6).** "There is one body, and ONE SPIRIT" **(Eph. 4:4).**

This thought opens up to us further the reason why it is not the Spirit of God as such, but the Spirit of Jesus that could be sent to dwell in us. Christ came not only to deliver man from sin and the law and its curse, but to bring human nature itself into the fellowship of the celestial life, to make us partakers of the divine nature. In His own person, having become flesh, He had to sanctify the flesh, and make it a worthy and willing receptacle for the indwelling Spirit of the Father - God. Having done this, He had, in accordance with the law that a lower form of life can rise to a higher, only as it is seized upon and transformed by the higher life, prepared Himself by death to give Himself as the seedcorn to bring forth fruit in us. From His nature, as He brought His humanity into subjection to the Spirit, as it was then glorified in the resurrection and ascension, His Spirit came forth as the Spirit of His human life, glorified into the union with the Divine, to make us partakers of all that He had personally wrought out and acquired, of Himself and His glorified life. And in virtue of His having perfected in Himself a NEW HOLY MANHOOD on our behalf, the SECOND MAN, the LAST ADAM, He could now communicate what previously had no existence - a life at once human and divine! And now, blessed be God! Jesus has been glorified; there is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God.

We seldom stop to consider that this precious Comforter, "another Comforter", is the Spirit of God in a dimension that did not and could not exist until Jesus had been glorified. We do not realize that He is indeed the eternal Spirit, the ever living Almighty God, but tempered, so to speak, by the FEELING of our infirmities wrought out in the days of His flesh; that the very flesh and blood of Jesus, with all His life of suffering and submission, have been combined with resurrection life and sent to dwell in us, and that this is what Jesus meant when He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you ... He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me. and I IN HIM...it is the SPIRIT that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" **(Jn. 6:52-63)**. Oh! the tremendous import and the awful reality of the fact that the ever living God became flesh, was touched with the feeling of my infirmities, made the sacrifice for sins once for all, and now lives after the power of an endless life, a priest for ever, coming to dwell in my heart as a quickening Spirit!

If further proof is needed that the Comforter is NOT a Being separate from the Father and the Son, it is surely found in **Jn. 14:21-23:** "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and WILL MANIFEST MYSELF to him. Judas (brother of James) saith unto Him, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt MANIFEST THYSELF unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered, 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." Here He promises that the Father and the Son will come to those who truly love our Lord Jesus, yet He distinctly states that this coming will be a MANIFESTING OF HIMSELF - a revelation and a personal relationship distinct from any they had received or could receive during His earthly ministry, and therefore "another Comforter" but still the very SAME JESUS! "WE will COME UNTO HIM, and make our abode with Him," promises Jesus. And yet the preachers think that every time Jesus speaks of His "COMING AGAIN" He is referring to some future coming when He will split the eastern sky in His body of flesh. Would to God that the Lord's people could see that the scriptures have many, many things to say about HIS COMING that the preachers and churches know absolutely nothing about!

THE COMING OF CHRIST AS THE SPIRIT

As we continue our meditation upon this wonderful theme of the coming of Christ in the Feast of Pentecost, we will fasten our attention upon the ascension of our Lord; and if I had sufficient imagination I should like to picture our Lord and the eleven walking up the side of the Mount of Olives, communing as they went, - a happy company, with a solemn awe upon them, but with an intense joy in having fellowship with each other. Each disciple was glad to think that his dear Lord and Master who had been crucified was now among them, not only alive but surrounded with a mysterious safety and glory which none could disturb. The enemy was as still as a stone: not a dog moved his tongue: His bitterest foes made no sign during the days of our Lord's after-life below. The company moved onward peacefully towards Bethany - Bethany which they all knew and loved. The Savior seemed drawn there at the time of His ascension, even as men's minds return to old and well-loved scenes when they are about to depart out of this world. His happiest moments on earth had been spent beneath the roof where lived Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. There they had seen Lazarus raised from the dead by Him who was now to be taken from them: the memory of the triumphant past would help the tried faith of the present. There they had heard the voice saying, "Loose him, and let him go," and there they might fitly see their Lord loosed from all bonds of earthly gravitation that He might go to His Father and their Father.

But they have come to a standstill, having reached the brow of the hill. The Lord stands conspicuously in the center of the group, and, following a brief discourse, He pronounces a blessing upon them. He lifts His hands, and while He is lifting them and is pronouncing words of love, He begins to rise from the earth. He has risen above them all to their astonishment! In a moment He has passed beyond the olives, which seem with their silvery sheen to be lit up by His radiance. While the disciples are looking, the Lord has ascended into mid-air, and speedily He has risen to the regions of the clouds. They stand spell-bound with amazement, and suddenly a bright cloud, like a chariot of God, bears Him swiftly away. That cloud conceals Him from mortal gaze. Though we have known Christ after the flesh, now after the flesh know we Him no more!

They are riveted to the spot, very naturally so. They linger long in the place, they stand with streaming eyes, wonder-struck, still looking upward. It is not the Lord's will that they should long remain in shock; their reverie is interrupted. They might have stood there till wonder saddened into fear. As it was, they remained long enough; for the messenger's words pierced their souls: "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 1:11).** Do you not see them going down the side of Olivet, taking that Sabbath-day's journey into the cruel and wicked city? They held fellowship of the most delightful kind with one another, and without delay entered into the upper room, where in protracted prayer and communion they waited for the promise of the Father. You see I have no imagination, I have barely mentioned the incidents in the simplest language. Yet try and realize the scene, for it will be helpful to do so, since our Lord Jesus was to come in like manner as the disciples saw Him go into heaven.

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 like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." Ah, it was the fulfillment of the messenger's promise to them, this SAME JESUS had returned in mighty Spirit power, they heard Him come, and they SAW Him come from heaven, even as they had seen Him go into heaven. 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 angel had said that "this same" Jesus shall 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 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, about which we shall write through many months to come; but this particular coming of the Lord in the Feast of Pentecost was clearly and repeatedly prophesied by the Lord Himself, and He came just as He promised, praise His wonderful name!

Many years ago B. F. Headley penned these true and graphic words: "At this point, let us scan carefully Jn. 14:28-29. 'Ye have heard how I said unto you, I GO AWAY, and COME AGAIN UNTO YOU. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father;....And now I have told you BEFORE IT COME TO PASS, that WHEN it IS come to pass, YE might BELIEVE.' Note, dear reader that Jesus said, 'I go away and come again.' Note that He said also that 'WHEN it IS come to pass, YE might BELIEVE.' These verses of scripture upset some of our old theology and started it crumbling, and set us to digging to see if these things be so. If you, dear reader, are candid and honest, it is possible that they may also change some of your pet opinions concerning the so-called 'second coming' of Jesus.

"Now please be honest with plain English, with yourself and with God, and answer these questions. Was Jesus talking to His disciples about something which was to take place during their lifetime, or was it something which was to be two thousand years, or more or less, after their death? That He spoke of events which were to transpire before their deaths is very evident, else He would not have said, 'that when it is come to pass, YE might believe.' They could not believe in something which was to happen after they were dead and gone, but it was very possible that they could believe in something which happened while they were yet alive and He was desirous that they should believe it when it came to pass, therefore, He fore-warned them by saying, 'I have told you BEFORE it come to pass, that WHEN it IS come to pass, YE (not those who come after you) might believe.'

"Now let us ask another question. What was Jesus talking to His disciples about? Immediately I hear someone answering, 'His going away.' But that is not right. He was talking about, not only His going away, which is only half of the subject, but He was talking about His COMING BACK. Knowingly or unwittingly, we have observed the first half of that statement of Jesus and forgotten about the second half of it. He was talking just as much about His coming again as He was talking about His going away. So the whole subject to which He was calling their especial attention was 'I go away AND come again.' It was ALL of this in both phases of the subject, both the going and the coming, to which Jesus was calling their attention and fore-warned them about it ALL when He said, 'I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.' What was to come to pass? He was to 'go away AND come again.' When was it to take place? During the lifetime of those disciples to whom Jesus spake! Was Jesus to 'go away' during the lifetime of those disciples? Yes, that is just what He said. But, was He to 'come again' during the lifetime of those disciples? Yes, Jesus said that He would do that very thing also. Did those disciples die? Evidently they did die for we have no record of any of them being alive today in the flesh, and there is record of the deaths of many of His disciples. If then, Jesus was to come again before the death of those disciples in accord with what is written in the scripture quoted above, can we logically conclude that He did anything other than just what He said He would do, that is, 'go away AND

come again?' And both the going away and the coming again must have taken place centuries ago during the lifetime of those disciples, if we are to believe that Jesus did what He said He would do" - end quote.

Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME to 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 YE SHALL KNOW THAT I AM IN MY FATHER, AND YE IN ME, AND I IN YOU" **(Jn. 14: 18-20).** Simple as these words may seem they have occasioned great perplexity to those whose spiritual minds are veiled to the vast storehouse of scripture passages that speak of the coming again of the Christ as the Spirit. Many Christians, and I might say most, believe in the "first" and "second" coming of the Lord. The first coming was when He was born in the stable of Bethlehem, the second coming will be when He will appear in the glory of His Father, and every eye will see Him. The first coming is past, and they are fervently looking for the time when He will come again in the clouds of heaven in His glory with all the heavenly angels accompanying Him; and they try to make all the scriptures pertaining to THE COMING OF THE LORD fit into just these two comings. How surprising it is to many to learn that the Bible doesn't speak of two comings at all, it speaks of many comings, and in trying to apply all the scriptures that pertain to the various comings and appearings of the Lord, to these two comings, is what has caused most of the confusion and the great and dreadful ignorance on the part of most Christians regarding the Lord's return.

Let us look at some other interesting and enlightening statements about the coming of the Lord. Meditate deeply upon these words, my beloved. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you ANOTHER COMFORTER, that He may abide with you for ever; I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME UNTO YOU" **(Jn. 14:16,18).** "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt MANIFEST THYSELF unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me ... My Father will love Him, and WE WILL COME unto Him, And make our abode with him" **(Jn. 14:22-23).** "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. AND IN THAT DAY ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" **(Jn. 16:16, 22-23).**

How clear it is that Jesus was talking about His coming again, but not in the way that is generally perceived as His second coming, but yet a true and personal coming to the one who loves Him and keeps His commandments. It was not to be a manifestation to the world, for the world would know nothing whatever of it; but it would be in very fact the COMING of "this same Jesus" to indwell their hearts by His Spirit.

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus died. But then He arose the Conquering Christ! The fact of the Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked to the despondent and brokenhearted apostles the eleven, for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke, and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time that Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Christ went up and the Holy Ghost came down. They saw Him go and they saw Him come. It shook the place where they were sitting. The divine earthquake shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell to rise no more. It shook the world. The Spirit's power came. The Christ returned in mighty Spirit-power. He who IS the Truth came again as the Spirit of Truth. He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. All history substantiates the claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John, and many of their successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen Empire.

When the disciples came to face Calvary they ran for their lives. They were terrified. Peter hid himself that cold night; when he was confronted by the damsel, as he warmed his hands over the fire pot, for she charged he

was one of Jesus' followers, and he swore and said he didn't even know Him. The rest followed a long way off. His only company on the cross was two thieves. After the Day of Pentecost we see different men altogether. The same Peter who weeks ago swore and said, "I never knew Him," - What a change! The same clay, the same knarred hands and gruff voice and rough mannerisms, tanned from the winds of the lake, but standing like a massive oak, giving His testimony of his encounter with Jesus. Hearken to Peter - "Ye men of Judea, and all that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words: these are not drunken, as ye suppose...but this is that, which was spoken by the prophet Joel!"

Now the Son had returned in the power of the Spirit. Behold a new day, fresher than the first day of creation! From henceforth He would come to indwell His people. Pentecost had arrived. The very same Spirit that rolled away the stone came to indwell the Lamb of God, to raise Him far beyond the gates of death, to raise His humanity up into the uncreated life of the Father. Pentecost, O blessed Pentecost Day, the day the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead came as a gift of our heavenly Father to indwell here below. This made the change in the disciples. Christ IN THEM made the difference. He had been WITHIN them, but now He was WITHIN them. No platitudes can give you this power, no sterile form, no static doctrine, no empty ritual can turn your heart and transform you into a God-man upon this earth.

Jesus prophesied that He would come again in the lifetime of the disciples - not only during their lifetime - but before the ministry He had given the twelve and the seventy would be completed. How utterly amazing His words, believed not by one in a million Evangelicals and Fundamentalists today! Hear it! "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, TILL THE SON OF MAN BE COME" **(Mat. 10:23).** Look at His words! Can anything be more specific and definite as to persons, place, time, and circumstance, than this prediction of our Lord? It is to the TWELVE that He speaks; it is the cities of ISRAEL which they are to evangelize; the subject is His own SPEEDY COMING; and the TIME so near, that before the work He sends them to do is complete - HIS COMING WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE!

But if we are to be told that this is not the meaning, nor the half of it, and that Jesus speaks of another coming, to other evangelists, in other ages, and in other lands a coming which, after nineteen centuries, is still future, and perhaps remote - then the question arises: What may not scripture mean? The grammatical sense of words no longer suffices for interpretation; the Word of God is a riddle to be guessed - an oracle that utters ambiguous responses; and no man can be sure, without a special revelation, that he understands what he reads. Strange, isn't it, that to-day it actually takes A SPECIAL REVELATION to embrace the simple truth He declared! Oh, where is He who walked the Sea of Galilee? Oh where is He? He is with us now. He is with us all the days, even unto the consummation of the age. He has come to us in the wonderful Feast of Pentecost. He indwells our hearts by faith and this glorious Christ within is just the same today.

Today is the second thousand years since He came in the flesh, lived, ministered, died, resurrected, ascended into heaven, and returned as the Spirit. The second thousand years is drawing to a close and, blessed be His name! He is the same. He pursues His mission still and reigns in majesty over His Kingdom by entering into these temples of clay, and filling our spirits and our souls and our bodies with His own eternal presence and power, making us one with Him, members of His very own body, of His flesh, of His bone, and of His blood. He is redeeming a vast family of so is putting His mighty Spirit, inworking His glorious mind and nature, inscribing them on the heart His Law of Life, so that we, who were destined from the beginning to be the revelation of HIMSELF to the creation, may complete His mighty work for the redemption of humanity.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing ...

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 6
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEASTS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART SIX

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PENTECOST
I GO TO THE FATHER
WHY JESUS WENT AWAY
KNOW HIM NO MORE AFTER THE FLESH

The three primary Feasts given to Israel were the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Two of these Feasts have now been fulfilled and are still being fulfilled in the body of Christ today. The last Feast still waits a future fulfillment that will begin at the completion and maturity of the Christ-body at the end of this age. Every one of the Feasts of the Lord have not only a historical aspect, pointing back to something God did, and a prophetic aspect, pointing forward to something God would do; but every one of them has a personal and individual aspect in our lives experientially. Each Feast finds its fulfillment in our forward walk in God. In Passover we see a picture of our justification. In the Feast of Pentecost we have a picture of our baptism with the Holy Spirit, the "firstfruits" of our inheritance. In the Feast of Tabernacles we find a picture of our glorification, our entrance into the fullness of our inheritance and possession in God. In each of these Feasts, according to the Word of God, there is a coming, appearing, and manifestation of the Lord to His people in a spiritual dimension. While men speak of the "first coming" and the "second coming" of Christ, God's program is in THREES. God has promised to meet with man in THREE DIMENSIONS. "THREE TIMES in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD (Passover), and in the Feast of WEEKS (Pentecost), and in the Feast of TABERNACLES: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty" **(Deut. 16:16).** God says that He will meet with man THREE TIMES - in the three great Feasts of the Lord! To "appear before the Lord" designates not only an action on our part, but a reciprocal action on God's part. Not only must we appear, but HE MUST APPEAR! It is a joint-meeting in which WE APPEAR B-E-F-O-R-E_H-I-M, even as He appears in His glory as He did to Israel of old.

It is a wonderful fact that God came down and appeared at each of the Feasts of Israel. The Lord first came into the midst of the children of Israel at the time of the Passover in Egypt. "For the Lord will PASS THROUGH to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing (the Lord passing in their midst) for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever" **(Ex. 12:23-24).**

The Lord also manifested Himself at the inauguration of the Feast of Pentecost. At Mount Sinai the Lord said to Moses, "Lo, I COME UNTO THEE in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will COME DOWN IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE upon Mount Sinai... and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD DESCENDED UPON IT IN FIRE... and the whole Mount quaked greatly. And the Lord CAME DOWN upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the Mount" **(Ex. 19:9,11,18,20).**

Finally, the Lord appeared at the Feast of Tabernacles on the occasion of the dedication of Solomon's temple. "And it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not minister by reason of the cloud: for the GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF GOD" **(II Chron. 5:13-14).** Is it not clear that the COMING OF THE LORD and the APPEARING OF THE LORD are associated specifically with the Feasts, and when the Lord commands, "THREE TIMES in a year shall all your males appear before the Lord," He is assuring His people that HE ALSO WILL APPEAR and meet with them in these THREE DIMENSIONS.

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

For fifteen long centuries Israel had kept the Feast of Pentecost as a celebration of the time when God met with them in power and glory at Mount Sinai. On one Pentecostal celebration, when Jews from many places were gathered together in the city of Jerusalem to keep the Old Testament Feast, suddenly they heard a strange commotion coming from an upper room. While Jews in the temple continued to keep the old Feast, the one hundred and twenty followers of the despised Nazarene were experiencing the New Testament fulfillment of Pentecost. While the Jews were keeping the Feast of Pentecost fifty days after the Feast of Passover, the disciples were experiencing its fulfillment fifty days after the Passover Lamb had been slain on Calvary. God spoke with His people in an altogether new way from Mount Sinai. He did so again as the hundred and twenty received the spiritual experience of which Sinai was but a type. For, it is written, the one hundred and twenty "began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." God's presence came down in fire upon Mount Sinai. In like manner, as the hundred and twenty received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of FIRE, and it sat upon each of them." God wrote His Holy Law upon tablets of stone on Mount Sinai. But at the spiritual Pentecost He inscribed His Law upon the fleshy tables of men's hearts by the transforming power of His indwelling Spirit. There is the power of a REAL PENTECOST! The real Pentecost, precious friend of mine, is not signs and wonders and miracles, but the Law of God written upon the heart. Jesus walked out this glorious Feast upon earth, He fulfilled all the Law as the anointed One of the Father, and revealed the nature, mind, will and power of God before men. Now HE is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit! For us as members of His body - we keep the Feast of Pentecost when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, endued with power, transformed in mind and heart, receiving the earnest of our inheritance, the gifts and fruit of the Spirit ministered by love. The Lord Jesus Christ comes to us in a further dimension of Himself in the Feast of Pentecost. He comes as the Lord, the Spirit!

I GO TO THE FATHER

There came a day in the long ago in which our blessed Christ, feeling the limitation and restriction of His body of flesh, cried out in anticipation of spirit, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; BECAUSE I GO UNTO MY FATHER" **(Jn. 14:12).** Now there is a wonderful reason WHY those who believe on Jesus are going to do the works He did and even greater works. It is just BECAUSE. Do you know what "because" means? It means that what follows is the reason or cause - the WHY - you will do these things. "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do; BECAUSE ..." Because of what? "Because I GO UNTO MY FATHER!" Only moments before uttering this astounding statement Jesus had told His disciples that the Father was in Him and He was in the Father; but now, seizing upon the mysterious omnipresence of the Father and drawing its cloak of mystery even more tightly about His Person, He announces that He is "going" to the Father. The question follows: Where did Jesus have to go to get to the Father?

With words divine in wisdom and sublime in significance Jesus explained to the benighted woman of Samaria that "God is a spirit" and "the Father is a spirit" **(Jn. 4:21, 23-24).** What is a spirit? Webster's Dictionary includes in its definition of the word the following: "A supernatural, incorporeal, rational being usually invisible to human beings but having the power to become visible at will ... a being having an incorporeal or immaterial nature." The Hebrew word for spirit in the Old Testament is RUACH, and means BREATH or WIND. The Greek word for spirit in the New Testament is PNEUMA, which also means BREATH or WIND. The English word GHOST used in the King James version, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is derived from the Greek PNEUMA. Its original meaning is exactly the same as the word "spirit" - meaning breath or wind.

All three definitions emphasize that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39). Similarly, Jesus indicated that the Spirit of God does not have flesh and blood (Mat. 16:17). So when the Bible says that God is a Spirit, it means that He cannot be seen or touched physically by human beings. As a spirit, God is invisible to the physical man. **"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, INVISIBLE, the only wise God..." (I Tim. 1:17).** The word "invisible" comes from the Greek word EROSOT meaning "not seen."

So where did Jesus go when He "went unto the Father"? It is infinitely necessary that every child of God thoroughly understand that we cannot over-emphasize the value of knowing that our heavenly Father IS AN OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT. Thus, when our precious Lord "went to the Father," that is but another way of saying that He went TO THE SPIRIT! Can we not understand by this that our Lord was indeed saying, "Because I go to the SPIRIT. The Spirit is in Me, and I am in the Spirit; but because this physical Man goes back into an invisible spirit existence from whence He came - then ye shall do the works that I do now, and greater works than these shall ye do." Why? Because that Spirit can COME BACK to you!

Where did Jesus go? He went not to the vast empty space in the North. He soared not away to another planet, nor to some far distant galaxy. Nor did He ascend to that celestial Disney World in the sky with wonderful streets of gold and spacious mansions over every sun-kissed hill top, that the preachers love to preach about. Oh, no! He went into the spirit realm. When He was made flesh and dwelt among us He couldn't get into us with that body of Bethlehem's manger, that body that walked the dusty roads of Palestine, and which with sweetest compassion and tenderest mercy touched the sorrowing and afflicted multitudes with wonderful healing power. He had to go back to the Spirit in order to return and come into us by the Spirit. Because He is in a spirit existence He can now be in every one of us. Spirit can come into all of us at the same time.

As Jesus prepared to leave this earth realm, He promised His disciples that His departure would be their gain; the Comforter would take His place, to be to them far better than He had been, or ever could be, in His bodily presence. This would be true because His own relationship with them had been very much external, and, in consequence of this, had not resulted in what might have been expected. He had been WITH THEM, and they were still very carnal, earthy. But the coming Spirit would be IN THEM; He, Jesus, would return to them as the Spirit, in an intimacy and vitality they could not know as long as He was outside them, merely WITH them. He would return to them, not in flesh and bone, but as the Spirit, as an Indwelling Presence, in the power of which they would have at their disposal, and as their very own possession, yea, even as their very own being, ALL THAT JESUS IS!

"...the Spirit of Truth ... He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO YOU" **(Jn. 14:17-18).** The thought of Jesus walking with men on earth, living with them, leading, teaching, guiding them, is so clear. But the thought of Jesus becoming a Spirit and hiding Himself within them, and speaking, not in audible sounds, but only in the depth of the life, was too staggering a thought for these yet carnal men. Their minds were yet blinded to spiritual realities. They still needed to be educated (as do multitudes of religious today!) to acknowledge that God desired to rule, not by outward law, but by an inward life. As long as Jesus was with His disciples as a physical being, He had to work from outward inward, and yet could never effectually reach or master their inmost parts. When Jesus went back to the Father, back into a spirit existence, He then returned as the Spirit to be IN THEM, that now He might work mightily from within, outward. Taking possession of the inmost recesses of their being by His Spirit of Life, He would cause them, in their surrender to His will, mind, nature and power, to personally become what He Himself is. The shaping of their life, the forming of their character, the development of their abilities, would be by the power of the Spirit of Christ, who really had become their spirit. On the wonder-filled Day of Pentecost that Spirit was gloriously poured out on the waiting disciples and marvelous works were wrought, and greater works yet shall be done because Jesus went back to the Spirit. He poured out His Spirit and came into us as He promised. The Spirit of Christ in His people would not just be a gracious influence from heaven, to encourage and inspire the children of God on their journey to heaven; rather, He would be the very SPIRIT OF TRUTH in the earth. He would be the VERY SAME JESUS who was with them, but now walking within them, in spirit form.

"The last Adam was made A QUICKENING SPIRIT" **(I Cor. 15:45).** It is impossible to bring the immensity of that statement into the realm of our human understanding. The resurrection of Jesus was the first step toward the last man Adam becoming a QUICKENING SPIRIT. But notice carefully, dear reader, what Paul says in Eph. 4:10: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT F-I-L-L ALL THINGS." As we read that stupendous declaration we must consider with great carefulness and holy reverence the essential fact that the Christ was not born in Bethlehem's stable so that He might fill all things; He did not stoop to become a man in order to fill all things; neither did He die so He could fill all things; nor yet was He resurrected with a body of immortality and glory to fill all things. Not one of these events, wonderful beyond explanation, could enable the all-glorious Christ of God to be like the wind which blows sovereignly

toward the north, the south, the east, or the west - the wind that lifts the dust of the earth on high, that stirs mighty oceans to rage in fury, the wind that blows where it listeth and fills the whole face of the earth and the heaven above with its life-giving vitality.

Two things, and two alone, were essential before Jesus could FILL ALL THINGS WITH HIMSELF. He must GO AWAY. And He must BE GLORIFIED. He must go to the Father, ascending back into a spirit existence; and He must be received up into union and participation with the eternal Spirit, becoming of the same substance and essence of the eternal Spirit. The glorious truth is just this: JESUS ASCENDED UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS TO BECOME UNIVERSAL. HE BECAME SPIRIT TO BE UNIVERSALIZED. HE ASCENDED THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. It is majestic! Wonderful! Sublime! Do not mistake me. This is no longer the Jesus of Galilee who was so foully done to death by religionists more than nineteen hundred years ago; He is the same, yet not the same. He was limited then; He is unlimited now. He dwelt in a single body then; He dwells in a many-membered body now. It cannot but be that that human Jesus has entered into the full consciousness of God and grasped the scepter of omnipotence. That, and nothing less than that, demonstrates the eminence of His ascension and glorification.

Before the ascension, His presence was occasional; since the ascension it is constant. Before the ascension, His presence was formal; since the ascension it is vital. Before the ascension, His presence was approximate; since the ascension it is inner. Before the ascension, His presence was limited; since the ascension it is infinite. Our presence with one another is occasional, formal, approximate and limited; but His presence is constant, vital, inner and universal. Hallelujah!

WHY JESUS WENT AWAY

It was on the solemnest of nights that Jesus spoke one of the most marvelous truths concerning His coming again. Some months previous, on the last day of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, He stood in the temple 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" **(Jn. 7:37-38).** This He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive. On the night before His crucifixion Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples. The supper was over; but the band of friends had much to say to one another that night, and they lingered long around the table. They did not know it was the Last Supper, never dreamed of it; but there had been an unusual sweetness in their intercourse, and they talked on and on. The entire conversation is recorded in the Gospel of John, chapters 13 through 17. The hour grew late, but John still leaned on his Master's breast, and the others, grouped around in the twilight, drank in the solemn gladness of the Passover Eve.

Suddenly a shadow falls over this scene. "Little children," Jesus says to His disciples, "yet a little while am I with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" **(Jn. 13:33; 16:7).** The hour is late. With their unspiritual minds they think He is getting tired. He means to retire to rest. But Peter asks straight out, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Into the garden? Back to Galilee? It never occurred to one of them that He meant the Unseen Spirit Realm. "Whither I go," He replies a second time, "Ye cannot follow Me now, but ye shall follow Me afterward." AFTERWARD! The blow slowly falls. In a dim, bewildering way it begins to dawn upon them. He speaks of separation!

This truth fell upon the disciples like a thunderbolt startling a summer sky. For thirty-three years He had lived among them. These past three years they had learned to love Him. Day after day they had shared together the sunshine and the storm, and their hearts clung to Him with a strange fascination. And just when everything was at its height, when it seemed He would soon be hailed as the King of Israel, when their association with Him was now pledged indissolubly in the most solemn sacrament, the unexpected words come, "I must say goodbye; it is expedient for you that I GO AWAY!" It was a crushing blow to the little band. They had staked their all upon that love. They had given up home, business, friends, pleasure, and promised to follow Him. And now He says, "I must go!"

Let us see what He means by it. Why did Jesus go away? We all remember a time when we could not answer that question. In fact, we wished He had stayed, and had been here now, walking among us. Your

understanding will be greatly enlightened when you are able to grasp this simple truth I now bring to your attention: the reason Jesus went away was so He could be very near! It seems a mystifying paradox, but He went away to be very near; He ascended far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS! He went away from being nearby, so that He could return and be closer to us even than the air we breathe, closer than the blood coursing its way through our veins!

Suppose, again, He had not gone away; suppose He were here in that same nail-scarred body now. Suppose He were still in the Holy Land, at Jerusalem. Every ship that started for the East would be crowded with Christian pilgrims. Every airplane flying through Europe to the Middle East would be loaded with people going to see Jesus. Every mail-bag would be full of letters from those sick and afflicted, those in difficulty and trial, and gifts of homage to manifest men's gratitude and love. You yourself, let us say, are on one of those airplanes. The Ben-Gurion International Airport, when you arrive after your long flight, is blocked with planes of every nation. After circling the airport for a dangerously long time you land, and board one of the multitude of tourist buses headed from Tel Aviv up to Jerusalem. Far as the eye can reach, the traffic moves over the highways in an endless stream. You do not mind the scorching sun, the choking dust, the rude drivers, the elbowing crowds. You are in the Holy Land, and you will see Jesus! Yonder, at last, in the far distance, are the glittering spires of the Holy Hill, above the burnished temple dome beneath which He sits. But what is that dark seething mass stretching for miles and miles between you and the Holy City? They have come from the north and from the south, and from the east and from the west, as you have, to look upon their Lord. They wish that His hands might be placed upon their head; that His arms might be thrown around them. But it cannot be. You have come to see Jesus, but you will not see Him! They have been there for weeks, months, years, and have not seen Him. They are a yard or two nearer, and that is all. The thing is impossible. It is an anti-climax, an absurdity. It would be a social outrage; it would be a physical impossibility.

Now the Christ foresaw all this when He said it was expedient that He should go away. Observe He did not say it was necessary - it was EXPEDIENT, a means to an end. The objection to the opposite plan was simply that it would not have worked. So He says to you, "It is very kind and earnest of you to come so far, but you mistake. Go away back from the walls of the Holy City, over the sea, and you will find Me in your own home. You will find Me where the shepherds found Me, doing their ordinary work; where the woman of Samaria found Me, drawing the water for the noon meal; where the disciples found Me, mending nets in their working clothes; where Mary found Me, among the commonplace household duties of a country village." Yes, the visible Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ must of necessity be brief. Only a small circle could enjoy His actual presence, but a great and glorious and universal kingdom like the Kingdom of God needed a risen and glorified Lord. It was expedient for the whole body of its subjects that He went away. He would be nearer man by apparently being further. The limitations of sense subjected Him while He stayed. He was subject to geography, locality, space, and time. But by going away in glorification He was able to return as the Spirit, the incorruptible river of God's divine and eternal life, to flow and flow and flow, age after age, unceasingly and untiringly into humanity as LIFE. My soul shouts a thousand hallelujahs that He went away!

And yet, even today, untold millions of Christians have learned nothing of this simple, sublime truth. Many precious saints are just living for that day when Jesus comes, or they get to heaven, and they can SEE HIS PERSON, bask in His favor, and have PHYSICAL CONTACT with Him. Many picture themselves kneeling in reverence at Jesus' feet, as did Mary of Bethany, kissing His feet, gazing intently into His eyes, strolling hand in hand with Him down Hallelujah Boulevard, or sitting on one of the hillsides of glory for a day, leisurely talking things over with Him, asking all the questions they have always wanted to ask, and unburdening their heart of the many concerns they have so long desired to pour out to Him - personally. There are those among us who, like Thomas of old, want to put their finger on the print of the nails, their hand in His riven side. How the unspiritual heart cries out for the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of the voice that reverberated once over the Galilean hills!

But, my brother, my sister, we need to face FACTS! Do you realize that there are vast numbers comprising untold millions of people (Dan. 7:10; Jude 14) who have been saved by His grace? John saw them in Revelation 7 as "a great multitude, which NO MAN CAN NUMBER"! And each and every one of these long, personally, and individually to speak to Jesus and bask in the ecstatic joy of physical fellowship with this resurrected MAN. Do you not realize that with such an innumerable throng about Him, you could not get within

FIFTY MILES of Him? Let us suppose, for one moment, that there have been only 100 million persons saved during the past 2,000 years. That sounds like a lot of people, but it is less than half the number of people living in the United States right now. Fox' Book of Martyrs reveals that during the Dark Ages some 50 million souls were martyred for their faith in Jesus...because they refused to bow to the superstitions and idolatries of Rome. That doesn't include the millions of Christians who lived before and since. There are some 20 million Spirit-filled saints alive on the face of the earth TODAY! So you see, 100 million is merely a fraction of the number of people gathered out of all ages who make up that "great multitude which no man can number" who are redeemed by the precious blood of God's Lamb. But if there WERE only 100 million saints of God, and each scheduled a PERSONAL INTERVIEW with Jesus; should Jesus spend only TEN MINUTES with each; it would be exactly 1901.3 YEARS before your turn would come, and then another almost TWO THOUSAND YEARS until your next TEN MINUTE session with Jesus! And during all that time Jesus would not have attended to any matters in the entire universe other than these interviews twenty-four hours a day, unceasingly for four millenniums! It should be obvious to every thinking mind that KNOWING CHRIST, talking with Him, fellowship with Him, MUST BE UPON SOME BASIS OTHER THAN HIS INDIVIDUAL, PHYSICAL, HUMAN IDENTITY.

Ah, to bring the Christ back in the flesh, to know Him once more after the flesh, would be one gigantic step backward, an outrage of immense proportions, an absurdity! Do we not already KNOW HIM? Are not those who have not seen His earthly form more blessed, according to the words of Jesus, than those who saw and believed? O twice born men who through faith have been born of His life-giving Spirit, behold, we have fullness of fellowship with Him NOW. He speaks to us and continually manifests Himself to us in tenderest tones. Even now we delight in the blessed wonder of His glorious presence. We walk with Him now in the Spirit, and unburden our hearts to Him at any hour of the day or night, and He communes with us in the garden of our hearts. And HOW do we know Him? Why, BY HIS SPIRIT! And it is through the FULNESS OF THIS SAME SPIRIT that we shall ultimately SEE HIM and KNOW HIM "AS HE IS". There is simply no other way! What, I ask, could His flesh body ADD to our relationship in Him? If our confidence is in HIS FLESH BODY, then we shall of all men be most miserable. What incredible limitation! We should be able to share with Him on that personal, human level ONCE EVERY 2,000 ... 4,000 ... 10,000... or 50,000 YEARS!

He went away THAT THE COMFORTER MIGHT COME. Oh that the eyes of men might be opened to see how truly it was expedient that He go away in His visible body of flesh that He might return as the invisible Spirit so that we might know Him by the Spirit and receive Him as our very life!

I am convinced that it is right here at this point where so many of the Lord's precious people need this teaching: "It is EXPEDIENT (advisable, desirable, advantageous, profitable, to your interest) for you THAT I GO AWAY." Like those disciples, so many sincere Christians have believed in Jesus with all of their heart, love Him, and seek to follow Him - but, the Jesus they believe in, the Jesus they love, the Jesus they seek to follow and obey, is the Jesus is the picture on the wall; the Jesus with piercing blue eyes, flowing chestnut hair, fine chiseled features, well trimmed beard, Galilean robe. It is the Jesus of Bethlehem's manger, of Nazareth's carpenter shop, of the sandy shores of the Sea of Galilee, of the Judean hills. The Jesus who preached to the multitudes, fed the five thousand, healed the sick with the touch of His hand, cleansed the lepers, and who, weeping, cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" Even the Jesus of the Judgment Hall, of the Via Dolorosa, of Golgotha's hill, of Joseph of Arimathea's garden tomb. With some it is even the Jesus of the resurrection; the Jesus calling tenderly to the weeping Mary in the freshness of the morn, Jesus walking along the road to Emmaus, Jesus appearing mysteriously to His disciples behind closed doors, or Jesus inviting the doubting Thomas to thrust his hand into His side. But, dear ones, "It is expedient for you that I go away." "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto YOU." "I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO YOU." Even the resurrected Jesus had to pass away from their midst before the exceeding great and precious promise of the Indwelling Spirit of Christ could be fulfilled.

How many of God's dear saints are still worshipping the Jesus of the flesh! Truly they believe on Him, love Him, and long to see Him when He comes. And yet, in their longing to see Him, some glad day after while! They find that He is not presently their satisfying portion, their All-in-all. There is yet such a lack in their lives; so much carnality, strife, struggle, weakness, insufficiency and limitation. The only reason can be this: they have not yet fully inherited the promise: "The Spirit shall be IN YOU ... He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." The absolute imperativeness of Christ's going away, the absolute reality

of His coming again as the Indwelling Spirit, they do not fully understand nor appreciate. They have not been able to say with the inspired apostle, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet NOW HENCEFORTH know we Him no more" **(II Cor. 5:16).** "Knowing Christ after the flesh" – it is this that must come to an end, must make way for knowing Him in the power of the Spirit! AFTER THE FLESH: that means, in the power of the external, of words and thoughts, of efforts and feelings, of systems and methods, of ceremonies and ordinances, of influences and aids from without, from men and means. We must know Christ no more after the flesh, as He was on earth, or even in resurrection. We are to know Him now AFTER THE SPIRIT, as the exalted and glorified Lord who has come to us as the Indwelling Spirit!

To many it is a difficult thing to set aside the Christ of the flesh, to know only the Christ of the Spirit; to set aside the Christ who works through the agencies of the external, through efforts, systems, ceremonies, methods, influences from without, of men and means, and come to know Him alone who works INTERNALLY after the power of an endless life. "As many as RECEIVED HIM (as Spirit), to them gave He power to become the SONS OF GOD" **(Jn. 1:12**). To all who honestly desire to become truly God-men, bearing the full image of the first-born Son, and in all things be well pleasing to the Father, the thought of Jesus' departure that His Spirit may now become our very own, and we be transformed and matured into His very own stature, will be welcomed with unspeakable gladness and gratitude. In this union the privilege we enjoy, the nobility we obtain as sons of God, the intimacy and fullness of fellowship and relationship with God we enter into all these are infinitely greater than anything experienced by men of God in any passing time or age. To have our Lord coming as the Spirit into our hearts, becoming our very own life, just as He was the Spirit of Jesus Christ on earth - surely this is a blessedness worth any sacrifice, for it is the means of the manifestation of God Himself. As the people of Jesus' day saw the full revelation of God in the Person of Christ Jesus, so the world of our day is yet to see a full and complete revelation of the Christ in His body. This is the consummation for which all other things since the foundation of the world were accomplished. The Word now begins to be fulfilled: "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them!" **(Rev. 21:3).**

KNOW HIM NO MORE AFTER THE FLESH

We do not wish to weary the reader with unnecessary repetitions, but it is our earnest hope that all may clearly see that it would be a monumental tragedy should we revert again to the knowing of Christ after the flesh - even His resurrected flesh that appeared before the astonished eyes of the wondering Thomas. I do not hesitate to say that the strongest temptation to every man is to guide himself by what he can see, feel and handle. This is why the disciples wanted Jesus to remain. This is the core of all ritualism and ceremonialism, of all the blinding creeds and lifeless traditions systems, of all the foolishness of candles and crucifixes and incense and ages and robes and temples and programs and ordinances and prayer books. It is the essence of idolatry. Men want to see God, therefore they make images of Him, or an object of ceremony or ordinance that He can be present in. I do not laugh at ritualism; it is intensely human. It is not so much a sin of presumption; it is a sin of mistake. It is trying to undo the going away of Jesus Christ. It is trying to make believe that He is still here IN THE FORM.

If men cannot have the historical Jesus here in the flesh, they then create some fleshly thing to represent Him. And the fatal fallacy of it is that it defeats its own end. He who seeks God in tangible form misses the very thing he is seeking, for God IS A SPIRIT. The desire burns within man to see God and this desire is given him to make him spiritual, by giving him a spiritual relationship; and he cheats himself by exercising the flesh instead of the spirit! Hunger and thirst after God are given us by the gracious hand of our Creator to raise us out of the realm of the seen and the temporal, for the things which are SEEN are TEMPORAL, but the things which are not seen are eternal, says the Lord. But instead of letting the spiritual appetite elevate us into the realm of the Spirit where God dwells, we are prone to degrade the very instrument of spiritualization and make it minister to the flesh.

It was expedient in order that the disciples of Jesus should be SPIRITUALIZED that Jesus should become A SPIRIT. They could not have Him in the flesh and in the Spirit too; His bodily presence would hinder the spiritual indwelling. They must part with the Jesus they knew before they could receive the GLORIFIED JESUS as the Spirit. Christ Himself had to give up the life He had before He could be glorified either in the heavenlies

or in us. Even so, in our union with Him in the Spirit, we too must give up the Christ we have known in the past, however we have known Him, if indeed we are to become partakers of all He is by the Spirit.

This is hard to grasp, we are so earth-bound, used to visible forms and appearances, and the very word "spirit" leaves one groping for something more tangible. Yet because of His inner moving and the unfolding revelation of Himself within, I have come to realize that to settle for a "form", ANY FORM, is to possess the alabaster box without the higher experience of knowing the fragrant ointment within. It is not the box we want, it is the ointment! Thus we refuse to cling to the "form" for our hearts are crying out for the "essence". God has often accommodated His people in their childishness and for a time provided a "form", but later He SHATTERED THE FORM that they might become aware of the essence. The hour has arrived when every man and woman of God who would follow on to KNOW THE LORD must experience a total breaking forth from every structured form and encrusted tradition, that we might KNOW HIM, the essence. Yes, it is a shattering process, most severe as the forms of rituals, ceremonies, religious systems, creeds, ordinances, ministries, and religious exercises of many kinds are literally swept away that we might now come to KNOW CHRIST ALONE as the inner Reality and Life.

The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews penned one of the most profound statements in all the Word of God when he wrote, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second" **(Heb. 10:9).** The writer of this letter had a great task before him. He had to try to make some people see the meaning of a loss. In what tender and masterly fashion he did his work matters not to us for the moment. Suffice it to say one can scarcely conceive of it being done better. The letter was written to some Hebrews who could not reconcile themselves to the loss of the Temple, with its splendid ritual, its stately and impressive worship, its wealth of form and type, and its endless symbolism. While in some sense entering into the spirit of the New Day, they were still partially dominated by the habit of a thousand yesterdays.

We can only look with sympathy on those Hebrews in their difficult passage from the old to the new. It is not easy to abandon an established tradition. Habits of thought and conduct get a wonderfully strong hold upon nations and upon individuals. One can clearly see that the believing Jew would be very slow at times in realizing the meaning of the new conditions of spiritual life involved in his acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Messiah. So to these men in their passing confusion of thought - to these men who understood far better what they had lost in the passing of the Jerusalem Temple and ceremony than what they had gained in the formation of the living temple of God built of countless living stones destined to be the habitation of God by the Spirit - came the writer of this letter to the Hebrews, to enter into their difficulties, to show them that upon the loss against which they were feeling resentment and uttering it, there was being built an IMMEASURABLE GAIN which they but dimly appreciated.

"He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." The writer says, "I acknowledge you have lost something - something very beautiful and comforting, something that has met your spiritual needs for centuries. But I want you to look beyond that loss, and find the splendid meaning of it, and see how that it is really the figure of a more glorious worship and a greater reality of life than ever Israel has known before." He taketh away. This is God's work. And God's taking is just the opposite of His giving!

Let us notice a few of God's firsts and seconds. God's seconds are always better than His firsts, which He gives to mankind. Meditate deeply upon these: Cain - Able; Cain's sacrifice - Able's sacrifice; Ishmael - Isaac; Esau - Jacob; Letter - Spirit; First Covenant - New Covenant; Water baptism - Spirit baptism; First Adam - Second Adam; First earth - New earth; Old man - New creation; Jesus in flesh - Jesus in Spirit. The New Testament presents a more glorious message than the Old; the last Adam redeems what the first Adam lost; the message of God's grace unfolded in the New Testament far excels the Law of the Old. The second is greater than the first. It always is when God takes and gives. As someone has written, "In His great wisdom our God has arranged many things in pairs, or shall we say, by contrasting twos. Some of the 'firsts' may seem to be very good, and for a time quite acceptable, but in due time they are to be followed by the 'seconds' which are higher, better, and more desirable than the firsts. Perfection is found in God's seconds. Often the firsts are but a type and a shadow of the reality, which is later to be found in the seconds. In the former we find the negative realm working out its purpose, and in the latter there is the glorious positive fulfilling its sphere. The

more one ponders each fragment of truth revealed, the more they yearn to leave behind the realm of imperfection, fragmentary, and enter into the freedom of the Spirit of Life in fullness" -end quote.

The first is of the earth earthy - the second is of God from heaven. And that is an epitome of the whole process of salvation, both for the individual and for the creation. He taketh away the outward that He may establish the inward, the seen that He may establish the unseen, the material that He may establish the spiritual. Israel had a religion that appealed to the senses. It was to some extent spectacular. Its tendency was temporal and local. It was a religion of times and places. The believing heart could not cling to it and at the same time enter into the timeless and universal gospel of Jesus Christ. And so the vision of the eyes had to go that the vision of the heart might grow clearer. The vision of Jerusalem of Judea had to fade that the child of God, born now from above, might see the New Jerusalem, the City of God, coming down from heaven - a city ever being built of lives transformed by heaven's life into the radiance of God's glory on earth.

There are two passages in the New Testament which, taken together, form perhaps the most perfect illustration of this principle of which we have been thinking that can be found anywhere. They are these: (1) I go unto My Father (2) I am with you always. Jesus Christ: took Himself from His disciples' eyes that He might give Himself to their hearts. They lost the first, the physical presence, that they might find the second the spiritual presence. And as we seek ever to have the Spirit of Christ and do His service, so in countless ways shall this great principle of true gain by seeming loss have effect on our lives. Ever we shall be losing the less to find the greater; losing the outward to find the inward; losing semblance to find realities; losing shadows to find substance; all the former things shall have passed away and all things shall have become new, praise His wonderful name!

How many millions of children have gone through Sunday schools, grown up, attending church all their lives, listening to preachers and teachers explaining Moses and Jesus of Nazareth; and if you ask them on their death bed, what they know of Christ; they picture baby Jesus, Mary's son growing up, or Jesus teaching the multitudes, laying His hands upon the sick and suffering, and being nailed to the cross. They know that He came back from the dead for forty days, and then ascended into heaven, never to be seen or heard from again in that body of flesh. These know absolutely nothing about CHRIST THE SPIRIT, CHRIST AS HE I-S, THE GLORIOUS CHRIST W-I-T-H-I-N!

Ah, how do WE see Him? As He WAS, or as He IS? Is our understanding of Him as the lowly Son of man, great and wonderful as He was in that former state, or do we see Him as He IS in His exalted position at the right hand of the majesty on high? Do we see Him as the crucified One? It is wonderful to see Him in that way. Do we see Him as the One who endured the cross, despised the shame, conquered death and rose triumphant from the grave? Or do we see Him as the ascended One, the glorified One; the One who transcended the law of sin, rose above the confining, limiting physical laws of nature and ascended into the Spirit realm of God, the Head of all principalities and powers, far above them all; crowned with glory and honor; Lord and King of the universe; FILLING ALL THINGS WITH HIS QUICKENING LIFE. Do we see Him as a physical Man, or do we see Him as Saul of Tarsus saw Him on the Damascus road, as the Light of God brighter than the noonday sun. Do we see Him with gentle blue eyes, seamless robe, and feet shod with the sandals of yesteryear; or do we see Him as John the Revelator saw Him on Patmos with eyes as a flame of fire, His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters!

How we praise God for the coming of Christ in the Feast of Pentecost! Truly He has come as the Spirit to write the Law of God upon our heart. This is the power and glory of PENTECOST! Wonderful as was the presence of Christ in the world, that physical presence cannot be compared to the magnificent glory of the SPIRIT CHRIST dwelling in the heart of man. No outward manifestation of power can take the place of His indwelling presence. It is from within and not from without that the work of transformation is to be carried forward from glory to glory until we shine in that same image of Christ.

Though Christ had walked and talked with His disciples, eating with them, praying with them, teaching them, and continually demonstrating the mighty works of God among them, even giving them power to heal the sick and cast out devils in His name, yet at the time of His departure there was but little sign of any work of transformation within them. All was by grace. Peter was still capable of cursing like a sailor and lying like the

devil! Judas was still capable of stealing, fraud, and acting a traitor. In the face of pressure they were all capable of forsaking Him and running away in despair. They were still very natural, carnal men, as almost all the Old Testament saints had been before ever the Christ of God walked the paths of earth. God in Christ had indeed been among them, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, but He was definitely not IN THEM!

All the evil in the world today, even as Jesus said, comes from within the evil heart of man. Therefore, since all evil begins within and not without, transformation must begin within and not without. A man who makes his New Year's resolutions to change and reform his habits has only an outward change, and usually temporary at best, while his heart remains unchanged. But the man who ceases his sinfulness and carnality because his heart is changed from within is indeed a New Creation man. Herein, then, lies the first and greatest blessing of the coming of the Lord in the Feast of Pentecost. Jesus had been with them, but now He would be IN THEM, renewing from within. He would become the dispensation of God into man by the Spirit. How wonderful it must have been to walk the hills of Judea and the shores of Galilee with Jesus by their side! How much MORE WONDERFUL IT IS that Christ by the Holy Spirit now dwells within us, bringing forth that same image of Christ and glory of the Father in our lives! Many saints entertain the notion that the return of Jesus in that singular body of flesh would mean the subjugation of all His enemies and the establishment of His Kingdom over all from pole to pole. Not so! Shall Jesus accomplish by His presence in the flesh what He has not been able to do by the awesome power of His omnipotent Spirit? Behold! the Kingdom of God is within!

A child may be given an acorn by his father - a tiny seed in which is locked the mighty oak that will one day tower upon the spot where it fell into the ground, under whose shadow man and beast will rest, and in whose enormous branches the birds of the air will build their nests. His father digs a hole in the earth and the child places the seed in it. In the darkness, hidden, buried, it is nourished and fed. Tiny roots push out seeking nourishment. Finally, spring comes and at the right moment there appears the first manifestation of the mighty oak. A tiny shoot appears. The father takes his child to see. "Isn't it wonderful!" he tells the child. "Look at that tiny shoot." The child begins to cry. "I want my acorn! Where is my acorn?"

In like manner, God our Father ordained that a New Creation should be brought forth in the image of Himself, to be born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed. He followed the same wonderful pattern that infinite wisdom had devised to produce all things from a seed. First He must bring into the world the holy and incorruptible One who was to be called THE SON OF GOD, for He Himself was to become THE SEED of an entirely new creation of incorruptible SONS OF GOD. Then, true to the pattern of sowing and reaping, that seed must fall into the ground and die; "For," said Jesus, "the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" **(Jn. 12:23-24).** It is the outer shell, the form of the seed that dies - not the incorruptible life within. The incorruptible life is the CHRIST SEED, springing forth, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward to become the full corn in the ear, to become the life of the many sons of God, the new creation - a creation of transformed men and women, born again of the incorruptible seed of God's Christ. But, wonder of wonders! the babes in Christ, comprehending not that our Lord Jesus Christ was the GERM SEED of the new creation, while they behold the harvest of many sons in preparation, at once begin to cry and demand, "I want my acorn! Where is my acorn?"

They would in their childish folly cling to the physical, historical Christ of the flesh, demanding that He be brought down from heaven again in just that singular body of flesh and bones, were they able. Is it not therefore abundantly true that, if the incorruptible life sealed up within God's Christ was to be released into the new creation harvest, then God's Christ must die. How else but by death could incorruptible life be released that they who dwelt in death might through faith partake of the power of His life giving Spirit? O what a death! O what a resurrection! O what an ascension! O what a glorification! O what an outpouring of HIMSELF! Who can fathom the depths of truth set forth in these words of our Lord: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME UNTO YOU." Praise God! He has come!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 7
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART SEVEN

THE FEAST OF FULLNESS
JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!
FROM PENTECOST TO TABERNACLES

Even though we have heard that we are living in such a day of miracles and sensational happenings that people are shock-proof, let us remind you that people are not shock-proof! Soon a series of prophetic fulfillments of a sensational nature will be transpiring right here on this earth that will shock millions of people who thought themselves to be shock-proof heretofore! Truly, we are living in a day of miracles. Every time we look at a new born baby we are looking at a miracle, and every time we see a giant plane take off the ground into the air with hundreds of people on board, we are looking at a miracle. However, these will fade into insignificance, compared to the miracles that are just ahead.

The prophetic Word of the Lord gives promise of a time to come when the Lord will move mightily by His Spirit. At that time the Lord will restore that which was lost all through the ages past and the long night of man's selfhood and rebellion against God. There is an event soon to take place, which shall overshadow and eclipse all former, lesser, manifestations of God's glory and power in the earth. The glories of this great event will inspire, initiate, and bring to fulfillment the times of the restitution of all things. The grandeur, the splendor, the glory and the great power of God to be manifest at the time of this event is impossible for us to comprehend presently, for we are still living and moving, for the most part, in the realm of the "firstfruits" of God's Spirit. The grand and glorious event to which we refer is the coming of Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles!

In previous articles we have explored the coming of Christ in relation to the throe great Feasts of the Lord in Israel. We need to understand thoroughly the truths concerning the three great SPIRITUAL FEASTS, of which the three annual Feasts of Israel of old were but types and shadows. God commanded, "THREE TIMES thou shalt keep a Feast unto Me in the year" **(Ex. 23:14).** Of the three Feasts the first was Passover. That foreshadowed Calvary. We are called to the SPIRITUAL FEAST of Passover in the experience of salvation. Jesus died and Himself became the sacrifice for our sins on the very day of the Passover Feast: "For even Christ OUR PASSOVER is sacrificed for us" **(I Cor. 5:7).** Israel of old was peculiarly a Passover company. They were saved by blood, the same as we are today; but their experience went no further because the time had not yet come for the outpouring of the Spiritual Feast of Pentecost. We are then called to the second Feast of the Lord when we are called to the SPIRITUAL FEAST of Pentecost in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. So, following the death of Jesus on the Passover, fifty days later we find that "...when the day of Pentecost was fully come ... suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" **(Acts 2:1-4).** In Israel of old the Feast of Pentecost was "the feast of the harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labors" **(Deut. 16:9-12; Ex. 23:16; 34:22).** Pentecost was the "firstfruits" of the harvest, and under New Testament economy it is fulfilled spiritually and is "the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT" **(Rom. 8:23),** the firstfruits of our inheritance. Christ's coming in the Feast of Pentecost saw Him descend on a little flock as the Comforter, which coming Paul tells us was but "an earnest" (or sample) of the Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). "Earnest" means merely a pledge or first installment. The balance must follow. The fullness is guaranteed by the first installment. In other words, HE IS COMING A-G-A-I-N to pour out ALL His glorious and eternal fullness in great power and glory!

The Spirit-filled believer anticipates the fullness of God on the basis of this humble beginning. The "firstfruits" of the Spirit is at once a possession, a rich, blessed, and unquestionable reality, and an initial endowment. As an

initial gift, it stands in direct line with the expectation. The very fact of its reality is "the guarantee of... the full possession of salvation." The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our full inheritance (Eph. 1:14). "Who hath also sealed us, and given the EARNEST of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:22). This scripture tells us that a down payment has been made to us by God. When we put something in layaway at a store, we have to put down a certain percentage of money on the purchase. That money is the same thing as an earnest. Partial payment is given in anticipation of the complete fulfillment of the transaction. We have earnest expectations or foretastes of the Kingdom as we see it now on its very smallest scale.

Let us illustrate another way. In eastern lands it ever has been, and is, customary for there to be an intermediary in arranging a marriage. The Bible picture of this is in Genesis 24, where Abraham's servant Eliezer, goes on a long journey to find a wife for Isaac. He takes with him a good report of his master's son, and tells how that his father has made him heir of all his vast possessions, and he then shows the damsel and her friends SAMPLES of this wealth in camels and jewelry, and gives them some of the latter. Thus allured, Rebecca left her known circle and took a long, desert journey to become Isaac's wife, though she had never seen him. Thus did Paul the apostle speak to the saints**: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2).** Fulfilling the role of Abraham's servant, Eliezer, the apostle bestowed upon those who heeded his words a FORETASTE of the vast and immeasurable wealth of the Kingdom of God, by imparting to them the gift of the Holy Spirit with its attending love, joy, peace, righteousness and power in the measure known by our present experience. How bountifully the table has been spread before us with His presence and divers gifts of the Holy Ghost! How rich and wonderful, beyond explanation, has been the blessing and glory so lavishly bestowed! And yet, precious friend of mine, all that we have received up to this present time is but the "earnest" of the full inheritance, which will be received when the betrothal is consummated at the marriage of the Lamb!

THE FEAST OF FULLNESS

There is a mystery about the Feast of Tabernacles. It is the only one of the three major Feasts of Israel that as yet has not had a New Testament fulfillment. Therefore it has not been celebrated in a parallel Feast by Christians the world over as has been the case with the other two Festivals, those of Passover and Pentecost. Truly we can say - Passover HAS come, Pentecost HAS come, and Tabernacles MUST come, for each is a part of God's great plan for His people. We have had the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost and both of these Feasts have been fulfilled IN THIS AGE IN THE CHURCH which is His body and right here on earth. For some strange reason men seek to postpone the last Feast to some future age, or give it to the Jews, or relegate it to some beautiful "Isle of Somewhere," and consequently the real spiritual meaning and import of the Feast of Tabernacles is completely obscured and lost. The grand truth is that like the others, the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the body of Christ RIGHT HERE UPON EARTH. It will be fulfilled dispensationally, it will be fulfilled in us individually, and it will be fulfilled in us as the Corporate Man. The grand truth of this has been wonderfully quickened by the Spirit of God to multiplied thousands of saints around the world in these last days.

The Feast of Tabernacles must have been most picturesque and striking. At the Feast of Tabernacles Israel set aside seven days unto the Lord. From the 15th to the 21st day of the seventh month they left their houses and dwelt in booths built of various trees and rejoiced before the Lord. The booths were to remind the people of the deliverance of the Lord when He brought them out of the wilderness where they lived in booths and brought them into the land of promise. The 1st and 8th days of the Feast were extra Sabbath days. There are several names for the Feast of Tabernacles. It is called the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Ingathering, the Solemn Feast, the Feast of Booths, the Feast of the Seventh Month, and the Great Feast.

There were seasonal rains in Palestine that pertained to this Feast. The Feast of Tabernacles was the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the agricultural year. At Tabernacles there were plenty of corn, oil and wine. This Feast, like the first two, was associated with the harvest. Whereas Passover was held at the time of the firstfruits of the barley harvest, and Pentecost was held at the time of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, when with the ripening of the grapes, olives, corn, figs, etc. the harvest was complete, Tabernacles closed the cycle.

Therefore, we see that the Feasts were associated with a PROGRESSION IN HARVEST, and speak of the ongoing process of the development and maturing of HIS LIFE in the life of the believer.

At the celebration of Tabernacles, not only had the barley and wheat been harvested, but also all other grains, the fruit of trees, the olives, the grapes, all that could possibly serve as food or drink. The harvest was complete. "...the Lord thy God shall bless thee in ALL THINE INCREASE, and in ALL THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice" **(Deut. 16:15).** Thus, this Feast speaks to us of the FULLNESS OF GOD, and therein lies the challenge to move on "unto the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST" **(Eph. 4:13).** Can we believe God for a full and complete appropriation of the Christ-life and the Christ-character? Can we believe that we can be conformed to the image of the Christ? Can we believe for the manifestation of the fullest measure of His power and glory? Oh, beloved, whereas the Passover realities represent our initial experiences as babes in Christ and the Pentecostal experience adds a further measure of His Spirit, the Feast of Tabernacles speaks to us of a completed harvest, a fullness in Christ, full growth and maturity in Him, and the full measure of His life, wisdom, nature and power!

What sets the Feast of Tabernacles apart from all the others is the abundance enjoyed during the Feast. It's the full harvest. Passover came right after the bleak winter season, and there was little food to spare. Pentecost marked only the "firstfruits" of the wheat harvest. But at Tabernacles there was plenty! Everyone looked forward to enjoying the full fruit of their labors. It was the close of the agricultural season when all the products from grainfield, oliveyard, vineyard, and the fruit trees were garnered. Hence the name, "Feast of Ingathering," under which it was instituted (Ex. 23:16; 34:22). It is the ingathering of mature fruit or, to be more exact, of harvest. Only the mature fruit can be harvested.

Thus, the Feast of Tabernacles speaks to us of two things: abundance of fruit; and rest from our labors when the harvest is complete. All the Feasts are types of Christ. Each one, as a type, is complete and perfect in itself; but the last one, the Feast of Tabernacles, is the all-inclusive and greatest type. The lamb of the Feast of Passover as a type of Christ is indeed complete and perfect; yet it is a type of Christ in a much limited measure. As far as the Lord Himself is concerned, He is not limited at all, but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, there is such a limitation. When we come to the Lord and receive Him as our Salvation, the Christ we receive is whole, complete, and perfect; but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, we experience Him in only a small measure, just as the little lamb of salvation. From the time we experienced Christ as the lamb, we have always been progressing and advancing; we have continually made progress in our experience of Christ and received of Him more and more. This does not mean that Christ has become greater and greater. No, Christ is the same, He changes not! But as we grow in our appropriation of Him He becomes greater and greater TO US AND IN US. Day by day in our experience Christ is becoming greater and greater! At the stage of our experience in which we arrive at the last Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, the UNLIMITED CHRIST, Christ is unlimited to us, He becomes ALL IN ALL. The other Feasts are limited, we know Christ by measure in them, but in the Feast of the SEVENTH MONTH we know Him in all fullness and rest with Him in all His glorious and eternal abundance for ever more! All the other Feasts can be measured. There is an extent, a limit, to the features and realities of Christ they prefigure. Not so with the Feast of Tabernacles, here the harvest is complete, all the fruits of the land are gathered in the people now rest and rejoice and eat to the full of the fruits of the land. Here Christ is known as the inexhaustible and immeasurable, and we rest from all our labors, and enjoy HIM as the fruit.

Oh, what a grand and glorious realm lies before us in the Feast of Ingathering! The day of the full fruit of the Spirit! The day of Perfection! The time of full and complete Redemption, spirit, soul, and body! The full and complete experiencing of HIMSELF! The fullness of Strength and Power and Glory! The Feast of Feasts! The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this day and hour is completely obscured and lost amidst the shout And euphoria over the "firstfruits," and most of the Pentecostals and Charismatics do not know what it is all about. They can see the healings, deliverances, miracles, prophecies, singing in the Spirit... and so forth; and they understand not that it is God in His great mercy inviting His people to enter on in to their full inheritance. They do not realize that all this is but the foretaste and earnest of their heritage, and that God bids them arise and come away with Him to the Great Feast that lies before!

There was much sacrificing of animals during this Feast. The first day 13 bullocks were sacrificed along with two rams and 14 lambs. Each day following for seven days of the Feast one less bullock was sacrificed, but still two rams and 14 lambs were offered each day. The sacrifices were not just burned up, they were eaten and there was more than enough to go around. Whereas at Passover and Pentecost there was only enough for the household, at Tabernacles there was plenty for all; the servants, the poor, the stranger - ALL could partake!

In all these types and previews we can see a glorious picture of the Latter Days. A time of harvest is coming, a great outpouring of blessing and love and power and glory will be upon the saints. Not an outpouring from heaven, but an out-pouring from the innermost being of God's matured ones, His HARVEST COMPANY, as mighty Niagaras of Living Water gush forth, a tremendous outflowing from the very Fountain-Head of the Rivet of God which will send streams of salvation into all the world. It will be a time of deliverance and blessing and transformation such as we have never known. God will "tabernacle" with His people in a new and glorious way, and will be manifested in their midst with such power that the whole world will know it. He will make a great Feast, and all who respond to the invitation will be welcome at His table. The latter-day Harvest of Ingathering will be reaped from the entire world. All nations will participate in His Feast of Tabernacles. The mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above every other mountain.

"The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion" **(Isa. 51:11).** Joel, Micah, Isaiah, Zechariah, the Psalms, and other prophecies have given us the picture of the glory of the Latter House and of the fruitful Latter Day. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them ... He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with him" (Ps. 126). "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. Selah. Let the people praise Thee, O God, let ALL the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God shall bless us. God shall bless us; AND ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH SHALL FEAR HIM" **(Ps. 67:3-7).**

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

It is a wonderful day for a believer when he becomes conscious of the fact of the INDWELLING CHRIST; that it is, indeed, the very Christ of God who has come in and taken up His abode within man, and He is no longer a distant Christ in some far-off heaven somewhere. No greater truth can enthrall the ransomed spirit of a saint of God than the blessed truth that Jesus Christ HAS COME AGAIN! Has He come to you, dear one? Has He come to you in the Feast of Passover, revealing Himself to you as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? Has He entered into the deepest recesses of your being and washed you whiter than the driven snow? Has He come to you a second time? Has the Christ come to you in a second dimension of His presence and life and glory? Has He appeared to you as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and Fire? Have you appeared before Him in the joy of the spiritual Feast of Pentecost? I have good news for you, my friend. God does not stop at Pentecost. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

There are some who clearly see this blessed truth that Christ has come already as Savior and as the Anointing Spirit, who then presume that the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was "the second coming of Christ" and that, therefore, all the scriptures pertaining to the coming of the Lord find fulfillment in our present walk in the Spirit. But these apparently overlook the fact that the entire New Testament was written AFTER PENTECOST - and it contains more than one hundred and fifty references to the coming of the Lord Jesus as being yet in the future.

However great the blessings may be with which His comings have already enriched believers and still continue to endow them, these blessings are merely the harbingers of the full harvest which the Lord has in store for those elect saints who "follow on to KNOW the Lord." It certainly cannot be said that the measure of the coming of Christ now experienced has brought the full realization of all the blessedness and glory that pertains to His coming again, and that it will be utterly in vain to look for any further coming of the Lord. As we have pointed out, the New Testament Epistles were written many years after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the

day of Pentecost, and these Epistles repeatedly refer to the coming of Jesus Christ as something that was still future at the time they were written.

When we turn to the New Testament we find the thought focused in the coming of the Lord, and connected therewith is the word "until". When the times of the blessedness predicted by the Old Testament prophets are brought before our attention by the Holy Spirit, He says that they will be brought in by the coming of the Lord, for God will "send Jesus Christ ... whom the heavens must receive (retain) UNTIL the times of the restitution of all things" **(Acts 3:21).** When the Spirit reminds the saints of the responsibility to fight the good fight of faith, it is "UNTIL the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(I Tim. 6:14).** When the Holy Spirit points out the need of taking heed to the more sure word of prophecy which we have received, it is "UNTIL the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" **(II Pet. 1:19).**

The apostle Paul added to the preponderance of evidence that, to the Spirit-filled saints in the Church, there was a coming of Christ that was yet future, when he penned these meaningful and encouraging words to the brethren at Thessalonica**:** "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" **(I Thes. 1:4-6, 9-10).**

The same thought is expressed in **Titus 2:13,** "LOOKING FOR that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." The words "looking for" are from the Greek word PROSDECHOMAI meaning LOOK FOR, WAIT, TO RECEIVE; thus A WAITING that keeps you LOOKING with the expectancy of RECEIVING! It requires this whole statement to actually give the full depth of meaning of this one word.

Paul wrote, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience WAIT for it" **(Rom. 8:25).** There is much that we do not see, it has not yet been brought to us, nor can we generate it in ourselves, therefore, since a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above, all we can do is look, wait, and expect to receive at HIS appointed time, while patience has her perfect work, and we are duly purified and prepared so as to be ready to receive when it shall come. There is a change in the prefix "pros" to "apek" in this word, but the overall meaning remains the same, and we'd like to give a few verses which use this word, to enlarge the scope of that for which we are waiting. "WAITETH FOR THE MANIFESTATION of the sons of God" (**Rom. 8:19).** "WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). "WAITING.FOR THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ**"** **(I Cor. 1:7).** "We through the Spirit WAIT FOR THE HOPE of righteousness through faith" **(Gal. 5:5).** "And the Lord direct your hearts ... unto the patient WAITING FOR CHRIST" **(II Thes. 3:5).** "Be patient...unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman WAITETH FOR THE PRECIOUS FRUIT of the earth ... be ye also patient ... for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" **(James 5:7-8).** These saints were aware that the Christ had truly come and indwelt their hearts by faith. But it was as much a part of their walk in God to believe that He WOULD come, as to believe that He HAD come!

FROM PENTECOST TO TABERNACLES

Completeness and perfection, however much desired, are not obtainable through an "in part" possession. Once we understand this one great principle, we no longer condemn ourselves for not manifesting perfection here and now. It would be like giving a farmer a pound of seed and a bag of fertilizer and then expect him to raise enough food in one short season to satisfy the starving millions of Africa. A partial supply cannot produce a full result. As children of God, the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, we have received the EARNEST of our inheritance, but we are earnestly exhorted to "gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT unto you AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" **(I Pet. 1:13).** We must, GROW IN GRACE and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but don't demand completeness and perfection until JESUS CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US THAT GRACE AT HIS APPEARING WHICH WILL COMPLETE THE WORK WITHIN.

The Holy Spirit has left no doubt that the Christ has not returned in all the fullness of Himself. Christ has ascended into the heavens, and He has returned in a "firstfruit" measure of Himself, but His absolute fullness remains locked up, as it were, in the unseen realm, awaiting a day of manifestation. Now HE is the One "whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" **(Acts 3:21).** In spite of all the Holy Ghost revivals, soul-saving crusades, healing and deliverance meetings, and signs and wonders and miracles wrought through the ages, we are yet to see the genuine work of restoration begun. So long as the heavens continue to veil from our view the manifestation of HIS FULLNESS, the "times" of restitution have not truly come to their hour.

The inworking of the Christ which we have known thus far, however precious and glorious it might be, is still IN PART - with carnality, sin, limitation, sickness and physical death still upon us, and suffering being used in the purification process. Ah, the Christ HAS come, and the Christ IS YET TO COME, for truly He came, and He continued to come; He comes, and He continues to come; and He shall come, and shall continue to come until He has come in all the fullness that HE IS. Yes, the heavens have received Him, His glory has been reserved in the invisible realms, and kept in store for the progressive unveiling and revelation of His power and majesty.

He has come in the foretaste of His omnipotence, working all through this present age in the hearts of the remnant, gathering out of each generation A FIRSTFRUITS, until the times of restitution. Then He shall be released, breaking forth in visible manifestation of the fullness of His nature, power and being, to begin the great work of restoring ALL THINGS back into God. How we yearn for that fullness! How our souls pant after Him! How we groan within ourselves, waiting for the glory that shall be revealed! He shall not remain forever withholden in the invisible sphere, but we shall RECEIVE OUT FROM the heavens, for He shall come to us, and in us, and out of the invisible shall proceed the visible manifestation, as the prophet foretold, "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 S-E-E-N_U-P-O-N_T-H-E-E. And the nations shall come to THY LIGHT, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" **(Isa. 60:1-3).**

Jesus Christ IS LORD, but He is not yet the Lord of lords, exhibiting fully that Lordship in His body, to restore creation. If you don't understand that there are some things waiting to be accomplished, then you need help in the scriptures. There are those who would try and claim and appropriate to themselves the fullness and perfection of God right now. They are already perfect, mature sons, filled with the fullness of God, immortal and incorruptible, ruling and reigning with Christ - so they say. Their boast is louder than their living, and their claims exceed their experience. The reports of their great power and authority over the creation are highly exaggerated.

Christ is not coming to evacuate His poor, discouraged, bedraggled, defeated Church to some distant planet to escape the ravages of the antichrist. HE, the Head of the Church, is coming in power and victory to His body, to assume the Headship and Lordship over the Church. When He was on earth He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have their nests; but the Son of man hath no place to lay His head." I can assure you, beloved, that Jesus was not in the least concerned about a place to sleep at night! He was the Head, and He was perfect. But there was not a perfect body imbued with all the fullness of divine life, ready for His Lordship. There was no place prepared for His Lordship to rest, no body to put His Headship upon so that creation would see the completed Christ, Head and body, in the glory and dominion of perfection. So the Holy Spirit has been perfecting that body. He has been producing sonship. He has been making a place for the Son of man to PUT HIS HEAD.

There was leaven involved in the ritual of the Feast of Pentecost, as the Lord commanded, "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord" **(Lev. 23:17).** The loaves of bread would speak to us of God's people in union with Christ. **"For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17).** Hence in the "two" loaves of this new meal-offering we have the completion of this new body of believers known as the Church, wherein all the believers were "made ONE" by the grace and Spirit of Christ (Eph. 2:14). The firstfruits of the wheat had been harvested, and now instead of a sheaf we

have two loaves, a body of believers, God's witness in the earth. The loaves were baked with leaven because from the time of Pentecost right until now, the Church of Christ has never been really free from division, sectarianism, and carnality. How wonderful it is to know that God knew exactly what the Church would be like throughout her long history, and made the type to fit accordingly!

Thus, the Feast of Pentecost is not the fullness. Pentecostal people love to call themselves "Full Gospel"; there are people right here in little Crystal River who say, "We're a FULL GOSPEL Church!" No they're not! I am asked the question, betimes: What is the difference between what the Pentecostals and Charismatics preach and what you teach? Indeed, there are vast and varied differences! But fundamental to them all is the fact that they preach but TWO FEASTS, while we proclaim THREE. They preach two Feasts and call them the "FULL GOSPEL". The truth is, they are but two-thirds Gospel, at best! Pentecost is not the fullness! It's the firstfruits of the Spirit and the earnest of our inheritance. Pentecost included leaven, therefore it is "in part," and not the fullness.

I want you to see a principle, where God's mind is, where His heart is. It's to bring a people to maturity. When you live in a Church world that tells you that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the fullness of the Spirit you get into the same rut you came into in the Passover experience when the Baptists told you, you received everything when you were first saved. Projections of that kind of thinking will do one thing - they will stagnate your growth. If you've got it all you don't need anymore; and if you have the fullness, what else can you have? It is alarming to some when you come along and say there is more than a Passover experience of the new birth, you can also receive a Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit like they had in the book of Acts. That bothers Passover folks! But not nearly as much as it bothers Pentecostal folks when you tell them that what they have is not the fullness, but merely the "firstfruits" of the Spirit and the "earnest" of their inheritance! That bothers them in the most horrendous way!

When you tell Spirit-filled people that they are just living on the "milk," they get bothered even more. But Heb. 6:1-2 gives us the foundation for the Christian walk which the writer says is "repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." All these are but the first elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ, for those, according to the apostle, who use milk! Now notice that one of these milk bottles is labeled "the doctrine of BAPTISM(S)." And what God knows is what I know and what I am telling you - the baptism in the Spirit, that blessed Pentecostal experience, precious as it is, is foundational, it is milk, it is just baby food! It's a springboard, not an ultimate. It's not an end, just a means to an end.

Now don't misunderstand me, and don't misconstrue my words. I would not for one moment minimize this foretaste, this firstfruit of the Holy Spirit which we have received in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Blessed Feast of Pentecost! I would not for one moment depreciate the great outpouring of the Spirit which began at the turn of the century, in which millions came to Christ and were transformed. Neither do I belittle in the least the glorious moving of the Holy Spirit which swept across the land and around the world beginning in 1948. I do not speak in derogatory terms of the speaking in tongues, prophecy, gifts of healing, laying on of hands, five-fold ministry and the mighty manifestations that accompanied the restoration of these gifts and ministries to the body of Christ. I myself have been a glad partaker of its glory. I may say with the esteemed apostle Paul, "I thank my God that I speak with tongues more than ye all." I would not deny it in life or in death. Since the day the Holy Spirit swept with indescribable bliss and glory into my life at the altar of a Pentecostal Camp Meeting, at the tender age of twelve, I have seen hundreds, yea, thousands, receive the power of the Spirit. Yet in my heart I know for certain that all the glory we have seen is but a faint shadow of the glory that shall be revealed at the Feast of Tabernacles, bringing the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for six thousand years.

The purpose of the Holy Ghost is not to make you feel good, nor to enable you to speak in tongues, heal a few sick folks, and get your prayers answered. The purpose of the Holy Ghost is to baptize you with the Holy Ghost and Fire and purify your spirit, soul, and body, bring you into a realm with God where you are changed from strength to strength, from glory to glory, and faith to faith until you come into a walk with God where you begin

to grow up into all the nature, wisdom, knowledge, power and glory of God. That's the heart-cry of God in this hour. God wants to mature a people and fill them with all the fullness of God.

Then the glory of the Lord will fill the whole body of the sons of God in the fullness thus far known only by our glorious Forerunner and Head. His glory shall flow and flow and fill the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the words of the Savior, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YE DO." The power of God shall at last conquer the nations, and sin, and sorrow and death shall be swallowed up in victory. The coming of the Lord in power and great glory is at hand. The time of the Feast of Tabernacles draweth nigh. The Royal House of King-Priests after the order of Melchizedek is about to be revealed. In that day the lame man shall leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped. The desert and the solitary place shall blossom as the rose. Men will learn war no more. The times of the restitution of all things will dawn in awesomeness before the eyes of all nations. Heaven and earth shall kiss and all things shall be reconciled to God. It will be the time of the manifestation of the manifested sons of God when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

What I am proclaiming, announcing and declaring is that there is a THIRD experience in God. There is a visitation, an appearing and coming of the Lord called Tabernacles that is going to come to pass in the Church today, right here upon this earth, and the implications of this Feast go far beyond anything you or I could possibly imagine. Does not the scripture say that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it even entered into the heart of man the things that God has made available for those who love Him? People ask me what manifested sonship is going to be like. I do not exactly know. It is like trying to describe how a space ship works to a savage in the jungle. Most of the Church world today is like Sarah, laughing at the idea that God would visit His people again in a mighty way.

One cannot explain what Passover means to an unregenerated and unbelieving man unless God causes him to see it. Passover is distinct from anything that an unbeliever has ever experienced. There are those who have experienced Passover, having been born again by the Spirit of God, but they have no comprehension at all of what it is to experience Pentecost. It is like trying to explain the world of man to a worm. Today, there are people who have experienced both Passover and Pentecost and yet, they are as blind as bats to what the Feast of Tabernacles is going to be like. I am declaring that there is a THIRD REALM in God for us to experience. There is a fullness we do not yet have. This third dimension brings His Lordship. And this Feast, being the last, brings perfection! It will bring the consummation of our SALVATION, spirit, soul and body. This third dimension in God is the place where you and I, in the Spirit, move beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place of God's fullness. Blessed are they who are called to this great Feast, that which supercedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses! And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal which will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great things for the Master. It is my deep conviction, precious reader of these lines that the timing of this Feast is at hand. People ask, "Why haven't I heard this before?" If you search the scriptures, you will find that the Feasts were declared to be in their APPOINTED TIMES.

Great were the glories seen by men like Noah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David and Solomon. Glorious were the manifestations of God's power that swept the Judean hills when our Lord spake as never man spake and healed, cast out devils, and even raised the dead to life again. Sublime beyond explanation were the holy visitations at Pentecost and in the years that followed as multitudes, both of men and women, were brought to the feet of Jesus Christ, and by the hands of the apostles God wrought mighty miracles and special signs and wonders until the world was turned literally upside down with the glory of the heavenly visitation. It would have been wonderful to have dwelt there then and to have rejoiced with them for all the wonderful works of God. Marvelous beyond description were the works of God as He birthed His infant Church! Blessed as were all those things and marvelous as were the results, yet more glorious still is the hope pulsating within the breast of all creation as "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. Because the creation itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God"

(Rom. 8:19, 21, 22). As J. B. Phillips so beautifully renders, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own."

The supernal glories that lie like the towering Mount Everest before us are beyond compare. The grandest event of all time is now at the doors. For almost two thousand long years the Lord has been gathering out of all nations an elect people and refining them in the furnace of affliction, transforming them in mind and heart by the deep dealings of His Spirit, and preparing them in wisdom and knowledge to possess the reins of the government of the world. And while we rejoice and praise God for all the mighty visitations of the past, and those glorious visitations we have experienced in our own lifetime, yet I know by the Word of the Lord that the next great move of God will be greater than all - the manifestation of the sons of God. Nothing is more certain than that. The Spirit witnesses all across the land and around the world that the long awaited revelation is at hand. The unveiling of the in-Christed is now at hand. The cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint are joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the arising of God's deliverers. The desire of all nations is at hand. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

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 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 to His elect in the Feast of Tabernacles, we must then be prepared to receive Him in fullness. We cannot tell Him what portion of Him we will receive and what portion we will not receive. WE WILL RECEIVE HIM IN FULLNESS, and without any reservations or preconceived ideas, or we will not receive Him at all. Either we will go up and keep the Feast according to His Word, or we will miss the glory of His coming. Vast multitudes of Christians will not see Christ when He appears 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, the world, and the devil, and are disposed to turn loose of the past religious traditions, the old forms and ceremonies, and 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.

At the closing of this article I am deeply impressed to share the following vision received by an old prophet of God many years ago, one of the Lord's pioneers of this Gospel of the Kingdom in these last days. He wrote: "In that vision which lasted all night, the most wonderful vision I ever had, in which I saw the sons of God in action all over the world, ministering to the multitudes in every tongue and nation, to all people, I saw both men and women ministering. I saw them standing, suspended in mid-air, in the midst of a busy intersection of a large city, with all traffic stopped, and thousands of people seeing them with their eyes, and hearing them with their ears, regardless of distance, and without the aid of mechanical devices. I saw them speaking to a people of one language, and in a moment's time I saw them transported to another people of another language, speaking to them in their own language, having power over all mechanical devices and natural laws, so that they could cause every activity to cease, and every eye to be fixed upon them, until their message had been delivered.

"I saw them walk upon the water; and I saw the terror in the faces of the wicked, at the sound of their voices. I saw the professing Christians fall upon their faces in true repentance, crying out for mercy, and I saw them being genuinely converted. I saw the skeptics being convinced, and the blasphemy of the wicked, as they would rail and mock, only to be struck dumb or blind at just a word from the manifested sons and daughters of God.

"The vision lasted all night, as in my spirit I was living in that future time, when God will be manifested in fullness in His sons and in His daughters, while my body was back there in bed alongside my wife. Sometimes the scenes would make me weep and I would sob, my body shaking violently with pain and agony, whereas another scene would cause me to laugh with holy laughter, as I witnessed the genuine repentance of the shallow Church members.

"I'll never forget the vision of the young girl (the daughters of God) who spoke with the voice of many waters. Human language could never describe the quality of her voice. All I can say is, it was so filled with love and compassion, it would break the hardest stone, and at her command, every infirmity, every sickness, every blindness, every lameness was healed; every one was made perfectly whole, even those who had been lunatic from birth.

"Sister Britain got no sleep that night, and finally when the dawn was ready to break, she asked me why I didn't get up and write the vision. I did try, but could not hold my hands on the keyboard of the typewriter. Some unseen force held them aloft over my head. I walked the floor and wept, and begged the Lord to permit me to write some of the visions I had seen, to preserve them in black and white. At last He did, and I wrote just a very few of the visions I had seen, for a large book could not contain them all.

"What did the experience do for me? That vision set my soul aflame! Should I publish what I had written? What would people think of me if I did? Surely they would think me mad! I was just getting started in the writing and publishing ministry, and surely, I thought, that one message would cause all men to lose confidence in me! Finally with tears streaming, I said, I'm going to publish it, regardless of the cost. I know it's true! I know it's going to come to pass! And though all men turn against me, I'm going to publish it anyway! And so we did. We then waited anxiously to hear the reaction of the people. To our surprise, the message thrilled their hearts. THEY BELIEVED IT! They still believe it!" -end quote.

And now many years after, the old prophet has long ago passed from the scene. But today, not only the small number who were touched by his word, but multiplied tens of thousands of saints in every nation under heaven have been quickened to these wonderful truths. A vast army of saints is now in preparation for the greatest day in earth's long history - the Feast of Tabernacles, the manifestation of the sons of God.
Hallelujah!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 8
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART EIGHT

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!
RIVERS OF LIVING WATER
JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

All over the world in this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to the elect concerning an imminent manifestation of Christ. The trumpet has sounded - the appointed time has come. Christians in every nation have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth.

The prophetic Word of the Lord gives promise of a time to come when the Lord will move mightily by His Spirit. At that time the Lord will restore that which was lost all through the ages past and the long night of man's selfhood and rebellion against God. There is an event soon to take place, which shall overshadow and eclipse all former, lesser, manifestations of God's glory and power in the earth. The glories of this great event will inspire, initiate, and bring to fulfillment the times of the restitution of all things. The grandeur, the splendor, the glory and the great power of God to be manifest at the time of this great event is impossible for us to comprehend presently, for we are still living and moving, for the most part, under the economy of the "firstfruits" of God's Spirit. The grand and glorious event to which we refer is the coming of Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles!

The Feasts of Passover and Pentecost found fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ. But we have no record at all of the Feast of Tabernacles ever finding fulfillment in the early church or the New Testament economy. Now, inasmuch as this Feast did not find fulfillment in the early church, nor has it found fulfillment at any time in the New Testament order of things - what deduction should we make from that observation? We should deduce that if God fulfilled the first two Feasts, HE IS GOING TO FULFILL THE THIRD! And this third Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, REMAINS TO BE FULFILLED! The grand truth of this has been wonderfully quickened by the Spirit of God to multiplied thousands of faithful saints around the world in these last days.

What sets the Feast of Tabernacles apart from all others is the abundance enjoyed during the Feast. It's the full harvest. At the celebration of Tabernacles, not only had the barley and wheat been harvested, but also all other grains, the fruit of trees, the olives, the grapes, all that could possibly serve as food or drink. The harvest was complete. On the spiritual plane this points to the fact that God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life and the manifestation of Himself throughout this church age, right up to the present time. But there shall yet come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ - not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used - but the Kingdom of God coming with power and with glory, as an expression and a manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the Kingdom of God, creation delivered, and the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth for evermore. What bright and glorious prospects loom before the vision of all who press on to the Feast of Tabernacles!

Since the church's birth almost every generation has known something of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Most of these moves would have to be characterized as something less than worldwide. They swept cities, states, even nations at times, but few were global. But now, even beyond the strength and influence of the celebration of the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost, there has been released from heaven in the last several years an even greater sense of expectancy. It is the expectancy that ALL HEAVEN is about to break loose in

the midst of the Lord's elect on a worldwide basis. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices in every hamlet and metropolis to say, "The earth is about to see the glory of God in a most remarkable way." I am convinced that a host of heavenly messengers has recently been released to every corner of the earth bearing the message, "And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" **(Isa. 40:5, NIV).** What I am proclaiming, announcing and declaring is that there is a THIRD experience in God. There is a visitation, an appearing and coming of the Lord called Tabernacles that is going to come to pass in the church today, right here upon this earth, and the implications of this Feast go far beyond anything you or I could possibly imagine.

In those blessed days of the holy visitations at Pentecost and in the years that followed, there was an humble disciple, filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, who spoke to the people and did wonders among them. But some of the religious crowd of skeptics doubted all that he said. The Bible tells us they could not resist "the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake," so they "stirred up the people" and set up false witnesses, accusing Stephen of blaspheming both Moses and God. Stephen's anointed wisdom told that religious crowd that the Lord would destroy the temple of stones, to fulfill the temple and the law IN A PEOPLE, and would change their customs and worship (Acts 6:13-14). That is exactly what the Lord did, but the religious Jews refused to accept the change that came. So today, more than nineteen centuries thence, Jews the world over continue to worship in their synagogues according to the Mosaic customs in apparent ignorance of the fact that the mighty God has forever abolished that order and replaced it with the higher order of His Spirit in the true church which is His body. Likewise there are vast multitudes of Christians today who will not believe the anointed wisdom of the Lord's messengers who are telling of God's purpose to again change the order and establish a new spiritual administration over the earth!

God is speaking to His people today and saying to us as He said to Israel at Mount Sinai, "You have kept this Feast of Pentecost long enough ... you have enjoyed this realm to the fullest. It is time to move. Pack up your tents and begin to move. Leave this realm; embrace the experience and use it, but move on in Me." I think there are more movements built around the Pentecostal mountain than any other experience from God. We have the "tongues" group, the "prophecy" group, the "revival" group, the "Jesus' Name" group, the "healing" group, the "deliverance" group, the "New Testament Church" group, the "praise" group, the "Word" group, the "faith" group, the "shepherding" group, and many, many others. There is nothing wrong with each of these experiences and revelations when they are kept in balance. We need them working in our lives. But when we shift our bearings from GOD HIMSELF and place them on one or a number of these experiences and continue to go around and around them, as though these were the ultimate we are in serious trouble! These various experiences are not our inheritance, but merely a means of causing us to come unto that for which the Lord has apprehended us. God will plead with us to MOVE ON, He will woo and entice and urge us onward for a season, but if the call is not heeded, He will move on and those who will not heed His calling will march around and around their little mountain until they die in that terrible and dread wilderness! I have seen it happen so many times! Oh, my Father, give us ears to hear what Your Spirit would say to the churches, and grant us grace to move out and fulfill all your will!

The church world today has no vision for what is about to happen. All it can think about is getting raptured away into the clouds. Our prime concern is to prepare the ground for the truth concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, which surpasses the glory of Pentecost even as the noon-day surpasses the brightness of early dawn. If the saints of God could only catch a glimmer of the glory of the Feast of Tabernacles, which even now looms before us, they could not possibly cling to the stagnant remains of yesterday's visitations. If the Passover was wonderful - and it certainly was - how much more wonderful has been Pentecost in its fullness! And if Pentecost is wonderful, how much more shall we expect Tabernacles to exceed it in glory? And even now as the-first faint rays of this glorious Feast begin to appear on the eastern horizon, we have every reason to rejoice - knowing that the days of deliverance and restoration are here. And little by little we can see how the pattern is being unfolded before our eyes.

There was a time when doctrine was the passion of my life. I was an avid student of theology and meticulously examined various doctrines. Some of them I rejected, and others I embraced. I thought it most important to search the scriptures and, from the letter of the Word, determine what is the truth about a great number of

things. Then I got into the gifts of the Spirit and for a season miracles were happening and wonderful hearings and deliverances, and the gift of prophecy gushed forth like rushing streams from the mountain tops. Then God began to open the realm of sonship to my wondering spirit, and He has brought me to the place over the past several years where my one and only desire is to SEE HIM and KNOW HIM. I am telling you that the Person of Jesus Christ is exciting me more than anything else that I have ever found in the Word of God or in the realm of experience!

I cannot emphasize too strongly the infinite importance of the APPEARING OF CHRIST. There is a people today who LOVE HIS APPEARING. Vast multitudes of Christians will be thrilled with the passing, temporal blessings of His next visitation, but the elect will behold the glory of Christ, and will be made ONE IN HIM in every aspect of Himself that He discloses. The nominal Christian will find great joy in the fact that a new anointing is present, and that glorious things are being accomplished throughout the earth, but the elect will SEE CHRIST and will be made glad PARTAKERS of His glory. CHRIST will be the theme of this next move of God in the earth. He is the great Subject, the central Person of all our desires and yearnings. We do not desire more messages ABOUT HIM, we are simply crying out to KNOW HIM IN ALL HIS GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL REALITY.

Though we find deep satisfaction in the sweet communion that we have with Him, and the secret converse we have together as He journeys with us through the wilderness, how oft our hearts long for a closer touch with our precious Lord! No words can express the rapture that is ours when we walk and talk with Him by the way; but we yearn for HIS FULLNESS, when all veils and limitations of earth shall forever pass away. There are times when He makes Himself so real that our small capacity can hardly stand the strain of such revelations. It is as though we were bringing a pint cup to receive the waters of Niagara; even the earthen vessel is almost carried away. But the day is coming when our capacity shall be so enlarged, that we can receive the full unveiling of our Lord and the glories that are His; and He will give us such revelations of the Father that we shall indeed enter into His joy and glory. Then we shall see Him face to face, and shall behold all things clearly, with nothing between to obscure the vision. This mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible shall have put on the incorruptible. The Father's name will be written in our forehead.

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!

"Behold, I come quickly" **(Rev. 3:11).** "And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" **(Rev. 22:12).** "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" **(Rev. 22:20).**

There is an important and sublime truth contained in the passages just quoted. The word "quickly" is from the Greek TACHU meaning shortly, without delay, swiftly, SPEEDILY, or SUDDENLY." While there is significant truth, not understood by the average Christian or preacher, in the statement of Jesus two thousand years ago, that He would come shortly and without delay, it is to the thought of the SPEEDINESS or SUDDENNESS of the Lord's coming that I would now draw your reverent attention. 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" **(Mal. 3:1).** 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 shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" **(Acts 22:6-7). T**he 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. And we, too, are admonished by the Lord to watch diligently for His coming, "lest coming SUDDENLY He find you sleeping!"

The coming of Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles will break just as unexpectedly and suddenly and startlingly upon a sleeping church and an unbelieving world as did the coming of the Lord as the Passover Lamb and His coming in mighty Spirit-power on the day of Pentecost. It is my deep conviction, and I share it prayerfully, that the Lord Jesus will come forth in fullness in His elect body on the exact date of the Feast of Tabernacles, in the fall of the year (not necessarily this year - but the cry of our heart is ever, Come, Lord Jesus!).

The Feasts of the Lord portray distinctly the three primary manifestations of the Christ, and it is of immeasurable importance that we thoroughly understand that the comings of the Lord have ALWAYS TRANSPIRED ON THE PRECISE DATES OF THE FEASTS WHICH FORESHADOWED HIS APPEARING. The Son, Jesus, was literally, physically born - not in December - but at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in October (see our booklet, FIVE REASONS WHY THE SONS OF GOD SHOULD NOT CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS, free, upon request). The Lamb of God, Christ our Passover, was literally and physically slain for us at the exact hour when the gleaming knives were put to the throats of the Paschal lambs all across the land of Israel. The faithful disciples in the upper room were keeping the Feast of Pentecost when the day was "fully come" and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. Today, we would say that a formation of jets had come in for a landing. There was a roar like the sound of a mighty waterfall. Suddenly, instantaneously, this energy, this snapping, crackling, popping Light filled the house. It played like static electricity over men until they were illuminated and radiant with divine energy. They stood and staggered under this power but were not drunk with new wine, they were suddenly charged with such a wave length of power that they were renewed in their minds, transformed in their natures, and went forth everywhere doing great signs and wonders and miracles, proclaiming the Word of God with power.

The Feast of Tabernacles took place on the 15th day of the 7th month, the month of Ethanim (around October), and lasted seven days. I do not hesitate to predict that the manchild company, the sons of God, will be born, literally and dramatically birthed upon the stage of this world, in a blaze of earth-shaking supernatural power and glory, during the Feast of Tabernacles time. They will be the "firstfruits" that will enter into HIS FULLNTSS, the total incarnation of God upon earth. When the Lord comes in a mighty way once more at the Feast of Tabernacles, all flesh shall see the salvation and glory of the Lord. Whatever the year may be, the manifestation of the sons of God will take place when the Feast of Tabernacles is "fully come". That will be the greatest of all "spectaculars" the world has ever witnessed, when He erupts from within His many-membered body in the fullness of which Pentecost has been only a foretaste. The inhabitants of the earth will be terrified, yes, even paralyzed! Instantly they will know this is no natural phenomenon, no traditional religious service; while deep within, the Voice shall witness: TRULY, THIS IS THE SON OF GOD! The effulgence of His Person shall appear upon His chosen ones, the intensity of His brilliance, equating to that of seven suns, shining through the undulating "garment" composed of tens of thousands of glorified saints, a star-studded, super-spectacular, seven times the power of Pentecost, the likes of which has never been witnessed by man since the dawn of creation.

On Friday afternoon, Nov. 22, 1963, at 12:30 in the afternoon, President John F. Kennedy was shot to death by an assassin as he rode through the streets of Dallas, Texas. Within minutes, television and radio flashed the news across the nation and around the world. America was galvanized in a shock that brought us together unlike anything except the explosion of tte Challenger spacecraft. I'm sure I could ask each one of you where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news of Kennedy's assassination, and you would be able to tell me. I remember vividly where I was at that time - at the airport in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico, preparing to fly across the Gulf of California to the western Mexico city of Los Mochis. I shall never forget the feeling of unbelief and shock. But there is another event coming, the magnitude of which the world has never experienced, which will take the inhabitants completely by surprise, and I can assure you, precious friend of

mine, that you and billions of other people throughout the earth will forever remember where you were and what you were doing THE DAY THE SONS OF GOD WERE MANIFESTED!

In years past we were taught that Jesus would come again to this earth in a singular, limited physical body. And when He made this world-wide appearance, all the church would suddenly be raptured and taken up to heaven. Whenever I minister that the Christ has ascended and been glorified, assuming again that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and that He now returns as a glorious Spirit-Being, filling all things, and that W-E A-R-E HIS BODY, some tell me that I have taken all their "blessed hope" away. But let me assure each reader of these lines that I have learned to never take away anything unless I can give something better in return. I may take your "hope" away, but in its place I give you REALITY.

Ah, God has not left us without a blessed and inspiring hope and ere we have finished this series of articles, the Lord permitting, we shall disclose to you, what, to us, is a most transcendent vision for the yet future fulfillments of the prophecies of the scriptures concerning the coming of our blessed Lord, to be completed in a cycle of events so stupendous and wonderful that we stand in awe as we behold them. Of this cycle, the ministry of Jesus nearly two thousand years ago was but a miniature. There is that glorious coming of Christ set forth by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the apostle Paul, of which he says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire ... when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S, and to be admired IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would account you worthy of THIS CALLING, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power" **(II Thes. 1:7-11).**

This facet of the Lord's coming is called His REVELATION - "When He shall be REVEALED from heaven." When He comes in the Feast of Tabernacles His coming will be greater than the singular Man Jesus appearing in the sky. When He comes He will exhibit majesty, glory, power and such splendor as is now unknown and inconceivable. He will be "REVEALED FROM HEAVEN" - that is, He will descend out of the glory of the Father in heaven, and will come to be "GLORIFIED I-N H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S, and to be ADMIRED I-N ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE."

The ground of the admiration which HE will receive will be what will be seen, not in the sky, not in Jerusalem, nor yet in that singular body which Thomas' thrust-out hand touched and felt, but IN HIS SAINTS. That is, their graces, their love, their nature, their glory, their wisdom, their perfections and powers will be the occasion of producing admiration of HIM, for HE will be seen as the source and reality of it all. One translator has rendered it, "and to be made marvelous in all them that believe." I have said it before, and I now say it again, I am not so concerned about the MANIFESTATION of the SONS of God; I look, rather, for the MANIFESTATION OF G-O-D I-N HIS SONS! There is coming a day, the glory of which is indescribable, when the Christ shall be manifested in an all glorious manner, and the source of His highest triumphs will be what is seen IN the saints. His main honor, when He comes in the Feast of Tabernacles, will not be the outward splendors, which Christendom is ever expecting, nor the angels which will accompany Him, nor the display of His power over the elements and all laws of nature, but the SAINTS who have been made ONE IN HIM, and through whom HE will be revealed. He shall then be admired and glorified in His TRUE BODY to a total and ultimate degree.

This appropriate honor of Christ in the church, which is His body. has never yet been fully seen. His people on earth have, in general, most imperfectly reflected His image! They have been comparatively few in number, and scattered upon the earth. They have been poor and despised. They have been persecuted, and regarded as the "filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things." The honors of this world have been withheld from them. The great have regarded it as no honor to be identified with the elect of God in any generation, and the proud have been ashamed to be enrolled among the number of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. At the Feast of Tabernacles all this will be changed, and the in-Christed will show to admiring worlds what are the exceeding riches and power of His grace.

There is a church, which is His body, "which is the FULLNESS OF HIM that filleth all things" **(Eph. 1:23).** The church is the "fullness" of Christ. The "fullness" is a word not easily explained in our language, but it is not what some people call it - the "complement". Complement very often in men's minds means only supplement. And

that is exactly how most Christians view themselves in relation to Christ - just a supplement! The real meaning of the word fullness is just what you would call a full blown rose with every petal seen. The church - the rose - is here in a visible way upon earth - and now ALL HE IS comes out through His body. Christ is the fullness of God, and the church is the fullness or plenitude of Christ. Nothing, therefore, can be clearer than the fact that the body of Christ, notwithstanding that it has manifested much carnality, weakness, blundering and failure through this age, will come out in the end as the magnificent exhibition of all the beauty of God's Christ. The saints shall be the expression and display of the full glory of the incomparable Son of God, for they are HIS FULLNESS!

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

I want to take you back to that scene which transpired twenty centuries ago on the Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Let me briefly describe to you how that "last great day" was conducted. Early, early on the morning of that day, a million people and more, who had been dwelling in tents and booths all around Jerusalem, arose, on the Last Great Day of the Feast. Early in the morning, Priests and Levites, singers and players on instruments, those that sounded silver trumpets, those that played on the goldenharps, the tabrets, viols, wind and stringed instruments, the great orchestra of the great Temple, all gathered with the magnificent Temple Guard, with all the pomp and display of that splendid, most inspiring, most touching, and Divinely-appointed ceremonial.

What was the scene? From the Temple there issued forth the High Priest, bearing in his hand the Sacred Golden Vessel. With him were all the attendant priests of the Sanhedrin, and all the pageantry and flourish of the Temple Guards. With the Urim and Thummim on his breast, and all his attendants following in train, he passed through the Temple and walked slowly and solemnly down the Temple Mount. The beautiful music that had come down through the ages swelled forth in mighty volume. The sweet singers sang this song with joy, "With joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation," as they went down the Temple Mount to the sweet, sweet stream of Siloam, that Sacred Stream which flowed out of the earth under the Temple Mount, and went away around Moriah and Zion, and then was lost in the gardens of Ophil - a strange river.

They went down to Siloam and the High Priest dipped the Golden Vessel into the clear, pure Water. Then having taken the Sacred Water, he reversed the procession, and passed up with the Water in his hand, while the choir sang, the instruments played, and the people chanted that great song, the twelfth chapter of Isaiah: "Behold, God is my Salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song; and He is become my Salvation; THEREFORE WITH JOY SHALL YE DRAW WATER OUT OF THE WELLS OF SALVATION." They swept upward to the Temple amid the hush of the multitude, whose hearts were touched by the inspiring scene. Then came the last great ceremonial on that Last Great Day of the Feast, when the High Priest, in the presence of all the people, took the Water he had taken from the Sacred Stream, and poured it out upon the Altar, while a great shout went up from the people, "With joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation!"

Just at that moment a young Man, humble, an untitled Rabbi, stood forth before the multitude. Not as King did He come, but stepping forward He took the place, doubtless, of the High Priest. Standing there beside the Sacred Altar, He lifted up His hands to the multitudes on Mount Moriah, Mount Zion, and Mount Olivet, and cried with a Voice that re-echoed down the Valley of Hinnom: "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!" What a hush fell upon the people! What a wonder that any man should be so daring as to step forward and take the High Priest's place and declare that He Himself was the Sacred Fountain opened in Judah for sin and all uncleanness.

That day Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, just as when at Sychar's well He said to that woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee Living Water." She did not understand. But, oh, how gently He made her know! Into that parched and weary woman's heart, who had had five husbands and was now living in shameless adultery, there came - into this barren, barren heart - the Water, a Well of Water, a Spring

of Water, that made her a Messenger of God. She went into the city and broughtout all the men of Sychar to the feet of Jesus. There is a thirst in the heart of every man for the Fountains of Living Water. The vast majority of mankind has mistaken the thirst they have for Living Water to be a thirst for some temporal thing. Vainly they imagine that their thirst can be quenched by partaking of the stagnant waters of earths cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the Fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. "If any man thirst," says Christ, "let him come unto Me and drink!" He becomes all in all to every searching heart. When Jesus comes, the thirsty soul finds the Fountain of Living Waters. There his thirst is slaked forever. Henceforth the River is in Him, a literal Niagara of Living Water springing up unto eternal life. "The River of God is full of Water."

With reverent heart and bowed head I now direct you to the wonderful truth that it was on this Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, at the ceremony known as "The Pouring Out of the Water," that Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow Rivers of Living Water." This He spake of the Spirit, which they should receive. That the time would come when men would no longer draw their experience from wells of Divine provision, but an artesian fountain of Living Water would rise up in the soul, and flow forth unto humanity in mighty Rivers of Blessing and Life.

The Jewish people have always believed that their Messiah would appear on this last, Great Day of the Feast. In fact, they still believe it. This is why Jesus had to be there on that Day. He had an appointment to reveal Himself to Israel on that literal, typical Day and He did. He was right on schedule. He always is! As the Water was poured out on the Altar, it was customary for the priest to quote, as we have pointed out, from Isaiah twelve. He would have concluded with the words: "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." What irony there would be in those words! He knew nothing of the true Messiah who stood right before him; and yet there it was written, and he spoke forth these words in utter ignorance of the truth they conveyed: "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee!" There He stood, the Holy One of Israel, the very Fountain of Life, and the Substance of all their ceremonies and festivities. He does the same today. He stands in secret in our very midst, waiting for admittance. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if ANY MAN hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" **(Rev. 3:20).**

We must keep in mind that when Jesus appeared in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles two thousand years ago, Ho appeared as a physical man at a symbolic ceremony, and that ceremony was not the Feast of Pentecost, but the Feast of Tabernacles. It was at the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus presented Himself as the Giver, by the will of the Father, of the Holy Spirit as Rivers of Living Water. And yet, is it not true that we have always associated the Rivers of Living Water with the gift of the Holy Spirit received at the Feast of Pentecost? How dull of hearing and understanding is the carnal mind! We have looked to Pentecost as the source of the Rivers of Living Water, and in so doing have misappropriated the symbol entirely, and missed the larger fulfillment of the type! I have been greatly blessed and enriched by reading the comments of the late George Wylie on this subject. I am especially impressed to share the following words of wisdom and revelation from his pen:

"After surrendering my heart and life to the Master I heard of the infilling of the Holy Ghost, and sought it with all my heart. I was told that this would be the fullness of God. I expected that I would be filled with His fullness and have power to turn the world upside down and do all kinds of miracles and impossible things. How disappointed I was when I found that I didn't have that kind of power, and I wondered why. Later I discovered that far from being filled with all the fullness of God, I had merely received the firstfruits of the Spirit - far from fullness. What Jesus said about Rivers of Living Water flowing has not happened yet. O yes, we have seen little trickles and gushing little rivulets here and there, but nothing like mighty Rivers.

"Once I was visiting a church shortly after coming back from our missionary stay in Liberia, Africa. We saw the Lord do many wonderful things there; wonderful hearings and transformed lives; but I still realized there was a tremendous lack. There wasn't the flow of the Rivers the Lord spoke of. There was a tremendous hunger in me and great desire for more of God, and to break the bounds of the limiting things that seemed to cling to me and

hinder me from being what He had said I should be. The Elder asked me if I would like to say something, so I just unburdened my heart, and shared the deep longing of my spirit to launch out into the deep of God. There was a song we often sang then:

Launch out into the deep, Let the shoreline go;
Launch out, launch out, In the ocean Divine;
Out where the full tides flow!

"I quoted these words and said how I longed to do just that, to launch out into the deep and be swallowed up in the Divine Fullness. The Elder's wife got up and said, 'Bro. Wylie, if you had been with us in the prayer meeting on Friday night, you would have been out in the deep.' I answered her, 'Sister, there is a world of difference in having a little shower of rain fall on you, and launching out into the depth of the Divine fullness.' O my, how can we be content with a little trickle when there should be Rivers flowing! I believe the day is here for these Rivers to break forth and flow as they ought to. The scripture says that this had not happened yet, when the Lord spoke these words, because that He was not yet glorified; but when He was glorified it would happen. As I am sitting here meditating on these things, and talking to the Lord about it, I said, 'Father, now that your Son has been glorified, why has it not happened as He said it would?' Do you know what He just told me? He said, 'The Christ has not yet been glorified.' As I considered those words I realized that the Head has been glorified, but the body has not yet been glorified, and when the rest of the Christ is glorified then the prophecy will be fully fulfilled. Then there will be Rivers of Living Water flowing in the totality of all that that means!" -end quote.

None can deny that Jesus spake of the outpouring of the Spirit that would follow the glorification of the Head; but there was also a deeper teaching in His loud utterance, for, after all, Pentecost is just a stepping-stone to Tabernacles. What then, in brief, is the conclusion one is compelled to arrive at in piecing together these types and passages? That the blessing of Tabernacles proclaims the inward revealing of the life of Jesus Christ in a fuller and mightier way than ever before experienced; that whereas Pentecost is a "firstfruit" or "earnest of the Spirit," Tabernacles is a HARVEST, or greater manifestation, a flowing of the Living Waters in such power that even the mortal and corruptible workings in our flesh and blood shall be swallowed up in HIS LIFE, and shall overflow to a fainting and thirsting world in such glory and power that it shall change and transform all things.

It is the healing, life-giving stream that we read about in Ezekiel: "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh" **(Eze. 47:8-9).** Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of MEN." The manifestation of the sons of God shall eclipse anything we have ever read about in the Bible or church history! This Water has been flowing ever since Pentecost; we realize that; but soon it shall gush forth from HIS HARVEST COMPANY who have drunk deeply at the blessed Fountain-Head of Life, and shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing and salvation to a dry and parched wilderness where no life is. A great outpouring from beneath the very throne of God, the dominion of God personalized in His obedient elect, will send streams of salvation into all the world.

Truly, in a way never imagined by sinner or saint, the burning words of the prophet will be fulfilled: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5). Isaiah again enlarges on this prophecy: "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" **(Isa. 52:10).** It is true that this has happened in measure throughout this Gospel age, but it has never happened on the scale where all things are transformed under the Lordship of God's Christ. We have been made, eye-witnesses of the firstfruits; now we await the HARVEST! We have been made glad partakers of the rivulets of Pentecost; now our souls pant for the gushers of Tabernacles!

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

The message of this article is just this: Jesus is coming again! He will never come again into the body of His humiliation, never again walk to rest upon the well, or sleep in the storm tossed boat, never to again be smitten

in the face and spit upon and crucified. Can we not all thank God that that part of it is finished? "In like manner as ye have seen Him go away," so will be the manner of His coming. It was an hour of His Kingdom glory and the holy rapture of His translation. And so will He return. So He has returned. So He does return. His return on the day of Pentecost was in a mighty rushing sound, in tongues of flame, in prophetic ecstasy, in gifts of apostles and miracles. He came to fill His body, His church, with this power. Can we even begin to comprehend the greater glory of His coming in the Feast of Tabernacles? All this will be reproduced on a larger scale. It will be the FULL HARVEST of His life. He will come with the keys of death and the grave in His hands for His elect sons. He will come in power as the Judge of the living and the dead. He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords in sovereign grace to carry out the great work of reconciling and restoring ALL THINGS. Some presume that they have already received this anointing, already reign as kings in the Kingdom. Their lives and their ministries give the lie to their claims. I have not witnessed a power and a glory greater than Pentecost in any place, nor in any person, nor through any ministry anywhere on this terrestrial globe. Have you? But it is coming. You can count on it!

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was never intended to accomplish so great a purpose. God's purpose in this age has been, not to deliver the whole creation, but to "take out a people for His name" in order that, by His goodness to us in Christ Jesus, He might display in the ages to come the transcendent RICHES OF HIS GRACE (Eph. 2:7). Having accomplished His purpose for this age, the Lord shall then use the finished product from this age, a company of sons in His own image, to be the deliverers of creation.

We have heard many so-called Gospels. The world is full of poor deluded souls who are trying to establish their own particular creed of imaginings and mistakes. We try to go to the world, we try to tell them the message, by using all the world's own methods, to advertise, to appeal to their emotions, to entertain them with music. It only proves our impotence, that we have not left the world very far behind if we can return and employ the world's ways so easily. Today, everyone with a little bit of preacher's "itch" is attempting to get themselves a little congregation, a little following, to build a little kingdom. These all imagine that somehow they are going to go out and storm the world and "take the world" for Christ. But a new day has dawned, a day when the pure and unadulterated Gospel of the Kingdom must go forth to the whole world. Religionists have tried in vain to lift the world out of its shame by their ambitious programs and preaching their own ideas and the doctrines of the antichrist. It simply would not work. The world has grown steadily worse. Their lofty phrases, and text-book prayers, and apologetic platitudes, and time-honored traditions have utterly failed. Now a new company is to go forth with a burning message of truth direct from the throne, and in the fullness of power reserved for this day. The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing WITHOUT MEASURE, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the ineffectual absurdities that have been preached throughout the years. Religionists have side-stepped, and mollycoddled, and back-slapped too long. Their day is done. The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the "in part" realm. A new day is dawning for those who have been quickened from above. A new army is being prepared for this new day, an army of the sons of God perfected in His image, filled with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus, radiating the effulgence of His glory, demonstrating the omnipotence of His power. And there shall be an exultant victory. For now the day is dawning when "A-L-L nations shall come and worship before thee" (Rev. 15:4). "And... all the nations ... shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES" **(Zech. 14:16).** It cannot be denied by any that throughout this age all the nations that have come to worship the Lord have worshipped Him in the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost. But there is a day, glorious day! when all the nations shall know the Lord and feast with Him in the blessing and glory of TABERNACLES!

I believe I speak the truth when I say that many of us have reached the point of no return - there is nothing to go back to, not in the flesh, not in the world, not in the church systems; there is nothing out of which we have been drawn by the Spirit of God to which we would return; it is all so empty, meaningless, lifeless, worthless. Now we must FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD IN HIS FULLNESS. It is vain to come out, unless we are committed to ENTER IN. We are committed to a course, which cannot be altered, for it is fixed in its destination - His throne! "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).**

We do not desire the throne for what we can get out of it, for our own fame and fortune, but for the infinite potential it holds for blessing and restoring the creation. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature 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" **(Rom. 8: 20-22).** Today, the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, even nature itself is groaning. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops. Creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

It is not more preachers we need. It is not more radio broadcasts or television programs. It is not more missions and missionaries. It is not more tracts or even Bibles. It is not more programs and crusades. It is not another revival. All we need is the cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint to be joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the manifestation of the sons of God. There is an elect people who, even as I pen these words, are being made participators in this grandest of all dramas of history. Their prayer, praise God, is soon to be answered. The long awaited revelation is at hand. The glorious Lord is soon to be revealed from heaven in flaming fire to be exhibited in great glory and power and admired IN HIS SAINTS.

Ah, my brother, my sister, do not sell creation short! Do not settle for less than God's best! All creation is standing on tiptoe, waiting and counting on you. If you love Israel; if you love the peoples and kindreds of the earth who know nothing of the Saviour; if you love the sad, the tormented the sick and the dying; if you love the burdened brute creation; if you love the mountains, the trees, the rivers and the oceans so mindlessly being destroyed under the hand of greed - you will joyfully welcome the hope of the manifestation of God in His sons; for it is the hope that shall bring to the groaning creation, emancipation from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the Children of God; to Israel her Messiah; to the heathen idolater, the knowledge of God; to the rebellious, correction; to the sick and dying, health and life incorruptible; to the Bride, the presence of the Bridegroom; to mute nature, blessed release from the cruelty of man and the blight of the curse.

You have kept the Feast of Passover. We trust that you have also kept the Feast of Pentecost. But will we now move on from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion, where we may keep the next Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles? The power of His presence will be manifested in a way never seen before. Let us go up to the Feast! Jesus will meet us there! Oh, my friends, let us listen for the sound of His coming!

In the crimson of the morning, in the whiteness of the noon,
In the amber glory of the day's retreat,
In the midnight, robed in darkness, or the gleaming of the moon,
I listen for the coming of His feet.

I have heard His weary footsteps on the sands of Galilee,
On the temple's marble pavement, on the street,
Worn with weight of sorrow, faltering up the slopes of Calvary,
The sorrow of the coming of His feet.

Down the minster aisles of splendor, from betwixt the cherubim,
Through the wondering throng, with motion strong and fleet,
Sounds His victor tread, approaching with a music far and dim-
The music of the coming of His feet.

Sandaled not with shoon of silver, girded not with woven gold,
Weighted not with shimmering gems and odors sweet,
But white-winged and shod with glory in the Tabor-light of old-
The glory of the coming of His feet.

He is coming, O my spirit! with His everlasting peace,
With His blessedness immortal and complete,
He is coming, O my spirit! and His coming brings release;
I listen for the coming of His feet!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 9
THE PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART NINE

THE PAROUSIA
THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN HIS BODY

Once I read a story and it goes something like this. Bamba Gumba might be a tribal king. We will assume that he is. And we will assume that he rules in aboriginal splendor over loyal subjects in the wilds of Africa. We will also assume that he is a crafty ruler. In order to maintain his royal position unchallenged he must keep his subjects impressed as to his superior prowess; and in order to accomplish this he maintains a display of majesty and might such as none other before him has ever done. But in order to support an elaborate retinue as befitting his high estate he must occasionally devise means to augment the royal revenue. For this purpose we now picture him on his way to America. He has found that travel broadens one's outlook on life, and also that one who goes abroad enjoys certain distinctions and makes impressions on one's subjects which otherwise could not be hoped for. And so Bamba Gumba arrives in New York.

Here he takes in the sights, and obtains certain colorful ornaments of which his tribesmen of the hills are extremely fond, and for which they will gladly pay him many times the cost. But one day, while listening to a conversation, there is suggested to his alert mind a plan of extraordinary merit. He is of course well aware of the superstitious nature of his subjects; and here at last is a plan, which will take advantage of that superstitious nature and yield him handsome dividends. He knows that, because of his unchallenged authority, and as a result of the high esteem in which he is held by his subjects, the plan cannot fail. And so he returns home, envisioning an end to all his worries in regard to finance.

As soon as he arrives he summons his under chieftains into conference. The plan demands immediate action. No time can be lost. This, he explains, is a matter of unlimited emergency; and steps must be taken at once to avert impending horrible disaster. In America he has learned of a plague, so dreadful that it is called by six different names, namely: park, roof, jail, car, table and road. But in his own language the proper word for all six is "oomph." This plague, unless proper steps are taken, is incurable when once contracted, and it may take almost any form. But he has good news. Certain occult powers have been conferred on him in America, and now he is able to deliver the sufferer from this terrible plague. This power will also immunize his subjects from contracting the plague in most cases. But only on one condition will he guarantee sure and certain deliverance. Has he not been to great expense to procure immunization for them? And surely they wish to show their appreciation for the sacrifices that he, their benefactor, has made! And so the condition of deliverance is that each citizen pay to him yearly a certain specified sum of the coin of the realm. Or if the payment of coin is impractical or impossible, then either corn or chickens of equal value will be accepted instead. And immediately we envision feverish activity in the vicinity of the royal chicken coops. The royal carpenters are hard at it building new accommodations for the expected increase in the royal poultry holdings.

I am sure that no one who reads these lines would ever allow himself or herself to be deluded and carried away by such a fantastic invention as the foregoing! We are Spirit-born children of God, free from bondage to dark superstition and offensive delusions. We are intelligent, educated, Bible loving, church taught; we are of sound judgment. We would never stoop to like ignorance. Six English words that all mean "oomph" - the very idea! We are altogether too smart and too spiritual! But are we really as smart and as spiritual as we think? Dear Reader, human nature is the same the world around. You and I may think we are smart; but let me tell you, if you and I had been raised in the domain of a Bamba Gumba, no matter how high our educational achievements might be, aid no matter what our mental capacities might be, if we had been raised in that environment then, except for a miraculous work of grace, when others began carrying chickens to Bamba Gumba, we also would start carrying chickens.

Ah, we laugh at even the thought of our being carried away with an "oomph" tale of a Bamba Gumba. We sort of unconsciously pride ourselves that we are altogether too smart to be fooled by any of the delusions of pagan religion, silly superstitions, or such. But the cold facts are that from every denominational pulpit in Christian America, as well as in every other nation on earth, is preached ignorance, just as offensive and just as irrational as the invention here depicted to wheedle money, corn and chickens from the poor benighted bushmen of Africa. And uncomplimentary as it may be, the fact remains that not one in a million among Christians even have the ambition or spiritual discernment to detect the lie.

The poor downtrodden bushmen of Africa are not the only people on earth who follow Bamba Gumbas. For we in America - yes, even the Christians in America - educated, freeborn and alert though they may be, have been reared under and persistently adhere to just such offensive inventions, disseminated by men who, in spite of many degrees and letters, and much professed wisdom, know not the truth, refuse to listen or learn and, like so many parrots, repeat merely what they have taught to say by others. For, insane madness that it is, from practically every pulpit in America today are heralded distortions of truth just as irrational as any scheme invented by any Bamba Gumba who ever lived. And while we marvel at the credulity of the illiterate and unlearned in believing such tales, and would unhesitatingly warn them to simply find out what the six English words really mean: those six different words which Bamba Gumba represented as being an "oomph," yet we just have not had enough holy inquisitiveness and spiritual initiative to do the same thing ourselves.

For in the New Testament, in the original Greek, are found six different words and phrases which have been represented to us as ALL meaning the very same thing - the "coming" of the Lord or the "second coming" of Christ! And while a few scholars have gone to the trouble to tell us what these six words mean, yet I do not hesitate to say that not one Christian in a million has earnestly sought the Lord for spiritual wisdom and divine understanding concerning these important matters. There is confusion in the minds of many when they come to this great truth of our Lord's return and much of this uncertainty stems from a failure to understand the diverse meanings of these six Greek words which are used in connection with His coming. While Bamba Gumba's six words all meant "oomph," OUR six words are all construed to mean "second coming"! Until the great scriptural truths contained in these six Greek words dawn upon our enlightened hearts by the quickening of the spirit of wisdom from on High, though we may be earnest students of God's Word and feel satisfied with what we have, nevertheless, there will be in our possession a great mine of eternal riches and heavenly wealth of which we are able to appropriate only a small portion.

The subject of this study was not chosen simply to make a play on words but to direct attention to transcendent realities of infinite importance. Words are wonderful things. They open vistas to the mind of man that are utterly limitless. They break hearts, or cause the despondent to sing with joy. An announcement of a birth or the sad news of a death alike are conveyed by words. Mighty empires rise and fall at the issue of words from the lips of great kings, and powerful generals. Words are among our most wonderful possessions. Through the centuries they have stood for certain meanings, and simple regard for truth demands that we treat words as they were intended to be dealt with. Important truths pertaining to the manner of our Lord's return have been long hidden by mistranslation. As we all know, the Bible was not written originally in the English language, hence we who use the English language must depend upon translations from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New Testament. While in most instances in our English Bibles very little of the richness of meaning has been lost through mistranslation, there are exceptions in which profound truths of the divine plan have been long concealed by unwitting mistranslations.

The apostles spoke and wrote a language called "he Koine dialectos," and while a few generations ago this vernacular form of Greek was not fully known, the researches of archeologists have given us a complete and comprehensive understanding of the New Testament vocabulary. The Greek is a more precise language than the English. The English Bible uses a few terms which relate to the coming of the Lord, but there are actually six Greek words used in relation to the Lord's return. For the sake of simplicity we shall list these words, with the shades of meaning they present, and then go on to consider them in more detail.

1. PAROUSIA**.** This word occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament. It comes from the verb PAREMI which means "at hand," "to be present." The noun signifies "Presence." This verb emphasizes the actual personal presence of the one who comes. "Be patient unto the COMING (presence) of the Lord" **(James 5:7).**

PAROUSIA never indicates the act of coming or the arrival of a person, but denotes the presence of one who has already arrived.

2. APOKALUPSIS. This word comes from the verb APOKALUPTO meaning "to uncover, "unveil," and stresses the appearing or revelation of one by means of an uncovering or unveiling. It is the disclosure of one who has been hidden under cover. "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION (unveiling) of Jesus Christ" **(I Pet. 1:13).**

3. EPIPHANEIA. This word is to be found six times in the New Testament. It comes from a verb which signifies "to shine upon," "bring to light," "to appear," "to manifest." The noun is "manifestation," "brightness." It is the appearance out of darkness of a star that has been there all day, unseen and unperceived, and suddenly manifesting at night. This word is used in the sense of the glory or majesty that is revealed by the coming of the Lord.

4. PHANEROO. This word means to render apparent or make manifest, not necessarily a visible presence, but a perception. "When He shall appear (become apparent), we shall be like Him" **(I Jn. 3:2).**

5. ERCHOMAI. This word is used to indicate the actual act of coming, not, as with PAROUSIA, the presence of one who has arrived, but the event of coming. "Behold, HE COMETH (is in the act of coming) with clouds" **(Rev. 1:7).**

6. HEKO. This word stresses the point of arrival at a certain place, as I am come and I am here. "Hold fast till I COME (to you)" **(Rev. 2:25).**

Of course these six Greek words do not mean six different comings of the Lord; but the distinction between them enables one to see what the texts mean with reference to the coming of His presence, to His abiding presence, to the revelation or unveiling of His presence, to the manifestation or out-raying of the glory and majesty of His presence. By no means do any of these words mean identically the same thing. For instance, both the word EPIPHANEIA and PAROUSIA occur in a notable verse: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the BRIGHTNESS (epiphaneia) of His COMING (parousia)" **(II Thes. 2:8).** Actually translated the verse reads: "The MANIFESTATION of His PRESENCE."

It is obvious that He CAN be present without manifesting the fact; and the present One CAN manifest the full glory and majesty of His presence with a brightness above the noon-day sun. Yonder, on the mount of Transfiguration, He suddenly shone before His disciples till the midnight became as the midnoon of a cloudless sun; yonder, above the road to Damascus, so close to Paul and unseen, then shining out till the glory of the shining blinded him and made him fall from his horse prostrate in the dust of the highway; yonder at Patmos when He appeared unto John and so blazed forth in the manifestation of His presence that the disciple fell at His feet as one dead with the weight of the glory. He can be present and yet unmanifested, as yonder at the foot of the golden ladder Jacob slept with a stone for a pillow and awakening, cried out in holy awe, "Surely the Lord I-S in this place, and I knew it not!" **(Gen. 28:16).** The manifested and unmanifested presence of the Lord. The Lord present and no one aware of it; then suddenly revealed and every eye beholding Him. This is the teaching of the two words, EPIPHANEIA and PAROUSIA. As these two words are both applied to the coming of the Lord; as this great event is spoken of both as HIS EPIPHANEIA and HIS PAROUSIA, and the difference between manifested and unmanifested is absolute; as they are two things as well as one, two things as to MANNER and capable of being applied to the same thing as a fact; as both ARE applied to the fact of His coming, then the coming of Christ has in these two words two distinct aspects; the aspect in which He is manifested; another aspect in which He is unmanifested.

Betimes, in the throes of trouble and testing, the heavens have seemed as brass and God appeared to be a million miles away, when suddenly, the Lord shone forth out of our darkness to show His mighty hand of deliverance on our behalf. Ah, HE WAS THERE ALL THE TIME, as present as present can be, but in one instant He MANIFESTED His presence and our sorrow turned to joy, our despair to victory, praise His name! How often it has happened to us, as it did to Jacob, when he awaked out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the

Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." He was lonely, He was troubled, He was fearful, He was fleeing from his brother Esau, things were just not going in his favor at all. Exhausted, he took a stone for a pillow and laid down to sleep. And then he had his dream with the visitation of God. Then suddenly he realized that God was IN THIS PLACE, and he had not been aware of it, shadows of loneliness, shadows of weariness, shadows of emptiness, shadows of despair, shadows and more shadows had obscurred any sense of the presence of God being with him. YET GOD WAS IN THAT PLACE, and had been with him all the time. And God is in YOUR PLACE, precious friend of mine, wherever and however it is. He may only be present (parousia) or His presence may be manifested (epiphaneia), yet God is there accomplishing some precious things, whether you are aware of it or not. Through overlooking these important distinctions we have missed much heavenly wealth and glory that lies concealed within the six Greek words and which unfold the various facets of our Lord's coming. Our vision was greatly enlarged when we discovered by revelation of the Holy Spirit this multi-faceted splendor of HIS COMING!

The story has been told of a beautiful incident that occurred many years ago in the North of England. A young Salvation Army girl, only recently saved, was overflowing with the joy of the Lord and was eager to share her salvation with all others. Walking along the street of a little Durham city, she saw a tall, gray-haired man coming toward her and, stranger though he was, she stopped him and said, "Pardon me, sir, but are you saved?" The tall stranger leaned over toward her and answered, with a quizzical smile playing on his kindly face: "My dear, do you mean ESOTHEN, or SOZOMENOS, or SOTHESOMAI?" The Salvation Army girl was bewildered - it was "all Greek" to her! She did not know that she had stopped bishop Westcott, one of the greatest of Greek scholars and an editor of the famous Westcott and Hort edition of the Greek New Testament. He had asked her, using three different tenses of the Greek verb: "Do you mean, I was saved, or do you mean, I am being saved, or do you mean, I shall be saved?" And then bishop Westcott, who was indeed saved and knew that he was saved, lovingly explained a little of the three tenses of the gospel to the young girl, and showed her something of the riches of her past salvation, her ongoing salvation, and her future salvation, from spirit to soul to body; and before they separated that earnest young girl knew more about the gospel and her Saviour than she had ever known before, and went away rejoicing that she had asked this tall stranger whether he was saved.

In like manner, when we are asked, "Do you believe in the coming of the Lord?" we may reply, "Do you mean His PAROUSIA, or do you mean His APOKALUPSIS, or do you mean His EPIPHANEIA, or do you mean His PHANAROO, or do you mean His ERCHOMAI, or do you mean His HEKO?" Ah - we believe in ALL His comings, and it all the facets of His comings!

In a map of the heavens a "d" appears beside some of the stars, indicating that although these stars to the naked eye are single points of light, the telescope reveals them to be double, or triple, and, in some cases, to lie one behind the other, separated by immeasurable space. Some time ago, on a stop-over in Guatemala, Central America, we visited beautiful Lake Atitlan which spreads out in the mountains at an altitude of 5,200 feet, an incredible sparkling blue against green and purple slopes. It is justly famed among the most beautiful lakes in the world.. The majestic volcanoes Toliman, Atitlan, and San Pedro grace its southern shore with altitudes up to 11,595 feet. We took a boat ride along the shores of this sparkling, pristine mountain lake, the water so clear that, as I walked on the pier I could easily see thirty or more feet straight to the rocky bottom with perfect clarity. Traveling around the lake by car, observing from the high mountain vistas, there is a point at which the volcanoes appear to be but one towering peak. But as you draw nearer it becomes evident that there are not one, but three, and that these peaks lie one behind the other, valleys deep and wide stretching between.

As in the works of God, so also in His Word - distance and angle of vision count for much. Events that to the casual reader appear to be but one, as: they are approached by the telescope of divine illumination are seen to be separated into various facets and manifestations. Just as it could not be learned from the Old Testament, by the deductive powers of the carnal mind, that what seemed to be one coming of Messiah would resolve itself into two, first in humiliation and then in glory; so also it cannot be learned by careless study of our English versions of the New Testament that the return of our Lord is a many-splendored, 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. As we have stated again and again in this series,

the scripture shows clearly and unmistakably that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings, and shall continue to have many more. The truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; He will continue to come, praise His wonderful name!

A friend recently wrote in a letter regarding these things: "What a tremendous expansion of heart, mind, and spirit this revelation invites, what a turning of the diamond like many-faceted wisdom of God in first this direction and then that direction, what a reaching out in all directions to lay hold on HIM in whatever form He should appear, in whatever manner He should express, in whatever dimension He should move. I am completely overwhelmed by the power of this word. It has the strange dual effect of simultaneously lifting me up to soar in my spirit into the high realms of His truth and of reducing me to rubble before the majesty of His life! Quite frankly, I hardly know what to do with myself in the wake of its impact. I am absolutely beside myself with wonder. Oh, listen to the sound of His comings! Surely, what I feel tonight is akin to what Elizabeth felt when the babe in her womb stirred at the sound of the voice of one favored by and blessed of God."

THE PAROUSIA

The Greek word PAROUSIA is translated as "coming" in your King James Bible, and that is where a lot of the problems with the so-called "second coming" begin. The word actually means "along side" or "presence." And there are many, many scriptures that the Bible projects as talking about the "coming" of the Lord that are not talking at all about a physical descent of Jesus from the sky. They speak rather of His coming in us, His appearing through us, and the glory of the fullness of the presence of the Lord in the midst of the church, the presence of the Lord in the earth.

The effect of error on the work of the early translators is apparent in many of the prophecies pertaining to the return of the Christ. The theory, which developed during the Dark Age,s held that the Christ would return to earth as a sort of glorified man. In this form He was suddenly to appear in the sky, be visible to the entire human race for a short time, and then as He approached closer to the earth it was to be enveloped in flames, the unconverted of the human race whisked off to a place of eternal torture, while the saints would be taken to heaven. All of this was to begin and to be completed within one twenty-four hour day.

This distorted conception of the return of Christ, and its purpose, caused the Church of England scholars to translate the Greek word PAROUSIA by our English word "coming," when its real meaning is "presence." In their twisted theology there was simply no way in which Christ could be present in the earth for more than a few hours. He was to return, and rapture His people almost immediately away to heaven, so they could not conceive of His coming meaning His PRESENCE. The word PAROUSIA is used twice in the New Testament when it does not apply to Jesus, but to the apostle Paul. These uses of the word establish its real meaning. Paul expresses others' appraisal of him, saying, "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence (PAROUSIA) is weak" **(II Cor. 10:10).** And again, writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (PAROUSIA) only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" **(Phil. 2:12).**

It can be seen at once that the use of the word "coming" to translate the Greek word PAROUSIA in the foregoing texts would have given an entirely wrong meaning to Paul's words. In these passages it is the PRESENCE of a human being that is involved, so we understand what Paul means. He is not discussing his "coming" or "arrival," his "journey" to them, but his actual presence in their midst. So we need only to move from the understandable into the realm in which we do not fully understand in order to realize what the prophecies mean which discuss the PAROUSIA of our Lord; that meaning being His ACTUAL PRESENCE, not His "coming."

PAROUSIA is formed e present participle of the verb "to be" (EIMI), with a prefix meaning "alongside." It means to be near or to be present. It is clear that it describes not an event, but a STATE or CONDITION, that involves duration, a period of time. It is defined by Liddell and Scott as "a being present, presence." In each place where it is translated "coming" in the King James Bible, the Revised Version has "Greek: presence" in the margin. The Greek antonym for PAROUSIA is APOUSIA meaning "un-presence" or "absence," and is used in the passage quoted above from Phil. 2:12 wherein Paul says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always

obeyed, not as in my presence (PAROUSIA) only, but now much more in my absence (APOUSIA), work out your own salvation..." No translator would think of rendering APOUSIA as "going"; so neither should PAROUSIA be rendered as "coming." It is "presence" contrasted with "absence." The word simply means "present." It would be the answer that a soldier would give to a roll call. Two thousand years ago the "coming" of the Son of God to this world took place in a split-second of time when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary; but it was followed by His parousia or presence in this world for almost thirty-four years; many events took place during that time of His PRESENCE.

This is without doubt one of the most important truths in the whole New Testament. Nowhere does PAROUSIA mean "coming" or "coming again." The whole church world proclaims that the "second coming of Christ" is the HOPE OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. It is not His coming that is the hope of the church, but IT IS HIS P-R-E-S-E-N-C-E which is the hope of the church and the hope for the world. The PAROUSIA is a LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, not simply a flashing of Jesus across the skies. From the hour of the firstdawn of creation's light to this present moment no soul of man has ever been brought into relationship with God or transformed into His image apart from the effectual MANIFESTATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Archeological discoveries reveal that the Greek word PAROUSIA was used in ancient times to describe the visits of kings or emperors to various cities and provinces of their realms. The word was what we might call a "royal word." Throughout the papyri there are references to the entry of monarchs with great pomp and circumstance into ancient cities or nations which are called the "parousia of the king." Mention is made of special taxes being levied, and large supplies of wheat being provided for the "PAROUSIA" - not for the moment when the king arrived, but for his stay in the locality, as when in England the flag on the palace proclaims the presence of the queen in the metropolis, and tells us that the court is in London.

One discovery reveals that taxes to pay the expenses of such a visit were raised by issuing a special PAROUSIA coin. Since royal visits were usually few and far between it was the custom of the ancients to strike new coins to commemorate the occasion. These would be minted with the "likeness" of the victorious general, or the reigning ruler who was "present" to judge his people, impressed on each new coin. In instances where it was a conquering general who was making his parousia, striking down the former king or taking him captive, the coins of the old realm were "called in." They were then smelted and new coins poured in homage to the new King. As many numismatists have observed one can follow the travels of Caesar Hadrian by studying the many commemorative coins struck in the places where he made his parousia.

In like manner, on the spiritual plane, when the Lord Jesus Christ conquers our self-will and casts down the flesh from its place of rule in our hearts, He replaces the old coinage of Adam's "likeness" with the new coinage of the Spirit which bears His own image. This will be complete when the POWER OF HIS PRESENCE has completed its wonderful work upon our lives. Praise God, the day shall surely come at the close of the wonderful times of the restitution of all things when there will be no "coinage" in earth's realm, as well as in heaven's, which does not bear HIS glorious "likeness" for all creation will be restored into harmony and oneness in Him again! Even now, a FIRSTFRUITS has been ushered INTO HIS PRESENCE, And in the words of the old hymn, "What a wonderful change in my life been wrought since Jesus came into my heart!"

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy... to stand before the Son of man" **(Lk. 21:36).** Arise, O child of God, and stand before the Lord! Cast aside the restricting shroud of man's traditions, and take unto you the mantle of truth as it is IN HIM. Who knows what it means to "stand before the Son of man," but they who PASS OVER INTO HIS PRESENCE. The PAROUSIA is the ENVELOPING PRESENCE OF CHRIST and to stand before the Son of man is to awake to the wonder and glory and majesty and power of HIS PRESENCE. It is the FULLNESS of all that one can conceive of as being the reality of His promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM," and again, "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the age" **(Mat. 18:20; 28:20).**

The PAROUSIA is THE GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE and THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY. So little has His presence been realized by those Christians who fill Sunday after Sunday the pews of the harlot church systems, that even many who are baptized in the Spirit have more fear of the power of the adversary than they do have of the knowledge of the majesty and presence of the King of Glory. His presence is not always best

known in the realm of soulish worship, with its clapping, dancing and shouting, nor in the manifestations of religious fervor. Praise God for the reality of rejoicing in Him, but many have discovered that they thought God was only in the Cathedral, so He called them out from there. We thought God was in the great revivals with signs and wonders and miracles, so He separated us from this. We thought the presence of God could be conjured up by much singing, clapping, and shouting, so He sent fiery trials, strippings, and separation even from this. Finally, isolated and all alone, then He says, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art..." **(Gen. 13:14).** I am with you IN THIS PLACE, perhaps obscured by the shadows, but I am there, working within to conform you to My image, and bring you forth in My likeness. Though we share an existence apparently filled with nothing but the mundane happenings of the routine, YET GOD IS PRESENT AND ACCOMPLISHING GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS within. God reveals Himself to the humble in the lowliest of disguises, but the proud who never look beneath the surface, fail to find Him even in the greatest of His manifestations.

It is time for God's people to wake up to the true and real meaning of the PAROUSIA of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word PAROUSIA is used three times in the second epistle of Peter (1:16; 3:4; 3:12). In the first instance it refers to the Divine Presence, which burst forth from within Jesus at His transfiguration. In this passage Peter describes the glorious manifestation of God on the mount of Transfiguration as the "coming," the "parousia," the "presence" of Christ. Now Christ had already come in the flesh; the four men had already walked together up the mountain; but here was a "coming" of the Lord not previously known. And so he says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the POWER and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him on the holy Mount" **(II Pet. 1:16-18).**

"The POWER and PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ" refers not to His arrival on the holy Mount, but to the manifestation of His STATE OF BEING during that period of time in which the disciples were "eyewitnesses of His majesty." Notice how the apostle associates the POWER and the PRESENCE of Christ with the GLORY OF GOD that appeared in the hour of Christ's transfiguration. In fact, the Lord Himself explains that this manifestation of the GLORY was in reality, the very Kingdom of God. In each of the three accounts where the scene is recorded the story is preceded with the remark**:** "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the KINGDOM OF GOD" **(Lk. 9:27).** Matthew describes it as "the Son of man COMING in His Kingdom" (Mat. 16:28). Mark refers to it as "the Kingdom of God come with POWER" **(Mk. 9:1).** Peter combines the two statements in the words, "The POWER and COMING of the Lord Jesus Christ." The effulgence of the power and glory of God's presence erupted from the inner life of the Christ of God and Peter uses the word PAROUSIA to describe this blessed experience. And, dear reader of these lines, as the majesty and dominion of HIS PRESENCE grows, increases, develops, and is released from the inner sanctuary of your regenerated spirit, emanating, overflowing, enveloping, manifesting HIS GLORY - you, too, and all about you, will know and behold the transcendent wonder of HIS PAROUSIA.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN HIS BODY

We will never be able to understand God's great and eternal purpose in the body of Christ until first we see Jesus as the PATTERN SON. Over the past forty years we have heard much about signs and wonders. Great crusades have been held under large tents and in huge auditoriums, where vast multitudes of people have witnessed mighty demonstrations of the healing, delivering and wonder-working power of God. Some of these, of course, were spurious ... clever tricks foisted upon the people to deceive and mislead God's people, to magnify the flesh and glorify man, preachers making themselves millionaires by their flamboyant deception, using trickery to rob the simple, the widow, the well-meaning, and thousands of the Lord's precious little ones. But not all of these signs have been of the devil. The very fact that, there is a counterfeit proves that there is a genuine, for no one counterfeits that which does not exist. In our day, as in olden times, God is showing forth His power and making known His Presence by many signs and wonders.

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 that 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. . ." **Mk. 16:17** says, ". . SIGNS shall follow them that believe..." Notice that it does not say that believers follow after signs ... too much of this is being done today! Verse twenty says that they went everywhere preaching the Word, and the Lord worked with them, "confirming the Word with SIGNS following." Signs are given to be seen and heard about. The beloved prophet Daniel exclaimed, "I thought it good to show the SIGNS and WONDERS which the High God hath wrought toward me. How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation" **(Dan. 4:2-3).**

But I would not dwell upon the many signs and wonders that God is giving forth in this hour, and there are many. A greater sign than all of these has been given and it is this marvelous and glorious wonder, God's greatest sign, of which I would write today. JESUS is God's greatest sign! In Isa. 7:14 the prophet by inspiration cried out, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." Contrary to the notion held by many the Sign was not the virgin, nor was it the virgin conceiving, nor yet the miraculous birth - but rather it was the One who was born and brought forth into the world in such a manner - Emmanuel, GOD WITH US. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" **(Mat. 1:23-25)**. Ah, beloved, Jesus was and still is God's GREATEST SIGN.

Now a sign is that which points to something, and this man Jesus - His birth, His life, His ministry, His miracles, His words, His death, His resurrection, His ascension points unerringly to something beyond Himself. You see, the SIGN was not fulfilled when Jesus was born and walked this earth, for He was not the fulfillment of the Sign - He WAS HIMSELF THE SIGN! "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign... and shall call His name Emmanuel." When Jesus came the Sign was GIVEN. But a sign is not fulfilled when it is given. It is fulfilled when that to which it points comes to pass! The babe lying there in Mary's arms; the young boy disputing with the lawyers and doctors of the law; the Christ of God proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom; Jesus of Nazareth anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power going about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils, raising the dead; the Son of God disclosed in majesty and power on the mount of Transfiguration, His raiment shining exceedingly white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them; the Lamb of God dying on Calvary's hill; Jesus the Christ raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; Christ ascended to sit on the throne of the Majesty on High - all this is the greatest SIGN God ever gave to the earth, and it shall not fail. That to which it points shall most surely come to pass, praise His glorious name! Jesus Christ is THE SIGN, which points unerringly to that great thing which God is doing in the earth, the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!

Many centuries before Jesus walked on earth the Holy Spirit spoke prophetically through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me are for SIGNS and WONDERS..." **(Isa. 8:18).** We discover in Heb. 2:13 that the One who spoke those marvelous words was actually our Lord Jesus. And He says that He is for a Sign. And so are the children (sons) that God hath given Him, those who are to be conformed to His image, the body of the Christ, the overcomer. Hallelujah! All the sons of God together are but a Sign, the firstfruits of God's creation, pointing to a vast harvest yet to be gathered into the Kingdom of God in that glad day when Christ has subdued ALL unto Himself and delivers up the Kingdom to the Father that God may be All-in-all, everything to everyone - everywhere.

Perhaps some reader of these lines is beginning to question... If Jesus IS the Sign, and the scriptures most plainly show that He is, then who or what is the FULFILLMENT of that Sign? Our precious Lord does not leave us in doubt, for the Bible very plainly reveals this great mystery. This is the wonderful secret that was revealed to the apostle Paul, which he calls "MY gospel." For it was Paul who saw the glorious truth of the BODY OF CHRIST, the PERFECT MAN, the SONS OF GOD, the MANY-MEMBERED MAN that God would make after His own image and likeness to reign over all things upon earth and over the vastnesses of infinity forever (see I Cor. 12:12,27; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; Eph. 4:13; Rev. 21:7; Rev. 2:26-27; Rev. 3:21).

Yes, Jesus is a Sign. His life is a Sign pointing to, and a pattern for, His anointed body. Those who are in His body shall follow in His steps and be conformed into His image. This thing of which Jesus is a Sign is a SON

COMPANY, born from above, filled with His Spirit, possessed of His glorious mind, caught up into the purposes of God, processed through Father's faithful dealings, and anointed for rulership... to sit on the throne with Him. This body of people, though composed of a multitude of saints throughout the world and gathered out of the ages, yet is seen in the scriptures as ONE BODY, spoken of as God's ONE PERFECT MAN, the OVERCOMER, and the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD. As we have already said, how this body comes into existence and what happens to it and through it can be learned by studying the Pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ. And although there will be unnumbered multitudes of people saved by the grace of God through the precious blood of Jesus, and we do thank God for these dear ones, yet the high purposes of God are tied up in that company of saints who press their way toward the mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Consider now what is next in order for the people of God today! Would you like to have a true prophetic insight into God's purposes and plans? Then study the Pattern, the Sign. See how the baby Jesus began to grow up into mature manhood. Except for one brief glimpse of the boy Jesus at the tender age of twelve, we know nothing of how He grew from babyhood to manhood. Yet we know that He did. And though the growth of His body in this hour may appear to be imperceptible from day to day, its progress is sure, and in the Father's appointed time it will come to the full maturity of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. Let us look at the boy Jesus. When we do see Him, where was He? What was He doing? See Him there, He is in the temple, His mind upon the things of God... astounding the lawyers and the revered doctors of the law with His knowledge of God and the depth of His revelation, while the other children are playing their religious games in the market-place. The doctors of the law cannot understand this lad, who someday will be God's Man, neither can they answer His searching questions. See how He is about His Father's business, recognizing at least in a measure who He is and His divine calling.

See Him at Jordan laying down His own life and giving Himself into the hands of His Father in such a way that He became a vehicle for the expression of God. God reveals His might in the storm and His power in the lightning. He has expressed His creative ability in the majesty of the universe. But only in Jesus, His Son, could He truly reveal and express His own divine nature. So the Son, as a man, laid down His own rights, His own thoughts, His own will and ways, and became a visible means of expressing that which was divine, that which was invisible. No man can see the invisible God. But He has One to truly represent Him, One to express His love, His grace, His goodness, His knowledge, His wisdom, His glory, His authority and dominion in heaven and earth. He has One like Himself, in His own image, and at Jordan He placed this One publicly as HIS SON. "This is My beloved Son in whom.I am well pleased," declared the Father's voice from heaven.

From His anointing at Jordan, Jesus entered a ministry for three and a half years that destroyed the powers of hell, and shook this world to its very foundations. HE IS THE PATTERN. Looking unto Him, we see our course set before us. "Be of good cheer," He said, "I have overcome the world." Never once was anyone turned away that came to Him. There was no disease too strong or too advanced, there was no limb too crooked, there was no eye too blind, there was no storm too violent, there was no demon too powerful, there was no sinner too wicked. He was victorious over every devil, over the elements of nature as the winds and the waves obeyed His mighty voice, over every evil force. He had entered into that realm that the enemy had usurped from Adam, and had won it back. Glory to God! What a wonderful Saviour!

What does this mean to you and me, my brother, my sister, who have received the call to follow the Lamb? We don't yet see all things under the feet of God's CORPORATE SON (Heb. 2:8), but (verse 9), "we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor." We see the Head of this body supremely victorious, waiting until the body comes to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that His enemies become His footstool. The Head is victorious, triumphant and crowned! But this glorious work He began will be carried forth until His whole body, even the feet, shall rise to the place of authority and power that He has. Now in these last days there is coming forth a body of people, raised up by the Holy Spirit of God, who are not content to let Satan and the carnal mind rule here on this earth. They are crying out for deliverance and interceding for the Kingdom of God on earth. They know not how this can be done, for it truly looks impossible! But having heard from heaven they gladly embrace the hope. The Spirit of God is now revealing truths that have been hidden from ages and from generations. Hope is springing up in the hearts of the saints, God's "called out ones," and they are beginning to see that we can follow Jesus into that which is beyond the veil, into the Holiest of All, into

the fullness of God. These are looking not to die, but to live; not for eventual victory in heaven, but for victory right here on this earth.

Can our finite minds comprehend even in a measure what this shall mean, to walk in the STATE OF BEING Jesus was in? To have dominion over the elements, the beasts, the birds, over the most powerful devils and the worst diseases. Yes, even victory over death itself, the last enemy to be conquered. Some claim now to have already conquered death, while they are still afraid of a mad dog, still fasten their seatbelts on the highways, or still fear an attack of the flu. Precious friend of mine, death is the last enemy to be conquered. But fall it must, before the mighty power of God working through the enchristed, His body. And Jesus said that the works He did, we would do also, and even much GREATER WORKS (Jn. 14:12). This power is not given for us to gratify our carnal appetites with bread made from stones, nor for sensationalism, nor to build a kingdom for ourselves. Jesus was tempted with all these things, and He overcame them. And so will those who follow His pattern. Praise God! What a destiny! How marvelous the plan of God! How glorious the path of those who walk with God!

Do.not mistake it, my friend - Christ is coming literally, personally, bodily. The appearance and presence (parousia) of Christ is IN HIS BODY. "Now YE ARE the BODY of Christ." The PAROUSIA, the PRESENCE of Christ is in the Body. Consider now with reverent honesty the inspired words of the apostle, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... when He shall come to be glorified I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired I-N ALL THEM that believe in that day" **(II Thes. 1:7, 10).** That is the presence, the coming of the Son of God in and through the Christ Body. And He is coming, coming, coming, from glory to glory, from experience to experience, from inworking to inworking, until we know the POWER AND GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE in all the fullness of HIMSELF.

We know that we have a token of His presence, being "Christ in you, the hope of glory" **(Col. 1:27).** We have received the firstfruits of His presence and, even now, there are occasions when others do sense His presence in us, and we become a particular manifestation of the Christ to them in their need. If just this "in part" measure of our present possession can betimes shake individuals, families, communities, cities and nations for God, what will it be like when we are filled with the fullness, and literally become the embodiment of HIS PRESENCE in the earth? No wonder we read, "The creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" **(Rom. 8:19).** When HIS PRESENCE, consciously so, comes on the scene, there are changes, regeneration, restoration, and ultimately all creation will be released, delivered from its bondage to vanity, the tyranny of change and decay.

"Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because He cometh to judge the earth" **(I Chron. 16:33).** "The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord**..."** **(Ps. 97:5).**

When God's PRESENCE becomes PERSONIFIED in the mature and perfected body of Christ, and God sends His sons forth throughout the land, then all the exalted kingdoms of man will melt like wax before them. It will not just happen because of what they say, or what they do, but because of WHO THEY ARE - BECAUSE HIS PRESENCE IS WITHIN THEM IN SUCH POWER AND MAJESTY AND GLORY AND FULLNESS. What an hour! The "end time" is not the waning and vanishing of the glory of the Holy One. The "time of the end" is the manifestation of the consummation of the FULLNESS OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the presence of the Lord. Look! The farmer keeps looking for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early and the late rain. You, too, be patient; make your hearts firm BECAUSE THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD HAS DRAWN CLOSE" **(James 5:7-8).**

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 10
THE PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TEN

PAROUSIA

The Greek word PAROUSIA is translated as "coming" in your King James Bible, and that is where a lot of the problems with the so-called "second coming" begin. The word actually means "along side" or "presence." And there are many, many scriptures that the Bible projects as talking about the "coming" of the Lord that are not talking at all about a physical descent of Jesus from the sky. They speak rather of His coming in us, His appearing through us, the glory of the fullness of the presence of the Lord in the midst of the church, the presence of the Lord in the earth.

The word PAROUSIA is used twice in the New Testament when it does not apply to Jesus, but to the apostle Paul. These, and other, uses of the word establish its real meaning. Paul expresses others' appraisal of him, saying, "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; **but his bodily presence (PAROUSIA) is weak" (II Cor. 10:10).** And again, writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul says, **"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (PAROUSIA) only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).** It can be seen at once that the use of the word "coming" to translate the Greek word PAROUSIA in the foregoing texts would have given an entirely wrong meaning to Paul's words. In these passages it is the PRESENCE of a human being that is involved, so we understand what Paul means. It is not discussing his "coming" or "arrival," but his actual presence in their midst after having arrived. So we need only to move from the understandable into the realm in which we do not fully understand in order to realize what the scriptures mean which discuss the PAROUSIA of our Lord; that meaning being His ACTUAL PRESENCE, not His "coming." And many of these references are not future tense!

This is without doubt one of the most important truths in the whole New Testament. Nowhere does PAROUSIA mean "coming" or "coming again." The whole church world proclaims that the "second coming of Christ" is the HOPE OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. It is not His second coming that is the hope of the church, but IT IS HIS P-R-E-S-E-N-C-E which is the hope of the church and the hope for the world. The PAROUSIA is a LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, not simply a flashing of Jesus across the skies. From the hour of the first dawn of creation's light to this present moment no soul of man has ever been brought into relationship with God or transformed into His image apart from the effectual MANIFESTATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

The PAROUSIA is the ENVELOPING PRESENCE OF CHRIST and to stand before the Son of man is to awake to the wonder and glory and majesty and power of HIS PRESENCE. It is the fullness of all that one can conceive of as being the reality of His promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM," and again, "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the age." The PAROUSIA is THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY and THE GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE.

Do not mistake it, my friend - Christ is coming literally, personally, bodily! Yes, He comes literally, for the Lord IS literal, actual, REAL! He comes personally, for He IS truly THE PERSON of all persons! And He comes bodily, for the appearance and presence of Christ is IN HIS BODY. "Now YE ARE the BODY of Christ." The PAROUSIA, the PRESENCE of Christ is in the body. Consider now with reverent honesty the inspired words of the apostle, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... when He shall come to be glorified I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired I-N ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE in that day" **(II Thes. 1: 7, 10).** That is the presence, the coming of the Son of God in and through the Christ Body. And He is coming, coming, coming, from glory to glory, from experience to experience, from inworking to inworking, until we know the POWER AND GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE in all the fullness of HIMSELF.

Woe! unto those who stand gazing intently into the starry heavens to behold One coming again to occupy some remote spot of God's earth, to sit in a royal chair in Jerusalem or in London, in a body of limitation and restriction, concealed behind walls, accessible only by appointment. "Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; GO NOT FORTH: behold, He is in the secret chambers; BELIEVE IT NOT. For as the lightning (sun) cometh out of the east and (gradually) shineth even unto the west, so shall be the PRESENCE of the Son of man" **(Mat. 24: 26-27).** Millions are waiting to see Jesus descending through the air, a shining body of FLESH, with the scars, as crucified; expecting Him as He WAS, and not AS HE IS, they seriously err, and blind themselves to the truth, as did the Jews at His advent in the flesh. If they knew WHAT to expect they would not gaze into the skies, nor would they set their faces toward the throne in Jerusalem, nor yet, the throne in London to behold the man, the carpenter of Nazareth; for the highly exalted King of glory comes as the sunlight, as the ever-increasing effulgence of God's glory, making His presence and influence felt and known the world over. Wherefore, "Go not forth."

The PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST, the PRESENCE OF THE SON OF GOD is a past, present and future reality. His PAROUSIA is the ongoing, progressive unfolding of Himself. How often we have yearned for a deeper consciousness of His presence, and wondered where we could find His presence, that is, visible manifestations of His presence, that specific sense of being in the very presence of the Christ in a literal and conscious manner.

The Old Testament is replete with occasions when God manifested His presence in some form or manner so that the people knew they were IN His presence, and all these manifestations were climaxed when Jesus Christ came forth as the visible expression of the invisible God, being "the brightness of His glory, and the express I image of His person" (Heb. 1:3). The Bible does not tell us how in the morning of the world God manifested His presence and walked with man among the trees of the Garden, but this we read, "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the PRESENCE of the Lord God amongst the trees of the Garden" **(Gen. 3:8).** Obviously this was more than just the consciousness of the cosmic omnipresence of God, there was some kind of a local manifestation of which they were very conscious, and which they felt they could hide themselves from.

Then we read in **Gen. 4:16,** "And Cain went out from the PRESENCE of the Lord." Thus we know that there was some form of expression accommodated to sinful man, and from which it became his nature to flee. We would not in any way infer that the presence of God was disclosed merely in some earthly figure, with arms, legs and torso, as a man, for GOD IS SPIRIT, but God is able to so manifest Himself in His glorious presence that we are consciously aware of Him, and know that we are before His face. God manifested His presence in remarkable and awesome ways to Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel and scores of others throughout the Old Testament dispensations.

But the greatest manifestation was when Jesus came, EMMANUEL, God with us. Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He knew He was the visible expression of the Father. There were brief moments when certain individuals also came to know who He was, though for the most part "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" **(Jn. 1:10-11).** "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" **(I Cor. 2:8).**

PAROUSIA

As stated earlier in this series, I believe every word that the Bible says about the coming of our Lord; I don't believe what the harlot church system says about it, nor what the television evangelists say about it, nor what the tradition-bound preachers say about it, nor even what some Bible translators say about it; but I certainly believe what the Bible says about it!

We have amply demonstrated that the Greek word PAROUSIA, generally translated "coming," literally means "presence." In the following texts relating to our Lord's coming the word PAROUSIA appears in the Greek text and should be translated PRESENCE; and in giving the texts we are using the word PRESENCE. "What shall be the sign of Thy PRESENCE?" **(Mat. 24:3).** "So shall also the PRESENCE of the Son of man be" **(Mat.**

24:27,37,39). "They that are Christ's, at His PRESENCE" **(I Cor. 15:23).** "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus Christ at His PRESENCE?" **(I Thes. 2:19).** "...He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(I Thes. 3:13).** "We which are alive, and remain unto the PRESENCE of the Lord shall not prevent (hinder) them which are asleep" **(I Thes. 4:15).** "Be preserved blameless unto the PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(I Thes. 5:23).** "Now we beseech you brethren, by the PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him" **(II Thes. 2:1).** "Be patient therefore brethren, unto the PRESENCE of the Lord" **(James 5:7).** "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the PRESENCE of the Lord draweth nigh" **(James 5:8).** "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His PRESENCE?" **(II Pet. 3:3-4).**

"Come now and let us reason together," saith the Lord through the lips of Isaiah; and again, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" **(Isa.1:18-19).** Let us therefore reason together with Him by giving thoughtful, prayerful, and reverent consideration to the scriptures He has provided, using this key word PAROUSIA in connection with the so-called "second-coming" of Jesus. Let us do this with hearts hungering and thirsting after righteousness and willing minds open to conviction by the blessed Spirit of Truth through the inspired Word, and willing to abandon false opinions and conceptions born of faulty translation and traditional teaching; remembering that He has shined forth with ever-increasing light since the beginning of creation; is shining forth now, and will continue to shine forth until the darkened hearts of all humanity have been warmed, melted, and returned to God; remembering that He has been, is now, and will continue to be entering, accompanying, bringing in, filling out His Kingdom, that wonderful realm in Christ in which all humanity shall eventually find their life when His Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh; and remembering that we of this age are merely a few specially chosen for His name to be used as instruments for future ages in the expansion of His Kingdom; it is not at all strange that He should now desire to tell us of His PRESENCE and the glorious work planned for and to be accomplished IN AND BY HIS PRESENCE in this age and in vast ages yet unborn. With these thoughts in mind let us now prayerfully examine the following scripture passages.

I THES. 5:23-24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

This incorrect translation of the Greek text suggests that the apostle Paul believed that those believers at Thessalonica would be preserved physically, enjoying health and longevity for 2,000 years, until the so-called "rapture." Those of you who are qualified to read the Greek text may be surprised to learn that the Greek words meaning "until" (MECHRI, HEOS, ACHRI) are not to be found in this passage. These verses say nothing whatever about being preserved "until" or "unto" the coming of the Lord. The word translated "unto" is the Greek preposition EN which is the equivalent of our English word IN. The Greek preposition EN clearly defines LOCATION or POSITION. Dr. Robert Young, author of Young's Analytical Concordance, in his Literal Translation correctly translates the verse, "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved unblameably IN THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Concordant New Testament renders, "Now may the God of peace Himself be hollowing you wholly; and may your unimpaired spirit and soul and body be kept blameless IN THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Diaglott reads, "And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your whole person - the spirit and the soul and the body - be preserved blameless IN THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You see, precious friend of mine, there is a whole world of difference between being preserved blameless UNTIL THE COMING of the Lord, and being preserved blameless I-N THE PRESENCE of the Lord! Is it not by HIS ABIDING PRESENCE that we are able to be kept and preserved blameless, faultless, without blemish or spot? It should be apparent that the primary thrust of this scripture is a sanctification and preservation of the whole man in a state of holiness and perfection by the power of the presence of the Lord. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME before Him in love" **(Eph. 1:4).** This is utterly amazing! Vile sinners such as we - assured that it is the purpose of God in election and predestination that we should be WITHOUT BLEMISH before the Father! Such a condition is first stated to be true in our forerunner, Christ: "...the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb

WITHOUT BLEMISH" **(I Pet. 1:19).** Wonder of wonders! that there should be a people, a firstfruit company, a royal priesthood, a seed of blessing which is AS FREE OF BLEMISH as is the precious lamb of God Himself! Dear chosen one of God, dare you believe it? Ah, if this were not the case, why would God be dealing so severely in your life? "Now He that hath wrought us for this self same thing is GOD**" (II Cor. 5:5).** Thank God - HE shall perform it!

That our Father shall bring this work to its final consummation and present us FAULTLESS is certain! Ah, under the searchlight of His holy presence, have you not beheld your own weakness and unworthiness and despaired that your life could ever be conformed to the image of God's lovely Son? True, in your own strength and initiative such a feat can never be performed, but the word is sure: "HE HATH CHOSEN US ... THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME before Him!" Chosen - to be without blemish! What a calling! And the One who has so chosen is the same who is well able to bring it to pass! "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath HE reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, TO PRESENT YOU HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE AND UNREPROVEABLE in His sight" **(Col. 1:21-22).** Furthermore,"...unto HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING, and to PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS before the presence of His glory" **(Jude 24).** He - I-S_ A-B-L-E! He - is able to PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS! Yes, beloved, He can and will do it. Let us trust Him. Perfection is not a thing He gives us apart from Himself. Perfection is nothing but Christ Himself, most compassionately and most faithfully intervening in our daily life, most really and fully giving and living HIS LIFE IN US. The mighty CHRIST WITHIN is the guarantee of our perfection as sons of God.

Holy, without blemish, unblameable, unreproveable, blameless, without spot or wrinkle - all are related terms. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, 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 AND WITHOUT BLEMISH" **(Eph. 5:25-27).** There is much difference between a spot and a wrinkle. A spot is "a stain coming from defilement," indicating an eruption of unrighteousness in one's life. A wrinkle is "a fold, a drawing together." A wrinkle is a blemish, though there may be no defilement with it. A garment may be spotlessly white with no stain upon it, but if it is wrinkled, its beauty and usefulness are marred. A wrinkle is a blemish revealed UNDER PRESSURE, bespeaking a weakness, such as discouragement, distraction, confusion, immaturity, etc. - not defilement, no wickedness, evil or sin involved, but marring the beauty and usefulness, nonetheless. The body of Christ, God's house of sons shall not have even a wrinkle! Our precious Lord is going to cleanse the members of His body with the washing of water by the Word and make them whiter than snow. The hand of the Father will smooth out every wrinkle by the intense heat and pressure of His dealing hand, until the body of Christ appears in all the glory and beauty of CHRIST'S COMELINESS.

Holy and without blemish! In linking holy and without blemish so closely, the Holy Spirit would lead us to rejoice in the Father's declaration, to reach out after nothing less than to be fully holy AND mature - without blame, without lack, fully furnished and COMPLETE IN CHRIST in every aspect of our being. The hour is coming and now is when the sons of God who are coming into the image of the firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, find themselves drawn irresistibly by the Spirit into the state of being of that blessed company of the 144,000 redeemed ones John beheld in vision upon the holy mount of Zion: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth... and in their mouth was found no guile: for they are WITHOUT FAULT (blemish) before the throne of God" **(Rev. 14:4-5).**

NOW, can we not understand what Paul really meant when he expressed the confidence that the Thessalonians would be preserved BLAMELESS I-N THE PRESENCE of the Lord? Oh! what a mess men make of God's Word! This beautiful passage of scripture has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the so-called "second coming" of Christ! When the simplicity of the wording in the Greek language is understood, how PLAIN it all becomes! But precious and simple truths such as these have been altogether lost by the religious systems in general. The world is altogether too full of babblers of every description, who resist the truth of God to the uttermost. It is high time for the truth to be told in no uncertain terms, and high time for all who love the truth to abandon the pews and doctrines of Babylon to be truly separated unto the Lord in this momentous hour. Truly, as we seek HIS PRESENCE and live and walk in the POWER OF HIS PRESENCE, in ever-increasing measures we shall experience the mighty operation of His life within that conforms wholly into the

image of God! And so, we shall be preserved BLAMELESS IN AND BY THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD right here and now!

I THES. 3:13. "To the end (purpose) He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming (parousia, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Young's Literal Translation says, "To the establishing your hearts blameless in sanctification before our God and Father, I-N THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Rotherham translates this "in the presence," and the Diaglott "in presence." Would any Christian argue that the inspired apostle meant to state that the saints cannot be established in holiness until "at the second coming" of Jesus at some indefinite future time? Certainly not! He meant that they should be established in holiness right here and now. If that be so, which we believe all will readily admit, then why not so state it and also in so translating it give Jesus full credit for the work accomplished since we must be established by, in and through His work in us here and now as the ABIDING HOLY GHOST. Would it not, then, be better to lay aside our prior theology and translate this "to the end He may establish your hearts - in, by, through or throughout the presence of out Lord Jesus Christ with His saints" here and now and future? Oh, righteous Father! Take away the veil of blindness that has been over our spiritual eyes!

JAMES 5:7-8. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Young's Literal Translation reads, "Be patient then, brethren, till the PRESENCE of the Lord; lo, the husbandman doth expect the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, till he may receive rain - early and latter; be patient ye also, establish your hearts, because THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD H-A-T-H DRAWN NIGH." Rotherham says, "Establish your hearts because the PRESENCE OF THE LORD HATH DRAWN NIGH." The Concordant New Testament renders, "Be patient, then, brethren, till the PRESENCE of the Lord. Lo! the farmer is waiting for the precious fruit of the land, being patient about it, till it should be getting the early and late showers. You also, then, be patient; establish your hearts, for the PRESENCE OF THE LORD IS NEAR."

Are these early church saints enjoined to wait for a distant "coming" of Jesus, which they are told is "drawing nigh," but which would not have happened yet 2,000 years thence? The subject here is not Jesus crashing someday down through the skies it is rather His coming as the "former and the latter rain" upon the earth. There has been a general misunderstanding of the passage under consideration, for it is clear that the Lord's coming as rain, the former and the latter, is a SPIRITUAL VISITATION in the midst of His people. The rain bespeaks of the pouring out of the presence and glory of Christ as the quickening Spirit, as He moves to give forth His presence in blessing and restoration. The coming of Christ unto His own is as the rain, and this truth is clearly stated by the prophet Hosea, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His GOING FORTH is prepared as the morning; and HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth" **(Hos. 6:3).** Therefore, rain represents the visitation of the Lord to His people. How the saints of God are thirsting for these living streams from heaven!

How little do we realize that God is more anxious for the "latter rain" than we are! And why? Because He is the Gardener; and He is waiting for the Harvest when His people will grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. He is looking for the Feast of Ingathering when He might gather in the precious produce of a vast field of people fully conformed to the image of that first "seed" that was cast into the earth. Praise God, He sends the rain, the former and the latter rain, with refreshing showers of blessing in between. "Behold, the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive the early and latter rain." And then we are admonished, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the COMING (PRESENCE) of the Lord," for in a very real sense the coming of the latter rain IS the coming of the Lord upon His people. This great Ingathering is the Harvest for which the Husbandman has been waiting since the foundation of the church.

In Palestine the first, or early rains usually come in the month of September, after the long, hot summer in order to soften the ground that they might plow the soil and plant the grains before winter comes. The early rains furnish the moisture for the germination and first growth of the seed. The latter rains occur in March and serve to fill out the heads of grain and bring the growth and maturity necessary for harvest. That which God

established in the natural is designed by Him to pattern His workings in the spiritual realm. Thus we know that for God to be true there MUST be two great, worldwide outpourings of the Spirit upon mankind, interspersed by various localized showers of blessing.

The mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost proved to be the former rain moderately. It is beyond the ability of any man to fully comprehend the far-reaching results of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This glorious outpouring of the Holy Ghost was not only a real experience to those who received it, but a heavenly visitation that shook the entire earth as nothing either before it or since has ever done. The entire course of history was changed thereby. As one has written, "So great was that outpouring that by the end of the century one twentieth of the entire Roman Empire had been converted to Christ, and by the year A.D. 300 Christianity far exceeded paganism. Following Peter's sermon at Pentecost, three thousand souls were saved and the day following another five thousand were saved. In the days following multitudes both of men and women turned to the Lord. Mighty signs and wonders were done by all the apostles. By Paul's hand God wrought special miracles. The sick were brought and laid in the street that the shadow of Peter falling upon them might bring healing to their bodies. The glory of that former rain beggars description. Truly they had been baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost and the heavenly 'wind' was blowing whithersoever it listed. This was a mighty manifestation of THE GLORY OF GOD. This was GOD'S GLORY falling as rain among the people and filling their hearts with joy and gladness, transforming their lives and making them sons of God" -The Page.

I do not hesitate to tell you that there is coming a great and glorious outpouring of the Spirit in these latter days which will be the fulfillment of the "latter rain." For some 85 years now mercy drops have been falling, and betimes windy showers of refreshing and quickening have swept across the face of the earth. The last or most recent shower of latter rain blessing came during the years 1948-1953. But the celestial deluge is yet to fall in GREAT POWER AND GLORY. Glorious beyond words to describe was that wonderful outpouring of God's glory at Pentecost, but no language of men below nor of angels above can begin to describe the SURPASSING GLORY of the outpouring in these last days. The latter rain is coming, the manifestation of the PAROUSIA or PRESENCE of the almighty Christ of God, and compared to it the former rain was a flickering candle before the burning brilliance of a noonday sun, or a trickling stream compared to the vast ocean currents beyond the power of man to either produce or control. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that wonderful day of Pentecost was the former rain, but never let the truth grow dim that this same Jesus shall come in great power and glory as the latter rain. Then will come the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for six thousand years. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed from the living, completed temple of His Body. His glory shall 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. According to James 5:7-8 the PRESENCE of the Lord has ALREADY DRAWN NEAR. His PAROUSIA has already been revealed. Let us, then, be patient unto the fullness of the blessing, the PRESENCE of the Lord, until the Holy Spirit be poured out in all the fullness of HIMSELF!

I COR. 15:22-25. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in His own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. 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, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." Young's Literal Translation correctly expresses it thus: "For even as in Adam all die, so also in the Christ all shall be made alive, and each in his proper order, a first-fruit Christ, afterwards those who are the Christ's I-N HIS PRESENCE, then - the end, for It behooveth Him to reign till He may have put all the enemies under His feet - the last enemy is done away - death." Rotherham says that the second order of those made alive in the Christ is those who are "the Christ's IN HIS PRESENCE." The Diaglott reads, "in the presence of Him." In each case the Greek preposition EN is correctly rendered by the English IN, and what an infinite difference there is between people being made alive "AT His COMING," or people made alive "IN His PRESENCE"!

Let us now see how it is that "in Christ" all shall be MADE ALIVE. The whole chapter of I Cor. 15 deals with resurrection. The word resurrection is so inadequate to express the true thought or idea that the Holy Spirit is conveying to us. The common conception of this word carries with it the idea of opening all the graves in the world and the arising out of them of the physical bodies of those who have died. But since death is something more than physical bodies, you can be assured, dear ones, that resurrection is something far beyond bringing

bodies out of tombs. To have a false or limited view of the resurrection is to have a false and limited view of God's work throughout the ages until now. If our view of the resurrection is dwarfed, then our whole view of God's plan is dwarfed.

So we read that in Christ ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. The contrast is not between corpses and walking bodies, but between the dying process and the life process in God. The Greek text actually reads, "As in Adam all ARE DYING, SO in the Christ shall all be made alive." The terms "are dying" and "shall be made alive" are in the incomplete tense in the original, which denotes an action in progress. The long drawn out activity of death in dragging men down to sin, sorrow, death and the grave is put in contrast with the ceaseless activity of life imparting holiness, power, incorruption and glory. All who endured the first shall enjoy the second. Here is a message for mankind, which should lift it above its misery! The process of His life, and hence, the process of resurrection has already commenced with us! Truly, "He HATH QUICKENED us together with Christ ... and RATH RAISED US UP" so that "If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above" **(Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1).**

To be "made alive" is more than some instantaneous event to take place some time in the distant future. "Made alive" is not a blasting open of graves and the coming forth of the bodies that have been buried in them. "Made alive" does not point to some future event when people will go soaring off into the heavens. When Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus, He rebuked Martha for looking for some manner of event in the far distant future and told her that the RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE WAS STANDING THERE BEFORE THEM. "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE." The resurrection and the life had just walked into town! Oh, saints of God, do you not see that the eternal Father in the Christ was and is the resurrection? "I live by the Father," Jesus declared. The resurrection was not some THING that happened to Jesus, not some EVENT of which He was a partaker, not some DAY marked by the calendar. The resurrection was and is A MAN! "I AM" - there it is! "I AM the resurrection and the life." To possess the Man, to put on the Man, to enter into union with the Man is to have resurrection, for the Man IS the resurrection. "In Christ shall all be made alive."

There is a wonderful Law known to men of science, which is called the Law of Biogenesis. This Law demonstrates that during all of recorded history life has only come from pre-existing life. No human power has ever been able to produce life out of inorganic chemical substances. We know that life is not now being originated on earth and that all the life forms today spring from pre-existing life forms of some kind. The inorganic world is staked off from the living world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted with the properties of life, without this direct contact with life they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere forever. It is a very mysterious Law which guards in this way the portals of the living world. And if there is one thing in nature worth pondering for its strangeness it is the spectacle of this vast helpless world of the dead cut off from the living by the Law of Biogenesis and denied forever the possibility of resurrection within itself. Here we stand in the presence of the uncrossable gulf - the gulf of all gulfs - the gulf between DEATH and LIFE.

As we consider these thoughts may God Almighty grant us that His Spirit may instruct us in the way of truth and understanding. Let us open wide our hearts and minds before the Lord that He may reveal the eternal truth of this subject to our hearts. The principle by which, in nature, the inorganic is raised up into the organic, and, in like manner, in God's economy, the natural man is raised up out of death into the life of the Kingdom of God, is stated simply by the Lord Jesus in **Mat. 13:31-32:** "Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs." Let us UNDERSTAND! How are the inorganic, non-living mineral elements of the earth raised up into the organic Kingdom of living things? Within the seed is a germ of life. The seed containing, the life is planted IN THE EARTH, in the Kingdom of the dead. Once buried in the earth, with all the right amounts of water and air, and the right temperatures, the seed germinates and the life within the seed begins to grow. Finally the shell of the seed bursts and there takes place a release of the life from the seed. As the life is released it immediately SEIZES UPON the chemical elements in the earth, converts them into food, and then builds up living tissue out of matter that never lived! The inorganic chemicals BECOME organic tissue! The dead is converted into the living! The lifeless elements

of the earth are transformed into the living substance of the plant. This is one of the most amazing facts in nature, though it is happening every minute all around us! Now we can see clearly what the Lord Jesus meant when He said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds, but when it is sowed in the field, and becomes grown, it is the greatest of herbs. The plant stretches down to the dead world beneath it, touches its minerals and gases with its mystery of life, and brings them up enabled and transformed to the living sphere. In like manner, the breath of God, blowing where it listeth, touches with its mystery of divine life the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf between the Natural and the Spiritual, endows them with its own holy and eternal and divine qualities, and produces within them these new and marvelous faculties, by which those who are born of the Spirit are said to SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD and ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

How futile in the face of such truth as this is any form of self-reformation! How worthless and unprofitable the empty rituals and the vain and lifeless traditions of Babylon's religion! Place a lifeless rock in the dead earth and nothing will happen. Administer lifeless ceremonies and dead doctrines to a man dead in trespasses and sins and likewise nothing will happen. However thorough the self-reformation may be, however beautiful the traditions and doctrines of religion, however impressive and inspiring to the soulish nature of man the rituals and ceremonies, the music and the programs, it leaves us without life and hopelessly dead to the glorious realities of the Spirit of God. Well did faithful Paul bear witness to the life-giving work of the Spirit in the lives of the Ephesians when he said, "You hath HE QUICKENED, who were dead in trespasses and sins ... but GOD, who is rich in mercy, even when WE WERE DEAD in sins, hath QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST ... and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" **(Eph,. 2:1-5).**

What is this wonderful and mysterious quality, which constitutes Spiritual life? What is this strange new power which can raise us up out of the realm of darkness and death and give us eternal life and glory as sons of the living God? The answer is brief - it is Christ! "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the son of God hath not life" (I Jn. 5:12). This higher life of God reaches down into the EARTH WHICH WE ARE, seizing upon the earthly elements of our natural life, quickening, transmuting, changing, transforming, raising us up into the blessed realm and kingdom of the Spirit.

The Law is: Except a mineral be born "from above" - from the Kingdom just above it it cannot enter the Kingdom just above it. And except a man be born "from above," he cannot enter the Kingdom just above him. There being no passage from the lower Kingdom to the higher, whether from inorganic to organic, or from Natural to Spiritual, the injection of a LIFE is a necessity if a stone or a plant or an animal or a man is to pass from a lower sphere to a higher sphere. The earth will never possess the Kingdom of God so long as eternity shall endure. It must be the other way about. The Kingdom of God, the higher Kingdom, must possess the earth. Though the Kingdom of God is within me, yet I cannot possess it. It must possess me, or it will never be known. If I try to possess Christ, I will be as barren in the future as I have been in the past, but if CHRIST POSSESSES ME, then I will be hid with Christ in God and God will raise me up to find my existence in the realm of His divine life and glory.

With my poor and puny ability I cannot make the truth of Christ's indwelling life to be a living, transforming reality to your heart. None but the Spirit of God can perform this wonderful and divine act of illumination. He alone can take the things of God and show them unto you. Nevertheless, I can certainly assure you that, the moment the grand and glorious FACT of HIS INDWELLING LIFE grips your heart and fills your mind, the reality of His divine indwelling will immediately begin to transform your life. Yea, and I shall further add that the knowledge of His abiding life will also begin to change your mind, quicken your emotions, and renew your body as well.

Truly the resurrection is not a future hope - it is a present reality. As those in Adam "are dying" so in Christ men "ARE being made alive." Receiving of His life we find it to be a RESURRECTION LIFE. The word "resurrection" is from the Greek word ANASTASIS meaning - a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word resurrection, which we term to mean a restoring to life again. The Greek word means the WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short than full conformation into the image of God that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Resurrection is the process of STANDING UP and ADVANCING, it is arising

from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life lifted up from the earth, to be raised to the heavenlies, joined in one with the fullness of the Spirit of God. Our alienation and separation from God, with all the dreadful attending sorrows, are already beginning to end in this life as through Christ we ARE MADE ALIVE! And, blessed be His name, in Christ shall A-L-L be made alive!

And just how shall all be made alive? IN and BY and THROUGHOUT THE ENVELOPING PRESENCE OF THE LORD, saith the scripture. Becoming Christ's, and abiding IN HIS PRESENCE is the Biblical formula for being "made alive"! "As in Adam all are dying, so in the Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order, a first-fruit Christ, afterwards those who are the Christ's IN HIS PRESENCE." How much more reasonable, logical and demonstrable is this than the erroneous time-worn theory that it is Jesus streaking across the heavens, and blowing a trumpet, that will raise the dead out of their graves! The apostle Paul in strict harmony with this principle wrote, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead DWELL IN YOU, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY HIS SPIRIT THAT_ D-W-E-L-L-E-T-H_ I-N_ Y-O-U" **(Rom. 8:11).**

The life that quickens (makes alive) the mortal (dying) body is not something outside ourselves. The idea is not that Jesus comes riding on a cloud and suddenly "zaps" the bodies of men with a current of divine energy, instantly transmuting them into shining incorruptible beings. This is the vague form in which many babes in Christ conceive the truth, but it is contrary to Christ's teaching and to the analogy of nature. Vegetable life is not contained in a reservoir somewhere in the skies, and measured out spasmodically at certain seasons. Animal life is not bottled up somewhere in the blue beyond and dropped down to earth now and then when it is time for an embryo to be formed. The life is IN every plant and tree, every animal and fish and fowl, inside its own tissue and substance, and works there as a mighty power to form even that which is contained in the life. The life is permanently fixed and rooted in the organism. Life is not one of the homeless forces which promiscuously inhabit space, or which can be gathered like electricity from the clouds and dissipated back again into space. Life is definite and resident; the Spiritual Life is not a visit from a force, but a resident tenant of the soul. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a seed, which a man took, and SOWED IN HIS FIELD."

Incorruptible life is not derived from the occasional touch of Jesus as He "passes this way," nor from the weekly refreshing that comes to our souls as we gather together in our church meetings. Thank God for the fellowship and encouragement of those of like precious faith, and the ministry of every precious member of the body of Christ, but I declare to you that the life incorruptible, immortal, and eternal can only be experienced by yielding to the CHRIST WITHIN, conscious of His voice, His hand guiding, and His power continually transforming the spirit, the mind and the body into the image of Him who created them. Glory to God!

MAT. 24:27. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming (parousia, presence) of the Son of man be."

In order that we may get a correct understanding of this verse and its momentous spiritual vision, we must give consideration to the word translated "lightning," since this translation has given rise to a most erroneous concept of the coming of Jesus. It has led Christian people, almost without exception, to look forward to that blessed event as an instantaneous affair, which shall flash suddenly across the heavens and startle the world with its vividness. But nothing could be farther from the truth and nothing could have befogged our vision more.

The Greek word translated "lightning" in this passage is ASTRAPE. The meaning, as given in Strong's Concordance, is "lightning; by analogy, glare; bright shining." So we see at once that scholarship recognizes this word as meaning a "bright shining" of light which might arise from a source other than a flash of "lightning." It is so used, in fact, in Lk.11:36 where we read, "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the BRIGHT SHINING (ASTRAPE) of a CANDLE doth give thee light."

Let us now pose a question. Does "lightning," as we understand the English word, always "come out of the east and shine unto the west?" Does it not flash from north, south, east or west according to the location of the clouds which are charged with either positive or negative electricity? And yet, the "bright shining" here spoken

about is expanded to shining "from the east even unto the west." Again, if the coming of the Lord is portrayed by "lightning," it would be only in limited areas and over only portions of the earth from time to time. Is such a view consistent with the scripture that "every eye shall see Him and every knee shall bow?" And yet the same people who liken His coming to the "lightning" will likewise zealously uphold the latter view. Let us no longer be children in understanding!

But, I ask, what light does ALWAYS come out of the east and shine even unto the west? Does not the light of coming day arise always in the east, gradually brightening the horizon until the sun becomes visible and its rays illumine the eastern sky and "spread as a carpet" over the countryside, city and hill, bathing all in its warmth and beauty as it shines even unto the west? Has not our Lord Jesus been likened unto the "Sun of righteousness" to "arise with healing in His wings?" And the Psalmist hath declared, "The Lord God is a sun... the Lord will give grace and glory" **(Ps. 84:11).** Praise God, the Sun of righteousness has arisen in our heart and He giveth grace and glory for "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" **(Jn.1:14).** The light of that Sun has shined brightly into our darkened soul and is bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. Dear reader, you may have Him flashing for a brief moment across your cloudy, dark, stormy earthly sky if you so choose, but we are glad to see Him with SPIRITUAL EYES and behold His grace and glory as it spreads over the whole world of mankind from east to west until it shall embrace the whole human race, bringing warmth and beauty and life where all was, and still is largely, spiritual darkness and death.

Yes, dear friends, His coming, His parousia, His presence is not to be an instantaneous, brilliantly blinding light flashing across the natural heavens from any local quarter as the word "lightning" might and does incorrectly portray; but His coming, His presence, has been, is now and shall be like the DAWN OF A NEW DAY that constantly increases from the first faint rays of spiritual light until the soul and body of the individual are flooded with the noonday brightness of the blessed Sun of righteousness. And so it shall be universally until that light has brought every created being into subjection to our Lord and He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet, for "the entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" **(Ps. 119:130).** Shine on, O King eternal!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 11
THE PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART ELEVEN

THE DEPARTED CHRIST
HIS PRESENCE AND THE GATHERING UNTO HIM

In previous articles we have amply demonstrated that the Greek word PAROUSIA, generally translated "coming," literally means "presence." This is without doubt the key to one of the most important truths in the whole New Testament. Nowhere does PAROUSIA mean "coming" or "coming again." The PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST, the PRESENCE OF THE SON OF GOD is a past, present and future reality. His PAROUSIA is the ongoing, progressive unfolding of Himself. How often we have yearned for a deeper consciousness of His presence, and wondered where we could find His presence, that is, visible manifestations of His presence, that specific sense of being in the very presence of the Christ in a literal and conscious manner. The PAROUSIA is the ENVELOPING PRESENCE OF CHRIST and to stand before the Son of man is to awake to the wonder and glory and majesty and power of HIS PRESENCE. It is the fullness of all that one can conceive of as being the reality of His promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM," and again, "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, even unto the end of the age." The PAROUSIA is the PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY and the GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE.

THE DEPARTED CHRIST

The doctrines and creeds of most churches of our day have developed around and focused upon six events in the life of the Christ. These are known as the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ. But because the fourth of these, the Ascension, has been so falsely interpreted and distorted by the unspiritual minds of tradition-bound theologians and teachers, the church world has come to the wrong conception of the last two - Pentecost and the Return of Christ.

If one did not search the scriptures, but listened only to church preaching, hymns and doctrines today he would surely gather the idea that the Christ has gone somewhere. No one seems to know where He is, but He is in some far-off heaven somewhere literally and permanently seated upon a majestic throne. At any rate, all are quite sure that He has left planet earth, for did not the disciples see Him go? And so the vast majority of Christians are convinced and firmly believe the New Testament affirms that Christ is no longer on earth. But let us SEE!

The longer I travel in my pilgrimage along the blessed pathways of the celestial kingdom the more I become aware of the mighty significance of every word breathed into the sacred pages of scripture, which our heavenly Father has graciously given for our understanding, training and guidance. How carelessly we peruse its pages! How casually we read its astounding and earth shaking statements! How lightly we pass them by and how thoughtlessly we contradict their plain and simple pronouncements, teaching instead for doctrine the traditions of men! What an infinite transformation would be wrought in our understanding and experience should we dare to believe A-L-L that the scriptures have spoken concerning Him!

When our wonderful Lord Jesus was holding precious communion with His beloved disciples in those heaven-blessed days following His resurrection, on one occasion when He appeared in their midst, we read, "And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted" **(Mat. 28:17).** What! Are they still doubting? Why, even Thomas has been convinced by now! Are they still doubting? Ah, it does not mean that. Let me briefly give you the scene, not so much from the English translation but from the finer reading of the Greek in which Matthew wrote the record.

It was like this. The eleven were gathered at the appointed place, but Jesus had not come. He was not late - He was never late - but according to their reckoning He was late, and He had not come. Peter goes down to the brow of the hill, which commands a view of the path winding up the hillside, to see if He is coming, but there is no sign of Him. Another disciple goes down to see if He is coming and returns, shaking his head. The Master has not arrived. Is He really coming? And suddenly, as before, He is there. He is there - not immediately in their midst, but just a little way from them. He is suddenly there! and no one had seen Him arrive. Of course, as before, it is probable that He had been there all the time and suddenly He made Himself visible to them and they all saw Him. As they looked upon Him suddenly appearing yonder before them, the majesty of His person compelled them to worship. It is the "prostrate" word for worship, the word which means that they were flat on their faces before Him. And in the very act of worshipping, some doubted.

Wavering worshippers! Do you know anything about that? This message seems to me to be always urgent upon those who follow on to know the Lord. It is so tragically possible still to worship Christ and yet, in the very act of worshipping Him, to waver. Now this word "doubted" is an unusual word: it only occurs twice in the New Testament and both times are in Matthew. When Peter walked on the water and was saved by his Master, Jesus said unto him, "O thou of little faith! Wherefore didst thou doubt?" It is the same word; and it is only on these two occasions, then and there, that this word is used in the New Testament. It means literally "to stand in two ways at once". I don't think I can illustrate it, but I think you will see what it means. Anyway, you will from Peter walking on the water. One moment he was looking at his Lord, and walking by faith: the next moment he was looking at the waves, and walking in fear. Then again looking at his Lord and receiving strength: but immediately a big wave makes him lower his victorious gaze and he is once more frightened and floundering. Wavering - standing in two ways at once - vacillating back and forth between the spirit and the flesh - one moment full of faith, the next moment full of fear. A very unsatisfactory way of walking and living! As James says, "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord."

Ah, then I think I see what this means. I think I can sympathize with them, methinks I have done it in my own soul again and again. As they looked at Him standing there suddenly before them, they were compelled to worship, so glorious was He, so commandingly majestic. As some of them lifted their gaze from their prostration on the ground, they looked into His eyes and they saw something that was so challenging there that they knew He had big things for them: they knew that He was calling them to something great: and as they looked at Him, worshipping Him, they shrank, some of them, from what they knew He was going to give to them and demand of them. I think He must have had His flint face on that day. They wavered! Wavering worshippers!

Do you not remember some great experience, some glorious meeting, some wonderful manifestation of God's presence, some mighty move of His Spirit, some awesome unveiling of His glory when the Lord Christ was so exalted before you in the power of the Holy Spirit that you were worshipping Him. There was nothing else to do - you had to worship Him. Did you waver as you worshipped? In the face of His glory, at the majesty of His presence you caught an enthralling glimpse of the glory set before - the glory of sonship to God, the holy expectancy of being made like Him, conformed to His image; the awesome wonder of sharing His mind and His wisdom, His authority and His power; the calling to be a joint-heir and co-ruler with the Christ in the marvelous work of redemption and restitution, to restore the creation into God again. This high and holy calling, known only by revelation of the Holy Spirit of Truth, is a jewel and a prize to be greatly cherished and revered by God's elect. What a vision! What a hope! But - did you waver as you worshipped? Is it not true that in the very face of the ecstasy of the moment of divine illumination and quickening we are at once distraught by the haunting voice of the carnal mind pressing its demands upon us: You will never make it to perfection! Our inherent weaknesses and persistent faults, our unconquered carnality and obvious mortality present themselves before us, magnified like weird mocking monsters dancing hideously in the twilight, taunting, jeering, scorning, sneering, condemning - just who do YOU think YOU are? A son of God? - indeed! You will never be a son of God! You wretched little pretender! You can't make it, such a high and holy calling is forever beyond your grasp, you will never be an overcomer, you claim too much, its not for real! Oh to worship Christ without wavering!

No wonder they wavered! For look what He had to say to them. "Jesus came," --you see, He came right up to where they were now, came close - "and spake unto them, saying" --and, Oh, what a word is this! You have

noticed the four "alls"? "ALL power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore go ye and disciple ALL nations, baptizing them into the Name, teaching them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you - literally - ALL the days, even to the consummation of the age." Consider His power. "All power is given unto Me..." All authority (exousia, not dunamis) hath been given to Me in heaven and on earth! His power! That position our ascended Lord occupies today. All authority in heaven and on earth is in the loving hands of our living Saviour. His power! Consider His plans. "Go ye therefore and disciple ALL nations..." Consider His principles. "Teaching them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Consider His PRESENCE. "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALL THE DAYS - perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion - to the very close and consummation of the age" **(Mat. 28:20)** (Amplified). "All the days" - Sundays and Mondays. All the days! Days of sunshine and blessing and glory - days of thundercloud and turmoil and trial. ALL the days! Days when everything goes right and days when everything goes wrong. Days when you have the victory and days when you suffer defeat. "All the days I am with you!" Throughout the march of the centuries an innumerable multitude of men and women have claimed these beautiful words as the unfailing promise of our lovely Lord Jesus. But, precious friend of mine, that is not a promise! I dare say you will find it in the Promise Box, but it is not a promise.. He did not say, "I WILL be with you all the days." it is better far than a promise; it is a FACT! "I AM with you always" - making no conditions - not saying: "If you do this, that and the other, I will be with you" - but stating as an accomplished, perpetual, unchanging fact the complete assurance of a constant and age-lasting PRESENCE OF THE CHRIST with us. How much plainer can any statement be? Yet the preachers today confidently affirm that HE IS GONE! "Christ is in heaven," say they, "but His Spirit is with us here," as though His Spirit were somehow not HE HIMSELF. Who is the Lord, anyhow? "Now the Lord I-S THAT SPIRIT" **(II Cor. 3:17).** Mark, in the last verse of His Gospel tells us, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the LORD WORKING W-I-T-H THEM and confirming the Word with signs following." After He ascended HE WAS RIGHT THERE WITH THEM STILL. Glory to God!

When the holy Christ of God uttered His wonderful proclamation, "And, lo, I AM with you always," that proclamation forever established that in truth the Christ NEVER WOULD DEPART. There is a wonderful difference between ascending and departing. Jesus said, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father" **(Jn. 20:17),** but never, once did He say that He would depart from them. "For hath He not said, "I will NEVER L-E-A-V-E THEE, nor forsake thee" (**Heb. 13:5).** That which the church today regards as the departure of Jesus, was never so regarded by His disciples. Rather it meant to them a CONDITION OF POWER, for He told them that He must "go away" that the Comforter might "come." None of the Gospel writers felt that the "taking up" involved any departure of the Christ. It never did mean AN END of His presence to any of them. But on the other hand, it really meant a far greater realization of His presence than they had ever experienced. Their statements that He continued to work with them, that He said He would be with them to the end of the age, and their fullness of joy all testify to the fact that they believed He was still with them and had not gone anywhere else. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH I-N ME**"** **(Gal. 2:20).** In the last chapter of Luke's Gospel and the first chapters of its sequel, which we call "The Acts of the Apostles," the pen of inspiration has faithfully recorded the facts surrounding the ascension of our Lord and His coming to us as the Spirit. Jesus led His faithful little band of followers out of Jerusalem as far as the village of Bethany and while speaking to them He stretched out His hands in blessing upon them. As He blesses, His feet lift from the grass and, still blessing them He rises upwards. They follow Him with their gaze, until a cloud intervenes and receives Him out of their sight. Only out of their sight. Not out of their company. Only His BODILY PRESENCE was denied to them. Had He not said, "Lo, I am with you always"? In a sense He did not really go away: HE ONLY WENT OUT OF SIGHT. And in ten days' time, He was to come to them in a closer way than ever by His indwelling Spirit.

That cloud intrigues me. "And a CLOUD received Him out of their sight." "Received Him out of" is one word in the Greek meaning "to take under". It signifies to take up by placing one's self underneath, in the style of a hiker carrying a backpack, or as a waiter holds a tray. It is one of Luke's medical terms. Weymouth in his translation puts it thus: the cloud "closing beneath Him, hid Him from sight." Don't tell me that was the sort of cloud which spills the rain and from which the lightning flashes. No! No! That Cloud is the Cloud of the Glory of God, the Shekinah, described in Eze. 1:4 as "a great cloud ... and brightness."

A cloud is perhaps the best known Eastern symbol for the swirling, lustrous radiance which hides "the face of His throne" **(Job 26:9).** The Hebrew term translated "cloud" in Ezekiel is AWNAUN, a word which is

occasionally used of a nimbus or thundercloud, but which is repeatedly used for THE GLORY CLOUD OF JEHOVAH. The first appearance of AWNAWN, "cloud," as a technical term for the Shekinah is found in **Ex. 13:21** wherein we read, **"**And the Lord went before (the Israelites) by day in a pillar of a CLOUD, to lead them the way." It was this "cloud" which Ezekiel saw while he was with the exiles in Babylon by the Chebar Canal. The Glory Cloud is the "chariot" of Jehovah, composed of myriads of celestial beings, the spirits of just men made perfect, the armies which are in heaven, the heavenly hosts of the spiritual world**.** "Behold," declares the prophet, "the Lord rideth upon THE CLOUD, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it (the cloud)**" (Isa. 19:1).**

Just as the CLOUD "covered the mount" at the giving of the Law (Ex. 24:15-18), so, also, it "covered the tabernacle" when it was completed. "And the Glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the Cloud abode thereon, and the Glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" **(Ex. 40:34-35).** Many years later, when Solomon had finished the work of the temple, "The Cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the Cloud; for the Glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" **(I Kings 8:10-11).** It will be observed that "The Cloud" and "The Glory" are equated as synonymous, for The Cloud "filled the house" and The Glory "filled the house" are stated in parallel fashion.

This is the Cloud of HIS GLORY into which the triumphant saints of God are to be caught up." "And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the CLOUDS" **(I Thes. 4:16-17).** There is no definite article in the Greek text before the word "clouds," to make it THE CLOUDS, which would thus identify them as the clouds of the lower atmosphere surrounding our earth. Where the identifying article is missing, it speaks of quality, or is used as a descriptive term. The Greek word "cloud" it often used of a large body of individuals in the Greek Classics, and it is also so used in Heb.12:1 speaking of that great "cloud of witnesses" which surround us. Thus our "catching up" is being brought into that higher spiritual sphere, where we shall become one with that whole great cloud of witnesses, that "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" **(Heb. 12:23).** What a glorious UNION of forces when those of our generation upon the earth, and all those overcoming saints of all former ages who have gone on before us, are joined together, becoming an indestructible force in the full, total and complete manifestation of His majesty, power and glory at the manifestation of the sons of God!

The Resident within the shimmering Cloud of Glory is just the Lord Himself, the source of the dazzling light, for it is HE who causes the celestial host to shine forth, thus forming the "cloud" and manifesting His glory thereby. Yes, He shall be revealed TO US, shall complete all of His work and purpose in us, lifting us up into higher realms of the Spirit, and completing that UNION WITH THE WHOLE BODY OF THE FIRSTBORN. Then shall He be revealed IN US in fullness as Paul explains, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, in flaming fire ... when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be ADMIRED I-N ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE in that day" **(II Thes. 1:7-10).**

I would draw your reverent attention to the following two scripture passages. "Behold! He cometh WITH CLOUDS" **(Rev. 1:7).** "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, The Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS" **(Jude 14).** Or, "Lo, the Lord comes in holy myriads of Himself" (Literal translation). If you will take a few minutes to meditate upon these two verses you will begin to realize that the Lord coming WITH CLOUDS and the Lord coming WITH SAINTS is not two separate events, but just the same thing. The "cloud" that received our Lord Jesus out of their sight on the day of His ascension, was the same "cloud" which revealed the majestic Person of Jehovah on Mount Sinai and in the Tabernacle and Temple of old, and the very same "cloud" with which He comes again and into which His elect is gloriously caught up. It was the Cloud of celestial spirits swooping down from realms of glory to bear Him up in triumph to the sphere of authority, power and blessing, which should thenceforth flow forth as a mighty river of life through the channel of His body upon earth. They came, say the Greek, and they wrapped Him round, some of them underneath Him, and into their presence He passed, and the eyes on earth beheld Him no longer. From the eternal and omnipresent realm of the spirit He occupies the omnipotence of the throne of the universe; from that throne He gives the Holy Spirit of HIS PRESENCE to all who believe.

May the blessed Holy Spirit open the eyes of our understanding that we may see that beyond the veil of the flesh is the realm of God, the realm of the Spirit, and it is there the Christ of God dwells, and it is there He must be touched, seen, known and experienced. He did not "leave us" for He promised He never would; His "disappearance" from the sight of men was not a lessening of His PRESENCE with us in any way. Rather it was an intensification of that PRESENCE. For the Christ was transferring that PRESENCE from one body to many bodies. He was expanding and enlarging His power and influence and character greatly among men. That expansion and enlargement has continued throughout the centuries, and the body of Christ has continued to grow and develop in preparation for the full and total and complete manifestation of His life when every elect son of God has come forth finally from Father's hand full grown in the mind, nature, will, power and dominion of Almighty God.

Our testimony joins in harmonious accord with that of the beloved disciple John when he declared, "WE KNOW THAT THE SON OF GOD IS COME." He is here now in the world, IN US, and it will have to be through us that the world will come to the knowledge and experience of this PRESENT CHRIST. The enveloping and overwhelming of HIS PRESENCE - this is the PAROUSIA of Jesus Christ! With this precious truth in mind let us now reverently consider a couple more texts touching on the PAROUSIA of our Lord.

HIS PRESENCE AND THE GATHERING UNTO HIM

II THES. 2:1. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (parousia, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him..." This scripture has been much used to substantiate the rapture teaching by assuming that the PAROUSIA of the Lord was a future event and likewise "our gathering together unto Him." When we endeavor to receive the revelation of spiritual truth, we are at once brought into conflict with the pre-conceived ideas of time-honored tradition. I exhort the saints therefore to lay aside every concept that they have received from man, which they have not thoroughly investigated upon their knees with an open Bible and in holy brokenness before God. The mists and darkness of carnal minds and lifeless creeds have obscured the meaning of this beautiful passage from all but a few, but those words - "by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "by our gathering together unto Him" - precious friend of mine, have reference to very present reality which was first spoken of by the Lord Himself when He said, "For where two or three are GATHERED TOGETHER in My name, there AM I IN THE MIDST of them" **(Mat. 18:20).** There you have the two ingredients: The presence of the Lord, and the gathering together unto Him.

The Concordant New Testament translates this passage thus: "Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him..." Rotherham's translation reads, "But we request you, brethren, in behalf of the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him..." The Diaglott makes a still clearer translation by the rendering, "We entreat you, brethren, concerning the presence of the Lord of us Jesus Anointed and of us assembling to Him," which portrays the Lord as then and there present and their gathering, or assembling, to Him to be then and there. In other words, the apostle was beseeching the saints at Thessalonica that AS THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER OR ASSEMBLED UNTO THE LORD IN HIS PRESENCE they should not be shaken in mind or be troubled by the fact that the Day of the Lord they awaited was not to immediately break in its fullness of glory upon them.

We read so much into the scriptures that simply isn't there! To suit our purpose of emphasizing what the scriptures REALLY say, in contrast with what most people THINK they say, we shall paraphrase seven well-known verses from the Gospel of John, chapter fourteen, in keeping with the popular teaching of our day. To hear the preachers expounding the things of God it should read something like this:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in hell, believe also in heaven. In heaven there are many mansions: you know I have told you this and have described its beautiful golden streets many, many times. I am going to heaven to prepare a mansion just over the hilltop for you, and if I go and prepare a mansion for. you, I will come again and take you away to heaven, that where I will be you will be also. And you all know well that I am going to heaven, and you know the way to heaven. And Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we didn't know you were going to heaven and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man shall ever get to heaven but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: but when you get to heaven you shall know Him and you shall see Him" (in. 14:1-7, Paraphrase).

Strange as it may seem, the subject of the fourteenth chapter of John is NOT HEAVEN! Jesus rarely spoke of heaven in the traditional sense during His teaching ministry. For Jesus came, not as a revelation of some geographical or astral location, but as the expression of a glorious PERSON. And that Person is the FATHER. It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the word heaven, or any synonym thereof, does not appear even once in this entire chapter! But the term FATHER is used some TWENTY-THREE times! It should be obvious to any thinking mind that the thrust of Christ's words was to bring His disciples into a living relationship with the almighty and infinite Father. Said Christ, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and HE TO WHOMSOEVER THE SON WILL REVEAL HIM" **(Mat. 11:27).** Armed with the understanding that the key word in John, charter fourteen, is FATHER and not HEAVEN, we might examine the profound truth here uttered by the lips of the Son of God.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto MYSELF; that where I AM, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, but by Me."

It would be of utmost profit for any of us to diligently consider this important question: Where does Jesus say He will receive us to? "I will come again, and receive you UNTO M-Y-S-E-L-F." To understand the deep meaning of this significant statement we must see by the spirit of wisdom and revelation just WHERE CHRIST IS. The Lord has never anywhere promised to carry us off to a beautiful Isle of Somewhere, but in the tenderest tones He assures us that He is Himself the WAY TO THE FATHER. "I am the WAY ... no man COMETH UNTO THE F-A-T-H-E-R, but by Me." Jesus is the WAY! The way to where? Why, bless your heart, He is the way to the Father! The WAY is not a route through the Milky Way the WAY is a PERSON! And the DESTINATION is likewise a PERSON. "No man cometh unto the FATHER, but by ME." It is IN CHRIST that we are enabled to enter into intimate relationship and vital union with the Father.

Before either the firstfruit company or the rest of creation can be brought to the Father it is vitally necessary that there be a GATHERING UNTO THE CHRIST. It is my deep conviction that this is the grand truth the Holy Spirit is pointing to in **I Cor. 15:24-28.** "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, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And when all things shall be subdued UNTO HIM, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

From the earliest times of antiquity the Lord has spoken through the mouths of His anointed prophets foretelling this wonderful GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO CHRIST. The patriarch Jacob, at the time of his death, acting under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and with the spirit of prophecy upon him, called all his sons together to tell them what their posterity should become in the purposes of God. Laying his bony, trembling hand upon the head of his son Judah he prophesied, saying, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh (Christ) come; and UNTO HIM SHALL THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE BE" **(Gen. 49:10).** Paul asserts, as we have shown, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (presence) of out Lord Jesus Christ, and by OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM..." **(II Thes. 2:1).** It seems to me that these two passages compliment and explain each other, and that both clearly point to the oft repeated term "in Christ" or "in Him." Again and again, the Holy Spirit of God sets forth that privileged position IN CHRIST. "Therefore if any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature ... and all things are of God who hath reconciled (harmonized, gathered together) us TO HIMSELF by (in) Jesus Christ" **(II Cor. 5:17-18).** Again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN CHRIST: 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: 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."

God was in Christ. And it is there, in Christ, that God reconciles and gathers together the world and all things unto Himself. When a man or a woman becomes a member of Christ's body he or she commences to be rooted and grounded IN HIM. From Him we draw our life as roots draw their food and sustenance from the

earth, and it is by the life of Him that we are built up and grow to be a holy temple (the many mansions) in the Lord, an habitation for God through the Spirit. The wondrous parable of the Vine and the branches, with the accompanying command, "Abide in Me, and I in you," has been to us a source of rich instruction and edification. And though we feel as if we had but very imperfectly learned the lesson of abiding in Him, yet we have tasted something of the joy that comes when the soul can say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I do abide in Thee."

Many years ago the saintly Andrew Murray penned these inspiring and challenging words: "You know what abiding in Him is. It is to consent with our whole soul to His being our life, to reckon upon Him to inspire us in all that goes to make up life, and then to give up everything most Absolutely for Him to rule and work in us. It is the rest of the full assurance that He does, each moment, work in us what we are to be, and so Himself enables us to maintain that perfect surrender, in which He is free to do all His will. Let all who do indeed long to walk like Christ take courage at the thought of what He is and will prove Himself to be if they trust Him. He is the TRUE VINE; no vine ever did so fully for its branches what He will do for us. Honor Him by a joyful trust that He is, beyond all conception, supplying you with His infinite fullness, the TRUE VINE, holding you by His almighty strength. And as your faith thus looks to Him, instead of sighing and failure, the voice of praise will be heard repeating the language of faith: Thanks be to God! he that abideth in Him does walk even as He walked. Thanks be to God! I abide in Him, and I walk as He walked" -end quote.

But this is not all. You find in **I Pet. 3:18,** "Christ, also, hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." There we have the great object of Christ's work. "That He might BRING US TO GOD." Christ came and died and rose again to bring us to God. Listen to what we read in the book of Hebrews, about the better hope of the New Testament "by which WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD." Listen to what we read in the same chapter, "He is able to save completely them that COME TO GOD BY HIM."

You know there is a great difference between the way to a house and the house itself. I may be traveling through the most beautiful scenery, on a lovely, pleasant day, with delightful company, and enjoying every step of the way, and yet, I am not content to stay there always. I have gone into that way to bring me to the end, the object of my journey. Christ is the way; what is the end of the way? The end is God - the Father. Christ wants to bring us to God. You often find Christians so occupied with Christ they never get time for God. You ask me, is there any difference between going to Christ and going to God? A very great difference! In Christ I have the gracious and merciful side of God's character. But that is not all of God's character I need to know. In Christ I have the condescension of God coming near to me, but the object of that condescension is to bring me to that place where I can come unto Him - to be one with the Father and like the Father in every way. You can never have all that God has provided unless you learn the lesson that Christ is going to win your heart that He may bring you back to God. Just think, Christ was not, in Himself, self-sufficient when He was on earth. He lived every day with the thought within Him: There is One greater than I, and My blessedness is to live in dependence upon Him, with a will given up to His will and in a trust that counts upon His working. And if I am to be in Christ and Christ in me, what was His life must become my life; fellowship with the Father and dependence upon the Father.

Christ came to bring me to God. I not only need faith to realize that He is in me and I in Him, but by faith I need to give myself up to His working, that as a living Person He shall reveal the will of God perfectly in me, and so breathe into me His own disposition and His Qwn life. Christ is to dwell and live in me. I am not to count Christ as a separate being, dwelling in my heart as a locality, but Christ is to be in my heart, in my life, in MY thinking, living and willing, as the very life of all I do, so that He lives Himself out through me. So Christ is formed in me, and God sees the very figure, the very form of Christ within me. And as Christ is thus manifested within me in His disposition and Spirit, the nearness of God becomes more intimate and the fellowship with God becomes more close. Oh! beloved, God wants us to come nigh to Him in Christ.

Christ suffered, that He might bring us to God. What did He suffer? Nothing was too great. He endured All, that He might bring us to God. Are you willing, my brother, my sister, to take the time and trouble that you may be brought nigh to God? If that has become the object of our desires we will understand the work of Christ far better, and our understanding and knowledge of that work will bring far more abundant fruit. Jesus came to reveal the Father, and to bring us back to the Father, by degrees. He came to save the world, this is true, but

beyond that He came to reveal the Father. He is the way to the Father. By Him we can return to the Father. As one has said, He did not fence everybody in to a "Jesus realm." Jesus knew the limitations of our human realm; He also knew the source of fullness, and so He said, "I go to My Father, for My Father is greater than I" **(Jn. 14:28).** Know this, my friend, and you will understand a great truth: THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL REALMS OF SONSHIP. Fatherhood is the position of being part of the life-giving force.

From the pen of another ready writer let me quote the following words of truth and wisdom. "There is a ONENESS WITH THE FATHER, a relationship which He would have us enjoy, where we receive directly from Him all that we need. Jesus also spoke of that dimension when He said, 'In that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, HE will give it you' **(Jn. 16:23).** This surely bespeaks of a deeper relationship with our God. The evidences of our salvation being clearly revealed, the mediatorial work of the Son being complete in our personal behalf, we shall have DIRECT ACCESS TO THE FATHER. This does no despite or injury to our Saviour, rather it redounds to His glory, for it reveals that His workings in us have been successful, and that we are now prepared to enter into a deeper relationship with Him, able to approach the Father in His name, or, might we say, having received His name, we stand in the character and nature of all that His name implies.

"While we praise God for all that HE DOES, and IS DOING in the hearts of men, and for whatever is being wrought in groups, churches, etc. still we hear the cry over and over again, 'Where can we go to find the answers we need?' For NO MAN has been found worthy to open and to read the book' **(Rev. 5:4).** Indeed, we find that the more we progress towards spiritual maturity, the less anyone else has an answer for us. Paul once wrote, 'He that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all things, yet he himself is judged (discerned) of no man' **(I Cor. 2:15).**

"Others, who are just beginning their walk with Christ, come to you, or to some group, and receive help. Prophecies are given, words of exhortation, edification, and comfort come forth, and they receive the answers they need. Yet you find for yourself there are none who can discern for you - in fact, far too often they do not even understand your question, let alone get an answer for it. We look for a Seer, a Prophet, one who can draw out of the deep the water of life to satisfy, and 'there is no man able.' Why? Because God now purposes to bring us, yes, if necessary, TO PRESS US into a new relationship with Himself, until we learn to go directly to our Father and receive from Him all that is needed for the occasion. While we appreciate our spiritual brethren, their love, their fellowship, their counsel, yet we are being brought to the place where we have to say, 'I'll go to the Father, for MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL.' Thus we find ourselves being brought to the threshold of a new dimension, a deeper relationship than we have experienced heretofore. While others run from meeting to meeting, from preacher to preacher, from brother to brother, God places within your heart that deep yearning to GO TO THE FATHER. If He can give my brother a word of prophecy for me, why can't He speak it directly into my own heart? He can, and He does! When we learn to go to Him, and not just lean upon others for our 'group therapy.'

"'For this cause I bow my knees unto THE FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named' **(Eph. 3:14-15).** 'From whom every FATHERHOOD in heaven and upon earth is named...' (Rotherham Translation). 'From whom every family in heaven and earth is named - THAT FATHER from whom ALL FATHERHOOD takes its title and derives its name' (Amplified Bible). While much can be said for sonship, and what it means to become a mature son of God, led by the Spirit, and always doing the will of the Father, yet we find that there is a purpose for this fully qualified state of sonship, a purpose on which there has been very little teaching. Obviously the time was not ready for such instruction, the sons are yet in the throes of their travail and preparation. But the more the grace of God inworks His divine purpose for this coming into maturity and being received of God as a true son, the more also He begins to unveil that GLORY to which we are called, and of which we shall be partakers, and this includes the glory of fatherhood.

'All of the training and discipline of bringing a child to maturity, to where God can invest in them the fullness of His Spirit, to where they will AT ALL TIMES be motivated and controlled by the Spirit, all of this is now leading into a deeper dimension - where the crowning glory of sonship is manifested in fatherhood. If all the ways of natural life are normal, no young man is content to just stay at the age of recognized maturity, strong, qualified to be on his own. But soon there awakens within him that desire to be able to produce out of himself, be it in the field of creative activity, birthing a business of his own, developing an established practice in his chosen

profession, or raising a family and establishing and providing for his own home. But regardless of how his energy is expended, he desires to accomplish something, to make a name for himself, to raise up out of his own efforts that which testifies to his ability. In the realm of our spiritual application, we find this holds a tremendous word of truth. God is doing more than just bringing His chosen remnant to maturity so that they can stand in full strength, but He is also leading them on in to fatherhood. And while it is true, we are already projecting our vision beyond experience in these spiritual realms, yet God is placing a vision before His own, a goal set before, and then HE will bring them into the fulfillment thereof.

"Jesus, the very man Christ Jesus, knew His position as a SON, but He also knew of His position as Father, and that it was expedient for Him to return to that realm from which He would be able to impart, pour out of Himself, that flow of the Spirit which we now need to bring us to maturity. He had condescended to men of low estate, manifest in the flesh, becoming an offering for our sins, but when the sacrifice was complete, He was ready to ascend far above all principalities and powers, that He might again be the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. 'He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. AND HE GAVE...' **(Eph. 4:10-11).** Yes, returning into His fatherhood position He began to give, imparting out of Himself, sending forth the Spirit into our hearts, whereby now we are able to cry, 'Abba, Father.' HE IS OUR FATHER, for from Him we have received grace for grace. And when He shall have finished imparting of this superabundance of His grace to us-ward, we shall have that same sufficiency which He possesses, and be able to impart to others. Therefore, we repeat, the challenge is not just to become a 'son', but to go on, and being filled with His fullness, so that we become LIFE-GIVERS, even as HE became a life-giving Spirit. IT IS FROM HIM THAT WE SHALL DERIVE OUR FATHERHOOD.

"THERE IS A FATHERHOOD REALM! A position in God where we shall be able to impart life. How we have wept in days gone by, and how there still yearns within us that deep desire for His fullness, when we see someone in need, and find that we do not have that 'substance' to be able to meet that need. If there be any love and compassion within us, of course we can pray, encourage, share the burden, but we still cannot impart life. We take them to an altar and pray with them, but we cannot save them, it is a sovereign act of God. We hold up their hands in praise, tell them to hang on - to let go - and highly confuse them as to how to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, but we could not, and cannot impart the Spirit to them. We are not yet fathers! But God is going to bring His remnant to that place where He can receive them INTO HIMSELF, and by reason of this union they will have something to impart. Now it is self-evident that inasmuch as from our Father God all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name, and inasmuch as those who enter into this realm in God are filled with His fullness, and are partakers of His divine nature, so that they might beget the same, then it follows that the attributes of our own Father are to be found in these 'fathers' " -Ray Prinzing (end Quote).

We are forced to the conclusion, then, that when Paul says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (parousia, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him," he speaks of something higher far than the childish notion of Jesus streaking across the heavens like a flaming meteorite while bodies arise from the cemeteries to be "gathered together" unto Him in the upper atmosphere. It is not a physical or limited thing at all, it bespeaks a realm of SPIRITUAL REALITY. It is not a gathering together of physical bodies unto a certain place, but a gathering on a spiritual plane of experience unto the person of HIMSELF. The Christ is gathering a people together IN HIS PAROUSIA, IN HIS PRESENCE that He may bring them to God. God is not one place, and Christ another place, and we another place. It is not even necessary that the Lord should return from some far-off heaven to this earth in order to raise the dead. All that He has undertaken to do He can do from anywhere, for He is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all! The power of the voice, or the touch, or the manifestation of the Son of God is not diminished by distance. He who at Cana could heal the son of the nobleman at Capernaum, twenty miles of hill and vale notwithstanding, could if He chose to do so, empty the graves of earth without moving a millimeter from His present position. But the glorious gathering together unto Christ has nothing whatever to do with either time or space. It is an event of spirit, and truth and reality.

And as the apostle shows in the verses which follow this grand statement in II Thessalonians, chapter two, there is a Day yet to come - O glorious Day! - the Day of Christ, the Day of many sons come to glory, the Day of perfection and maturity, the Day of fullness and triumph, the Day of power and dominion, the Day of creation's deliverance and restoration back into God. But the dawning of that Day is rooted in a FIRSTFRUIT

COMPANY that LIVES IN HIS PRESENCE, being GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO HIM, and there IN HIM, brought by and through Him, unto the glory of THE FATHER - FATHERHOOD!

II PET. 3:3-4. "Then shall come in the last day scoffers ... saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." The King James Version gives, "Where is the promise of His coming?" but again the word "coming" is the Greek word PAROUSIA meaning "presence". A free translation would be, "Where is the promise of the presence of Himself? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Or it may be phrased, "Where is His promised presence - seeing that all things continue on as from the beginning of creation?" That is, where is the FULFILLMENT of the promise? The scoffers imply that the promise has utterly failed; that the Christ is not present; that there is not the slightest evidence that His coming has ever been accomplished; that they who believe He is here now are certainly deluded! What is the reason scoffers say such things? Well, partly because Christians are saying just the same thing! That is, that the Lord is coming at some future time and they are not holding forth the truth of HIS PRESENCE.

The fact that all things continue to go on as they have always done is proof, to the carnal mind that the Lord is still away. The sun rises and sets; the tides ebb and flow; the seasons follow each other in the usual order; men are born, live and die; one generation succeeds another, as has always been the case; nations rise and fall; there are wars and rumors of wars; sin abounds; and all external evidence points to the belief that these conditions will continue as they have always done. So - WHERE IS HIS PROMISED COMING? the scoffers demand.

The world lieth in the lap of the Wicked One and is dead in trespasses and sin and the natural man understandeth not the spiritual things of God, neither can he for they are spiritually discerned. Scoffers belong to the world, but how much more pitiful when we find that the great mass of Christians, who are supposed to be children of light and to have spiritual discernment, are failing to "receive Him because they see Him not" but continue to gate into the skies. While Christians century after century have eagerly scanned the heavens for signs of the appearing of the Lord, they have forgotten to live in the glory of THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST here and now. Now that the Lord is beginning to open our eyes to the message of life for this hour may He grant us grace to walk gladly in the brighter light of the enlarged vision. It is my earnest prayer that the believing heart of every saint separated unto God by His Holy Spirit may be gripped by this blessed truth: It is possible for saints here and now to live in the constant and continual presence of the Christ who walked the shores of Galilee; the Christ who healed the sick and raised the dead; the Christ at whose voice demons fled like darkness before piercing light; the Christ who spake as never man spake; the Christ who lived and died and rose again and ascended on high; the Christ who has been given all power in heaven and in earth; this mighty Christ walks with us still, yea, walks WITHIN US, closer to us even than the air we breathe or the blood that courses its way unceasingly through our veins. As the days have passed, especially in recent months, there has come to me the ever-increasing assurance that I am dwelling and walking in the PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST - His PRESENCE. The Christ is no longer far away; He is here. No longer need saints say "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep to bring Christ again from the dead? The WORD (Christ) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart" **(Rom. 10:6-7).**

Let all God's elect rejoice in the truth I now present. Lay hold upon it as you would a precious jewel because its truth uncovers the secret key that will unlock the door to great spiritual experience and understanding. The moment the solemnizing fact of CHRIST'S PRESENCE grips your heart and fills your mind by the Holy Spirit, the REALITY OF HIS ABIDING PRESENCE will begin to transform your life. How wonderful the presence of Christ! Where is His promised presence? Ah, He who told us in words that cannot fail, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," now abides with us forever, whom, "having not seen, we love; IN WHOM, though now we see Him not (with physical eyes), yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" **(I Pet. 1:8).**

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THE APOKALUPSIS OFJESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWELVE

THE UNVEILING
UNCOVERING THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN
THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

In the New Testament, in the original Greek, are found six different words and phrases which have been represented to us as ALL meaning the very same thing - the "coming" of the Lord or the "second coming" of Christ! And while a few scholars have gone to the trouble to tell us what these six words mean, yet I do not hesitate to say that not one Christian in a million has earnestly sought the Lord for spiritual wisdom and divine understanding concerning these important matters. There is confusion in the minds of many when they come to this great truth of our Lord's return and much of this uncertainty stems from a failure to understand the diverse meanings of these six Greek words, which are used in connection with His coming. Until the great scriptural truths contained in these six Greek words dawn upon our enlightened hearts by the quickening of the spirit of wisdom from on High, though we may be earnest students of God's Word and feel satisfied with what we have, nevertheless, there will be in our possession a great mine of eternal riches and heavenly wealth of which we are able to appropriate only a small portion.

In previous articles we have amply demonstrated that the Greek word PAROUSIA, generally translated "coming," literally means "presence." This is without doubt the key to one of the most important truths in the whole New Testament. Nowhere does PAROUSIA mean "coming" or "coming again." The PAROUSIA OF JESUS CHRIST, the PRESENCE OF THE SON OF GOD is a past, present and future reality. It is the fullness of all that one can conceive of as being the reality of His promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM," and again, "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the age." The PAROUSIA is the PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY and the GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE.

THE UNVEILING

This brings us to the second Greek word we shall consider - APOKALUPSIS. This word has been translated in the Bible by various English words such as lighten, revelation, manifestation, coming, appearing and revealed. We can easily understand how the translators could use such a variety of word-meanings to describe the word APOKALUPSIS, but it was not really because APOKALUPSIS held various shades of meaning in the original tongue. To know the past of an individual helps us to understand him better. To know the life history of a word makes its present meaning clearer and more nearly unforgettable.

In English, for instance, the word rostrum is defined as a place where one stands in giving a speech. But originally this Latin word meant "a bird's beak," such as the beak of a hawk or sparrow. But now this meaning does not even enter one's mind when he hears or reads the word. In the days when Rome was a world power naval vessels were constructed with long sharp prows for ramming enemy ships. Because of the appearance, it came to be known as "the bird's beak," and this portion of the vessel was considered a trophy of war. The captured rostrum was taken to the Coliseum at the time a victorious commander went there to receive the acclaim of the people, and he would stand in the rostrum to receive his trophy and to give his speech.

The Greek word APOKALUPSIS is a derivative of APOKALUPTO. APOKALUPTO is a compound word composed of APO, meaning "off" or "away," and KALUPTO, meaning "to cover up." Thus APOKALUPSIS means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (uncovered)" **(Mat. 10:26).** Our English word

"revelation" has become for many a word that signifies a strange belief or some far-out-doctrine, which should be handled as something delusive and dangerous, and avoided if possible. But this is just the opposite from the biblical meaning of the word, and the consideration we need to give to that which is revealed. That which is uncovered is no more a mystery, nor can it any longer be a threat. It is open to view, whether positive or negative, and can be considered without fear since it is no longer shrouded in darkness or mystery.

In the following texts the word related to our Lord's appearing is from either the Greek APOKALUPSIS or APOKALUPTO. "Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is REVEALED" **(Lk. 17:30).** "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be REVEALED in us" (**Rom. 8:18).** "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the COMING (unveiling; revealment) of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(I Cor. 1:7).** "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be REVEALED from heaven... in flaming fire ... when He shall come to be glorified in His saints" **(II Thes. 1:7-10).** "That the trial of your faith ... might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the APPEARING of Jesus Christ" **(I Pet. 1:7).** "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION of Jesus Christ" **(I Pet. 1:13).** "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be REVEALED, ye might be glad also with exceeding joy" **(I Pet. 4:13).** "The REVELATION of Jesus Christ **(Rev. 1:1).** "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the MANIFESTATION (unveiling; revealment) of the sons of God" **(Rom. 8:19).**

Only by REVELATION, UNVEILING can we know the Christ of God or behold Him in His ineffable glory. When the light of the Holy Spirit shines in, the mists that have hung like a cloud over our minds, obscuring the King in His beauty, are cleared away. Then the realities which were once unseen become clearly visible and that which was once seen through a glass darkly is now seen face to face and that which was once known only in part is now known as we are known. The word "unveiling" is certainly the clearest possible translation of the word APOKALUPSIS. On the basis of this "unveiling" of our wonderful Christ, we may, then, expect the APOKALUPSIS to be understood not as a matter of His COMING, but merely of SEEING. It is not at all a question of our Lord making some change in location, as "coming" from high heaven back down into the atmosphere of this planet; it is, rather, the matter of Him who is already present with and within us BECOMING UNVEILED - uncovered, disclosed, revealed in the power of the Holy Spirit that we may truly BEHOLD HIM in the fullness of Himself. It would be one thing for you to "feel a presence" in your room, but something greater should that presence become visible, so that you SEE CLEARLY what was once veiled in obscurity.

Since APOKALUPSIS means to reveal, or unveil, there must be something to unveil or which may be unveiled. That something must be PRESENT or it cannot be unveiled; and it must be hidden from sight or it cannot be disclosed. This is exactly what we have shown in foregoing articles concerning the Lord Jesus, namely, that He is PRESENT and that He is hidden from sight of the natural eye because "the Lord is that Spirit." But, praise God, we are now to find that His invisible presence, parousia, is to be revealed, disclosed, uncovered, unveiled, and that, too, to the whole world in due season. Are we looking for a so-called "second coming" of the Lord? Emphatically we are NOT looking into the sky for such a thing BUT, most emphatically, we ARE looking forward for the disclosure, uncovering, revealing of the Lord NOW PRESENT BUT HIDDEN in Spirit form. Truly, the APOKALUPSIS of Jesus Christ is a yet future vision for the great mass of Christians as well as for the world, and to all of us there is yet much to be unveiled.

Retaining the foregoing in mind, let us now note briefly the following scriptures. "We greatly rejoice ... that the trial of your faith ... might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing (apokalupsis, disclosure, uncovering, revelation, unveiling, manifestation) of Jesus Christ" **(I Pet. 1:6-7).** Prayerful pondering of this scripture is all that is needed to grasp the meaning of the honor and glory that shall be ours, not in being caught up into the starry skies out of the trials which produce the honor and glory, nor in Jesus coming riding upon a cloud in the upper atmosphere, but when He is UNVEILED TO THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS MANY-MEMBERED BODY OF SAINTS bringing deliverance to the entire groaning creation through the manifestation of His grace, glory and power which shall yet bring a larger measure of life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Again, "So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(I Cor. 1:7).** Ah, we are waiting for the marvelous apokalupsis, disclosure, unveiling of Jesus Christ, that which

transcends HIS GIFTS, wonderful as they are, as He manifests the fullness of the Son of God and His great, many-membered Christ body, but we are no longer gazing into the sky for His so-called "second coming" at some indefinite future date. Praise God, we are beholding the handiwork of our God on every hand today as He moves the nations like pawns on a chess board in mighty preparation for the closing events of this age and the ushering in of the more glorious age to come.

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design - except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored. Then on a certain day a vast multitude of the citizens of Florence assembled in the public square; the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. At this unveiling all of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David". In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. And, precious friend of mine, in the lump of clay which is you, the almighty Father sees an image too - the image of Jesus Christ! And God is working unceasingly and tirelessly to form the image of His Son in you. No truth has come with more soul-gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the beautiful hope of sonship to God. Well indeed may we yield ourselves into the hands of heaven's skilled sculptor that HE may form His Son in us, for the mind of omniscience has ordained that that sonship should be the HOPE OF ALL CREATION. It is for sonship that the whole creation groans in a sort of universal travail while it eagerly waits to see the glorious sight of the sons of God coming into their own (Rom. 8:22-23).

Oh! God unveil our minds, unveil your word, unveil your great and eternal purpose, unveil yourself, unveil your glory, unveil the mysteries of your kingdom. Take away the veil from our eyes. Let us consider for a moment the holy hope spoken of by the apostle Paul when he penned these soul enthralling words, "Even the mystery which hath BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, but now is manifest to His saints ... which is CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY" **(Col. 1:26-27).** The glory spoken of here is not heaven as has been generally supposed, but SONSHIP. That is the highest and most glorious glory that God has ever given or ever will give. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," said Jesus **(Jn. 17:22).** "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. Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called He also justified, and whom He justified He GLORIFIED" **(Rom. 8:29-30).** This is glory; this is glorification; this is SONSHIP. The only hope of sonship, the only hope of glory, is for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to dwell in you and control and order every step of your life. "As many as are led BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD." Christ in you is the hope of glory. Christ in me is the hope of glory. Not Christ in the sky or Christ in Jerusalem. Sonship is not what I am, but WHAT HE IS. Sonship is not what Christ is APART FROM ME, but what HE IS IN ME. Sonship is Christ FORMED IN ME, REVEALED IN ME.

There is yet another act of God that transcends by far anything that has ever been known. It is the REVELATION, the UNVEILING of Jesus Christ. It is the REVELATION and UNVEILING of the sons of God. The last book of the Bible is called, significantly, the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. It is interesting to note that when we come to the sixth verse of the first chapter it speaks of how HE "hath made US kings and priests unto God." As the revelation progresses with THE CHRIST always as the central figure, we next find Him standing IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS with a special message and call to the OVERCOMERS out of these various churches. Thus, in the unveiling of Jesus Christ, we also come to the UNVEILING OF THE OVERCOMERS - those who eat WITH HIM of the tree of life, live WITH HIM free from corruption and death, share WITH HIM a new name, rule WITH HIM over the nations, walk WITH HIM in resplendent white, dwell WITH HIM in the city and temple of God, and sit WITH HIM upon the Father's throne from whence He rules over all the vastnesses of infinity for evermore! And so, through the book, again and again, we see this many-splendored unveiling - THE SON and the sons, THE LAMB and those with Him on Mount Zion, THE WORD and they that are with Him who are called, and chosen and faithful. Time would fail to speak of the two witnesses, the woman clothed with the sun, the manchild caught up to the throne, the bride of the Lamb, etc.; but all are facets of this unfolding revelation of THE CHRIST and His anointed ones, His many brethren, prepared as salvation unto all the ends of the earth.

There is coming a day when all the glories of the Son of God will be revealed and manifested in the sons of God. With a heart of understanding and a spirit bright with the hope of God's eternal purpose the apostle

penned these meaningful words, "...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL (apokalupto.; unveil) HIS SON I-N ME" **(Gal. 1:15-16).** As one has written, "Let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us what a son of God really is, for the greater works (Jn. 14:12) of which Jesus spoke are not to be performed by ordinary believers, but by THAT VAST FAMILY OF SONS who are now nearing the hour of manifestation. They are that chosen company, selected from many ages, who through fires and furnaces of affliction have been brought into that same glorious IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST. These sons of God are LIKE HIM. They are EXACTLY like Him. They are IN HIS IMAGE (Rom. 8:29). They are IN HIS IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS. They are so completely SONS OF GOD and so completely LIKE HIM, so completely BORN OF HIM, so completely OF HIS MIND and WILL and PURPOSE their one difference is that He (the blessed Jesus) IS THE ELDEST IN THAT VAST FAMILY OF SONS and they with Him are THE BRIDEGROOM, the LAST ADAM IN ALL HIS COMPLETENESS" -The Page.

With all emphasis I must declare that we are now hastening toward the hour of the long awaited UNVEILING of the sons of God. For many millenniums all creation has groaned and sighed under the thralldom of sin and sorrow and death, but our heavenly Father had a purpose wonderful and glorious beyond words to express when IN HOPE He subjected the whole creation to the desolation of the curse. "For the creation was subjected to frailty - to futility, condemned to frustration - not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of HIM who so subjected it. Yet WITH THE HOPE that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" **(Rom. 8:20-21,** Amplified**).** Ever since that day and because of that hope which springs perennial within the bosom of every man and all things, "...the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known - waits for the revealing (apokalupsis), the disclosing of their sonship" **(Rom. 8:19)** (Amplified). Everything is gathered before an UNVEILING. Everyone is in expectation. All the people are gathered then finally the great moment comes when the veil is removed and the statue (or whatever it is) is brought into view. What a day!

The blood, the sword, the fire, the cross, and the dealings of the Holy Spirit have not been working in us through these many years in order to make us ready for a harp in heaven. It has been in order to prepare us to be an habitation of God through the Spirit. And, Why? In order that the hour would come that Christ Himself once fully formed in us, would be able to be manifested not only in His works and gifts, but IN HIS PERSON. Until now we have manifested the works of God through the gifts of God, we have witnessed to what salvation has done for us, but now God wants us to be the revelation of HIMSELF. The gifts and the works were only to bring us to the Person. The hour is upon us when there must be a full and complete UNVEILING of the Person of Jesus Christ through us. For years we have been saying: "If the world could only see the works of God!" Well, we have shown them His works and it was not the answer, for so often the works, the signs and wonders and miracles, fascinated the eyes of the curious and blessed the people's flesh, but did not impart unto them the glory of the Son of God. God did not save the world by works, He saved the world by a Person. "These were written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" **(Jn. 20:31).** This life which comes by believing IS A PERSON. "I AM the life," says Jesus **(Jn. 14:6).** And the book of Revelation is not the book of the revelation of powers hidden through the ages, or the book of the revelation of historical or future events, but it is the book of the UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST. All through the book we see Jesus Christ. In the faithful witness, in His coming in clouds of witnesses, in His presence in the midst of the candlesticks, in the Lamb, in the 144,000, in the manchild, in the city, in the temple, in the throne - all is the flowing out of HIMSELF. Of course, when you have Him in all of His glory, majesty and Person, automatically you have His works. If He is who He is, He can open every seal, perfect His body, judge the nations, manifest His mighty power, deliver creation, and restore all into Himself again.

Is it not a miracle that God is bringing us to this hour when there is that awareness in us that there must be an unveiling, a revelation, an indwelling and expression and manifestation of a Person? "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears, for they hear," the Spirit testifies. It should not be difficult for even the least of saints to understand that this is the answer to all the world's needs. For this purpose the people of God have been going through all the dealings and processings of God, particularly during the last few years, in order that Christ may be fully formed in them. In order that God would have a people through whom He can manifest Himself without inhibition, without limitation, without any hindering of 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 His gifts - wonderful though His gifts are but conscious of GOD HIMSELF. Not proclaiming the works, but unveiling the Lord Himself as life, light and love. This is once more "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit" (I Tim. 3:16).

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the unveiling and revelation that is coming through the sons of God to one another and to the people of the world will be, and is, the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF. God purposed to save the world, not by sending salvation, but by sending A SAVIOUR, who becomes our salvation. Salvation is merely a by product of A SAVIOUR. "The Lord is become my salvation" **(Ps. 118:14).** "The Lord is our light and our salvation." He not only sends light through some inspiration from the scriptures, but Jesus Christ who IS the light of the world BECOMES OUR LIGHT. This is the realm of which it is said, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" **(I Cor. 13:10).** Now we understand the exhortation, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven IS PERFECT" **(Mat. 5:48).** Christ is the perfect One, the express image of the Father, therefore the coming of the perfect is the coming of Jesus Christ Himself the unveiling and revelation and manifestation of the Christ of God.

When that which is perfect is come, when Christ Himself is come and has BECOME our light and our salvation and our strength and our joy and our all in all, then all divisions are gone and everything that separates from one another. Light from the scriptures separates because one may have more light than another, but when Christ Himself is our light and our life, He brings unity. There is no division, separation or fragmentation in the unveiling of Christ. "Is Christ divided?" (I Cor. 1:13). When CHRIST is revealed the army of Joel goes forward and nobody breaks ranks and nobody thrusts one another, because they have found their union IN HIM. As long as our union is in our state of development it is based, for example, on the same experience of salvation, the baptism in the Spirit, or light from the scriptures. But when we were Fundamentalists rejoicing in our experience of salvation we would still fight! Or, if our union is based on the same expression of divine healing, or deliverance, or speaking in tongues, or church government, or water baptism, is it not true that we would still quibble. When our union is in CHRIST and in HIM becoming our all in all, then all ground for pride and self and division is gone. "If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creation" **(I Cor. 5:17).** This is the unity Jesus prayed for: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" **(Jn. 17:23).** O may God bring to full expression this great mystery of the indwelling Christ. It is such a marvelous mystery that we cannot comprehend it.

Up to this present time we have had a revelation, but mostly of His gifts and works. Oh, occasionally there would be a bright shining of His presence and in the midst of the activity you could see His face. But practically everybody who has had a vision of God's Christ has only seen His face. When John saw Him in the book of Revelation, he did not just see His face, but he could describe His head and His hairs white as snow, His eyes as a flame of fire, His voice as the sound of many waters, His right hand holding seven stars, His mouth out of which proceeded a two-edged sword, His countenance as the sun shining in its strength, yes, he could even tell you about His feet which were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. Ah, my beloved brethren, the revelation of Jesus Christ has only been in part so far. We know in part, and we prophesy in part, but in these last days there must come AN UNVEILING of the whole Christ. Christ must be seen in all of His glory, in the whole of His body, in a full and marvelous unveiling of Himself. This old world will not end in tragedy some dark night when sin sweeps in like a flood and the devil is winning. NO! History does not end in failure. I have read the last chapter. With the eyes of faith and revelation I have beheld the final act, the closing drama. All of human history will be consummated with the full and complete revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ in His overcoming body as salvation and light and life unto all creation. Press on, saints! We are on the winning side!

UNCOVERING THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN

Jesus Christ Himself is the Son of God because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). But I do not hesitate to add that the fullness of the Godhead that dwells in Christ our Lord has not yet been UNVEILED before our wondering eyes. In his letter to the saints at Colosse, the apostle Paul begins in the second chapter, saying, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; IN WHOM ARE HID all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

ALL - not merely some - of the rich and valued treasures of wisdom and knowledge are contained in Christ. Therefore any search for them outside of HIM is doomed to failure. The deep meaning of Paul's words is that in the Christ is stored up all the divine treasures of wisdom and knowledge - not PARTIAL wisdom, not a few FRAGMENTS of knowledge but ALL - the fullness of all things dwells in Him. It is not necessary to go elsewhere, investigating human systems and sciences, eastern philosophies or man-made religions, to gain either wisdom or knowledge. All these are embodied in JESUS CHRIST. They are "hidden" in Christ as in a treasure house - but in the sense that they are so concealed that they can be shared by those who are willing to make the effort to secure them. "Those that seek shall find," is the law of the Kingdom. More and more fully can Christ be known. Larger and larger are those priceless stores which must be sought and can be found IN HIM. No other revelation of God is needed, but in Christ are boundless riches yet undiscovered even by the very elect.

"So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous ... and preserveth the way of His saints" **(Prov. 2:2-8).**

Our God delights to conceal a thing as well as reveal it. Part of the route Jesus walked on earth was the path of "concealment." Rather than bursting forth upon the scene in unbridled omnipotence to silence all His enemies, divine wisdom caused Him to withdraw from their midst, to walk in solitude, to be humbled, esteemed as nothing, mocked and ridiculed, rejected of men. As someone has pointed out, there is in our God a glorious humility, which is in tremendous contrast to the ego of man. Man continually wants to be seen and heard, seeking positions of power and prominence, yet our great Creator hides Himself, so that men will have to "SEEK the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from everyone of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" **(Acts 17:27-28).**

Long centuries ago the patient patriarch Job testified, "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him: but He knoweth the way that I take: and when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" **(Job. 23:8-10).**

Ray Prinzing penned the following words which I feel certain bear eloquent testimony to the experience of us all. "There are many other times when we go seeking God, for a clearer revelation of Him, to 'feel' His presence, and develop more of a God-consciousness, and I dare say, He seems not to be found. HE HAS CONCEALED HIMSELF. And though we run to this meeting and that meeting, phone this preacher, and write to another to see if there is a 'word for us,' all of our chasing and beating the air is an exercise in futility - and then we settle down, to say, 'I cannot see Him. BUT He knoweth the way that I take...' For the moment I do not know where HE IS, but He knows where I am - and when HE has tried ME, I will come forth as gold - because HE will perfect that which concerneth me. Bless His holy name!

"ALL THE TIME HE KNOWS WHERE WE ARE! 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do' **(Heb. 4:13).** And it becomes a WALK OF FAITH to know that when HE has hidden Himself, still it is IN HIM that we live, and move, and have our being, and that He continues to draw us onward by His grace, even during those times we are not consciously aware that something is being changed within us. And I dare say, as one man expressed it, 'Sometimes His silence is awesome.' But whether it is a time of silence, or a time of the inflow of life and revelation and keener spiritual awareness, in either case, we can say, all is well, because we are HIS, and HE knows the way that we take. 'I will wait upon the Lord, that HIDETH HIS FACE from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me for signs and wonders in Israel from the lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion' (Isa. 8:17-18). 1 WILL WAIT, because He is hidden, but I will also continue to look for Him - 'Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. 9:28). And then, without a pause, the prophet goes right on - BEHOLD - the very word challenges us to SEE! But what is it that is to come OUT OF HIDING? God was not idle when He was concealed. HE had been busy reproducing Himself in secret. And now says, 'Behold, I AND THE CHILDREN'

which are to be for SIGNS AND WONDERS. Yea, they are the demonstration and manifestation of what HIS GRACE shall do in all of creation, as 'IN CHRIST shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order' (I Cor. 15:22-23). -end quote.

The apostle Paul taught us, "For as far as this world is concerned you have died, and your new, real life is HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD" **(Col. 3:3-4,** Amplified**).** The awesome potential and unfathomable fullness of our new life is HID with Christ in God, so do not be surprised if you are not able to display the power and glory of this new life on all occasions. Were you to be a blazing revelation of that life to all men NOW, it would wreck the wonderful purpose of His hiding in you. There are seasons when the Lord's people are gathered together, and in times of holy meditation, contemplation, prayer, praise, and seeking, when the Spirit of God moves in an unusual manner, there are glimpses into the hidden realms in God. But when we return to the routine of the day, and the monotony of every day living, where the world beholds us, is it not true that the vast majority of our associates are completely unaware of our identity. The life of God within is veiled, and they see you, but there is no comeliness or spectacular manifestation so that they flock to you to see what you have. You may rejoice all you will in your sonship, but chances are the world about is no more conscious that you are a son of God than were they that the "firstborn" was God's beloved Son. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world KNEW HIM NOT" **(Jn. 1:10).** How we have yearned to manifest the fullness of that life concealed within our earthen vessel! Oh, yes, we often would like to appear before men in glory NOW. We would show them how spiritual we are, putting on such a display of power and glory until their eyeballs would sizzle and every mouth would be stopped and all would bow low in reverence before us, acknowledging that God is in us of a truth. We would let them see what great and mighty sons of God we are! But this very attitude reveals the fact that we are not fully DEAD to self with all of its ego and pride. And to try and manifest that which GOD HAS HIDDEN for its own germination, protection, growth and development, only results in a psuedo-spirituality, and can indeed cause the abortion of that "holy thing" which has been impregnated within. So HE continues to sanctify us, separating us from the world, from the flesh, from self and it is by the inworking of HIS CROSS which purifies, separating the precious from the vile. There are, praise God, those times of refreshing given to the saints when we do manifest out of that "in part" development of His life, but it ever falls short of HIS FULLNESS, and even then God draws again the veil, so that His inner work may continue and not be hindered by the attention of the outer-world.

The mystery of Christ is the greatest mystery of all the ages, this mystery which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." HIS LIFE hidden now within us shall totally transform us, spirit, soul and body. HIS LIFE shall not forever be concealed within, for I testify to you that we are soon to see it unfold. "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in the splendor of His glory" **(Col. 3:4,** Amplified**).** Ah - there shall be A REVELATION, AN UNVEILING of His life, His glory, His people, and because we have long been hidden IN HIM, we shall also share in that revelation - partakers of the divine glory. When all the mixture of flesh and spirit manifest through us in gross confusion, kingdom building, Babylon personified, has been sifted, purged, separated and brought to death because we share the awesome "fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death," then shall HIS LIFE be finally unfettered, unhindered, unobstructed, and HE SHALL APPEAR in all the fullness of Himself and WE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM in the splendor of His full-orbed glory! Our life shall not always be hid. He who is our life shall be manifested. Why should we want to be known in this day of His rejection? Let us rest with Him at God's right hand and wait until His time has come. But when His hour strikes, then our time will have come - and He will not be glorified apart from us!

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The book of Revelation opens with the statement: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The word "revelation" comes from the Latin REVELATIO, an unveiling. The Greek word is APOKALUPSIS, the removing of a veil. By transliteration APOKALUPSIS is our word "apocalypse." The Revelation is the apocalypse or the unveiling of Jesus Christ. Many Christians would object strenuously if we said that the book of Revelation was anything other than a REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST just as it declares itself to be and, yet, the whole content of the book has been and is still shrouded in a veil of highly symbolic language that has defied the understanding of natural men for centuries, and to the most spiritually minded much of its real meaning is still partially hidden, although, with the increasing light of the Holy Spirit of Truth shining upon its pages, we have been entering into more and more of its hidden truths, howbeit, we have yet much to learn of the full and complete vision.

Now, we have already pointed out that that which is to be revealed, unveiled, or disclosed must BE PRESENT, else it is impossible to disclose or uncover it. If this book with all of its mystifying language and symbolism, is an APOKALUPSIS, revelation, disclosure, uncovering, unveiling, manifestation of JESUS CHRIST, then it follows that He must be present, not coming in a future sense as to distance, but here and now present although His presence, parousia, is veiled, hidden from our natural sight. Did He not say, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age?" If, then, we are to understand THIS revelation, disclosure, uncovering, unveiling, apokalupsis of Jesus Christ, it must be only as the Holy Spirit unlocks our understanding to this wonderful book and the realities of its message. This is just what has been and is taking place as the light of His invisible presence shines into our darkened minds and brings to us a revelation, a disclosure, an unveiling, an apokalupsis of Jesus Christ and our hearts are made to exult and marvel at the wonders of our God.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ..." This significant statement at the very beginning of this book, is the inspired key to all the contents which follow. This is not merely a revelation of historical or end-time events, but the unveiling of a Person CHRIST. In fact, one of the reasons that the book of Revelation has been so misunderstood is because men have thought it was the unveiling of events that are in the future. It is not the unveiling of events but the unveiling of a Person who has not yet been seen in all of His glory and beauty. Today He is like a statue that has the veil put over it, awaiting the day when the veil shall be removed and He shall be seen in all of His glory.

It is the thought of some that the Revelation is a book filled only with that, which is frightful and sensational. There are figures of wild beasts, monstrous creatures; there are convulsions of nature, thunders and lightnings and earthquakes; there are trumpets of judgment and bowls of wrath. But all of these are incidental. They are the freaks one sees in the side show. The main event is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. This unveiling is the central truth, the primary meaning and prevailing purpose of this book.

Actually, at Christ's coming in the flesh two millenniums ago He was not revealed rather He was concealed. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," John said. The Word (Christ) was made flesh, taking upon Himself the tabernacle, or tent, of flesh. Just as God had manifested Himself back in the Old Testament through a tabernacle, with all sorts of coverings and curtains that shut man out from Him, so the Lord Jesus came in a tabernacle of flesh. He was put in the concealing wraps of a human body. God was not revealed when Christ came the first time, except in measure to a few - a Simeon, a Simon Peter, and a small company of followers. It still can be said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ, when He came in flesh, declared God; He exegeted Him, explained Him, let Him out in the open where, for the first time, one can see the heart of God. Yet we have not seen GOD. The coming of Jesus was not the revelation of Jesus Christ. The unveiling of Jesus Christ is set forth in the New Testament as a hope and reality unto which God's elect is still moving.

Peter admonishes us, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" **(I Pet. 1:13).** Without a doubt, we cannot comprehend THE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE which shall be brought to us and to all men, at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This present age has been an age of IN-PART manifestations during which all spiritual manifestations, including the gifts of the Spirit, have been IN-PART. Although this present age has been referred to as the age of grace, nevertheless even grace has been in part. But when Christ appears and is fully revealed or unveiled, then GRACE SHALL COME TO A GREATER FULLNESS. Praise God! Methinks that the real age of grace has not even begun yet, as the apostle says, "That in the AGES TO COME He might show the exceeding RICHES OF HIS GRACE in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ" **(Eph. 2:7).**

Understood as THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST and immediately the book is changed from a history book to a SPIRITUAL BOOK relating the progressive unfolding of the very victory and triumph of the Christ of God. The saints have heard the term "apocalypse" and it conjures up ideas of the wrath of God, tribulation, destruction and the end of the world. Yet the word APOKALUPSIS from which our English word "apocalypse" is derived, carries no negative connotation in the Greek. Our word "revelation" is likewise the Greek word APOKALUPSIS. The whole book of Revelation is the Apocalypse that is so important to us. It is the revealing of Jesus Christ. If we try to read and understand Revelation without knowing that Jesus Christ is intimately involved, we will spend all our time trying to understand and explain facts, such as: How many horses are

there, and what colors are they? Why are they running? Who is the woman sitting on the beast? Who is the antichrist? What does the number 666 mean? And we miss THE REVELATION! We realize that all these concepts are symbolic And represent SPIRITUAL REALITIES, but the importance of the book is its purpose - the unveiling of God's Christ.

Each part of the record, of the woes, thunders, vials, beasts, in all their sundry and various situations, are all to serve but one purpose, and are allowed to exist for one end, namely, to BRING FORTH A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. And this revelation comes to its magnificent conclusion when He that sits upon the throne proclaims the wonderful fiat: "Behold, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW" **(Rev. 21:5).** The Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. In, by and during that unveiling, many things are made to appear in the true light. That means that all the evil things which appear do so BECAUSE of the true light, and in THAT LIGHT they are made to appear in their true character: JUST WHAT THEY ARE. It is the LIGHT OF THE LAMB, which causes that to be so. Both in the Glorious City and in the book itself, "THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF." For He is the true light which lights all men, coming into the world. Now He comes into the world, and the world was made by Him, and saved by Him, and the world SHALL KNOW HIM - as the whole Bible teaches God's objective to be. And He will come to His own and they will receive Him, FOR THAT IS THE NEW COVENANT.

One can never understand correctly the book of Revelation if his eyes are engaged with some side issue. The unveiling of "the beast" and his "image" are side issues. That is, they are unveiled as the RESULT of the flooding light issuing forth from God's blessed Lamb. In that true light of God, the negative realm appears AS IT IS, for what it is, in order that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt, with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have ever known in my life was the beast of old Adam's nature, the carnal mind, the seed of the serpent lurking within my own bosom. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of heaven's Lamb which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast, the bestial nature lumbering about in MY EARTH! It is not the uncovering of these evils which throws light on the Lamb. The unveiling of the Lamb, as the Word of God, the Spirit of righteousness and wisdom and glory, the King and LORD of creation exposes all that is not of God, that it might be once and for all dethroned from mind, heart and action. As the daylight destroys and removes the darkness - in the very nature of things - so the unveiling of Jesus Christ is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God destroying, removing, swallowing up the power of the flesh, the world and the devil IN US. The daylight FILLS the world just as truly as the night darkness ever did. Even so, the light of God shall fill the world, our world, and the world outside of us as truly as the darkness of sin, sorrow and death has done. Before it is all over, every creature in heaven, earth and hell shall have had a revelation of the Son of God.

Thank God! the "apocalypse" is a thing of rarest beauty and divine majesty rather than a frightening, dreadful and fearful time as the preachers proclaim. True, not all the uncovering is glorious at the time, the woes and thunders are fearful experiences, and the occurrences of the beast and the dragon, with their rise and fall, are shuddering to the natural mind, but viewed from the position that all is the consequence of HIS UNVEILING, and results in a new heaven and a new earth, indeed ALL THINGS NEW, so overwhelms and enthralls us that we can but respond in glad unison with the revered Seer of Patmos, "EVEN SO, COME! LORD JESUS."

The book of Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from Him, and with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him and see with the beloved John that the important things are:

1. The Judge - not the judgments.

2. The Lamb - not the dragon.

3. The Seven Spirits of God - not the spirits of devils.

4. The Rider on the White Horse Who has Four Names - not the four horses.

5. The Throne of God - not the seat of the beast.

6. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah - not the beast out of the sea.

7. The Faithful and True Witness - not the false prophet.

8. The 144,000 Sons of God on Mount Zion - not the beast out of the earth.

9. Those who have The Father's Name on their Forehead - not the mark of the beast.

10. The New Jerusalem - not the city Babylon.

11. The Bride of the Lamb - not the harlot riding the beast.

12. The Glory of God - not the darkness that covers the earth.

13. The Unveiling of Jesus Christ - not the antichrist.

There is a dimension of the revelation of Jesus Christ that transcends the speaking of words, the writing of books, and the preaching of sermons. The unveiling of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour and the hope of creation. If God does not give a special ministration of the spirit of wisdom, righteousness and power to meet the need of creation, it will not be met. There are no buttons to press that can deliver mankind from the power of sin and death or solve the complex and frightening problems that exist in the world today. The further we move in God the more helpless and totally empty we become, for our nothingness is magnified in the light of HIS GLORY.

The hour for the unveiling of God's Christ is at hand. May God grant to each of his apprehended ones the understanding that from this time on God is not interested in the little "blessings" He has bestowed on you. From now on it must be "WHEN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE SHALL APPEAR..." If there is a mind in us, it must be the mind of Christ, not our religious mind that has been cultivated through the years until it is devoted and full of the Bible and stayed on God. From now on it must not stayed on God, it must be HIS MIND IN YOU. What we have witnessed to for work of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His victory in us, how a product of the work of God; but God's purpose is not that we shall be a the work of God, but that there shall come a revelation of a Person, that will be Christ. It will not be a revelation about God, but the UNVEILING OF GOD IN US.

Are you willing, my brother, my sister, to have nothing but the PERSON? Are you willing to lay aside the gifts and the blessings and forget the experience to have the Person? The hoary headed old prophet, Simeon, took up the baby Jesus in His arms and declared: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The salvation He saw was not a blessing or an experience, it was THE BABY. What the Spirit is saying is that God must have a people in whom the Lord is BECOMING rather than DOING. That is what the manifestation of the sons of God is, that is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is, and there will never be a revelation of Jesus Christ if all I can talk about is His gifts and His blessings and His works. His works are not Him - HE IS A PERSON. Paul said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," not, "It pleased God to reveal His gifts through me and give me some great experiences." And when he prayed, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you," Paul did not mean that they should receive a little more cleansing with the blood, a little greater anointing in the gifts, die a little more death and so on. There came an hour when Paul knew that the works of the Lord would not be sufficient, but that the LORD HIMSELF had to be put on in all fullness, so that instead of having a revelation of the acts of God, there would be THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST.

"Blessed Father! let it be so in us. Let Christ be fully formed in me and in all who read these lines, and in all the elect body of Christ. Lord, let the work of doing for us come to an end, until it shall be Christ formed in us. Mighty God! cause Jesus Christ to become in us our peace, our joy, our salvation, our wisdom, our victory, our power, our life, that from this moment on there shall only be the expression of HIMSELF, the revelation of His own Person and Being and Nature. O God, let that divine Nature, that divine Person of the Son of God be fully manifested in us, that the creation that is groaning for the unveiling of Jesus Christ will see Him unveiled in His

body, unveiled in His church, unveiled in His ministry, unveiled in His king-priests, unveiled in His sons, that every eye shall SEE HIM. Amen!"

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 13
THE EPIPHANEIA OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

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PART THIRTEEN

THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION
IN A DIFFERENT FORM
THE MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRIST
LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

In this study we approach the third Greek word related to the "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ - EPIPHANEIA. This word is to be found six times in the Greek New Testament. It comes from a verb which signifies "to shine upon," "bring to light," "to appear," "to manifest." The noun is "manifestation," "brightness." The lexicographers define it, "an appearance, show, display, grandeur, splendor." In its use in classical Greek, it applies to the invisible divinities that become visible. It also applies to the appearance of the sun after the passing away of the clouds. The best possible translation is MANIFESTATION. The EPIPHANEIA of Jesus Christ is ultimately the FULLNESS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF to the saints, the world and creation!

This word is found in the following texts where, with one exception, it is, in the King James version, rendered "appearing." "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" **(I Tim. 6:14-15).** "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His APPEARING and His kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1). "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord... shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His APPEARING" **(II Tim. 4:8).** "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious APPEARING of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" **(Tit. 2:13).** "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the BRIGHTNESS (epiphaneia) of His coming (parousia)" **(II Thes. 2:8).**

Let us consider for a few moments the difference between the three Greek words presented thus far. We have shown that the word PAROUSIA means "presence." It is the fullness of all that one can conceive of as being the reality of our Lord's promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM," and again, "And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, even unto the end of the age." Nowhere does PAROUSIA mean "coming" or "coming again." The PAROUSIA is the ENVELOPING PRESENCE OF CHRIST and is a past, present and future reality. The second word, APOKALUPSIS, means "to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose." It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils or hides. Since APOKALUPSIS means to reveal, or unveil, there must be something to unveil or which may be unveiled. That something must be PRESENT or it cannot be unveiled; and it must be hidden from sight or it cannot be disclosed. This is exactly what we have shown in foregoing articles concerning the Lord Jesus, namely, that He is PRESENT and that He is hidden from sight of the natural eye because "the Lord is that Spirit." But, praise God, we are now to find that His invisible presence, parousia, is to be revealed, disclosed, uncovered, unveiled, and that, too, to the whole world in due season. Are we looking for a go-called "second coming" of the Lord? Emphatically we are NOT looking into the sky for such a thing BUT, most emphatically, we ARE looking forward for the disclosure, uncovering, revealing of the Lord NOW PRESENT BUT HIDDEN in spirit form. Truly, the APOKALUPSIS of Jesus Christ is a yet future vision for the great mass of Christians as well as for the world, and to all of us there is yet much to be unveiled.

Let us now notice that the EPIPHANEIA of Jesus Christ is something greater and grander by far than either His PAROUSIA or His APOKALUPSIS. God poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Christ came to His church as the blessed Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the indwelling Christ, the Lord, the Spirit; but that was not

the EPIPHANEIA of Jesus Christ. From that time until now the Christ of God has dwelt within the regenerated hearts and lives of vast multitudes of men and women who have by faith received Him; but this is not the EPIPHANEIA of Christ. Jesus has been with His people for these twenty centuries, to aid, to comfort, to teach, to quicken, and to bless; but this is not His EPIPHANEIA.

Let us SEE! The PAROUSIA is the reality of His presence with us - though hidden and unseen. The APOKALUPSIS is the drawing aside of the veil or covering that hides Him from view, enabling us by the spirit of revelation to behold the King in His beauty. The EPIPHANEIA is the MANIFESTATION or OUTRAYING of Himself, which follows the unveiling. The manifestation is consequent upon the unveiling; when that takes place the hidden One is no longer hidden but seen. Once brought out into view He then springs into action, bares His holy arm, arises in His strength, and the MANIFESTATION of His presence commences. This truth is expressed in a notable verse: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the BRIGHTNESS (epiphaneia) of His COMING (parousia)." Actually translated the verse reads "THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS PRESENCE."

Ah - He can be present and remain unseen, and truly this has been one of the more difficult aspects in this tremendous calling of God upon His elect as He has made known in our hearts the beautiful hope of sonship - that secretness, aloneness, hiddenness of His working. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour" **(Isa. 45:15).** How often He veils Himself, and we cry out like Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me. Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him" **(Job 23:3-9).** At times such as this we yearn to see the manifestation, the awesome display of His working - that we might behold His glory and bask in the sunlight of His love. He can manifest His presence, and manifest it with a brightness above the noon-day sun. The EPIPHANEIA is just this MANIFESTATION of the fact that the Lord is present; the very manifestation of the presence of Himself. Thus we see that the EPIPHANEIA refers to the operation and display of His power and glory, which make manifest in an open and discernible way there ability of His presence. It is not just one manifestation somewhere in the indefinite future, but a constant, continuing, progressive and ever-increasing manifestation. Certainly, the presence of Christ has not been manifested to the world in general. Therefore we endeavor to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the APPEARING (manifestation) of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:14-15). The indwelling Christ must become manifest to the outer world. The parousia, the inward presence of Christ, is to have ultimately an outward manifestation and demonstration.

In these articles on the appearing of Christ, it is not our purpose to merely present another Bible study or more doctrinal views. Rather it is our earnest desire and holy responsibility to present CHRIST and the glorious hope of HIS APPEARING, and to encourage all who read these lines to prepare for the MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST to, in, and through His "many brethren." All of the Lord's overcomers are indeed "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of Christ" **(Tit. 2:13).** "If God is so wonderful," mused the little Italian girl, "why doesn't He show His face?" And that, precious friend of mine, is precisely what He will do! The Psalmist cried out, "Turn us, O Lord. Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved" **(Ps. 80:3, 7, 19).** It is only as we turn in the direction of the unveiled glory that we can know transformation. You can read the history of great revivals, you can think of the great visitations of yesterday, you can reminisce all you want. There is not enough power in such things to transform you! Transformation comes only in the light of the present glory and manifestation of Christ Jesus. Praise His name!

May almighty God help us to turn in our thinking, in our heart and spirit to behold Him and see Him as He is, not as He was. The Bible says, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (i.e. no longer merely as a man)" **(II Cor. 5:16).** I dare say there are untold millions of Christians today whose experience does not go much further than a bit of knowledge of the historical Jesus they read about in the four Gospels. Oh! that we may see and know Him by the spirit! We must see the revelation and manifestation of Jesus Christ as King and Lord! There is a vast difference, brothers and sisters. The apostle Peter saw Him day after day, performing the miracles. Peter

walked with Him and he knew Him to some degree. There was something of revelation coming through in the manifestation of Christ's power. And one day Jesus said, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And His disciples said, "'Some say you are John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." "But whom say ye that I am?" inquired Jesus. In that moment Peter had an experience; he received a revelation. The veil was drawn aside, he looked by the Spirit and saw into the interior of this One he had known as Jesus. Peter saw Him as the anointed and glorious Son of God. He saw something different that day and declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He saw through that veil of the flesh!

Another day Jesus said, "There will be some standing here, who shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power" **(Mk. 9:1).** And He took with Him Peter, James and John and went up into a mountain. There these men saw something magnificent. The Lord Jesus' very countenance and His whole Person was changed. He was clothed with a quality and a degree of glory they had never seen before in all the days previous to that hour. They beheld another glory, but it was the same Person. It was the same Jesus Christ, but another glory! And this, without question, left a deep, lasting impression upon Peter. He wrote years later, "I will endeavor that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYEWITNESSES of His Majesty" **(II Pet. 1:15-16).** Ah, Peter had experienced the unveiling and manifestation of the Son of God!

Saul of Tarsus met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Saul did not see a man six feet tall with piercing blue eyes and a neatly trimmed chestnut beard. He saw a light and a glory that was brighter than the shining of the sun at noonday. It was the glory of Jesus Christ appearing in a different form. It was the manifestation of the Christ of God in power and glory. What I am saying is there are many modes and forms of the manifestation and appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. As much as I know at this moment, I am seeking to prepare myself for His manifestation in this hour. Oh Lord, make YOUR APPEARING! Break forth out of the midst of us! We are longing to see you!

THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

It was the early morning of the most important day in the history of the world. Jesus had died three days before and was laid in Joseph of Arimathea's newly-hewn tomb. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of her beloved Master early in the morning after the Sabbath. Mary looked into the tomb and saw, shockingly, two messengers in brilliant white, one sitting at the head of the sepulcher and the other at the feet right where Jesus' body had lain. Amazed, she saw the grave clothes between them and noticed the napkin that had been used to cover His face rolled up and laid on a nearby rock shelf. Tears streaking her face and her sobs quieted by the shocking sight she saw, she heard one of the men say, "Woman, why are you crying?" She answered, with a voice that was shaking with fear and grief, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't have any idea where they have laid Him."

She backed out of the tomb, turned towards the pleasant garden place where a few other people seemed to be gathering, and found her way partially barred by another stranger who spoke to her, and he also wanted to know the cause of her sadness. She thought this man was the gardener, and supposing that he had been in the vicinity most of the time since Jesus had died, she didn't think it strange that he said, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" She looked at him and said, "Sir, if you are the one who has carried Him away, please tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Suddenly, with the tone of voice and accent with which she was familiar, and which on many occasions had stirred her very soul, He now spoke to her, saying, simply, "Mary!" What was that tone? That familiar timbre of voice? This man did not look like Jesus. He was not dressed as Jesus had always dressed. But it was the unmistakable voice - the voice of Jesus. In that wonderful heaven-blest moment she knew. It was Jesus! Stunned almost to the point of fainting, she exclaimed, "Master!"; reaching out a hand, incredulously, thinking, "It can't be! But it is!" She tried to take His hand. Jesus withdrew His hand and said, "No, don't touch Me! I have not yet ascended unto My Father - but I want you to go to My brethren and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and to your God." Mary knew that she had seen Jesus, but she knew also that now He was different. She hurried up the pathway, went back into the city, and came to the disciples' hideout. She related every word that had been told her - but the disciples looked at her as if she were crazy.

Later that same day two of Jesus' disciples were strolling along toward a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. As the men were walking along the roadway, Jesus came up behind them, having stepped out of His spirit dimension and again assumed a body of flesh and bone. He looked so totally different they couldn't have recognized Him, and since He seemed to be walking their way, they continued to speak wonderingly of the shocking events of the past few days, not suspecting the stranger who was strolling along beside them. It was then that Jesus broke into the conversation. They were amazed that a stranger could have been in the environs of Jerusalem, yet seemingly not know of the events that had occurred. He said to them, "What kind of things?" They answered Him, "About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in work and word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and rulers gave Him up to be sentenced to death and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who would redeem and set Israel free. Yes and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things occurred. And moreover, some women of our company astounded us and drove us out of our senses. They were at the tomb early in the morning, but did not find His body; and they returned saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive! So some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and they found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see."

We had hoped - we had trusted - and now everything has been dashed into despair, for He was crucified! Our world came tumbling down around us, ending in death. And now suddenly there is this other report that He is alive again. Now we are totally confused, we don't know what to believe. Ah, how often has this been repeated in the lives of the Lord's people! A man arises claiming to have the anointing of God upon him, God's man of faith and power for the hour, his star rises with brilliance, his message seems to give new hope to them, when suddenly it all falls down again - he is proven to be but a huckster, a religious racketeer, faking the gifts, off with a woman, etc. until people become cynical and wary of anything new, they will not trust any man. And well they ought to feel this way. But wait - God has a remnant, God has a man, a many-membered man, THEY ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, His very own nature, character and quality of being worked into them. And, blessed be God! yet again the divine CHRIST-LIFE shall be manifested in power and glory on this earth, and before the face of all nations. Praise His wonderful name!

As the men walked along the road to Emmaus, after their hopeless tale about His death, burial, and the puzzling empty tomb, Jesus, seeing their doubts chided them, "Oh, you foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in everything the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it thoroughly planned that Christ should suffer all these things and enter into His glory?" There followed a quick synopsis, as they walked along, of every major prophecy from Genesis to Malachi, with Jesus interpreting to them in every scripture the events concerning His own life and ministry. Jesus opened their understanding, He gave them the real reason, the divine purpose behind all these events. There was a QUALITY, A MEANING that stretched far beyond anything they could have dreamed of. So also, were our eyes to be opened in this day, we would see a depth in God's purpose in our inworkings, which would astound us. No wonder it is written, that when the revelation of His purpose is ultimately brought forth, "The kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall-they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" **(Isa. 52:15).**

They were amazed that this stranger could know all of these things, wondering at his words, as they drew close to Emmaus. When they made as if they would turn off the main road to go to the village, it appeared as if this stranger would go further. Cleopas and the other disciple begged Him to stay with them, saying, "It's almost evening, and the day is nearly gone." They went in, and after a light supper was prepared, sat down to eat. Just at the beginning of the meal, as was custom, they asked their guest to bless the food. He picked a piece of the flat bread, blessed it, broke off a piece, and gave one to each of them. At this moment, Luke says, "their eyes were opened" and they knew who He was! With all of His gracious words ringing in their ears, talking rapidly and earnestly all the way along the roadway to Emmaus about the things the Christ would have to suffer, His life, His calling, the training of His disciples, the manner of His death, and His resurrection, they sat-in absolute astonishment as, having reached out to take a piece of bread, and with a jolt realizing it was Jesus, even as they looked at Him smiling at them across the table, He vanished!

They cried out in a combination of ecstatic joy, fright, doubt and wonderment! Shaking their heads, they looked at one another in absolute astonishment. With their scalps prickling and every hair standing almost on end, they sat in stunned silence. Had this really happened? But the piece of bread was still in their hand, and THEY

had not broken it! The place was set, the meal was steaming in its common bowl, and yet Jesus, who had just been sitting across from them, unrecognizable to them at first, had instantly disappeared! They said, "No wonder our hearts seemed to burn within us while He was talking so earnestly to us on the way as we walked along, and gave us such understanding of the scriptures!" Hastily, they took a few quick bites of the meal, got up, and began to trot along the road to Jerusalem as fast as they could, until they found the private place where the disciples had been huddling in fear.

When the eleven were all gathered together, they related "how the Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!" They were busily explaining all about the conversation, the stranger who had appeared to join them, relating all the things He had said to them, while the astonished disciples were listening with a mixture of doubt and wonderment, when, shockingly, Jesus flashed into human form right in their midst! They were frightened almost out of their wits! They thought it was some spiritual apparition and were terrified! They knew they had locked the door, because they were terribly afraid their hideout would be discovered by the religious leaders or Roman soldiers, and they themselves be made to suffer some terrible persecution for being His chief followers.

Jesus said, quietly, "Peace be to you!" Astonished, they stepped back, eyes wide in dumbfounded amazement. With a smile on His lips, Jesus said, "What's bothering you? Why are you reasoning around in your minds? See, these are My hands and My feet! It is I, really!" As if to give emphasis to the fact that He was in their midst again with bodily form as a human being, in the very same body which had been quite literally resurrected, CHANGED INTO SPIRIT (although manifested as flesh), and that He now possessed the ability to instantly materialize once more in His fleshly form, asked, "Have you got anything here to eat?" As their startled eyes widened, He sat down with them at the table, and began to eat the fish! Following the meal Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. Even as the Father has sent Me and commissioned Me to fulfill His purpose on this earth, so I am commissioning you." He breathed on them each, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit! Whatsoever persons' sins you forgive, they will be forgiven; and whatsoever persons' sins you retain, they will be retained." Following this brief encounter, Jesus dematerialized again! The disciples were left in bewildered, excited amazement about this stunning event.

It happened repeatedly - in many parts of the country, with different groups at different times. On one occasion, as attested to by the apostle Paul years later, more than FIVE HUNDRED of those who had known Jesus were gathering together in a special meeting when He had appeared before them, and THEY ALL SAW HIM!

Mary had seen a "gardener." Two of the disciples had seen and conversed with a "stranger." The eleven in the upper room saw the Master as He formerly appeared. Later, a group of them saw Him on the lakeshore, and thought it was a "fisherman." He was with them forty days after His resurrection, but they saw Him only on a few brief occasions. The entire time that He was manifest to them, had it all been crowded into one day instead of being at intervals during the forty days, would probably have been less than twelve hours, or one eightieth of that entire time. This being true, it is evident that He was present with them UNSEEN about seventy-nine eightieths of that period of forty days. And even when they did have MANIFESTATIONS, they were not (except once, on behalf of the doubting Thomas) in a form exactly like the one they had known so intimately for three and a half years, and had seen but a few days before. It is not once intimated that they knew Him by the familiar features of His face, nor even that He was recognized by the same appearance as in other manifestations. Yes, He was different, so different that they were puzzled to understand Him, and to know just how they could still be His disciples.

IN A DIFFERENT FORM

The Lord Jesus comes to us in different ways. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to have another manifestation, beloved. It is dawning. It has begun even now. Praise the Lord! It is the same Lord Jesus, but manifested in a further unfoldment of Himself, progressively bringing us to the realization of His fullness.

"After that He appeared in ANOTHER FORM unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country" **(Mk. 16:12).** He appeared unto them in another form - not another Person. It was the same Christ and Lord. But there was some difference of manifestation. That is the plain truth coming to meet us out of the region of

mystery where for us the final truth of things dwells. After His resurrection Jesus was to His disciples Jesus with a difference. He was the same, and yet not the same. There was something about him that differentiated Him from the Christ of the Garden, and the hillside, and the country road, and the seashore. The disciples never doubted that He was the same Jesus with whom they had passed through the corn-fields, and traversed the Palestinian highways, and voyaged on Gennesaret. But the human form which was soon to pass from their midst already seemed to be playing a lessening part in their recognition of their Lord. In a little while they should see Him no more - that is, as a man sees his fellow man. Soon the vision of the living and ever-present Christ was to be internalized, reserved wholly for the inward eye of every quickened and transformed spirit. But it would appear that already, in anticipation of this new order of things, the old order was changing, and the outward form of the Master was already becoming less and less an essential medium for the revelation and recognition of His unchanging personality. This much may be gathered from the record of those blessed days between the resurrection and the ascension.

The story of the appearances of the Christ between the resurrection and the ascension tells us that, in the knowing of Jesus by those to whom He manifested Himself, the spiritual senses predominated over the physical, and the spirit played an ever larger part in the work of perception. It is abundantly clear that it was no apparitional and illusionary Christ that the disciples recognized; but it is equally clear that they who had been wont to recognize their Lord in precisely the same way as they recognized one another, now needed that their physical senses should give way to the spiritual faculties of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened that they might KNOW HIM.

Form plays so large a part in our physical and material reckonings, judgment by appearance is so necessarily a part of our life in a world of appearances. But all who would be sons of God must learn that, even as the same Christ came to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples on Tiberias, and to the two who journeyed to Emmaus in forms which they did not immediately recognize as Him, so that spiritual life which Jesus revealed, and for which He stood, and ever stands, may take unto itself more than one form of manifestation as it makes its way into the hearts and lives of men. "He appeared in another form." He is always doing that. Would that we were able always to find Him! Would that our faith were deep enough, would that our love were broad enough, would that our insight were keen enough, to recognize Him in all the forms and fashions of His coming unto the children of men!

Some find the Christ as Mary Magdalene found Him suddenly when He called her name. Some find Him in the doing of His will, as the disciples who cast the net in Tiberias, and found it was their Master and Lord they were obeying. Some go the journey to Emmaus - the way of many a heart-burning, many a meditation, many a mind and spirit struggle and find Him in the breaking of bread at His hand. At the core of all spiritual experience there lies the same eternal truth, for it is the same Christ who meets us all; but many are the forms experience can take. Some find Him in the blessing, others with Job upon the ash-heap of stripping and desolation, who, being brought very low and tested to the uttermost can shout the triumphant declaration: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee!" **(Job. 42:5).** Therefore, let not the man who has met the Master in the garden of Joseph doubt that He was ever seen on the shore of Tiberias; and let not him who hath found Him on that dawn-lit beach think it improbable that He ever walked and talked with the travelers to Emmaus.

"HE APPEARED IN ANOTHER FORM." It is the same Christ revealing Himself to men in another form. So, my brother, my sister, as we ponder the mysterious manifestations of the risen Christ among the faithful and devout disciples, let us remind ourselves that this same Jesus is ever in our midst, and we must be ready to recognize Him as He becomes manifested to us from day to day, and from glory to glory, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRIST

We will never be able to thoroughly comprehend Christ's presence, His unveiling, or His manifestation until we understand these wonderful truths in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. This is what the Kingdom of God is all about, the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the marching forward of God. There are different degrees and different types of the manifestations of Christ. Individually as well as corporately we have had manifestations of our Lord Jesus in times of worship, prayer, singing, healing, prophecy, and in the walking out of the will of God in our lives. They are all part of the revelation and manifestation of Christ. In

some way Christ comes through. Every manifestation of Christ serves a purpose. And how often He appears in "yet another form!"

Historically there have been times and seasons of the manifestation of Christ. In those heaven-blest days of the early church the Christ of God was poured forth in such power and glory that it is beyond the ability of any man to fully comprehend the far reaching results of His operation through the apostles and prophets and saints of that generation as they brought to the face of the earth another unique expression of the glory of God. The Christ of Galilee had disappeared from their midst, but again there was a going forth of Jesus Christ, released in another form through a many-membered body. It was a heavenly visitation that shook the entire earth, changing the course of history and the destiny of nations and empires. This was GOD'S GLORY arising upon the people and filling their hearts with joy and gladness, transforming their lives and making them sons of God. Truly, it was the MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

Late in the fourth century a Scottish lad by the name of Patricius (Patrick) had spent six long years of his young life subjected to the unspeakable horrors of slavery deep within the forests of Ireland. In this foreign land he served a Druid chieftain, who put him to work feeding the swine. In the midst of his dreadful solitude he had a dream one night. In that dream he had a vision and a voice said, "Lo, thy ship is ready!" The next morning he fled his captors and staggered two hundred miles through the dense forest of Ireland, finally arriving at the sea. And when he came out of the woods, there was a ship, waiting to sail, loaded with Irish wolfhounds. He asked passage on the ship but was angrily cast out. As he walked dejectedly away, someone ran after him and told him to come back, that they had changed their minds. And so, Patrick left the land of Ireland. He sailed to Gaul and after some years returned to his home. But he could never get out of his mind those Irish Druids that had held him captive. For years, he planned the revenge that he was going to have upon his captors. But it was a different kind of revenge; it was a noble revenge in which he would bring to them the light of the gospel. He could hear the thousands of souls in those darkened forests, crying for the Bread of Life, and there was none to break it, he said. Finally, after twenty years had passed, during which he watched the westering sun go down over that benighted island, and his heart would return to those people, one night he had another vision and someone came with a handful of letters and at the top it said: THE VOICE OF THE IRISH. And suddenly, he said, I heard a whole chorus of voices and I saw a group of people standing at the forest's edge, the forests of F. Claugh, and they said, "We pray thee, holy youth, come and henceforth walk among us. "He believed that he had been called by God to return to the land of his slavery. So, he set sail for Ireland. There he landed on those inhospitable shores and plunged into the depths of the forests and confronted the fanatical Druids and proclaimed the gospel. He confronted the Druid kings and priests and he overwhelmed them with the power of the gospel. "And the Lamb shall overcome them" **(Rev. 17:4).** And so mighty was his missionary endeavor that he crossed Ireland from one side to the other, time after time. There was hardly any place in the Emerald Isle where the breath of the revival brought by Patrick did not reach. The results were astonishing! He found the island a completely pagan and savage land, and left it almost totally converted to the Lord Jesus Christ and transformed in mind and heart. Who can deny that this mighty accomplishment was the result of the MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST!

The glorious manifestation of the Christ of God stirred and shook Scotland in the days of John Knox. In Knox's day all of Europe was sunk in the mire of darkness, ignorance and corruption. Scotland was the most backward nation in Europe at that time, its morals were the most degenerate; its church was the most corrupt; and the entire scene was one of gloomy despair. In the midst of this gross darkness Knox went into a garden in Scotland and knelt for hours in agonizing prayer. He finally lifted up his hands to God and cried in a mighty voice: "Great God, give me Scotland or I die!" God gave such power to Knox, and sent such a wave of the glory of God, until the whole nation was brought under the mighty regenerating hand of God and the entire life of Scotland was totally transformed by the Spirit of the Lord.

At times God has raised up mighty men and, as it were, pulled apart but a little the veil, giving a glimpse of the force of a ministry filled with the fullness of His power the harbinger of greater things to come. Such men were John Wesley and George Whitefield who turned England to God in the eighteenth century. Such a man, also, was Charles Finney, an attorney, who upon being apprehended of the Lord left his vocation, waited upon and then followed the Lord. When he entered into a town often all the taverns, theaters, pool halls and houses of prostitution would close, not because of some law, nor out of respect for religious gatherings, but because there was no longer any need for them, there simply weren't any customers, the whole town had turned to

God! One man wrote of Finney, "No one has ever approached the gigantic stature of the mighty Charles Finney, who alone, without an evangelistic society, without a radio or television program, without a computer, without 10,000 partners TO APPEAL TO, or a business manager, WON TWO AND A HALF MILLION SOULS TO CHRIST. A hundred like Finney WOULD WIN THE ENTIRE AMERICAN NATION." But - it was not Charles Finney who turned England to God. I do not hesitate to tell you that that mighty move of the Lord was naught but THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST as HE appeared in "yet another form."

At the turn of this century, in the country of Wales, in an hour of great apostasy and degeneracy, many hundreds of people began to fervently pray for God to move in that land. After many months the flood gates of heaven were opened and the Holy Spirit swept as an overflowing stream over the nation. Vast multitudes of people were mysteriously moved upon by the "wind" of the Holy Spirit and sovereignly swept into the Kingdom of God. Soon the valleys and the mountains of the entire land were ringing with the high praises of God. The mighty tidal wave swept hither and thither - men knew not how or why. Visitors from all parts of Britain and the Continent began to flock to Wales to see the "great sight" of God breaking forth in supernatural power upon the sons of men. Practically the entire nation was turned to God by the MANIFESTATION OF JESUS CHRIST THE LORD!

No less striking and wonderful has been the manifestation of Christ in power and glory in the great Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit which came first to America, and then to the world, at the turn of this century and continues to this present hour. I am thankful for my Pentecostal heritage and for those Pentecostal experiences, but I am even more grateful that the Lord in His mercy opened the eyes of my understanding and permitted me to see and experience something of that manifestation of Christ to His people in those hallowed years following 1948. Great and wonderful beyond the telling was the glory of the Lord that erupted in mighty signs, wonders and miracles, in divers gifts of the Holy Ghost, in prophetic utterance and direction by the laying on of hands, in the song of the Lord in the mouth of vast multitudes as the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and the music of celestial choirs on earth went sweeping up the sky steeps. And it is precious to me now that out of this gushing fountain of HIS MANIFESTATION was birthed the precious "present truth" of sonship, the Kingdom of God, and the reconciliation of all things! Truly, the Christ appeared "in yet another form."

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

We have not yet witnessed the magnitude of ministry that shall be revealed through the manifested sons of God. God is preparing His perfected and mature body, anointed with the fullness of the seven-fold Spirit of God, and this enchristed company shall appear on the cosmic stage of history in these last days with ten thousand times more power than a St. Patrick, a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Finney, or any of the revival showers of this century. God has moved deeply upon my heart in these days to prophesy to God's elect that there is coming a great and glorious MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST before the face of all nations and the whole earth. There will be a fresh revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's going to come in the midst of a people who truly "love His appearing," and I see and hear signs that already He is beginning to come. We are standing on the threshold of a new and fresh and transcendental manifestation of our Lord. These things are burning like a furnace inside of me. I am being quickened by these things. I know God is on the move, and my deepest desire is to be a part of this manifestation that will usher in a new day for this sin-cursed planet. The Lord wants to reveal Himself in our midst in a new way, and through us to creation. I am asking God to unveil and manifest Himself to me in these days in a fuller way. Oh God! do a new thing. Are you, precious reader of these lines, hungry for that today? Are you anxious and eager for the Lord to appear? Are you truly looking for His appearing, the manifestation of Himself, His EPIPHANEIA?

The whole earth and all creation is waiting for the glory of the Lord to be manifested. The dealings of God in your life and mine are fraught with divine purpose. There is something far greater ahead of us than walking on streets of gold or flitting about in white night gowns strumming harps. This was the mentality instilled into me as a young man. Thank God there is a heaven, but I want to tell you something. All the dealings of God toward us - the cross, the suffering, the processings, the blessings, the glory - are all intended to put something of His nature and character into us. This working will enable Him to be made manifest in this old dark world in which we live. God has purposed that righteousness and glory shine forth before all the nations. This is going to be done through those who are being transformed into the likeness of His Son. Then the glory of the Lord shall be

revealed from the living, completed temple of His body. His glory shall fill the earth. His power will shake the nations and all nations shall come and worship before HIM. The harvest of this age shall be gathered.

Oh, how our love for God grows when once our eyes envision the wonders of His marvelous purposes, which were purposed in Christ before the world began! Have you noticed the precious understanding of Paul when he penned his fatherly letter to Titus his own son in the faith, when full of the Holy Ghost, his soul aflame with the revelation of God's magnificent plan, how he made known the hope of God's glory to his beloved son? "The grace of God," says the apostle, "that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men" **(Tit.2:11).** This has already taken place, we all know: the all-saving grace of God has appeared where ever the gospel is proclaimed, in the measure that it is proclaimed, "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" **(Tit. 2:12).**

But is this all? Is the grace of God appearing to all men "in this present world" all there is to God's great purpose? Is there no portion that goes beyond what we have heard, known and experienced of His grace in "this present world"? Is there no expectation which will surpass the limitations of this age of sin, sickness, travail and death; this age of the duality of good and evil, light and darkness, sin and salvation, victory and defeat, hope and despair? The King James version adds - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (**Tit.2:13).** Young's Literal Translation is more true to the Greek text when it says, "Waiting for the blessed hope and MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Diaglott adds its testimony: "Waiting for the blessed hope, even the APPEARING OF THE GLORY of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

A wonderful experience awaits the child of God when for the first time he sees that there is an expectation right here upon earth of the MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST. The message is clear - the "grace" of God has already appeared: the "glory" of God is going to appear; and THIS IS WHAT WE LOOK FOR - THE APPEARING AND MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF OUR GOD AND SAVIOUR! It is not "the glorious appearing," but the "manifestation of the glory," although the manifestation of the glory will certainly be most glorious! And where is His glory to appear? In the same scene where the grace of God has appeared! "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 the creation waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD (who reveal the glory)" **(Rom. 8:18-19).** This is not a statement about our anticipated removal into some far-off heaven somewhere, certainly not this, but the forth-shining of the fullness of God's glory right here upon earth. The Tabernacle of Moses reveals the order. In the "outer court" you may have His blessings. In the "holy place" you may have His gifts, or some overflow of His presence. But in the "most holy place" you deal with the Majestic One Himself! You can taste of blessings from God, learn about God, and periodically experience His operations, but never really get to H-I-M. Beloved, in this wonderful hour we are being brought unto God! We are BEING brought unto an expression of the GLORY OF GOD, the likes of which none of us have ever known! And it is destined to affect the whole earth, to forever alter the course of history, and once for all chase away the night of darkness, sin and death!

His seed has come into us, we have been born of the Spirit of God, God is having a people in whom is the Spirit of His Son, so that there is a relationship with the Father and a forming and a revelation and an outflow of the Father's character, mind, and will. For what reason? So that God can appear IN THE MIDST of His apprehended ones and so that God can appear THROUGH His people at any time He wants and in any form He needs to appear. "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).** Long centuries ago the prophet Malachi asked the burning question, "Who may abide the day of HIS COMING? and who shall STAND when HE APPEARETH? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (the priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" **(Mal. 3:2-3).**
The unveiling (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ prepares the way for the manifestation (epiphaneia) of Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of Jesus Christ is the appearing of Jesus Christ. As I have stated earlier, there are many different modes and types of the manifestation of Jesus Christ. "Who shall abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when HE APPEARETH?" Ah, Jesus Christ has come as Saviour and has appeared in saving power in the midst of all the saved ones. He has come as Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and has appeared in the glory of the anointing in the midst of all the Spirit-filled ones. He has come as Healer and

has appeared in miracle-working wonder in the midst of all the healed ones. How we praise God for all of these appearings - but now He must appear in "yet another form" - as KING, as LORD, as PRIEST, as the SON OF GOD, as G-O-D.

Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself in dimensions far beyond those of Saviour, Baptizer and Healer. "Who shall STAND when He appeareth?" asks the prophet. I tell you in truth that it is those who have been MADE ONE IN HIM in that in which He is appearing. When He appears as Saviour it is the saved ones who STAND WITH HIM IN THAT APPEARING. When He appears as Baptizer, it is the Spirit-baptized ones who STAND WITH HIM IN THAT APPEARING. When He appears as Healer it is the healed ones who STAND WITH HIM IN THAT APPEARING. Those who KNOW HIM in the manifestation of Himself are able to stand with Him as the embodiment and expression of His manifestation in that realm. God is teaching us the way of overcoming, the reality of His authority and Lordship. Why is He establishing that authority and that Lordship in the hearts of His elect? Because He is the Lord and Head of the body, the church. Of course you will never know His Lordship, except by the Holy Spirit: "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The Lordship of Jesus Christ must be set up in our hearts, where His will becomes our delight. Why does He want us to come into lordship and authority? So He can appear in the midst as the LORD OF LORDS! If we are not lords, ruling with authority, He cannot come as Lord of lords. He is not Lord of slaves. He is not Lord of babies. He is Lord of LORDS! Why is God bringing many sons to glory? That in the midst of all the sons Jesus Christ might appear as the pre-eminent One, THE SON among the sons!

"Well," you say, "why does He not appear as King of kings?" Because most of us are beggars. "Oh, God, please bless us; Lord, do this, do that; give us this, give us that." And if He appeared as King of beggars we would be ashamed before Him at His appearing. In all our poverty, in all our need, in all our self-pity, in all our limitation, foolishness and carnality, should suddenly the Majesty of the heavens, the blessed and only Potentate appear, why right away we would fall with our faces in the dust in shame before Him. But if we are standing as kings in the presence of God, reigning in life, undefeated and victorious, overcomers and conquerors in all things, rejoicing because His throne is in our hearts, then we welcome the King of the kings in the midst of the kings! And we can STAND when HE APPEARS!

Do we love His appearing? Do we want God to make us a people for Himself, so that in whatever form He desires to appear, He can appear in the midst? The inspired apostle John has taught us that when. HE APPEARS WE MUST BE LIKE HIM. It says, "We shall be like Him," but it also means, "We must be like Him." Can we not see that if we are not like Him in the way He wishes to appear, He cannot appear in that form? We are HIS BODY, the vehicle, the expression and manifestation of the Christ. Because we are His body, whenever He manifests Himself, He will manifest Himself in the form of that body, in whatever form the body is. If He must appear as Saviour, He must appear among and through saviours. If He must appear as Deliverer, He must appear among deliverers. If He appears as the Chief Cornerstone, He must appear among living stones. If He appears as the Son of God, He must appear among many brethren conformed to His image. If He appears as High Priest, He must appear among the priesthood. If He comes as Lord, it must be among other lords. If He comes as King, He must be king in and through other kings. If He is going to be revealed as GOD, He must be revealed among the gods (Ps. 82:2,6).

"Who shall stand when He appeareth?" When He appears as King, only the kings can stand with Him, everybody else has to fall before Him. When He appears as Lord, only the lords are able to stand with Him, the rest will bow before His appearing. When He appears as Judge, only the judges (I Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22) can stand with Him, all the rest will cringe before Him. And when He appears as High Priest, only the priests, those elect saints born of a priestly heart, possessed of the priestly nature, are able to stand with Him!

This is the glory of the EPIPHANEIA - the MANIFESTATION OF JESUS CHRIST! May all who read these lines continue to yield their lives under the mighty hand of God, unto his processing, waiting for that blessed hope, the MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST!

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 14
THE EPIPHANEIA OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FOURTEEN

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING
APPEARANCES OF CHRIST TO INDIVIDUALS
SEEING THE LORD

The third Greek word related to the "coming" of the Lord Jesus Christ is EPIPHANEIA. The lexicographers define it, "an appearance, show, display, grandeur, splendor." In its use in classical Greek, it applies to the invisible divinities that become visible. It also applies to the appearance of the sun after the passing away of the clouds. The best possible translation is MANIFESTATION. The EPIPHANEIA of Jesus Christ is ultimately the FULLNESS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF to the saints, the world and creation!

Let us now notice that the EPIPHANEIA of Jesus Christ is something greater and grander by far than either His PAROUSIA or His APOKALUPSIS. The PAROUSIA is the reality of His presence with us - though hidden and unseen. The APOKALUPSIS is the drawing aside of the veil or covering that hides Him from view, enabling us by the spirit of revelation to behold the King in His beauty. The EPIPHANEIA is the MANIFESTATION or OUTRAYING of Himself, which follows the unveiling. The manifestation is consequent upon the unveiling; when that takes place the hidden One is no longer hidden but seen. Once brought out into view He then springs into action, bares His holy arm, arises in His strength, and the MANIFESTATION of His presence commences. This truth is expressed in a notable verse: "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the BRIGHTNESS (epiphaneia) of His COMING (parousia)." Actually translated the verse reads "THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS PRESENCE."

The story of the appearances of Christ between His resurrection and the ascension tells us that it was necessary for the spiritual faculties to be quickened in order to perceive the Lord in His varied manifestations. Almost on every occasion when the Lord manifested Himself to His disciples it was as it had been with the men who walked the road to Emmaus, "After that He appeared in ANOTHER FORM unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country" **(Mk. 16:12).** He appeared unto them in another form - not another Person. It was the same Christ and Lord. But there was some difference of manifestation. That is the plain truth coming to meet us out of the region of mystery where for us the final truth of things dwells. After His resurrection Jesus was to His disciples Jesus - with a difference.

"HE APPEARED IN ANOTHER FORM." It is the same Christ revealing Himself to men in another form. So, my brother, my sister, as we ponder the mysterious manifestations of the risen Christ among the faithful and devout disciples, let us remind ourselves that this same Jesus is ever in our midst, and we must be ready to recognize Him as He becomes manifested to us from day to day, and from glory to glory, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus comes to us in different ways. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to have another manifestation, beloved. It is dawning. It has begun even now. Praise the Lord! It is the same Lord Jesus, but manifested in a further unfoldment of Himself, progressively bringing us to the realization of His fullness.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

There is one wonderful trait that identifies the sons of God, and that is that they LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING - indeed, they LOVE HIS APPEARING. Paul taught the Thessalonians to "wait for His Son from heaven" **(I Thes. 1:10).** The word used (wait) is instructive. It is a word, which would not be used of a patient sitting in a dentist's chair; nor of a sick man dying of an incurable disease, resignedly waiting the end. The word involves eagerness, longing, expectancy. It expresses an earnestness and intensity of desire, which can only be characterized by the magnificent phrase - "that BLESSED HOPE."

Oh beloved reader of these lines, what scenes are before us! What grand realities! What brilliant glories! May we live in the light and power of these things! How we love His appearing in all the wonderful ways in which He has already appeared and in those in which He shall yet appear! We will never be able to thoroughly appreciate the Christ's appearing until we understand clearly this wonderful truth in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. There are different degrees of the manifestation of Christ. One of the biggest lies ever foisted upon gullible babes in Christ is the foolish notion propounded by the church systems that there is to be but one single "appearing" of the Lord at some indefinite date in the future. I would have to tear my Bible all to pieces if I taught that. The grand truth is that He appears unto His elect from glory to glory, in ever-increasing unfoldments of Himself. He appeared; He continued to appear; He appears; He continues to appear; He shall appear; He shall continue to appear. Praise His wonderful name!

We are distinctly told that men SAW the Christ following His resurrection. "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, having been seen of them forty days" **(Acts 1:3).** And in **Acts 10:40-41** we read: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him TO BE MADE MANIFEST, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." The list of those who saw Him is given in I Cor. 15:5-8. He appeared to CEPHAS. He appeared to the TWELVE. Then to above FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN at once. Then He appeared to JAMES. Then to ALL THE APOSTLES. "Last of all," Paul says, "He appeared to ME also." That doesn't mean that after Paul He would never appear to anyone else - if that were true, how could WE look for and love His appearing? Many years after Jesus appeared to Paul He appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos! Time had marched on. The glory that John had seen in the days of Jesus of Nazareth was now a thing of the past. It had done its work, and had left an indelible impression upon John's being and its mark upon the world. But, nonetheless, it was a thing of the past. Likewise, the glory of the New Testament Church had risen to great heights. The disciples had gone throughout the entire civilized world and spread the glad tidings of redemption through Jesus Christ, and the ushering in of the grace of God. But we find that by the time John arrived on Patmos there was a waning. All the other apostles had vanished from the scene. Even the great Paul was dead. The glory of God upon that infant church had lifted. There was a scattering, and much persecution and tribulation. There were also many problems, with heresies, confusion and rampant carnality.

John was at this time waiting for a further revelation from God. He was not lamenting and saying, "Oh, if I could just tell about those good old days with Jesus when He was here ... if only we could have continued in those blessed years of joy and victory and glory in the early church." He was not trying to recapture the glory of the past. He was there for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus in that day! Thus a tremendous unveiling came in that bleak island. The Lord Jesus appeared to John in a glory greater far than any glory in which He had beheld Him hitherto. And this manifestation of Christ was the herald of a new and glorious dealing of Christ in the midst of His people!

But let us go back to Paul for a moment. "Last of all He was seen by me also." Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He came in religious zeal breathing threatening and slaughter Against the disciples of the Lord. He was a man who was filled with indignity and hostility and bitterness. If he found any Christians, men or women, he sought to bind them and bring them to Jerusalem where they might be tortured and killed, if they refused to recant of this Christian heresy. He went to the High Priest to secure papers to go to Damascus. As he drew near, there suddenly shone a light from heaven so bright as to pale the sun by comparison, and it caused him to be thrown from his horse to the ground! In this blinding light Saul heard a voice which called his name, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Trembling with astonishment, Saul asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The reply thundered back, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

In that moment Saul saw a vision that was to change his entire life. Everything was changed in the brilliance of that light. His world was turned upside down - rather, right side up! His right, he discovered, was wrong; his faith was unbelief; his earnestness was treason; his truth was error; his zeal was rebellion. Everything suddenly turned topsy-turvy and he realized that this Jesus, whose name just a moment before had been an epithet, an object of derision, of laughter, of scorn, of hatred, now suddenly was the Lord of glory, the All Holy One, the Altogether Lovely One, the Creator and Redeemer of the world! In that moment Saul was changed from the persecutor to a disciple. He fell to the ground a sinner, and rose a saint; he fell to the ground a sighted man who was blind, and rose a blind man who could see. He saw the greatest sight in all the world. He saw his

God for who He really is. In that moment Saul bowed low before the God of grace and power; he was brought to submission to Jesus Christ. And through Paul's life and ministry the church was established throughout the far-flung Empire and the course of history was forever altered.

Skeptics down through the centuries have tried to explain that conversion and the dramatic events it precipitated. But, precious friend of mine, there is no explanation other than the SUPERNATURAL SOVEREIGN WORK OF GOD. That is our God! And I do not hesitate to tell you, beloved, that God is getting ready to move again! All over the world in this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to His apprehended ones concerning the imminent manifestation of the sons of God. The trumpet has sounded the appointed time has come. Elect saints in every nation have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth and shake all nations.

Although Jesus Christ appeared in glory to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, that was not by any means the end of His appearing in Paul's life. Nearly thirty years later, in recounting his experience before king Agrippa, Paul reiterated the words of the Lord Jesus spoken to him that eventful day: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I HAVE APPEARED unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I WILL APPEAR unto thee" **(Acts 26:16).** "I W-I-L-L APPEAR!" Ah, the Lord obviously appeared to Paul more times than just the one initial experience. In fact, Paul said of the gospel he preached, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" **(Gal. 1:12).** Is it not plain to be seen that the appearing of the Lord in Paul's life was an on-going reality from glory to glory? He was TAUGHT by the REVELATION of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Only one who had encountered the Lord in a personal and real way could pen these meaningful words: "For I have RECEIVED OF THE LORD that which I delivered unto you..." **(I Cor. 11:23).** The Lord appeared to Paul and continued to appear to him throughout his ministry, imparting the transforming truths he proclaimed.

APPEARANCES OF CHRIST TO INDIVIDUALS

I say again - I repeat it with assurance of His Word of truth - "looking for His appearing" does not mean gazing into the skies for Jesus to flash down from heaven on a cloud. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. EACH MANIFESTATION IS ON THE PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PERSON TO WHOM HE APPEARS, AND EACH IS DESIGNED TO MEET A NEED. Understand this truth, my beloved, and you will comprehend a great mystery of the Kingdom of God. Every man and woman on the face of the earth, regardless of spiritual stature, should, on the plane they are on, LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING, for men are always transformed thereby. It is impossible to emphasize too strongly the fact that the Christ appears to men right where they are and on a level of manifestation they are capable to receive. He appears to us in greater and greater glory as we walk on with Him. That is why we see, in the scriptures, an ascending scale of glory with each manifestation of Christ. There was one degree of glory in His appearing in Bethlehem on the night of His miraculous birth. There was a greater glory when at Cana of Galilee He turned the water into wine, showing forth His glory that His disciples might believe on Him. In that glory He walked and showed Himself to Israel with mighty signs and wonders for three and a half years. Greater still was the glory disclosed in His astonishing resurrection and the manifestations that followed. And the glory seen by Saul of Tarsus along the road - the glory brighter than the noonday sun shining in its strength - was greater still. But the glory witnessed by the beloved Seer of Patmos as transfigured he beheld One standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks - was greater and grander than all! Oh, yes, my beloved, in our individual lives and corporately, the appearing of the Lord is ever "FROM glory, TO glory"!

Some time ago a friend shared the following experience, which wonderfully illustrates the point I am endeavoring to get across. "Last fall, the Lord began to show me what was the cup that passed to Jesus in the Garden. It was not physical death. No one could ever convince me that Jesus was afraid of physical death, because He has released me from such fear. If I am not afraid, then He could not have been afraid either. No, that cup which He so dreaded was something far more than death to His physical being. I saw that it was that cup of Proverbs that says, 'Look not on the wine when it is red in the cup, for at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.' That word, 'red' is, in the Hebrew, 'Adam.' 'Look not upon the cup when it is ADAM!' The dregs of that cup, while looking beautiful and sparkling and clear on the top, are shown to be a serpent. It was

that cup that was passed to Jesus in the Garden, and that brought from His holy lips, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!' And then-the Lord quickened to me that word which says, 'Babylon hath been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord.' It was the cup of Babylon, with all her dead forms and perverted, twisted, carnal doctrines that the Father offered Jesus. He who was pure ESSENCE, free from all dead form, to become identified with form! Such love!

"THIS is the real death that Jesus Christ died - and is still dying! It is the death that He died from the foundation of the world, and has continued to die again and again, in every age - as He has stripped Himself of His glory, come down to be contained in forms - candles sitting on an altar, images placed around a wall, doctrines that belie His very nature - identifying - pouring His anointing into them to bring forth a measure of His life! This is the sacrifice of Christ Jesus! As I sat in a meeting one Sunday morning, I saw it so beautifully illustrated. There the Spirit of God was moving among the people, their pastor just having been filled with the Spirit not long before...the Spirit moving amongst all that foolishness of crucifixes and candles, of ritual and form, even in clerical garments. But Christ was there - in Life! MOVING, yet fixed to the cross of that dreadful tree of legalism and form! I sat there and looked at the altar and the idolatry there and murmured a prayer of thanksgiving: 'What a God you are to allow Yourself to be brought down so far IN ORDER TO SERVE!' Nailed to the cross of form, shedding the blood, which is the New Wine of the Spirit, the very essence life of Christ" - end quote.

There is a remarkable testimony of the appearing of the Lord, altogether as sovereign and glorious as that of the apostle Paul that comes to us from one of England's great preachers of the eighteenth century, a man by the name of William Huntington. His testimony begins at a time of hopeless confusion in his young life when he was searching after God but was helplessly enslaved by the unyielding shackles of sin, fear and ignorance. He wrote: "While I was standing on my ladder, sinking in despondency, or rather despair; wishing for more books of prayers, and fretting because I could get none that would suit my case; behold, suddenly a 'great light shined round about me,' quick as lightning, and far superior to 'the brightness of the sun.' My hair stood upright, and my blood rankled in my veins, for fear this was to bring me to my dreadful and long-expected end, for I knew not as yet which class I was to die a member of, not being pardoned. I now came down from my ladder, and stood looking this way and that, but could see nothing except the vision. I cried out, 'What is it? what is it? what is it?' fearing it was something to bring me to my end, and that I should have no part in that sweet line of promises and invitations which I saw belonged to the elect, who are emphatically styled heirs of the promise. Immediately I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me in plain words, 'LAY BY YOUR FORMS OF PRAYERS, AND GO, PRAY TO JESUS CHRIST; DO NOT YOU SEE HOW PITIFULLY HE SPEAKS TO SINNERS?' These are the words VERBATIM, for I think that I shall never forget them.

I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but went to my little tool-house to pray, yet I cannot remember that I had at that time any faith in the Saviour or expectation of being heard or answered - to all appearance I was sunk too low for that. I rather thought this vision was to bring me to my final end. Therefore I trembled in myself, and was almost desperate, fearing that I should shortly sink under that awful line of and curses. When I came into my little tool-house, to the best of as I usually had done - that is, I pulled off my blue apron, and covered my head and face with it; for I was like the poor publican, I could not even look up to God - I was afraid He would damn me if I offered to do it. I kneeled down, and began to pray extempore, the language of one desperate, precisely thus: 'O Lord, I am a sinner, and Thou knowest it. I have tried to make myself better, but cannot. If there is any way left in which Thou canst save me, do Thou save me; if not, I must be damned, for I cannot try anymore nor won't.'

"The very moment the last sentence dropped from my lips, 'the spirit of grace and of supplication' was poured into my soul, and I forthwith spake as the Spirit gave me utterance. I immediately prayed with such energy, eloquence, fluency, boldness, and familiarity as quite astonished me; as much as though I should now suddenly speak Arabic, a language that I never learned a syllable of. And the blessed Spirit of God poured the sweet promises into my heart, from all parts of the scriptures, in a powerful manner, and helped my infirmities greatly by furnishing my faltering tongue with words to plead prevalently with God. Yea that blessed Spirit enabled me to compass the Almighty about with His own promises, which were so suitable to my case that His blessed Majesty could not get out of His own bonds. It came to pass that, after I had been wrestling in this manner for about the space of a quarter of an hour, behold, Jesus Christ appeared to me in a most glorious and conspicuous manner, with all His body stained with blood! He appeared in His aspect as one greatly

dishonored and much abused, and yet inclined to pity me. I turned my eyes from Him, but He pursued me, and was still before me. I fell to the ground, and laid on my face, but could not shun the sight.

"The more I strove to avoid Him, the nearer He approached, the vision opened brighter and brighter, and the deeper impression was made upon my mind; and the more I condemned myself, and tried to creep into darkness from His sight, the more He smiled upon me, and the more He melted, renewed and comforted my soul. When I found I could not shun Him, nor shut out His dissolving beams, I arose from the ground, and went into the garden. Here I found that all my temptations were fled; my hard thoughts of God, and the dreadful ideas I had of Him in His righteous law, were dissipated; my sins, which had stood before me during so many months, with their ghastly and formidable appearance, had spread their wings and taken flight. My darkness was dispelled by the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and life and immortality appeared in such a glorious point of view, that I swooned in the soul-renewing and soul-transporting flames of everlasting love. All the horrors of the damned, and my meditations upon their irrevocable doom, vanished; confusion and despair sank into oblivion; the self-existent Jehovah, the God of armies, had put all to flight, and kept both throne and field alone, waving the banner of eternal love. I went into the tool-house in all the agonies of the damned, and returned with the Kingdom of God established in my heart. O happy year! happy day! blessed minute! Yea, rather, blessed be my dear Redeemer, who 'delivereth my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.' JESUS CHRIST WAS COME - it was the year of Jubilee with me" -end quote.

Another testimony of the same magnitude comes from far away India. Sadhu Sundar Singh was born of wealthy parents, September 3, 1889, at Rampur, in the state of Patiala in North India, the youngest son of his father, Sundar was brought up in the midst of luxury. His parents were Sikhs by race, but in religious thought and practice were almost as much Hindus, frequenting the places of worship, reading the sacred books and keeping in close contact with the teachers of both religions. Alluding to this period of his life, with a playing upon words, which was characteristic of his speech, Sunday Singh said, "I was not a Sikh, but a seeker-after Truth."

By age sixteen he had read the Granth of the Sikhs, the Muhammadan Quran, and a number of the Hindu Upanishads - a remarkable achievement. But it was all in vain. His mother had taken him to priests and sadhus (holy men) who might point out to him sacred texts which would show him the way; and for some time, under the direction of a Hindu sadhu, he practiced a form of Yoga - one of the methods, much esteemed among Hindus, of seeking identification with the Supreme Spirit, and the resultant peace and illumination, by concentration leading up to a state of trance - but with no avail. There was no peace! With the Bible he first became acquainted at the Presbyterian Mission School in his village, but it repelled him as being utterly subversive of the religion of his fathers and offensive to the proud traditions of his Sikh blood. He little thought that from this unlikely source he would ultimately gain the Peace he so earnestly sought.

The story of his conversion is best given in his own words, quoted from one of his addresses. "Preachers and Christians in general had often come to me and I used to resist them and persecute them. When I was out in any town I got people to throw stones at Christian preachers. I would tear up the Bible and burn it when I had a chance. In the presence of my father I cut up the Bible and other Christian books and put kerosene oil upon them and burnt them. I thought this was a false religion and tried all I could to destroy it. I was faithful to my own religion, but I could not get any satisfaction or peace, though I performed all the ceremonies and rites of that religion. So I thought of leaving it all and committing suicide. Three days after I had burnt the Bible, I woke up about three o'clock in the morning, had my usual bath, and prayed, 'O God, if there is a God, wilt thou show me the right way or I will kill myself.' My intention was that, if I got no satisfaction, I would place my head upon the railway line when the five o'clock train passed by and kill myself. If I got no satisfaction in this life, I thought I would get it in the next. I was praying and praying but got no answer; and I prayed for half an hour longer hoping to get peace.

"At 4:30 A.M. I saw something of which I had no idea at all previously. In the room where I was praying I saw a great light. I thought the place was on fire. I looked around but could find nothing. Then the thought came to me that this might be an answer that God had sent me. Then as I prayed and looked into the light, I saw the form of the Lord Jesus Christ. It had such an appearance of glory and love. If it had been some Hindu incarnation I would have prostrated myself before it. But it was the Lord Jesus Christ whom I had been

insulting a few days before. I felt that a vision like this could not come out of my own imagination. I heard a voice saying in Hindustani, 'How long will you persecute Me? I have come to save you; you were praying to know the right way. Why do you not take it?' The thought then came to me, 'Jesus Christ is not dead but living and it must be He Himself.' So I fell at His feet and got this wonderful Peace, which I could not get anywhere else.

"When I was converted by the vision of Christ a power like electricity entered my soul and took possession of it. With it came the joy I was wishing to get. This was heaven itself! When I got up, the vision had all disappeared; but although the vision disappeared the Peace and Joy have remained with me ever since. I went off and told my father that I had become a Christian. He told me, 'Go and lie down and sleep; why, only the day before yesterday you burnt the Bible; and you say you are a Christian now.' I said 'Well, I have discovered now that Jesus Christ is alive and have determined to be His follower. Today I am His disciple and I am going to serve Him' " -end quote. Sundar Singh devoted His life to the Lord and became an Indian "sadhu" or wandering "holy man," traveling across India proclaiming the love of God in Christ Jesus. He was a true mystic --receiving innumerable visions of the spirit world, and abundance of revelations of that bright realm which lies beyond the vale of flesh. It is interesting to note in passing that one of the spiritual truths revealed to the Sadhu by the Spirit of revelation from Jesus Christ was the wonderful truth of the ULTIMATE SALVATION OF ALL MEN. Blessed be God!

I am certain that many of my readers who are of mature years remember reading or hearing the "Betty Baxter Story." I personally heard Betty Baxter give her extraordinary testimony more than thirty-five years ago, and have never forgotten the profound impact it made on my young life. She began by saying, "As far back as I can remember, I can never recollect a day without pain and agony in my body. From the time I was just a baby, and all my life-long I suffered pain in my body. From the time I was an infant when the doctors said I was born abnormal, there was something wrong with my spine and with my heart. My daddy began to take me from one doctor to another. He took me from specialist to specialist, to clinics and hospitals. Every doctor, after X-rays, gave the same answer - there was nothing that could be done for me. At the age of eleven I was taken to the large University Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I was kept there almost three weeks as they X-rayed and did tests, trying to find out whether there was anything they could do, at least for the pain and suffering in my body. When the three weeks were up they told my parents that there was nothing that medical science could do for me, and sent me home to die.

"I grew worse as I was shut away from the world in my bedroom at age eleven; my spine curved, my chest sunk in, until at the age of fifteen when they stood me up I stood as tall as my four year old brother. There were knots the size of hen's eggs beginning at the base of my neck, one after the other down to the base of my spine. My arms were paralyzed from my shoulders to my wrists, I could only move my fingers. My head was twisted and turned on my body. And in this condition, with all hope given up for me, my parents were advised not to spend any more money on doctors as there was nothing medical science could do. My mother was a devout Christian who deeply loved Jesus. She was desperate, she didn't want me to die. She began to read and study God's Word. She found the answer to what she was searching for in the Word of God. One day, very excited, she came to my room and exclaimed, 'I've found the answer! It says here that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. It says here that ALL things are possible, if you can only believe.' She said, 'Betty, this lets me know that if I have faith and really believe, you're not going to die, but God is going to heal you, bring you out of that bed, make you whole, and you will walk by His power.' "

There is neither time nor space to relate the numerous details that ensued. There were many and varied crisis' in Betty Baxter's condition, climaxing in an out-of-body experience as she came to the river of death, only to be turned back by the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, on a hot August afternoon, sitting in the living room in a big overstuffed chair piled high with pillows, as she prayed, the Lord Jesus spoke in an audible voice beside the chair, and said, "I am going to heal you completely on Sunday afternoon, August 24, at three o'clock." He gave her the day and the hour. Following a number of consequent events we now take up the thread of her story again.

"August 24 finally came. Daddy and my brothers and sisters went to Sunday School and Church. That afternoon mom had invited a few friends together to pray for me. At a quarter till three she came into my

bedroom, leaned over my bed and said, 'It's fifteen minutes till three. Do you want mother to carry you and put you in the big chair in the living room?' I told her, 'Yes,' and thought, 'fifteen minutes! And I've waited over fifteen years for Jesus to come and heal me.' They carried me into the living room and put me into the chair with the pillows with my head resting on my knees and my arms hanging at my side. When I'm happy I always cry. So the tears were rolling down my cheeks because it was time now for me to be healed. My baby brother knelt in front of me and shook his little head and said, 'Don't cry any more Sis, it will only be a minute and you'll be bigger than I am.' They knelt around my chair and mom said, 'It's ten minutes now, what do you want us to do?' I replied, 'Start praying, I want to be praying when he comes.' The last thing I remember hearing was my mother saying, 'The hour is come; you won't fail me, will you Lord? You're going to come and heal her because the hour is come.'

"Then I didn't hear any more. There was no wind that day but suddenly a great rushing wind swept through our living room. The drapes swirled in the wind; a door slammed somewhere, and then the wind subsided and all was silence. In this calmness and stillness I knew now that Jesus would really come. My eyes were glued to the opposite side of the room; I watched and waited, it seemed I dare not breathe. As I looked I saw taking form before me a white, fleecy cloud. As I watched, stepping out of that cloud was the Lord Jesus Christ! He stepped forth out of that cloud dressed in flowing garments of glistening white. His face shone with a radiance so bright that I closed my eyes and opened them again while my eyes grew accustomed to His brightness. He stood there a tall man with outstretched arms. I can't describe Him to you. If I were an artist I could not draw Him as He really was. He came walking toward my chair and the closer He got the better I felt. But I felt so unworthy, too unworthy for Jesus to touch me - but if I can touch His garment I know I'll be healed. My fingers reached out trying to touch His clothes, and in the stillness I heard my mother cry out, 'Jesus! You'll have to come closer, she can't reach that far.' But He didn't come closer, and soon the strength that was in my fingers was gone and they fell at my side. He showed me by this that my last feeble effort had failed. It must be HIM and Him alone to heal my body.

"As He stood there I saw beside Him two rows of trees and they stood tall and straight. As I watched, one in the center began to bend until the tip of it touched the ground. I wondered why the one little tree was all bent over while the others stood straight and tall. Then I saw Jesus walk through that row of trees. When He got to the little bent tree He reached out His hand and placed His hand where it was bent and with a loud crack and pop the tree straightened up like the others. I said, 'That's me, alright! He's coming by today. He'll put His hand on my spine, the bones will crack and POP as the vertebras go into place, and I'll be straight like other girls.'

"Then He took a final step and stood just beside the chair. He leaned down and looked straight into my face and said, 'Betty, you've been patient, kind and loving. Henceforth I promise you joy, health and happiness.' With the final word, 'happiness,' He stretched forth His hand and my body became tense waiting for the hand of Jesus. I felt a hot sensation rush through my body. Two hot hands were placed on my fallen organs and I felt everything inside of me move into place. I knew that internally I was healed. Two hot hands - as hot as fire - took my heart and squeezed it and for the first time I could take a deep breath without gasping and I knew that my heart trouble was gone. And then I felt His hand pressed on the very center of one of the knots on the center of my spine - there was a tingling sensation as though I had touched a live electric wire the bones snapped and cracked as the vertebras went into place. In the presence of those who were there they saw the knots fade and disappear. My hip snapped into its right position, my paralyzed arms were raised high and in ten seconds I stood on my feet straight as I'm standing tonight, healed by the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ!" end quote.

A sister in Christ relates how that in recent years in Agra, India, she met a former "holy man" (sadhu) from the Hindu religion who had had a strange and marvelous experience. While he was praying in the temple, he heard an audible voice speak to him in a language he did not understand. He looked all over but could not find anyone. So he went to his "guru" and told him what had happened and asked him if he could explain it to him. The guru asked him to repeat the words that he had heard and when he did, the guru turned pale for he understood it, as it was in English and he knew the English language. The words that he had heard were, "Jesus is Lord, worship Him." When the guru told this to the sadhu, the sadhu asked who Jesus Christ was. He had never heard of Him. The guru said, "He is the God of the Christians. And He is the greatest of all Gods." "Then, why didn't you tell us about Him?" asked the sadhu. "Because if I had, you would have killed me."

"What must I do then?" asked the sadhu. "You must go and search for Him, apparently He is calling you to be His disciple." So that is how the sadhu came to Agra where he found a missionary. He gave his story to him and asked him where he could find this Jesus Christ. Through the ministry of this brother, he was led to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is still serving Him today. When this same sister was in India in 1983 she learned that Jesus Christ had appeared to the gypsy people along the Rajasthan and Gujarat border and they were coming out by the score, looking for Him. He has appeared to the Nepalese and to many others.

Just this past year a precious brother on our mailing list wrote and shared his experience. He said, "I have met with considerable criticism over the past for having put forth this understanding. In 1942, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit on the kitchen floor at home on the farm. The Lord Jesus appeared to me at that time, and because of this I have been unshakable in certain knowledge. He has appeared on various occasions since, but not in the same way. If He can appear to me, there is no reason why He would not appear to any saint."

SEEING THE LORD

While we praise God for all of these beautiful experiences of those who have received a manifestation of the Lord, let us never lose sight of the principle that EACH MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST EXISTS ON THE PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PERSON TO WHOM HE APPEARS. He will always appear on the level and in the manner and form that men can receive Him and that meets their need. You will note in connection with all the appearances of the Lord related in this article that in every case the Lord manifested Himself in a physical form to either an unconverted person or to a saint who had as yet received no call or vision of the deep things of God. Let not those who grow up into the stature of the Son of God imagine for one moment that Christ will appear to them in the same mode or form as He appeared to sinners and to babes in Christ!

After His resurrection the blessed Christ of God appeared to His followers in various forms. Mary saw Him as a "gardener." Two of His disciples saw Him and conversed with a "stranger." The eleven in the upper room saw the Master as He formerly appeared, but not as crucified, with scars. Later a group of them saw Him on the lakeshore, and thought it was a "fisherman." But Thomas doubted. He said that he would not believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead unless he could see the nail prints in His hands and feet and the spear wound in His side.

There are few recorded instances of Christ's appearings more enlightening than the account of Christ's personal revealing of Himself to Thomas. Eight days later, while they were gathered in a room with the doors closed, Jesus suddenly materialized in their midst. They were awe-striken. Jesus looked straight at Thomas and said, "Thomas, come here!" Thomas took several hesitant steps forward, eyes searching the face, studying intently to see if there were anything familiar about this person whose voice seemed identical, yet filled with an even greater note of authority. "Come on," He said, "Go ahead, Thomas, I want you to put your finger right here into My hand." Thomas reached out his finger and actually put it inside the large tear in Jesus' hand where the bones had been separated and the flesh grotesquely torn. Thomas' finger was tingling from its contact with the cold flesh and bare bones of Jesus' hand. The figure took off His outer garment, and pulled up His shirt underneath to reveal a gaping, livid wound in His side. Jesus said, "Go ahead, put your hand into My side!" Trembling with fear, Thomas reached out and actually put his hand completely into the gaping aperture that had been left by the Roman spear. Thomas' stomach was churning, his mind reeling, his eyes glazed with shock. It was He! It really was! This was in fact the very same Jesus he had himself seen proved dead, standing here before him alive! His legs went limp and he fell at His feet, at those mangled feet, and he looked up into that compassionate face and there was wrung from his soul, from the very depths of his being, a confession, and He cried, "MY LORD AND MY GOD!" In that instant, as though some mighty wind had swept away the cobwebs of his mind, Thomas' doubts disappeared and he KNEW that He was alive; and he could SEE, and he could understand!

The undeniable truth is that Jesus appeared with the nail prints and the wounded side ONLY TO DOUBTING THOMAS. Can we not see by this that unless Jesus chose to show the scars they were not visible - that for the moment He descended to the point of CONSCIOUS THINKING where Thomas, who could only believe by seeing with the human eye, could see? NO BLESSING WENT WITH THOMAS FINDING OUT ABOUT THE

RESURRECTION. Jesus said kindly, "Because you have seen Me you have believed! I'll tell you, B-L-E-S-S-E-D are they that have NOT seen and yet have believed!" Blessed are they that have not seen Me in this form with the scars - for He appeared to many - and yet have believed! Blessed are they who receive Me in whatever form I manifest Myself. Blessed are they who do not cling to any manifestation that is past. Blessed is the one who does not have to handle with his hand the unseen things of the Spirit. That one WILL be able to see and handle and experience the hidden things of God, the all-glorious Christ revealed WITHIN.

Believers as a whole are not moving to that. They hate to hear it and the majority of Christians refuse to admit it, but they are one and all "DOUBTING THOMASES." They will not believe that "this same Jesus" has returned unless and until they SEE HIM AS THOMAS SAW HIM. "Except I shall see - I will not believe," said doubting Thomas, and he has and will have his innumerable successors as long as time remains. The cry of almost all Christian people today is, "We want to see Jesus." Men think it is so spiritual to want to see Jesus with earth-bound eyes. We used to sing a song and one line in the chorus said, "And I shall know Him by the nail prints in His hands." We have sung that, in order to KNOW Jesus, we would have to see the nail prints. Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe! We have preached about poor old doubting Thomas, but the great majority of God's people really are "doubting Thomas's." They have to see the print of the nails and the wound in the side of Jesus. They are telling the Lord that He MUST manifest something, which they can see and understand by the flesh. Something they can handle. And I do not doubt for one moment that there is in the church of God today a vast THOMAS COMPANY unto whom the Lord will manifest Himself in just such a manner. But I do not hesitate to tell you that there is NO BLESSING attached to any appearing of our Lord, which is necessary to accommodate unbelief! There is great blessing and heavenly wealth stored up for those who will lay aside the grave clothes of yesterday's manifestation to receive Him as LIFE ON A HIGHER PLANE.

Several months ago a dear sister from Arizona shared by letter the following incident, which is both interesting and instructive. "Many years ago when I was involved in some prayer groups where people were talking about the Lord having appeared to them, I had an interesting thing happen to me. I spent one late evening in my living room, leaning on a hassock, where a Bible was also resting. I was praying up a storm, trying to get the Lord to materialize and appear before me. Yes! I know it is humorous now - but what I learned was a gem. While I was working so hard at praying, my elbow hit the Bible, knocking it to the floor. The sound startled me in the darkness and I jumped about three feet off the floor in panic. Then I was quiet and the Lord spoke to me in that still, small voice. First, He asked, "What would you have done if I had appeared?" I realized, then, that I would have been terrified! Then most simply He said, "You are looking for me wrongly; you will not find Me or see Me this way or in this form." I knew then that He had come to me - that was almost twenty years ago" -end quote.

Yes, HE CAME, but not in the form the sister expected. Seeing with the natural eye and hearing with the natural ear are not all there is of seeing and hearing. "No man hath seen God at any time" thus, yet all God's children have seen Him, and known Him, and held communion with Him. We HEAR God's call, our "high calling," we HEAR the voice of our Shepherd, and are constantly LOOKING unto Jesus, and while we see not yet all things put under Him, we do SEE JESUS crowned with glory and honor and with unveiled face we BEHOLD the glory of the Lord and are changed into the same image, for God hath shined in our hearts giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the FACE of Jesus Christ.

"And they shall SEE the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" **(Mat. 24:30).** "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall SEE Him" **(Rev. 1:7).** Every one who is a scholar knows that the words "see" and "know" are identical in their spiritual meaning. When I tell a brother something He did not see before, and I am trying to get him to see it, all at once there passes over his face the illumination, which indicates intelligence. He says, "Brother Preston, I see it!" What does he mean? He does not mean that he sees anything with the eye of flesh. He means that he "knows" it. I talk to a blind man who has no eyes to see at all. I explain something to him and presently he says, "Brother, I see it." Does he see anything? No! But he KNOWS it. How many times in the day do you say, "I see it." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD." Suppose I give you the meaning of this passage: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall KNOW God." The apostle Paul said, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall SEE the Lord" **(Heb. 12:14).** The real message of this verse is just this: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall KNOW the Lord." It is the pure in heart who see God, who know God.

As one has written, "In the midst of turmoil Job cried, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I SEE GOD: Whom I shall SEE FOR MYSELF, and MINE EYES SHALL BEHOLD, and not another.' He was positively sure in his own mind that in some distant future day he would SEE GOD, but what he did not know was that AT THAT VERY MOMENT God was leading him into the coveted experience. Within a few days he would shout with ecstatic joy, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: BUT NOW MINE EYE S-E-E-T-H THEE!" **(Job 42:5).** It is easy to put off spiritual experience for the millenniums to come, but God would have us enter them now. 'That I may KNOW HIM' was the ceaseless longing of Paul's heart. Too many sermons are preached ABOUT GOD, but too few people come to KNOW HIM personally. You can never know people by hearing about them even from their closest friends. You must see them, know them, and understand them personally. However vivid a description may be given of an individual, you could still pass him on the street without knowing who he was or even live in the same house with him without knowing he was the person in question. So also it is with God. You will know many things about Him by hearing, but you will only KNOW HIM when your eye SEE HIM. 'No man can see God and live,' but that does not mean that he will live the same anymore, but will live as God lives in the Spirit" - The Page.

To see the Christ with the understanding, to perceive Him with our spirit, to know Him experientially dwelling in our "deep," our innermost life, this is the vital necessity for our day. The place where you really find Christ is WITHIN. "Christ liveth in me." As His life matures within, as HE grows up within you, you can continually LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING, HIS MANIFESTATION. From the deep of your spirit He will move in His operation outward into soul and body, reconciling, changing, transforming all. That is the greatest place you will ever SEE HIM.

"Even so, come (manifest) Lord Jesus!"

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 15
THE PHANEROSIS OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FIFTEEN

SEEING GOD
REVEALING THE FATHER
EVERY MAN THAT HAS THIS HOPE
EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

The cry of the deepest in man has always been to see God. It was the cry of Moses and the cry of Job, the cry of psalmist and of prophet; and to the cry there is heard the distant sound of approaching answer. In the fullness of time the Son stepped forth with the startling proclamation that He Himself was the appearing of God before men. "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 thou hast not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" **(Jn. 14:7-10).**

This bring us to the fourth Greek word associated with the so-called "coming" of the Lord. The noun is PHANEROSIS and the verb PHANEROO. This word means "to appear" or "manifest." The word EPIPHANEIA which we have already considered also means "manifestation" - but with a difference! PHANEROO is often used when someone is manifesting someone else, as when the Son manifested the Father, or when we manifest the indwelling Christ in our lives. EPIPHANEIA means to manifest oneself, not someone else; and it not only means to manifest oneself but to manifest oneself fully. We can have a partial manifestation, one that is not complete; but when the Lord said He would manifest Himself to those who keep His commandments it was a form of this word that He used. This is not a partial manifestation, but complete and perfect.

But when the pen of inspiration employs the word PHANEROO it speaks not so much of God manifesting Himself TO us, but, rather, God manifesting Himself THROUGH us! It is someone manifesting someone else - the Christ and His body of the enChristed becoming the manifestation of GOD in the earth. Let us consider a few examples where the word PHANEROO is used. "I have MANIFESTED (phaneroo) Thy name unto the men which Thou hast given Me" **(Jn. 17:6).** "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be MADE MANIFEST (phaneroo) in our body" **(II Cor. 4: 10).** "When Christ, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR (phaneroo), then shall ye also APPEAR with Him in glory" **(Col. 3:4).** "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was MANIFEST (phaneroo) in the flesh..." **(I Tim. 3:16).** "For the life was manifested... that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was MANIFESTED (phaneroo) unto us" **(I Jn. 1:2).** "In this was MANIFESTED (phaneroo) the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" **(I Jn. 4:9).**

"For in Him (Christ Jesus) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:9-10). Jesus Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. What often confuses people is that they forget that what is made visible on this earthly plane is one realm, and the glory of the SPIRIT realm is another. The Fatherhood realm is of spirit, to beget after Himself, for "He is the Father of spirits" **(Heb. 12:9).** Yet to become manifested in a visible realm of flesh and blood, He took upon Himself the creaturely form of His own creation, and became also the SON OF MAN. "GOD was manifest in the flesh..." **(I Tim.3:16).** And now, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bone, our mission to MANIFEST HIM is one of the most glorious parts of our conformity to our Lord. He says it plainly in the most solemn moments of His life: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" **(Jn. 20:21).** After the Lord had fulfilled His mission on earth He ascended into heaven, and became to the world the Unseen One. And now He has given over His heavenly mission to HIS SONSHIP COMPANY, having entered into them in mighty spirit power to perform it. They must so

represent Him, the Invisible One that from seeing them men can judge what He is. Every son must so be the image of the Father - must so exhibit in his person and conduct the same love, grace, and power, as animated the Christ, that from them the world may know what God is like, and be touched by Him. Oh, my soul! take time to realize these heavenly thoughts: The purpose of sonship is to reveal glory and to minister the life of the great Father in the heavens.

SEEING GOD

The wonderful purpose of Christ's PHANEROSIS, His appearing and manifestation, is that men may SEE GOD. One of the sweetest of all the beatitudes is: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." This may, in some respects, be called the greatest of all the beatitudes; for surely of all things, the most sublime is seeing God. The word "see" in the original tongue is interchangeable with the word "know," and must be so understood. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall KNOW God." "Oh, I see!" is an expression frequently used to denote comprehension and knowledge. The scriptures often employ the term "see" in exactly this manner. It is essential to understand this if we are to find harmony in the many prophetic statements, which tell of Christ's coming.

Rev. 1:7 is a prophecy descriptive of the manner of Christ's return, and those who will be affected by it. We quote: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." This text has been misused in an attempt to prove the erroneous theory that Jesus will return as a flesh and bone man and be suspended in the sky until every individual throughout the whole earth has had an opportunity to see Him. But this crude interpretation of the prophecy is quite out of harmony with the Bible's use of language. example, how the Bible uses the function of the eye to symbolize discernment. After Job's long experience of calamity and trial, and the revelation of God's heart to him, he cried out in communion with God, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: BUT NOW MINE EYE S-E-E-T-H THEE!" **(Job 42:5)**. All will concede, we believe, did not see God literally, but he saw Him, nonetheless. Jesus said to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see" **(Mat. 13:16).** To "see" means to KNOW. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall KNOW God." A pure heart is one to which all that is not of God is strange and jarring. A heart that has no desires but for the glory of God, whose affections all center in Him, whose delight is in His perfect will, such an one will truly see and know the Lord. It is better to know God than even to see Him by the eyes of sense. There were many who saw Jesus who did not know Him. They saw the Christ, but they knew not that He was the Christ. They saw His miracles, but they did not know Him. They even rejected Him and hated Him, some of them. You could see Jesus Himself in bodily form today, but unless you had purity of heart you could not know Him to be the Christ. It is only purity of heart, which gives purity of sight.

When we turn our telescopes upon the stars and see them in their beauty and glory; when we see that one star differs from another star in glory, and when we see masses of stars in beautifully variegated colors, we see God in the heavens. We see God in the beautiful thoughts, which He has given in His Word. We see God in the lives of men and women who have God in them. We see God Himself if our eyes are opened to see things, which are heavenly. We see in the apocalyptic vision how John the apostle saw Jesus; how he describes the wonderful revelation of Christ; how he fell at His feet as dead when he saw Him. His spiritual eyes saw Him. After all, purity of heart is the attainment of spiritual eyes. I believe it is possible to see a vision we never have seen because of the grossness of our sight.

The following words by George Hawtin bear eloquent testimony to the truth I now proclaim. "I have often thought of the wonderful words 'no man can SEE GOD AND LIVE.' Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me reverently to say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live AS THEY USED TO LIVE, but they are TRANSFORMED. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into THAT SAME IMAGE of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure you are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion. There is no possibility of any man's ever being the same again or living as he used to live once he has personally met the Lord and his eyes have beheld Him, the King in His

beauty. 'As for me,' said David, 'I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness.' My own heart answers Amen. That is when I, too, shall be fully satisfied" -end quote.

There are a few scriptures, which seem to indicate that it is not possible for us to see the Lord. The Lord said as much to Moses: "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live" **(Ex. 33:20).** John goes further: "No one has ever seen God" **(Jn. 1:18; I Jn. 4:12).** And Paul takes it to the ultimate: "No man has ever seen or can see" God **(I Tim. 6:16).** It is as if invisibility is an indubitable attribute of God (I Tim. 1:17).

But if we will search the scriptures we will see that men DID see God! There are passages in the Bible where seeing God is spoken of as a deadly danger. Gideon feared for his life when he saw the angel of the Lord, but the Lord consoled him and told him he would not die (Judg. 6:22). Manoah and his wife both feared themselves doomed: "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" **(Judg. 13:22).** The possibility of seeing God is the background of the fear of the consequences. Thus Moses "hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God" **(Ex. 3:6).** Isaiah, seeing the Lord sitting on His throne, lamented "Woe is me! For I am lost ... for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" **(Isa. 6:5).** However, there are also passages in the Old Testament that do not include this fear for the consequences of seeing God. In particular Moses, in his unique position among Israel, spoke "mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark sayings" and he saw "the form of the Lord" **(Num. 12:8).** Moses, Aaron, Abihu, and seventy elders "saw the God of Israel" and He "did not lay His hand on them" **(Ex. 24:9-11).**

Jacob declared that he had seen God at the place he named Peniel, which means "the face of God." The record states: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: FOR I HAVE SEEN GOD FACE TO FACE, and my life is preserved" **(Gen. 32:30).** These scriptures would appear to be contradictions and illustrate our need for the light of truth and understanding in this matter. On the one hand God told Moses that no man could see Him and live, while the record shows clearly that JACOB SAW GOD FACE TO FACE, and his life was preserved. And, indeed, if no man can see God and live, then God's word to Moses has reference to THE SOULISH LIFE, which is actually death! Jacob SAW GOD AND HIS LIFE WAS PRESERVED, indicating that this life, which was preserved was the life of the spirit, the true life of God, the divine quality of life, which is beyond the veil of tears and sorrow and pain.

What a marvelous and incomprehensible potential this: TO SEE GOD! Now, we know, of course, that God has no corporeal form. "No man hath seen God at any time" **(Jn. 1:18).** Therefore, there is no question of "seeing" God in the ordinary physical sense in which one might see a human being or a mountain or an airplane. If one could see God in this way, He would have to be limited, and, therefore, not God. To "see" in the sense referred to here, signifies spiritual perception, and spiritual perception means just that capacity to apprehend the true nature of GOD'S SPIRITUAL BEING which most Christians so sadly lack. We live in God's world, but we do not in the least know it as it is. Heaven lies all around us - it is not a distant locality afar off in the skies, but all around us now - but because we are lacking in spiritual perception, we are unable to recognize it; that is to say, we are unable to experience it; and, therefore, so far as we are concerned, we may be said to be shut out of heaven. We do contact a tiny fragment of it, and that tiny fragment we know as the spiritual experiences we have received, but even that little bit, we see for the most part, all awry, distorted by the dimness of tradition and the outer darkness and wearisome senility of the doctrines and methods of the Babylonish church system.

Heaven is naught but the biblical name for the REALM OF GOD'S SPIRIT, the invisible and omnipresent dimension of SPIRITUAL REALITY. And it is all around us. We are one with it by virtue of our Spiritual Life. We touch heaven as we touch God, we dwell in heaven as we dwell in God and we experience heaven as we experience God. Heaven is eternity, but what we know here and now, with our spirits imprisoned within these walls of carnal minds and bodies, we know only serially, in a sequence called "time," which never permits of our comprehending an experience in its entirety. All true Christians have touched heaven when they touched God, but all of our experiences have been limited by this physical world. We have seen and known God through experiences, but no limited experience can enable us to SEE GOD AS HE IS or to know Him as He is. Men speak of the experience of salvation, the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the experience of healing, or of a vision, or a dream, or a miracle, or a revelation. We rejoice in each of these blessed experiences, each one bringing a "knowing" of something of the life and glory and reality of God, yet in none of them do we truly SEE GOD AS HE IS in the unbounded fullness of His glorious and eternal reality.

As long as our eyes remain closed to the CELESTIAL REALM, we will never see God as He is. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. There is a most enlightening passage of scripture in Jn. 1:18. "No man hath seen God at any time." Were we to discontinue reading at this point, we would abandon all hope of ever seeing God. However, if we will continue reading we will discover this amazing truth: "...the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM." Let us now give earnest attention to the rendering given by the Amplified Bible that our souls may bask in that blessed hope that is laid out here in the vivid words of this translation. "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him - He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him, and He has made Him known."

Therefore, our conclusion must be that God can be seen by those to whom it is given, for Christ hath declared Him. The Greek word used for "man" in this passage (no MAN hath seen God) is OUDEN and has reference to ONE MAN. This word comes from another Greek word which has to do specifically with ONE MAN: the man alone and without Christ. Therefore, the man alone and outside of Christ does not and cannot see God. On the other hand, the man IN CHRIST can see God and will be changed. He who sees God will not continue to live the same, but will experience a wonderful and glorious transformation as, like Jacob of old, HIS LIFE IS PRESERVED. The whole matter becomes easier to understand when we read further in John's Gospel: "Not that any man hath seen the Father, SAVE HE WHICH IS OF GOD, HE HATH SEEN THE FATHER" (Jn. 6:46). And the promise was previously given in this chapter: "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which SEETH THE SON, and believeth on Him, MAY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn. 6:40). As we see the Son, we also see the Father, for the Son hath declared Him.

To SEE GOD is a holy privilege, reserved for those who are IN CHRIST. It is given to those elect saints called to the high calling of God IN CHRIST JESUS, or for those who are "OF GOD" according to Jn. 6:46. Jesus encouraged His followers to behold the Father, when He said, "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" **(Jn. 14:9).** Jesus then promised the Comforter, saying, "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 ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" **(Jn. 14:19-20).** That one scripture alone should be sufficient to establish once and for all that SEEING CHRIST speaks of something far more than beholding a human form riding upon a cloud. "The world seeth Me no more; but YE SEE ME." Ah, only those who have eyes to see do see! But, praise God, the day shall surely come when "EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM!"

Consider now these words of wise counsel penned by another writer: "In order to see God and have that single eye toward Him, we will have to lay aside all the doctrines of men and the theories about Him which only clutter our vision and obscure the reality of His glory. The world is full of doctrines made up of half-truths, speculations and ideas about God and His truth, which only tend to be an opiate dulling our spiritual senses and filling our vision with the cloudy mists of unbelief. But the elect shall BEHOLD THE LORD, seeing Him who is invisible to the natural man, and they shall inherit the fullness of the promises contained in the wonderful and glorious SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. The Psalmist expressed the wishes of all the sons of God, when he said, "Arise, O Lord, deliver my soul from the wicked... from men of the world, WHICH HAVE THEIR PORTION IN THIS LIFE ... AS FOR ME, I WILL BEHOLD THY FACE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS: I SHALL BE SATISFIED, WHEN I AWAKE, WITH THY LIKENESS" **(Ps. 17:13-15),** This indeed is our wish and desire, for within the heart of every true son of God there beats the lively hope of THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, and the intense desire to be delivered of the spirit of this age, "from men of the world, which have their portion in this life." We seek to behold the face of the Lord in righteousness and will only be satisfied when we awake in His likeness. Things of this world mean nothing, for our only ambition now is to SEE HIM AS HE IS" -The Living Word.

REVEALING THE FATHER

It is important that we keep in mind the enlightening truth that the Greek word PHANEROO, used of Christ's appearing, is most often used when someone is manifesting someone else, as when the Son manifested the Father, or when we manifest the indwelling Christ in our lives. The sons of God are apprehended to BECOME GOD'S CHRIST, that they, too, may REVEAL THE FATHER. This brings us to a passage of scripture, the truth of which is seldom, if ever, heard among the people of God. The preachers and teachers invariably misapply it,

but it is fundamental to our understanding of the manifestation of the sons of God and the appearing of Christ. "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: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth Himself, even as He is pure" **(I Jn. 3:1-3).**

I have quoted from the King James Version, which reads, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Some other translations say the same thing and some say - we are the children of God. That is the proper rendering as the Greek word is TEKNON which means little children or a child, instead of the Greek HUIOS which means a full grown son and is correctly translated "son" in Rom. 8:14, 19 and other places. Beloved, now - right now - we are the little children of God. And this is no small thing! "Behold, what manner of lovely God give our hearts today to be in the state of soul of the beloved disciple here presented, so overpowered with the sense of divine paternal love, as to exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God, therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him (the Father) not." Children of our heavenly Father! The offspring of God! This is our present calling and standing. We are already born of God, and the life we have from Him is Christ. This is not a question either of hope or of attainment. The grace of God has already given us life in Christ, and Christ's relationship with the Father.

Every believer is NOW a child of God; but does this give him a place of honor in this world? If any of us were a son of the queen of England, what an important place in that land would such a relationship give us! Indeed wherever we might be in the civilized world we should receive the honors due to her Majesty's son. Thank God we are HIS children! And what dignity, what honor, what place of importance, may we expect in this world as CHILDREN OF GOD? Ah, the more like the Son of God we are, the more we shall share His place of rejection in this evil age!

"Now are we the children of God; but it doth not yet APPEAR (phaneroo - is not yet manifested) what we shall be: but we know that when HE shall APPEAR (phaneroo) we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Here we have the truth brought out with great clearness and force. We know what we are - God's children. But "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The word - appear - is the Greek PHANEROO, meaning MANIFESTATION. What we shall be is not yet manifested. And what shall we be? What do all little children become? Why, ADULTS, of course! The children become sons. Sonship is a higher realm than just being children.

The future the Father has planned for His sons is away beyond our ability to comprehend or even imagine. I am overwhelmed with awe when I think of what is ahead for us. **Rom. 8:18** reads, "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." Phillip's rendering of this is beautiful: "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us." Oh! the glory of it. Who can express it! Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" **(I Cor. 2:9).** I have heard preachers attempting to describe the future glories with the most flowery language; but it didn't come anywhere near the truth. The human mind is not capable of conjuring up a picture of what the Father has prepared for His own. We can let our imagination run as wild as the wind and it will not come anywhere near comprehending the grandeur of what the Father has in mind.

Paul prayed for this understanding for us when he wrote, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling..." **(Eph. 1:17-18).** Can we know what this glorious hope is? Is there any way we can begin to comprehend it? Yes, but I doubt that we can begin to grasp the glory of it in its fullness; but the scripture says, "God reveals it to us by His Spirit." As we are able to receive some small measure of the wonder of our calling the Spirit will reveal it to us in a measure. As the Spirit begins to open the eyes of our understanding how different it is from what preachers have been telling the people for centuries, of a glory land where all is eternal day with nothing to do but sit on a cloud, play a harp, and own a little cabin somewhere in a corner of heaven.

The manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place. When they are manifested they will receive in the whole universe of God the honor due to those who are in this wondrous relationship. "We KNOW that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him." This is fully revealed to faith; we know it with divine certainty. But WHAT WE SHALL BE has not yet been manifested; if it had been, who could withhold the place of dignity due to a son of God? Thank God its manifestation hastens apace, for "when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." When He is manifested, we are like Him. No wonder that HE should be glorified and admired IN us when we are seen in His likeness. Precious counsel of God, that "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!" Thrice blessed accomplishment when the saints are so manifested in "the image of His Son" that it is evident they are the "many brethren" of that "firstborn." Sovereign pre-eminence is His! but they are owned as "brethren;" they are MANIFESTED "sons of God" - the "many sons brought to glory."

To be like Him, made in His image and likeness is the purpose of God for His sons. It is not only His purpose for His sons but also for the whole human race. This is what He had in mind when in the beginning He said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." He wasn't speaking here of the first man Adam with his wife, Eve; He was referring to the entire human race which will ultimately, in the ages to come, be brought into this same likeness. There is a firstfruits company the Lord is working on now, bringing them into this place where they will be LIKE HIM. This is the Father's purpose for this day, to bring this company to perfection and into His likeness. These are His elect, His chosen ones, His foreknown whom He did predestinate to be conformed into the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

You will never understand what it means to be a son of God until first you clearly see who it is that "appears" or is manifested in our text. The preachers have been wont to quote the words, "But we know that, when HE shall appear, we shall be like HIM; for we shall see HIM as HE is," and then apply the "He" and "Him" to our Lord Jesus Christ. This passage has been used untold thousands of time to confirm some sermon on the "second coming" of our Lord in clouds of glory to "rapture" the church. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Notice that this passage and those, which form its celestial setting, make NO REFERENCE TO JESUS CHRIST. The plain, unequivocal truth is that Jesus Christ is not mentioned even once in these verses! It has nothing whatever to do with any "second coming" of the Lord Jesus. John is not here concerned with the historical Jesus. John clearly declares that by the Father's abounding love WE are now "the children of GOD" children of the FATHER - not Jesus. Then he goes on to say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when HE (the Father - not Jesus) shall appear, we shall be like HIM (again, the Father); for we shall see HIM (the Father) AS HE IS." John is speaking to SONS and is declaring that when THE FATHER shall appear to His sons "we shall be like Him" and shall then see the Father "as He is." The entire passage addresses the relationship of the Father to His sons and the sons to their Father, and makes no reference whatever to the "coming" of Jesus Christ.

There is certainly no lack of fantastic and distorted notions among Christians, which they imagine to be truth. In the same way the teachers and preachers have taken these verses that teach of the Father and have interposed Jesus Christ, so they also have taught from these same verses that by beholding Jesus as He is we will be changed into His likeness. It is a wonderful and blessed truth that "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" **(II Cor. 3:18).** But it is an untruth and fabrication to teach that precious fact from I Jn. 3:1-3! It says nothing about seeing Jesus as He is. It is the Father. No one but the Father and His sons enters this passage. "Behold, what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us ... and we know that when HE (the Father) shall appear, WE (the sons) shall be like HIM (the Father); for WE (the sons) shall see HIM (the Father) as He is."

With all emphasis I must declare that it is not "seeing" the Father as He is that changes us into His likeness, rather, it is our becoming like Him which enables us to see Him as He is. "We know that we shall be like Him; FOR we shall see Him as He is." The fact that we see Him as He is the evidence, the proof, and the demonstration that we are finally LIKE HIM. How could we possibly "see Him as He is" in any state of being less than exactly like Him? Natural minds discern the natural. Spiritual minds discern the things of the Spirit. Natural minds cannot discern the things of the Spirit because they each belong to two distinctly different

realms. "The natural man receiveth 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).**

For natural minds to comprehend the spiritual is equally as impossible as for worms of the earth to comprehend things human. Humans are of a higher order than are worms. Worms may see men, and may observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The worm has no comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or words, or habits. Even men on different cultural, religious, and educational levels do not comprehend that which pertains to another. How much does a janitor or garbage man comprehend of the speech and knowledge and world of the nuclear physicist! How much does a single girl comprehend of motherhood! Likewise, heavenly beings are of a much higher order than are humans. There is no common ground of knowledge. Therefore humans are totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to that higher order. And so, until humans receive of God's Spirit - the Spirit of God is that which KNOWS (I Cor. 2:11) - until men receive of God's Spirit, it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, or of His Word or ways. And then after men are born of God, the depth of their knowledge is wholly in proportion to their growth in divine life. Children do not "know" their parents "as they are" nor do they comprehend the import of their words and actions.

Let me illustrate. When I met the girl who was later to become my wife she had four brothers, all living at home. When I visited Lorain at her house, one of my earliest recollections is of the almost daily feuds that erupted between the eldest son and his mother. He was a teenager at the time, self-willed, head-strong and rebellious. His head was literally filled with grandiose ideas and schemes and he had more wisdom and knowledge and was smarter by far than either his father or mother. The situation became so intense that finally Kenneth left home (Florida) and traveled to New York with a friend. There he got a job, and, as the years rolled on he met a girl, married, settled down and began to raise a family. Afterwards he and his little family moved down to Florida and lo, and behold! built a house just one block from his parents. I shall never forget the day I walked into my mother-in-law's kitchen and she and Kenneth were sitting at the dining room table, deep in discussion, reminiscing about the turbulent times they had passed through when he was a teenage boy at home. I overheard Kenneth saying, "Mama, I don't know why you didn't beat the pants off of me!" I thought, "Old boy, your memory must be failing you - she almost did!" But as I stood there that day, in one blessed instant of time the Holy Spirit flashed a revelation to my spirit. I saw that for the first time in his life Kenneth actually saw his mother AS SHE IS. No longer was she the ignorant, stupid, insensible, misunderstanding, mean and repressive woman he had known as a boy. It was truly remarkable what a vast storehouse of wisdom and knowledge and understanding she had gained within the brief space of a few years! But she hadn't changed - he had!

Now he could see her as she really was BECAUSE HE HAD BECOME LIKE HER. Growth, experience, maturity, responsibility - these were the factors that caused him to now view his mother from the mature perspective of a man, an adult. Ah - at that moment the revelation broke within my bosom, sweeping like a giant tidal wave through my understanding: WE CAN ONLY SEE GOD AS HE IS WHEN WE BECOME LIKE HIM! It is not seeing Him as He is that transforms us into His likeness; it is transformation into His likeness that enables us to see Him as He is - THE FATHER OF LOVE. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed..." The intent of I Jn. 3:2 is to show that at the time of HIS APPEARING or HIS MANIFESTATION His sons shall already be in the state of BEING LIKE HIM. It is a work that must be accomplished previous to His manifestation, a prerequisite for His manifestation, indeed, He CANNOT APPEAR until we are like Him and see Him as He is!

There must come within our being the harmony of the outer and the inner, when He appears we must appear like Him. He cannot appear to the outer world in any more capacity than we give Him to appear. When we appear LIKE HIM then that which He is appears through us. He cannot manifest through anything less than the image of Himself. The greater cannot flow through the lesser without restriction and limitation. To be like Him, to see Him as He is, guarantees the manifestation of Himself through us!

Hawthorne has given profound truth in pictorial form in his allegory, "THE GREAT STONE FACE." The young man, Ernest, had heard, when a child, from his mother's lips, the local prophecy, that some day there would

come to the valley an exact resemblance of the Great Stone Face which they could see in the neighboring mountain, and being the greatest and noblest personage of the time, should be a great blessing to those among whom he lived; and he had taken the prophecy more seriously than the other inhabitants of the valley. As he had greater faith, he had the power of seeing more clearly than his neighbors the grandeur of the strange stony outline, and the hope of its fulfillment entered more deeply into his life. When one and another came and seemed to be the fulfillment of the prophecy, he saw they did not answer to the word, but the Great Stone Face seemed to say, "Fear not, Ernest, he will come." As he thus dearly cherished the hope of the great man's coming, he gave himself to doing good, and so mighty became his character that the people said, "The man resembles the Great Stone Face." His belief so molded his actions, that the hope configured his features, so that without his conscious knowledge or effort Ernest had himself BECOME THE FULFILLMENT of the prophecy. So with the manifestation of the Father - He shall appear, we shall be like Him when He appears, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall become the very fulfillment of HIS APPEARING! Hallelujah!

EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE

Are we LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING? If we are there is something we should be doing now. Listen to this! "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it, doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when HE SHALL APPEAR WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him PURIFIETH HIMSELF, even as He is pure." Many are looking for His appearing and quote this verse seemingly believing that a sudden transformation into His likeness shall take place at His appearing. Not so! There will be no sudden transformation, my friend, when we see Him at His appearing. We had better get our eyes on Him now, purifying ourselves to be even as pure as He is pure. How does one purify himself? We purify ourselves in obedience to the truth (I Pet. 1:22). When He comes near, when He speaks, when He deals - obey, abandon, yield yourself!

"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. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" **(II Cor. 6:17 - 7:1).** We have something to do about this. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" for "what fellowship hath light with darkness, what concord hath Christ with Belial, what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of the living God, therefore... let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

The pure in heart shall SEE GOD, and every man that hath the hope of SEEING HIM AS HE IS purifieth himself. To purify oneself is to "unmix the heart" so that there is no mixture of that which is soulish and that which is spiritual. It is to depart from every goal and every aim in life except the Lord Himself, to cease all activity except that which is produced by the Spirit, to have an eye single to God's glory and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. All things must bow low before the will of God.

So many saints are very much in the position of a blind man in a beautiful flower garden. All around him are glorious colors; but he is quite unaware of them. If we suppose him to also be devoid of the sense of smell, we shall see what a very small part of the glory of the garden exists for him. And if we further suppose him to have no hands, we shall see how the garden practically does not exist for him at all. Yet it is all there, if he could but sense it! Have we not all been condemned to a far greater tragedy in that we have been planted by the power of a new spirit and a new heart inside the very portals of the Kingdom of God and have walked in the very midst of the eternal glories of heaven, but our hearts have been so mingled with the clatter of this world that our eyes have not been able to see them, our ears have been dead to their sounds of joy, our nostrils unable to smell their fragrance, our hands unable to lay hold upon the eternal glory.

The inspired George MacDonald wrote: "None but the pure in heart see God; only the growing-pure hope to see Him. Even those who saw the Lord, the express image of His person, did not see God. They only saw Jesus - and then but the outside Jesus, or a little more. They were not pure in heart; they saw Him and did not see Him. They saw Him with their eyes, but not with those eyes, which alone can see God. Those were not

born in them yet. Neither the eyes of the resurrection-body, nor the eyes of unembodied spirits can see God; only the eyes of that eternal something that is of the very essence of God, the thought-eyes, the truth-eyes, the love-eyes, can see Him. It is not because we are created and He uncreated, it is not because of any difference involved in that difference of all differences, that we cannot see Him. If He pleased to take a shape, and that shape were presented to us, and we saw that shape, we should not therefore be seeing God. Even if we knew it was a shape of God - call it even God Himself our eyes rested upon; if we had been told the fact and believed the report; yet, if we did not see the GODNESS ... we should not be seeing God, we should only be seeing the tabernacle in which for the moment He dwelt. In other words, not seeing what in the form made it a form fit for Him to take, we should not be seeing a presence, which could only be God. To see God is to stand on the highest point of being. Not until we see God - no partial and passing embodiment of Him, but the abiding presence - do we stand upon our own mountain-top, the height of the existence God has given us, and up to which He is leading us. That there we should stand, is the end of our creation. This truth is at the heart of everything, means all kinds of completions, may be uttered in many ways; but language will never compass it, for form will never contain it. We not only may, but we must so KNOW HIM and it can never be until we are pure in heart. Then shall we know Him with the infinitude of an ever-growing knowledge" -end quote.

Had you been beside Moses during his forty days in the heart of the cloud, when He saw God face to face, you would not have seen Him if you had not been holy. Had you stood beside the Martyr Stephen, when he beheld the glory of God, and the Son of man standing beside Him, your eyes would have discerned nothing if you had not been holy. Yea, if it were possible for you to stand within the pearly gate (were there such a thing!); you would not see the sheen, as it were, of sapphire; you would carry with you your own circumference of darkness; and the radiant vision would vanish as you approached. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The one condition for seeing God in His Word, in nature, in daily life, in circumstances, in the darkness and pain of the present travail, in the affairs of men and nations, in closer-fellowship, in intimate communion, in vital union, yea, in all things, is holiness of heart wrought there by His own indwelling. My brother, my sister, follow after holiness as men pursue pleasure; as the athlete runs for the prize; as the votary of fashion follows in the wake of the crowd.

EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

It should be abundantly clear that only SONS conformed to HIS IMAGE can ever S-E-E GOD. "And we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." But the hope that now looms bright before us, HIS FIRSTFRUITS, is the same hope that abides for ALL MANKIND. Truly, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," and just as surely, "EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM" **(Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 1:7).** What a hope!

Another beautiful illustration is found in Lk. 2:25-30, when Simeon, who had received the promise from God that he should not see death until he had SEEN the Lord's Christ, came by the Spirit into the temple, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child Jesus. "Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: FOR MINE EYES HAVE S-E-E-N THY SALVATION." What kind of eyesight is this? A little babe in the arms of his mother, and yet Simeon's eyes were opened to see - not just the form of the babe, but THY SALVATION! This certainly was not an uncommon sight, mothers were constantly coming into the temple with their children, to do for them after the custom of the law. And no doubt there was a vast multitude of other people in the temple on that day; they, too, saw the babe in the arms of his mother, but they did not see THY SALVATION, for having eyes, they saw not - "and the world knew Him not."

When the scripture said: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER," which is the vision of Habakkuk, which is the word of Isaiah: "ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE GLORY OF GOD" (Luke says: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God"), God is saying the same to the world today, in saying to us who have received the call to sonship: THE SONS OF GOD ARE TO BE THE SALVATION OF GOD UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. "That they might be unto Me for a people, for a name, for a praise and for a glory" **(Jer. 13:11).** The unveiling of the sons of God is the unveiling of the glory of God. "This people have I formed for Myself. They shall show forth My praise" **(Isa. 43:21).**

When the glory of God is to be revealed, which is the salvation of God, it will be the unveiling of the sons of God. For "saviours shall come up on Mount Zion and shall judge the mount of Esau" **(Ob. 21)**. God is raising up in these days a church of living stones, over whom Christ the capstone is reigning. God is raising up today sons, who are in union with the first begotten of the Father, "the firstborn among many brethren." God is raising up lights today who will "shine in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation." So all flesh must see the church, all flesh must see the body of Christ, all flesh must see the sons of God, for they are the hope of all creation (Rom. 8:19-20). In Isa. 49:6 God said to His elect: "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that THOU MAYEST_B-E_M-Y_S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N_UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH."

When the Kingdom of God fills the earth, the earth will be filled with righteousness. WE ARE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. The earth will be filled with righteous sons! When the glory of God is revealed, the earth will be flooded with the light of God. WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. The earth will be flooded with a glorious shining people! When the salvation of God is manifested, the sons of God will be seen, for we are raised up to BE HIS SALVATION unto the ends of the. earth. The earth will be filled with a fully-saved people!

And let me say today, the reason the world will know the church and the body of Christ and the sons of God to be the salvation of God, is because God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh and all the ends of the earth shall SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD. All humanity, with that quickening of the Spirit, will have their eyes enlightened to SEE in the body of Christ the salvation of God, to SEE in the sons of God the glory of God and the salvation of God. Yes, my beloved, both statements are wondrously true: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," and "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and EVERY EYE SHALL S-E-E H-I-M!" Glory to God!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 16
THE COMING OF THE MORNING STAR

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART SIXTEEN

FINDING CHRIST BY THE LIVING
THE STAR THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE
I WILL GIVE YOU THE MORNING STAR
THE DAY OF THE LORD

Astronomy is the oldest science that is known to man. Last night on top of Mount Wilson and at Palomar in California men kept a lonely vigil through the night looking at the stars, and they are looking at the stars in a new way. They are looking at them for a new meaning. Actually, they are looking out there trying to find a place for man to go. The Word of God turns man's attention repeatedly to the heavens. "The heavens declare the glory of God... day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" **(Ps. 19:1-2).** The heavens do not speak English, yet they speak to every Englishman and every American. The heavens do not speak French, but they speak to every Frenchman. They do not speak Spanish, still they speak to every Spaniard. They speak in every language to every people. The Old Testament closes with God directing man to look to the heavens. God says, in effect, "Look up to the heavens, and don't miss it, because it's important!" "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" **(Mal. 4:2).** The Old Testament closes pointing a finger to the East, to the sunrise, proclaiming that all who fear the Lord are to look in that direction because there is the promise of sunrise. The Old Testament is expectation, it doesn't conclude anything. But it points to the heavens. It points us to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, arising with healing rays over the horizon of this earth-realm. And, brothers and sisters, that is a fitting figure, because the Lord comes to usher in a NEW DAY.

The Old Testament ends with the glorious promise of the arising of the Sun of Righteousness. But the New Testament does not begin with the Sun of Righteousness. Wise men came from the East and walked down the streets of Jerusalem and said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His STAR in the East." Not the sun, but the star. God hung in the heavens something supernatural, something new, something divinely glorious - a star. And out of the East, these men who had been studying the stars, began to converge on Jerusalem. And if you think there were just three little wise men there, you need to read the story again. There were probably three hundred! I don't think for one moment that three men from Persia could have caused such a commotion in Jerusalem. Matthew says that at their appearance king Herod was troubled - greatly disturbed - and THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM WITH HIM. They came from every direction. They came from all the countries of the mysterious Orient. And they said, "We have seen His star, and we've come to worship Him."

Now how did they come to associate the coming of Christ, as a King with a star? If you want to know where they got it you will have to get into the gondola of a heathen prophet and go up with him. Back in the book of Numbers this heathen prophet who had a message from God said this, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a STAR out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth... out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion" **(Num. 24:17-19).** "I shall see Him, but not now (the One of whom I am speaking is not present yet): I shall behold Him, but not nigh (this is not going to happen within the foreseeable future): there shall come a STAR out Jacob..." Out there in a pagan, heathen land there was given this prophecy to the Gentiles that a STAR was coming! They were to watch for a star, if you please. They had that prophecy in that area of the world. They were looking for a star, and when they saw it they converged on Jerusalem.

The star in Matthew chapter two is just the beginning of this matter in the New Testament. If we go to the last book, the book of Revelation, we see two things: the first is that the Lord Jesus is the star, not the evening star but the Morning Star (Rev. 22:16); secondly, we see that all the stars mentioned in the book are people. We

have so frequently discussed the symbolism of the book of Revelation that there will be no need to remind those who read these lines that every sentence in this marvelous book has a symbolical and figurative significance and stands for some SPIRITUAL REALITY. The language of the Bible is the language of symbols.

The sweet singer of Israel ran his skilled fingers elegantly across the strings of the harp while by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he intoned these majestic words: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun" **(Ps. 19:1-4).** Surely there is something more referred to here than a mere wonder excited by the works of the Creator! When we read the whole Psalm and mark its structure, and note the words employed, we are emphatically told that the heavens contain a revelation from God; they prophesy, they show knowledge, they tell of God's glory, and set forth His purposes and counsels.

On a clear, moonless night the stars overhead are a wonderful sight. If the weather is warm, we can easily become engulfed in the awesome spectacle. The overwhelming variety, the mind-boggling distances, and the intriguing patterns soon capture our imagination. Only the cool night wind or the reminder from the back of the neck that we are not accustomed to looking up for so long will bring, us back to earth sooner than we might like.

A star is a huge ball of glowing gas in the sky. The sun is a star. It is the only star close enough to the earth to look like a ball. The other billions of stars are so far away that they are no more than pinpoints of light - if they can be seen at all. There are more than 200 billion, billion stars. Suppose that everyone in the world were to count the stars. Each person could count more than 50 billion of them without the same star being counted twice. Stars are enormous objects. The largest stars would more than fill the space between the earth and the sun. One star can measure more than 100 million miles across! We can hardly imagine the great distances that separate the stars. The star nearest the sun is more than 25 million, million miles away from the sun. But even this great distance is only one-billionth the distance from the sun to the farthest stars. Gazing upon the multitude of stars that shine in the nocturnal heavens, one might despair of ever reading anything intelligible in their design - they seem to be so scattered, so entirely without order, spread with such confusion over the face of the sky. And so far away, so silent.

Some time ago our daughter took an aptitude test to discover her career abilities, or what she is best at. She came across questions that were expressed in this way: "A group of four things are set before you; three of them have something in common and one of them seems out of place. Find the one that does not belong." How about a little test right now. In the first chapter of the Bible we read "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" **(Gen. 1:16).** Again, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" **(Gen. 1:14).** Of the four things set before us in this verse did not one of them seem strangely out of place? Some one is asking, "What four?" Notice again: "...and let them be for SIGNS, and for SEASONS, and for DAYS, and YEARS." Does one of them seem out of place? It would be obvious to everyone with even an elementary knowledge of astronomy that the heavenly bodies have a great deal to say about our YEARS, our DAYS and our SEASONS. But how are they SIGNS? What is a sign? Perhaps the best way to answer our question is by answering another question first. What, precisely is the purpose of a "sign"? Is it not to proclaim a message? To give information? To tell a story which is important to the one who put up the sign? A sign is also something arbitrarily selected and appointed to represent some other thing. To SPIRITUALLY comprehend the creative record, we must admit that God intended these orbs of light as expressions of some special teaching; something different and higher far than what is naturally deducible from them. Stop there for just a moment. Ask yourself what the inspired Psalmist means when he says that every day speaks to him and to us. What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of KNOWLEDGE? To whom does he refer when he says that there is no place on earth where the language or speech of men is spoken that "their voice is not heard"?

FINDING CHRIST BY THE LIVING STAR

There are signs in the heavens! There are stars revealed in the Word of God, which portray the plan and purpose of God. In this study we want to consider the mystery of the Morning Star, the identification of the Morning Star and what it represents to us in the spirit. The Morning Star is mentioned twice in the book of Revelation and is involved with Jesus and with the promise of the Lord to the overcomers. What or who is the Morning Star? Come and see! "And, behold, I COME QUICKLY ... I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last ... I am the root and the offspring of David, and THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR" **(Rev. 22:12-16).**

The Lord Himself is the Morning Star. I do not hesitate to tell you that to see Christ is to behold the Morning Star. To know Christ is to know the Morning Star. To experience Christ is to experience the Morning Star. How can we find Christ? How can we see and touch and experience the Christ? This was the same problem that confronted the wise men of old. One thing is certain. To find Christ is a living matter; it is not by a knowledge of the Bible and doctrines and Church traditions. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. There is no doubt about this - it is an historical fact. The strange thing, however, is this: far away from the so-called Holy Land, far away from the religion of the Jews, far away from the glistening walls of the temple, far away from the sacred books of the Law, far away from the bleeding sacrifices, far away from the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and all the fervent and incessant religious activities, there appeared a star bearing the revelation of the Christ in a heathen land. It did not appear to the Pharisees or the priests or the scribes or even to the king of Israel, but to men in a pagan land. Today, all the Churches, all the preachers and teachers tell the people that they must find and know Christ by the Bible. But the first case of finding Christ in the world was not by the Bible! The wise men were not reading the Bible as they rode along the way to Jerusalem. These men had seen something that no man before them had ever seen. Their eyes and minds and hearts had received the sweet sound of a message so transcendingly glorious that it compelled them to make a journey that lasted for two whole years.

You see, precious friend of mine, merely to hold the Bible in your hand and read Micah 5:2 (revealing that Christ would be born in Bethlehem), as did the scribes in Jerusalem, is not sufficient. You may read all the prophecies and all the promises and all the great statements of God's wonderful plan and purpose and provision. You may confess after you have read it that you have got it. You may name it and claim it, but you have not seen it. The chief priests and scribes in Israel knew the scriptures forward and backward, but the Lord did not appear to them. He went far away to a heathen land to reveal the Christ to some heathen, not through the scriptures, but through something, which no human hand can ever touch - a heavenly star! To hold the book in your hand is easy, but to look unto the star is another matter. Like so many Christians of our day, those priests and scribes rejoiced in and revered the things they read in the book, but their hearts could not comprehend nor were they able to recognize the vital truth and reality of the message. They had the book, but their eyes had never seen the star - so they could not find the Christ! No one knows just when or where or how the star will appear. But I can assure you of one thing - you may attend the greatest seminary and understand all the theology and receive the highest degree conferred upon one in that, and never see the star or find the Christ. We may think that the star should have appeared to the priests praying in the temple, but it appeared to pagans in a distant land.

Oh! that we may see this star. What is the star? The star is the LIVING REVELATION, the QUICKENING VISION of the Christ wrought in the heart by the illuminating activity of the Holy Spirit. The star is not the dead letter of the Word, the outer shell or husk of the truth. What is needed today is not the knowledge of static creeds and lifeless traditions, not empty ceremonies and impotent programs, not more religious activities, but the heavenly vision, the celestial glow and gleam, the holy brightness and brilliance of THE STAR, the vision that carnal concepts can never reach. Ah, my friend, what have you? Do you have the Bible, do you have religion, do you have Church meetings, or do you have the star? Do you know all the verses, claim all the promises, and stand on all the doctrines, or do you have the heavenly star? Are you clinging to the dying embers of yesterday's revelation and yesterday's move of God, or are you following the on-going path of the Living Star?

You see, the wise men need not to have gone to Jerusalem at all. The Christ child was not in Jerusalem. And when they did find Him they found Him not in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth; not in a stable, but in a house (see our booklet "Five Reasons Why The Sons Of God Should Not Celebrate Christmas" - available upon request). When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem king Herod called the chief priests and scribes together and inquired

of them where Christ should be born. The scribes were the Bible Professors of that day. Immediately they answered, "Bethlehem!" And they showed him chapter and verse - Micah 5:2. But did any of them hurry off to Bethlehem to find the King and worship Him? Not one! They were troubled by the news, but no one had revelation enough to go see what had happened. The Jewish leaders had all the religious head-knowledge, all the theology and dogmatics, but the wise men had the Living Star!

Then the wise men departed from Jerusalem, and we read this astounding statement, "Lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them...when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." When you get into religion, you miss the star, but when you leave religion, the star appears to you. Things have not changed in two thousand years. I would impress upon every saint of God who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship to God that you cannot get living guidance from the ministers of the harlot church system; you cannot receive the heavenly vision in religion; you have to leave. When they departed from Jerusalem, lo, THE STAR WENT BEFORE THEM till it came and stood where the young child was. The heavenly star led them to the very spot, into the living presence of the Christ. This is all we need. Let no one misunderstand my words. I am not saying we have no need of the scriptures. Do we need the knowledge of the scriptures? Of course we do! The wise men had, without doubt, received the wonderful prophecy handed down from generation to generation, uttered long centuries before by the prophet Balaam, proclaiming, "There shall come a star out of Jacob!" How else would they have known what King they sought? This was very helpful. BUT THEY COULD NEVER HAVE FOUND THE CHRIST WITH THAT INFORMATION. Only the living guidance of the star could bring them to the Christ.

We want to see that star today. Oh what bursting there must have been in the bosom of the Seer of Patmos as the sublime words of Jesus swept like a thunderous tidal wave over his awakened consciousness! "I AM the root and the offspring of David, and THE BRIGHT AND THE MORNING STAR." From the desolation of Patmos John had beheld the natural Morning Star many a time after a night of storm, floating in the infinite spaces of the morning darkness. In our solar system the Morning Star is that bright planet - Venus which at some seasons of the year appears so beautifully in the east, at the darkest hour of the night, leading on the morning - the harbinger of the day. Paul said, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" **(Rom. 13:2).** The hour spoken of by the apostle is that time just before the dawn - the darkest part of the night. It is the time of the Morning Star. The Morning Star is the last great star of the night season, the brightest star of all the stars that adorn the canopy of the heavens at night. In fact, it is still visible as the sun spreads its first rays over the horizon. It is the last star to disappear into the surpassing glory of the dawn.

THE STAR THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE

The appearance of Christ as the Morning Star is a most glorious manifestation of the Lord to His elect. It is amazing how one fresh word of revelation from the Lord can change the whole course of our understanding and give us renewed hope and a fresh vision of the necessary dealings and processings of God in our lives to usher us onward into His fullness. I have been inspired and encouraged with this precious truth. This is indeed a revelation of the Lord's purpose and ways that has inspired within new understanding, confidence and anticipation of the glory that lies before. It is my deep desire that all who read this message shall be encouraged in their forward walk in Christ.

There is a remarkable and illuminating passage of scripture **in II Pet. 1:16-19.** "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS."

There has been a world of misunderstanding and misinformation connected with these significant words of Peter. Peter said that we have a sure word of prophecy. We are admonished to give heed unto this sure word of prophecy until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts. It cannot be disputed that most Christians have carelessly assumed that that sure word of prophecy is the Holy Scriptures. But the sure word is not the

Bible! Peter does not merely state that we have received a sure word of prophecy. I would draw your reverent attention to his exact words. This is very important. "WE A-L-S-O have a M-O-R-E sure word of prophecy." Then he goes on to say in the subsequent verses that the prophecy came not in OLDEN TIMES by the will of man: but "holy men of God SPAKE as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost" **(II Pet. 1:21).** The message is just this: in OLDEN TIMES holy men of God SPAKE as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and this record is the scriptures (vs. 20). But now, WE A-L-S-O have received a word - a M-O-R-E SURE WORD of prophecy. We also ... likewise ... in like manner ... furthermore ... in addition to ... beyond that which was spoken in olden times...WE ALSO have received a word of prophecy which is even MORE SURE than that uttered of old. And what is this more sure word of prophecy, which we now have? It is the revelation Peter and the disciples received on the holy mount with Christ!

The record of the dazzling-glory of Christ's transfiguration is gathered from the accounts of the three Gospel writers. "He was transfigured before them," says Matthew, "and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." To this Mark adds this descriptive sentence: "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Luke in his account adds the significant statement, "His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering." The significance of the word GLISTER is that that which glistens is merely reflecting light as a bright object might reflect the light of the sun, but that which glisters shines from light that comes from within itself. It was in this manner of animated illumination that Jesus was seen in transfiguration. The light, which He really is was shining as the sun from within Himself. He IS LIGHT, even as a star IS LIGHT.

With overwhelming awe these three men awakened from the drowsiness of their sleep, for they had been sleeping (Lk. 9:32), to gaze in wonder at the magnificence of the transfigured form of their Master. It was many years after this heavenly event that Peter wrote, "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty." The word MAJESTY occurs only three times in scripture. Once it is translated MIGHTY POWER, once MAGNIFICENCE, and once MAJESTY. It speaks of splendor, beauty, glory and power and that which overwhelms the human mind, enlightening the believer to the beauty of holiness, subduing the nature and inciting to the depths of veneration and adoration. As we consider this marvelous experience we should especially notice this most meaningful statement spoken when our Lord Jesus Christ received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM" (Mat. 17:5).

What did Peter, James and John see on that mount? There was the blessed Lord Jesus, with Moses and Elijah, the type of two things - the law and the prophets. There you have two men - the greatest of all lawgivers, and one who epitomizes in the most splendid manner all that the prophetic mantle embodies. And in the presence of these the heavenly Father gives all glory and honor unto His Son with the command to the disciples: "Hear ye Him." HEAR HIM! When the disciples heard it they fell on their faces, seized by alarm and struck with terrifying fear. All their life times they had been instructed to give the utmost respect and unfailing obedience to every sacred word of Moses and the prophets. But Jesus came and touched them, and said, Get up, and do not be afraid. And when they raised their eyes they saw no man but Jesus only. The message is clear - the law and the prophets have forever passed away, and today there is just THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" **(Rev. 19:10).** This the voice of the Son of God, the indwelling testimony of Jesus, the inward illumination of the Christ within as the spirit of prophecy, IS THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY WHICH WE HAVE.

Hear what the apostle says about this more sure word of prophecy. "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL the day dawn, and the DAY STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS" **(II Pet. 1:19).** Two-foldedness is the teaching here, both in type and antitype; they fit each other in the law of the analogue as hand and glove, and each bears conclusive witness of the other. First, there is the light that shines in a dark place. Second, there is the Day Star that arises in the heart, bringing in the dawn or brightness of the day. Every person understands what the Morning Star is. The Morning Star appears at the darkest part of the night. It rises above the horizon suddenly just before the blackest part of the night. It is seen and greeted only by a few who are watching for it. The rest of the world is asleep. Only astronomers and heaven gazers and waiters-for-the-dawn see the Morning Star. The sun, on the contrary, floods the whole world with light and awakens and gives life to all nature. Before its illuminating rays the darkness and shadows

of night are scattered. The Morning Star is not daylight. You never saw a man wakened up in the morning by the Morning Star. You must get up early to see the Morning Star. What wakes people up in the morning is the streaming sunlight - it is daylight. The Morning Star is all very good for a man in the dark morning, but the Morning Star is not the day.

Two-foldedness is the thought which leaps along all the lines proclaiming the coming of our Lord as Light: He comes as the Morning Star, as a light shining out in the darkness; and then He comes as the Day Star, as the sun arising in all its strength and majesty, bringing in the day. The most notable of all stars is that star which is called the sun. The sun is the center of our solar system. All the planets of our solar system revolve around the sun. In the scripture the sun is called the Day Star - it is the star of the day. It is the one star in God's vast universe, which gives us the light of day. And just as the natural sun is the center of our physical solar system, so the spiritual sun, or Day Star, is the center of our spiritual solar system. The Day Star typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He is spoken of in Mal. 4:2 as the Sun of Righteousness who arises with healing in His rays. Peter calls Him the Day Star, which arises IN OUR HEARTS. The entire Kingdom of God revolves around this Sun of Righteousness who is the Day Star. The saints of God revolve around the Lord Jesus Christ, the center of our spiritual solar system. Those who would do away with the central supremacy of THE SON are manifestly "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness to the age" **(Jude 13).** HE is the center of all things in God to His creation. When does the Day Star appear? The Day Star appears when the night season ends. The Day Star, the arising of the sun, signals the ending of the night. The darkening of the sun in scripture always speaks of the obscuring of Jesus. Any time the operation and manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is blotted out through apostasy, carnality or unbelief, the darkness of night falls upon the hearts of men.

Do you inquire what is the Morning Star? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is the Sun of Righteousness? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus seen, experienced and known in a totally different dimension. The symbols proclaim it. 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 comes at the hour when the night is disputing with the morn. It comes when all the lowlands are 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 sines 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 one transition hour from darkness into light. 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 waken them. All the heavens own the coming. They turn into rose and amber and purple of amethyst; they flame and flash, they seem to swoon in glory till the edge of heaven and the edge of earth melt into one undefined, shivering, unequal line of splendor; 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. His coming is compared to the Morning Star. He comes to us like that bright and morning star. 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; when the mountain heights of pride, ego, self-centeredness and self-will stand out in their self-appointed majesty against the heavenly ways and divine will of the precious mind of Christ Jesus. He descends in noiseless softness as the star of the morning, indicating an imminent change, a transformation, that the morning comes; it is a pledge of the 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.

His coming is also compared to the sunrise. He will come, a bow will be given unto Him, and He shall go forth conquering and to conquer. There will be the "light of His arrows and the shining of His glittering spear." He shall arise with healing in His wings. Aye! But the healing shall be the health of fire consuming iniquity, the fire that leaves neither root nor branch of evil. By the purifying, transforming, healing rays of the Sun of

Righteousness we shall be changed into His likeness, the night in us swallowed up by God's great Day. The coming of Christ is as star-light and sun-rise. And how we praise God for both!

I WILL GIVE YOU THE MORNING STAR

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works 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. AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR" **(Rev. 2:26-29).** I want to show you a mystery about the Morning Star. We have indicated to you that the Day Star is the sun, because it is the Day Star that brings the dawn, the day. The sun typifies Jesus Christ in all His blazing glory bringing in the fullness of light and dispelling the night. Anyone who possesses even an elementary knowledge of astronomy knows immediately that the Day Star and the Morning Star are not the same star. The Morning Star is a different star than the Day Star. And Jesus, in speaking to the overcomers who shall rule the nations, says to these overcomers concerning this power to rule the nations, "I'm going to give you something; I'm going to give you something called the MORNING STAR." That Morning Star embodies within it the nature and qualities of your power over the nations, and indicates the purpose and result of that rule.

The Morning Star is promised to all who "overcome" and who walk with Christ in blessed submission to God. Inasmuch as Christ declared Himself to be "the Morning Star" and He promised to GIVE this Morning Star to all who overcome, then it is obvious that something unique and special of Christ is imparted to the Lord's faithful overcomers. This is a "coming" of the Lord you will seldom, if ever, hear anything about from the preachers and teachers of the harlot church system. The television evangelists, who love to flaunt the "rapture" before their undiscerning audiences, know nothing of this coming of our Lord as the Morning Star. But the giving of the Morning Star involves an impartation of the Christ. The Morning Star is a glory of the Christ within, as HE shines in the darkness of our weakness and inability and frustration GIVING A VISION OF AND HOPE FOR THE DAWNING OF THE FULL DAY. During our spiritual growth unto full stature, the Christ within has been developing from experience to experience, from strength to strength, from hope to hope. And now He comes to impart to a people the glorious hope of the day - THE TOTAL VICTORY AND COMPLETE TRIUMPH OF THE CHRIST LIFE WITHIN THE ELECT, AND THE WONDERFUL BLESSING,AND DELIVERANCE OF ALL MANKIND THAT ENSUES.

How pathetic that for vast multitudes of believers today their one cherished hope is to escape this planet and live forever in some far-off heaven somewhere. And they would abandon the teeming billions of earth to writhing endlessly in the unspeakable horrors of damnation and hell, while they flit about in white night gowns over the Elysium fields of that glory world above. These poor deluded souls have absolutely no concept of God's glorious DAY prepared for all mankind! Their sole interest appears to be in saving their own necks, along with the trifling hand-full of saints captured from the hands of an almost-omnipotent devil.

Again, I ask, 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 watching during 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 the long night of sin and death is almost over, and the Day is not far hence.

How plain, how practical the application! There is a remnant of God's people over the whole earth that have taken heed to the word of prophecy as to a light that shines in a dark place. The Morning Star has shined in their hearts, foretelling the approach of Eternal Day at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness. This remnant have fixed their eyes upon Jesus, they are looking away from all the darkness of this world, from the chaos of

sin, sickness, pain, rebellion, crime, drugs, 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 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. But all things are out of order, in frightful chaos. The curse must be lifted, every enemy put under our feet. Divine order for the universe must be restored. All creation is groaning and crying for release from the curse of sin, decay and death. And everything hinges on that body of SONS that are to be manifested in that perfect state of divine order. And those who receive of this victory and glory, the wonderful mind of Christ, conformed to the image of the Son, with a full and complete triumph over sin, carnality and death, in spirit, soul and body - do not these make up that blessed company TO WHOM IS GIVEN THE MORNING STAR? And, in thus receiving the Morning Star, do they not in turn BECOME THE MORNING STAR? Flooded with HIS LIFE AND LIGHT they become the herald, the harbinger of the near-approaching dawn.

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 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 shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God" **(Rom. 8:21).** The Word of God, as well as the witness of the Spirit, makes us know that this is not for some other generation. It is now! It is here! Be ready! Prepare yourself! Cast aside all doubt and fear! The Morning Star is being given to the saints of the Most High! Victory over every enemy is arising in a people - the MORNING STAR COMPANY!

Ah, yes, the mists and shades of night are all about. In fact, it is darker than ever before. That tells us what time it is! Sin abounds. The love of multitudes has waxed cold. The wanton harlot, Mystery Babylon the great, sits exalted astride the nations and reigns as a queen over the earth. Violence fills the lands. As in the days of Noah, every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts is only evil continually. But in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation is a people - a people whose hearts have been charged from above - a people who have been given the Morning Star - and they hail the rising orb of light that tarries but a little until the Sun of Righteousness brings in the dawn. The whole creation shall be gladdened by the dawning of "a morning without clouds" - the opening of a bright and never-ending DAY OF GLORY! Those to whom the Morning Star has been given, those blessed saints unto whom has been committed the word of universal reconciliation, those who have received the call to sonship, who yield themselves unto God to be transformed in mind and heart, in spirit, soul and body, conformed into the image of God's Son; these, I declare, ARE GOD'S MORNING STAR COMPANY. And as of old, the morning stars are now prepared to sing together, and all the sons of God shall again shout for joy!

On a personal level, all that ultimately shall be fulfilled collectively and universally, is first accomplished individually within God's elect sons. The meaning to the individual of receiving the Morning Star is that a new day is prepared to dawn in our experience. It signifies the awakening of the heart, the quickening of the mind, the infusion of light and understanding, the up-springing of hope and purpose, and the stirring of faith to apprehend new heights and realms and realities in God. A whole new state of consciousness is coming to fruit in us. A new day lies before us. And the Morning Star is the Christ within bringing into focus the consciousness and energy of that fresh unfoldment of HIS LIFE.

All of the vision is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ who is the "I AM." So we look for the new day, HE IS THE NEW DAY, And its dawning reality within is vitally a part of HIS COMING. He is that "LIGHT that shineth in a dark place," and as He comes to us, finally "the day dawns, and the day star arises in our hearts." And in very truth, for us the new day has begun!

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart;
I have light in my soul - for which long I have sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Yet what we now have within as the Morning Star is but the foretaste of that greater dawning still to be realized. And there are periods of time when it seems to us that HE TARRIES, for we understand not what He meant when He said, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father" (Jn. 16:16). We long for Him, yearn for Him, we thirst for the fullness of His life, and we find it difficult to wait even "a little while." We can watch the clock, scrutinize the changes taking place within, observe the signs of the times, analyze every prophecy spoken, and fret ourselves with the "time element," or we can set our gaze firmly upon Him, knowing that HE HAS APPOINTED THE TIME OF THE DAWN, and He will bring us to His time.

Yes, the night is far spent, praise God! There are cycles of the DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL as the Spirit brings to light realms of darkness within us of which we were not previously aware, until we are overwhelmed with our own darkness. The dark cycles sweep over us, pressures from within and without, deep-rooted tentacles of the self-life, carnal reactions that lay undiscovered, corruption hidden in the depth of the heart, until just the appropriate circumstances are arranged by Father's wise hand to draw them forth. But, praise God! there is within that darkness THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE, CHRIST WITHIN AS THE MORNING STAR, INSPIRING HOPE OF THE DAWN. It is common with man to judge after the seeing of the eye and the hearing of the ear, and during the black of the night we despair that release will ever come. But there is another realm, deeper yet, the realm "of spirit," and we can commune with our own spirit which becomes one with His spirit, and find there is a light within, the Morning Star, as the Psalmist said, "The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" **(Ps. 18:28).**

"Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" **(Ps. 19:2).** The workings of God come in these cycles of night and day. God sends the blessings, the movings of the Spirit, the quickenings, the illuminations and they carry you through a time of darkness. Then as things seem to ease up a bit, pressures lift, victory breaks through, and a morning appears. Glory streams through your day. The Sun of Righteousness has arisen. Yet comes the next cycle of processing, the shadows deepen into darkness, and you cry out for the Lord to enlighten your darkness, and, bless His name! fresh quickenings from within carry you through another night of testing.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. YE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT, AND THE CHILDREN OF THE DAY: WE ARE NOT OF THE NIGHT, NOR OF DARKNESS" **(I Thes. 5:1-5).**

I know what the church system has taught, but they taught a lie. They teach that the Day of the Lord is the seven-year tribulation at the end of the age. They have no scriptural foundation. The Day of the Lord is that special period of time, not twenty-four hours, and not one singular time, when the Almighty God actively manifests Himself in dealings to end unrighteousness and establish the reign of His righteousness. Many individuals and churches and nations through history have encountered their own unique "Day of the Lord," their Hour of Visitation. I am making known a DAY unto you, beloved, and the day I am proclaiming is the Day of the Lord, and it is upon us now. We must not be established upon the traditions of the elders or the doctrines of men. We must allow the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to unfold Christ, that we may know Him when He appears, in whatever form or manner He appears, that we miss not the Day of Visitation as did the Jews of old. A great light shined in the darkness, the greatest light that has ever been upon this earth and yet, to this day, they are living and walking in darkness. The very glory of the Father was revealed to them as the scripture said it would be. All God ever could be or ever shall be was manifested in Jesus Christ. No greater light could have shown unto them than that light, because the Light of lights was there to see. Most of them did not recognize Him, neither did they suspect that the Lord of glory was right there in the midst of them. If they had entered into Him, He would not have declared that another day yet remained for the children of God. Don't let us, dear ones, miss our "Day of Visitation." Let us not fall short of that which He is speaking unto our hearts, that we might hear His words and instructions and begin to walk in the light of that glory. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." The Jewish nation was

not ignorant of the teaching of the scripture concerning His coming; but they had drifted so far from God in their hearts, that when that day arrived they knew it not because it took the Holy Spirit to reveal it.

The Day of the Lord always comes as a thief in the night. There have been many seasons of the Day of the Lord. I admonish all who read these lines - be established in YOUR DAY. It's a new day, the Day of the Lord. It is coming in like a thief. Christ's presence is beginning to fill the whole earth and the glory of God is risen upon a people. This is not a fallacy, this is the immutable Word of the Lord. This is the very truth, the very understanding as the Spirit has made it known unto His people, that they might know the counsel of God for this very day. Though multitudes continue to walk on in darkness, you shall walk in light. Many stubbornly cling to those things which are passing, the relics of a former day of glory, but those whose hearts have responded to the call are taking hold of those things that are new. The former heavens He shall roll up like a scroll and set aside. There is a new heaven and a new earth for you today, saints of God!

"And the evening and the morning were the FIRST DAY" **(Gen. 1:5).** God's days always begin with evening, pass through the travail of night, and joy comes in the morning. Most Christians who rejoice in the truth of the PRESENT DAY OF THE LORD have altogether missed the awesome words thundered by the prophet in **Amos 5:18-20.** "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" There is that aspect of the Day of the Lord, which is darkness and not light. It is a day of darkness and there is no light in it. You see no light, discern no sweet rays of cheer. You get caught up in the Day of the Lord and God begins His work in you. He comes to do away with the old that He might establish the new. What strippings! What purgings! What purifyings! What desolations! And the evening and the morning become your day. God is purging and purifying us from the things of man in the Day of the Lord. All flesh, our flesh, is become as grass. He is turning your world upside down and emptying it out and He will completely re-lay the foundations and put a glory in you that will out-shine the sun. What a glorious Day! Have we not experienced something of the night season when all is darkness and gloom? That is the evening, the night time of the Day of the Lord. Then, at the darkest hour, there comes the appearance of the Morning Star - a ray of hope and expectation. And joy comes in the morning!

There is another fascinating facet of this truth that presents itself to us. Though we are caused to pass through the night, the Morning Star announces the end of the night, bringing with it bright expectations of the dawn and the day. It will be helpful for us to locate our position in the night, or in the day. Are we children of the night, or do we pertain to the MORNING STAR COMPANY and the day? The answer lies in the answer to another question - What are we looking for these days? Doom, collapsing of the economy, tribulation, the antichrist, one world beast government, mark of the beast, darkness and gloom? If all you can see is the night, then surely the scripture is fulfilled in you, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" **(Lk. 21:26)**. But while there are those who dwell upon the negative, God is also anointing His MORNING STAR PEOPLE who have their faces set steadfast for the dawn. Those who speak long and loudly about the distressing conditions of the darkness are manifestly CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT. But those who have received the Morning Star look not for terror, eclipses and earthquakes, convulsions and revolutions, calamities and judgments. What are you looking for? What is your hope? What is your expectation? What are your fears? Are you looking for certain events which are to transpire on earth, such as the revival of the Roman empire, the development of the ten kingdoms; the conspiracy of the Illuminati; the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem; the appearance of antichrist; the appearance of the false Christ of the New Age movement; the battle of Armageddon? Say, beloved friend, are these the things which fill the vision of your soul? Do you meditate upon them day and night? Is it for these you are looking and waiting? If such be the case, you have not been given the Morning Star! Oh! that the reader of these lines may realize habitually the purifying, elevating power of the hope of the arising Sun of Righteousness with healing rays. While so many walk about in fear, it is an unspeakable blessing for those who find themselves in a dark place to have a BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR to cast its light athwart the gloom. **THANK GOD FOR THE MORNING STAR**! For more on 'signs in the heavens' and the original zodiac go to THE HEAVENS DECLARE.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 17
THE COMING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART SEVENTEEN

LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE
THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
APPROACHING THE DAWN

The Word of God turns man's attention repeatedly to the heavens. "The heavens declare the glory of God... day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" **(Ps. 19:1-2).** The heavens do not speak English, yet they speak to every Englishman and every American. They speak in every language to every people. The Old Testament closes with God directing man to look to the heavens. God says, in effect, "Look up to the heavens, and don't miss it, because it's important!" "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" **(Mal.4:2).** The Old Testament closes pointing a finger to the East, to the sunrise, proclaiming that all who fear the Lord are to look in that direction because there is the promise of sunrise. It points us to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, arising with healing rays over the horizon of this earth-realm. And, brothers and sisters, that is a fitting figure, because the Lord comes to usher in a NEW DAY.

A person who speaks only the English language can take a book written in French, and, while he may not be able to read it except with much hesitation and mispronunciation, still he can struggle through it after a fashion. Occasionally he will come to a word, which closely resembles the English with which he is familiar. But, because he knows nothing of the meaning of French words, no matter how well he can read the text, it means nothing to him until he learns what each individual French word means. Even so Christians who read Bible prophecy, if they do not understand the prophetical language, are confronted with a similar problem. Prophecy is invariably written in prophetical terms, And unless one understands the meaning of each individual term, though he may be able to read the text fluently, yet he has no understanding of what he reads. So, before one can understand prophecy, he first must receive a revelation of the prophetic language. Fortunately the Word furnishes us with the keys to prophetical terms, by which we may through the Spirit become proficient in the prophetic language.

There are many terms used in prophecy, such as stars, moon, sun, sea, rivers, trees, mountains, hills, islands, valleys, heaven, earth, beasts, horns, eyes, etc., etc. In our last study we considered the mystery of the Morning Star. There are stars revealed in the prophetic Word of God, which portray the plan and purpose of God. If we go to the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation, we see three things: the first is that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Morning Star (Rev. 22:16); secondly, we see that all the stars mentioned in the book are people (Rev. 1:20; 9:1, etc.); thirdly, the Morning Star is involved with the promise of the Lord to the overcomers, and is promised to all who overcome (Rev. 2:29). The giving of the Morning Star involves an impartation of the Christ. The Morning Star is a glory of the Christ within, as HE shines in the darkness of our weakness and inability and frustration GIVING A VISION OF AND HOPE FOR THE DAWNING OF THE FULL DAY. There is a remnant of God's people over the whole earth today into whose hearts has shined the Morning Star. And, in thus receiving the Morning Star, do they not in turn BECOME THE MORNING STAR? Flooded with HIS LIFE AND LIGHT they become the herald, the harbinger of the near-approaching dawn.

Long centuries ago in Babylon the aged prophet Daniel received this challenging and assuring word from the Lord: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" **(Dan. 12:3).** There are many other stars besides the Morning Star in God's glorious celestial realm, His spiritual heavens. Here the signification of stars is identified with the saints. Each member of God's elect is one star in God's spiritual universe. You are a star in God's economy! You are appointed to have an eternal fixed position in God's heavenly Kingdom as a star, as a shining one, as a luminary. There are different degrees of glory to the stars, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory

of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD" **(I Cor. 15:41-42).** As one star outshines another in glory so it is in the Kingdom of God. Stars have different dimensions of glory. The greatest of all stars signified to us is the Sun Himself, Jesus Christ our Lord. But there are vast multitudes of stars having different degrees of glory in the Kingdom of God - but they are all called "wise" stars and they all "turn many to righteousness," therefore they burn as bright lights in the Father's Kingdom. Stars are bright lights that give light where there is darkness. Who ARE the wise? The margin reads "teachers" in place of "wise." "They that be TEACHERS shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." That is, of course, those who teach the truth, and lead others to a knowledge of the truth that makes men free.

I am sure every reader of these lines is familiar with the old song, "Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown?" There is no scripture to indicate that the saints will wear "starry crowns," but there is scripture, which is greater by far! It is the privilege of all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to dwell upon the consolations of this marvelous promise, "And they that be teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever." God's universe embraces all places. This little world of ours, and each star and sun and planet are but tiny grains of sand on the seashore of infinity. Each one is small indeed in relation to all the rest of the systems, and in relation to limitless space. A conception of its magnitude can be gathered only from the stellar worlds themselves. What are those stars, in the likeness of which the teachers of righteousness are to shine forever and ever? How much of brightness, and majesty, and length of days, is involved in this comparison?

The sun of our own solar system is one of these stars. If we compare it with this globe upon which we live (our handiest standard of measurement), we find it an orb of no small magnitude and magnificence. Our earth is nearly eight thousand miles in diameter, but the sun's diameter is eight hundred sixty-four thousand miles. In size it is one million three hundred thousand times as large as our globe. In the matter of its substance, it would balance three hundred thirty-two thousand worlds like ours. What immensity is this! Yet this is far from being the largest or the brightest of the orbs in the heavens. The sun's proximity, only some ninety-three million miles from us, gives him with us a controlling presence and influence. But far away in the depths of space, so far that they appear like mere points of light, blaze other orbs of vaster size and greater glory.

There are stars, as, for instance, Arcturus, which emits light equivalent to one hundred fifty-eight of our suns; Capella, one hundred eighty-five; and so on, until at last we reach the great star Rigel, in the constellation of Orion which floods the celestial spaces with a brilliance fifteen thousand times that of the ponderous orb which lights and controls our solar system! Why, then, does it not appear more luminous to us? Ah, its distance is equivalent to thirty-three million diameters of the earth's orbit; and the latter is one hundred eighty-six million miles! Figures are weak to express such distances. It will be sufficient to say that its glowing light must traverse space as only light travels - one hundred eighty-six thousand miles a second - for a period of more than ten years before it reaches this world of ours. There are many other stars, which are hundreds of light-years from our solar system. A few years pass away, and all things earthly gather the mold of age and the odor of decay. But the stars shine on in their glory as in the beginning. Centuries and cycles have gone by, kingdoms have arisen and slowly passed away. Yet the stars' brightness is not dimmed, nor their force abated. The dew of youth still seems fresh upon them. No faltering motion reveals the decreptitude of age. These shine on in undiminished glory through all the ages of time.

Thus shall those wise and blessed sons of God shine who turn the inhabitants of the world to righteousness. Thus shall their ministry and their years roll on from age to age until that wonderful age of all ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times wherein everything in heaven and in earth and in all realms is gathered together into one in Christ and God becomes All-in-all. What glories lie beyond this, we cannot yet know. Of this we may be sure: we who are redeemed have entered a progressive institution, a Kingdom in which stagnation will never enter. We will ever go on "from glory to glory," for "of the increase of His government ... THERE SHALL BE NO END" **(Isa. 9:7).** We will never come to the place where we can sit down with folded hands and say, "This is the end." We, who have been born into the heavenly realm, have entered a stage of action, we have become active agents in the greatest development program ever conceived. A whole universe awaits our touch and guiding hand. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that He put ALL in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is not put

under him. But we see NOT YET all things put under him (man). But we SEE JESUS..." **(Heb. 2:6-9).** Surely these words can mean nothing less than UNIVERSAL DOMINION!

Away out there in the blue is a Kingdom of life and light and love for every son of God to explore and develop and perfect. And if ever, in all the countless ages to come, that Kingdom should become too small or overcrowded for its citizens, let us remember that we, being as He is, are therefore, one and all, the very same kind of Beings as He who simply spoke the Word, and lo! the present worlds appeared. Being like Him, we will also be creators, one and all, and not destroyers, as in our human state. "WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.

God says that men enter His heavenly Kingdom by being born into it (Jn. 3:5). Men do not die to go to heaven, they are born there. And then after they are born into that state - after they become heavenly beings - they can lay up, by their obedience to the heavenly Father, heavenly riches which will not only be a place, but royal pomp and splendor and majesty and dominion beyond compare. Sonship does not only entitle one to residence in God's limitless and eternal domain, but to the ownership and rule of that domain, in proportion to qualifying in service now. Oh, that it were possible to lift men up above the shadows, and give them just a glimpse of something higher! Mortal minds are so entirely inadequate; human eyes so dim; human ears so dull!

Heaven is not a mansion over the hilltop, not the gratifying of the needs and desires of this vessel of clay. It is not that which will bring creature comfort. It is not a state of eternal creature enjoyment and rest. The celestial realm is something infinitely higher. it is eminence, power, majesty, glory. It is becoming the same kind of a Being as the One who made the worlds (Jn. 10:34-36; I Jn. 3:2), and will bring, not inactive rest with fluttering wings and strumming harps, which in a few short hours even becomes exceedingly tiresome, but activity and accomplishments far surpassing that of earth's limitation. And it includes kingship and priesthood over God's eternal and infinite domain. It is dominion and power and influence far above that which earth can contemplate or even imagine. And then the place, which we receive after entering this heavenly state is not heaven, but that which we receive as a consequence of our entrance into the celestial sphere. The place is the reward which faithful heavenly beings will receive as their very own, a part of their inheritance, heavenly real estate.

The stars are distant lights. They shine in other spheres. There is no doubt that vast numbers of these stars are "suns" like unto our own, the centers of great solar systems, with heavenly bodies that revolve around them, perhaps populated by beings of which we know nothing at this present time. Thus will it be in the Kingdom of the Son, in the spiritual heavens of God's universal and eternal dominion. Each son of God will be a star, a sun, shining forth in living and everlasting luster. Each member of the elect will faithfully radiate his beams of life and light and love, shining in those spheres, which the omniscient Father shall allot to them. Thus each shall become the central star of a spiritual solar system composed of myriads of creatures in God's glorious creation, which revolve around them, unto whom they shine as the revelation of God's nature, glory and power. And thus shall the scripture be fulfilled, "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their FATHER. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" **(Mat. 13:43).** The Kingdom does not, become the Kingdom of the "Father" until Christ, having "put all enemies under His feet," including the last enemy death, has "delivered up the Kingdom to God, EVEN THE FATHER" and God becomes "All-in-all" **(I Cor. 15:24-28).** What glorious and ineffable prospects lie before us!

There is also a negative aspect to the stars - "falling stars." Today we see those who, as falling stars, blaze their way across the heavens. They make a spectacular entrance, and shine brilliantly for a season, and just as suddenly they are gone - their light becoming darkness. Ah, they have done mighty works, they have preached to multitudes, they have cast out devils, they have healed the sick, they have prophesied in His name, they called Him Lord; but they were not subject to His law, His order, His purpose. They were "doing their own thing" and perverting the light into the building of their own kingdoms. He will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" **(Mat. 7:23).**

There are also those stars described as "wandering stars." Jude 12 and 13 tells us, "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; WANDERING STARS, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." So many who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ today are not stars, there is no

radiance of His glory from their lives. Some, however, are stars, but they are wandering stars. Do you know what a wandering star is? In our universe a proper star has a certain position and fixed orbit. It continues in its appointed course steadfastly. But there are some stars with no fixed position or orbit: they are wandering stars. They are stars, but they are not steadfast stars. If you follow them you will be misled. If you accompany them they will not take you anywhere in God. These possess no clear vision of God's purposes, no stable comprehension of His plan, no submission to His dealings, no learning of His ways, no dedication to His principles, no putting on of His mind, no divine order in their walk. These are tossed to and fro by every "new" teaching, wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, the prey of the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men - personality followers. They ever seek some "new thing," and let a new revelation come along, or a new teacher come to town, and they will run after him and flock around him for a season, but there is no fruit of God in their walk; just as quickly they cool off to the excitement of the "new," and wait for the next sensation to appear. They themselves are wandering stars: they have no ground, no foundation, no standing, no goal toward which they are unswervingly moving under the guiding and disciplining hand of the Father. Today they say this, and tomorrow they say that; they are wandering. Be careful! You will never arrive at sonship by following a wandering star. If you are wandering you are wasting your time. If you would go to a certain place, get out your map, get on the right road and in the right lane; and as you drive, you will reach your destination. Above all we would BE His stars, bright shining as the sun. In the entertainment world, the "movie stars" shine from their false and lofty skies. God, at the same time, is exalting His sons, the "moving stars" of the heavenlies that they may swallow up all lesser lights. In becoming Christ-centered, we become life and light to those worlds which rotate around us. We follow on in our prescribed course, in the order and harmony of God's spiritual universe!

LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

The Lord Himself is the Bright and Morning Star. Hear what the apostle Peter says about the Morning Star. "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" **(II Pet. 1:19).** Every person understands what the Morning Star is. The Morning Star appears at the darkest part of the night. It is seen and greeted only by a few who are watching for it. The rest of the world is asleep. The sun, on the contrary, floods the whole world with light and awakens and gives life to all nature. Before its illuminating rays the darkness and shadows of night are scattered.

The dark place where the Morning Star shines is IN OUR HEARTS. The place where the Day Star arises is likewise IN OUR HEARTS. We should not be obliged to present lengthy arguments to prove that without God the heart of man is hopelessly dark, incurably carnal, and desperately wicked. It is most enlightening to read the words of Jeremiah who said by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that "the heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" **(Jer. 17:9).** To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the depth of iniquity to which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend. As a friend has said, "We should not find this so amazing a passage of scripture were it not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, 'The heart is deceitful above all things EXCEPT THE DEVIL!' He merely stated that the heart is deceitful above all things, PERIOD! Since Jeremiah spake by the Spirit of God this could not possibly have been a slip of the tongue or something uttered before it was thought through. If the heart is deceitful above ALL THINGS, it naturally follows that there is nothing more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD!"

There is no doubt whatever in my mind that Jesus had this very scripture in mind when He spoke the words recorded in **Mk. 7:15-23.** "There is NOTHING from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ALL THESE THINGS COME FROM WITHIN, and defile the man" **(Mk. 7:15,21-23).** Every sin category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Everything that a man could ever think or do that is evil is said by Jesus to come OUT OF THE HEART OF MAN. What an incredibly dark place, the human heart! No wonder the apostle made the heart of man the location of the Morning Star - the star that appears at the blackest part of the night!

Man today wants to hear nothing about the depravity of his heart, the utter corruptness of man's nature. Twentieth century man has endeavored to forget it, to deny it, to ignore it, to turn his back upon it, to get away from it, to escape it, and hope in some way that it will just go away and leave him alone. But it will not! The reality of man's sin has filled to overflowing the prisons and mental hospitals of this nation until they sprawl as endless cities. Wing after wing of these institutions is filled with people who are there primarily because their lives are overwhelmed and crushed by their sin, which they've striven to ignore or deny. When will we face reality for the way it is and seek God's remedy for it instead of our own daubing at the surface blemishes of the fatal cancer within? Even Freud, unbeliever that he was, in his psychoanalytic studies probed deep into the soul of men. There, as he plunged down into that subbasement of the human soul which he called the "id," he found lurking in all the crevices and corners of that soul such foulness, such unbelievable hate, such attitudes towards those whom they were supposed to love, such lust and greed and pride, that he himself was shocked at what he discovered. But he was unknowingly putting his imprimatur on the Word of God which says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ... The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? ... I the Lord search the heart."

Ah - the Lord searches the heart! And just how does He do this? The wise man replies, "The SPIRIT OF MAN is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly" **(Prov. 20:27).** The Psalmist adds this inspired insight: "For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness" **(Ps. 18:28).** Can we not see by this that it is when OUR SPIRIT IS LIGHTED BY HIS SPIRIT that the Morning Star appears over the horizon of our inward darkness? Blessed harbinger of the dawn! It means just this - the Spirit of God in our spirit searches into the dispositions and affections of the soul, praises what is good, condemns what is evil, while announcing the imminent arising of the Sun of Righteousness whose healing rays shall scatter the night, transforming the nature until the heart is purified into the image of God. To many of us now His light may seem no more than the flickering of a candle, shining in the darkness of our lives, but once His light shines upon us, such a response is created in our dead and dormant hearts that we find ourselves quickened with hope and expectation. When the light of the Star divine comes shining into the darkened recesses of the soul, that man can never be the same again. Once Jesus, the light of the world, shines upon him, never again will he be satisfied with the outer darkness of this world.

Every man's life is his own castle of many rooms. By His indwelling Spirit, the candle of the Lord has been moving from one room to the next, silently, carrying the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. He has been challenging every activity, deed, act, word, and even every thought and intent of our lives. Now we come to the close, and just as we are ushering our heavenly investigator to the last room of the castle of our lives, as we are walking down the hall, He stops, looks down and says, "What is this?" We had devoutly hoped that He would not notice that trap door set so securely in the floor. Hardly anyone knew about it at all; and casually we toss it off. "Oh, that's just the basement, Lord. You really wouldn't want to go down there." "Oh," He answers, "but I would. In fact that's why I came - to go down there." So, over all your protestations His will wins out. You lift that creaking door, and as it opens, there is the odor of stinking flesh and hidden corruption and the sound of bats' wings, and a circular, narrow stairway leads down into the inky blackness below. With anxious heart, you follow Christ down those stairs, wondering what evils shall be brought into His light. As the shadows flee before that light which radiates from Him, you reach the floor of the basement with all of its darkened chambers and its unclean imagery. There is no place to hide, for the light that comes from Christ reveals all. Jesus has come, the Morning Star has appeared, the candle of the Lord has come to search the heart and reveal the very depth of the secrets, the suppressed attitudes, secret motives, hidden desires, concealed ambitions, all the darkness of the soul. Thank God! He does not uncover our iniquity to destroy us, but to save us and purify unto Himself a people to show forth His glory in the earth.

Years ago when farmers were clearing land they had great trouble with the stumps of trees. It was easy to cut down the tree but to burn out the stump was a long and torturous process. Finally somebody invented a machine that had a long boom and a huge hook. This hook was planted around the stump between the roots. Then there was a whirring of machinery and a grinding of wheels and levers, and the stump of the tree was ripped from the ground despite the desperate clinging of the roots to their accustomed earth. The. Living Word of God is the hook, which would go down into the dark soil of our hearts and pull out the stump, root, and all the very last vestiges of carnality, self and wickedness. The wonderful law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus - there is nothing like this law found in all the legislation of ancient or modern history. All the enactments of

princes and potentates may cover the deeds, acts and words of their servants. But only God can command the heart. The greatest tyrant who ever lived could do nothing to quell the hatred that raged like a tempest in the hearts of his subjects. He could do nothing to hush the curses that smote him like white lightning. Here, therefore, we see the signature of God, for only God searches the heart, and gives promise of the dawn!

All sin is but the perversion of that which is legitimate in its proper order. Sex, for example, is a wonderful and beautiful thing in the order of God, but misused it is demeaning and creates problems of guilt, distrust, broken homes, venereal disease, etc. Within the marriage union it is holy, the apt figure for the spiritual love and union between Christ and the Church; but out of order expresses itself in fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality and all manner of uncleanness. All the false religiousness of the Babylon system is but the perversion of the holy things of God. Spiritual truth and reality lowered to the carnal plane, and joined to fleshly zeal, results in organized spiritual darkness - RELIGION.

Man's nature is saturated with powerful drives of desire, ambition and creativeness. It has been said that the powerful horses of desire and ambition have to be dealt within some way. There have been numerous proposals for dealing with these wild horses that gallop in the breast of every one of us. The Buddhist has his suggestion. Guatama, the Prince, recommended very simply that we shoot these wild horses, thus ending all desire, and get rid of all ambition. Thus we would rid ourselves of all misery. The behavioral psychologist today has an opposite view from that of Guatama Buddha. He declares that we should simply let the horses run wild. Whether you are age five, ten or twenty-five, just do the thing that feels good. Let it all hang out. Then what do you have? You have a society just like ours, where you cannot walk the streets in safety at night. You are afraid to send your children to some schools, lest they not come home at all, with or without an education. But God has something to say about those wild horses. He says that we are not to shoot them and we are not to let them go; but we are to tame them. We are to harness them, ride them and redirect them to God's glory. Some people say, "You have never tried to ride my wild horses. That wild horse of lust - I have tried to tame it and have landed on my back in the dust. That wild horse of ambition for the things of THIS WORLD has thrown me many a time. We will never be able to tame them, and it is folly for us even to try." But when Christ comes in HE CAN TAME THE WILDEST HORSE. This One who tamed the raging waves of the sea of Galilee can tame the raging horses in our hearts. That desire can be redirected. That ambition can be redirected. That zeal can be harnessed. Our drives are not to be annihilated; rather they are to be sublimated. They should be purified and reprogrammed to a higher and greater cause - the cause of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ - the cause of the Kingdom of God. Our passions need to be purified and our desires distilled of all carnal thoughts and self-interest, yielded unto the Spirit of God, as instruments of righteousness. When the Spirit of God takes control of our lives, when the soul is subjugated and joined to the spirit, we can say, "My soul panteth after Thee, O God" **(Ps. 42:1).** How many people are panting after the transient things of this world! How few can honestly say, "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!"

God has made us to reach for something more glorious than the stars, which will live forever, for the eternal Kingdom of God. With such a grand and glorious goal set before us, millions of Christians are simply digging for clams in the mud flats of material blessing and prosperity for the here and now, and a mansion and a harp in that glory world above. What eternal and infinite loss attends such paltry goals!

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Morning Star is the candle of the Lord that shines in the dark place of the heart, searching all the inward parts of the desires, affections and nature. The Sun of Righteousness is the arising of the glory of the Lord shining in His full strength and majesty, dispelling the darkness, bringing in the day of victory, life and glory. In scripture the sun is called the Day Star - it is the star of the day. It is the one star in God's vast universe, which gives us the light of day. And just as the natural sun is the center of our physical solar system, so the spiritual sun, or Day Star, is the center of our spiritual solar system. The Day Star typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He is spoken of in Mal. 4:2 as the Sun of Righteousness who arises with healing in His rays. Peter calls Him the Day Star, which arises IN OUR HEARTS. The entire Kingdom of God revolves around this Sun of Righteousness who is the Day Star. The saints of God revolve around the Lord Jesus Christ, the center of our spiritual solar system.

Thus, in the prophetic scriptures the Lord is symbolized by the sun. The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, Gen. 1:16 informs us that God made "the greater light (the sun) to RULE the day, and the lesser light (the moon) to RULE the night." Here we first have the idea of both the sun and the moon being RULERS. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a "Sun." "For the Lord God is a SUN and a shield" **(Ps. 84:11).** "Thy SUN shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine EVERLASTING LIGHT" **(Isa. 60:20).**

The comfort and hope of the Morning Star and the dazzling brilliance of the Day Star both originate in the hearts of God's elect. But the scriptures are clear that their influence is destined to extend to the world and beyond to the farthest reaches of creation. "I am the light of THE WORLD," said Jesus, and again, "YE are the light of THE WORLD" **(Jn. 8:12; Mat. 5:4).** John on Patmos, beholding with astonishment the glistering glory of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, exclaimed with the voice of jubilation, "And the NATIONS of them that 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).** To which the prophet Isaiah adds his testimony, saying, "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 GENTILES (NATIONS) SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" **(Isa. 60:1-3).**

One of the most beautiful word pictures of the Lord's coming is painted by the prophet Malachi when he likens the manifestation of Christ to the Sun - the "Sun of Righteousness." This "Sun" will rise, declares the prophet, with "healing in His wings." Here the rays of the sun are likened to great wings upon which it rises, and under the shadow of which is found health and life - "healing." It is the rising of this "Sun" that will scatter the mists and gloom of the long night of sin and weeping through which the human race has been stumbling over the broad road leading to destruction. When the sun rises the face of nature is changed. When He who "rules the day" appears in fullness of strength, the whole world answers to the mighty change; evil is judged; the oppressor is broken to pieces and the captive set free. He who "rules in righteousness" chases all before Him, which is unsuited to His sway, and brings in the long sighed-for Sabbath for creation.

There has been a dawn for us and, blessed be God! there shall be a dawn for all creation. The peoples of our planet will not remain in the icy clutches of an ever-deepening darkness until all hope is gone, until there is nothing but total darkness and death. No, light will appear - more light than the world has ever seen - at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His rays. The whole face of this old world is yet to be changed by the arising of the Sun of Righteousness within His people!

There will be no unsolved problems anywhere not taken care of by the bright shining of the glory of the Lord through His sons, for nothing short of a universal dispensation of this glorious Sun's healing rays can fulfill Jesus' own promise concerning the manner and object of His coming. Consider the problem of war. Today we find mankind devastated by the ravages of war, revolution and anarchy. But in due time, the LORD will say to the raging nations, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10). It will be then that the nations will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks," and NATIONS shall learn war no more (Mic. 4:1-4). We hear much these days about poverty. Poverty is indeed one of the major problems in the world. But through the wise rule and gracious administration of the sons of God, a "feast of fat things" will be made "unto all people," and every man will dwell under his vine and fig tree, and there will be none to molest nor make afraid (Isa. 25:6; Mic. 4:4). We read further concerning this problem that God's Christ "shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor... for He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and he that hath no helper (the forgotten man)" **(Ps. 72:4,12).**

The problems of religion will also be solved. Today earth's millions worship a multiplicity of gods, and even those who attempt to worship the true God are hopelessly divided into factional groups from which there comes a jargon of conflicting claims, dogmas, and doctrines, some even claiming that God is dead. But all this will be changed, for the proclamation of the Lord is that Mystery Babylon shall with violence be thrown down and burned with fire, for strong is the Lord that judgeth her. And the promise of the Lord is sure: "For then will I

turn to the people a pure language (understanding of God), that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent" **(Zeph. 3:9).**

Then there is the major problem of sickness and death. Unless this problem can be solved, mankind will still need endlessly to travel through the valley of the shadow of death. In such an event there could be no lasting happiness anywhere, for every happy home would be intermittently blighted by that dread enemy which counts its victims by the billions. But the Spirit of God has testified, "The creation itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" **(Rom. 8:21).** The power of that blessed One who broke up funerals in Judea more than nineteen centuries ago simply by raising the dead to life again will be demonstrated, not on behalf of a limited few, but for the restoration of all the families of the earth. Hallelujah - what a Saviour!

The enlightening rays of the Sun of Righteousness will fill the earth, not only your earth and my earth, but that earth out there - until all the shadows and darkness and night have been chased away. This means that all doctrines of devils, all superstitions, all human creeds and dogmas, all human precepts by which men are taught to fear God rather than to love Him; all political intrigues, all humanistic education and institutions, as well as the thousand and one other evils which plague a dying world, are to be swept away, replaced by the glorious KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND HIS TRANSFORMING GRACE. With the glory of God filling the earth, there will come also the destruction of all the myriad citadels of sin and vice and crime. As that glorious Sun of Righteousness forces its healing rays into the various dens of iniquity, the hells of this world, the satanic darkness of these rendezvous of evil will give place to the glorious enlightenment of the NEW DAY.

There will not be a nook or corner in the earth where the light from that glorious Sun will not penetrate. The warmth of its healing rays will pervade the slums of our great cities and radiate into the institutions of suffering which we call hospitals. The prospect for the suffering peoples of earth is truly a marvelous one. It has been well said that the hopes of the world are as bright as the promises of God, and these are very bright indeed. And not only bright, but sure. How glad we are to know that the limited scope of God's Kingdom in the earth today is not the end of the matter! And how blessed we are with the knowledge that the Christ does not arise to destroy the earth, but to bless the people with peace, health, provision and life, and that through the powerful agencies of His Kingdom He will fulfill all the grand promises of sages and prophets, that all the families of the earth shall truly be blessed.

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise and arise and arise until there is no more night anywhere in God's vast universe. No man anywhere will be able to escape the glory of God. The apostle John said that GRACE AND TRUTH came by Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:17). Grace literally means, THE INFLUENCE OF GOD upon the heart and its reflection in the life; and the apostle Paul declared that "where SIN ABOUNDED, grace did MUCH MORE ABOUND" (Rom. 5:20). In the light of that plain scripture let the preachers attempt to tell us that God does not plan to enlighten and deliver the WHOLE WORLD! We praise God that there is a RISING OF LIGHT and we are already in the dawn of it, yea, WE ARE THE DAWN OF IT, for WE are the firstfruits of God's creatures, and it will shine over ALL THE WORLD even unto the West, that part from which darkness comes, and there will be no more darkness.

APPROACHING THE DAWN

We have experienced Christ as the Morning Star, the Christ within shining forth in the dense darkness of our carnal state of being. Before us looms the arising of the Sun of Righteousness, the Day Star, swallowing up all into THE DAY of God's fullness. When there is a shipwreck at midnight, with what longing the mariners look for the morning! How often the sigh goes up, When will the day break? Even so must the Christian wait upon God, and rest patiently until HIS LIGHT shines upon him. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning" (Ps. 130:6). O my soul, begin each day with the prayer, "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant ... Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us ... cause Thy face to shine..." **(Ps. 31:16; 4:6; 80:3,7,19).**

God lights our candle, gives to us the Morning Star, that HIS LIGHT MAY BECOME OUR LIGHT. It is not possible to explain these truths to human satisfaction. The things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither

have entered into the heart of man MUST BE REVEALED to us by the Spirit. You see, God is light and when that God-light works its way out into our outer-man we begin to shine as the firmament. The Day Star is the OUTRAYING of the Father, the FORTHSHINING of the Son; it is being "filled with all the fullness of God," it is "Christ formed in you" and it is "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

It is from such a realm of glory and eminence and blessing that Adam fell! Since the transgression in Eden long ago, men's spirits have been fallen. They have no power but to receive light and reflections from without, but in the beginning the spirit of man was designed, not only to RECEIVE light, but to BE light and to GIVE light. This is now a wonderful reality in Christ, for **"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ARE YE LIGHT in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8).** Ah, WE ARE NOW LIGHT IN THE LORD, but the measure of light we now are is small indeed, in comparison with the light that shall be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God. For the sight of this glorious unveiling the whole creation stands on tip-toe, and it shall come to pass that all that is looked upon by these glorious sons of God will be FLOODED WITH THE LIGHT OF LIFE, for the creation shall then be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

The question is asked concerning God's elect, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?" (S. of S. 6:10). "Looketh forth" would better be translated "breaketh forth." "Who is she that BREAKETH FORTH AS THE DAWN?" The imagery here bespeaks the Day Star arising within the body of Christ until the morning so breaks forth through them that they themselves BECOME THE DAWN. It is my conviction that even as I pen these words there is a blessed company of saints scattered across the earth in whom the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is breaking forth as the dawn. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: HIS GOING FORTH IS PREPARED AS THE MORNING (DAWN)" **(Hos. 6:3).** Even the initial glow of His breaking over the horizon is breathtaking and stunning. There is something grand and glorious, sweet and refreshing and inspiring in the morning hour. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward" **(Isa. 58:8).**

We have passed through a time of great darkness. It has been a long night of travail - yearning, waiting, longing. Darkness has blinded the minds of men, a deep sleep has been upon the Adamic race, and the death of the carnal mind has kept earth's inhabitants in the regions of the shadow of death. But let it be shouted from the housetops - THE LIGHT IS COMING! It is time to cast off all works of darkness, now to be clothed with the armor of light. CHILDREN OF LIGHT, STARS AND SUNS, WE ARE TO BECOME. Birthed into the new age, to bring forth the glory and triumph of His Kingdom. Thank God, the first rays of light of the new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn!

Oh, I am so glad the night is passing. It has been such a long night, and the people have been so weary, and they can find no rest, no rest, no rest; for human breasts and human hearts can find no rest until they find it in God. I am glad the night is far spent; the Day is at hand; that the glory-dawn is piercing through the sky. It is morning, NOT MIDNIGHT as the preachers so loudly proclaim. Hark! Brethren, hark! Do you hear the chariot wheels rolling along the sky? Can you not hear? Can you not see that the heavenly hosts are gathering from all the heavens? Do you not understand that the army of the Lord beyond the veil, and His army on earth, is mustering to the battle? Do you not hear? Have you seen - have you seen a cloud, like unto a man's hand? Already the clouds are passing across the sky, and I hear the sound of abundance of rain, and beyond it I see glories that beggar description. To some of us the Sun of Righteousness has already arisen. Our eyes have seen His coming. Our eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. He is coming with power and great glory, in clouds of power, in clouds of power, IN CLOUDS OF POWER! I see the coming power. I realize something of the touches of that coming power, and the great glory.

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?" **(Job 38:12-13).** Ray Prinzing has so aptly commented on this passage: "Job was in a profound communion with the Lord, and was being challenged with facts and mighty works which were far beyond him. 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' Among the questions proposed to Job came this one: 'Hast thou caused the

dayspring (or literally, the dawn) to know his place?' God was doing more than causing Job to recognize His omnipotence and His greatness, but underneath these questions God was also imparting revelation to Job - THAT THERE IS A DAY, THERE IS A DAWN, AND THIS DAY SHALL KNOW HIS PLACE, it shall know its proper timing, it shall know its position, and it shall perform its task and purpose. There is a DAY that shall dawn, and when it does, it will SHAKE THE WICKED, or all wickedness, out of the earth, and righteousness shall be established. IT IS THE DAY OF HIS KINGDOM. Such a day is more than a time element, for this day IS A PEOPLE. And when they have been fully prepared, then shall their going forth, like unto the Son of God, be prepared as the morning, and they shall shine with HIS LIGHT AND GLORY, 'a light to lighten the nations.' "

Praise God, the morning IS PREPARED, the dawn IS BREAKING - a people who embody and personify the hopes of creation, a people who are experiencing deep within the transformations so necessary to bring deliverance to the earth, to change the world. The sun comes up at an early hour of the morning and if you are up at that time you will see it rise, but if you sleep until noon, a great number of important events can transpire before you arise. So the morning can be over before you know what is going on! There are those that are asleep in Zion today. They have been lulled to sleep - and if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch. They have no understanding of the purposes of God, no comprehension of what is taking place, therefore, they are leading God's people astray and THIS DAY will come upon them unaware and take them.

The reason there is darkness today is because of the false doctrines and dark traditions of the church systems. No wonder God's people are full of unbelief, filled with doubts, and overwhelmed with fears. No wonder they magnify the works of the devil and declare him more than they declare God. They know not the DAY in which we are living, because of the darkness of their minds. They receive death and they feed on darkness all about them. But God has raised you up, my brother, my sister, as a light this very day, that you might dispel the darkness and remove these heavens that men have been dwelling under and establish something completely new in the earth, a new heavens in which the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His rays. Bring forth in your life a new likeness, the image of God, that you may declare HIM that is supreme throughout all the earth and that He may reign in every heart. Behold the dawn!

But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not yet awakened. They know not of the dawn. But we who are of the day, and who are not lovers of the drunkenness of false doctrine nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. "We are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others" **(I Thes. 5:5-6).** We who have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business. There must be a parting of the ways. It is time to forsake the shame and error of the harlot system, and time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there ghall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" **(Isa. 52:1).**

Hallelujah for the Sun of Righteousness!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 18
THE COMING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [continued]

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART EIGHTEEN

CHRIST THE LIGHT
THE LIGHT OF LIFE
LIGHT BODIES
HIS IMAGE IMPRESSED

The Lord was presented to us, in a previous article, as the Morning Star. He is now before us as the Sun of Righteousness - the day-spring from on High. How beautifully apt both these figures are, we have already seen, and this will become more evident as we proceed. We have seen the relation between these two characters in which the Lord comes. He comes as the Morning Star. He comes as the Sun of Righteousness. The Morning Star is the candle of the Lord that shines in the dark place of the heart, searching all the inward parts of the desires, affections and nature. The Sun of Righteousness is the arising of the glory of the Lord shining in His full strength and majesty, dispelling the darkness, bringing in the day of victory, life and glory. In scripture the sun is called the Day Star - it is the star of the day. It is the one star in God's vast universe, which gives us the light of day.

Thus, in the prophetic scriptures the Lord is symbolized by the sun. The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, I Jn. 1:5 informs us that "GOD IS LIGHT, and in Him is no darkness at all." The light, which God is the sun of God's spiritual solar system. "For the Lord God is a SUN and a shield" **(Ps. 84:11).** In the Old Testament as well as in the New, we find that light is given as a symbol or picture of God. Indeed, its very definite language says that light is God and God is light. The 27th Psalm begins with this word, "The Lord is my light." This phrase is found frequently in the Psalms, as for instance in Ps. 36:9, "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light." Also **Ps. 43:3,** "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. 56:13,** "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" Again in **Ps. 89:15,** "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance." There are sixteen other references in the Old Testament, besides these, which refer to light as emanating from God. These evidence the fact that in some intangible way the physical creature that is such a mystery to us is associated with the Person of God. We read in Dan. 2:22 that light dwells with God. That is to say, light is part of the very "being" of God. It is part of His own Person, makeup and nature. It is embodied in Him. Light has its origin in, and emanates and radiates from God. From the brightest star in the universe to the tail of the tiniest firefly - all light comes from God.

When God created, He began with light. Yes, when God said, "Let there be light," out of dark nothingness came billions of galaxies with billions upon billions of blazing stars. What is light? This question has been a puzzle for millenniums. People once thought light was something that traveled from a person's eyes to an object and then back again. If anything blocked the rays from the eyes, the object could not be seen. Since the 1600's, scientists have made many discoveries about light. They have learned that light is a form of ENERGY that can travel freely through space. The energy of light is called RADIANT ENERGY. There are many kinds of radiant energy, including infrared rays, radio waves, ultraviolet rays, and X rays. And yet, light is something more than just waves. As you know, certain kinds of light will pass through objects that would stop waves. We can see only a tiny part of the different kinds of radiant energy. This part is called VISIBLE LIGHT or simply LIGHT.

While we recognize light as a physical creature it nevertheless has what may be called a spiritual nature. One of the many marvelous phenomena of light is the fact that it can be passed through a physical substance as hard as rock with its speed unimpaired, and its nature unchanged. Even though it passes at many thousand

times the speed of a bullet through a physical object, light leaves no hole to mark its passage, and the object through which it thus passed is undamaged! Glass, you know, is artificial rock. The same elements that make stone are used by man in his manufacture of glass. Indeed, the glassware of the laboratory is generally called flint glass, and had the American Indians possessed this type of glass they would have chipped it into arrow heads and weapons superior to those of native flint. Man, by his art and device, takes the elements of stone and transforms them into an artificial sheet of rock which he calls glass. Light, flashing through space, passes unimpeded through this physical substance leaving no hole to mark its passage, being unimpaired in the process. When one physical substance can pass through another physical substance leaving both unimpaired and unchanged, it is certainly related to the spiritual!

CHRIST THE LIGHT

"And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep ... and God said, Let there be light: and there was light" ***(Gen. 1:2-3).*** Now what was that light which God spoke into the darkness in that long ago beginning? Was it the sun, or the moon or the stars, as some Bible teachers try to tell us? It couldn't have been, for the sun, moon and stars had not yet been made. They were not made until the fourth day. So this had to be some other light. Now if the Son was the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14), as He claimed to be, then He must have been connected with this first light somehow. And if He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, then it is clearly evident the He Himself was the light God brought forth at that time. Let us look at the last light, in the next to the last chapter of the Bible, "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).** So in the end there is no need for the sun nor the moon, for the glory of God and the Lamb is the light. If HE is the light in the end, He must have also been the light in the beginning - for HE IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END!

Now let us consider some significant statements that Jesus made about Himself. He said, "I am the light of the world (Greek: kosmos); he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" **(Jn. 8:12).** If we limit the world, or the kosmos, to mankind, then we will fail to see the glorious place the Son has in God's great plan. The whole kosmos we are told was in darkness, the heavens as well as the earth, and the first and greatest need was light, and God brought that light into the dark universe, AND THAT LIGHT WAS HIS SON. Jesus also declared, "I am come a light into the kosmos, that whosoever believeth on Me should not walk in darkness" **(Jn. 12:46).** So what He said was, I am the light that came into the kosmos, to bring light into the darkened creation. He, indeed, was the light; but there was something greater far in Him coming into the darkened universe than to be just a light. There was an infinitely higher purpose than that! John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, gives additional revelation on this great truth, when he speaks of the Word being with the Father in the beginning, and how all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Then he goes on to make this significant statement, "In Him was life, and THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN" **(Jn. 1:4).** From this verse we see that LIGHT and LIFE are essentially the same thing. "The life was the light." So when He came a light into the kosmos, He was also the life that came into the creation, to give life unto all creatures. John goes on to say, "That was THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" **(Jn. 1:9).** All other lights are artificial, imitation. Only the Son was the TRUE LIGHT, and He came a light into the kosmos, not to be just a light to sinful men, but to be a light to the darkened universe, the heavens as well as the earth, the spiritual as well as the physical dimensions. When John made these enlightening statements he spoke of the time of the beginning of the creation, when the Word was with God bringing forth the creation, and not the time of His birth in Bethlehem. In that dim and distant beginning He was the light, and He has been the light ever since, and will be in the ages to come. The Bible tells us of a glorious day where there is no need of the sun nor the moon to give light. "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).** "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light" **(Isa. 60:19).** Christ was the true light in the beginning when the divine fiat was proclaimed: "Let there be light!" But when God subjected the earth to this period we call time, it began with the creation of the sun and the moon. And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years" **(Gen. 1:14).** These were "lights" indeed, but they were not THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world!

The glorious Son of God is the One in whom the unapproachable and utterly incomprehensible glory of God is made manifest. As we only know the sun by the light that shines from it, so is Christ THE OUTSHINING, the revelation of God's glory. As the light that shines from the sun is of one nature with it, so the Son is of one nature with the Father and is Himself called "the everlasting Father. "As the light that shines from the sun is one substance with it, so the Son is THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS SUBSTANCE" **(Heb. 1:3)** and is Himself called "the Mighty God." It is all important that we know the glory of Jesus. The more the soul is filled with that glory, and worships Him in it, the more it will see with what confidence it can count upon Him to do a divine and supernatural work within us, and lead us to an actual living out of the glory of the Son in our lives. Let us turn away from earth, that in the knowing of Him our own lives may be transformed, until He, who is the outshining of the divine glory, SHINES INTO OUR VERY HEART, and He, to whom the Father has given such a place as Creator and Upholder and Heir of all, takes that place within us too, and be to us the beginning and the center and the end of all; until He who IS THE IMAGE OF GOD so possesses our beings that WE BECOME THE OUTSHINING OF GOD'S GLORY and THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" **(Jn. 1:4).** Now we are confronted with something else - two of the simplest things in the world: light and life. ZOE and PHOS are the two words in the original language. From ZOE we get zoology, the study of life; and from PHOS we get photo or anything that is built on it, such as photograph - it is light. These two things are so common, we take them for granted. Life - we see it everywhere. There may be a great deal of life right where you are at this moment. You go out in the woods and you see the same thing - life. It greets you on every hand; but can you explain it? You see in the Tabloids headlines from time to time announcing that men have now discovered the source of life. But if you read them, you find that they have not found the source at all, though they think they are close to it. They put the microscope down on a green leaf. One moment that little cell is arranged one way and is dead as a doornail. The next moment the thing is rearranged in another way and it is alive. And then the thing starts growing and doubling, dividing and multiplying itself. Why does it do that? Life!

I often wondered how it could be that God was omnipresent; that He could be everywhere at once, as the Psalmist said, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" **(Ps. 139:7-10).** God can be everywhere, and fill the universe with Himself because the glory of God is the RADIATION of His Light-being into the whole kosmos. God is likened to a SUN, so that bright orb that shines out there in space is a type of God. Let us consider this for a moment.

It is interesting to note that God did not do away with the darkness altogether, rather He separated the light from the darkness, calling the light "day" and the darkness "night" (Gen. 1:4-5). Darkness, in a measure remained, and still does. Isaiah tells us that in the end days darkness shall cover the earth, and great darkness the people. He is speaking here of spiritual darkness, of those people and realms that have not been exposed to the TRUE LIGHT. Though this condition has existed since the beginning, thank God! it shall not continue forever, for He who is the true light shall chase away altogether the darkness, and nothing but the true light will fill God's vast universe. In **I Jn. 2:8** we read this assuring statement, "Yet I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in Him and in you, because THE DARKNESS IS PASSING AWAY and the true light is now shining" (R.S.V.). Thank God, the darkness is passing away like the night before the penetrating rays of the dawn. He who separated the light from the darkness in that beginning, because the darkness comprehended not the light, shall obliterate completely the darkness from the new creation. "Behold, I make all things new." There will be no darkness in it at all, for God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. And when the final chapter is written, when the curtain comes down on the closing act of the grand drama of creation and redemption, God will be ALL IN ALL.

Light is life, and darkness is death. Whenever we read of light it always speaks to us of life; when we read of darkness it bespeaks of death. Light is that which dispels the darkness. When one brings a light into a dark place the darkness flees, because, you see, darkness is a negative thing, it is really nonexistent; it is just the absence of light. Provide the light and the darkness is gone. I have often wondered why the light in the

beginning didn't do away with the darkness; the darkness remained. Why didn't the darkness disappear, when the light came on the scene. If you turn on a light in a dark room the darkness is gone. Where did it go? It didn't go out the door nor through the window. It didn't go anywhere because it is a negative, a no-thing. So why didn't the Light in the beginning dispel the darkness? The answer, of course, lies in the counsels of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. God in His infinite wisdom planned to separate the light from the darkness, causing light and darkness, day and night to co-exist side by side, that through the progression of the ages He might reveal to the entire creation the awesome ability of the light to conquer the darkness. This is a great lesson, and once every being in all realms has learned it well, none will ever seek the darkness again.

This is a great mystery, but the present creation was created on a level of death, and death was from the very beginning, and still is, the state of being of the physical world. As long as darkness exists death will hold its power. Even before man graced this blue-green orb, death was in the universe; and this is why we see darkness as the first condition of creation in Gen. 1:2. And God didn't do away with all the darkness, He ordained the night to remain. This meant that death remained in the creation. So everything of this gross material realm, when it was brought-forth from the hands of the Creator, had the potential of death in it. Death was a built in factor in all things. But included in God's great and eternal purpose is the abolition of darkness and death; and the Almighty, in working out His plan, is doing just that. When He has finished His marvelous purpose there will be no darkness nor death anywhere in the unbounded heavens. "The last enemy that shall be DESTROYED is death" **(I Cor. 15:26).** But destroyed it will be; and the Son, who is the Light and the Life, is the One ordained to perform this great task.

When God separated the light from the darkness in the beginning, He called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. We are also told that He made two great lights, one to rule the day and the other to rule the night. Man with his limited carnal understanding has restricted this to our solar day and lunar night, and to the sun and the moon. But our almighty Father had something infinitely higher in mind than this! These are mere types and shadows of reality. There is a greater spiritual meaning to all this. There is a REALM OF LIGHT and a REALM OF DARKNESS in creation which has nothing to do with our solar day and lunar night. They are realms in the spirit, and we can be inhabitants of either. The realm of light is ruled over by the Son of God, the Sun of Righteousness, who is THE LIGHT; and the realm of darkness is ruled over by Satan, the Prince of darkness. Paul, in writing to the saints at Thessalonica, stated, "Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" **(I Thes. 5:5).** There are many other passages where we read of the children of light, the children of the day; and the children of the night or of darkness. So we can be either children of the Day, or children of the Night. We can either walk in light, or walk in darkness; it all depends on who we are following. Jesus spoke this beautiful truth: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have THE LIGHT OF LIFE" **(Jn. 8:12).** As we follow the Lord we will have the Light of Life, for He is the LIGHT and the LIFE.

As we consider this world in which we live, we see that all of the physical light we have here springs from the sun in our sky. Take away that orb and darkness would soon cover the earth. All vegetation would droop and die as it turned yellow, then brown and black and crumbled into the earth. Soon after that all animal and human life would have the same fate. The verdant creatures which grace the surface of the earth have been created to live in light. No one who has ever seen the sickly color of some plant that has struggled for life in semi-darkness can fail to miss the contrast between the green thing, which grew in the sunshine, and the pale travesty which grew in the shade. In total darkness every man would become blind within three days, and death would follow shortly after.

The life that we know comes from the sun. In the same way, Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. The reason for the decay and death that we have all around us is due to a lack of righteousness. Sin! Sin is the lack of rightness, or righteousness. When man sinned, death entered his world. It is what the apostle Paul referred to as "the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Because of this inexorable law of sin and death mankind, upon Adam's disobedience, fell into the corruption of the world around them. The scientific term for that is ENTROPY. It is known as the second law of thermodynamics, and it states very simply that all things in the universe are moving toward greater randomness, toward decay and dissolution. Thus, according to the scripture, the entire "creation was made subject to vanity - frailty and futility" **(Rom. 8:20).** The earth itself

began to "wax old, as doth a garment" and ultimately "shall perish" (Heb. 1:10-12). Since all flesh is made of the earth's physical elements, it also is subject to the law of decay and death and as "grass, withereth ... and falleth away" (I Pet. 1:24). It is universal experience that ALL THINGS, living or nonliving, eventually wear out, run down, grow old, disintegrate, and pass into the dust.

This condition is so universal that it was formalized about a hundred years ago into a fundamental scientific law, now called the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This law states that all systems, if left to themselves, tend to become degraded or disordered. Physical systems, whether watches or suns, eventually wear out. Organisms grow old and die. Hereditary changes in species are caused by gene mutations which in many cases have resulted in deterioration or extinction of the species itself. The astounding fact is that there is no reason known to science why things should grow old other than the second law of thermodynamics which simply describes a universal fact that takes place everywhere, from the smallest atom to the greatest sun. Entropy controls all things, and entropy is nothing other than THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH which bespeaks a lack of righteousness which is God's way of saying that in a universe made by God, the all-holy One, unrighteousness cannot be allowed to have permanent existence. Thank God! there is a counter law, a transcendental law, THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. Christ Jesus, the Righteous One, came into this world and was declared to be the Son of God according to THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS" (Rom. 1:4) and was raised from the dead BY THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS. Can we not see by this how HOLINESS is linked to LIFE and UNRIGHTEOUSNESS is connected to DEATH? The law of entropy CAN be broken! The second law of thermodynamics CAN be transcended! The law of sin and death CAN be superseded! "How?" you ask. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, YE SHALL LIVE. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" **(Rom. 8:13,2).** Therefore, it is the Christ who rises, the Sun of Righteousness. He brings light and, with light and illumination, He brings life; the spirits that were drooping and lives that were dying and bodies that were corrupting because of unrighteousness and sin begin to lift up and revive and LIVE AGAIN.

Though the sun is over ninety-three million miles out there in space, it radiates light, heat, energy and life to everything on the earth. The nature of the sun is that of light, heat and energy, and it radiates itself into all our solar system. Even though it is so distant from us, if it weren't for our atmosphere, the light and heat would burn everything to a crisp in a matter of minutes. How much farther its radiation would go, I have no idea, but it could travel an inestimable distance into space. The sun supplies us with light, heat, energy and life that is needed to support life on this planet. Without it no life could exist on this earth. The sun is the source of all this. God is a SUN, and what the sun is to the earth, God is to the creation. He is the life, the light, the energy that pervades and radiates through the universe, on all levels and in every realm, supporting and sustaining all things. Just as our sun radiates itself into our solar system, and supports and sustains natural life on this planet; so God radiates Himself into the entire universe to support and uphold and give life to everything He has created.

In that age of antiquity when the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the time came for our heavenly Father to bring forth His image in creation. "Let there be light," was the Word of the Lord, and there WAS LIGHT - not the light of the sun, for the sun was not given His command until the fourth day, but the light that shone was that TRUE LIGHT, even the light of God's Christ (Gen. 1:4). If I may add this thought, we must conclude that ALL LIGHT is God's light, even the light that shines from the sun, the moon or the stars. We call it natural light, but can we be wrong in concluding that even natural things are also from the hand of God - spirit lowered in vibration to the material plane?

The pen of a ready writer has written these words of wisdom and understanding: "Our little minds can but dimly grasp the wonderful transformation that took place when the Spirit of God began to move on the face of the deep. The water, of course, was ice because there was neither light nor heat. That was the true ice age, of which men of science often speak. But now the Spirit of God was moving upon the deep, dividing darkness from light, dispelling the bitter cold, melting the endless snows and the timeless ice, to make the dry land appear that both vegetable and animal life could spring forth at God's command to live and thrive. Thus it is written, 'Thou sendeth forth THY SPIRIT; THEY ARE CREATED: and Thou RENEWEST the face of the earth' (Ps. 104:30). What a marvelous transformation was taking place in that natural creation as OLD THINGS began to pass away and all things became new'! Gone was the darkness, the death, the snow, the ice, and the

dreadful cold, and in its stead bustling life and bubbling song filled the whole earth. The earth, that was without form and void, and the gross and terrible darkness that covered it like a shroud is the Lord's symbolic picture of the condition of unregenerate man. The description given in Gen. 1:2 - the earth was WITHOUT FORM and VOID and darkness was upon the face of the deep - is an apt and accurate description of the spiritual condition of a man outside of Christ, unconverted, unregenerate, and not born again. The word VOID conveys the meaning of emptiness, destitution, unoccupied, of no effect. What more accurate picture could be given of an unregenerate man as he lives without God or hope in the world? The earth was "without form" before the Spirit of God moved upon it, and darkness - gross, outer darkness - was upon the face of the deep. O man of the world, is not this a picture of your life without God? What form or shape can be given to such an emptiness as a life lived without the Lord? Darkness hangs like a pall over the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins, and, should one gain the whole world and lose his soul, it would profit him nothing at all. Moffatt in his translation of Prov. 4:18-19 has so significantly stated, 'The course of bad men lies through darkness dim. They cannot see what makes them stumble; the course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day"' -The Page.

We are told that when a man gets away from this earth a short distance, he is in total, absolute darkness, and it is frightening to be out where there is nothing from which the sun can be reflected. Our little globe is out in a dark universe, yet that is nothing compared to the spiritual darkness that envelopes it. When the sun disappears, there is physical darkness over the land; but twenty-four hours a day there is spiritual darkness here, awful spiritual darkness. Man does not know God; man is in rebellion against God; man is in sin that blinds him to God. In the Lord Jesus Christ there is life, and the life that He gives is the LIGHT of men. In fact, His life is the only thing that can kindle light in the heart of an individual. An unregenerate man has no spiritual life within him. This is the reason that when you present to him Jesus Christ, he says, "I don't get it. I don't understand that at all."

The light shines in the darkness of this world at this moment. I have a notion that somebody reading these pages is saying, "Why is that preacher talking about being in Spiritual darkness? I understand everything." No, unless you know Jesus Christ as your life and light, you do not understand, and even then you understand only in that measure and to the degree that you truly KNOW HIM. The Spirit of God has to open your heart and mind and enlighten you before you can ever see Him as the light of life. May I say to you, friend, this world is in spiritual darkness. John stated it this way. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" **(Jn. 1:5).** Understand this, O man, and you will know a great mystery. The word "comprehend" is an unfortunate translation. And a wiseacre did not help it by rendering it, "and the darkness was not able to put it out." That is no translation at all. The word in the Greek is KATELABEN, meaning actually "to take down." It is the picture of a secretary to whom the boss is giving dictation, and she stops and says, "I can't take that down, I am not able to take it down." The light shines in darkness and the darkness is not able to take it in. Barriers have been erected. That is it exactly. Someone said to me, "Boy, was I in darkness before I received Christ! And I don't know why I didn't see." well, that is it - you were in darkness and you did not see. Barriers of sin, ignorance, and unbelief were set up; the darkness just could not take it in.

Nor, may I add, can the religious darkness of carnal-minded Christians "take down" the glorious light of revelation truth that shines so brilliantly into the minds and hearts of those who follow on to KNOW the Lord. The natural man CANNOT understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY discerned. In all matters of revelation and spiritual understanding it is impossible to overestimate the absolute necessity of the sovereign and omnipotent moving of the Holy Spirit upon the darkness of our deep, who comes to take the things of God and show them unto us. Two worlds exist all about us - the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. When God's appointed hour comes for a man to be quickened, illumined and given understanding, He sends the Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a cloud about us that He may reveal to our wondering eyes the things that are real and true and eternal. It is "when He the Spirit of truth has come" that men are guided into all truth.

Again I share from the words of another, "It is He, the Holy Spirit, who, after revealing TRUTH to our darkened hearts, miraculously transforms the believer into the very truth he sees. The Spirit of God reveals to the believer's heart what the truth of God is and what the mind and will of God is and having done so, He makes

him PARTAKER of the truth so that he, by beholding the truth, actually BECOMES the truth he beheld. He reveals salvation to us and we become THE SAVED. He reveals His plan of redemption and we become THE REDEEMED. He reveals His eternal purpose of sonship and we become the SONS OF GOD. These things concern His heavenly calling. As a flower opens to the light of the sun, so eternal purposes unfold in the light of the Holy Spirit and we, seeing and believing them, embrace them and become partakers of them" -end quote.

LIGHT BODIES

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" **(Gen. 1:3).** And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" **(Gen. 1:14,16).**

I would draw your reverent attention to the words here used for light. The Hebrew text of Gen. 1:3 says, "Ye hi or: wa ye hi or." The nearest to a literal translation our language will permit is to say, "Light be, and light was;" or even better, "Exist light, then exists light." Our English word, light, appears again in the English translation of the Bible in the plural form in the fourteenth verse, God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night." There is, however, a vast difference between the word for light, the substance, in verse three, and the one translated lights in verse fourteen. In verse three the Hebrew word is OR, while in verse fourteen the word is MA-OR. This latter word is best translated as luminary; light container; or light holder; and these light holders are placed about throughout His universe like street lights in a big city. We have the same distinction in the Greek where PHOS appears as light, the essence, and PHOSTER as the word for a light container. The MA-OR, then, are the great luminaries such as the flaming suns, and even their reflecting satellites called moons, the meteors, and the nebulae; but OR itself is the very substance and being of light.

In the Old Testament symbology the Hebrew word used for light, as standing for the Person of Christ our Lord, is OR, and in the New Testament the Greek word for light, as applied to the Person of Christ, is PHOS. The significance of this is noted when we see that the characteristic word for the body of Christ in the New Testament is PHOSTER, or light holder. Jesus Christ then is the Light and we are the luminaries, which contain or shine forth the Light. The most significant appearance of this word in connection with the children of God is **Phil. 2:15,** "That ye may be blameless and harmless, THE SONS OF GOD, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS (phoster: light holders; luminaries) IN THE WORLD." This word is comparable to the luminaries of the Old Testament, the MA-OR or the light containers. In **Rev. 21:10-11** we find, "And he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God: and her light (phoster) was ... clear as crystal."

As we consider this truth we should especially notice in reference to men, that II Sam. 23:3-4 reads, "He that ruleth over men... shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth." And in II Sam. 21:17 we find David the king called, "the light of Israel." This same meaning is found in **II Kings 8:19,** "Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake, as He promised him to give him always a light, and to his children." In **Mat. 13:43** we find concerning saints who are to be kings and priests and rule with Christ, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

LIGHT-BEARERS! Friends, Christ is the light, the light is within, it must break through, it must ARISE, it must have pre-eminence in our hearts. The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and this glory surrounds Him. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we will also radiate the glory of His nature. This is the real purpose of our calling. The Christ within, not another man's revelation, nor another man's faith, but your own INDWELLING LIGHT enables you to manifest as one of God's light-bearers. 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 birthed and formed, partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, a new life found within - a new star in God's spiritual universe BECOMING. Each and every son of God must ultimately come to that place where all his need is fully met by the INNER SUFFICIENCY of the indwelling spirit of life, not from that which stands without.

We cannot deny, while for the child of God the light is growing brighter and brighter day-by-day, yet for the world in general it is becoming darker with every passing hour. But God is not going to leave the world

swallowed in darkness, He is preparing HIS MESSENGERS OF LIGHT, HIS CELESTIAL LUMINARIES will be established in His heaven, and they announce by their shining a new age to come, when light shall be upon every man. The SIGN COMPANY (Gen. 1:14), which heralds the new creation of God, shall be made manifest. Yet what an humbling, purging, purifying process must be accomplished in this company ere God will exalt them in "due" time! Ah, He must thoroughly teach us complete submission to HIS WILL so that we know it is by DIVINE GRACE ALONE, and never anything in ourselves that will give us this position. If you try to shine in God's heaven without first having been filled with Him who IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE, you will fail. Those religious ones, those great ones, those "big names" who streak across the sky in a vain effort to arouse the attention of the world, end in darkness and defeat. They are but meteorites, burning out as they fall through the atmosphere of earth. But in His time GOD PLACES in proper position HIS LUMINARIES that shall shine with the glory of God for the ages.

LIGHT-BEARERS! These are known collectively as ZION, for "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined" **(Ps. 50:2).** God hath shined - literally, caused to shine. It means much more than just the fact that out of Zion GOD IS SHINING. He is Light, and He is always shining. But more specifically, He will cause the light to shine out through His Zion company. Divine radiance will find its expression through this people. Those who shall stand with the Lamb on the mount of Light (Rev. 14:1) shall be vessels, light-holders, luminaries, light-bearers, through whom God shines.

"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" **(Isa. 60:1-2).** 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. "For the Lord shall arise upon THEE, and His glory shall be seen upon THEE." His glory will not be seen streaking across the physical heavens, BUT UPON HIS PEOPLE. Darkness does cover the earth and great darkness the people, but in spite of the abounding desolations, we live in the most glorious hour of all time for the people of God; for we have been selected by God to be priests with Christ in the grand task of bringing reconciliation, restitution, and restoration to the whole fallen world order. Nothing that man has done has so desolated the world that it is beyond hope. On the contrary, when we see sin and darkness all about us, let us be encouraged by the divine principle, "But where sin abounded, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND" (Rom. 5:20).

In the very midst of all this darkness upon the land and gross darkness upon the people, God is arising upon His chosen ones. How joyful we are that God, who is the Light, gets right down where the darkness is. He does not come from afar to dispel the night, but "God ... commanded the light to shine OUT OF DARKNESS" **(II Cor. 4:6).** First, God has met us right where we are, the dawning of God's day has blazened 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. 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 be one of God's scintillating stars.

I cannot do better than quote the true and eloquent words of Ray Prinzing: "In James 1: 17 we read of 'The Father of LIGHTS.' As to His Fatherhood, Light can only beget light. And since HE IS The Light, then He begets lights. Wuest's Expanded Translation brings out that He is the Father of 'heavenly luminaries.' And it is of 'His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures' **(James 1:18).** The firstfruits of His creatures are AS HE IS, namely, they are to be LIGHTS.

"In giving further description to our 'Father of lights,' the Amplified records, in verse seventeen, 'in Whom there can be no variation (rising or setting) or shadow cast by His turning (as in an eclipse).' It seems that far too much of our past experience portrayed us as just being little 'moons,' only reflecting some of His light to earth, to men. And there have been so very many eclipses! There are two important kind of eclipses with which we are familiar. There is the SOLAR eclipse, when the moon comes between the sun and the earth, then the only light is that which shines out around, and in spite of the moon. Any time a ministry, or vessel so being used, comes between THE SON and the earth, then we surely have an eclipse, and the only light mankind receives at such a time is that which shines out around that ministry or vessel, literally in spite of that one. Oh, may God help us not to become guilty of eclipsing the light, which needs to be shining upon men today. When our

ministry, our doctrine, our traditions, which we think are reflecting the light of God to men, come in the way, and stand between God and man, then the true light is eclipsed.

"The other most familiar kind of eclipse is referred to as a LUNAR eclipse, when we have a situation wherein the earth comes between the moon and the sun. When our own earth (flesh) get in the way, then HIS OUTSHINING again is eclipsed, and the light is veiled from view. We have received a blessing from the Lord, and we would pass it along to others, but when our flesh gets in the way, the real light of the blessing does not reach those with whom we would share. But we are not interested in just being 'moons' to serve as some kind of 'reflector' of our Lord. This makes a good illustration for the point of eclipses, but we truly desire to BECOME ONE IN THE SUN, to possess His nature of light, and to have that inherent quality of light within. Praise His name, He shall bring a people into that state of being where there is FULL LIGHT. A very important part of the process is to bring us into ONENESS until we no more walk in duality, partaking of both good and evil, for 'when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light' **(Lk. 11:34)."** -end quote.

We are appointed to shine as the sun. We have now come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God 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 live 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 betimes! But, precious friend of mine, you may be poor, despised, unlettered; but if, through grace, there is a link connecting you to the Sun of Righteousness, "the light of the world," then you are, in very deed, a son of the day, and destined, ere long, to shine in that celestial sphere, that region of glory, of which "the Lamb" will be the central sun forevermore. This 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. But if you are 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 Son of God, and no attraction to that place by His side, then, 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, traditions, rituals, ceremonies and service of the revered religious systems of earth, yet you are A SON OF THE NIGHT, A SON OF DARKNESS; and are just as dark, just as void, just as formless and empty, just as dead as was the desolate earth, from which you came, before that memorable day in which God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

HIS IMAGE IMPRESSED

This study would not be complete without suggesting that there is another word for light in the Greek text of the New Testament, which appears in text only twice. This word is PHOTISMOS, and we read it in **II Cor. 4:4-6,** "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the LIGHT (photismos) of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT (photismos) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This word is the basis of our modern term PHOTOGRAPH, and this is the literal implication of the text.

Photography is a way of recording a scene by the creation of an image by light. Light travels in a straight line at the speed of 186,000 miles a second. When light hits something it bounces back - or is absorbed. If it bounces back to your eye, the object looks bright. If it is absorbed, the object looks dark. When you snap the shutter of your camera, this permits the light that bounces back from a scene to pass through the lens of the camera to the film at the back of the camera. The film at the back of your camera is a sensitive silver screen. Units of light strike it and leave an invisible record, a "latent image." Each unit, sent to its proper spot by the lens, adds a little to the pattern of light - thus reproducing the scene the lens sees, impressing the picture image on the film. Light has literally taken the image of the thing being photographed and transferred that light-image onto the film. Later on, chemical development makes the "latent image" visible. According to II Cor. 4:6 the face of Jesus Christ is literally PHOTOGRAPHED UPON OUR COUNTENANCE to become our light and glory, and

the face we show to the world should be the ILLUMINED COUNTENANCE made so by the light of God impressing the image of Jesus Christ upon us!

The light that creates this image upon us is THE LIGHT OF LIFE, that same incorruptible LIFE which erupted as LIGHT before the astonished eyes of those chosen disciples who climbed with Christ to the invigorating heights of the mount of Transfiguration. We are told in **Mat. 17:2** that "He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as light." In the ninth chapter of Mark, we are told that "His garments became glistering," which, in the Greek means "to lighten forth, flash forth like lightning." Within that form that was marred more than the sons of men, dwelt glory ineffable. As He prayed upon the mount of Transfiguration, He opened a little way the robe of humanity with which He had covered Himself when He came down to earth, and His majesty and glory burst forth!

The glory of the transfiguration was the momentary unveiling of the glorious heavenly light that is brighter than ten thousand suns. It was in truth the manifestation of the light of life promised by our Lord to those who follow Him (Jn. 8:12). It shone from His face. It glistered from His garments. It surrounded Him like a halo. It radiated out from Him with blazing brilliance brighter than any noonday - the light that swallows up all darkness and death of the carnal realm. This was resurrection life, kingdom life, incorruptible life. And, beloved, this beautiful picture tells us what OUR INCORRUPTIBLE BODIES WILL BE, the radiant light of life that Christ Himself actually is. When Jesus burst out of the tomb in resurrection He came forth in the full brilliance of divine light of life. In this glory Paul saw Him in his Damascus vision, a light brighter than the noonday sun (Acts 26:13-14), and in this way John beheld Him in the wonder of the Patmos vision (Rev. 1:16). And this, beloved, is the glory the saints will possess when the fullness of His light of life has been experienced in spirit, soul and body. And in those blessed SONS OF LIGHT will be fulfilled this marvelous promise, "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" **(Mat. 13:43).** Amen!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 19
THE COMING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART NINETEEN

FROM EAST TO WEST
CAIN'S JOURNEY EASTWARD
ABRAHAM GOES WEST
LOT CHOOSES THE EAST
THE RIVER THAT FLOWS EASTWARD
THE TABERNACLE
THE WESTWARD JOURNEY
THE LIGHT OF UNDERSTANDING

"Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). "For as the lightning (bright shining; sun) 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).**

In order that we may get a correct understanding of this verse and its momentous spiritual vision, we must give consideration to the word translated "lightning," since this translation has given rise to a most erroneous concept of the coming of Jesus. It has led Christian people, almost without exception, to look forward to that blessed event as an instantaneous affair, which shall flash suddenly across the heavens and startle the world with its vividness. But nothing could be farther from the truth and nothing could have befogged our vision more. The Greek word translated "lightning" in this passage is ASTRAPE. The meaning, as given in Strong's Concordance, is "lightning; by analogy, glare; bright shining." So we see at once that scholarship recognizes this word as meaning a "bright shining" of light which might arise from a source other than a flash of lightning. It is so used, in fact, in **Lk. 11:36** where we read, "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the BRIGHT SHINING (ASTRAPE) of a CANDLE doth give thee light." Therefore, any BRIGHT SHINING light could fulfill the meaning of ASTRAPE.

Let us now pose a question. Does "lightning," as we understand the English word, always "come out of the east and shine unto the west?" Does it not flash from north, south, east or west according to the location of the clouds, which are charged with either positive or negative electricity? And yet, the "bright shining" here spoken about is expanded to shining "from the east even unto the west." Again, if the coming of the Lord is portrayed by "lightning," it would be only in limited areas and over only portions of the earth from time to time. Lightnings' brief flash penetrates the darkness only for a moment. Such a coming of the Lord could portray merely a very limited appearing or manifestation of His presence. Let us no longer be children in understanding!

But, I ask, what light does ALWAYS come out of the east and shine even unto the west? Does not the light of coming day arise always in the east, gradually brightening the horizon until the sun becomes visible and its rays illumine the eastern sky and "spread as a carpet" over the countryside, city and hill, bathing all in its warmth and beauty as it shines even unto the west? Has not our Lord Jesus been likened unto the "Sun of righteousness" to "arise with healing in His wings?" And the Psalmist hath declared, "The Lord God is a SUN... the Lord will give grace and glory" **(Ps. 84:11).** Praise God, the Sun of righteousness has arisen in our heart and He giveth grace and glory for itwe beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" **(Jn. 1:14).** The light of that Sun has shined brightly into our darkened soul and is bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. Dear reader, you may have Him flashing for a brief moment across your cloudy, dark, stormy earthly sky if you so choose, but we are glad to see Him with SPIRITUAL EYES and behold His grace and glory as it spreads over the whole world of mankind from east to west until it shall embrace the whole human race, bringing warmth and beauty and life where all was, and still is largely, spiritual darkness and death. Yes, dear friends, His coming, His presence is not to be an instantaneous, brilliantly blinding light flashing across the natural heavens from any local quarter as the word "lightning" might and does incorrectly portray; but His coming, His presence, has been, is now and shall be like the DAWN OF A NEW

DAY that constantly increases from the first faint rays of spiritual light until the soul and body of the individual are flooded with the noonday brightness of the blessed Sun of righteousness. And so it shall be universally until that light has brought every created being into subjection to our Lord and He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet, for "the entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" **(Ps. 119:130).** Shine on, 0 King eternal!

FROM EAST TO WEST

The first rays of dawn are seen in the eastern sky, and then the light steadily progresses toward the west. So also is the presence of the indwelling Christ, as He illumines us in a beautiful, progressive manner - so that "the path of the uncompromisingly just and righteous is like the light of the dawn, that shines more and more - brighter and clearer - until it reaches its full strength and glory in the perfect (to-be-prepared) day" **(Prov. 4:18)** (Amplified).

In Gen. 3:24 God gives us the first symbolic portrayal of the "east." "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 the way of the tree of life." When Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden, God placed a flaming sword to guard the entrance of the garden and the way in to the tree of life, and it turned every way so that no one enter in from any direction without encountering that sword, and you will observe that He set it at the EASTERN GATE of the garden. Why is this so important? Because there is a vital message in this inspired record. If the gate to Eden was located at the east, obviously entrance into the garden carried one in a westernly direction. Man's banishment from the Garden of Eden, his exile from the life and glory of God was a journey eastward. The message is clear - should Adam seek a re-entry into the garden, he could either return through the sword, as he moved with the processings of God in a westernly direction, or, he could continue in his state of selfhood, independence and rebellion and continue the eastward migration which would carry him farther and farther away from the tree of life. When God drove man from the portals of that heaven-blest Eden, eastward, He was moving him away from the glory of God in the tree of life. So it is our desire, therefore, to turn westward BACK TO THE TREE OF LIFE.

CAIN'S JOURNEY EASTWARD

Although Adam was corrupted by sin, he was still living in the presence of God. Not only did man know God's presence in the garden, he also experienced God's presence outside the garden, for it was there that Abel and Cain both made their offerings, and God even spoke to Cain about his slaying his brother. So, although man was corrupted by sin, he had not left the presence of God to walk out the ultimate of his disobedience - total INDEPENDENCE from God, absolute SEPARATION from God. But with Cain's banishment we read, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the EAST of Eden... and he built a city" **(Gen. 4:16-17).** This is most interesting! Cain traveled eastward, thus departing from the presence of the Lord. Cain left the place where God had placed His presence, and went his own way into further selfhood, to dwell in the land of Nod. Nod is the Hebrew word for exile, vagrancy, wandering. Exiled from a consciousness of the presence of the Lord to walk independently of God, outside of God, separated from the life, righteousness, joy, peace, faith, wisdom and will of God. This is the symbolic position of the land to the east, in contrast to that which is in the west.

Let us UNDERSTAND! What transcendent spiritual realities lie hidden within a story bearing the musty odor of ancient mundane history! Cain, had it not been for sin, would have been living in the garden of Eden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the realm of the Spirit, the sphere of God's divine life, glory and power. In spite of sin, he was still able to know the presence of God, typifying the ANOINTING. Not the inner abiding anointing which is represented by the figure of the tree of life, but that anointing we see in the Old Testament in which the Spirit of God came upon men, working on and through them in special ways and times, but always working from above and without, working inwards. to Cain was given the opportunity to stand justified in the presence of God, under the anointing of God, justified by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. But now he is found rejecting the provision of the Lord and moving in the opposite direction from the course of the anointing, turning backwards in his walk, in that reverse condition ever moving further and further from the anointing of God's presence.

Cain's final end was that of an exile, a vagrant, living on a territory never intended for him, not in his true inheritance or possession. There, separated from the anointing, the scripture says Cain "dwelt." He "settled" there. Any man who understands the progressive dealings of God knows one thing if he knows nothing else: the anointing of God is ever from glory to glory, and as long as we are short of the FULLNESS OF GOD we must NEVER SETTLE anywhere! Jesus Christ is pictured by the Psalmist as a bridegroom typified by the sun who comes out of his chamber to run a race through the skies (Ps. 19: 4-6). Malachi speaks of Christ as "the SUN of righteousness, arising." Everyone knows, of course, that the "race" of the sun is from east to west. In the scriptures this is the route of SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION - from east to west.

The Sun of righteousness has arisen in this world to run a race, but Cain went in the wrong direction and DWELT THERE! The very condition of settling indicates the loss of the anointing - lost from the on-going purposes of God - for the Son does not settle until He stands on the pinnacle of Mount Zion in the heavenly sphere of life and glory and dominion. But men always "settle" when, following some spontaneous moving and revelation of God, they begin to organize and systematize it, build walls of formulated creeds and dogmas about it, endeavoring to "preserve" it, as though the Spirit who produced the outpouring in the first place had never said, "Let us GO ON TO PERFECTION!" **(Heb. 6:1).**

After departing from the presence of the Lord Cain "built a city" - founded a rebellious civilization, of which Paul spake when he wrote of this fallen race that they walk "according to the course of THIS WORLD" **(Eph. 2:2).** The "course of this world" is that which is built by and upon the "wisdom of this world." Of this wisdom James says, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" **(James 3:15).** The Bible speaks of "the way of Cain." The way of Cain! With his back to the light, walking away from the tree of LIFE, Cain sought to find satisfaction and fulfillment in SELF. As one has written, "There is an obvious principle in this record - to leave the presence of God, one will build for self. But one cannot build for self as long as they remain in the presence of the Lord, for there they will be immersed in His glory, and fall low before Him to worship at His feet. One cannot worship God and build for self at the same time. Indeed, the Hebrew word for worship literally means: SELF ABASEMENT. 'O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God' (Ps. 95:6-7)" -end quote. Obviously, then, those preachers who build their fleshly religious empires have already "gone the way of Cain" before ever they commence to "build a city." The eastward journey is ever the figure of man's selfhood. How significant, then, the cry of EASTERN PHILOSOPHY: Know Thy SELF!

ABRAHAM GOES WEST

Reading on in Genesis, we come to the time following the Flood. It is interesting to note that during the time when "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech," the people JOURNEYED EASTWARD (not "from the east" as the King James gives it). They settled in "the land of Shinar," which is Babylon and is to the EAST OF PALESTINE.

Having journeyed EASTWARD, the people then began to build a tower, which was named Babel, meaning confusion (Gen. 11:1-4). The error of Cain is repeated once more.

God further reveals His plan as it relates to east and west when He called Abraham and selected him to be the father of His purposes in the earth. Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees, in the area of old Babylon - the EAST. The religions which constituted what today we call Paganism originated in the east. Those religions were for the most part forms of sun-worship, and worship of the moon and the constellations of the heavens. The Chaldeans, like the Persians and most of the ancient nations, were worshippers of the heavens. Sun-worship was their religion, and astrology was, if one might so put it, their theology. The eastern pagan concepts of astrology, divination, psychic phenomena, transcendental meditation, reincarnation, astral projection, etc., etc. today ride upon a crest of popularity unequalled in history. Eastern philosophies are taking the world by storm. Mankind, in his fateful journey eastward, has launched himself into a mystical orbit, where hopefully some answers to life's enigmas can be found. But that which is born of the flesh will always travel eastward, away from the presence, or consciousness of the Lord, into an emphasis upon S-E-L-F REALIZATION, while that which is of the Spirit will guide us from east to west, into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of JESUS CHRIST, progressing until we come into our final appointed resting place IN HIM.

God commanded Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:1) to go to a land that He would show him - the land of Canaan. Ur means light - the light of Babylon. But what is the light of Babylon? Is it the light of God? NO! It is the false light of the carnal mind, as the apostle says, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their work" **(II Cor. 11:13-15).** Abraham was directed to leave the light of Babylon in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. Leaving Babylon and coming to Canaan is a picture of leaving the darkness of man-made religious systems and coming into the Kingdom of Light where shines the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. When Abraham and Sarah journeyed from Babylon to Canaan they left from the east and went to the west. Isn't that remarkable! When Adam and Eve were banished from the glory of the Lord they were driven eastward. When Cain went out from the presence of the Lord he traveled even farther eastward. But when God inaugurated a RESTORATION, Abraham was required to leave the east and go west. Herein is revealed God's great pattern for RESTORATION!

Abraham had to learn God's ways step by step. In **Gen. 12:7-8** we find, "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there built he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he called upon the name of the Lord." Notice, beloved, the direction of the pitching of the camp. Abraham pitched his tent to the east, with Hai to the east and Bethel on the west. Bethel means."the house of God." Hai means "a heap of ruins." When Abraham pitched his tent he was facing Bethel, heading westward, revealing his desire to go towards God's house. The way of ruin, desolation, chaos, destruction and loss the way of the east - lay behind him!

LOT CHOOSES THE EAST

There came a day when the herds of Abraham and his nephew, Lot, had grown to such an extent that there was not grass enough in one place for both of them to feed their flocks. It became evident that they would have to separate from each other as they reached out for new pasture. Abraham was most gracious and gave Lot first choice. And Lot looked over the land from the mountain where they were standing and saw down in the valley the river Jordan flowing between green fields, where the soil was rich. He saw the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah upon the plain, near the head of the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan flows. "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed EAST: and they separated themselves one from the other" **(Gen. 13:11).** Going east is going your way. Going west is going God's way. Lot was enticed by all those things which appeal to the flesh - the well-watered plains, the life of ease for the flesh, the fleshly excitement, activity and entertainment of the cities - and so he JOURNEYED EASTWARD. It was a calamitous journey ending in fiasco. He departed from his uncle, the man of God, and pursued that which gratified the flesh, moving closer and closer to the city of Sodom, until after a time he was dwelling in the very heart of that cesspool of wickedness, until the day that God pronounced judgment on the whole realm and rained down fire and brimstone from heaven. A great cataclysm took place and when it was over the great cities of the plain lay deep beneath the waters of the Dead Sea!

THE RIVER THAT FLOWS EASTWARD

It is significant, however, that after Lot had separated from Abraham, God said unto Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever" **(Gen. 13:14-15).** So tremendous is the promise of God to Abraham, because he would have an eye single to God, that in due time God would give him an inheritance in ALL DIRECTIONS, even to possess the gates of his enemies, and to restore all of that which was eastward, for "in thee and in thy seed shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED" **(Gen. 28:14).** Then "ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people... and ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" **(Ex. 19:5-6).** "And hast made us unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall reign on the earth" **(Rev. 5:10).** "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" **(I Cor. 15:25,26,28).**

It is a beautiful truth - when the people of God have come into the fullness of all that which awaits them WESTWARD, they will be empowered to bless and restore all of the realm of the EASTWARD, into the light and life and glory of God. It is the healing, life-giving stream that we read about in Ezekiel: "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house EASTWARD... these waters issue out TOWARD THE EAST COUNTRY, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, THE WATERS SHALL BE HEALED. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, SHALL LIVE: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish" **(Eze. 47:1, 8-9).**

The beloved Seer of Patmos beheld in rapturous wonder the same blessed scene and described it thus: "And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb ... 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 of the water of life freely" **(Rev. 22:1,17).** In the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden we are told of a remarkable river that had its source in Eden, but on flowing out of the garden divided itself into FOUR BRANCHES (north, south, east, west). This is a type or symbol of the life of God, flowing out from the Kingdom of God to the whole earth. The nature of God's wonderful river is that it flows OUTWARD.

Jesus identified this great river of God when in the last day, that great day of the Feast, He 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. THIS HE SPAKE OF THE SPIRIT, which they that believe on Him should receive" **(Jn. 7:37-39).** Thank God that this river now flows! The life of Jesus Christ is flowing as a river out from the throne of God. There is coming an outflow of blessing and life and glory from the body of Jesus Christ, where God is enthroned, that shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read about in the Bible or in Church history! From the glorious city of God the river shall flow, out of the innermost being of a people filled with all the fullness of God. The body of Christ IS THE TEMPLE of the living God; our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the door; and from under the threshold flow the living waters of the Spirit, ever increasing, both in the individual believer and in that corporate temple of living stones which is built up a spiritual house, an habitation of God through the Spirit. In the symbolism of Ezekial 47 the waters FLOW EASTWARD, i.e., towards the Kedron, and thence towards the Jordan, and so along the Ghor into the Dead Sea. The main point in the picture (see Eze. 47:3-5) is the rapid augmentation from a petty stream into a mighty river, not by the influx of side streams, but by its own self-supply from the sacred miraculous source IN THE TEMPLE.

Note the progress and increase of these waters: The WENT FORTH EASTWARD (vs. 3), towards the EAST COUNTRY (vs. 8). The prophet and his guide followed the stream as it ran down from the holy mountains, and when they had followed it about a thousand cubits they went across, to try the depth, and it was to the ankles (vs. 3). Then they walked along on the bank of the river on the other side, a thousand cubits more, and then, to try the depth, they waded through it the second time, and it was up to their knees (vs. 4). They walked along it by a thousand cubits more, and then forded it the third time, and then it was up to their middle - the waters were to the loins. They then walked a thousand cubits further, and attempted to cross it the fourth time, but found it impossible: the waters had risen, so that they were waters to swim in, A MIGHTY RIVER THAT COULD NOT BE PASSED OVER (vs. 5).Ah, these are increasing waters, this river runs constantly, AND THE FURTHER IT GOES THE FULLER IT GROWS! As it is written, "Of the INCREASE of His government and peace THERE SHALL BE NO END" **(Isa. 9:7).**

This river of life has been flowing ever since Pentecost; we realize that; but soon it shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness. "Behold, I will 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).** We thank God for the taste we have had from the Fountain of living water. But Jesus has promised, "The water that I shall give him shall BE IN HIM A WELL OF WATER SPRINGING UP into everlasting life" **(Jn. 4:14).** Sad to say, we have been like the fountain in the Song of Solomon, "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed" **(S. of S. 4:12).** A fountain! But shut up, sealed, frozen over. Abraham digged many good wells in his day; but after his death we are told that the Philistines had filled them in. Isaac found that he had to dig them again before he could take advantage of the refreshing waters that lay buried under the rocks and dirt and filth which the enemy had tossed into the wells. So it is with the body of Christ, and the fountain

which Christ has created in the hearts of His people. All the potentialities of this new life are right in our heart, locked up like the germ-life in the seed.

"RIVERS of living water" is Christ's promise to His people. If men are content with waters up to the ankles, this is not for them. If they are satisfied with waters up to the knees, this is not for them. If waters up to the waist are sufficient, this is not for them. If men are satisfied with a new birth experience, a baptism in the Holy Spirit experience, with gifts of the Spirit and blessings and a comfortable New Testament Church order - such contentment only proves that the Rivers of Living Water have ceased to flow from their souls; for this fountain that Christ places within, if not cluttered up with the mire of the Philistines, is an ever-increasing and inexhaustible supply of divine life and power and glory. Thank God for every measure of truth and life that we have experienced hitherto; but let it flow and grow, child of God - let it surge forward until it becomes a mighty Amazon in this desert-world of sin, sickness, sorrow and death. All who have ears to hear must hear what the Spirit is saying in these momentous days. The Spirit is saying that He is preparing a people, He is preparing sons who shall be a RIVER OF LIFE. God is preparing a body for that first Son, a RIVER-BED FOR THE FLOWING OF HIS LIFE, that His salvation may be manifested unto all the ends of the earth.

This great river flows into the desert and into the sea - the symbol used is the Dead Sea - the very sea, significantly, whose saline waters COVER THE GUILTY CITIES OF THE PLAIN, whither Lot went when he journey eastward - Sodom and Gomorrah! In its bituminous waters no vegetable or animal life is said to be found. But now death is to give place to life in this great sea of humanity - and the healing properties of these waters are such that the sulphurous, death-pervading lake of Sodom SHALL BE HEALED! Praise God, from His WESTERN GARDEN, His RIVER OF LIFE COMPANY shall flow forth EASTWARD, into all the EAST COUNTRY, the life-giving streams! "And there shall be a very great multitude of fish." "Follow Me," said Jesus, "and I will make you fishers of men" **(Mat. 4:19).**

There is coming a time of unspeakable glory, plainly revealed in God's Word as the time when He shall MAKE ALL THINGS NEW (Rev. 21:5). This renewal of all things is as certain as the rising of the sun and the going down thereof. There is coming a blessed day when the River of Life shall overflow so abundantly unto the whole creation that the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. There is coming a day when there shall be no more sin and no more curse and no more death anywhere, for the former things have passed away, washed and quickened and renewed in the life-giving powers of the River of Life. These are the things, which eye hath not seen or ear heard, and certainly they have not even entered into the heart of those who fill the pews of the Churches Sunday after Sunday. These are the things God has revealed to them that love Him. These are the UNSPEAKABLE things, unlawful for man to utter, the things that pertain to the eternal purposes of God in the realm of the Spirit. These are the things that shall be brought to pass in the age and in the ages to come as the River of Life flows out through the ministry of the sons of God.

THE TABERNACLE

To further illustrate the distinction between the way of the flesh and the way of the Spirit, we read that when Abraham sent away the sons of his concubines, he sent them away from Isaac, "EASTWARD, UNTO THE EAST COUNTRY" **(Gen. 25:5-6).** And when Balak waited someone to curse Israel, he sent for Balaam who was dwelling "IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE EAST" **(Num. 23:7).** The children of Israel, God's covenant people, were continually oppressed by "THE CHILDREN OF THE EAST" **(Jud. 6:3,33; 7:12; 8:8-10).** Indeed, the scriptures abound with these illustrations of the truth that men of flesh face EASTWARD, or dwell in THE EAST COUNTRY, while the Lord's Spirit-led people are always facing WESTWARD, symbolically and spiritually, towards His fullness and glory. Indeed, "eastern religions" are well named, for they are religions devised by man as he stands at his farthest distance from God. Only as we face WEST spiritually can we properly describe God and His ways.

It is also interesting to note that Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness was always pitched to face the east (Ex. 27:13-16). The great Temple in Jerusalem was likewise positioned so that the entrance was on the east. Thus, there was always an entrance prepared for those who came from the east seeking after the Lord. That "east to west" speaks of the route of spiritual progression is seen in this beautiful symbolic arrangement with the entrance on the east you automatically turned your back to the east and entered in a westward direction, first

into the Outer Court with its brazen altar of sacrifice and brazen laver, and then westward into the Holy Place with its ministry, and finally into the mast westward location of all - the Most Holy Place. Even so in our spiritual experience do we walk WESTWARD, coming out of the land of the east, with all its selfhood, its building for the flesh, and its separation from God, beginning at the Outer Court of the Tabernacle to partake of HIS sacrifice, being justified freely by His grace; then into the Holy Place with its ministry, His anointing, His manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, and dimensions of worship wherein HE is exalted; and finally through the veil, until at last we appear before God in the Holiest of all, and there at the mercy seat, with the dazzling light of glory radiating forth, we become like Him, partaking of that divine fullness and those sacred realities for which our heart has long sought after. Moving then from a beginning experience in God into HIS FULLNESS is, in symbolism, a progression FROM EAST TO WEST.

THE WESTWARD STAR The wise men at the time of the birth of the Christ-child were living in the east, for, said they, "We have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" **(Mat. 2:1-2).** It is evident from a careful study of these words that the wise men were in the east, not the star, and having seen that star from their location in the east, they traveled westward to where the star led them. From Persia, Babylon, and all the countries of the east they came! Leaving the place of man's wisdom, they journeyed westward to behold HIM "Who of God is made unto us WISDOM, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" **(I Cor. 1:30).** Leaving all the realms of man's carnal reasoning, all the errors of astrology, all the deceptions of the psychic realm, all the delusions of Easter philosophy, all the mysteries of the occult, they went westward to seek out HIM is IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE (Jn. 14:6).

There is in this hour an insidious intrusion into the ranks of those who have received the call to sonship. I speak of the subtle injection into "sonship teaching" of facets of eastern philosophy which arise from the realm of the SOUL - the carnal, mental realm - and are not of the Holy Spirit. The doctrines of "eastern religion" stand in stark contrast, yes, and in opposition to the truth of the gospel of Christ from the west. These have absolutely nothing to offer the man who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, transformed in mind and heart by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, quickened and made alive in Him and raised up to share His glory and sit with Him in the heavenly places, far above every principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named in this age and in the ages to come.

None can dispute the fact that those nations of earth which for long centuries have been devoted to eastern religion are today, as ever they have been, lands of INCREDIBLE SPIRITUAL DARKNESS, blinded by ignorance, captives to silly superstitions, devastated by poverty, spread over with squalor, and ravaged by sin, sickness, sorrow and death. Only in those lands where the magnificent display of the grace of God in the saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ has conquered the hearts of men have entire civilizations been blessed, lifted and transformed economically, physically, politically, educationally and spiritually. The Conquering Spirit of Jesus Christ has transformed the hearts of men and the face of nations. The subtle force of this Conqueror is seen penetrating all the spheres of modern life. His aggressive warfare on the old heathen homes transformed the home, until the Christian home, where woman is queen, rather than the chattel and slave of the man, and where the children are cradled and cultured in love, rises in beauty and glory. He has transformed governments, until today, instead of people being the servants of the kings and presidents, they are the servants of the people. He has transformed the educational institutions, until today the poorest and obscurest child has the opportunity of the highest and most finished education. He has transformed commerce, until the principles of equity and honesty and fairness are those only which the leaders in the commercial world can adapt if they wish to hold their supremacy. The gospel of Jesus brought tenderness and love into the world until today the mentally ill, impoverished, unfortunates, the sick and the maimed, have grand institutions reared for their benefit, to which they can go, and there find warmth and care and protection. Such things as charitable institutions would have been laughed to scorn by the world before Christ came. All of these dramatic changes and many others as well, have been wrought by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In stark contrast to the spiritual and material blessings and prosperity of those nations whose God is the Lord, we see the distressed state of those who have served the false gods of the east. The "ascended masters of the east," I am told, have resided in the Himalayas for more than 25,000 years, ostensibly to bless, lift, heal and guide the people into the ways of life and light and blessing. In my opinion, if the nations of India, Tibet, Burma and Afghanistan are the classic examples of the fruit of this long and illustrious ministry - I can get along

quite well without them, thank you! Amazing, isn't it, that out of gross pagan darkness come the doctrines of the masters of the far east, transdental meditation, yoga, ESP, cosmic Christ consciousness, alpha waves, astral projection, telepathy, clairvoyance, reincarnation, karma, etc., and then some would seek to join these unfruitful works of darkness with the glorious LIGHT of the gospel of Christ! Ah, my friend, far too long we have allowed our soul, our mind, to play the harlot with these alluring spirits of the east, which defile our spirits with their sorceries. Harken! ye sons of God. Ere we stand on Zion's holy hill the soul needs to be brought back from the land of its wanderings in the east, to be cleansed by the precious blood of the Lamb. You who would be sons of God, you who would rule and reign with Christ, you who would lead the nations unto living fountains of water - I tell you this day that the voice of the Father calls you back from the polluted waters of the east, to "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" **(Eph. 4:23-24).** May the almighty Father cause you to hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the chambers of your soul's castle. May you see the saber of truth flashing its dazzling light and hear the clatter of the hoofs of the white horse of CHRIST'S TRIUMPH WITHIN as He bounds through your land, delivering from the realms of the world, the flesh and the devil, and bringing us to that place in God where no more do we lean upon anything which the flesh has to offer, no longer trusting in the psychic realms with all their divinations, but we follow on to know HIM who IS our Way, Truth, and LIFE. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" **(Ps. 43:3-4).**

What a beautiful arrangement for spiritual progression. "We have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him." The star seen by the wise men of the east, with all their wisdom, led to the discovery of THE CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD, in what was to them the farther west. Persia was a long way from Palestine; Palestine is a long way from us; but the star that shone from heaven in that far-off day is still guiding the pilgrim feet of the watching few to the lowly place where lies the new-born hope of the world, God's Christ, Head And body. The Christ-child, conceived in the physical womb of a physical woman and then separated from her by a perfectly normal birth, was God's immutable hope of reconciling the world, even as it is written that God was in Christ, RECONCILING THE WORLD unto Himself. Can you not see, precious friend of mine, the rising crescendo of God's almighty purpose? For it is NOW written that Christ IN YOU is the hope of glory, and if I understand God's Christ aright, and God's glory aright, within you, dear child of God, dwells something imperishable, something eternal, something transcendental, something conceived of the Holy Ghost, something God-like, a spark from the Divine Glory that no power shall ever quench. The Christ-child has been born anew in our hearts. The Sun of righteousness has arisen within His people. Hasten where HE leads. Kneel to the Christ who waits expression through your life; bestow your gifts rich and rare - all you have, keeping nothing back. All creation groans with unutterable longing for Christ to be formed in you, in me.

THE WESTWARD JOURNEY

Throughout the ages past, God has revealed His purpose to bring His people from the realms of carnality and the ways of man unto the fullness of the presence and glory of the Lord. This was to be A PROGRESSIVE WESTERN MOVEMENT. The coming of the Son of man is likened to the rising sun, which shines FROM THE EAST EVEN UNTO THE WEST. It is interesting to note in this connection that history corroborates this progressive WESTERN advance of God's dealings with humanity throughout the unfolding ages.When God created Adam, He put the man in the garden, which was located EASTWARD IN EDEN (Gen. 2:8) so that his progress must be WESTWARD. Then the place of God's blessing and glory moved west into Palestine when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees in the east and planted his seed in the land of Canaan to the west. The first center from whence the glorious light of the gospel of Christ shone forth to the world was Jerusalem. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the center of spiritual activity moved westward into Greece, entered Asia Minor, penetrated Rome. Into the royal palace, with more than royal grace, strode the Conquering Christ. The revelry which aforetime rang through those imperial chambers hushed itself into reverential silence; and the emperor in lowly manner bowed before the flashings of His authoritative demeanor, and solemnly swore to evermore support His throne, and decreed that the religion of Jesus Christ should thenceforth be the religion of this great realm. The centuries rolled by. Slowly descended the gloom of the dark ages. But by and by the glory of God broke forth afresh, unweakened by the deadly embrace of a hollow and lifeless ceremonialism. Luther's voice rang out its clarion notes, and the whole continent of Europe was convulsed by those tremendous and rapid movements which broke down the elaborate formalism and deadly

corruption of those dark ages, and set men forth into the clear light of heaven, where they could breathe its own free airs. The Glory Cloud had again moved westward and Germany and Switzerland became the center from which the great power of God shook the world and changed the course of history. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the center continued its western movement to Britain, as the Spirit of God moved in mighty power across the length and breadth of that land in massive tidal waves of revival, converting and transforming untold millions of lives and birthing the Bible Societies and the modern foreign missionary movements. England sent forth missionaries to her colonies which circled the globe and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth. And here we have it still moving west, or coming from the way of the east to America.America was no accident. As God called the children of Israel to leave their bondage in Egypt, led them across the Red Sea, and into the promised land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, so, three millenniums later, God called our Christian forefathers to leave the tyranny of Europe, led them across the great Atlantic Ocean, to live in free America, truly a land flowing with milk and honey, corn and oil, fruit and grain, and gold, coal and iron and wealth untold.

When Columbus first landed in America, he, with his men, kneeled down on the beach, and consecrated the new country to Jesus Christ. When the French Huguenots, driven from France on account of their devotion to Jesus Christ, landed in the Carolinas, they there on the ocean's beach kneeled, and consecrated the new land to Jesus Christ. When the Dutch Holland refugees landed on Manhattan Island, they were animated by the same spirit, and bowed down on the sand, and consecrated the land to Jesus Christ. When the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, they knelt there, and consecrated the land to Jesus Christ. This continent belongs to no other person than Jesus Christ! His Spirit, working in the minds of His followers, discovered it. And He, through them, took possession of it, from the stern and rock-bound coasts of New England, to the sun-kissed slopes of California. Here to these shores flocked legions who acknowledged no submission except to the rule of Jesus Christ. Here in this new land, born in prayer and faith in God, our heavenly Father has surrounded His chosen people with friendly neighbors to the north and south, and protected them from invasion by wide oceans on the east and west. And from here, God has sent missionaries and raised up preachers, that His Word might be proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the earth, until almost every creature has had the opportunity of hearing the blessed good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God. "Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord: and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" **(Ps. 33:12).**

What was God's purpose in leading our forefathers across the ocean to found here the world's greatest nation? Was it that we alone might enjoy the richest land, the highest standard of living, the choicest freedoms, the greatest wealth, the most marvelous inventions that the world has ever seen? NO! When God called His people, the children of Israel, from their cruel bondage in Egypt and settled them in the rich land of Canaan, He had a very definite purpose in mind for them. There, they were to worship and serve Him, only. They were to exalt His great name before the heathen nations that surrounded them. They were to eventually become a blessing to all mankind. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" **(Gen. 12:2-3).** God has called the United States of America into existence and given us the riches of this great continent, for the very same and definite purpose. Here, we were to build a nation whose very coin and currency would proclaim to a scoffing, heathen, and humanistic world that "In God We Trust." Here, the Bible was to be read and revered and obeyed. Here, God's ministers and God's people were to be free and unhampered in their allegiance to the Almighty. Here, were to be raised up Churches from which missionaries would go to the uttermost parts of the earth with the message that Jesus Christ came to set men free. Yes, America was appointed to be "God's Country," and we were meant to be God's people. How long until the Glory Cloud moves westward again? I don't know. But today the western progression of God's glorious purposes has brought us to the beautiful land of America.

Above and far beyond these physical realities lies the spiritual truth that we presently see ourselves SPIRITUALLY MOVING WESTWARD toward the Most Holy Place, the place of the fullness and glory of God. May these unspeakably solemn truths find a place of lodging, growth and ever-expanding expression in the lives of all who read these pages. Before concluding this message I would share a quotation from the writings of Paul and Emily Mueller. "In 1851 John Soule coined the phrase: 'GO WEST YOUNG MAN, and grow up with the country.' Horace Greely picked up that statement and used it extensively in giving advice to young men, and thus the phrase, 'GO WEST YOUNG MAN' became popular. Today a manchild has been born, and

from the time of his birth he has heard a still, small voice behind him saying, 'GO WEST YOUNG MAN.' The pleadings of his heavenly Father have been persistent and determined as the young man was urged to press his way WESTWARD into the Holy of holies. The young man, the manchild company, is indeed pressing his way WESTWARD and will continue to do so until he has been perfected and matured and until his Father tells him to turn around and go EASTWARD to the nations. The deliverance of all creation depends on the sons of God and the direction they take (Rom. 8:21-22). As we continue to go WESTWARD, we will ultimately partake of all God's glory and fullness and become a part of the flowing of God's torrential river of Life" -end quote.

THE LIGHT OF UNDERSTANDING

As we have noted, Jesus explained that His coming would be like a BRIGHT SHINING, which shines FROM THE EAST EVEN UNTO THE WEST. Here, unmistakably, is the idea of enlightenment. Never has the presence of an earthly king or potentate been so glorious and all-powerful as properly to be likened to a brightness sufficient to enlighten the whole world - from the east unto the west. This, however, is true of earth's great and eternal King, our Lord Jesus Christ. The meaning of these words is evident: Jesus' presence will enlighten the world. And as light is used in the scriptures to symbolize knowledge - the knowledge of God - what the Master really told the disciples in symbolic language was that HE WOULD ARISE AS ENLIGHTENMENT unto all the ends of the earth until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

The sweet singer of Israel penned these significant words: "The entrance of Thy words GIVETH LIGHT; it giveth UNDERSTANDING to the simple" **(Ps. 119:130).** The prophet Hosea, speaking of God, said, **"Thy judgments are as the LIGHT that goeth forth" (Hos. 6:5).** "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a LIGHT unto my path" **(Ps. 119:105).** Also in **II Cor. 4:6,** Paul declares "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." Can we not understand by this that TRUTH is LIGHT, UNDERSTANDING is LIGHT, KNOWLEDGE is LIGHT and LIFE is LIGHT. We often hear someone say, "I got some light on that." They are declaring the reception of understanding. In like manner, DARKNESS is IGNORANCE. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath BLINDED THE MINDS of them which believe not, lest the LIGHT of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" **(II Cor. 4:3-4).**

From the above scripture we know there are TWO KINGDOMS: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, or the Kingdom of LIGHT and the kingdom of darkness. Praise God, He "hath delivered us from the POWER OF DARKNESS, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" **(Col. 1:13).** In this world darkness and light, day and night co-exist. Here in Crystal River it is a bright, sunlit day. On the other side of the world people slumber upon their beds in the darkness of night. Therefore I learn in the natural a principle that teaches me a spiritual truth: it is day and night at the same time! These lines are being read by many thousands of people around the world. Some of you walk in light and some of you walk in darkness. Some of you walk in spiritual light indifferent dimensions, while some of you walk in spiritual darkness in different dimensions. it's a matter of your UNDERSTANDING. It's not a matter of whether you speak in tongues, how you were baptized, or rules and regulations of any kind. It is a thing of the SPIRIT, a condition, a state of being, a spiritual mentality, a KNOWING OF THE LORD IN TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING.

Darkness is but the absence of light, or the lack of understanding. Christ Himself IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE. Life comes from light, therefore, if we want to know the condition of life in a man, we must see the state of enlightenment within him. We often think that if a man becomes a little more zealous, his life has grown; or if he is a little more pious, his life has increased. Such concepts are totally incorrect. Life is not in the zeal of man; neither is it in the piety of man. There is only one realm and one source of life, and that is LIGHT. Life rests with light; life comes from light. To determine whether a person has grown in life, we must observe the condition of his INNER ENLIGHTENMENT. Thus, if we want to help others grow in life, we must help them to be enlightened. If they can receive enlightenment from us they can obtain life and grow in life. May God help you to experientially become this day part of His SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS COMPANY. Arise, and shine!

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 20
COMING AS THE RAIN

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY

TIMES OF REFRESHING BETWEEN THE SEASONS

Every great spiritual reality is presented to us in scripture over and over again, from various standpoints, under various emblems, and like the multi-faceted hues of the diamond, in order to exhibit the truth in its setting with accompanying truths, to make it as real as possible to us, and also in order to reach every individual on his plane of spiritual development and according to his need. Thus the coming of the Lord is set forth in scripture by prophecy, parable, and analogy, to reveal to our longing hearts all the facets, manners, and modes of His appearing and manifestation unto us. Among the various types of our Lord's return is His coming unto us AS THE RAIN.

The world cannot receive the Christ today because it SEETH Him not, neither KNOWETH Him. But to all whose hearts hunger and thirst for the fullness of His presence, power and glory the promise is sure: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" **(Hos. 6:3).** The apostle James, speaking of the coming of the Lord, penned these significant words: "Be patient therefore, brethren, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive THE EARLY AND LATTER RAIN. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETII NIGH" **(James 5:7-8).** Furthermore, the prophet Zechariah gives us this inspiring admonition of hope: "Ask ye of the Lord RAIN IN THE TIME OF THE LATTER RAIN; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" **(Zech. 10:1).** In that beautiful messianic Psalm, Psalm 72, the sweet singer of Israel intoned these marvelously instructive words about the coming of the King of Glory: "HE SHALL COME DOWN LIKE RAIN upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" **(Ps. 72:6).** Little wonder that the scriptures reiterate again and again that the Lord comes WITH CLOUDS; for there can be no rain without clouds, and we are exhorted to ask for rain, via the avenue of clouds (Zech. 10:1).

There has been a general misunderstanding of the Word of God throughout Christendom concerning the truth of the coming of the Lord; for it is clear as we consider all the scriptures on the subject that the Lord's coming is first and foremost a spiritual visitation in the midst of His people. James therefore associates the bestowal of the latter rain with the "coming" of the Lord: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Notice in this passage how the truth concerning the latter rain is sandwiched in between these two statements concerning the "coming of the Lord," for in a very real sense the coming of the former and latter rain IS THE COMING OF THE LORD into the midst of His people. The rain is really the LORD HIMSELF coming upon us.

It is our deep conviction that Christ has appeared to His people as both the "early rain" and the "latter rain," and scattered "showers of refreshing" betwixt and between, throughout this age. Multitudinous and glorious beyond description have been the appearances of Christ as the rain. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he clearly established the fact that the outpouring of the Spirit at that time was the early rain (Acts 2:16; Joel 2:21-32). During the mighty outpouring of the Spirit in those glory filled years following 1948, the Lord often spoke in prophecy, telling the saints that that visitation of the Spirit was CHRIST COMING TO HIS PEOPLE as the latter rain. All major denominations, including the Pentecostal denominations who were closest to that visitation of the Spirit, rejected that wonderful move of God. And when they rejected that deluge from

heaven THEY ALSO REJECTED CHRIST, for it was none other than HE who came to His thirsting people at that time as latter rain.

I have often heard it said by unthinking people and preachers that God has promised a mighty "latter rain" outpouring of the Holy Spirit JUST PRIOR TO THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS. I do not hesitate to tell you that God has promised no such thing. You will not find that concept anywhere in the pages of the Bible. The preachers and teachers of our day are so totally confused and blinded by the carnal traditions and delusive dogmas of the church system, that not only do they fail to behold the glory of Christ when He is revealed, but they cannot even quote scripture correctly. There is no passage of scripture which promises a great world-wide revival BEFORE the coming of Christ. The Word of God is strangely silent about a latter rain, which will fall BEFORE the coming of the Lord. Nothing could be clearer from the scriptures than the fact that the rain former and latter, I-S the coming of Christ! Just as the former rain was given moderately by the coming of the Spirit of Christ on the day of Pentecost, so the latter rain is given abundantly in the end of the age to bring forth in the earth HIS IN-CHRISTED SAINTS. Just as the glory filled the typical tabernacle in the long ago when all was complete, so will the glory fill the completed tabernacle of the body of the Christ by His coming as latter rain. How the people of God thirst today for these living streams from heaven!

There are many wonderful truths to embrace, endless revelations to inspire and thrill the heart of man, but you will never be gripped in your spirit by any more inspiring and encouraging than that penned long centuries ago by the prophet Isaiah. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" **(Isa. 55:8-11).**

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." This scripture has been misquoted so many times and has been taken out of context in so many instances, that most of the Lord's people have completely missed its real meaning. Here we see God's way of thinking and walking contrasted with the way humanity is thinking and walking. Here God sets before us the way of the Spirit and the way of the flesh. God walks in the way of Spirit. Humanity walks in the way of flesh. Because mankind walked the way of flesh, God sent His Son, the Living Word, that He might walk this LOW ROAD of flesh with the children, so that, through Him, the children might be given the ability to overcome. As God walks in Christ Jesus, He keeps to the HIGH ROAD and He walks as Spirit.

There are two ways disclosed to us. The ways of God are not our ways. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Now if we stop there it is a hopeless situation. It is hopeless because God says to us that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the way of God higher than our way. That is how much higher the way of the Spirit is than the way of the flesh. We cannot attain unto it. If we lift this verse out of context our soul will be cast down, disconsolate and without remedy; our fleshly condition is hopeless, there is no way to attain unto GOD'S WAY. Though we might pass lightly over the verse that follows this, I would urge it upon my reader for your prayerful and reverent consideration. After establishing that God's ways are high as the heavens, the Lord continues: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow FROM HEAVEN, AND RETURNETH NOT THITHER, BUT WATERETH THE EARTH..." **(vs.10).** God is teaching a deep spiritual truth with a natural illustration. The rain and the snow come down, and they do not return to the heavens. They do not strike the ground and then leave that ground. We know, of course, that eventually they do go back up in vapor, but there is a work for them to do before that. There is a purpose in the rain and the snow coming down. They come down to "water the earth."

The rain and the snow come down from the heavens to the earth. Just so, the place in which God is, His state of being, is so much higher than we are. In Hosea 6:3 we find that the Lord shall come unto us as the rain, even the latter and the former rain unto the earth. This is the LORD coming to His people as the rain comes to water the earth. This is the One who is higher than us coming down upon us to give us of Himself. It is not God getting in control of our thoughts and our ways, but God coming down in His thoughts and His ways into our earthiness, so that what He is in His high heaven He now BECOMES IN OUR EARTH. The rain and the snow

come down from the heaven and do not return to the heaven, but WATER THE EARTH. The rain and the snow water the earth and cause it to bring forth the bud, so that the sower may have seed, and the eater may have bread.

This is why we have the rain and the snow. So that the one who sows the seed may have more seed to sow, and so there is enough left over for those who eat to have their food. The rain and the snow bless and refresh the earth, giving life, and cause it to bud and bring forth and give increase. Now God says, "So, (in just this way) shall MY WORD be that goeth forth out of My mouth. It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Now, to what is God comparing His Word? To the rain and the snow that fall upon the earth to water it, to give life and increase. God is saying that is just exactly what HIS WORD is sent to do and shall do.

God's Word! God's Word coming down from heaven! "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, 14).** God's Word will come down from HIS HIGH ROAD, falling upon this lower road of the flesh realm. God's Word, or the Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos, the Living Word of God, will come as the former and latter rain unto His earth, or His people. He shall come upon those who are walking this lower road of the flesh. He will come upon our earth, and He will cause to spring up in our earth the seed of life that He has planted there. We are in the way or road of flesh, but down from that realm of Spirit, from God's way, God's state of being, He is pouring forth HIS VERY SELF upon humanity. God declared that His Word should not return unto Him void. Just as the rain and snow accomplish their purpose in the earth, so shall God's Word, His anointing, His Christ not return unto Him void, but it SHALL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE.

How thankful we are for this! How we praise Him for what He is doing! How marvelous are all His ways! We have talked loudly and long about the rain, but knew so little about it. This rain, this LORD was and is something that is to saturate our very beings and not run off from us. It is to bring forth the purpose of God in our lives. It is to bring forth the life of God within us. It is to produce the nature of God in us. It is to cultivate the wonderful mind of Christ in us. It is to bring God's own heavenly condition and state of being to fruition within our lives. It is heaven coming down to earth and filling it. It is the ascendancy of the Spirit within us by first falling upon our earthiness as rain from heaven, then accomplishing within God's great and eternal purpose. Oh, the mystery of it! The wonder of it!

I remember many years ago traveling down a valley in California. Barren, bare, waterless, useless, seemed a great deal of the land to me. Suddenly, however, I came to a belt of great fertility. I said, "Why is this?" "Water," they said. "Where did you get it?" I asked. "There is no water here on this plain to speak of - where did you get it?" They pointed to the beautiful Sierra Nevada, that great range of mountains, which skirts that valley and is a continuation of a great range far up. They pointed to the snowy peaks, and they said, "There we get the water." They showed me how they had turned much waterless country into a vast vineyard and orchard. Some of that land sold for many thousands of dollars an acre because it was full of vines and fruit trees and brought in a splendid income. It was water, water brought down from these mountains, that wrought the transformation. I saw fine, strong cattle and lovely plains with green grass, and saw that it was alfalfa. I saw how they channeled the water and made it flow gently over the land, and how they kept it there, until the seed started to grow. They could get several crops a year of that beautiful alfalfa and other grasses. I saw at once, what I had seen in lesser degrees in other lands, the tremendous power of water as a fructifying power. That water came into these dry, barren, waterless plains from the snow-clad mountains which yielded their treasure when the summer sun shone upon them and melted the imprisoned waters, which were then guided and distributed until they gently flowed over all the wilderness wastes, and turned them into fertile fields, lovely gardens, and rich orchards and vineyards.

So it is with the coming of the Lord. All my springs are in Thee, O God! "The river of God is full of water." That river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, is the Spirit of the living Christ of God coming down as rain, and flowing through the river-bed of our earth. In that blessed stream the tree of life is growing. Christ is that tree of life, and the leaves of the tree are the words of God, and they are for the healing of the nations. Blessed be God! The power and immensity of the illustration completely staggers the imagination and floods

the soul with indescribable wonder. I was interested in reading an article which contained a quote by a scientist who tells us that sixteen million tons of water fall on this earth every second. It is hard to grasp this statement, isn't it? Sixteen million tons of water fall on this earth every second. How much is that? One billion, three hundred eighty-two million, four hundred thousand tons of it every day. That is just the power and magnitude of THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS THE RAIN UNTO US!

A sister in Christ shares the following vision, which is so very expressive and illustrative. "I was before the Lord on the evening of the 8th of July, seeking His face and pouring out my heart before Him, when suddenly I was There. IN THE SPIRIT I found myself surrounded by a sweet, powerful force of love. It not only surrounded me but invaded me to the inmost part of my being. At the same time it brought with it such a deep sense of peace, of security and of well-being. Jesus was with me. His glory shined all around and upon all. He was just like I had last seen Him and He was just loving me. It was just like being inside a dense, transparent, invisible but tangible cloud of pure LOVE. As I was completely covered in this bright cloud of love it began to rain. It rained and rained and rained. But what a strange rain it was. It was not like rain on this earth because it was not wet at all. It was a heavenly rain. The large drops were like drops of pure crystal lights, or like small diamonds that had life and light inside of them. They fell from above so softly and smoothly like little stars. Although each one gave me such a sense of joy and pleasure, my hands did not get wet. Although of substance, they were still so light and airy and I carried them about in my hand. Jesus showed me that this was His rain of blessing. Later I was so amazed for in the service that night there was a prophetic word concerning the beautiful showers of rain that He was even now sending upon His people. I had been given to see and feel that very rain" -end quote.

TIMES OF REFRESHING

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die ... a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up..." **(Eccles. 3:1-3).**

The scriptures amply testify that there are seasons in life. We can know the seasons because each one has individual indications of when it is coming. When spring comes, the grass starts turning green and the little roots start putting out their shoots. When summer comes, the flowers bloom. When fall arrives, everything turns orange and brown. Winter brings the cold and snow. You can see the evidence and know what season it is.

Grand and glorious truths lie tucked away in the passage quoted above. "To everything there is a season" certainly applies to the "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" **(Acts 3:19).** Then there are seasons of apostasy, when men settle down in their own carnal visions, and propagate them. Then in God's own time He breaks forth in brighter light to dispel the shrouding gloom of the static traditions of religion, and raise the people above them, up into HIMSELF. There is a time for these "seasons of refreshing" to be birthed; then when their purpose has been accomplished it is their time to die, and the rain clouds blow away. Now if we can discern the signs of the times we will not try to keep alive something that has come to its death time in the providence of God. "O ye hypocrites," said Jesus to the Pharisees and Saducees, "ye can discern the face of the sky (whether it appears to be bringing fair or foul weather); but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" **(Mat. 16:3).** They could discern natural things but had no insight into spiritual movings. They were not one whit different from vast multitudes of religious people today who look only to natural things for signs of the appearing of the Lord: earthquakes, economic conditions, wars, communism, European Common Market, crime, science and technology, computer systems, marks on the forehead or hand, world leaders, the Jews, moral breakdown, etc. Those who with carnal minds continually examine outward world events FOR SIGNS OF THE LORD'S COMING know absolutely nothing about the mind of God nor do they have spiritual understanding of His omniscient purposes. Oh, that God would open the eyes of His people who have believed on His name that they might leave their hopeless paths of tradition and their human ways of looking at things and begin to fall into step with the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God!

I have long been intrigued by the words spoken by Peter while preaching to the people outside the temple, after he had healed the lame man, when he said to the crowd, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He

shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" **(Acts 3:19-21).** The Greek-English Interlinear gives a more literal translation of the original Greek text in this passage. "Reform, therefore, and turn, that your sins may be blotted out; so that seasons of refreshment may come from the presence of the Lord." In this verse we find the plan of salvation presented in simple terms. When we repented of our sins and turned to the Lord, we found that "seasons of refreshing" did come from the presence of the Lord. This is the Spirit of the heavens falling into our earth. Can we not now understand the true meaning of Peter's words? "...when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall (by this means, in this manner) SEND JESUS CHRIST ... whom the heaven must retain until the TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS. . ." Ah - as soon as He falls into our earth the times of restitution begin! The restitution of all things is not just a future glory. There are "times" of restitution. When Jesus Christ is sent into our lives in seasons of refreshing, the "times" of this glorious restitution have begun within as we are restored into the image of God.

All through this present age, the Lord has sent showers of blessing or "seasons of refreshment" upon His people. "Times of refreshing" - how meaningful are these words! They imply life and light. "From the presence of the Lord." The expression as here used, "the presence of the Lord," literally means "out from the face of the Lord." The thought is a common one in Oriental figurative language, in which turning one's face toward another denotes friendship, or favor; while to turn the back is a symbol of enmity or disfavor. Moses, the ancient lawgiver of Israel said, "The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and give thee peace." We have all experienced these seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord and we know how glorious and wonderful those seasons have been.

It seems to me that Acts 3:19-20 is the very core and heart of the whole purpose of God in sending Jesus Christ unto us as the rain. What Are these "times of refreshing" from the presence of the Lord? Verse twenty explains, it is the coming of Jesus Christ TO US. "And that He may send to you the Christ, the Messiah, who before was designated and appointed for you, Jesus" (Amplified). These times of refreshing are Jesus Christ coming in manifest presence TO His people. Now let me explain what I mean by MANIFEST PRESENCE. We all know the term - "God is omnipresent. "What does that mean? It signifies that God is present everywhere. The Psalmist put in these words: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" **(Ps. 139:7-10).** Obviously you cannot escape God's omnipresence. He is equally present in all places at all times throughout the unbounded heavens.

What is the difference between that and His MANIFEST PRESENCE? The Lord made a promise to His disciples, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will MANIFEST Myself to him" **(Jn. 14:21).** The word "manifest" means that He will allow you to see, to feel, to hear, to smell, to touch Him. He will manifest Himself in such a way that it will come to pass that you will KNOW HIM by His manifestation. "I will MANIFEST MYSELF unto those that love Me." The message is clear - He will come in presence, not in His omnipresence, but in His manifest presence, revealing Himself in a dimension where He can be seen, heard, felt, smelt and touched - not physically, necessarily, but in a dimension of truth and reality. I am sure that many who read these lines have been in meetings and in experiences with God where was disclosed the MANIFEST PRESENCE of the Lord. In Acts 3:19 this is what the apostle Peter is dealing with, the coming of the Lord to us in times of refreshing.

Let us define this expression: "Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." For years I thought of it in terms of God up in heaven someplace, and from His presence up in heaven refreshing came down to earth. There is a truth there, as we have previously explained, but it is not the point of this passage. That is not what it means! It indicates times of refreshing that come BECAUSE HE IS PRESENT AMONG US - from the presence of the Lord among us. Not the presence of the Lord in some far-off heaven somewhere raining down refreshment on us, but times of refreshing that are the result of His manifest presence among us after the rain has fallen into our earth. Times of refreshing from or because of - the presence of the Lord!

There is an illustrative story in II Samuel chapter six. When in the days of king David the land of Israel was free from its enemy, the Philistines, David thought the time had come to bring the holy ark of the Lord out from its hiding place, where it had remained all through the rule of Samuel and the reign of Saul. They stood the ark on a wagon, to be drawn by oxen. At one place the road was rough, and the oxen stumbled, and the ark almost fell from the wagon. Uzzah, one of the men driving the oxen, took hold of the ark to steady it. God's law forbade anyone except a priest from touching the ark, and God was displeased with Uzzah for his carelessness; and Uzzah fell dead by the ark of the Lord. This death alarmed David and all the people. David was afraid to have the ark of God come into his city. He stopped the procession and placed the ark in the house near by of a man named Obed-edom. There it stayed three months. They were afraid that it might bring harm to Obed-edom and his family; but instead it brought a blessing upon them all. When David heard of the manifold blessings that had come to Obed-edom with the ark, he resolved to bring it into his own city on Mount Zion. When the Ark of the Covenant came to Obed-edom's house, what happened? All kinds of blessing - refreshing everything good started happening to him! Why? What was there? THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. The MANIFEST PRESENCE of the God of Israel. The Lord had said, "Thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And THERE I WILL MEET WITH THEE, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from BETWEEN THE TWO CHERUBIMS which are upon the ark of the testimony" **(Ex. 25:21-22).** "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIMS, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth" **(Isa. 37:16).**

"'His coming forth is as sure as the sunrise; He shall come UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the former and the latter rain unto the earth" **(Hos. 6:3,** Free Translation**).** He comes TO US as the rain. Rain brings the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord gives times of refreshing. Rain brings times that cause the water to soak the ground to mature the crops for the harvest. But notice! There is an "if" in there. We will know His coming as the rain IF we "follow ON to KNOW the Lord." His coming is as sure as the sunrise; we will know it IF we follow on to know Him; and He will come unto us as the rain. These are days of the coming of the Lord! He is coming to us in times and seasons of refreshing.

Seasons - if we are going to fulfill the purposes of God in our lives in our day we must walk in God's "seasons". All farmers know the importance of observing seasons. You don't expect to harvest apples in May or watermelons in December. Why? Because it's the wrong season. You always cooperate with the seasons and if you do you bring in a bountiful harvest. Now if I went out and started plowing and planting corn in September I would be in trouble. Why? Because I am not cooperating with the seasons! As that seed germinates and begins to grow, it's going to come up at the wrong time and, ere long, the cold will kill it. I must plant my corn in the spring and expect a harvest in the fall; thus I am flowing with the seasons. A good farmer will also understand that rain coming at the wrong time will only spoil his crop, for the rain will beat down the grain, making it impossible to harvest. Can we not see by this how infinitely important it is to observe God's SPIRITUAL SEASONS - God's times.

Paul wrote to the brethren at Thessalonica and said, "Ye have no need that I write unto you about the times and the seasons" **(I Thes. 5:1).** These saints understood something of God's seasons and worked with them. Today, when it becomes time for God to pour out His Spirit the renowned Doctors of Divinity say, "That's not for us today, that was just for the early Church." They refuse to cooperate with God's seasons. And then it becomes time to MOVE ON into the Most Holy Place, into the Order of Melchizedek, into the Kingdom of God and the Spirit-baptized ones say, "Whoa - that's not for today, that's for the millennium." The carnal minded religionist always puts everything in either the past or the future. So, what do they have right now? "oh," they say, "we have faith!" The Lord called it UNBELIEF. Thus - with all the glory of God in the past or the future, and unbelief in the present, the religionist ends up with NOTHING for today.

Most folk want to know what we WERE or what we WILL BE. They lust after past or future blessings because they are not victorious in the NOW. The plain truth is just this: the adversary doesn't care what you believe or what you experience, as long as it is in the past or the future! Multiplied thousands of the Lord's people have lived for years on a diet of TESTIMONIES. People will throng to hear the story of a man who was a warlock, a member of the Mafia, a drug addict, or a Baptist Pastor before he met the Lord. I don't want to know what you were prior to your conversion. There is no life in it! Yet people gather regularly to hear these words of death. I

guess they want some soulish goose-bumps to tingle their spine. They remind me of spiritual "peeping toms" who want to peer into the darkness of what you and I were before we knew the Lord. What makes a man great in the Kingdom of God has nothing to do with what made him great in the kingdom of darkness! Faith comes by hearing the Living Word of God, not by listening to the activities of death. Thank God that many are waking up. They are tired of feeding on husks. They are tired of trying to digest the empty shell with no corn in it or any germ of life in it. It is none of your business what I was prior to conversion and it is none of my business what you were! It is over - thank God! Can't we just praise HIM that HE has forgiven, cleansed and transformed us and FORGOTTEN what we were? Hallelujah!

God has something better, greater, higher than that for us, beloved; He has SEASONS OF REFRESHING from the presence of the Lord. If we know these seasons and flow with them, there will be great fruit in our lives. I want to stir you to say, "Lord, I want Your best for my life! I want to change NOW. There are some things in my life that need to be saved NOW. I need transformation NOW." So my interest lies not with your past, for this new order of life has no pedigree (Hob. 7:3). 1 want to know what God is doing in your life and in my life NOW ... TODAY! Be encouraged from the past. Have hope for the future. But yield yourself unto God to be an overcomer in the present! Get in tune with God's season for you today. Discern His dealings, His processings, His will for today. Then cooperate with His seasons!

There is a further application of this truth, shared by another: "All of God's times are related to certain spiritual states, and we have to be in the right state and condition to be in its corresponding time. There is a right spiritual state wherein that which was either past or future becomes NOW. Others may have experienced it long ago, but I wasn't ready for it then. Some will not be ready for it for a long time to come. But our prayer is that HE WILL WORK IN US, DOING A QUICK WORK, CUTTING IT SHORT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, that we might come into the 'now' of its fulfillment. Thus we pass from vision into reality, from profession into possession, being changed from glory to glory" - Gospel Echoes.

BETWEEN THE SEASONS

God in the beginning ordained in the earth the orderly progression of the seasons. Most areas of the world experience what is spoken of as a rainy or wet season and a dry season. In the land of Israel, between the early and latter rains, there was a period of great dryness and dearth. The pools dried up and the brooks ceased to flow. But there was a wise design in the dryness, even as there was a beneficent purpose in the rain. It was the time when under the intense heat of the sun the grain was able to develop in a particular stage.

We know from Church history that the Lord Jesus visits the earth with a special outpouring of Himself from time to time, in order to accomplish the work of the Kingdom. There are seasons of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord. The Reformation, the great Methodist revivals, the move of God in Scotland, the Great Awakening in America, the revival in Wales, the Pentecostal outpouring, the Latter Rain visitation, and present movings of the Spirit in various regions of the earth - the Lord's presence and power and glory comes among His people in a mighty way, but afterwards lifts for a season so that other purposes can be accomplished. Such flowings and ebbings of divine life are according to the law and design of God. Some necessary changes are wrought in our lives through means of blessing and glory, and others take place when we go through dry seasons or through the fires of testing and refining. So there are times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and there are times when it seems He has pulled the veil over His face. There are times when there is a forward thrust - new dimensions are opened up, great revelations stream forth, mighty power is displayed, there is blessing, quickening, growth all around, and a spiritual advance is made. Then the glory lifts, the blessings diminish, the siftings and shakings commence, and that which was received with great joy is put to the test. It is during these times of "nothingness" that the elect, the remnant of the Lord are severely tried. Will the vision and deposit received during the rain now take deeper root to become a firm, stable and permanent INNER NATURE, the planting of the Lord; or will the adverse circumstances and pressures from without cause the tender shoot to wither and die?

This crucial time BETWEEN the "seasons of refreshing" will either make or break the follower of the Lord. Each refreshing begins with the Spirit of God sovereignly moving over the heads of men. God has never asked for either the approval or cooperation of any chief priest, scribe, rabbi, bishop, pope, or preacher when He is ready

to visit His people in power. Suddenly, without warning, He thrusts forth upon the scene the thundering voice of a John the Baptist or a Luther; brings to the stage of action a Knox, a Wesley, a Whitefield; or showers from some bright cloud refreshing rain-drops of His life and gifts, unfolding the beautiful blossoms and exquisite flowers of glowing faces, transformed lives, burning, spontaneous testimonies, weeping, repenting sinners, mighty blessings and powerful baptisms of grace and glory. The leaders, superintendents and bishops of the time-honored religious systems beat on their desks, rant and rave, denounce it as heresy, attribute it to the devil, label it wild-fire, and declare that it will not last. And, of course, it doesn't last! In due time the fiery cloud of glory passes, the invigorating showers dissipate, the revival meetings deteriorate into monotonous form and empty tradition, men carry on, programs are instituted to fill up the void, the people get involved in round after round of religious works, and soon the self-seeking ministers are busily engaged in sprinkling rose water over decadent congregations of sleepy souls. The glories of yesteryear are but dim memories faded into insignificance. The former glory and power once so freely manifest has vanished. YET IT HAS PLEASED THE LORD TO TAKE IT AWAY.

Every time God brings a fresh revelation and new experience to His people many of them are prone to say, "This is IT! This is the ultimate truth and crowning glory of God! This is what it is going to be!" At the beginning of this century when God brought the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, many of those people believed that such was the last great move of God. They had come out of Holiness and Evangelical churches and the Lord led them into a new experience. Very quickly they settled down in it. For fifty years they organized and systematized it and Pentecost became one of the more respected denominations among the church systems.

In 1948 God moved again with power and great glory. It was called "Latter Rain." Rain, whether it be the former or latter, or showers between, is the Lord coming to His people. When this move began, again we found many people believing that was it, this was God's greatest and final move, and thousands have settled for the blessings and manifestations which characterized that move of the Spirit as being permanent and already the clammy arms of the denominational octopus have crushed its vitality and sucked the life blood from it.

So God moves on. God brought Luther out from the Roman Catholic denomination, but God did not desire to stop there. The Holy Spirit drew the Wesleys out of the Church of England, but again He did not stop there. The Lord surely moved in the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, but He did not stop there. Latter Rain was unquestionably a shower of great refreshing and quickening power, but God did not stop there, and He is not stopping with any of the present day movings, manifestations or dealings of His Spirit. His pathway is ever onward and upward, FROM glory TO glory. What anticipation this stirs in our hearts! The fact is - there will never be any stopping with God for He ever moves ahead, and "Of the increase of His government and peace THERE SHALL BE NO END" **(Isa. 9:7).**

The present emphasis of the Holy Spirit is upon the imminent manifestation of the sons of God. We are privileged to be living in blessed days of preparation for this grandest of all events, days fraught with holy and solemn responsibility for God's elect. But I would be remiss if I did not acquaint the saints with the fact that even the placing of the sons of God is not the last revelation nor the final act in God's great drama of the ages. It is easy for the apprehended ones to settle down in the beautiful hope of sonship to God. But God will move on, beloved, making sonship, too, but a stepping-stone to realms higher and grander, for, as sonship is not the ultimate reality or position in the natural life, neither is it in the spiritual life. We praise God for the call to sonship, and we cannot by-pass the present processings or the glory yet to be revealed, for it remains to be accomplished in the age and ages to come. I have nothing in common with those who presume that they have already graduated from sonship into the Fatherhood realm or some other highly exalted sphere, when the simple truth is that the nature, power and glory of MANIFESTED SONSHIP have never yet been fulfilled in their lives. Yet, deep within my ransomed being lies the sacred knowledge that even this marvelous reality of sonship, glorious and far-reaching as it is, IS NOT THE ULTIMATE IN GOD.

At this point I wish to share a beautiful admonition from the pen of George Warnock of Canada. "'As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven..' It is not just another rain, another revival, history repeating itself. Every time it rains there is a new measure of fullness wrought in the earth. It rains, and the seed that has been planted begins to sprout and break forth under the soil. It might not even be visible. Silently does the Spirit of

God come into the life and such a one is 'born again' by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. But it is really just the sprouting of the seed. It is a rebirth in the inner man. It is God becoming involved in the life of the individual, that before the entrance of the Word was nothing more than earth... dark, barren, fruitless. Again it rains. Now there is a springing forth of leaves, of twigs, of branches. There is a continual unfolding. One says, 'Strange, I never saw that in the Word before.' It was there, and you read it perhaps hundreds of times, but you never saw it. Why? Because you were but a sprouting seed hidden away in darkness...or a blade ... just beginning to come forth into the light. You have been growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now you are able to see what was inherent in the seed, but was never revealed. It was in the Word, but hidden away in the letter, in the shell. It rains, and rains again. The process continues to go on. 'All the rivers run into the sea, yet is the sea not full...' Because through the process of nature the sea yields its moisture back to the air, and the winds carry it across the land. The rivers are replenished, the clouds pour the water back to the earth again. The day of harvest approaches. Things begin to change once more. No sooner do we get accustomed to new revelation and settle back in satisfaction and delight of our new found joy, than God comes forth again... and there is dismay. It seemed that we were on the verge of having arrived at our true destiny. Our plant begins to take on a new measure of beauty and glory. There is liberty in the Spirit. The flowers of grace appear. There is a beauty and a glory in the life of the individual or in the assembly, such as our hearts had longed for. But it rains again, and those beautiful flowers disintegrate and fade from the vine. Soon they are trampled in the mud beneath. The once beautiful orchard becomes a picture of desolation. We had looked for much. There is nothing more beautiful than a blossoming orchard in the days of spring. But strangely enough the fruit-grower is not concerned about the fading of the flowers. In fact, he is happy! He must have the rain in due season; but in the time of harvest it is no longer necessary; because he is looking, not for rain, but for the FRUIT of the earth" -end quote.

Now, if our heavenly Father withholds the rain from our land, and leads us into a period of dryness and dearth - the wilderness experience - what is His purpose? Certainly the Holy Spirit never intended that His people should return to Egypt again. Does He want us to build a memorial on the well-watered spot where He rained glory upon us, or try to call back the same manifestation of His presence again? No! A thousand times no! We must walk in the constant assurance that never, NEVER, N-E-V-E-R does the Holy Spirit bring back the same cloud or shower, nor does He perpetuate or immortalize a prior state of development in Him. He intends to lead us on to where rivers of living water flow from out of our hearts. Many thousands of weary folk in old Samaria had slaked their thirst at Jacob's well before the day that Jesus came and asked drink of a woman who had nothing more than questions and arguments to offer Him, but to her the Saviour said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall THIRST AGAIN: (yes, and we may add again and yet again) but whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him... it shall be IN HIM a well of water SPRINGING UP into EVERLASTING LIFE" **(Jn. 4:13-14).**

The living water Jesus would have us discover lies beyond the FALLING RAIN, it is that water which has soaked so far down into our earth that it becomes IN US AN ARTESIAN WELL OF WATER SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE. The truth is that as long as we live only by the rain from without, we shall finally die. Our roots must go down deep - the deposit of life within must become a deep INNER WELL of abundant and unceasing supply and whoso continually drinketh of this continual inner supply of His life SHALL NEVER DIE.

The Lord is speaking to our hearts about a life that will demonstrate itself in the cluster upon the vine. We can be a garden filled with all the fullness of God. We can be a vineyard filled with the life of Christ. God is changing a desert into a garden. The desert is to bloom as the prophet proclaimed, "And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing" **(Isa. 35:1-2).** If the expression of the Holy Spirit through the body of Christ, the manifestation of His glory and the going forth of His Word and of His mighty deliverance will result in the desert being filled with singing and rejoicing, with praise and with gladness, then our hearts, the hearts of God's children, must first be filled with joy and gladness, our mouths must speak forth and sing forth the praises of the Lord, our spirits must be filled with rejoicing. The rivers of living water that must flow out of the sons of God must first fall as rain into us and bring times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

As heaven's deluge becomes channeled in the river-bed of our earth and these rivers of living water flow out, "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad." Evenas Aaron's rod budded and blossomed and brought forth almonds, so there should be a blossoming and a bringing forth of an abundance of the fruit of the Spirit. The Word tells us that the tree of life brings forth its fruit in its season every month, twelve manner of fruit. There should be a drawing on the river of the water of life, because the leaves of the tree must not wither: they are for the healing of the nations!

"The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" **(Isa. 35:2).** 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, so that all those about will see emanating from the inner life of God's people the radiance and the joy, the triumph and the victory of the Lord. "THEY SHALL SEE THE GLORY OF THE LORD." The glory of the Lord as it was on the countenance of Moses, as it radiated forth from the whole being of Jesus Christ, as it shone in the face of Stephen. And the glory of the latter house must 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 stand and minister. That men will fall down in prostration before the very presence of the glory of God, because it is from underneath the threshold of the house that the living waters flow out, from the deepest dimensions of our lives. Out from that low place and out of the temple and the tabernacle of our God 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 work, the authority and glory of His power, THE EXCELLENCY OF OUR GOD!

Forty years ago God brought the revelation that He would come unto us as the rain and we preached rain, rain, rain in the time of latter rain. We preached latter rain, former rain, and both rains at the same time. We found it in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Isaiah, Joel, Zechariah, Matthew, James and Revelation, to mention a few. The Spirit rain was falling, and we were getting some of those deluges from heaven. Today, God is saying, "It is time to go a little farther." The rain has come and the ground is wet. The rain refreshed as it fell but it did not make a flower grow so long as it was just falling on the leaves and on the ground. It had to go into the ground and be picked up by the roots and be transformed into an expression of life. SO TODAY THE RAIN HAS TURNED TO LIFE. We preached rain until the rain came. And it still comes to many. And it will surely come to us again on a higher plane. But now we must experience life and proclaim life. I am telling you that there is a place in God where you do not have to look to heaven for the rain, for in this season you must draw the life from deep within. Therefore THE RAIN MESSAGE IS CHANGED TO THE LIFE MESSAGE. We praise God for the rain, but we rejoice even more in that inner fountain of the water of life which is the result of the rain!

May we not in these moments before the manifestation of God's sons come unto Him and drink, that from the innermost being of him who drinks may flow "rivers of living water?" This, beloved, is what God is establishing in the end of this age, which is today. When the rain stops falling we will do one of two things. Either we will return to Egypt, or we will discover that within the Rock in the very midst of us THERE IS A FULL AND ABUNDANT SUPPLY!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 20
COMING AS THE RAIN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-ONE

THE PURPOSE OF THE RAIN
THE GLORY OF THE FORMER RAIN
THE GLORY OF THE LATTER RAIN
THE PRODUCE OF THE RAIN
IN THE FIRST

Among the various types of our Lord's return is His coming unto us AS THE RAIN. The world cannot receive the Christ today because it SEETH Him not, neither KNOWETH Him. But to all whose hearts hunger and thirst for the fullness of His presence, power and glory the promise is sure: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos. 6:3). The apostle James, speaking of the coming of the Lord, penned these significant words: "Be patient therefore, brethren, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive THE EARLY AND LATTER RAIN. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH" (James 5:7-8). Furthermore, the prophet Zechariah gives us this inspiring admonition of hope: "Ask ye of the Lord RAIN IN THE TIME OF THE LATTER RAIN; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" **(Zech. 10:1).** In that beautiful messianic Psalm, Psalm 72, the sweet singer of Israel intoned these marvelously instructive words about the coming of the King of Glory: "HE SHALL COME DOWN LIKE RAIN upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" **(Ps. 72:6).** Little wonder that the scriptures reiterate again and again that the Lord comes WITH CLOUDS; for there can be no rain without clouds, and we are exhorted to ask for rain, via the avenue of clouds (Zech. 10:1).

Thus the prophets foretold a coming time of the manifestation of the Lord as rain upon the earth, the former rain, and the latter rain. They spoke of a time when there would be an outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the earth that would be known as the early or former rain; they also prophesied of a time when there would be an outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the earth that would be known as the latter rain. The early or former rain was the outpouring or visitation of the Lord that you can read about in your Bible in the book of Acts. The latter rain began about the turn of this present century. Historically you will find sovereign outpourings of the Holy Spirit in all kinds of places from about 1885 onward; places like Armenia and Russia, places you wouldn't dream of. God was beginning to restore something! At the turn of this century the baptism in the Holy Spirit was restored to God's people. Talk about a bomb going off! The latter rain had begun.

In America in 1899 a Methodist minister, Charles Parham, had a little Bible School in Topeka, Kansas. These people had been through the traditional Holiness teachings of salvation, justification through the blood, divine healing, sanctification etc., and in their studies they came to a subject called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Brother Parham said to his student body, "Boys, I've got to go away for two or three days; I want you to search the scriptures about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and tell me what you find." He returned on schedule and unanimously they had discovered from the scriptures that the evidence for having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit was speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. With the realization that they obviously had not received this endowment of power, they commenced to search their hearts and seek the Lord for the outpouring of Himself.

At the end of that year, at a watch-night service, the hour of midnight struck as the small company of students and faculty continued in prayer, waiting upon the Lord, scarcely knowing what to expect, yet following undauntedly led deep within their spirits as the whisper of the Spirit within their consciousness: "HE shall baptize you with the assembled company there came the passing of the Divine quiver slightly... the rhythmic quivering of a leaf rippled forcefully, distinctly there flowed from her lips ecstatic the faith which had been kind

had grown to a mighty thunder Holy Ghost!" Suddenly, over breath! A woman began to by the wind... and beautifully, utterances, which soon became a language ... unintelligible to the kneeling company, but without doubt a language. Rising to investigate the phenomenon further, they beheld a blue flame-like fire playing about her head, as she gladly and joyfully yielded herself to the Holy Spirit of God. Although many groups of intercessors over the country were not present to witness that small and humble beginning, God had ordained that as the next few years quickly passed, the whole world was to hear of what He had done on that New Year's morning at the turn of the century. And by the time the century had run its course, multiplied scores of millions of believers would have shared the blessing of the experience.

THE PURPOSE OF THE RAIN

There were seasonal rains in Palestine, the former rain and the latter rain. The former or early rain was the rains that came at the time when the seed was planted in the ground, and speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the early or former part of this age. The latter rain was the rain, which came about six months later to bring the harvest to maturity and speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter part of the age. When a farmer plants the seed for a new crop, he desires the early rain to water the fields and to promote the immediate growth of that seed. In like manner, when the seed of the Kingdom was first planted in the early Church, the Lord then came as THE EARLY RAIN so that the seed would germinate and produce the desired life. Again, when the farmer sees that his crop is growing unto maturity, he then desires THE LATTER RAIN so that the grain will mature in the head of the plant and his harvest will be abundant. The harvest was the result of the rain. During Jesus' earthly ministry, He preached in the cities and villages of Judea, healing their sick and preaching the Kingdom of God. He looked at the multitudes and saw them as scattered sheep, having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, that He will send forth laborers into HIS HARVEST" **(Mt. 9:35-38).** Thus it is established that the harvest of the earth is "HIS HARVEST," for Christ is the Lord of the harvest, and He will see that the grain is matured and the harvest is reaped. He is, furthermore, the rain that falls upon the harvest!

We must also understand that not only dispensationally is there the manifestation of the former and latter rain, but individually, too, on the plane of our personal development in Christ. As one has written, "The Husbandman plants His seed, and He shall receive His harvest. However it requires long patience, for there are some tremendous processings required to bring it to that RIPENED harvestable state. There will be the early rains to make the seed sprout and grow. There will be the latter rains to close out the growing season and give fullness to the corn in the ear. There will be the hot drying days as it matures and ripens - and patiently the Husbandman waits. Yet suddenly He announces THE TIME IS NOW - conditions are just right, let us reap. 'We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus...' (Eph. 2:10). We are the PRODUCT of His hand. HE COMES TO US, He becomes in us the Seed, then He visits us periodically - 'the times of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord' (Acts 3:19). HE is our early rain which causes our life in Him, His life in us, to sprout and grow. Visitation after visitation, change after change, going from strength to strength - IF WE RECEIVE HIM IN EACH VISITATION. All of God's times are related to certain spiritual states, and we have to be in the right state and condition to be in its corresponding time. There is a right spiritual state wherein that which was either past or future becomes NOW. Others may have experienced it long ago, but I wasn't ready for it then. Some will not be ready for it for a long time to come. But our prayer is that HE WILL WORK IN US, DOING A QUICK WORK, CUTTING IT SHORT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, that we might come into the 'now' of its fulfillment. Thus we pass from vision into reality, from profession into possession" - Gospel Echoes.

THE GLORY OF THE FORMER RAIN

On the day of Pentecost, God, the husbandman, poured out the first rain of His Spirit on' His newly planted crop of believers to commence the growing season that would one day yield a harvest of spiritual fruit the husbandman Himself could eat and enjoy. These branches from the rod of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), as a result of cultivating, pruning, watering, fertilizing and finally drenching, with the latter rain of His Spirit, would yield the precious full ripe fruit of love, joy peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Gal. 5:22-23). This is nothing less than man in the express image of God! That initial outpouring was like the great volume of fuel that blasts our rockets out of earth's gravitational pull. So it is, the Spirit

blasted those early believers out of the gravitational pull of the things of this world, into the second heavens of Pentecost or the Holy Place.

A graphic and eloquent description of the glory of the former rain has been given by George Hawtin in his booklet BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY. He writes, "So great was that outpouring that by the end of the century one-twentieth of the entire Roman Empire had been converted to Christ, and by the year 300 A.D. Christianity far exceeded paganism. Following Peter's sermon at Pentecost, three thousand souls were saved and the day following another five thousand were saved. In the days following multitudes both of men and women turned to the Lord. Mighty signs and wonders were done by all of the apostles. By Paul's hand God wrought special miracles. The sick were brought and laid in the street that the shadow of Peter failing upon them might bring healing to their bodies. The glory of that former rain beggars description. Truly they had been baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost and the heavenly 'wind' was blowing whithersoever it listed. This was a mighty manifestation of THE GLORY OF GOD. This was GOD'S GLORY falling as rain among the people and filling their hearts with joy and gladness, transforming their lives and making them sons of God.

"Something happened to those saints at Pentecost that needs much more investigation than we have ability to give in this brief article, but let it be known that these people had been BAPTIZED WITH FIRE. Tongues of fire had rested upon them, burning up every trace of sin and carnal nature. I may be wrong, but I am persuaded that the Lord did for them at Pentecost in a moment of time that which other men must take a life time to attain. Their words were burning, flaming words of truth. Their miracles were on a par with the miracles of Jesus Christ. Their lives were radiant, shining suns, manifesting forth the glory of the Lord everywhere they went. Evil men killed them, but they could not resist the power and glory with which they spoke. THE GLORY that filled the typical temple of Solomon's day was the SAME GLORY that filled the living temple at Pentecost. Pentecost was the early rain given moderately, but it was glorious beyond description. In centuries past the Lord had filled temples made by human hands, but at Pentecost He was putting His Spirit in the hearts of men to form a temple not made with hands, a temple from which He will govern the world in the ages of glory yet to come" - end quote.

THE GLORY OF THE LATTER RAIN

Glorious beyond description was that mighty outpouring of God's glory at Pentecost! But as highly as we might esteem the wonders of that heavenly visitation, it was only the former rain moderately. Turning now to Hos. 6:3 we read, "HIS going forth is prepared as the morning; for HE shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Then from Young's Literal translation, "As the dawn prepared is His going forth, and He cometh in as a shower to us, as the gathered rain - sprinkling earth." There are two qualifying words to which I would draw your reverent attention. "LATTER" rain, with this word "latter" from the Hebrew MALQOSH, meaning GATHERED or HEAVY rain. While the "FORMER" rain comes from the Hebrew word YARAH, meaning SPRINKLING or FIRST rain. Thus, the former rain moderately is showers of sprinkling rain, whereas the latter rain is cloud bursts of heavy torrential downpours - copious effusions of the Spirit!

The latter rain showers commenced before the turn of this century. But in 1948 there occurred an unprecedented cloudburst of glory. A number of important events transpired in the year 1948, unmistakably marking that year as a significant milestone in the shaping of world events which would signal the final drama in this end of the Church age and the emergence of the new order of the Kingdom of God. In 1948 Israel (Judah) became a nation. In that same year the United Nations Organization was created. Also, the National Council of Churches was formed. And 1948, without a precedent in sacred or secular history, was the scene and action of a MOVE OF GOD'S SPIRIT, which constitutes one of the epochs of all the ages. Streams of events which began their flow before the foundation of the world, and which will flow on through the vast ages of time into the oceans of eternity, met and converged at this point.

I now quote from a report written by one of the ministries who was a student and who was present at the time the revival broke. "For many years great numbers of consecrated Christians had been fasting and praying for long seasons that God would restore the gifts of the Spirit to the Church. In 1947 in the month of September several of the brethren were led of the Lord to open Sharon Bible College in North Battleford, Canada. The

opening of the school brought a great burden for fasting and prayer upon all of the students and the staff. This settled down until it seemed that not a day passed by for months unless some were in fasting and prayer. Some fasted for three days; some for seven; some fasted for ten days; some for two weeks; some for three weeks; some for thirty days; and one man fasted for forty days. After many weeks of serious fasting and prayer, came the eleventh day of February 1948. I shall never forget those days as long as I live. How the Spirit of the Lord came down was indescribable!

"I remember a prophecy being given by one of the young women in the Bible School, saying that we were on the verge of a great Move of God, and that all we had to do was enter the door - but I said, 'Father, we do not know where the door is, neither do we know how to enter it.' It was on the twelfth day of February that God showed us by the Spirit how to enter in through this door. On that morning one of the teachers rose to prophesy. All of the students were kneeling. He prophesied by the Spirit of God for about half an hour. During the prophecy, He called the whole school to great reverence and said that we must walk in the fear of God. Then there was a warning that we should not mention to anyone what was transpiring at the school. As the prophecy went on, these earth-shaking words were given by the Spirit of God: 'REMOVE THE SHOES FROM OFF THY FEET FOR THE GROUND UPON WHICH THOU STANDETH IS HOLY GROUND ... AT THIS TIME I WILL RESTORE UNTO MY CHURCH ALL NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, AND THEY SHALL BE GIVEN BY PROPHECY, WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY.' This we knew was according to the Word of God, but we had not been able to understand it until the moment when it was revealed by the Spirit of God. The prophecy went on to say, 'I will indicate from time to time by My Spirit they that should be called to be prayed over to receive their gifts of the Spirit.'

"The next day, February 13, we searched the Word of God practically all day to see if these things that had been prophesied were according to God's Word. We found that Paul had said to Timothy, 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery...' (Tim. 4:14). And, 'Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands' (II Tim. 1:6). We found how that king Saul had received the gift of prophecy by having this gift prophesied to him by Samuel. We saw how Joshua had received the Word of Wisdom when Moses laid his hands upon him. We read how Paul wrote to the Romans, 'For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift...' **(Rom. 1:11).**

"On the fourteenth day of February - I can never begin to properly describe the things that happened on that day. It seemed that all Heaven broke loose upon our souls and Heaven came down to greet us. The power and glory of God was indescribable. Men and women were prophesied over and received the various gifts of the Spirit. To some it was prophesied that they would receive the gift of healing and immediately they began to heal the sick. Discernment of spirits was given and the influence of evil spirits was discerned, and these evil spirits were cast out. Some received the gift of faith, and faith began to operate mightily in our midst. Men and women prophesied like a mighty river. Heaven had truly come down to meet us. We sang new songs in the Spirit, songs that had never been sung before. Soon the multitudes were coming to North Battleford from the north, the south, east, and west. A new day arrived for the people of God. This was only the beginning!

"Soon the Lord restored unto us the ministries of apostles and prophets. All traditions and man-made divisions (denominations) were left behind. The elect remnant of God from the four winds were beginning to come together, destined to go on to perfection, ultimately to be filled with all the fullness of God and finally to stand in the last day as manifested sons of God, prepared to rule and reign in His glorious Kingdom. From now on we would be known only as 'Christians.' The last day 'Move of God,' the restoration spoken of by all the holy apostles, had begun. Its power and influence would grow until one day it would fill the whole earth. God would require of us a level of consecration and dedication never before dreamed of. We ceased to build our own little man-made kingdoms and began together to build the Kingdom of God. That was how it all began. There was much more that we would yet learn over the years" -end quote.

The effect of the move of God that began in Canada in 1948 soon spread around the whole world, and there are few places that have not felt its power in one way or another. It swept across North America, and over the continent of Europe; and also through Latin America, far away India, New Zealand, Australia, Korea and portions of Africa. God has done a great and mighty thing, but this is only the beginning. A mighty army of

saints is in preparation as overcomers to take the Kingdom and rule and reign with Christ over the nations. Events of immense magnitude and universal significance loom bright upon the horizon!

Every revival, or time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord began with a visitation from God expressed in a firstfruit people who tapped a high vibration of praise and worship. In 1949 in Tulsa, Oklahoma a minister had purchased a large tabernacle down town and preached every night for months to two or three women. One night before service, he sat in his office with his head in his hands, discouraged, not knowing what to do. Someone came running in shouting, "You won't believe this!" He arose and walked to the auditorium and saw the place was packed. A little woman far in the back began to prophesy through song, "This is the latter rain the Lord has promised unto thee." From that a worship broke forth in the people and for eight months, night and day, God appeared in one of the greatest visitations since the day of Pentecost. The newspaper reported that one night a neighbor sitting on his front porch looked over and saw fire on top of the building. He called the fire wagons, but there was no natural fire to be found. Something sat on that building as cloven tongues of fire and that is how the latter rain began in that city.

In those glory days at the beginning of the latter rain cloudburst, as the saints were gathered together by the Spirit and in the power of God, the entire gathering, whether ten or ten thousand in number, would all break forth into spiritual songs and psalms and hymns, and would all sing the same song BY THAT SAME SPIRIT. One brother related the example of a large congregation singing Handel's Messiah, from beginning to end, singing every word and every note in divine harmony, under the anointing of the Spirit, although no one in the congregation knew Handel's Messiah. The Lord also revealed that as He was able to teach a gathering of believers to sing the Messiah, repeating every word and note in correct harmony, SO IS HE ABLE TO TEACH HIS PEOPLE TRUTH AND A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM. And when the Holy Spirit imparts truth to His people, that truth becomes LIFE which can never be taken away from them. Glory!

The Word of God is very clear in its teaching, and both Old Testament and New Testament history confirm the fact that all the great revivals and movings and manifestations of the Lord through past centuries were the result of prevailing prayer and intercession with fasting. Elijah was a man of prayer and intercession and wrought wonderful things thereby. Daniel, on one occasion, prayed unceasingly for three weeks, during which time he seems to have abstained from pleasant bread and wine and all other gastronomic delights. After twenty-one days of fasting, confession, and consecration he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who enlightened him with an understanding of the ages as was never before revealed to man. The longest recorded fast in the Bible was the fast of Moses, the man of God, who, after fasting in the mount of the Lord for forty days, fell down at the sight of Israel's idolatry and continued fasting for a second forty days, apparently without touching food at all (Deut. 9:9-18). Paul said that he was often in fasting (II Cor. 11:27), and clearly stated that he approved himself as a minister of God by labors and watchings and fastings (II Cor. 6:5). The Lord Jesus Christ commenced His ministry with what we call a "prophet's fast," a fast of forty days duration. The entire forty days were spent completely without food, and during those days of severe temptation He gained complete victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil and angels came to minister to Him. Jesus returned from that encounter in the POWER OF THE SPIRIT; and so will all men return who lay aside natural things that they may freely partake of spiritual things.

When the rain of the Spirit is withheld from the Lord's people, the church systems of man attempt to stir up some spurious revivals, conjuring up their own blessings, all the while demonstrating the pathetic emptiness and spiritual bankruptcy of their fleshly activities. These remind us of the Indian medicine men putting on their rain dances. They are not unlike the ancient prophets of Baal in the days of Elijah, they leap onthe altar and call on their god to send down the fire. They imagine there is strength in numbers and power in much excitement and animated ceremonies, but while all their vain prophesying and frenzied activity is going on, God has His man waiting in the wings in solitude and Holy Communion before His face. It was after Elijah was called out of the wilderness and after he had slain the prophets of Baal that he sent a message to Ahab, saying, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for THERE IS A SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN ... and it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a GREAT RAIN."

The rain does not come from heaven by performances of conniving men. There is a tendency, inbred in the soulish nature, when it seems the Lord is not moving as He should, to try and "stir it up." Preach more

passionately; prophesy longer; praise louder; sing more choruses, clap, dance; command and MOVE THE SPIRIT! The corrupting influence of this false religious sensationalism is ever with us, but all who will be still and quiet long enough on the towering heights of God's holy mount will learn and know of a certainty that the rain of the Holy Spirit can come only from the presence of the Lord. When we come to the realization that we are passing through a season of drought, then and only then can we enter into our closet and shut the door and repent and seek the Lord for a true and genuine rain of His Spirit. And although we repent and pray and ask for rain, the Lord has a set time when He will open the heavens upon His elect. Let God bring it forth, my beloved. We can't! "ASK ye of the Lord RAIN IN THE TIME OF THE LATTER RAIN," is the simple but profound command of the Spirit of God. Ask! DON'T HOLD A RAIN DANCE! No need to try to "work it up" or "bring it down." No need to shout or dance or clap or cut yourself with knives or put on some religious demonstration to force the hand of God. In due time it will come to us if we will believe and wait, trusting in the Lord and His word of truth.

"For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof" **(Job 36:27).** Ray Prinzing wisely commented on this passage: "Herein is the secret of a mighty outpouring, it requires the ascending of much vapor, if there is to be a great return in refreshing showers. Every move of the Spirit across the world, and in every little group, has behind it the ascending of vapor. God lays hold on a remnant, they seek His face, prayers go up, praise goes up, and they draw nigh unto God, and then HE converts the vapor into rain, and pours down abundantly. We sang in Sunday School, 'The blessings will come down, as the prayers go up...' According to that which ascended, so also that which descended to bless another" -end quote.

THE PRODUCE OF THE RAIN

The result of the rain - former and latter - was the harvest. When the Lord gave the promise to Israel of a land of abundance and one that flows with milk and honey, He promised that if they would obey His word, He would give them "the rain in your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, THAT THOU MAYEST GATHER IN thy CORN, and thy WINE, and thine OIL." In the epistle of James believers are exhorted to patience in view of the Lord's coming as rain and the resultant produce thereof. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the PRECIOUS FRUIT of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the EARLY AND LATTER RAIN. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord (as rain) draweth nigh."

Here, from the example of the husbandman, believers are encouraged to patience. How perfectly this figure suits the Lord Himself! HE has spent much labor and has sown much precious seed. He has tilled and cared for His heritage. All preparation completed, there remains but to wait. So even as the farmer waits not only till the early rain makes the seed to sprout, but also till the latter rain fills the ears before they ripen, for both are needful before harvest can be gathered, the Lord on high lingers and has long patience. Thus are we too to wait that coming of His which will bring the fulfillment of our hope of full sonship to God.

At this point the question may be asked, But what is the harvest, and how does it apply to our lives? In the New Testament sense, or in the spiritual sense, it is apparent that the harvest represents saints of the Lord coming forth in the image and likeness of Christ and with the fullness of His life - sons indeed. It is also obvious that God has a purpose to accomplish in each age of mankind upon the earth. For example, it was in God's plan and purpose that Jesus Christ should come forth in glory and perfection as a result of the age of the law and the prophets. He was the END PRODUCT of that glorious age. Christ Himself was the harvest of that age; therefore, we can expect a like but even more glorious harvest as this present age comes to a close.

Now we come to the real meat of this message. In our generation we have seen a dramatic change in the course of the spiritual life of the body of Christ. But few recognize that it began with an outpouring of the Spirit at the turn of the century, with the real purposes of God brought into sharp focus fifty years later. Almost a whole generation has passed since the "Latter Rain" outpouring in 1948-49, and most of the pioneers of that move have gone on to be with the Lord. But there remains a few here and there who remember the powerful prophetic anointing in those days. The word of the Lord flowed like a mighty river, thundering down upon critical situations like a powerful Niagara. And from that prophetic realm came a great explosion of the

miraculous. Signs and wonders became commonplace before the eyes of the whole world. But what happened then was but a drop in the bucket to what God has planned for the days ahead! The deluge of signs and wonders and miracles, the rain of worship and glory and of the prophetic word was a prelude to the reality of a company of sons conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. How precious is the rain of His presence and power and glory! But how much MORE PRECIOUS the fruit of the earth produced thereby! Ah, God's ultimate objective is not rain. Rain is but an instrumentality - a means to an end. "That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." Now that's what we want! We want to become the bread of life to the multitudes famishing about us, and wine from the cluster to the thirsty soul.

Finally the cycle is completed, the day comes when the rains cease, and the earth is warmed by the bright rays of the sun from a cloudless sky. The beautiful blossoms wither and fade from the vine. Soon they are trampled in the dust beneath. But strangely enough the fruit-grower is not concerned about the fading of the flowers. In fact, he is elated! He must have the rain in due season; but in the time of harvest it is no longer necessary; because he is looking, not for rain, but for the FRUIT of the earth. In reality God is looking for something deeper, something better, something more enduring than the rain. He longs for that which will show forth His own life, His own nature, His own character, His very own wisdom and power and glory. Christ must be formed within before the husbandman can reach forth His hand and take that which will delight and satisfy His own heart, and which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of impoverished mankind. Lord! make us that bread of life and that wine of refreshing and restoration to the starving masses of humanity.

The rain that falls into the earth must finally produce the grain and oil and become concentrated in the cluster upon the vine. The presence and life of God must ultimately become something more than an available power outside of ourselves. It is not water from the sky for which the husbandman waits with enduring patience; it is the wine in the cluster! I am wearied a little because so often I hear God's precious people singing songs like "Oh Lord, Send the Power Just Now," or "Jesus is Passing This Way." There is a truth there, and I rejoice that there are indeed those special "times of refreshing" which come from the presence of the Lord, but I can assure you, beloved, that the elect saints of God will never know the glorious reality of sonship to God so long as they abide in that consciousness and mentality of the Lord "sending the power" or "passing by." The consuming desire within my heart in this important hour is that God's chosen people might with me become aware of CHRIST FORMED IN US. The message of life and triumph that in this dark and evil hour reverberates through the yielded spirit of every saint separated unto God by His Holy Spirit is just this: IT IS POSSIBLE FOR CHRIST TO BECOME I-N Y-O-U ALL THAT HE ETERNALLY AND UNIVERSALLY IS.

"He that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" **(I Cor. 6:17).** "...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME" **(Gal. 2:20).** "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU" **(Gal. 4:19).** It is this fact of CHRIST BEING FORMED IN US which now becomes first priority for the called out of God. Christ, the First of the firstfruits, the Head of the body, ascended on high, and HIS SPIRIT has been freely poured out as rain upon our earth, that we might receive of Him and have Him become all within our lives. NOW, as HE BECOMES FORMED AS BREAD AND WINE WITHIN US, then are we not to be that next "outpouring" which shall be given to bring life to the next order, that there might be a further harvest, as "in Christ" ALL are made alive, but every man in his own order? HIS Spirit became our life, our being, and we have received of Him that we might GROW in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, coming to spiritual maturity, then to be reaped, in the process BECOMING the bread and wine of Himself unto creation. Men speak of being God's harvest, of growing up into maturity, of putting on the mind and nature of Christ, conformed to His image, like ones unto Himself. But to what end? Just so we can wear halos and float about over the Elysium hills of that glory world above, strumming harps? NO! Praise God for the vision that ALL MANKIND SHALL BE HARVESTED unto the Lord. The outreach of this victory then becomes altogether-wonderful, praise His name!

IN THE FIRST

We have received the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost has come upon us, we have been filled with the Holy Spirit to the degree God has been able to fill us, depending on the degree to which we have been emptied of self. There is a day at hand when we will witness another great outpouring of the Spirit, transcending by far either the early rain of Pentecost or the latter rain of these last days. Let us refer to Joel's prophecy concerning the

former and the latter rain, the seed rain and the harvest rain. "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain IN THE FIRST MONTH. And the floors shall be FULL OF WHEAT, and the vats shall overflow with WINE and OIL" **(Joel 2:23-24).** God has promised that His people should receive the early and the latter rains in due season. "Ask ye of the Lord rain IN THE TIME OF THE LATTER RAIN; so the Lord shall make bright clouds (ministries), and give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field" **(Zech. 10:1).** This is really the LORD HIMSELF coming upon us. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He shall bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; His going forth is prepared as the morning, AND HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, AS THE LATTER AND THE FORMER RAIN UNTO THE EARTH" **(Hos. 6:1-3).** We have already established the principle that the fall rains were called the former or seed rains, then the rainy season ended with the latter rains of the spring, or the harvest rains - that which caused the grain to form in the head, preparing for harvest.

BUT HERE IS SOMETHING VERY UNUSUAL! God has promised to do something strange, indeed; for He would give, not only the former rain in its season; not only the latter rain in its due time; but He would give the FORMER RAIN AND THE LATTER RAIN COMBINED! "And He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain IN THE FIRST MONTH" **(Joel 2:23).** Can we not see by this what God has promised His people in this great hour? Not only the fullness of a great and glorious beginning, as in Pentecost. And not only the wonderful harvest of Tabernacles, the Feast of Ingathering. But all the glory of the early Church COMBINED with all the glory and power of the triumphant Church of the last days! All her FORMER glory combined with all her LATTER glory! Truly we cannot begin to imagine the great and tremendous things, which God has prepared for His people and for this earth!

Hear it! "And He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, AND the latter rain IN THE FIRST MONTH." The former rain has fallen moderately, and the latter rain has fallen profusely in these last days; but the former and latter rain combined has yet to fall, and it will one of these days, as our hearts are prepared to participate in it. The Authorized Version says that this mighty deluge will come "in the first month." But I would draw your attention to the fact that the word "month" is in italics, signifying that it does not appear in the original Hebrew text. Thus, deleting this supplied word the passage reads, "And He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain IN THE FIRST." The question follows - What is this FIRST? Is it the FIRST MONTH as the translators of the King James Version say, or does it bear another meaning? It is my deep conviction that the prophet is not talking about the former and latter rain both being brought in a month. He is speaking of it being brought in A FIRST - or a FIRSTFRUIT COMPANY - a PEOPLE the likes of which has never been before! You see, the purpose of the former and latter rains is to bring forth a harvest. Both rains then find their final and full expression IN THE HARVEST BROUGHT FORTH. The rain settles and is contained and formed IN THE GRAIN, IN THE OIL, and IN THE CLUSTER UPON THE VINE! When one drinks of the exquisite wine of the harvest he drinks of both the former and latter rain. The rain has been transmuted into wine!

Let me share with you the law of the firstfruits. Jehovah required of the nation of Israel that the firstfruits be offered to Him, whether it be of man (the firstborn), animal or the fruitage of the ground (Ex. 22:29,30; 23:19; Prov. 3:9). The faithful offering of the firstfruits brought pleasure to the Lord and a blessing to all parties involved (Eze. 44:30). A failure to bring them would be counted by God as robbing Him of His due and would bring His displeasure (Mal. 3:8). I was raised as a boy in south Alabama where, in the days of my youth, many of our neighbors were cotton farmers. You could have a hundred acre field, and come the latter part of August you could look out and see a big, fluffy, flossy boll of cotton. Another hundred feet or so there would be another boll. That's the FIRSTFRUITS! There is always a portion of the crop that has a faster growth than the rest. When you go out and examine the stalk that has the cotton on it, you will find it has forty bolls on it! Another stalk is larger, it has a hundred bolls on it, but only one is ripe - open. The rest are green. If you went over that cotton field you might get ten pounds of cotton, but if you come back in six weeks you could pick one hundred bales off it!

When the Bible speaks of firstfruits it refers to the produce of Canaan - wheat or barley, oil and grapes. When the wheat field was almost ready, the priests went out every day and examined it. They were looking for the

firstfruits. Why? Because the firstfruits BELONGED TO THE LORD! They were HIS. When they found the firstfruits they would blow the trumpets proclaiming, "C-O-M-E_U-P_T-O_T-H-E F-I-R-S-T-F-R-U-I-T-S!" So here they would come - the priests lined up abreast, going out to the field to pick the firstfruits. They would show it to Israel, then wave it before the Lord. It was His. It is for this very reason that the scripture says of the saints, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATURES" **(James 1:18).** And of that illustrious company of the sons of God who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth it is written, "These were redeemed from among men, BEING THE FIRSTFRUITS UNTO GOD and to the Lamb" **(Rev. 14:4).**

The more I meditate upon the law of the firstfruits the more I am convinced by the Spirit of God that when the prophet declares that both the former and latter rain will be poured out IN THE FIRST - it is the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE HARVEST to which he refers, and not the FIRST MONTH. The FIRST is a PEOPLE! The first is a people who have received of the former and latter rain and have thereby been brought to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. I want you to see this principle -where God's mind is, where His heart is. It's to bring a FIRSTFRUITS to maturity, the precious FRUIT of the earth, a people filled with all the fullness of HIM who has come unto them as the rain and been formed in them. These are the FIRST OF A KIND, A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS. And in THIS FIRST you are going to have the full embodiment and expression of both the former and latter rain - both together! All that the rain of God was meant to accomplish shall be fulfilled and manifested in and through this FIRST. Isn't that marvelous? Hallelujah!

The wonder of it is just this. This people will have a DUAL MESSAGE AND MINISTRY the message and ministry of the former rain together with the message and ministry of the latter rain. They will both sow and reap. They will birth men into the Kingdom of God and grow men up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. These will minister salvation, healing, deliverance, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and all the elementary things of the Christ to earth's vast billions; but they will also bring the multitudes of believers who have remained in the baby stage of growth into higher and higher dimensions of life and truth and development until they, too, become mature ones in Christ. Progressively they shall bring every man into the fullness of INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE in spirit, soul and body. Truly there has never been a people or a ministry on the earth like this! This is a FIRST! This is THE FIRST in which God manifests and from which He pours out all the power and life and glory and victory of both the former and latter rain!

There is going to be a ministration of the Holy Spirit in a way and measure that has never been before, when the Christ has been glorified in His body, His FIRST. We are to receive the Spirit in His fullness, be RAISED UP in the realm of the Spirit to be seated with the Lord in heavenly realms; above all the limitations of this fleshly realm; into a dimension in the Spirit that none as yet (except Jesus) has ever attained; to be poured out as former and latter rain into the earth. This will be the manifestation of the sons of God that the whole creation is waiting expectantly for. There will be an outpouring of the Holy Ghost such as never was. The glory of the former rain at Pentecost was marvelous beyond words to tell, and the glory of the latter rain has been glorious beyond human description, but the manifestation of God's glory when both former and latter rain, transformed into grain, oil and wine, are shed forth through God's firstfruit company will pale the light of the noonday sun and make to seem insignificant the greatest and most glorious things of the past. "The threshing floors will be full of grain (mature ministry), the vats (God's sons) will overflow with wine (life) and oil (anointing of power)" **(Joel 2:24).** Maturity, life and power! No wonder creation groans for this hour! What a ministry!

God's FIRSTFRUIT FORMER AND LATTER RAIN SONSHIP COMPANY is the great harvest for which the Husbandman has been waiting ever since the foundation of the Church. Gifts of the Spirit are really no evidence of spiritual attainment; God bestoweth His gifts freely by His grace upon whomsoever He will. But with FRUIT it is entirely different. Fruit must grow; and God has never intended that the body of Christ should ever bring forth fruit except by a continual and progressive DIVINE GROWTH in the Spirit of God. God will not come to us looking for gifts, but for fruit of the Spirit. He gave us His gifts freely by His grace, and all we had to do was to receive them and use them. That is the law of the Rain - He causes HIS RAIN to fall on the just and the unjust alike (Mat. 5:45). Does that not explain why we have had so many scoundrels running across the country operating in the gifts of the Spirit? What God demands now is FRUIT, because that is something which He can RECEIVE from you. Until now the Husbandman has come into His garden, pruning, cultivating, watering - without expecting anything in return. But now the harvest time is approaching, and soon He shall

visit His garden for one purpose and for one purpose only: seeking for fruit, and trusting that His tender care over the vine has produced genuine FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

Think of the indescribable glory of a ministry of the FRUIT of the Spirit! "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" **(Gal. 5:22-23).** Think of the impact and power of the ministry of DIVINE LOVE! "For God so loved the world..." From childhood most of us have heard these blessed words, yet they are so freighted with heaven's riches that one instinctively shrinks from talking about them. Who presumes to be able to measure the magnitude of God's love? "God SO loved the world." Charles Spurgeon once struck off a bold figure when he exclaimed, "Come, ye surveyors, bring your chains, and try to make a survey of this word 'so.' Nay, that is not enough. Come hither, ye that make our national surveys and lay down charts for all nations. Come ye, who map the sea and land and make a chart of this word 'so.' Nay, I must go further. Come hither, ye astronomers that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which your imagination staggers, come hither and calculate imaginations worthy of all your powers. When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you - 'God SO loved the world!' " Although we may completely despair of calculating the power and scope of the love of God, there are nevertheless in these classic words of Jesus some very clear statements that help us compute, to some extent, the greatness of the heart of God. This little word SO finds its definition, I think, in the object of the gift of God's love.

God so love "THE WORLD" - the world that then was and now is, the world rebellious against God, morally depraved and lost in degradation and shame. "Herein is love, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, but that HE LOVED US, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" **(I Jn. 4:9-10).** You see, it was while we were dead in trespasses and sin, while we made no response to God, while friendship with Him was cut off and the urge of faithfulness and goodness lay smoldering in the grave of our depravity - it was THEN that the love of God's great heart embraced US. God so loved the world - that means His love sweeps around the whole earth and flows out to men of every race and tongue and nation; but it means more. It means He loves the men and women of the world who by their own evil have wrenched themselves away from Him. It means that He loves the blaspheming atheist, the scornful skeptic, the lecherous outcast, the criminal behind the bars, the grafter who swaggers about as a good citizen and the unscrupulous leeches who drain the very lifeblood of widows and orphans. God so loved THE WORLD. ALL of it! And He loves it still. He loves the men living now upon the earth, and He loves those who have lived and died in dim and distant ages past. He loves them on earth and He loves them in hell. God SO loved! Herein is manifested the love of God: He loves the unlovely, the unloving, and the humanly unlovable! Let holy and powerful angels from the extended galleries of heaven sing it! Let the redeemed in rapturous wonder take up the song and let sinners fall prostrate in penitence before the almighty Creator and Redeemer! "God IS LOVE!" Do you believe it? Oh, that all men might learn God's one and only everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of love - and then preach it! But God would have a people who will BE IT! For two thousand years the great Husbandman has been nurturing the fruit of His Spirit in the garden of His sons. The love of God must be lifted up IN US. The peace of God must be revealed IN US. The kindness of God must be demonstrated THROUGH US. The gentleness and goodness of God must become EMBODIED IN A PEOPLE. Oh, how we love to manifest His gifts! But God desires that we manifest HIS FRUIT! Yea, that we BE His fruit. The sons of God are the sons of love, for GOD IS LOVE. The sons of God are the offspring of God's peace and joy and faith, and they grow up as the full expression of all His wonderful nature.

The ministry of the former and latter rain combined is the ministry of the harvest, the produce from the rain. The ministry of the fruit of the Spirit is the ministry by the omnipotent power of God of all that HE IS - the ministry unto creation of the infinite and omnipotent love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance of God Himself. What transformation shall be wrought in the earthly a ministry such as this! This alone can draw A-L-L MEN to Calvary's crimson fountain. O what a grand and glorious day awaits this sin-cursed earth in the outpouring of both the former and latter rain IN THE FIRST! The Day of the outpouring of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT in power and glory! Because we do not have the fruit of the Spirit in any degree of fullness, we cannot appreciate its glory. Before the gifts of the Spirit were restored to the Church we had a faint conception of what they would be like, but what a revelation it was as we saw them unfolding before our eyes! SO WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

We know what they are: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." But we shall never appreciate any measure of their real glory until the fruit of the Spirit becomes matured and visibly MANIFEST IN AND POURED OUT THROUGH THE SONS OF GOD!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 22
COMING WITH CLOUDS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-TWO

THE GLORY OF GOD
THE GLORY CLOUD
JESUS AND THE CLOUD
THE GLORY FIRE
COMING WITH CLOUDS

Jesus used graphic language when He spoke of His return. To the disciples who asked what His coming would be like He said, "They shall see the Son of man coming IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory" **(Mat. 24:30).** The picture language of the Bible employs essentially all the created things of God with which we here on earth are acquainted. There are various reasons why God has used so much symbolic language in His Word. We think that one of these is its unchangeableness. The meaning of words change somewhat through use and misuse. Whatever man creates is also subject to change, but this is not true of the created things of God. The created things do change, but their change is so slow and gradual that it is not perceived from generation to generation. In the sign language of the Bible, God has employed the sun, the moon, the stars, and clouds; and on the earth, oceans, rivers, mountains, valleys, sheep, goats, horses, wheat, tares, fig trees, and so forth. The characteristics of these have not changed throughout the centuries, and when used in the Bible to illustrate the exalted thoughts of God they should have the same meaning to us as they did to the ancients. As signs, they have a spiritual meaning and application.

One of the rabbinical names for the Messiah, based on Daniel 7:13-14, was "The Cloud Man." Daniel writes: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like unto the Son of man CAME WITH THE CLOUDS of heaven..." Christ, of course, is plainly identified as the "One who comes with the clouds" in the Salutation of **Rev. 1:7:** "Behold, He COMETH WITH CLOUDS; and every eye shall see Him..." Furthermore, when our Lord was adjured by the High Priest to tell whether He was the Messiah or not, Jesus answered with the old equivalent of "Yes!" Then He said, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN" **(Mk. 14:62).**

This identification was more than His enemies could bear. And so we read, "Then the High Priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witness? Ye have heard the blasphemy: What think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death" **(Mk. 14:63-64).** Why should the High Priest and those assembled, think it such BLASPHEMY for Jesus to say not only that they would see Him sitting on the right hand of Power, but also that they would see Him COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN? The truth is, they knew that our Lord was claiming to be the "Son of the Blessed (God)," the one who would come in the CLOUD OF GLORY, which had once filled the temple at Jerusalem! Furthermore, they clearly understood that the "clouds" upon which Messiah would come were not the fleecy white clouds which scud across a summer sky, but in all reality they would be the blazing Shekinah Cloud which from times of old had veiled the Divine Presence. How well the learned rabbis of Israel understood the true implication of Jesus' words!

THE GLORY OF GOD

Exactly what is the glory of God and how has God displayed His glory? What relationship do you and I have to the glory of God? The primary word translated "glory" in the Bible literally means "heavy," "weight," or "substance." The glory of a person is actually what is heavy or weighty about that person. Now don't misunderstand! That doesn't mean that it's just the fat lady at the carnival who has any glory! No, that's not the idea. What is the interrelationship between the idea of heaviness with glory? How many times have you said of an individual, "He carries a lot of weight." What do you mean by that? What you mean is that there is

something very impressive about that person which enables him to have great influence with other people. There is the concept of heaviness with glory. Glory is that which is impressive or influential about a person.

Let me illustrate. In the first book of the Bible Jacob's wealth is called the "glory" of Jacob (Gen. 31:1). What that means is that Jacob was such an excessively wealthy man that that is what really impressed other people with Jacob, that is what gave him influence with those about him, that is what caused them to sit up and take note of who he was. And then again in the book of Genesis Joseph's very high position as the Prime Minister of Egypt is called the "glory" of Joseph (Gen. 45:13). Again, that simply means that it was the special position of Joseph in the government that impressed other people and gave him influence in the lives of his contemporaries. It was his powerful office that caused other people to have great respect for Joseph. In Isa. 8:7 the Assyrian's great military power is called their "glory." In light of this can we not see that the glory of God is anything concerning God that impresses His creatures with who and what He is and that gives God influence in the lives of those creatures. The glory of God is that which is impressive or influential concerning God!

This brings us to the second significant thing that we learn from the scriptures about the glory of God - the ways in which God has manifested or displayed His glory. The The Bible teaches that God has displayed His glory throughout history through nature or through His creation. The sweet psalmist of Israel intoned these awe-inspiring words concerning this form of the display of God's glory in Ps. 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handy work." That is David's way of saying that the heavens display what is impressive about God. Have you ever been deeply impressed with the greatness of God when you have walked out of doors on a clear night and gazed up into those magnificent star-studded heavens?

A second major way that God has displayed His glory through the course of world history has been through His Israel people. In the prophecy of Isaiah God calls Israel by this title: "Israel, MY GLORY" **(Isa. 46:13).** And again in Isaiah God says, "I made Israel for MY GLORY" **(Isa. 43:7).** Yet again in Isaiah God says, "In and through Israel I display MY GLORY" **(Isa. 66:10-20).** How has God displayed His glory, His impressiveness, His influence through the Israel nations through the course of history? He has done it by the ways in which He has dealt with that people historically.

THE GLORY CLOUD

A third major way in which God has displayed His glory has been in the form of a CLOUD. This glory cloud of God has taken different shapes and different sizes on various occasions. When it was time for the children of Israel to begin their exodus out of Egypt, the glory of God took the form of a pillar of fire enshrouded within a cloud. "And the Lord went before them by day IN A PILLAR OF A CLOUD, to lead them in the way; and by night IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" **(Ex. 13:21-22).**

There are several things to observe about this passage. There was but one pillar of both cloud and fire, for when shining in the darkness it is still called the pillar of cloud (Ex. 14:19) or the cloud (Num. 9:21), so that it was A CLOUD CONTAINING THE FIRE. By day it appeared as a cloud in contrast to the scorching desert sun, hovering over the multitude as a blessed shadow, protecting them from the suffocating heat of the wilderness. By night the same cloud was a fiery splendor (Num. 9:15-16) giving the people light and heat to break the desert chill. They would see the blazing fire at night and they would see the bright cloud by day. It lighted Israel's path by its splendor and led them as a guide in their journeys. "In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire" **(Ps. 78:14).** It also threatened destruction to those who murmured against God (Num. 17:10), sending out fire against the rebels and consuming them (Lev. 10:2; Num. 16:35).

When Israel was encamped about the base of Mount Sinai, and God came down on top of that mount to meet with Moses to give Israel the law, the glory cloud of God in a blazing flame rested on top of that mountain. "And Moses went up into the mount, and a CLOUD covered the mount. And the GLORY OF THE LORD abode upon Mount Sinai, and the CLOUD covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD. And the SIGHT OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD was like DEVOURING FIRE on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the CLOUD, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" **(Ex. 24: 15-18).** It was there

amid the radiant cloud and flaming fire of God's glory that Moses received specific instruction for the building of the wilderness tabernacle, that wonderful typical HABITATION OF GOD from which the kingdom of Israel was to be directed and governed by the glory of God's presence.

Moses came down from the mount of God and began the construction of the tabernacle. At last, after many months of building and devoutly following the intricate instructions given by Jehovah, when every furnishing was finished and every feature complete in its minutest detail, we have these significant and wonder filled words: "Then a CLOUD covered the tent of the congregation, and the GLORY OF THE LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the CLOUD abode thereon, and the GLORY OF THE LORD filled the tabernacle" **(Ex. 40:34-35).** Thus, when the children of Israel dedicated the wilderness tabernacle they saw the glory cloud of God come and go right down inside the Most Holy Place of that tabernacle. Centuries later, when Solomon built the glorious temple in Jerusalem, on the day of dedication once again the glory cloud of God came and the people of Israel stood transfixed in awed wonder as they watched the glory cloud go right down inside the Holy of Holies of that temple.

What did the glory cloud of God signify every time it appeared? The glory cloud of God signified the unique presence of God. It always told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Jehovah was uniquely present at this place, at this time, for a special purpose. When the shekinah glory of God as a cloud led the children of Israel out of Egypt it signified to the people that God was with them in a very real and sovereign way. "And the LORD went before them IN a pillar of a cloud" **(Ex. 13:21).** God was IN the cloud! The Almighty God Himself dwelt in that cloud by day and in the fiery pillar by night. That strange pillar of cloud and fire was the visible manifestation of His glory and presence. While Israel walked in the light of His fiery presence, no calamity could harm them, no enemy could attack them, no evil could befall them nor plague come nigh their dwelling. God was with them in sovereign power in all their marches. "And the Lord said unto Moses, I come unto thee in a THICK CLOUD, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe for ever" (Ex. 19:9). And again, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: FOR I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD upon the mercy seat" **(Lev. 16:2).**

When the cloud came down out of heaven and rested on top of Mount Sinai, it signified that God in a unique sense had come out of the realm of spirit to meet with the nation of Israel in His manifestation on the earth plane. When they saw the cloud enter into the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and later in the temple, it signified again that God in a special sense was taking up residence within that worship structure within the nation of Israel. The light that shone in the Holiest of All behind the temple curtains of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, laced with threads of gold and figures of cherubim, was not the light of a candle nor the beams of the sevenfold candlestick, nor even the radiance of the sun. It was the shekinah, the glory light of God's majesty and presence. Every time the glory cloud of God appeared it signified the presence of Deity. Through time the Israelites called that glory cloud of God the SHEKINAH glory of God. The word shekinah means "to dwell." And since the glory cloud always signified that God was present at the place where the cloud appeared, to dwell in a unique sense, they called it the shekinah or DWELLING GLORY of God.

JESUS AND THE CLOUD

The disciples of Jesus had become accustomed to seeing Jesus the man, Jesus the healer, Jesus the man of sorrows. They had heard Him tell of the majesty and glory of His Father in heaven, but had never grasped the significance or the glory or the majesty and power of the Christ who walked the road with them. On that momentous occasion when the Lord Jesus took Peter, James and John up into the mount and was transfigured before them, suddenly there appeared a BRIGHT CLOUD - a cloud with a light in it. And out of that bright cloud the voice of the Father spake concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him!" It is more than coincidence that, as Peter spoke, a CLOUD overshadowed them and a Voice came out of the cloud. One of the significant facts in connection with the glory cloud of God's presence is that God always SPOKE from the cloud. This began first on Mount Sinai. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may HEAR WHEN I SPEAK with thee... and the Lord came down upon mount Sinai... and the Lord CALLED MOSES..." **(Ex. 19:9, 20).** At a later time God spoke from the same cloud after that it had descended upon the tabernacle. "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the

cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and THE LORD TALKED WITH MOSES" **(Ex. 33:9).**

What was that BRIGHT CLOUD with the light in it from which the voice of God spake? It was none other than the pillar of cloud housing the glory fire, the shekinah glory of God that had led the children of Israel in their exodus out of Egypt and guided them for forty years! As Jesus prayed on the mount, He was transfigured before His chosen disciples. At that moment of transfiguration the glory cloud enveloped Him and God spoke from the midst of the radiance of glory.

Please observe the marked similarity, which exists between the transfiguration experience and that of Moses going into the blazing cloud on Sinai. "And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became SHINING, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses (the law and the prophets): and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (like the tabernacle in the wilderness!); one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And there was a CLOUD THAT OVERSHADOWED THEM: and a VOICE came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him!"

The matter of utmost importance for us at this time is to grasp the full import of these words of the Father: HEAR YE HIM! It was always the Mighty God who spoke out of the glory cloud. And now that Voice comes out of the excellent glory and commands that from this time forth the ONLY VOICE we are to hear is THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD. The great revelation here is not that the Father now ceases to speak and from henceforth leaves it unto the Son to speak. The simple truth here unfolded is that THE VOICE OF THE SON I-S THE VOICE OF G-O-D! Ah, it was Jesus, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who was speaking from the cloud all the time ... away back on mount Sinai, in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and from between the cherubim over the mercy seat in the Holiest of All! The apostle John, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, caught the reality of this and declared, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD W-A-S G-O-D" **(Jn. 1:1).** He then speaks of the WORD as LIGHT: "In Him was life; and the life was the LIGHT of men. And the LIGHT shineth in darkness. . . " **(in. 1: 4-5).** This is strikingly reminiscent of the wilderness experience. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud ... and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them LIGHT: to go by day and night" **(Ex. 13:21).** The scriptures also assure us that "God IS LIGHT" (I Jn. 1:5), and that He is the "LIGHT of Israel" **(Isa. 10:17),** and Jesus most assuredly identified Himself as that CLOUD OF LIGHT which led God's people of old, for He said, "I AM THE LIGHT of the world: He that FOLLOWETH ME (a moving light, as the fiery cloud) shall not walk in darkness" **(Jn. 8:12).** John, after referring to Jesus as the WORD, which was the LIGHT continues**:** "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" **(Jn. 1:14).**

In the wilderness this GLORY, this CLOUD, and the VOICE OUT OF THE CLOUD are all brought together: "And Moses went up into the mount, and a CLOUD covered the mount. And the GLORY of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the CLOUD covered it six days: and the seventh day He CALLED UNTO MOSES OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD. And the sight of the GLORY of the Lord was like devouring FIRE" **(Ex. 24:15-17).** On the mount of transfiguration the SON is enveloped in the CLOUD and we are commanded to HEAR HIM. The writer to the Hebrews then identified this VOICE and this GLORY in these remarkable words: "God... hath in these last days spoken unto us BY HIS SON, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY, and the express image of His person..." **(Heb. 1:1-3).** Jesus is the brightness of God's glory! He is indeed, the presence in the cloud and the very cloud and fire of the presence!

In this connection it is interesting to note that in the wilderness the cloud of his presence COVERED and OVERSHADOWED the tabernacle of God. Fifteen centuries later, when Jesus was to come into the world as the beginning of the greater and true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, we read: "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall OVERSHADOW thee: THEREFORE also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" **(Lk. 1:34-35).** us

UNDERSTAND! I do not hesitate to tell you that it was the same SHEKINAH GLORY CLOUD in which the God of Israel dwelt, and which overshadowed the place of His tabernacling among Israel; the same glory cloud which descended upon and overshadowed the majestic heights of Sinai, birthing the law of the Lord to Israel; yes, it was the very same cloud of His presence that OVERSHADOWED MARY so that the Mighty God of Israel could indwell her, and come forth as a flesh being, to be "God manifest in the flesh." The angel that announced these wonder filled tidings to the virgin girl of Nazareth did not plant the seed of Christ in her womb; it was the overshadowing of the POWER OF THE HIGHEST. Christ was CONCEIVED in the glory cloud!

The One of old in the cloud of glory was just JESUS. The WORD. The VOICE out of the CLOUD. The LIGHT that guided Israel. And that One was made flesh and dwelt among us. And to aid us in our perception of who He is, He stood in the glory cloud on the holy mount of God. From the midst of that cloud issued the command to HEAR HIM. And when all other manifestations were passed away the astonished disciples saw JESUS ONLY. "The Cloud Man" long awaited by the earnest rabbis of Israel had made His appearance. The One who is the brightness of God's glory was here on planet earth in the form of a man. The One who IS THE SHEKINAH, the glory cloud of God's presence, stood among men. "And they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US" **(Mat. 1:23).**

Let every reader of these lines be assured beyond any possible shadow of doubt that it was this same shekinah, this very same glory cloud which the eleven disciples beheld in spell-bound astonishment on the crest of the mount of Olives that blessed day when the Lord ascended into mid-air and suddenly a bright cloud, like a chariot of God, bore Him speedily away, concealing Him from mortal gaze. "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and A CLOUD received Him out of their sight," the record states (Acts 1:9). An accident? An illusion? A marvelous coincidence? Not on your life! This is the equivalent of saying that the cloud which hovered over Israel in the wilderness; the cloud which rested upon the glorious tabernacle of old; the cloud which dwelt between the gleaming cherubim in the Most Holy; the cloud which filled Solomon's temple until the ministers could not minister by reason of the surpassing glory; the cloud which overshadowed the virgin girl Mary when she came to be with child; the same cloud which enveloped the Son of God and revealed His glory on the mount of transfiguration; that cloud IS THE VERY SAME CLOUD that received the Lord Jesus into its midst and out of the sight of mortal eyes! The cloud that received Jesus out of the sight of those startled disciples certainly was no ordinary rain cloud, which happened to be floating across a torturous sky. It was the blazing shekinah cloud which had always veiled the divine majesty of God from time Immemorial!

THE GLORY FIRE

Now, lest in our investigation of truth we should seem to miss the reality itself, we shall state clearly again that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, IS THE GLORY OF GOD and the glory of the Father and the shekinah cloud. All the wonderful manifestations of the glory of God, portrayed throughout the Old Testament and the New, find their eternal satisfaction in Jesus Christ our Lord. All the heavenly voices, the mighty thunderings, the blinding lightnings, the glowing pillars of fire and the luminous clouds of glory find their fulfillment in Him. The Voice that walked in the Garden of Eden was nothing less than Christ, the Word of God. The thunderings, the lightnings, the flame and smoke and cloud of mount Sinai were the same voice that said, "Be thou made whole," and "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The fire of the pillar was THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, the glory light that emanated from His presence. It was the radiant aura that is identical with the nature of that from which it emanates.

The truth that I earnestly pray will penetrate deeply into the heart of every saint of God who meditates upon these holy things is the fact of the relationship that we have to the Shekinah Glory of God, the glory cloud and fire of His presence. 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. On the day Jesus ascended into heaven He said to His followers, "You stay here in Jerusalem until the Father sends the gift that He has promised to you." The disciples obeyed the Lord, they stayed there in Jerusalem, and ten days after Jesus had ascended, on the day of Pentecost, while that little company of believers was banded together some strange things began to happen. Suddenly there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind swooping down

from out of celestial realms on that little band of believers, but that wasn't all that came down out of heaven, there were also TONGUES OF FIRE that came down out of the glory world above, as many tongues of fire as there were believers present that day. Those tongues of fire came down out of heaven right to the heads of the believers, and while the biblical text doesn't actually say this, the inference is that those tongues of fire disappeared right into their bodies.

What were those tongues of fire that appeared on the day of Pentecost? They were none other than the SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD! This was the same pillar of fire in the cloud that went before Israel and dwelt in the Most Holy Place; however, this time instead of being clustered together in a single blazing mass as a singular pillar of fire, it was subdivided into as many segments as there were believers present that day. What did the Shekinah Glory of God coming in the form of tongues of fire into the bodies of those servants of the Lord signify? They signified then exactly the same thing they had signified every time the shekinah had appeared before - the unique presence of God. But on this occasion they signified that the mighty God was coming to take up permanent residence within the bodies and lives of the sons and daughters of the Most High. Ah, my brother, my sister, born from above by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever, do you realize what this means to you? This means that God has seen fit to place His shekinah glory cloud INSIDE YOUR PHYSICAL BODY! That truth should make us holy. YOU are now God's GLORY CLOUD! The glory of the cloud that once overshadowed the tabernacle is the glory that overshadows you. The glory that filled the typical temple in Solomon's day is the same glory that filled the living temple at Pentecost and that now fills the living temple, which you are.

From the pen of another ready writer let me quote the following words of inspiration and instruction. "From the beautiful phrases of Weymouth's translation, we have these illuminating words of glory and beauty: 'You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Jesus Christ Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, IS RISING SO AS TO FORM A HOLY SANCTUARY in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together TO BECOME A FIXED ABODE FOR GOD through the Spirit.' It was this living tabernacle, this dwelling place of God, this spiritual habitation, the body of Christ, which was so magnificently portrayed in every minute detail of the typical tabernacle in the wilderness. Over that tabernacle abode the cloud and fire of God's glory and within the holy of holies was the shekinah, which was the glory of God's presence. In these blessed days so long ago God walked among His people. The glory of God hovered continually over a figurative tabernacle. When Jesus came, He walked WITH THEM. As John once said, 'We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' But the time came when that heavenly glory, which is Jesus Christ Himself, came to dwell, not merely with them, but in them, for thus has the Spirit spoken, saying, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people' **(II Cor.16:16).**

"I know and am sure that this wilderness tabernacle, of which the Bible speaks in such intricate detail, is a typical representation of the MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST, of which we are a living part. Nothing else in all scripture so adequately and marvelously displays the ministries, the gifts, the graces, the fruits, the door, the sacrifices, the communion and the GLORY of the body of Christ as does the tabernacle. Every detail the apostles taught concerning the body of Christ is clearly displayed in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

"The Shekinahi that once filled the Holy of Holies in the long ago, is the light of Christ that now fills the holy of holies which you are. I know we can neither see nor understand as we often feel we should, but there is a great truth which we must all learn and the sooner we grasp it the sooner we will cease from our fleshly strivings and enter into the rest of our Lord. We must learn that God no longer dwells in a wilderness tabernacle or in temples made with hands. Glorious as were those types and shadows, they were merely frail reflections of a more glorious 'house not made with hands' which was to come. Our Father no longer dwells in a temple in Jerusalem made by the art and Wisdom of Solomon or the cunning workmanship of skilled artisans. His temple henceforth is the living temple of His body, which temple we are. The burning truth the Holy Spirit would now reveal is that 'ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' Tothe elect saints of the church age Paul dared to say, 'Now ye are THE BODY OF CHRIST and members in particular.' The saints are the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies. They are the FATHER'S HOUSE OF MANY MANSIONS. The body of Christ is made of LIVING STONES, which stones YE ARE. This

is the true temple. This is 'My Father's house.' From the radiant glory of its many mansions He will govern the worlds in ages to come, restoring and reconciling all things unto Himself.

"What do the words of Jesus mean to you, saint of God, which He spoke concerning His glory, saying, 'When the Son of man shall COME IN HIS GLORY, and all the holy angels with Him, THEN shall He sit upon THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY' (Mat. 25:31). Was not the tabernacle, filled with His glory, the seat of His government in Israel? Dare we not believe that the THRONE OF HIS GLORY will be this GLORY FILLED TEMPLE of His body, the house of living stones not made with hands? Listen to Jesus as He describes this coming to His temple. 'Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a CLOUD with POWER AND GREAT GLORY' **(Lk. 21:27).** 'And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, **(Mat. 24:31).** These elect are they of whom Peter spoke, saying, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' **(I Pet. 1:2).** These are the elect of all ages, members in particular of the 'house not made with hands.' God's glory shall fill that living temple which they are" -The Page.

COMING WITH CLOUDS

I would draw your attention to the book of Revelation, the unveiling of Jesus Christ. This marvelous book contains deep and rich teaching for the elect saints concerning the coming of Christ; symbolic, mysterious, wonderful, but always to be approached reverently, humbly, with head bowed low and shoes removed from off our feet, as people standing on holy ground. Nineteen hundred years ago the beloved disciple on the lonely isle of Patmos saw unfolding before him the enthralling drama of the coming of his Lord. As the awesome sight began to unfold he cried out in astonished wonder and surprised joy, "Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" **(Rev. 1:7).** The coming of the Lord as revealed in the book of Revelation is complex and progressive, extending through a variety of diverse scenes, stages, events, and manifestations, until He has come in such measure of fullness that we know Him finally in that dimension where HE IS the glorious fulfillment of all that our heart has yearned for, and desired so earnestly. All the lacks swallowed up into completeness, all the voids filled with His fullness, and we know the bliss of HIMSELF as our All-in-all.

BEHOLD! This is the word with which John begins his description of what he saw. Someone has said that the word "behold" in the scriptures is the "Stop, Look, and Listen" sign of the Bible. It always calls for special attention and directs our focus to a truth of unusual importance. The word comes from the Greek IDOU a demonstrative participle. There are four things we should understand about this word. First, it bids the reader or hearer to give attention to what is being said, as if we were to say, "Now listen!" Second, it is used when an event is specified which seems impossible, yet occurs. Third, it is an exclamation of one pointing out something and calling attention to it. Fourth, it means to observe what is about to be said and consider it thoroughly.

Now let us look at the two words that follow: HE COMETH. "Behold! He cometh." This phrase is from the Greek ERCHOMAI. It is the third person singular, present indicative. Any reader who knows the conjunction of verbs knows what that means. First, it means HE COMES as a present tense reality. The verb is present indicative. He comes. He is in the act of coming. Behold! He is (now) coming! In other words, He has been coming, He is still in the act of coming, and He continues to come. This is extremely important. More than once the coming of the Lord is spoken of in this tense throughout the book of Revelation. It's not a future thing, not something that shall happen somewhere down the course of history, but it is something that IS. Oh! that God with flames of His holy fire would burn this truth indelibly upon the hearts of all who read these lines.

The Church world is either looking back to an historical Christ, or forward to a futuristic coming of Christ, and they miss this word ERCHOMAI altogether, their spiritual understanding never being quickened to this grand truth that HE COMES, He is coming, He continues to come, He will continue to come. It is something that can happen right now. It can happen in your life right now. It means that He comes from one place to another. He comes out of the realm of spirit to be manifested in flesh, expressed and revealed in a visible, tangible way to the physical creation. ERCHOMAI means to come, to make one's appearance come before the public. It means that He comes and appears before the view of the people round about. And this coming has already

happened, it is happening now, and shall continue to happen. This is the revelation that so captivated the apostle John that he could only exclaim with amazement, "Behold! He comes!" And the Spirit has borne witness for many years now among God's Spirit-led people that soon Christ shall come in the manifestation of Himself on a plane and in a measure never before seen or experienced by men upon this planet. He shall come to be glorified in His saints, manifested in His sons to set creation free from its bondage to corruption - sin and sorrow and death. Yes, He HAS come, and He is STILL TO COME!

There are two more words: WITH CLOUDS. "Behold! He cometh with clouds." "With" is from the Creek preposition META. It means with, but it also means together with, in the midst of, among, between, in common with, with the help of, and by means of. Behold! He comes WITH clouds, denoting an association. Behold! He comes TOGETHER WITH clouds, denoting a communion. Behold! He comes IN THE MIDST OF clouds, denoting an indwelling. Behold! He comes AMONG clouds, denoting a fellowship. Behold! He comes BETWEEN clouds, denoting a union. Behold! He comes IN COMMON WITH clouds, denoting a participation. Behold! He comes WITH THE HELP OF clouds, denoting an interdependence. Behold! He comes BY MEANS OF clouds, denoting an instrumentality. CLOUDS are the vehicle He uses in this coming.

Here is where I wish to point out a most significant fact of scripture which has entirely been overlooked by the average Bible student and almost all preachers and teachers in the church systems. All the way through the scriptures, from the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel to the ascension of Christ from the mount of Olives, God consistently manifested Himself in ONE GLORY CLOUD. There was always only ONE SINGLE CLOUD. One cloud over mount Sinai. One cloud resting upon the tabernacle in the wilderness. One cloud shining in the Most Holy Place. One cloud filling Solomon's temple. One cloud overshadowing the virgin, implanting the seed of the Christ. One cloud shimmering over the summit of the mount of transfiguration. And finally, we read, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and A CLOUD (only one!) received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Christ ascended in ONE SINGLE CLOUD of God's shekinah glory - the very SAME cloud in which He had manifested His presence throughout the long ages of time.

It is when we come to the return of our Lord that we notice a distinct difference in the circumstances surrounding that coming. For suddenly, the one single cloud disappears and we are introduced to a great plurality of C-L-O-U-D-S. Let us SEE! Christ departed this earth in ONE CLOUD. He comes again in MANY CLOUDS! "Behold, He cometh with CLOUDS: and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). Daniel in vision beheld Him thus: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man CAME WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN ... and there was given unto Him dominion" **(Dan. 7:13-14).** Jesus Himself said, "And they shall see the Son of man COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory" **(Mat. 24: 30).** And again, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and COMING IN THE CLOUDS of heaven" **(Mat. 26:64).** Finally, the apostle Paul relates this dramatic experience: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them IN THE CLOUDS, to meet the Lord..." **(I Thes. 4:17).** In the C-L-O-U-D-S! More than one cloud. Many clouds. A great company of clouds!

The question follows: Why are there MANY CLOUDS attending Christ's coming again, and what are these clouds? To aid our understanding of this truth, let us not for one moment forget that we are dealing with THE CLOUD of GOD'S GLORY AND PRESENCE. The shekinah. When Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, was in the world John said of Him, "And we beheld HIS GLORY" **(Jn. 1:14).** WHEN did they behold His glory? You may reply that they beheld His glory when He went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, performing miracles and teaching the glorious truths of the Kingdom of God. I do not deny that in all those things they beheld His glory, but the apostle Peter pinpoints for us what is really meant about them beholding the glory of the Son. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY (GLORY). For He received from God the Father honor and GLORY, WHEN THERE CAME SUCH A VOICE TO HIM FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY (THE GLORY CLOUD), saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, WHEN WE WERE WITH HIM IN THE HOLY MOUNT" **(II Pet. 1:16-18).**

How very significant that at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me,

and I in Thee, that they also may BE ONE IN US ... and the GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN THEM... I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ... Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, BE WITH ME WHERE I AM; that they may behold MY GLORY which Thou hast given Me" **(Jn. 17:20-24).** And this is the crux of the whole matter! From the dawn of creation's light until Jesus stepped upon this planet, God manifested to His creation in a singular way HIS OWN GLORY. He, the one eternal God exhibited His presence in the form of ONE GLORY CLOUD. But as Jesus approached the cross and the glorious events to unfold shortly thereafter, He disclosed the grand truth that God purposed from eternity to SHARE HIS GLORY WITH HIS VAST FAMILY OF SONS ... that glorious body which is the fullness of Him who filleth all in all!

Let us see then what great encouragement God has given us concerning His glory. "And ye know how we exhorted you, as a father does his children, that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you TO HIS KINGDOM AND GLORY" **(I Thes. 2:11-12).** Peter asserts, "I ... also am A PARTAKER OF THE GLORY that shall be revealed" **(I Pet. 5:1).** "Whereunto He called you to the obtaining of THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" **(II Thes. 2:14).** "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).** The writer to the Hebrews adds this significant testimony: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing MANY SONS TO GLORY, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" **(Heb. 2:10).** That there is to be a mighty and universal revelation of the glory of God, that very same glory which was revealed in the cloud of old, is evident.

When Jesus ascended nineteen hundred years ago, He ascended glorified in that singular glory cloud in which He had dwelt from eternity. He was the One God manifested in all fullness in one Man, the Son. But, blessed be God! when He comes again, "He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N_H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S, and to be admired IN THEM that believe" **(II Thes. 1:10).** Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote these words to the saints in Rome: "And if (we are) children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER" **(Rom. 8:17).** It should not be difficult for any believer to understand that since the majesty and glory of God is now to be shared by and imparted to a vast company of sons of God, each of these sons to whom is given that same glory that Jesus had from eternity shall stand ultimately in his OWN REALM OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD. The glory is shared, so the CLOUD, which represents that glory IS SHARED. Each elect son becomes a manifestation of the glory - of the CLOUD - of the shekinah! Each son becomes the expression and revelation of the Person of Deity. There is still only one Person of God, but He shall eternally indwell a many-membered body of like ones unto Himself, the extension and projection of His own Being. In the light of truths so sublime let us then search our hearts and sanctify ourselves in the knowledge that WE ARE THAT BODY. The cloud of old rested upon the tabernacle and filled the temple with the glory of the Lord. WE ARE NOW HIS TABERNACLE AND HIS TEMPLE! WE ARE NOW HIS ARK AND HIS MOST HOLY PLACE AND HIS HOLY MOUNT! The glory is now given to us rests upon us, increasingly fills us, and shall radiate out through this holy habitation of God forevermore. Under the Old Testament economy God dwelt in the one singular cloud. But now He says, "I will dwell IN THEM, and walk IN THEM... and ye shall be My sons and daughters." **(II Cor. 6:16-18).**

What, then, are those clouds with which, and in which, the Christ comes again? Why, bless your heart, WE ARE! The apostles Peter and Jude both tell us that FALSE MINISTRIES are "CLOUDS without water ... carried about of winds." A TRUE ministry then, is a CLOUD with water. A true ministry has life to give, and is willing to empty himself out in order to be a blessing to dry and thirsty souls. Jesus was a bright cloud laden with water, for "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life..." **(Mat. 20:28).**

The one glory has become the multiple glory. The one God has reproduced His life into a any-membered body. The ONE CLOUD of His presence has become MANY CLOUDS of His presence IN HIS PEOPLE. Isaiah foretold of this day**:** "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON T-H-E-E. 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 S-E-E-N_U-P-O-N_T-H-E-E" **(Isa. 60:1-2).** The "sign" of the coming or presence of Jehovah has always been the shekinah glory cloud. It was His sign to Moses, and when our Lord comes again in fullness in a many-membered body of saints, it will be IN THE CLOUDS OF HIS PRESENCE.

Because the Shekinah Glory of God lives inside the bodies of God's elect saints, we have the solemn responsibility of glorifying God in our bodies. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? Therefore GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, and in your spirit, which are God's" **(I Cor. 6:19-20).** Since the glory of God is that which is impressive or influential concerning God, it behooves us to yield our members day by day as instruments unto God in this world that creation about us may be tremendously impressed with our great heavenly Father who now lives inside us. We are responsible to use our bodies in such a way that God will have influence in the world in these dark days at the end of the age. I cannot help but believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, in anticipation of the hour when the glory cloud would fully indwell and cover the elect of God, said in that long ago, "YE are the light of the world!"

This treasure we have in EARTHEN VESSELS (II Cor. 4:7). Ah, there is a glory even now as we glorify God in these mortal bodies. Christ had and disclosed such a glory in that dim and distant past when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. But, blessed be His name, in His resurrection He came forth in new garments, clad in a sin-free and death free body of incorruption and immortality! Now His wonderful life is swallowing up the sin and death in us, bringing to His chosen ones also a change of raiment, and the hour is wonderfully near at hand when even this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality.

Though His glory has generally been hidden throughout the ages, at certain times and on special occasions that hidden glory has flashed forth into prominence before the eyes of the few who by the predestined counsel of God were permitted to experience unspeakable things unlawful for a man to utter. We are coming ever nearer when God shall unveil His power and glory before the face of all nations and peoples in a manner far beyond any measure experienced by men of any age. The whole world shall soon see the glory that is to be revealed in God's matured and perfected body. BEHOLD! HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS, IN GREAT POWER AND GLORY!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 23
COMING WITH CLOUDS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-THREE

COMING WITH CLOUDS
CLOUDS OF STRENGTH AND MIGHT
CLOUDS WITH WATER
THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

One of the major ways in which God has displayed His glory has been in the form of a CLOUD. This glory cloud of God has taken different shapes and different sizes on various occasions. When it was time for the children of Israel to begin their exodus out of Egypt, the glory of God took the form of a pillar of fire enshrouded within a cloud. "And the Lord went before them by day IN A PILLAR OF A CLOUD, to lead them in the way; and by night IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" **(Ex. 13:21-22).**

What did the glory cloud of God signify every time it appeared? The glory cloud of God signified the unique presence of God. It always told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Jehovah was uniquely present at this place, at this time, for a special purpose. When the shekinah glory of God as a cloud led the children of Israel out of Egypt it signified to the people that God was with them in a very real and sovereign way. "And the LORD went before them IN a pillar of a cloud." God was IN the cloud!

In the previous article on this subject we pointed out a most significant fact of scripture which been entirely overlooked by the average Bible student and almost all preachers and teachers in the church systems. All the way through the scriptures, from the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel to the ascension of Christ from the mount of Olives, God consistently manifested Himself in ONE GLORY CLOUD. There was always just the ONE SINGLE CLOUD. One cloud over mount Sinai. One cloud resting upon the tabernacle in the wilderness. One cloud shining in the Most Holy Place. One cloud filling Solomon's temple. One cloud overshadowing the virgin, implanting the seed of the Christ. One cloud shimmering over the summit of the mount of Transfiguration. And finally, we read, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and A CLOUD (only one!) received Him out of their sight" **(Acts 1:9).** Christ ascended in ONE SINGLE CLOUD of God's shekinah glory - the very SAME cloud in which He had manifested His presence throughout the long ages of time.

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It should not be difficult for any believer to understand that since the majesty and glory of God is now to be shared by and imparted to a vast company of sons of God, each of these sons to whom is given that same

glory that Jesus had from eternity shall stand ultimately in his OWN REALM OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD. The glory is shared, so the CLOUD, which represents that glory IS SHARED. Each elect son becomes a manifestation of the glory - of the CLOUD - of the shekinah! The one glory has become the multiple glory. The one God has reproduced His life into a many-membered body. The ONE CLOUD of His presence has become MANY CLOUDS of His presence IN HIS PEOPLE. Isaiah foretold of this day: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON T-H-E-E. 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_S-E-E-N_U-P-O-N_T-H-E-E" **(Isa. 60:1-2).** The "sign" of the coming or presence of Jehovah has always been the shekinah glory cloud. It was His sign to Moses, and when our Lord comes again in fullness in His many-membered body of saints, it will be IN THE CLOUDS OF HIS PRESENCE AND GLORY.

COMING WITH CLOUDS

In all matters of revelation and spiritual understanding it is impossible to overestimate the absolute necessity of the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, who comes to take the things of God and show them unto US. The natural man CANNOT understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY discerned. The truth of the matter is that the Bible could be read a thousand times, yea, ten thousand times without shedding a ray of light on the carnal mind of a natural man. In fact, natural minded people, even Christian people, have searched the scriptures day and night throughout endless years, yet, because they read with carnal understanding, destitute of the help of the Holy Spirit while depending entirely upon their natural intellect, the Lord withholds His light and understanding from them.

Some people get bent all out of shape when we tell them that Jesus is not returning riding upon a rain cloud. Let me assure you - the prophecies of the Bible are to be believed! But let us be careful that we do not make them mean something, which God did not intend. The mistake that many make is to say that all those prophecies are to be fulfilled in a very physical and natural sense, when the New Testament interpretations indicate that the prophecies do indeed have a literal fulfillment but with a spiritual interpretation. We need to understand that much of the language of the Bible is couched in symbolism, metaphors and allegories. The beauty of things is sometimes enhanced by the descriptive language that God uses, such as when He describes the church, the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:21-33), as a "great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" **(Rev. 21:1-2,9-10).** God's use of earthly language to describe His holy Zion in these two chapters of Revelation 21 and 22 is absolutely fantastic and marvelous. I doubt that John could have ever thought up this picture by himself!

Likewise, think of many places in the Bible where God uses symbolical language**. In Isa. 7:20** it says, "In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired." The shaving would include His head, His beard and His feet, it says. Physical or symbolical? In Ex. 14:21 we are told that the Lord "caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided," but in singing about this later, Moses said, "...with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together" **(Ex. 15:8).** Beautiful language indeed, that God could blow His nose and cause the Red Sea to part for the children of Israel to cross on dry ground; but we certainly understand this is symbolical language as to the method used in describing the real thing that happened.

I am reminded of the little girl who picked up a book on the vegetable kingdom. She read in the book that cabbages have heads. She asked her father, "Do cabbages have heads like we have?" He told her, "No." Then she said, "Well, the man that wrote the book wrote a lie!" "No," her father replied, "the man didn't lie." "But if he did not write a lie," she persisted, "then cabbages must have heads like ours!" Patiently her fattier explained, "No, honey. He is talking about another form of life, and that life form has a head, but it is a different kind of head from ours. Therefore he wrote the truth, but you put the wrong interpretation on it. The man who wrote that knew what he was talking about, but you, not understanding the things he spoke of, suppose that a cabbage has a head like a man's. But that does not make it so. The man was and is right, but your interpretation of what he wrote is wrong." Now, that is how the carnal mind reads the Bible. It understands spiritual realities in terms of fleshly or worldly things. All who interpret the scriptures with the natural mind are just as mistaken in their conclusions as was the little girl who looked for a cabbage possessing a human head complete with eyes, ears, nose and mouth and adorned with hair! The natural mind looks for Jesus to come on

a fleecy-white rain cloud, but the spiritual mind sees that lie comes in the shekinah clouds of glory radiating from the glorious living temple of His body.

Another proof that the "clouds" with which Christ comes are in reality the sons of God IN THEIR GLORY is couched in the terminology of the scriptures on this subject. Note that in most places the passages in question speak of Christ coming "WITH CLOUDS." There is only one other group or plurality of objects of which it is stated that Christ comes "with" them, and that is - the SAINTS! The Bible never says that Jesus returns "to" the clouds or "out of" the clouds. It is very careful to tell us that lie comes "with" clouds. And it also tells us that He comes "with" His saints. "To the end He may establish your hearts ... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ W-I-T-H ALL HIS SAINTS" **(I Thes. 3:13).** Jude says, "And Enoch also ... prophesied ... saying, Behold, the Lord cometh W-I-T-H TEN THOUSANDS OF SAINTS" **(Jude 14).** The Amplified is helpful, when it reads, "Behold, the Lord comes W-I-T-H MYRIADS OF HOLY ONES - ten thousands of His saints." But the Interlineary reading from the Diaglott translation gives the clearest of all renderings from the Greek text, so we note, "Lo, comes Lord I-N HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF." "Myriads of HIMSELF." All of them partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, filled with His life. Myriads of Himself, of His own kind, born of His seed, a many brethren company of SONS - all His sons. And again we read the testimony: "And the Lord my God shall come, and ALL, THE SAINTS W-T-T-H_T-H-E-E" **(Zech. 14:5).** The beloved John sees this same scene in wonder-filled vision and speaking in prophetical language writes: "Behold, He cometh W-I-T-H CLOUDS; and every eye shall see Him" **(Rev. 1:7).**

Rom. 8:17 contains a marvelous truth. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER." To be GLORIFIED TOGETHER is the hope that springs perennial within the breast of all who have by the spirit beheld HIS GLORY. This wonderful experience of being GLORIFIED TOGETHER is a reference of our union with Christ as members of His body, and speaks of a time to come when this entire company of the sons of God, IN UNION WITH CHRIST THE HEAD, shall be GLORIFIED TOGETHER - IMMERSED INTO THE LIFE OF CHRIST, sharing with Him in the fullness of His glory. This entire company shall be joined to Christ to share with Him in the blessed glorification experience when we shall partake of HIS GLORY, being fully transformed into the body of His likeness. Verse eighteen of Romans eight refers to that glory as "The glory, which shall be revealed IN US." Therefore, it is a glory which is yet to be revealed IN US, that is, in these bodies we shall experience that great glory of Christ when we shall be clothed upon with our heavenly house so that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

We are plainly taught that when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear WITH HIM in glory (Col. 3:4). He can do nothing without us. We are His body. Oh, marvelous thought! Christ has bound us to Himself with ties so strong (no man would sprak of his own hand as being near or far, his hand is part of himself; no man would undertake anything without a full participation on the part of every member of his body in that event), Christ has bound us, I repeat, so eternally and utterly to Himself that we MUST figure in His movements. Of course we shall appear with Him! It could not be otherwise - we are His body. Each elect member of His body has been so grafted into the trunk of the eternal Godhead, so incorporated in His life that He and His body are one. Oh, the unutterable glory of this union with Christ! To what an ineffable destiny it commits us. We no longer concern ourselves about whether or not we shall "go to heaven." The truth of the matter is, we would rather not go, if Christ were not there. Ah, He IS heaven! The faintest glimmer of light from His holy countenance beside which the sun is but a shadow, suffices the heart. Paul could not have done otherwise than sing there in prison when at midnight with Silas, he rejoiced. His back was bleeding with the stripes; it was midnight; he was in prison. But he sings as a participant of Christ; heaven's ineffable light bursts in about him, the glory of the Lord is upon him, and the Lord manifests Himself in this cloud!

We are to participate in Christ's coming. We are moving toward the most stupendous transactions in the history of the human race. Nothing can befall Him that does not befall us. We are yet to participate in a fuller measure in the fruits of redemption. We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. With Him we shall reign. The stream of life, which proceedeth from the throne, and from the Lamb and which breaks in upon us, so that even NOW "rivers of living water" flow from our innermost being, is going to just overflow all its banks in this day, so that death will be literally SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. Oh, that God may give us a heart to make due preparation for the participation in the yet unfulfilled history of Christ. For as we have been made to

partake of the death of the Federal Head of the new race, and in Him were resurrected and made to sit in the heavenlies, so, in that sublime event toward which the church moves, the coming of Christ with clouds, we too, shall participate. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!

CLOUDS OF STRENGTH AND MIGHT

Often clouds are used in scripture to symbolize something that has been lifted up or exalted. David declares that God's mercy and truth reaches unto the clouds, that His strength is found in the clouds and that He "maketh the clouds His chariots" **(Ps. 36:22; 57:10; 68:34; 104:3).** We know that these verses are not referring to the bright, fluffy cumulus clouds that we can see with our physical eyes, because Christ has ascended far above all such clouds, sitting at the right hand of the glory of God. He has passed through all heavens and He alone has all power and might, and mercy and truth. All those that are risen with Him and ascended to this place of authority are forming a great BODY through which God is revealing Himself today. The clouds are meant to set forth the MIGHT, as well as the majesty of His coming. "Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and HIS STRENGTH IS IN THE CLOUDS" **(Ps. 68:34).** This was the royal token given by Daniel the prophet in his seventh chapter, at the thirteenth verse, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man came with the clouds of heaven." Not less than divine is the glory of the Son of God, who once had not where to lay His head. "Behold, He cometh!" not with the bands of swaddling clothes of His infancy, the weariness of His manhood, the shame of His death, but with the all-glorious tapestry of heaven's high chambers. He comes with tens of thousands of like ones unto Himself who have been transformed by His life. He comes in a people with power and glory such as we have never witnessed before. The force of His coming will be such that all people and all nations will be compelled to acknowledge: THINE is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen!

I pray that the Spirit of God will grant me help to expound the thing that is in my vision and that He, being doubly gracious, will take these things of God and reveal them unto every believing heart. The Lord was "transfigured," we are told and Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory" with Him (Lk. 9:31). The glory was Christ's glory, and He it was that was transfigured, but these two men APPEARED in His glory. And that, in fact, is a picture of what is going to happen when Christ is manifested in the saints; the saints are to appear WITH HIM IN GLORY! "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" **(Col. 3:4).** It is participation in the Transfiguration glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as Moses and Elijah appeared in His Transfiguration glory. The scriptures teach that this Transfiguration is for us. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed (Greek: transfigured) by the renewing of your mind" **(Rom. 12:2)**. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed (Greek: transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

The open face is the "unveiled" face. The reference is to the veil, which Moses wore over his face to hide the fading glory from the eyes of the Israelites, when he came down from the mountain. But when he went in to speak to the Lord, he took the veil off. Paul, therefore, exhorts the Corinthians to take the veil off. This is the day and hour of God's great Unveiling - even the Unveiling of the sons of God! And as our eyes and hearts and minds become UNVEILED before God, we are going to be TRANSFIGURED into the SAME IMAGE! These words are unmistakable in clearness. The SAME IMAGE! And this IMAGE is developed and manifested as we partake of His Transfiguration, with minds and hearts and eyes unveiled before the Spirit of God. What Peter beheld, therefore, on the mount of Transfiguration was a true picture of the POWER AND COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ into the midst of His people in this great hour of His power and Kingdom. But it was just a picture; and when the real meaning of the scene is fully revealed to us by way of experience, it will far outshine any attempt to describe it.

"His strength is in the clouds" **(Ps. 68:34).** With that staggering, challenging thought in mind I ask myself, How much strength does He have according to ME? Reader, how much strength does He have according to YOU? The world today is full of that weak, watered down, insipid, lukewarm laodiceanism. Everywhere we look we see it. It flashes out at us from the television screen, and packs great auditoriums with vast crowds of thousands of people. False teachers, false prophets, and religious racketeers abound. Hollywood singers and entertainers make themselves rich by crooning and recording our precious hymns, which once were written in holy brokenness at the feet of Jesus. Preachers are making themselves millionaires by their flamboyant

deception, using the desperate needs of suffering humanity as a pretext to rob the widow, the simple and the well-meaning. I do not hesitate to tell you that they brazenly fake the sacred gifts of the Holy Spirit, in order by this blasphemous pretense to appear before the people as great and powerful men of God. My spirit loathes it all, and I cast it far from me. Such conniving and deception is not of the truth. It is no nearer to light than darkness and no nearer to Christ than Belial. It is the horrible delusion of Mystery Babylon from which every follower of the Lamb is warned to flee as he would from an adder.

The next thing in order is the reign of Christ with all His sanctified sons gathered out of the ages. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ... and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY" **(Mat. 24:30).** Not these clouds floating by in earth's atmosphere, but HEAVENLY CLOUDS. A heavenly cloud of people, or a heavenly people in the form of clouds. This people comes with power and great authority! How can you tell when Christ comes as a cloud within a saint of God? There develops within that one a ROYAL KINGSHIP, a kingly authority, the expression of the power of God in the inner life. Ah, we have seen His coming. He is coming with power and great glory, in clouds of power, IN CLOUDS OF POWER, I-N_C-L-O-U-D-S_O-F_P-O-W-E-R! I see the coming Power. I realize something of the touches of that coming Power, and the great Glory and I am solemnized thereby.

CLOUDS WITH WATER

Why does God identify Himself with clouds? There is a most remarkable incident, which took place in relation to the glory cloud when the children of Israel came out of Egypt. This incident is little known by God's people, but it happened to testify to us of the great PURPOSE for which God has enveloped His presence in a cloud. It pointed forward to the great work of the Holy Spirit during this and subsequent ages. Paul refers to this event in I Cor. 10:1-2: "Moreover brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were UNDER THE CLOUD, and all passed through the sea; and were all BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD and in the sea." Note that Paul says that the Israelites were "all BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD and in the SEA." And then in Exodus chapter fourteen it is repeated no less than four times, that they passed "on dry land" through the midst of the sea. Now, how can you pass through on dry ground and at the same time be BAPTIZED IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA? The fact is, God baptized those Israelites on DRY GROUND. The sea was indeed rolled back by a great wind and the gound became dry, but let us notice in Ps. 77:15-17 and 20 what else happened at that time: "When Thou with Thine arm redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The WATERS saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The CLOUDS POURED OUT WATER: the skies sent out a sound: Thine arrows also went abroad. Thou LEDDEST Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." THE CLOUDS P-O-U-R-E-D_O-U-T_W-AT-E-R when the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea by the hand of Moses! How many of my readers ever heard of that rain storm? Israel was thus "baptized" IN THE CLOUD and in the SEA.

Drawing upon the imagery of this first recorded "baptism," God all through the scriptures has enshrouded Himself in a cloud to declare that He shall RAIN all He is UPON US! Through Isaiah He declares: "For I will POUR WATER upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will POUR MY SPIRIT upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses" **(Isa. 44:3-4).** David prophesied in spirit of the coming of Messiah and described His coming in these words: "HE shall come down like RAIN upon the mown grass: as SHOWERS that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish" **(Ps. 72:6-7).** Joel prophesied: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will POUR OUT MY SPIRIT upon all flesh ... and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out My Spirit" **(Joel 2:28-29).** That our Lord is coming in a great spiritual outpouring of Himself is made plain in Hos. 6:3: "Then shall we know, if we FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and H-E SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the former and latter rain unto the earth." Hallelujah!

A cloud is made up of millions of tiny droplets of water in a big group. The clouds you see in the sky were formed when a mass of warm, moist air rose from the earth and reached a section of colder air. The moisture in the air condensed and made a cloud, just as your breath condenses on a cold day. When a cloud becomes so heavy with droplets that it can no longer hold them, it spills over, and we have rain. "O Lord my God, Thou

art very great ... who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the CLOUD HIS CHARIOT: He WATERETH the hills FROM HIS CHAMBERS" **(Ps. 104:3,13).** The clouds are the chambers of God containing the water of life. A cloud is full of water and water speaks to us of life. Water typifies the Word of God and the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 7: 37-39). A cloud speaks to us of a vessel, which contains water or contains life. Even so, God by His Spirit gives LIVING WATER to refresh and impart life unto His creation. It is the nature of a cloud to empty itself. "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth" **(Eccl. 11:3).** When the cloud gets filled up, it rains. That is the nature of the clouds - rain pours out. All that God is was emptied into Jesus Christ. All that God is was poured into Him, He became a receptacle, a vehicle for all the fullness of God (Col. 1:19; 2:9). He was filled up with the life-giving properties of God. Now, all that Jesus Christ is, is being emptied into His body until we are filled with all the fullness of God - having all the life-giving properties of God. HE IS FILLING THE CLOUDS! The nature of each son will be to pour out that life just as God poured it into Jesus and Jesus poured it into us. Every eye shall see His glory. They shall SEE HIM IN THE CLOUDS.

If the saints be full of God they will pour Him out upon the earthy-natured, unconverted and unspiritual ones. A true ministry has life to give, and is willing to empty himself in order to be a blessing to a dry and thirsty people. Pour out his life for others - that's what Jesus did! We must empty out that same life on a groaning creation and break the bondage. The whole creation is awaiting this son company of people who will be the clouds of glory. Their life-giving rain will be emptied upon a dry and cursed earth and creation itself will be released into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. The sleeping church, of course, wherever they see a "coming" mentioned, can think of little else but a physical ride into the rain clouds of our lower atmosphere, being whisked away into an ethereal state and experience of their own invention, where they intend to float around dressed in white night gowns or some such attire, eating - eating - eating what?

Rain comes out of clouds! Have you ever seen a drenching, soaking rain when there wasn't a cloud in the sky? No way! Rain comes out of clouds. There are clouds that don't bring any rain. There are many clouds floating across the religious heavens today that are not full of rain. These empty clouds Peter, Jude and Solomon all tell us about. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: CLOUDS THEY ARE WITHOUT WATER, CARRIED ABOUT OF WINDS; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ... these are wells without water, CLOUDS THAT ARE CARRIED WITH A TEMPEST; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved to the age" **(Jude 11,12; II Pet. 2-.17).**

False ministries are "clouds without water." Like the fig tree with leaves but no fruit, they give the appearance of the real thing, but there is no life-giving property in them. I remember as a child, when the land would be needing rain so badly, the people would watch the clouds in hope; but sometimes when dark, swirling clouds driven violently by the wind were approaching I would hear someone say, "I believe that is just a wind cloud; I don't believe we are going to get any rain from it." And so it was. It was noisy, with flashing lightning and crashing thunder, but gave no benefit to the dry earth, which needed a good soaking rain. There are many messenger clouds in Christianity today that are being "carried with a tempest" of religious fanfare but leave a place just as dry spiritually as it was before they blew in **Prov. 25:14** says, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." What a picture of some present day ministries! WINDS of doctrine (Eph. 4:14), and CLOUDS without water! Wanting only to float through the heavens to be seen of men. But no willingness to be a POURED OUT LIFE to bless God's thirsty creation!

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians of a blessed event wherein "the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them IN THE CLOUDS, to MEET THE LORD in the air" **(I Thes. 4:16-17).** Christians have generally supposed that "clouds" signifies the clouds of the atmosphere, but there is no definite article in the Greek text before the word "clouds" to make it THE CLOUDS, so that the sentence literally reads "caught up IN CLOUDS." Where the identifying article is missing, it speaks of quality, or being used as a descriptive term. The Greek word for "cloud" is often used in the Greek

Classics of a large body of individuals, and it is so used in this symbolic way in Heb. 12:1-2 speaking of that great cloud of witnesses" which surround us.

After elaborating upon the exploits of the great heroes of faith in the Old Testament dispensations, the apostle says, "And these all, having obtained A good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" **(Heb. 11:39-40; 12:1-2).**

"Cloud of witnesses" means STADIUM OF SPECTATORS in Greek. In some of the more spacious amphitheatres of olden times, the spectators rose in tier above tier to the number of forty or fifty thousand; and to the thought of the combatant as he looked around on this vast multitude of human faces, set in varied and gorgeous coloring, these vast congregations of his race must have appeared like clouds, composed of infinitesimal units, but all making up one mighty aggregate, and bathed in such hues as are cast on the clouds at sunrise or sunset by the level of the sun.

We are surrounded by a stadium of spectators and we're all playing a game on the field. And this great "cloud" of witnesses of which the apostle speaks is simply the OVERCOMERS gathered out of all the ages ... those who were either literally or figuratively sawn asunder, beaten, slain by the sword, being destitute, tormented, they were stoned, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, "that they might obtain a BETTER RESURRECTION" **(Heb. 11:35).** This old world is soon to be RULED by a great "CLOUD" of witnesses, of overcomers; by those who will exalt the Lord of glory, and not try to exalt themselves above the glory of the Lord. And though in their day they received not the promise, yet God prepared some better thing for us that they, apart from us, might not be made perfect. And they are most certainly the ones who now, with us, are going to be perfected (Heb. 11:40): who are going to receive all the glorious fullness of the Lord for this new day. They are going to manifest His glory and power and majesty, not their own. In other words, HE, the LORD OF GLORY, is coming to be glorified "IN His saints:" coming to be exalted and magnified and lifted up before the world, in and through those who suffered and overcame in order that they might reign.

The word is: "Seeing we also are compassed about by so great a stadium of spectators, LET U-S RUN THE RACE..." Ah, in the beautiful allegory of Elijah's experience, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand" **(I Kings 18:44).** Out of the sea of humanity there arises a little cloud, a firstfruit company, the remnant of this last hour of the age which is being joined to that great cloud of witnesses which have already been assembled from past ages. The significant fact is the little cloud is arising, THEY ARE ARISING, they are ascending up to the place of glory which God has founded for them, and for which they are being formed and prepared. When the full revelation of the CLOUDS OF GLORY comes it will be a wonderful moment, and a deeply impressive scene. All His messengers and saints and sons form His retinue, and there has never been such an assemblage since the world began. Hark! Brethren, hark! Do you hear the chariot wheels rolling along the sky? Can you not hear? Can you not see the heavenly hosts are gathering from all the heavens? Do you not hear? Have you seen - have you seen a cloud, small as this man's hand? Already the clouds are passing across the sky, and I hear the sound of abundance of rain, and beyond it, I see the glories of the fullness of the Kingdom of God!

These precious truths are vividly portrayed by a dear sister to whom the Lord has revealed Himself in multiplied visions of the spiritual world. She writes, "The Lord was there also in His great fiery Cloud of much glory. He bade me look and as I looked to the farther end of that vast temple there in still another room I saw a tremendous, cloud of glory huge in size and terribly unquiet. In constant movement it ever enveloped and enfolded itself. This cloud LIVED with its own tremendous LIFE. But even more strange I knew - without knowing how I knew that this great cloud was identified with the glorious Christ who was at my side. THEY WERE UNITED. THEY WERE ONE. Fully identified they were as if fully connected one with the other.

"Oh, I cannot ever find any way to describe Him in His great Cloud! So terribly immense and His glory is so great! The highest angels pale beside Him. Such immensities of power and rushings and thunderings! Even in His state of most relative calm the wonderful and beautiful glory and dread of Him is totally indescribable.

"Before the Cloud of gold I saw a limited number - too many to count, yet not a great multitude of flaming fires also of this same golden material but also like clouds. They seemed to be exactly like He was, the only difference being that they were smaller in size. Though very large, they were still not as large as He. Otherwise they were exactly like Him in the cloud in all other respects. Along the sides and round about the living fires I saw golden, flaming, living-stones made of the same material as the Cloud but unlike the other living-stones in that they were much larger and more aflame. Slightly smaller than the living fires, the living-stones were so aflame that they seemed to be ever consuming themselves yet never being consumed.

"Then He spoke saying that these - indicating the fires and the flaming stones - were just like He was and were A PART OF HIMSELF. These fiery clouds and the flaming stones were specially loved and chosen by Him. No one else, no other living-stone, could ever enter into this place. The flaming stones would go out and minister unto the other stones, but the cloud-fires would stay within with Him forever, ever reigning with Him. He further said that these beings, chosen by Him and specially loved, were those who had been made fully into His image, and that even now they were a very part of Himself. These great beings were so far above all other beings, even far above all the angels. In truth, they were just like Him. I wondered greatly and could not understand and was greatly distressed in spirit because of what I had seen. He spoke to me, quieting my spirit, 'These things are true and shall shortly come to pass.'

"Then there came out from Him in a huge wave something that appeared to be His very own self in mighty glory and in the Cloud, yet He did not leave His high place in the heavens either, yet He did. He was in so much activity and moved about over the heavens that opened below Him. This great wave of Himself in the Cloud also descended with tens of thousands of mighty angels down towards the earth. It did not descend slowly nor softly, but in great haste and speedy activity. When it was as yet some distance from the earth it hovered there for a while suspended over the heads of the people, but they did not see it nor did they know it was there. And there it rested. Then He spoke, saying, 'This which you see will not take My loving sons by surprise, because they are waiting for it to take place. They are already knowing and have been advised and are waiting for Me to come to them in love, for they will love My appearing.' He also said that His hour had been fulfilled and that it was now the time that these things must shortly take place.

"I looked far below Him down upon the earth and He told me that everything and every being that I saw above with Him WAS ALSO DOWN BELOW UPON THE EARTH. I could see it as in a reflection, yet I could not see it directly. He in His Cloud was no longer poised above the earth, but now had come down directly upon the earth. It completely covered the whole earth as He spoke to me with a great voice, saying, 'I am there to gather together My own, for they shall be filled with My glory and this glory shall be seen by all. Now is the time when My own shall be raised up to be with Me in My glory. My Cloud shall no more be raised up from the earth, but shall remain there so that we shall be together forever" - end quote.

Many who read these lines have heard or read the vision given to Evangelist Tommy Hicks a number of years ago. I am led to share here a portion of this remarkable vision as he recorded it, requesting the reader to note especially the reference to CLOUDS. "On the morning of July 25, 1961, at 2:30, I received a vision from the Lord that has entirely revolutionized my whole life and ministry. It seemed as though I had hardly gone to sleep when this vision came before me...three times, and then again on July 27, two days later.

"Suddenly, in the vision, I was standing with the full view of the whole world before me. From out of the heavens came great thunderings and lightning. Accompanied with this phenomena came a voice ... a GREAT voice... for it was the Voice of God. My face was turned toward the north. With a great flash of lightning covering the whole earth, I looked down and beheld a massive form that appeared like a huge giant. I was amazed as I saw this giant cover the earth. Its feet seemed to reach to the North Pole and its head extend to the South Pole. The arms were dramatically spread from sea to sea. Again, with another great flash, I saw that this giant was alive... and yet, strange to say... struggling for life. I said, 'Oh, Lord, what does this mean?'

"This massive being was covered with debris and seemed to be fettered. As I viewed this being, it began to quiver, then almost go into convulsive gestures. As this took place, I saw thousands of strange creatures. Every time the giant would quiver, they would withdraw. However, when it ceased to MOVE they would return again. I was definitely made to know what these creatures were. They were instruments that had bound the

body of Christ through the ages. Suddenly, the right hand of the giant came up, and with that, came a loud voice like a roar of thunder from heaven itself. Then his left hand was raised ... and as I looked, I saw its hands extend into the very heavens. Then, very slowly, the giant began to rise. With giant hands, it began to cleanse the debris from off its body. I saw it rise to its feet, with hands outstretched to heaven. It was so great that its hands were in the heavens, while one foot was in the sea, the other was on the earth. I trembled immensely, for never before had I seen such a sight.

"Presently, the sky was filled with CLOUDS...heavy clouds...but lo, they turned to silver...until from the very silver clouds themselves came liquid drops of light and power falling upon the form of the giant. Then I saw the giant MELT to the earth itself ... as though it were being POURED OUT from heaven itself. The form had seemed to dissolve and now in its place I saw millions of people. I cried out to the Lord: 'What is the meaning of this?' A voice so clear and vibrant said, 'I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army, which I sent among you' (see Joel 2:23,25).

"As I listened to the Voice and watched the multitude of people, - from the CLOUDS came great drops, like liquid light ... this majestic heavenly substance made everyone it touched lose his identity...and their identification was JESUS. I saw no barriers, no denominations, nor sects - but the transcendent glory of heaven that rested upon these people compelled them to lift their hands in praise and adoration. I watched to see who this company was worshipping. At that point, I saw a great white figure COME OUT OF THE CLOUDS...pointing His finger to one, then another. It seemed that He was giving directions, for as He would point they would go... some to the east, some to the west, and in each direction I could see them marching through cities, towns and villages ... some through deserts, forests and jungles.

"God is going to have a perfect Church. He is going to have a people that are so endued with power that it will not be an exposition of SELF, but it will be Christ in them, the hope of glory. I saw these people pass through the fire, unburned ... cross rivers as though there was no water there ... they crossed oceans with ease, escaped persecution as though a hand transported them from their surroundings. In spite of the roaring of wild beasts, attacks by men with swords and weapons of war, nothing seemed to hinder them. They moved over mountains, and down through valleys ... they moved like the hart skipping upon the hills. Their faces shone with the countenance of VICTORS! They were CONQUERORS!

"I hesitate to tell this part of the vision because it was with great trembling I received this revelation. I saw the man, clothed in white, point with a sceptered hand. Again, there was pouring forth from His hand this that I call 'liquid power'. As soon as it would touch the person, that person would have his hands bathed and dripping in the same heavenly substance. Upon receiving this anointing they would walk into hospitals ... through the streets ... into the institutions, and on and on, marching throughout the length and breadth of the land. I could hear them saying, 'ACCORDING TO MY WORD, BE THOU MADE WHOLE.' As the liquid power flowed from their hands, each one they touched was instantly healed and made whole!

"I saw people transported in the Spirit from nation to nation. I saw them going to Siberia, to Africa, to Canada - to the ends of the earth! I saw them literally lifted up and placed by the Spirit in the respective countries. Then I heard a Voice ... not a thundering Voice this time, but a Voice that was low and beautiful as the murmuring of the waters. This tender Voice said, 'My little children, I have given unto thee My treasures. You are Mine - you belong to Me. I love thee with an everlasting love. Now My power shall be IN YOU. The gifts that I have given unto thee shall be made manifest to a lost and dying world. I am going to restore to thee ALL.'

"I realized that this whole panoramic picture was the demonstration of the Kingdom of God through those who follow HIM. I continued to see a stream of people marching healing - blind eyes opened - deaf ears unstopped - literally millions of people receiving of the power of this great manifestation. It seemed so 'fluid' in its operation. There was no exaltation of a man. Simple words were constantly repeated - simple but profound: 'ACCORDING TO MY WORD, BE THOU MADE WHOLE.'

"Folks, the Kingdom is here. The very power and Spirit of the Kingdom of God so possessed me, I knew it was the revelation of the King in all His Kingly authority. I could see that the Lord was showing me that the Kingdom

of God was coming into view. This was the revelation of the Kingdom of God coming to man. The very Spirit and power of the Kingdom so gripped me, I felt like one caught away to the third heaven. Daniel saw the everlasting Kingdom... no power in the world will be able to destroy this Kingdom. Once again, I saw this giant Body being lifted into the heavens..." -end quote.

From earth's teeming millions of all ages there is a people arising in the image of Christ. We who watch the spiritual heavens shall soon see a cloud as we have never seen before. We have seen inky black clouds, and clouds of snowy whiteness; clouds brightly tinted and many silver lined; clouds made brilliantly gorgeous by the afterglow of the setting sun. But we never yet have seen a cloud made magnificently glorious by the blazing splendor of the Son of God. We have seen clouds charged with thunder and lighted up by flashes of lightning. Not yet have we seen a cloud charged with the power of omnipotence and flashing with the incorruptible radiance of the Son of God. Afar off we have seen the morning clouds as they have enwrapped the distant mountain peaks and splendidly capped the hilltops. We have yet to see the cloud which shall enfold the awful form of the Mighty One. We have seen clouds driven as chariots to carry rain to the dry and thirsty fields. A CLOUD IS FORMING IN THE HEAVENS THAT WILL BE SEEN, THAT WILL BE THE CHARIOT OF HEAVEN'S KING OF GLORY WHEN HE COMES TO REFRESH AND RESTORE AND QUICKEN ALL THINGS.

What a sight it will be! How it enraptures the faithful ones who "love His appearing," and who have hoped to the end "for the grace that is to be brought unto" them "at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Of a sudden the blazing light of day will take on a new brightness, above all the glory of the sun, and grow still more light, more bright, and more dazzling, until there is revealed to us the advancing glory of the King of kings. And with the glory clouds of myriads of like ones unto Himself the all-conquering Christ will appear again on earth! These brilliant bands will fill the glory-flashing skies from end to end and flood the world with life and light and love. How magnificent will be the advancing pageantry of the skies! How sublime beyond all mortal comprehension will be the blessed Lord Jesus when He "shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day!"

Behold, He comes with CLOUDS!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING PART 24
THE COMING OF THE KING

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-FOUR

CROWNING THE KING
DISCOVERING THE KING
THE KING IS REIGNING
THE KING ON DAVID'S THRONE

"Behold, thy King cometh," the Old Testament declares **(Zech. 9:9).** Time and again in the Word of God we find prophecies of a glorious and universal Kingdom ruled by a great and eternal King. So well was this understood in the time of Christ that even John the Baptist, after introducing our Lord to His public ministry, asked, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" **(Lk. 7:19).** The promised King did appear, but His own people wouldn't receive Him. One of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements of all scripture was penned by the apostle John in **Jn. 1:11-12, "**He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

TO Him, hidden in the bosom of past ages, all the scattered rays of prophecy pointed. IN Him, manifested in the fullness of time, man received a revelation of the program of God, and saw converging rays of prophecy meet and find fulfillment. It was the quickening, illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit in men of pure minds and sincere hearts that made those men see that Jesus was indeed God's Christ and that He was the promised King. Those touched by the Spirit of God gladly received Him and believed that He came forth from the Father. What revealing light of revelation it was that made Philip say to his brother Nathanael, "WE HAVE FOUND HIM of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" **(Jn. 1:45).** Andrew went seeking his brother Peter and upon finding him said with confident assurance, "WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH**"** **(Jn. 1:41).** Nathanael, upon hearing the simplest statement from the lips of Jesus, declared with evident amazement, "Thou art the Son of God; THOU ART THE KING OF ISRAEL" **(Jn. 1:49).** Surely it was no persuasive arguments from Jesus that evoked this remarkable response, for He had simply inferred that He knew who Nathanael was. No, it was something far more convincing than that. It was the inner quickening of God's presence and glory that revealed Him as Lord and King.

The kings have had their day, it is said, but there is one King whose day is shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Following World War I most of the vaunted thrones of Europe were toppled, and today there is only a meager handful of kings left ruling in the world. Most of the world has concluded that government by kings is a failure. But now that most of the kings are gone, the people are no better satisfied with the governments, which have succeeded them, while the world lies torn and bleeding as a result of a cruel struggle, which continues between opposing ideologies. Is such a world willing to try another King? There is no doubt about it - the kings of this world have failed, and we freely acknowledge that the governments which have taken their places are quite unsatisfactory, for the hearts of the people are filled with fear as they consider the possibilities of what may yet befall them. It is just such conditions as these, which call for a new ruler.

Frequently one hears the opinion voiced that the only thing which now will save the world from utter ruin, and the race itself from destruction, is a beneficent SUPERMAN, an authoritative one who would be wise-enough to map out a new and better course for the people, order his plans put into effect, and have power to enforce his edicts. Convince the world that such a ruler is on hand and he would probably be universally proclaimed! Not a single one of all the kings - the kings who have had their day - ever possessed these qualities.

A king qualified to take over in this chaotic world of today would need to fulfill the prophetic picture given to us by king David**,** "Give the king Thy judgment, O God, and Thy righteousness ... He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with justice. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, Thy righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break

in pieces the oppressor ... in His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" **(Ps. 72:1-8).**

Nearly two thousand years ago a man journeyed up and down in the land of Israel whom His followers believed was destined to be the world ruler, which the prophecies had foretold. He didn't have an army. He never tried to exalt Himself at the expense of others. He held no position of power or influence in the government or any human institution. He was noted for His kindness and compassion. He loved all, and was sympathetic and merciful even toward the erring. One of the most revealing observations made concerning Him states, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" **(Acts 10:38).**

But the world was too evil to appreciate so noble a character. He was hated by the rulers of His day, and charges were brought against Him aimed at His life. One of the charges was that HE CLAIMED TO BE A KING. He was brought before a Roman governor for trial, and was asked, "Art Thou a King?" to which He replied, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" **(Jn. 18:37).** In stating this, He knew that He was sentencing Himself to death, because such a claim would be considered treason against Caesar. This kindly, sympathetic, understanding, merciful, healing, delivering, and wise minister to the people was an Israelite, and when the governor realized he could do nothing more to save His life, he permitted his soldiers to place a crown of thorns upon the prisoner's head, and showing Him to the people, he cried, "BEHOLD YOUR KING!" But they shouted back, "Crucify him, crucify him!" **(Jn. 19:15).**

While this King of earth voluntarily surrendered Himself to His enemies, His manner of life and death and the power of His resurrection none the less changed the course of the world. Him who, being the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of history out of its channel, and still governs the ages. They crucified Jesus, but He told His disciples that He would come again, and taught them to pray for the Kingdom which He would establish when He came. Today, while the world is perishing because of its own misguided and selfishly inspired judgment, its one hope lies in the fulfillment of the promise made by King Jesus that He would come, and in coming, would do for the world what it cannot do for itself. The brightness of that hope springs perennial within the breast of every elect saint of God and radiates forth as a beacon in the dread darkness of the night for all mankind.

CROWNING THE KING

In lands in which royalty is still recognized, where it is not just acknowledged but has also really gripped the hearts of the people and sways the emotions, the days on which the royal ruler visits this or that place are always great days and festive occasions for its citizenry. And of all these days, that of the coronation of a new king has ever been one of the most outstanding. Long before the arrival of the king or queen in the capital of the land where the sovereign will be crowned, the city presents a scene of feverish activity, of hustle and bustle, to give all its thoroughfares a truly festive appearance. The hearts of the people are filled with a genuine desire to render due honor to the new monarch, and they vie with each other to make the most of the opportunity. When the day arrives the national flag is everywhere in evidence, and many streamers along the way give the city a gala appearance.

And when at last the hour comes for the king to enter the city and to parade through the main avenues, thousands upon thousands of his faithful subjects crowd the thoroughfares to greet him and to give expression to their joy and fealty. With His coming the glory of the scene is greatly heightened. He comes clothed in royal apparel, decked with all the regalia of his high office, and riding in a vehicle worthy of such an exalted personage. In the eyes of the admiring multitude he is every inch a king, and therefore truly worthy of their obedience and honor. A bodyguard of stalwarts accompanies the royal conveyance; bands play the national airs, which strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the multitudes that line the streets; and following contingents of military forces represent and symbolize the strength of the nation. All this serves to enhance the glory of the king. That day is in a very special sense HIS DAY and, just because he is the king, it is also a day of national rejoicing. And the people feel that they have a share in its glory and in the happiness which it engenders.

The history of civil royalty and rulership in this world shows that men do not regard a candidate for the throne as fully qualified unless he has received the endorsement of heaven. In the ancient monarchies, rites were performed, the oracles' approval was secured, and signs appeared, which were regarded as the evidences that the gods favored the candidate. Among the barbarous nations, strange and mysterious apparitions and observances imposed on the superstitious the impression that the one who stood forth as their chief was the chosen one of the Great Spirit, who invisibly controlled the destinies of men. However it has been abused and deceived, it is the inbred instinct of humanity to look for heaven's endorsement upon the person whom it would crown king.

Jesus Christ has been chosen by heaven to this high office. The collected wisdom of the universe has cast its vote, and elected Jesus Christ to be King over this earth. "A crown was given unto Him" (Rev. 6:2). "We see Jesus ... crowned" **(Heb. 2:9).** "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns..." **(Rev. 19:11-12).** God says to the earth, "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations" **(Isa. 42:1).** Addressing His chosen, the Almighty says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" **(Heb. 1:8).** Heaven has declared, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" **(Isa. 9:7).** The voice of omnipotence proclaims, **"I have set** My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ... be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth" **(Ps. 1:6-10).**

The choice of heaven, praise God! is ultimately to be the choice of the whole earth. He whom the Almighty Father has selected to be King over this earth, is enthroned and crowned, and every knee in the whole earth, yea, in the entire universe is going to bow in ratification of heaven's choice. This glorious One, who is the well-beloved of heaven, in whom the great Godhood is well-pleased, about whose feet the swelling feelings of the innumerable angelic throngs roll in great billows of delight, this Person we are to crown in this earth as its supreme Sovereign. Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen.

DISCOVERING THE KING

The revelation of Christ to the human heart as a King will always be subsequent to the revelation of Him as the Saviour. There need not necessarily be a long interval between these two revelations, indeed the sooner the one occurs after the other the better; but the Saviour must ever be discovered first, and in the joy of that discovery the soul will be led on to find the King.

When Gideon had achieved the liberation of his countrymen from the yoke of Midian, we are not surprised at hearing that they offered to him a throne. It was natural that they should say, "Rule over us," when his prowess had by divine assistance rescued them from the pitiful bondage of their enemies. It is even so in the history of our own spiritual progression in God. As we make proof of His power to save, and earnestly desire that He should carry on His saving work to its final triumphant conclusion, we begin to feel that He will be the better able to do this, the more completely we surrender ourselves to His control. If He is merely a Saviour, called in at a moment of emergency, He will show Himself on such occasions strong to save. But if He can once become our King, then He will exert His regal power in making such transformations within the little kingdom of our own nature as shall secure our permanent safety and well-being.

Thus we begin to long for His reign within; earnestly to desire that every lofty imagination may be cast down and every fleshly desire subdued, so that He may have His will, and ours be lost in His. And then we begin to find out that there is a vast difference between the conditions of the discovery of the Saviour and the conditions of the quest of the King, and oftentimes great searchings of heart will follow ere we can make up our minds at all costs and hazards to start upon this quest and to accept this allegiance.

What then are the conditions of this quest? What is required of those who would find the King? I answer you by referring you to the most significant narrative of the visit of the shepherds and the wise men to find Him who

was born King of the Jews. While each of these momentous occurrences deserve far more attention than we can give them at this time, it will be our purpose now to consider in passing a few of the wonders of these truly awe-inspiring events. God grant that, as we explore for this moment its available depths, our spirits may be edified and our desire increased for the glory and power of His coming to us both as Saviour and King.

We may learn not a little by considering the points of contrast between these two beautiful stories, each of which contains the account of a great discovery. In each case the Christ was the object discovered, and in each a great joy of discovery crowned the efforts of the discoverers, and in each case a supernatural sign led to the discovery; but in almost all other respects the two cases were diverse, and we may learn significant and eternal things from this discrepancy.

To the shepherds, plain and simple men, the revelation was explicit and clear: "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David A SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" **(Lk. 2:9-12).** These simple shepherds were left to no finely-drawn inferences, no dubious enquiries, no prolonged perplexities. They had but to believe a testimony they could not doubt, and to obey in faith a very intelligible instruction, and the Saviour was found. They had no difficulties to face, no long investigation to make, no arduous and weary search; they were exposed to no sort of hardships, or toils, or dangers, to no risks, or even inconveniences. It was but a short journey they had to take, and there was nothing to prevent them from taking it immediately, and none to dissuade them from going straight to the place where Jesus lay. All that was required on their part was decision and haste, full determination of heart and will to see at once the wonderful thing which had come to pass, which the angels had made known unto them.

What does all this teach us? Surely the lesson lies on the surface. We cannot fail to learn from all this, that when once the awakened soul begins in earnest to seek a Saviour, the way that leads into His presence need be neither difficult nor long. No weary quest, extending over months or years; no very heroic effort, no astonishing self sacrifice, is necessary when we seek the Saviour. Only let the enlightened mind act with decision and quickness, and the blessed discovery will soon be made, and we shall return praising and glorifying God for the wonders of redeeming love!

There is yet another point of contrast between the conduct of the shepherds on this occasion and that of the wise men when they found the new-born King. When they came to Jesus we do not read that they brought any kind of offering whatever. Does it not seem almost strange that they didn't? It would have been such a natural thing, we may suppose, that in going to meet the Saviour of the world these men, if they had no silver or gold, should at least have brought an offering from the best of their flocks. But it never seems to have occurred to them to do so. And why not? Surely they were not stingy! For our sakes no doubt, my brethren, was this written, that for all time it might be clearly known that the Saviour is God's free gift to man, and that He receives no gift in exchange for this; that when a man or woman seeks the Saviour he or she must come with empty hands, not to purchase, but to gladly receive God's unspeakable gift in His Son Jesus Christ. Those who seek the Saviour with a gift, be it money, or good works, or self righteousness, or even tears - nay, or even religiousness, must of necessity seek Him in vain until they learn to leave the gift behind, and simply accept God's free gift of salvation without money and without price.

But when we turn to the other story of the visit of the wise men, all is changed. These did not make their long and tiresome journey in search of a Saviour - for after Jesus had been born the wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He that is born KING of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to WORSHIP HIM ... And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and WORSHIPPED HIM: and when they had opened their treasures, they PRESENTED UNTO HIM GIFTS; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" **(Mat. 2:1-2,11).** Ah, the wise men brought their best and most precious gifts, and laid them at the new-born Monarch's feet; for nothing is too rich or costly to offer to a King. And they who seek the King come not so much to receive as to give. True, they do receive; for to gain HIS SOVEREIGNTY WITHIN is no small acquisition; but still we may say that this benefit to

themselves is not their first object. "We are come to worship Him," was the cry of the wise men, and even such is the consuming desire of every elect saint who seeks to find the King.

Just consider what this revelation meant to them, situated as they were, if they responded to it. No doubt those distant lands of theirs had an established religion, to which they would be expected to adhere, but this they forsook, when they recognized the superior claims of another God and King. No man, not even today, can break away from cherished traditions and the religious bias of his family and peers without exposing himself to much hostile and criticism and loss. He who chooses such a course must be prepared to sacrifice reputation, popularity, friendship, yes, even, in some cases, life itself.

And then there were all the toils and dangers of the way - dangers by mountain pass and swollen rivers, by sultry desert waste or pathless jungle; dangerous by roving gangs of thieves, through whose territory they may have had to pass who swarmed in all those half-civilized regions, and by whom they had to pass carrying with them considerable treasure. And then the weary toil, a journey of some two years. See them struggling on, the sun blazing over them by day, while the cold wind chilled them to their very marrow by night; as day by day and week by week they crept on by slow stages, ever wandering further and further from home and fatherland, and ever drawing nearer and nearer to that great unknown, the thought of which was the one motive power that still urged them on.

Fear not, oh, my Christian brother; only let us not pause to calculate consequences. What are all these outward trials, the strippings, purgings and processings, as compared with the inward glory, which the discovery of the King induces in our consecrated hearts? Surely we cannot lose by His sovereignty! If He asks us to give up all that we have, it is only that He may enrich us with His VASTER ALL.

Stay for a moment, dear reader, and reflect. Let us trace the analogy. To the superficial observer the discovery of the King does not seem as clearly a necessity as the discovery of the Saviour. You know the old story: "Jesus is my Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, Sanctifier, and thank God - I rejoice over this more than anything else - He is my COMING KING." Is it not because we have not been sure whether we wanted this Man to RULE over us? We do not mind Him ruling over Castro and the devil and the millennium, but we have not wanted to be totally conquered and ruled by Him. That is why we have kept Him coming. The Lord wants to be King NOW. We only begin to know Him when we find Him as Saviour; but this first revelation, while it sets at rest our personal anxiety about our own salvation, and unleashes a flood of blessings and benefits from His gracious hand, and bids us "fear not," and is designed to awaken our desire to know HIM more and more, but only as we respond to this desire and follow on to know Him in deeper measures can we grow up into the fullness of God.

Wonderful as it is to be forgiven, justified, born again, healed, delivered, prospered and blessed, as we follow on to know the Lord there follows a very definite crisis in our spiritual experience. We are brought face to face with the questions: Who is to be master - Christ or self? What am I going to live for - to enjoy His blessings and please myself, or to fulfill His will? Do I want to be blessed and prospered and get to heaven at last - or do I want to be conformed into His image and suffer with Him that I may reign with Him? Do I want God to bless me with good things, or do I want Him to rule over me, break me, subdue me, subject me, and process me until it is none of me and all of Him? Is it His benefits I want, or is it His nature?

We have made poor work of our attempts at self-government. Why not give Him the scepter and the throne, and let Him rule supreme? The more the mind dwells upon this possibility, the more desirable does it seem, until at last there rises from the heart, kindled into passionate desire, the cry of a great need - "Where is He that is born KING?" that from this day forth our lives may be one long offering, and all we have and are be laid gladly and willingly at His feet. He Himself is as willing to reign over us as He was willing to save us; and when once the "other lords" have been renounced, and all is cheerfully laid on the altar, we see that faith has as good a right to claim Him as King as ever she had a right to trust Him as Saviour. And in both cases alike, AS WE BELIEVE SO IS IT DONE UNTO US.

He becomes King to us. But He wants to be more than that. You first have to know Him as King. We have sung through the years a little chorus that goes like this: "Oh King of glory, We bow before Thee - Take Thy throne

and reign within our hearts." We first have to know Him in His Kingship, in His authority, in His government. We have to first know Him as King. But why does He desire us to know Him as King? Why does He desire to set up the throne of His Kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US to become kings!

THE KING IS REIGNING

With these thoughts in mind, let us look at the KINGDOM OF GOD as it is described and emphasized in the New Testament. It is natural, then, first of all, for us to take a look at the King of this Kingdom, Jesus the Christ. Unfortunately, the average church member does not think of Jesus as becoming a King. In thinking so loosely, we rob Jesus of one of the main phases of His ministry, that of being a King on this earth - the King of the Kingdom of God. Mind you, He is not GOING to be King; He is King now, for He has already ascended to the throne of the majesty on high and been given ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This is why He can say to His footstep followers, "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).**

With overwhelming awe the prophet Isaiah wrote, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth GOOD TIDINGS OF GOOD, that PUBLISHETH SALVATION; that saith unto Zion, THY GOD REIGNETH!' **(Isa. 52:7).** It is the purpose of all who are chosen of the Lord to minister to His elect of Israel, that they BRING GOOD TIDINGS, PUBLISH PEACE, and that they say unto Zion, THY GOD REIGNETH. Therefore, we publish the glad message to all the inhabitants of Zion: THY GOD REIGNETH! He does not hope to reign someday but HE IS REIGNING PRESENTLY. God is not trying to do something, He is doing it with the power and authority of His Kingdom reign. There remain some things which are not yet "put under Him" **(Heb. 2:8),** but He must reign until every enemy is subdued. The purpose of the reign of Christ is to subdue and put down all other rule, power, and authority. Christ is not waiting until all the enemies are destroyed before He begins His reign. Rather, HE IS REIGNING NOW and the purpose of His reign is to destroy all enemies. This is the positive declaration of God's infallible Word: "FOR HE MUST REIGN TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET" **(I Cor. 15:25).** Christ is reigning presently and His reign shall continue until all enemies are destroyed and God is All-in-all. Let it be known and understood by all: "THY GOD REIGNETH."

He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. There are some whom I have heard from time to time speak of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and soon-coming King - as if to deny by this that Christ has any Kingdom at all at the present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold. What could be farther from the teachings of God's Word, which teaches that Christ already rules and reigns over His Kingdom and that we are already a part of that Kingdom? How unmistakably inspiration declares that the Father "hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Already it has taken place, already we have been translated, already we are in that Kingdom, already the Christ has a Kingdom and is its King. The word "kingdom" is derived from the two terms "king" and "dominion" - KING'S DOMINION. It exists wherever the dominion of the Christ rules and holds sway over the hearts of men. Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible. He shall yet arise in power and glory in His completed and perfected body - the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD - and reveal Himself as the great conquering King, initiating the mightiest of all campaigns, bringing deliverance to the whole creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, and then shall all know the glory of His Kingdom as every tongue confesses and every knee bows and all in that day declare that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD - Jehovah of hosts, the Lord of glory, the King of the universe!

THE KING ON DAVID'S THRONE

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy messengers with Him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY**"** **(Mat. 25:31).** Darkened minds picture our Lord soaring down out of the skies on a great cumbersome throne, all dazzling white (Rev. 20:11), like a king arrayed in all his trappings in the natural. But we should remember that "the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" **(Jn. 6:63);** we should remember that prophecy is given in prophetical language, in highly figurative speech, the symbols bespeaking SPIRITUAL REALITIES. A throne means dominion and power and authority. White denotes righteousness. So a white throne denotes righteous dominion. Of course our Lord has a throne; in

fact, He has many thrones. Those thrones are the hearts of His own faithful saints. That is where He reigns, both now and forevermore.

The throne of God is not established in a geographical or astral LOCATION. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" **(Isa. 66:1).** God is not a limited physical being that can sit on a tangible throne in one restricted locality somewhere in the universe. God is spirit and God is everywhere and thus His throne is a spiritual throne and is everywhere. The one great truth that all theologians agree on is that God is omnipresent spirit who is everywhere and who fills the whole universe. And our scientists tell us that in that universe there are more worlds out there than all the individual grains of sand on all the beaches of all the world. You cannot put a God who is that great and everywhere present and bottle Him up in a physical throne in one limited spot. NO! He is everywhere and His throne is everywhere. The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent SPIRIT is not a material one, but bespeaks the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND RULERSHIP; and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. The THRONE of God is a sphere of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. It 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. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a limited physical body, for He now indwells the Church, which IS His body, the FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL (Eph. 1:22-23).

Consider for a moment, what the angelic messenger said to Mary, the mother of Jesus. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great ... and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" **(Lk. 1:31-33).** Jesus was BORN TO RULE. He was born to REIGN over the nations of earth. Remember what He said to Pontius Pilate? "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a KING then? Jesus answered Thou sayest that I am a KING. TO THIS END WAS I BORN, and for this CAUSE came I into the world..." **(Jn. 18:37).**

The ascension of Jesus was the supreme political event of world history. He ascended not to a place but to an office. He departed from the arena of humiliation and suffering to enter into His glory. He, in one moment, vaulted from the status of despised Galilean teacher to the cosmic King of the universe, rising over the heads of Pilate, Herod, and Caesar Augustus. The ascension catapulted Jesus to the right hand of God where He was enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. The implications of this event for the saints and for the world are staggering. It means that though we suffer persecution and the scorn of hostile power structures - though we groan under the demeaning status of an unwelcome minority - our candidate sits in the seat of sovereign authority. The Kingdom of God is not a future age, an unrealized dream or religious fantasy. The investiture of our King is a "fait accompli." His reign is neither mythical nor illusory. It is spiritual, powerful and real. At this moment the Christ of God REIGNS in the seat of imperial authority. To be sure, the Kingdom is yet to be consummated - that is future. It has, however, been inaugurated - that is past. He reigns in power, possessing all authority in heaven and in earth - that is present. His Kingdom is invisible but no less real. He left it to His body on earth to make His invisible Kingship visible.

I have said - and I entreat the reader's attention to it - that the Kingdom of God is a present reality. And may I hasten to add - the rule of Jesus Christ upon the throne of David is no less a present fact. Hear these words of truth and wisdom from the apostle Peter's Pentecostal sermon. "Men and brethren," says Peter, "let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David. Being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would RAISE UP CHRIST TO SIT ON HIS (David's) THRONE: he seeing this before SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION of Christ. This JESUS RATH GOD RAISED UP, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore BEING by the right hand of God EXALTED, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this. Therefore LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISREAL KNOW ASSUREDLY, that God HATH made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD AND CHRIST" **(Acts 2:29-36).**

Here it is stated as explicitly as words could do it, that the promise to David of Christ's succession to his throne HAS RECEIVED ITS INTENDED ACCOMPLISHMENT - that God HAS raised up Christ to sit upon his throne,

in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, as the fruit of David's loins, to the throne of power; and that His first regal authority from the throne of Israel was to send down the Holy Spirit, as had that day been done. Should any reader have missed the full implication of this the first time around I invite him to return to the scripture above and read it again reverently and prayerfully.

Christ's session on David's throne is inseparably linked to the coming of the power and glory of the Spirit at Pentecost. In a certain sense Jesus lacked the authority to dispatch the Spirit prior to His ascension. The very first act of regal authority He exercised after His enthronement was to endow His body on earth with power from on high. His disciples were given a great commission, a mandate to penetrate the whole world bearing witness to the Kingdom. These were and are to be the authentic witnesses of Jehovah. But no border was to be crossed or mission undertaken until first the Spirit fell. The disciples returned to Jerusalem rejoicing for the purpose of waiting; waiting for Pentecost. When the new King of Israel sent the Holy Ghost, the power of the Kingdom was unleashed on the world.

So-called "fundamentalists" scoff at the notion of Christ's NOW sitting on David's throne, and even many precious saints who are pressing forward into the deeper things of God ask a great many questions as to the points of analogy between the throne on which sat the humble son of Jesse in the midst of his subjects in Palestine, and the celestial seat of the Redeemer's present power. In whatever SENSE the seat of Christ's present rule is termed DAVID'S THRONE, the FACT, I will venture to say, is indisputable. That CHRIST IS NOW ON DAVID'S THRONE is as clearly affirmed by Peter in this sermon as words could do it. Let any one read his words again, and see if it be possible to make any thing else out of them. "David," says the apostle, "knowing that God would raise lip Christ to sit upon his throne, SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: This Jesus HATH GOD RAISED UP." "Christ's resurrection," says Peter, "was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by David, that He would sit upon his throne." "MESSIAH THE PRINCE" already sits enthroned on high, in the person of the crucified but risen Jesus, ready to dispense, not the poor honors of an earthly sovereignty - for the rule of David's Successor is not like the rule of David himself - but "repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified "both LORD" to RULE, "and CHRIST" to POUR OUT HIS LIFE INTO YOU!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, THY KING COMETH unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" **(Zech. 9:9).** "On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL that cometh in the name of the Lord" **(Jn. 12:12-13).** Here we are given a picture of Jesus as He neared the end of His public ministry on the earth, fulfilling the Old Testament prediction that He would ride into Jerusalem triumphantly on the colt of an ass and that people, the common, humble and meek people who heard Him gladly - not the unbelievers and money-changers, who hated Him and conspired to put Him to death - would accept Him as their King. Wouldn't it have been thrilling to have been there on that occasion and heard the mighty chorus of this humble throng of people as they cried, "BLESSED IS THE K-I-N-G OF ISRAEL! Truly, then, this is the King of the Kingdom - Jesus, powerful, mighty, bold, just, loving, humble, kind, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, the lily of the valley, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star, the King of Israel!

If you study the characteristics of the little donkey upon which Jesus sat, you will understand the characteristics of a ministry that is used as a vehicle for the Kingdom, a vehicle to convey and carry the King into Jerusalem. Jerusalem in the Old Testament typifies God's spiritual people in the New Testament. We know that because of what Paul taught in **Gal. 4:25-26.** "For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. BUT JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE IS FREE, which is the mother of us all." The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, made this wonderful statement, "But YE ARE COME unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY (SPIRITUAL) JERUSALEM" **(Heb. 12:22).**

YE ARE COME unto mount Zion. A traveler by train has often reached a place without knowing he is there. A guard or a friend has to tell him. Often it is because he had expected the journey to last longer. So deep is there in us the spirit of perfection by effort and attainment, by what we see of our outer man and feel that the

rousing call is needed continually. Here you are, sooner than you thought, in very deed, come to mount Zion! "YE ARE COME unto mount Zion." Come, let us walk about Zion, and go round about her. Beautiful in elevation, nestled in the high places of God, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. God has made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge! And may God, in the power of His Holy Spirit within us, reveal to us what it means, that we ARE COME UNTO MOUNT ZION.

In Rev. 14:1 the Seer of Patmos saw a Lamb standing on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. Zion represents the very highest position attainable by grace. Such are the ruling class in the capital city of God's celestial city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by king David who dwelt on the natural Zion of old. Israel was the whole nation, all the people of God; Jerusalem was the capital city, the seat of government, those anointed with power and the Holy Ghost; and while Jerusalem comprised all the ruling class, yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king. His was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion to which we are come, for turning to **Ps. 132:13-14** we read, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." And Paul, speaking of the greater house of living stones, the body of Christ, the sons of God tells us, "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).**

David was king over fleshly Israel. Christ is King over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells in the spiritual Zion. Zion is the realm of HIS LORDSHIP, HIS KINGSHIP. And this spiritual Zion is composed of all who as members of God's Christ have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem and Israel. Spiritual Zion is composed of the "little remnant", the ones who have followed the Lamb all the way, and have reached the very highest pinnacle of majesty in the spiritual realm, the sphere of HIS LORDSHIP AND KINGSHIP. And that mount Zion is in reality our dwelling place, where the powers of the heavenly world rest upon us and work in us. Glory!

"Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM." Read the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22. "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. The Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. The glory of God did lighten it, and the light thereof is the Lamb. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it: and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. And His servants shall do Him service; and they shall see His face." The New Jerusalem is a spiritual company upon whom the glory and life and power of God rests and through whom His government is administered to the earth. This is the glory to which Jesus has brought you in, when you were born from above. In the power and experience of that heavenly life the Holy Spirit enables you to live. This Jerusalem, this heavenly life from above, is the mother of us all. This is the Jerusalem from which the Lord has even now uttered His voice (Joel 3:16). This is the Jerusalem from which the Word of the Lord goes forth to all the earth (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). This is the Jerusalem from which living waters go forth to restore life and blessing to the whole world (Zech. 14:8). "And everything shall live whither the river cometh" **(Eze. 47:9).** This is the city, which Abraham looked for, which hath the foundations in the strength of God. We have come to it! Of this city we are now citizens. In it we live, and in it we have been brought into the Holiest, the very center of the city, the very presence and glory and power of God. We are come to the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

This Jerusalem is the throne of the King. David put his throne in Jerusalem, on the hill of Zion. Melchizedek, too, was the King-Priest of Jerusalem. (For more on Melchizedek, see link below). "He will sit on the throne of His Father David." Wherever Christ sits, wherever He rules, wherever He reigns, wherever His dominion holds sway and His authority is supreme - there the throne of David is, His Lordship over our lives. The throne of David is IN US. The throne was in Jerusalem. We ARE the New Jerusalem people - can we not see by this that the throne of Christ is within us? Jesus Christ in me, and in you, occupies a throne, a realm of authority and dominion in our lives.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem it pointed forth to a time when the presence of the King and His Lordship would be conveyed into our midst by the Spirit. There is something that is radically missing from most

Christian's lives, and from most Churches, and that is a great sense of His Lordship. We sing, "He is Lord," but we have no conception of the full weight and significance of that word - He is Lord. If you want to know what He does in the city, what He comes there for, then meditate deeply upon the joyful and impressive shout of the multitude on that long ago day. "Hosanna: Blessed is the KING OF ISREAL that cometh in the name of the Lord!" There is no way to hear the message of the King and the principles that put that message into operation in the home, in the church, on the job, at school - there is no way to hear that message - and remain the same. There is no way you can come into contact with the King and not change! It is my deep conviction that His presence and His power and His ministry and His authority is being restored in the midst of His elect, under His dealing hand, within that blessed company that has received the call to sonship.

When Jesus was revealed by the resurrection as the Son of God with power, from that point on no one ever spoke to Him as Jesus - He was the L-O-R-D Jesus! What does the word "Lord" mean? In the days of Jesus, the word "lord" (kurios - with lower case letters) was what slaves called their masters. When it appeared in capital letters - THE LORD - it meant the Caesar of Rome. As a matter of fact, when public employees or soldiers met each other they used to greet one another by calling out "Caesar is the Lord," and the other responding "Yes, the Lord is Caesar." This presented a problem for the Christians. They insisted to the contrary that Jesus Christ is THE LORD. Caesar did not mind other men being called lords as long as the term "THE LORD" was reserved for him. But the Christians reserved the term for Jesus. They placed Jesus high above the emperor. They said, in effect, "Caesar, you can count on us for some things, but when Jesus and you are in the balance, we will choose Jesus, because we have submitted our lives to Him. He is the first One. He is THE LORD - the One who possesses supreme authority in our lives." That was the reason Caesar persecuted the Christians.

The Gospel that we have in the Bible is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The Gospel that presents Jesus as King, as Lord, as First One, as the Maximum Authority. Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." What does this mean? I am the king of my life; I am seated on the throne; I make the decisions; I do it "my way." But when the Lord Jesus comes I must abdicate my throne and let Him sit on the throne. Now everything must be done HIS WAY. This introduces a new lifestyle - the life-style of the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Most people are Christians because they want to go to heaven and escape hell. If all the preachers and teachers one day called a press conference and told their people, "We have discovered that there is no heaven or hell," how many would stay in the Church after that? Most of the people would ask, "Why are we coming then?" They were coming for heaven, not because JESUS IS LORD AND EVERYBODY MUST SUBMIT TO HIM. In the hour in which we live the vast majority of Christians are more miserable than most other people in the world. They are only enduring this life in order to eventually get to heaven where they imagine they will spend the next billion trillion years or so singing, strumming harps, and dancing. I am quite sure that if such people would admit the truth, they would admit that even a thousand years of singing, shouting, playing harp music while dancing about in white robes would become very boring, to say the least. I find that most of these people can't endure five hours in a meeting even if the glory is falling all around! Most of them start examining their watches about noon on Sunday morning! The problem is that their theology leaves them with nothing constructive to do all eternity to do it in! They know nothing about the KINGDOM OF GOD. A Kingdom denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless.

He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord our God is the King, and His Kingdom shall rule over ALL. And praise His name, He is even now bringing forth in the earth a KINGDOM PEOPLE - the firstfruits of His redemption - who are discovering His Lordship over all of their lives. When all hell assails us, when the power of death all around crowds in upon us, when the pressures of this world would frustrate and vex and suffocate us, when our own passions and emotions and self-will would drown us in a sea of carnality and ungodliness, then HE STANDS UP WITHIN US AS KING - in Kingly authority. When the world, and our own flesh, would tear us apart and smash our lives and our hope of sonship upon the rocks, HE IS THERE, the still small Voice, the deep inner consciousness that all is well, that He, the Lord of glory is with us still, and all is secure in His loving hands, for He ordained our path and made provision for the hour. He is Himself the provision, the indwelling Christ, the anointing, the authority inherent in the Spirit moving in our lives.

Thank God, in every situation and circumstance of life HE IS PRESENT TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto Himself, thus reigning as King over our domain. As surely as we are God's Israel, so certain is it that He is enthroned within our hearts upon the throne of His father David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. Blessed be the KING!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 25
THE COMING OF THE KING
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-FIVE

THE KINGDOM WITHIN
REIGNING WITH CHRIST
PREPARATION FOR KINGSHIP

Jesus Christ has been chosen by heaven to the high office of Universal King. The collected wisdom of the universe has cast its vote, and elected Jesus Christ to be King over this earth and all things. "A crown was given unto Him" **(Rev. 6:2).** "We see Jesus ... crowned" **(Heb. 2:9).** "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns" **(Rev. 19: 11-12).** God says to the earth, "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations" **(Isa. 42:1).** Addressing His chosen, the Almighty says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" **(Heb. 1:8).** Heaven has declared, "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" **(Isa. 9:7).** The voice of omnipotence proclaims, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron... be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth" **(Ps. 1:6-10).**

The choice of heaven, praise God! is ultimately to be the choice of the whole earth. He whom the Almighty Father has selected to be King over this earth, is enthroned and crowned, and every knee in the whole earth, yea, in the entire universe is going to bow in ratification of heaven's choice. This glorious One, who is the well-beloved of heaven, in whom the Great Godhood is well-pleased, about whose feet the swelling feelings of the innumerable angelic throngs roll in great billows of delight, this Person we are to crown in this earth as its supreme Sovereign. Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen.

Consider for a moment, what the heavenly messenger said to Mary, the mother of Jesus. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great ... and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" **(Lk. 1:31-33).** Jesus was BORN TO RULE. He was born to REIGN over the nations of earth. Remember what He said to Pontius Pilate? "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a KING then? Jesus answered Thou sayest that I am a KING. TO THIS END WAS I BORN, and for this CAUSE came I into the world" **(Jn. 18:37).**

I declare to you today that the King reigns, and that the King is coming. The dawning of His coming in that eastern sky is beginning to fill the world with light. From Zion's lofty heights you shall hear increasingly the watchmen cry that the King is coming. God has raised up in the earth in these dark days at the end of the age an elect body, a herald, to proclaim the supremacy of the Kingdom of God and the absolute submission of all kings, rulers, nations and men to its rule. In the eleventh chapter of the Revelation at the fifteenth verse is one of the most remarkable statements ever written or spoken. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." "The kingdoms of this world ARE become." That is the word! It is not SHALL become, but there is a point at which the "voices in heaven," the proclamation of a people who DWELL IN THE HEAVENLIES, proclaim that the Kingdom of God has gotten the upper hand in the world. There is a time when there is an authoritative decree from God's heavenly people, His Zion company, His kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek to that effect. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

It is my deep conviction that the proclamation the seventh angel is sounding in heaven is causing voices to be heard ringing throughout celestial realms and impacting the earth with that wonderful fiat, "the kingdoms of this world ARE become ... " It is not that the kingdoms of this world, the powers of this age have been obliterated. It means that the reigns of power have been taken possession of by God's sons. That is to say that the Christ has been enthroned in this world in His elect body of sons as King of kings and Lord of lords. As the authority of God's Kingdom is developed in the enchristed ones, the herald sounds forth proclaiming that the King is come, and all realms must stand at attention before Him.

I will now take an illustration from ordinary life. Supposing that Queen Elizabeth II of England were to die today. May God grant that she shall continue to live. But if Queen Elizabeth were to die today you would see a very strange scene. Before more than a very few minutes had passed, the declaration would be made solemnly in the chamber of death that the Queen was dead. In a moment the high officers of state would turn about and salute the King. The heir-apparent would become the monarch in a moment, but before he had ever assumed the reins of power; before he had ever issued a proclamation of any kind; before he had committed a single royal act as the successor of his mother as the King of Great Britain and the Commonwealth; before he had ever done one thing as the great ruler of 75,000,000 people, a strange thing would happen.

There would issue from the Royal Palace, in peculiar garments, a number of men called heralds. The Chief Herald would march at the head, and they would go into the street in the historic part of London, in front of the steps of an imposing edifice. They would stand there with their long silver trumpets, and the Garter King at Arms would cause them to blow seven times. Then he would declare: "The Queen is dead. Long live the King!" His proclamation would be the first legal proclamation of the reign of Charles Philip, the present Prince of Wales, as the King of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of nations over all the lands and seas. It would not be because the Garter King at Arms was greater than the King, but because the law of England demands that his proclamation shall be set forth in a particular way. Only one man in all the kingdom can do it, and only certain heralds under his command can accompany him. That man is the man appointed by law and by centuries of custom as the Announcer of the death of the Queen and the reign of the new King. The King must BE King, and his Kingship must be proclaimed, BEFORE his authority and rule becomes evident.

Now somebody must proclaim that the Kingdom of God is come in the latter days. Somebody must proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. Somebody must announce the King and His Kingdom. Some Voice must demand the obedience of all men and all nations to that Kingdom. The moment that the herald proclaims it the world becomes the Kingdom of our God and His Christ. For a number of years now by the spirit of revelation I have heard the PROPHETIC VOICE of God's Spirit-anointed remnant heralding with unmistakable clarity and authority the message that the hour is come for every king and every president and every ruler and every system of man and every people and kindred and tongue and nation on the face of the whole earth to hear the word of the Lord and to OBEY THE KING. The proclamation of the power and authority and triumph of the Kingdom of God has issued forth from the heavens, and the hour is wonderfully near at hand when the Lord shall roar out of Zion and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord and all kindreds shall serve Him. The nations must now listen to the Voice which rings from Zion, and bow before that Voice and say, "We will serve the King." The gates of the Kingdom are opening wide. The stage is all set for the coronation of the King over the kingdoms of this world. The King is coming! He is coming to be glorified IN HIS SAINTS and they in Him. The hour is at hand. The time is at hand to enter into the fullness of His life.

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

The focus of the New Testament is upon Christ and His Kingdom. When John the Baptist announced the Messiah's approach two thousand years ago, every thing concurred to give weight to his testimony. Guided by the signs of the times, and by the chronological predictions of the prophets, expectation was everywhere awake for the first sound of Messiah's footsteps. From all parts of the country they flocked to the man of God, who cried alone in the wilderness, "Repent ye! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." With profound and breathless attention the motley group listened to the exciting tidings; and harsh as were his accents, rougher though some of his speeches were than the camel hair garment, which he wore, they gladly received them and were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Presently the Lord Himself appears upon the stage; and John the Baptist, having dutifully fulfilled his role

as the herald of the Messiah, retired and was little more heard of. Thus heralded, the Lord's ministry opened with every advantage; and vast crowds followed Him, as they had John, "trusting that it was HE who was to redeem Israel - saving them from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them."

Israel was looking for the Messiah to come and deliver them from ROME! They looked for Him to come with the glamour and pomp and power of an earthly Potentate, with the flashing of swords and the snapping heels of His army, to deliver them from their enemies and from the hands of all who oppressed them. They wanted a glorious, wealthy kingdom with prestige and honor for themselves. The prophets had plainly declared that a deliverer would come out of Zion. There could be no mistake about that, but their unregenerate hearts did not understand that the first work of the great Redeemer would be to deliver them from the curse of their sins and to transform their wicked hearts by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which deliverance could only be accomplished by the shedding of His precious blood and the renewing of the Holy Ghost within them. What value would it have been had the Saviour come only to deliver them from the power and authority of Rome if there was to be no change in their hearts? God's word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, but no sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they utterly corrupted themselves and forsook the Lord.

The book of Judges records how Israel corrupted themselves utterly before the Lord. The study of the book of Judges is the study of the utter depravity of the human heart. Again and again, over and over, time after time, repeatedly, the cycle goes on and on... "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges...the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord ... and the Lord raised them up judges ... and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges..." DO YOU GET THE PICTURE? How unmistakably evident that it was not their enemies from whom they needed deliverance - they needed deliverance FROM THEMSELVES! Their great problem was that they continually cried unto the Lord because of the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, or the Moabites, or the Canaanites, or the Midianites, or the Ammonites, or the Philistines; BUT NEVER ONCE DID THEY CRY MIGHTILY UNTO GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN DESPERATELY WICKED AND REBELLIOUS HEARTS! How like human nature that is!

The corruption of the human heart is incredible beyond words to express and it would have been completely useless had the Lord sent His Son to be the deliverer of His people while leaving their wicked hearts unchanged and their carnal natures undestroyed. The men of Israel could have believed in Jesus as their Saviour from the Romans. As their Saviour from their sins they could not believe in Him, for they loved their sins. The King of heaven came to offer them a share in His Kingdom; but they were not poor in spirit, and the Kingdom of Heaven was not for them. Gladly would they have inherited the earth; but they were not meek, and the earth was for the humble children of the perfect Father. The whole problem with Israel as a nation in the days of Christ was that they were unconverted. There was no birth from above. There was no new heart and no new spirit placed within by which men are transformed into new creatures and conformed into the image of God. They wanted the Christ to come and rule from without over their outward enemies, but they had no desire for Him to march triumphantly into their inner life to deliver them from the kings of corruption and idolatry that ruled upon the throne of their hearts. They wanted deliverance from ROME, but were uninterested in the cleansing of their own domain.

The same crowd is all about us today. They want deliverance from the government, from persecution, from communism, from the antichrist, from the trilateral commission, from the banking system, from the council on foreign relations, from the Jews and the vast political conspiracies that are steadily pushing the world into a nightmare of godlessness. But I do not hesitate to tell you that none of these are the problem. The most

powerful kings that rule in the world today are those that rule inwardly - and it is only as the Kingdom of God takes its rightful place in our lives, that these kings are subdued and brought to naught. In the soul-realm we have the dominant king of self-will, which has usurped control and ridden roughshod over the ways of God. There are religious kings of static dogmas and creeds, traditions and commandments of men. There are kings of passion, bringing the dominion of the flesh. Emotions, which usurp unholy sway over people. There are kings of ruling thoughts and imaginations, which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. But, praise God! there is a King who is mounted on a snow-white charger (Rev. 6: 2), the prophetic symbol of righteous conquest and dominion. This means victory! The Old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the Imperial City upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. And so Jesus Christ, astride the snow-white charger of righteousness and power rides in swiftness and strength into our earth, into our inner land. I have heard the hoofs of His horse thundering through the corridors of my soul as He has marched into my land conquering and to conquer, bringing all into submission of Him.

Jesus, when He appeared on the world scene, came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and the first word of that gospel is this: "REPENT, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" **(Mat. 4:17).** Jesus saw that their attitude was not simply WE DON'T UNDERSTAND, but WE WILL NOT UNDERSTAND. We do not like the lifestyle You advocate. We are looking for a Messiah who will crush our enemies. We do not want to hear that we are unconverted sinners and that we need a Saviour. The scriptures had plainly foretold that the Messiah would come as a great King. So naturally the carnal minds of men looked for a King who would come in grandeur and majesty, sitting upon a golden throne and attired with costly robes of royalty. Jesus did come as a King, but His Kingdom was not of this world system. His Kingship ruled through righteousness, divine judgment and dominion over every evil and unclean spirit that was in man. "Wherefore receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably (well pleasing with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). We are receiving a Kingdom, because we have received the KING, and He dwells within, and as He rules and reigns within, all of HIS DOMAIN becomes ours as we become ONE IN HIM. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. His joy becomes our joy. His peace becomes our peace. Then, our life manifesting the fruits of this Kingdom, we shall surely be well pleasing unto God.

A preacher once wrote, "Jesus Christ will return to this earth and with a mighty hand FORCE the people of the world to be happy and righteous." Ah, I have news for you, preacher; you cannot FORCE anyone to be happy, much less is it possible to force men to be righteous. Only a mighty transformation by the inworking of the Holy Spirit can accomplish so great a feat. Were Jesus Christ to come to earth to FORCE the people to do right, it could result only in the building of larger and larger prisons to accommodate the rebels; for apart from the washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost within no man CAN do righteousness!

History is an endless record of wars, maladies, famines, and all kinds of other events, which only result from that which is true WITHIN US. All the great events of history are but outward manifestations of the inner condition of the little cosmos of every individual. There is a vast universe without, and a cosmic world of good and evil, light and darkness, Christ and Belial. But all that exists in outer space does not exceed by one whit the realities, which are to be found in the unfathomable depths of the INNER SPACE of a man's life. Man is but a microcosm of the macrocosm. Every thing that appears visibly without is first and foremost carried on invisibly within the innermost realms of man's being. There are inner forces just as complex, intricate, spacious, expansive, unsearchable, inexhaustible, and powerful as those cosmic forces without.

Men have fondly hoped to solve the troubles of the world by treaties of peace, by conferences, by leagues, by alliances, by summits, by understanding and agreement, and above all, through the influence of religion. International conference after international conference has been held; disarmament has been proposed; appeals have been made to the United Nations Organization; a World Court has been formed; leaders of the free world and the super powers have met again and again to compose their differences. But it is becoming more and more plain to all that the evils of the world which turn the hearts of men from peace and righteousness to war and evil cannot be overcome by parliaments, or cabinets, or conferences, or courts, or alliances, or commissions, or councils, or conventions, or treaties, or tribunals, or armaments, but only by a complete change of individual hearts and individual lives by the inner dominion of the Christ of God. For wars issue not from outer conditions, and things, and circumstances, and delicately hung balances between nations,

and the breakdown of international diplomacy, BUT OUT OF THE NATURAL HUMAN HEART. Wars and evil are not the result of imperfect human government, but of IMPERFECTION IN THE HUMAN HEART. "Whence come wars? ... come they not hence, even of YOUR LUSTS THAT WAR IN YOUR MEMBERS?" **(James 4:1).**

The tendency of the human race as a whole has downward spiritually from the beginning. As a whole, man's penitence has been temporary, his apostasy repetitious. His acknowledgment of God's authority has been feigned, or at best half-hearted, his loyalty to the kingdom of darkness practically unqualified. His reformations have been superficial and brief, his revolts deep and protracted. As widely as the race is scattered, so widely have the works of the flesh been manifested. Throughout all generations they have been the same everywhere. The fountain is corrupt, and the stream cannot be better than its source. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, saith the Lord. The source of wickedness is within, and the manifestation of it without. And that is precisely why, precious friend of mine, the Kingdom of God IS WITHIN, and the rule of the King must be established WITHIN.

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. Evolution will not change it. Society will not change it. Religious creeds and ceremonies and programs will not change it. "Deliverance meetings" will not change it. The perfidious hearts and lives of fallen 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 "created (anew) in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). In all the ages of the past the only permanent reformations have been those, which were wrought of God in INDIVIDUALS. All national reformations and improvements have ended in degeneracy and revolt. All ecclesiastical reformations, after they have run their course, have ended in backsliding and apostasy.

We have two verses in the New Testament, which tell us what the Kingdom of God is NOT. Let us see what they say. When we learn what it is NOT, it explains more perfectly what it IS. "For the Kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink..." **(Rom. 14:17).** I believe this is symbolic. It means that it is not basically a physical, materialistic or ceremonial thing - "...but the Kingdom of God IS righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Secondly, "The Kingdom of God IS NOT IN WORD, but in power" **(I Cor. 4:20).** What does this indicate? It would indicate that the Kingdom of God is vibrant. The Kingdom of God is action. The Kingdom of God is life. The Kingdom of God is creative. If the Kingdom of God IS in power, this means the Kingdom of God is presently alive, active and functioning. Where God is, His presence is emanating life, healing, restoration or heaven's powers. The Kingdom of God is not to be found in the things you know about God or the depth of your knowledge and understanding of the deeper truths of sonship, reconciliation, etc. One knows that a person is in the Kingdom of God because of the life that emanates through him in faith by the Spirit of God. The Kingdom of God is not in word (head-knowledge of doctrines) but it is in POWER. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but is righteousness - right being and right living. It is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Kingdom of God is POWER. Paul tells us in I Cor. 1:24 that "Christ is the power of God." If Christ is the power of God, what kind of power is He? Why, spiritual power of course! There is nothing clearer in the history of this world than that Christ is power. He has made new men and women of tens of millions. He has turned them right around and set their faces towards God. That is the hardest task in the universe. To create a world is nothing compared with re-creating one human soul. The victories of Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, were child's play in comparison. Their power could crush men into a feigned submission, but it could not penetrate the inner nature and change the secret heart and will and soul. This is what Christ has done again and again. Have you ever tried to reform any soul held in the grasp of some sin? Motive after motive you urge - the injury he is doing to himself, his self-respect, public opinion, the love of friends and family, his place in this world or the next - all in vain. For a moment the poor sinful feet make a feeble struggle to lift themselves out of the mire, and then sink back deeper. A sense of despair comes over you: you feel as if there were nothing to which to appeal. And then one day a new heart, a new will, a new spirit are given by the sovereign operation of God; the man stands up in the glory of Christ. If you ask him the secret, he would tell you, with Paul, that Christ is the power of God unto salvation! Now, believe me, there is nothing worth calling power compared with the power that can accomplish that. To break a man's spirit; to reverse his will; to turn the currents of his heart; to make him love what formerly he hated; to set his spirit triumphantly superior to sin and weakness and sorrow

and death; to translate him into the Kingdom of the Son and give him seating in heavenly places; to make him a son of the Most High with a calling to glory and virtue: whoever can work these revolutions is strong beyond all that the mighty of the earth ever conceived of power. And Christ has done it again and again, praise His wonderful name. And He shall reign until all enemies are under His feet and the last soul in heaven, earth and hell has been re-created into the image of God.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" **(Mat. 6:10).** So then the Kingdom of God originates in the realm of spirit (heaven) and finds expression in the earth-realm (physical). It is set up in the believer's heart. The Lord God omnipotent then reigns when He is known through the indwelling Christ. He takes unto Himself His mighty power and subdues all things unto Himself. He goes into the soul, conquering and to conquer, until He has put all things under His feet. He works in the soul, until every thought is brought into captivity and obedience to Christ. We are praying for the time when God will give every unbeliever in the universe to Jesus Christ for His inheritance. We pray for the day when the uttermost parts of the earth will come under His dominion and possession. We pray for the day when all kingdoms will bow before Him and all nations shall serve Him. We pray for the day when the mountain of the Lord's house, His government of kings and priests, the many-membered Christ of God, shall be established everywhere. We pray for that day when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved. In that day it shall be seen that Christ is King over the whole earth. He will appear to every soul on earth, in heaven and in hell as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is proper for those who love Him and seek His appearing, to pray that He would haste the time. Everyone should pray that His Kingdom, the Kingdom of grace and glory and power would come quickly and swallow up the kingdoms of earth.

Men need not a King to straighten out the mess in the outer world - they need a King to change the inside of every man! "Please come Lord Jesus," I found myself saying the other day, after reading the gory news. Killings and muggings, and violent jail-breaks; with endless marriage disputes; child abuse by men who should know better; the video tape muck and mire sewering through our cities and homes; drunkenness with its toll of killing; mass killings of innocents in bloody strife in countries all over the earth; and last but not least, what kind of a human being have we that could push the red button, sending the whole race into oblivion? And, praise God, the King is coming!

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

When the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation..." That is, the Kingdom of God does not come with outward show, with external pomp, being outwardly observed by all, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you" **(Lk. 17:20-21),** or as the Diaglott gives it, "God's Royal Majesty is among you." The wonderful and rich truth the Lord presented here is that "the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU." He was telling us that the King is among His people, or more personally and intimately, Jesus was revealing, "THE KING IS WITHIN YOU, and if anyone says to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" **(Mat. 24:33).** He then states that false prophets and false Christs should arise, and we have seen this come to pass in our day. False prophets and false anointed ones will attempt to tell us that the Christ may be here or there, but we know they are deluded, for Christ, the King, IS WITHIN US.

It is another mystery, but it is a grand fact of truth nevertheless that Christ first reigns IN us that may consequently reign THROUGH us. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world" **(Mat. 25:34).** "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" **(I Cor. 6:9-10).** "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD..." **(I Cor. 15:50).** The word "kingdom" indicates the richness of the heritage of the saints. It is no petty estate, no happy corner in obscurity. I heard a good man say he should be content with a cabin in the corner of glory land or a spot just inside the gate. I shall not be! The Lord says we shall inherit a KINGDOM. We would not be satisfied to inherit less, because less than that would not suit our character. "He hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 5:10) and we must reign for ever and ever, or be as wretched as deposed monarchs. A king without a kingdom

is an unhappy and unfulfilled man. If I were a poor servant, a servant's quarters would be a boon, for it would correspond with my condition and degree; but if I am made a son of God, an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus; if I am made a priest and a king, I must have a kingdom, or I shall not have attained to a position equal to my nature. He who makes us kings will give us a Kingdom to fit the nature, which He hath bestowed upon us. Beloved, do strive after, more and more, that which the Spirit of God will give you, a KINGLY HEART; do not be among those who are satisfied with the miserable nature of ordinary humanity or the childish hopes of the babes in Christ who throng to the churches which are merely nurseries for the birthing, rearing and educating of babes and which then stifle and threaten to suffocate the life out of these little ones with their own static creeds, lifeless traditions and infantine programs. They eagerly look for mansions and harps and golden streets and wings and white night gowns in that glory world above, unable to comprehend that such glittering diadems are only nursery toys to God's true kings; the true riches are ETERNAL SPIRITUAL REALITIES; the true treasury wealth looks down upon the stars. Do not sell yourself short, ye sons of the Most High! Get a kingly heart - ask the King of kings to give it to you, and beg of Him a royal spirit. Act royally on earth towards your Lord, and for His sake towards all men. Go about the world not as mean men in spirit and action, nor yet in false humility as paupers and beggars, but as kings and priests of a race superior to the dirt scrapers who are on their knees, crawling in the mud after fleeting earthly riches and transitory worldly fame.

What Christendom in general cannot comprehend is that the Christ does not rule alone but through a many-membered body. Man in God's image, man in Christ at the right hand of God, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Was not this magnificent purpose burning in the heart of our heavenly Father when on the sixth creative day He proclaimed the wonderful decree: "Let us make man in our image ... and LET THEM HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). In this shadowy type we behold a vivid portrait of God's purpose for man, that when man comes fully into GOD'S IMAGE he shall be, first, the ruler of things BENEATH, the lowest realms of the bottomless, typified by the fish swarming in the depths of the seas, and the creeping things; next, the things upon the EARTH, typified by the cattle, and all the earth; and lastly, the things of the HEAVENS ALSO, typified by the fowl of the air. And should someone find it too difficult to embrace so great a truth from so small and insignificant a type, I would remind my reader that it was upon this very type from the ancient Garden of God, as reiterated by the prophet David in the eighth Psalm, that the writer of the book of Hebrews enlarged when by the Spirit he wrote, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What IS man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou madest him a little lower (Gr.: for a little while lower) than the angels; Thou CROWNEST HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, and didst set him OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: Thou hast put A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S in subjection under his feet. For in that He put ALL in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is NOT put under him! But NOW we see NOT YET all things put under him (man). But WE SEE JESUS ... CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR" **(Heb. 2:5-9).**

You won't quite grasp that at first. It's too overwhelming! To be CROWNED means to be given KINGLY RULE. To be crowned with GLORY and HONOR is to be given such rule as Jesus Christ has NOW, and of that rule we read, "Wherefore God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus Christ 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. 2:9-11).** The rule that Jesus Christ now has is the very same rule over the identical THREE REALMS of heaven, the earth and the abyss, which God delegated to Adam, the MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE, in Gen. 1:26! We have already stated that MAN in God's image, MAN IN CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD is God's government in the Kingdom of God. What a hope! What a calling! How much better, how much higher and more meaningful is this than harps and fluttering wings and white night gowns! A kingdom denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless. Glory! Little wonder in the light of truth so sublime that Daniel would prophesy three times that the SAINTS WOULD TAKE THE KINGDOM and reign for ever and ever. If you feel weak and helpless before a calling so high and holy, and that you could never fill such a role, remember that it is WITH HIM and UNDER HIM who is the Head and not apart from Him. We will be so fully and completely joined to Him that it will be literally true: AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.

I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been

greatly criticised by some for my hope of inheriting the Kingdom of God and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical and power-mad because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the Kingdom of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that Christ Himself has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things. He would both be King IN US and exercise His regal power THROUGH US. "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).** Such reward to His faithful followers is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we may renounce it once it is conferred. HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE. It was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees - "The glory that cometh only from God YE SEEK NOT" **(Jn. 4:44).** The Spirit of the Lord has been speaking to my heart. He is urging me to become a true partaker of the HEAVENLY CALLING.

Throneship involves far more than mere power over men's live and events. IT IS A MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY TO BLESS. I might add that it is the greatest ministry available with the largest capacity to bless. The purpose and scope of this Kingship ministry is given in Eph. 1:10 wherein we read, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." The apostle here takes up the divine intent, namely the goal of the divine plan which ordained that the whole creation, fragmented by its subjection to vanity - this gross material realm with its ensuing sin and death - should be restored to its pristine purity and original order, as it was when created "in Christ" in the beginning. Thus he writes that God "purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather in one all things into Christ." The Greek word translated "dispensation" (IOKONOMIA) is a compound of two words meaning "house" (OIKOS) and "law" (NOMOS). By definition "dispensation" means stewardship, administration or over-sight of a household." In Lk. 16:2-4 OIKONOMIA is translated "stewardship" in the follwoing phrases: ". . give account of thy stewardship"; ".....taketh away from me the stewadship"; ".....and when I am put out of the stewardship".

In I Cor. 4:1 Paul stated that he was a "steward" whom God had placed over His household, the Church. To him was committed the dispensation, that is the administration, the Gospel (I Cor. 9:17). To him was given "the dispensation of the grace apostle explains to be the "mystery" or sacred secret "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, it namely that saved Gentiles and saved Israelites form "the same body," which is the Church. Writing to saints at Colosse the apostle refers to this same "dispensation of God" which had been given him for the sake of the Church (Col. 1:25). This was what Paul and the other apostles "dispensed" or administered to the "household of God" (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:2-6). They "dispensed" or administered the grace of God, the gospel of God, and GOD HIMSELF!

It should be clear to every thinking mind that the business of a steward is not only to control the wealth and goods of his master, but to administer, apportion, assign, allot, distribute and dispense to all for whom it is intended. Thus, the "dispensation" of God is not merely the control of the things of God, but the very dispensing of the things of God and of God Himself. If we make a thorough and careful study of the scriptures with spiritual insight, we will realize that the great purpose of God is to DISPENSE HIMSELF INTO HUMANITY. It is regrettable that the term "dispensation" has been misused by the church systems. It means far more than a period of time - it bespeaks the administrative arrangement, the governmental management, or the distributing, dispensing stewardship of God's plan. In this divine dispensation God, who is almighty and all-inclusive, intends to dispense nothing other than HIMSELF to us. There is a "fullness of times" in which God shall dispense the fullness of Himself into everything in heaven and in earth. He accomplishes this by gathering all things together into one IN CHRIST, and it is there, in the Christ, that all the fullness of God dwells. May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God impress this upon you deeply!

As one has written, "God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful business man who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has. All of this capital is simply HIMSELF, and with it He intends to "manufacture" HIMSELF in mass production. God HIMSELF is the Businessman, the Capital, and the Product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation in order to bring Himself into humanity." Praise His

name! As His Kings and Priests upon His throne the elect sons of God are the governmental arrangement by which and through which God dispenses Himself into His creation. What an opportunity to change things! What an occasion to bless and heal and lift and transform the world! It would be a crime against humanity, my beloved brethren, to carelessly neglect and thus despise, as Esau despised his birthright, the position of responsibility and opportunity to bless and restore creation proffered to us by the illustrious King of kings and Lord of lords!

PREPARATION FOR KINGSHIP

The reason so many people fail to attain to the great heights of the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. So many Christians are far too taken up with carnal ideas and childish notions about mansions and harps and sitting on clouds eating pork chops with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in, to be able to grasp the true purposes of God!

There are certain basic principles of the Kingdom of God that must be a part of the frame of mind and the experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God. We must begin to RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE. Too many saints are weak, frustrated and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy and triumph of His Kingdom. "Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armor of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world - the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground IN THE EVIL DAY, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" **(Eph. 6:10-14)** (Weymouth).

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of UNIVERSAL DOMINION. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and universes if he is unable to RULE HIS OWN SPIRIT? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city" **(Prov. 16:32).** God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is a result of the use or abuse of the principles of the Kingdom of God. Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS FIRSTLY IN OURSELVES! "To him that overcometh will I (consequentially) give power over the nations: and he shall rule them..." **(Rev. 2:26-27).** "To him that overcometh will I grant (consequentially) to sit with Me in My throne" **(Rev. 3:21).**

You can never rule anything until first you overcome it WITHIN YOURSELF. To "overcome" means TO COME UP OVER THAT WHICH IS OVER YOU. When, within yourself, you rise up above the circumstance, the problem, so that it no longer controls or harasses you, you are then ready to begin to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them. Come up over what the religious systems have fed you. Come up over your own pride and inherent weaknesses. Come up over your desire to build a reputation for your name. Come up over the myriad pressures from within and without. Come up over the world of confusion and turmoil about you. You are called to be an OVER-COMER. Come over that wall! Come over into the Kingdom of God and a realm of complete victory.

One cannot make way for the King in other realms effectually, until his own heart has been cleared for the coming of the King. Here in one's self the wilderness is to be penetrated - depths of depravity must be filled; heights of insubordination must be lowered; all rough ways of self-will must be smoothed; and the crooked roadways of the carnal mind must be relaid with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. Here in one's own heart and life the work of kingship is to begin. We must reign as kings in the little kingdom of our own nature where we have been slaves. The rebel elements within our being must be conquered once and for all.

It is by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, that we overcome the enemies. As we use the weapons which we have carefully hung about our necks, we go from victory to victory, and hang up the

trophies we take in battle until the walls of the armory are adorned with the weapons and shields that we use, and the weapons and shields that we have captured from the enemy. If we cannot come out victoriously over ourselves and over the little temptations and frustrations here, how can the Lord trust us to reign over that which is without? What kind of warriors would we make? How much could He depend upon us? He will give us the place for which we are prepared and qualified; we must set our faces to be overcomers if we are to sit with Him upon His throne and reign with Him. We must know how to use the armor which He has provided, the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

When God gets ready to assume His rightful place in the universe again, He will say, "I have people here who have been tested." How can we rule in the Kingdom of God unless we are tested first? How can God trust us to rule or to have dominion over the universe if He can't trust us with our own families. If God cannot trust us with ten dollars, how could He trust us with the wealth of the nations and the forces of the cosmos? Have you met the kind of person who can never keep a steady job? The first day that something goes wrong, they want to quit and look for another job. And usually the thing that went wrong was that the boss expected his money's worth! They might complain about the working conditions, but most folk simply want to complain about work. The carnal mind is lazy. It doesn't want to work or exert itself. It is too slothful to OVERCOME! This is the kind of person who is unstable as water (Gen. 49:4). I do not hesitate to tell you that such cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

Man's first instinct under pressure is to run, to extricate himself from the situation. When we run from the problem immediately we FLUNK THE TEST. When we fail to overcome IN the problem, our character in that area is left weak, undisciplined and undeveloped. Oft times, so they can appear it "spiritual," men divorce their wives, wives divorce their husbands, parents abandon their children, people move from place to place, from job to job, from church to church. Often people pray like this: "Lord deliver me from this job where everyone is so filthy and the boss so hateful; give me a job with the Full Gospel Business Men where everyone is spiritual and praises God and speaks in tongues!" Ah, we seek an "environment" that is "conducive" to our "spirituality," little realizing that in that environment where all is so beautiful and harmonious we only APPEAR to be spiritual because there is nothing to cross us, nothing hostile, no adversities, no inconveniencies, in short, NOTHING TO OVERCOME! You can run from the problem, my friend; you can seek an environment where nothing is adverse to you, my beloved; you can even have faith where God will just solve all your problems and pour down the healings, prosperity and blessings; yes, you can do all this and be a Christian, even a good Spirit-baptized Christian, and make it to heaven someday; but I would be remiss if I did not warn you that you cannot do this and BECOME A RULER!

The journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ first from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from universe to universe, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here, careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the galaxies, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to MAKE WAYFOR THE KING!

This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a Kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, Spirit of His Spirit, nature of His nature, life of HIS LIFE!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 26
COMING ON A WHITE HORSE

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY SIX

THE BATTLE
HIS EYES
THE ARMIES THAT FOLLOW

In the book of Revelation, in the nineteenth chapter, there is a great picture. The Spirit has painted it. It is the vision of the coming of the Christ. It is the story of the Lord's coming told in colors. It is the great truth and some of its related principles portrayed in graphic action.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And fle hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" **(Rev. 19:11-16).** What a description is this!

Wonderful visions passed before the rapt gaze of the seer on Patmos' lonely isle. And none could have been more thrilling than the vision referred to in the text above. In the far upper spaces, midst the maze and whirl of mist and cloud, and vast throngs of beings, and reverberations of great rolling noises, appears a snow-white horse, which immediately attracts the attention of the apostle. Its arching neck clothed with thunder, its tossing mane, its dilated nostrils, its deep chest, its flashing eye, its superb grace as it pranced before him, made it the noblest horse and most magnificent which he had ever beheld.

But his glance passed swiftly from horse to rider; and though the snow-white charger eclipsed any animal John had ever seen, yet it was mounted by a person who, in form and feature and bearing, surpassed any man he had beheld, and his gaze was riveted by the unrivalled charm of his person. He was robed in crimson apparel, wore many crowns upon his brow, and from between his lips there flashed a gleaming sword; while as he guided his spirited charger his eyes blazed with the intense fire of a warrior. As John watched him, he saw him move irresistibly along a career of conquest. And, as he gazed, he recognized the rider as being his own well-beloved friend and master, Jesus Christ, whom he had so devotedly followed when, on earth, he walked slowly and wearisomely from place to place. Now, instead of being a pedestrian he was an equestrian, and instead of meekly submitting to his enemies he was overcoming them by the tremendous might of his powerful advance. It was a vision very real to the apostle; but it was recorded to teach, in symbolic form, the warrior spirit of Christ, and the great campaign upon which he had entered to conquer the world. The sphere of his movements, as perceived by the apostle, was this earth; and the time of his advance was over the globe and through all the centuries.

The, condition of Christ in the vision is very significant. He is mounted on a snow-white charger. This meant victory. The old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the imperial city upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. The Lord is described as the Word of God emblematically riding on a white horse; it is the image of aggressive action, of a prosperous conquest over His foes. The horse in scripture represents strength, and fearlessness to accomplish its task. "He paweth the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrightened; neither turneth he back from the sword. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting" **(Job 39:21-22, 24-25).**

The horse is without equal for beauty in the animal kingdom. His body is alive with rippling muscles. His mane and tail are items of extreme beauty. The horse is among the most intelligent of animals and few creatures can equal his strength and swiftness. No animal is of greater service to mankind. For pleasure, for work, and for war the horse exceeds them all. The Greek word in our text intimates that this steed is a war horse of fine mettle. In Bible days the strength of armies was often reckoned by the number and greatness of their horses and chariots. In his prophetical account of the army of the Lord, Joel declares, "the appearance of them is as the appearance of HORSES; AND AS HORSEMEN, so shall they run" **(Joel 2:4).** "The horse is prepared against the day of battle" **(Prov. 21:31).** It is significant that in the scriptures you do not find horses mentioned in connection with agricultural purposes, but for riding or drawing chariots, and for use in battle. The oxen were used for plowing, etc.

His color is white, an emblem of the Christ's purity and divine holiness. White also bespeaks of light - illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the churches, the out-called, challenging them to OVERCOME, we read, "I counsel thee to buy of Me ... WHITE raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" **(Rev. 3:18).** This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" **(Mat. 17:2).** The light is the robe of divine majesty, the incorruptible life of God emanating from the nature of absolute righteousness.

And so Jesus Christ, astride of the snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march. His movements always meet with success. His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great power. It is no easy campaign upon which He has entered. The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. The Bible represents Him at times in conditions and possessed of moods when He sits and reclines in repose, already having accomplished His purposes. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" **(Heb. 10:12).** But here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of accomplishing something not yet attained.

The horse in those times was regarded as the embodiment of speed. He who was mounted could get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with Jesus Christ. He was to carry on His conquests with great rapidity. Swiftly, as well as powerfully, would He move down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, would charge upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they had recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack.

THE BATTLE

Once I heard a preacher say that he believed Jesus Christ would LITERALLY descend from heaven riding on a white horse. "Jesus Christ created the horse," he declared, "and if He chooses to charge through the clouds on one, He certainly can." Certainly He can! But I do not hesitate to add that lack of spiritual discernment is the greatest curse upon the Lord's people today. People are so afraid that someone will "spiritualize" away something in the Word of God, realizing not that they themselves are "carnalizing" away the Word of our Lord, for, said Jesus, "the words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" **(Jn. 6:63).** Spiritual intelligence is the rarest of all spiritual things - and the least valued. In God's sight it is the only true wealth. How rare has true spiritual understanding become! The trouble with God's people today is with their ears and eyes. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day they insist that they DO hear and they DO see. But they do not understand. Neither do they know. Two worlds exist all about us - the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. The carnal mind CANNOT understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY discerned. The greatest need among the saints today is for God to send forth into our hearts the spirit of wisdom and revelation to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a veil about us, that lie may reveal to our wondering eyes those supernal things that pertain to HIS REALM.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the white horse! It is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, that it completely defies all human description. Behold! the open heaven, the white horse, the name

Faithful and True, the righteousness of His judgment, the eyes of flame, the head bearing many crowns, the vesture dipped in blood. Hear the name The Word of God. See the armies of heaven following, which are the vast multitude of the enChrist sons of God, and their fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints, and their white horses, which bespeak the strength, victory and power of the Christ by which they conquer. Consider the sharp sword with the double edge that goes forth from His mouth, the spoken Word of God - a sword to smite the nations, not with cruel force and merciless slaughter, but with TRUTH and LIFE. Behold, too, the name inscribed in His vesture and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL book. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. You will not read the fulfillment of its prophecies on the pages of Newsweek magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women and in the great accomplishments of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between the carnal mind and the precious mind of Christ, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death. A man must experience this combat within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life. Our Lord, when in the world, carried on such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than others, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh and the devil, and opening up the way to victory and triumph unto all who are willing to follow Him into the lifestyle of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is a SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR!

The apocalyptic description of Christ coming out of heaven on a war-horse, magnificently attired - attended by armies of celestial horsemen - to fight the battle against the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army," portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. it is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events, which correspond with these symbols. Nor shall we find them in the headlines of the Washington Post or the Miami Herald! The scene, reveals one divine and sublime truth: CHRIST SHALL, CONQUER! The Kingdom of Christ is "not of this world" and does not conquer the nations in any such "pitched battle" as the armies of men contend for the mastery in. The Kingdom of Christ does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. I believe in no such way of deciding the question between Christ and antichrist - between "the Kingdom which the God of heaven has set up," and "all these kingdoms" which it is to "consume and destroy." Believing that "the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL," but (just for that reason) almighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," I believe the warfare itself to be not carnal.

Ah - is it not within the corridors of your own soul, precious friend of mine, that you must hear the hoof beats of the great white steed thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the territory of YOUR LAND. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of that gallant charger as he bounds through your own world, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Don't you see His saber of truth flashing its dazzling light upon the eyes of your understanding, and swinging effectively in the direction of every cherished tradition and human interpretation? His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death.

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of Man. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph, which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city.

We don't have to wait until "some glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, our General has WON the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! And we can receive the spoils of His warfare! How can we be winners and partakers of that victory? First of all we need to know that we can never be part of those that conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Him. It was not until Saul had been knocked to his knees in the dust and all his own struggles and battles had been lost, that he entered into the victorious army of Jesus Christ. In that conquest Saul of Tarsus was slain and Paul the apostle rose up to take his place. Perhaps you are struggling in your spiritual life, you are trying to overcome, but the problem is you have never completely surrendered to Jesus Christ. That surrender cannot be simply by word. It must be in reality. There are those who offer Christ their praise and speak great swelling words of revelation in the gatherings of the saints, but go out and know that their life is not conquered by Jesus Christ.

When Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington he came up to Washington and his aides, each dressed in their finest military garb. Cornwallis began to extol Washington's virtues as a commander and military strategist and told him how impressed he was with the incredible maneuvers he had used. He continued in this way until suddenly Washington interrupted him and said, "Your sword, sir!" We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. Our hearts are the seat of throne of God, because there He reigns. The royal seal is the image of Christ in the heart; and where this is in the heart it extends over the whole soul and body.

HIS EYES

His eyes were a flame of fire. As John gazed upon Him, his attention was attracted to His eyes, which blazed like flames of fire. The spirit within was so aroused that it shone through His eyes. This description concerning the coming of the King of kings and the Lord of lords is most illuminating. George Hawtin has commented on this passage: "The eyes of the Son of God are completely different from all other eyes. The eyes of mankind and of every living creature are capable only of receiving light. Our eyes receive reflections and images of things that are without, but the eyes of our Lord not only receive reflections of things without, but are LAMPS OF FIRE, shedding abroad the light of God whithersoever they are turned. Every creature and everything upon which His eyes shall fall will receive the LIGHT OF GOD. 'They looked upon Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed' (Ps. 34:5). Even in the hour of Christ's greatest humiliation when Peter had denied his Lord, the Lord turned and LOOKED upon him, and at that look the light of truth dawned upon this trembling and heartbroken man as he sat in his dismal despair and, being thus enlightened to the truth and to the knowledge of his guilt, he went out and WEPT BITTERLY in repentance and contrition. But this manifestation of the light of truth that shines as a burning flame from His eyes is merely a fleeting shadow of greater things to come. It is as a feeble candle in the night compared to the illuminating rays of the sun at noon.

"The day is coming and is near at hand when Christ shall be the Light of the World in the fullness of its meaning. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole world and wheresoever He looks the light of heaven will shine. Upon whomsoever His eyes shall fall darkness will be dispelled from him and the light of Christ will shine upon him. Through long millenniums has the world sat in outer darkness and in the cold and gloomy shadows of death, but He who soon will come riding triumphantly through the open heavens has eyes burning as lamps of fire, before whose shining darkness and shadow will flee away forevermore" -end quote.

The One who has the eyes as a flame of fire is He who comes to judge and make war. To judge rightly He must see through and through, search all depths, look beneath all masks, penetrate all darkness, and try everything to its ultimate residuum. There is often something wonderfully luminous, penetrating, overawing, in the human eye. Men have been blinded by the look of kings. It is like the living intellect made visible, which seems to read all secrets at a glance. It is this infinitely intensified, flashing like a sword of fire that the apostle beheld in this Warrior Judge. It is an eye flame of Omniscient perception, a searchlight that penetrates to the inmost thought and intent of the heart, laying bare in its awful revelation every fiber of self, even in purposes

supposed to be pure, scorching, burning, shriveling every hypocrisy, and withering away every breath of the flesh.

Oh the eyes of the Lord! the eyes of holiness, the eyes of infinite discernment, the eyes of depthless love and burning desire for those apprehended to be conformed to His likeness. They descend into the depths of the soul, the candle of the Lord, to search out and make known what is of soul and what is of spirit, and flash with their flame of sincerity, truth and shadowless righteousness. The Word of God is quick and powerful - living and active - sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder (separating) of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow - the deepest part of our nature. And when the King of glory marches into our land He comes with eyes that are shining lamps of heavenly fire, ILLUMINATING mind and heart, revealing all that is there, destroying every selfish and secret motive, consuming every vestige of the carnal mind, purifying the deepest intents of the heart, and flooding the whole being with righteousness and purity and power. Some things in our lives are deeply hidden, but the eyes of the Lord, the dealings of God, are going to cause everything to surface and be brought out of the darkness. The fire of those eyes is such that all the dross is made to emerge. Do we really want the Christ to invade us through and through to thoroughly touch every area of our lives? We will never conquer until we are conquered! Praise God! This moment He is mightier in His elect than He ever was before. This moment He is conducting a campaign vaster, stronger, deeper, more overwhelming than ever before. He will direct it on from one degree of glory to another, until every human being will bow before Jesus Christ as their supreme Lord and King. He will shine forth the glorious light of His illuminating eyes into the darkened hearts of billions who never have known aught but shadows of death. His battlefield is the world. His warfare extends through the ages, down to the end of time. And He shall be victorious totally victorious - praise His worthy name!

HIS WEAPON

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations." The sword that goes forth from the mouth of Christ is without doubt the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God. His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. He is the LOGOS. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" **(Ps. 33:6).** This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" **(Jn. 1:1).** This is the Word that was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In this vision He is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth - truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapons of truth. Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them. As someone has said, it will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion. The spirit, which animates Him, is the warrior spirit. His object is the conquest of the world. He has formed the resolution never to cease from His campaign until the whole world, a conquered realm, bows devotedly before Him as its rightful Lord and Master, and only true King.

It has well been written: "When we read, 'With it He will smite the nations,' our first thought must not be vindictiveness as so many preach. This sword of the Spirit does far more than kill. It pierces to the dividing asunder of flesh and spirit and discerns the thoughts of men and the intents of their hearts, and more often than not it brings repentance rather than judgment. The mighty outpouring of God's Word at Pentecost caused men to be pricked and cut and pierced to the heart until they cried, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' And the answer of the word was quick and clear: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ... then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls' **(Acts 2:37-41).** When Stephen preached the Word, they were cut to the heart, and to Paul the Spirit said, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' That is the way His righteous sword is wielded. It kills only to make alive and wounds only to heal. It kills only those things that should die and makes alive the things that should live. Thus will He rule the world with an iron rod - the rod of true judgment and the scepter of true authority" - end quote (The Page). Christ the Conqueror goes forth to conquer. He has a sword, and His sword comes out of His mouth, and He is riding the white horse, and the cutting edge of divine conviction is piercing multitudes of hearts.

The apostle Paul says, "Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" **(Eph. 6:17).** Many commentators have noted that this is the only offensive weapon listed in the ARMOUR OF GOD. But I question that. A sword can be a defensive weapon in the hand of a man who has no offensive intentions or no heart for the battle. But I assure you, when the legionnaires of Caesar girded on their belts and fastened their breastplates in position and took upon themselves their helmets and picked up their shields and swords, they were not going forth to defensive warfare. They were going forth conquering as a conqueror, to travel across the face of Europe for imperial Rome, and to conquer all that came before them. How is Christ going to conquer? By His WORD!

When I speak, or write, I manifest spiritual influences; and the force of these influences is proportionate to the inner power, and their effect is proportionate to the state of reception of my hearers. Words are thus seen to be the representatives of spiritual forces. The action of spirit on spirit is inappreciable by the senses; but could we look behind the veil of nature when a crowd or a congregation is swayed hither and thither by the speech of one man, we should see that the influence exerted was as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" **(Jn. 6:63).**

The Lord's speech is the manifestation and influence of His inner life poured forth upon those to whom He speaks. An incident in the life of Jesus, recorded in Luke, chapter seven, provides a picture in which may be discerned the POWER OF THE WORDS OF GOD. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. Moved with compassion for the sorrowing woman He bade her dry her tears. The astounded crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD.

On another occasion Jesus had come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast. As He reached the city He came to the Pool of Bethesda and He looked into the pool. There were five porches around that pool. He passed through the porches, and at last came to a poor man, sick for thirty-eight years, who had been pushed away from the sacred spring. The man was startled as he heard the Voice. "Wilt thou be made whole?" He looked up into the face of a Man who was looking down at him, asking that strange question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" There went right down into his heart a strange sensation, his whole being vibrated like a harp when every string is touched by a master hand. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Gently he explained that he had no man to help him into the pool, but that others, when he was coming, step down before him. Then he waited with his eyes fixed upon the Man who had so strangely appealed to his will. He got ready, for the very next moment he heard the Voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, of Him who is the Lord of lords and King of kings say, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" And in a moment there came into his body with that Word, power; and he rose, took up that bed, rolled it up and walked home, set free from the bonds of Satan who had bound him for thirty-eight years. Oh! the power of the flaming sword of the Word of God that proceeds out of HIS mouth!

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the sword that goes out of His mouth. The Word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that Word flows forth as the sound of many waters. There are not to be two swords - one out of the mouth of the Lord, and the other out of the mouths of His ministers. There is one sword, and it is HIS. Our quotation of scripture and our knowledge of the Bible and our understanding of truth is not the sword of the Lord. The sword of the Lord is that Word which proceedeth only out of His mouth, and out of ours as we are MADE ONE IN HIM. The sword of the Lord bespeaks a purified people, holding forth the Word of Life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and how we praise God for this company!

This is not some carnal battle fought with carnal means, but the utterance of the Living Word of Truth, which no man shall be able to disannul. Ah, how fleshly have been the swords by which the religious systems have conquered! These "Christian" countries even go to war with one another. These "Christian" armies send thousands into a fast hell. The "Christian" nations are on fire with brawls, party against party, faction against

faction. These "Christians" have deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, robbery and murder, in their streets. The "Christian" families are torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic disputes, without number and without end. And what is most dreadful most to be lamented of all, are those "Christian" churches. Those churches that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, wage continual war with each other. Through long centuries this church has attempted to convert sinners by burning them alive. It has been drunk with the blood of saints and of martyrs. It has brought praise only to Satan. It is a false church, a false Christ, a false sword, a false word. This false sword, this spurious gospel is going forth conquering and conquer over the earth. True revival and true worship have all but fled from the harlot systems and can be found only in the hearts of the elect who love God and to whom the Word of the Lord is precious. All who have studied the history of the so-called church know of the abominations committed by this wanton and worldly system. They have conquered by sorcery, intrigue, murder, war and torture. They have made all nations drink of the wine of their fornication. And in this "enlightened" hour the lewd harlot of false Christianity stalks the earth still. False revivals abound. The false sword is wielded. The false gospel is proclaimed from the pulpits, from the printing presses, and over the air-waves. False prophets, false teachers, false shepherds, false apostles, false evangelists, false healers, false miracle workers, and false Christs abound together with all the marvelous works of trickery and deceit, insomuch that, if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived. It deserves the abominations of the earth.

In contradistinction, the Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that CLEAR WORD OF THE LORD which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to nought. It was said of our Lord and elder brother, "Never man spake like this man" **(Jn. 7:46).** "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him" **(Mk. 1:27).** "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" **(Mat. 8:27).** That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD" **(I Kings 17:1).** The pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His servants to ride victoriously. Nought shall be able to stand before the two-edged sword of H-I-S W-O-R-D. How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company!

Fear not. Have hope. Believe in hope! It is God's good pleasure to yet renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end. All the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they know war any more. The mountain of God's house shall be established on the top of the mountains. All the kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdom of God. Then they shall not hurt nor destroy His holy place. They shall all be without spot or blemish, loving one another, even as Jesus has loved us. You are called to be a part of the firstfruits, even if the total harvest has not yet come. You are to love your neighbor as yourself. You are to love your enemies and bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you. You are to wield the mighty sword of the Spirit. You are to ride forth in majesty as the expression of God's Kingdom on earth. You are to utter His burning Word of authority, smiting the earth with the rod of His mouth.

THE ARMIES THAT FOLLOW

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven He does not come alone. Even before the flood, Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, and said, "Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS to execute judgment upon all" **(Jude 14,15).** John saw, and writes, "The armies, the ones in the heaven, were following Him" **(Rev. 19:14).** Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train. They are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. He has many under His command. The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them and through them, even "the called, and chosen and faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all of the horses are white, and everyone who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two-edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which is the Living Word of God. They are dressed in white, for they are all righteous, cleansed by the crimson tide in which His cloak was dipped.

Again, I would share with you from the anointed pen of George Hawtin as he describes this glorious army. "This is the army of the SAINTS OF GOD, thousands upon thousands of blood-washed sons, all members in particular of the mystical body of Christ, and though they be so many, yet are they but one Christ. These are they of whom it is written: 'They that are with Him are called and chosen and FAITHFUL.' He who rides at the head of this heavenly host, which for six thousand years has been preparing, is the first begotten SON OF GOD, the firstborn from the dead, the PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH. He is the firstborn of MANY BRETHREN. He is the eldest in a vast family of God's sons. This, I declare, is the manifestation of the true body of Christ, the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD. These are they who during their life on earth went unto Him without the camp of the world's denominations and systems, bearing His reproach, that they might be received and taught as sons by their heavenly Father. Long ago amid the shadows of earth they heard and obeyed God's call, 'Come out of her, My people, and be separate; 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.' In their obedience God became their Father. As a Father He instructed them, broke them free from the blinding traditions and doctrines of men. He rebuked them as any loving father rebukes his children. He chastised them as a father chastises his son, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? For if we receive not chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. As a Father He fed them, and He fed them on His living word of life, they became partakers of the divine mind, the divine nature, and the divine will. The mind that was in Christ Jesus dwelt in them and as it increased they were thoroughly transformed by the renewing of their minds" - end quote.

But now the days of their rebuke and chastisement are over. The great Captain is mounted, and they are mounted too. He comes as Warrior, Judge and King, and they share with Him in the same character. They are warrior judges and kings with Him. They are clothed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. They wear no armor. They are immortal and incorruptible and cannot be hurt.

In the Song of Solomon 1:9 the King extols the qualities of His beloved in these significant words: "I have compared thee, O my love, to a COMPANY OF HORSES in Pharaoh's chariots." The historical allusion here, is to Israel as they fled before the horses and chariots of Pharaoh. None knew better than the children of Israel how swift were those famous horses; but by the strong arm of Jehovah, the Israelites outran and outstripped them. There were many steeds in Pharaoh's chariots, and the virgins who make up the followers of the Lamb, while they are few compared to the many who are called, are as a GREAT COMPANY.

Pharaoh's horses were famous for their value and beauty. They were the swiftest and the surest footed of all horses. They could go up over the hills and down through the valleys; they could leap over obstacles, and they never fell nor stumbled. In battle they obeyed, though they plunged into the face of the enemy and into death. They bore the chariots of war, they drew the chariots of the pomp and glory, the grandeur of the king. Egyptian horses, especially from the royal stables, were magnificently decorated, particularly their heads and cheeks, with brilliant ornaments, sparkling jewels, glittering with gold and silver lace, and on their necks were chains of gold, composed, I fancy, of medals recording victories won and glories to be remembered. One historian has recorded that the Egyptian horses were even exported to the neighboring countries, and Solomon bought them at a hundred and fifty shekels of silver, from the merchants who traded with Egypt by the Syrian desert. Such a steed in a chariot, like that which Solomon had brought out of Egypt by his agents, was an object of great beauty to the eye, especially when adorned with the costly trappings then usual. Pure white and beautiful, they were indeed marvels of swiftness and symmetry; each one garnished with gold and precious stones worthy of a king's ransom.

As the Israelites outstripped the horses and hosts of Pharaoh, so the followers of the Lamb have obeyed their Lord's command with such fervor, that they have overtaken and passed all the adversaries. As Pharaoh's horses were famous for their speed and beauty, as they were sure-footed and bore the pomp and grandeur of the king, so the speed and beauty of God's elect are becoming marked, and they bear the glory of the King. It is through us, precious saints, that the power of Christ's redemption is manifested upon earth. It is through us that this salvation is put to the test, and men see what it will do. It is in our lives, that its power to give speed, strength and victory is manifested. It is because His beloved has pressed along after Him so swiftly, and been obedient to His voice though He did not lead her as she would have desired, that He has likened her to these famous horses. He has been teaching her that to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of

rams. She has hearkened to each command of His voice and taken each step as He has directed. So fervently does she obey the voice of her Beloved, so eagerly does she pursue after Him, that finally she hears His voice whispering to her, "I have compared thee, O My love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots."

Unseen by her, unknown by her, His hand has upheld her as she ran. He has lifted her over all the hard places, He has established her steps that they should not be moved. He has kept her feet from slipping, He has lifted her over the precipices, so that many times she has not even seen them. Then after supporting her, and bringing her on according to the desire of her heart toward Him, He compares her to the swift steeds in the chariots of Pharaoh. The message is clear - how tenderly and graciously does our Lord address us. He keeps us faithful, and then He says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" He spoke to, and dealt with Gideon so gently and encouragingly, when he was hidden in the winepress beating out wheat. The angel saluted him with: "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon did not appear to be either a mighty man or a man of valor, for he was hidden away for fear of the enemy. But it was not anything in Gideon that made him mighty; it was because Jehovah was with him. And the Lord led him on until His gentleness made Gideon great, and he really became a mighty man of valor. How preciously God woos us on; and as we yield that He may work in us, He ascribes to us the fruit of His own working upon and within us, for His work becomes truly our very own as we are made ONE IN HIM. Hallelujah!

Ray Prinzing has expressed the following words of inspiration and instruction: "One historical writer has pointed out that everyone of Pharaoh's horses were THOROUGHBREDS. There was no adulteration or mixture of some lesser strain, with some weakness showing up during the heat of the battle, or some renegade trait showing up during a race which would also cause a defeat. The Lamb was without spot and without blemish. And surely the purification process must be complete in us, the regeneration must include our whole being, we are to be an entirely NEW CREATION, a new thoroughbred species. That is why He is dealing with us so intensely to guard our spirit, He would have a virgin spirit, undefiled with anything that pertains to the spirit of the world. No trait or strain of the old nature left in this company of God's choosing. Old things have passed away, and behold, ALL things are becoming new. This is why, also, He has been calling us out of Babylon, and then been purging Babylon out of us, for it is written: 'Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain (Babylon), saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and I will make thee a burnt mountain. AND THEY SHALL NOT TAKE OF THEE A STONE for a corner, nor a stone for foundations' **(Jer. 51:25-26).**

"We await the day of HIS COMMAND. We do not wait for an escape out of the world, but we wait FOR HIM. 'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... **(I Thes. 4:16).** The Greek word that is used here for SHOUT, literally means A WAR CRY. It signifies that the time has come when HE shall DO BATTLE against all unrighteousness. And for this day of battle He is now preparing His HORSE-HORSEMEN COMPANY. 'None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint' **(Isa. 5:27-28).** Hoofs like flint! This was a highly prized quality in a good horse, it meant that they could run farther in the battle, endure longer over the rough rocks, and not become lame. There shall be an ENDURING QUALITY in His elect, they shall be able to GO ON from victory to victory, and make progress over all the rough areas of testing and trial. Perhaps to us this is a rare and unique feeling, one we do not have every day, but there are those moments, when with the Psalmist you could say, 'By my God I can run through a troop, and leap over a wall.' During those times when the vision is so bright, and the sense of His anointing surges through you, you do find that 'perfect love casteth out all fear,' and IN HIM you are strong. Then the processings continue until what we have glimpsed BECOMES A LASTING REALITY" -end quote.

The army of the Lord is at this very moment in careful preparation. The mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire, which the King mustereth for the battle. His great command is FOLLOW ME. He rides the white horse of universal conquest. He goes on from conquering to conquer. Follow the King from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph in your own life; then you, who constitute the King's hosts, will move forward, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners (S. of S. 6:10).

You who have not yet surrendered to Him as King of kings, you who know Him as Saviour but have not crowned Him Lord of all within, don't you hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the

chambers of your soul's castle? You who have tried to be a good Christian, involved in the religious activities of the man-made church systems, but have not hitherto heard the call to come out of her and come up higher into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus - why do you stand out longer? Why not draw in your colors this day, and invite HIM to the supreme place in your heart and life, and enroll yourself among His followers from henceforth, to follow Him to the heights of Mount Zion; and then, when He celebrates His last victory, be among those who come with songs and everlasting joy to SHARE the fruits of His victory and chant His praise forevermore. Amen!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 27
THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-SEVEN

BRIDESHIP AND SONSHIP
MATURE RELATIONSHIPS
THE BRIDEGROOM

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; go ye out to meet Him" **(Mat. 25:6).**

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" **(Rev. 19:7).**

We approach in this study the consideration of the crowning mystery, and yet the most wondrous revelation of truth. It is at once a mystery and a revelation. Nothing but a revelation could have suggested such an idea to our minds, or have allowed us to entertain it without being guilty of irreverence; but the revelation is made in language so distinctly figurative that the great apostle Paul himself is constrained to say of the truth which it manifests and conceals, "This is a great mystery." The revelation of Christ as the Bridegroom permeates His teaching and His parables and suggests the grand truth to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. More than once He refers to Himself in His utterances as the Bridegroom. The solemn midnight cry raised by the expectant throng is, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh," and they that are ready are represented as accompanying Him to the marriage. He speaks of His disciples as "children of the bride chamber," who at that time had the Bridegroom with them. He alludes to "the wedding" in the earnest exhortation which He utters, impressing upon His disciples the necessity of being prepared for His coming as Bridegroom. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding." And He suggests the true purpose of all God's dealings with man in the parable of the wedding feast, whose opening words declare that, "a certain king made a marriage for his son."

What a blessed and thrilling revelation lies couched in the following passage recorded in connection with our Lord's miracle of turning water into wine. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him" **(Jn. 2:11).** In our meditations on the Bridegroom and the bride it is appropriate that we consider the marriage in Cana of Galilee. The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. The Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry at a wedding. May I say to you that that is important and it is profound, and it seems passing strange. Why didn't He begin at Jerusalem, the religious capital of the world? Why didn't He go to the temple to begin His public ministry? Or, better yet, why didn't He go to Rome, the power capital and political capital of the world of that day? Or why not go to Corinth, a great commercial center of the time? Why begin at Cana of Calilee at this wedding? Ah the Lord came from heaven's glory and He began His ministry at a wedding of two unknown, poor peasants yonder in the dusty little village of Cana.

But 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 that brought the first woman to the first man. He introduced them and He performed the marriage for them and made them one. Then I look into the prophecies of the Bible and discover that there is an event called "the marriage supper of the Lamb." The Lamb is there and a people called the bride is there. And the Psalmist relates the wonderful scene in these descriptive words, "Kings' daughters were among Thy honorable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir" **(Ps. 45:9).** Long centuries later John the Revelator stood transfixed in rapturous wonder at the scene and penned these challenging and electrifying words of spiritual instruction: "Let us rejoice - and shout for joy - exulting and

triumphant! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has prepared herself. She has been permitted to dress in fine radiant linen - dazzling and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" **(Rev. 19:7-8)** (Amplified).

Long millenniums ago at the dawn of human history the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an 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." It is my conviction that God's creation is an expression of God's own personal character and state of being. It will take the mind of the Spirit to understand what I say when I declare that when God saw Adam in his loneliness and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone," God was expressing a consciousness within Himself. God had need for companionship. This divine need is expressed by the apostle in **Eph. 1:4-6,** "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be ... before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

God's ultimate need was for the companionship of beings like unto Himself, of His own kind, with whom He could share His mind and heart, and whom He could incorporate into the outworking of His own eternal purposes. As we view from the Father's heart it becomes obvious that God in His paternal nature has "marked out for Himself" a vast family which shares His very own life, nature, spirit, purpose and power. I do not believe that any creature or entity, which existed before man either in heaven above or the earth beneath, provided what God needed. This is the condition, which prompted God in that long ago beginning to issue the wonderful fiat, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness" **(Gen, 1:26).**

Little wonder, then, that we read these remarkable words, "And Jehovah God 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." That is the first symbolism of the bride of Christ. God made for Adam someone with whom he should have complete and total intimacy. God Himself had that desire so He came in the cool of the evening to fellowship with this man and woman made in His image. If the Christ is to have a bride then the bride must be COMPARABLE to Christ. That's awesome, isn't it! But how could Christ become intimate with anyone who is not comparable to Him? Would He become intimate with a little girl whom He might abuse? Would He share all He is and has with a child who is physically and emotionally unable to return mature love or participate in His activities?

God gives us patterns in the Bible. All the patterns point to the central truth that God wants a people for Himself - a special, purified, obedient, prepared, developed, matured, loving, capable people joined in union with Himself. All other doctrines and revelations are secondary to that. God's desire for a people is the thrust of the entire message of the Word of God. Everything must revolve around that truth. It was not good for man to be alone and God was saying that it was not good for God to be alone. He wanted offspring, and Acts 17:28-29 tells us that WE are the OFFSPRING of GOD. Nature itself teaches us that pigs have little pigs and dogs have little dogs. I do not hesitate to add that Gods have little gods! We are made in His image - COMPARABLE! When once we learn this one grand truth all the Word of God begins to fall into place. My beloved, it is therefore in keeping that our Lord should go yonder to a wedding in Cana of Galilee and begin His ministry. There He went and put His seal of approval and His blessing upon it. He was there by His very presence to proclaim that UNION between God and man is the grand theme and purpose of God in creation and redemption!

BRIDESHIP AND SONSHIP

As God continues to deal in this hour with a people, to bring them into His fullness, there are questions which arise concerning definitions and applications of terms which the Spirit of God is bringing forth as He speaks to His elect. Two of the terms, which the Spirit is emphasizing, are BRIDESHIP and SONSHIP. Some become confused by these terms and wonder whether there is a difference between the two - or whether the bride and the sons are the one and same company of people. If we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying there need be no confusion at all. God wants us to UNDERSTAND!

It should not take much reflection to reach the conclusion that a bride and a son are NOT the same! If you are a married man with a family, think! - are your wife and your son the same? Though it is evident that they are two separate persons, what is it that really makes the difference? You may answer, "Well, one is female and the other is male." True, but that is still not the basic difference! A member of your family maybe female and yet NOT be your wife. She could be your daughter, your mother or your sister. Likewise, a male member of your family may be someone other than your son. So, while it is true that a wife is always feminine and a son is always masculine, the primary difference is one of RELATIONSHIP - the WAY in which they are RELATED to you. In like manner, through the new birth we have come into the God Family - the very universal Family which is GOD! And being birthed into the God Family we are now related to God, we have entered into a FAMILY RELATIONSHIP with Him; true, glorious and eternal kinship to Him in His very own life-form and species!

One can enter God's Family only by birth. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again...he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" **(Jn. 3:3,5).** "But to as many as did receive ... Him, He gave the authority, power, privilege, right to become the children of God ... who owe their birth neither to bloods, nor to the will of the flesh, nor to the will of man, but to God - they are born of God!" **(Jn. 1:12-13)** (Amplified). Newborn babes in Christ, and all children who have not grown up into spiritual maturity, are always referred to simply as the "children" of God without reference to gender or sex. "Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called "children of God" - and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. Here and now, my dear friends, we are God's children. We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" **(I Jn. 3:1-3)** (Phillips translation). So you see, precious friend of mine, in our spiritual infancy and immaturity God does not call us either His SONS or His WIFE but His CHILDREN! A study of the various Greek words for children and sons is most helpful in understanding this truth. "Children" is our first relationship to God in His family. We ARE His children. And what we are ultimately destined to be has not yet come into view or become reality until we pass our spiritual adolescence!

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this truth of relationships. Each of us is related to a great many people in a variety of ways. To my wife I am a husband. To my sons and my daughter I am a father. To my father I am a son. To my brothers I am a brother. To many I am a friend. To others I am an uncle, nephew or cousin. Obviously, this does not make me more than one person. I remain but one individual, but in my relationships to others I am different things. The Lord Jesus is spoken of in scripture as our Father, Brother, Husband, Friend, Master, King, Priest, Judge, etc. etc. Our American President, at the time of this writing (1988), is Ronald Reagan. To many he is "Mr. President" - and rightfully so. But previously he was a Governor. Would it make sense for people to start wrangling over his title as to whether it is Mr. President or Mr. Governor - a generation or two hence? Supposing he were to become a Senator from California at a later date; others a generation hence, might speak of him as The Senator. All of such names and titles are but designations of offices held, of particular relationships the person has had to the people. And yet each is, in a sense, like a DIFFERENT PERSON in each unique relationship!

There are so many profound and beautiful ties between Jesus and the elect, which are shadowed forth in the tender relationships between Adam and Eve; for Adam was in reality both father and mother to Eve, and then she was not only his child, but his sister as well, and also his wife. The same person can stand in varied relationships, filling different roles, while remaining the same person. All the right and natural relationships in which human beings stand to each other are meant to reveal something in God - some relation in which He stands to us. He is as a King to His subjects, giving them laws and governing them for their good. He is as a Father to His children, providing for their needs, training and disciplining them in love to become mature members of the Family of Elohim. But there is something, if one may say so, deeper than even this - something that corresponds to the tenderness of a mother, especially in her gentle power of comforting the weary and wounded spirit of her child. Isaiah cried out in the spirit of wisdom and revelation and declared, "For thus says the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; then you shall be nursed, you shall be carried on her hip, and be trotted on God's maternal knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you" **(Isa. 66:12-13)** (Amplified).

The word "one" in the passage above is in the Hebrew A MAN. And the prophet is not thinking of a little child, but of the grown man. His words are, in the original, "As A MAN whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort

you." The feminine name of God is EL SHADDAI meaning "the breasted - a woman's breast" and indicates the One who out of maternal bountifulness is the shedder-forth of blessings, comfort, nourishment and life. There is something in God, which corresponds to that power of tender mother-comfort, something of which, indeed, earthly mother-comfort is only the shadow, the earthly reflection. Ah the motherhood of God! Consider the wonder of it! And when we get a clear spiritual discernment of these multiplied relationships of God to us, it breaks us into perfect abandonment to Him, and draws us like the resistless tide of a sucking whirlpool, down into the fathomless gulf of His love and all-sufficiency!

MATURE RELATIONSHIPS

Children are children. Children are not SONS in the scriptural sense, for sons are those who have grown up into the nature and authority of the Father. A girl, as long as she is a child, is neither prepared for nor capable of fulfilling the role of a WIFE. In order to enter into marriage a young girl must pass through years of physical, mental and emotional development. Finally, upon becoming mature in all these areas, she is fitted for marriage and her role as wife. And so is it in God's Family! The term "child" describes the believer in his walk of immaturity in God. But as one begins to grow up into SPIRITUAL MATURITY it is then that the truly feminine and masculine aspects of his or her relationship to God begin to form and become manifest. "Vive la difference!" someone once said. And starting from early childhood we all begin to notice there is indeed a difference. We become increasingly aware of it as we grow up. But it is only as fully developed adults that the true power, potential and purpose of the feminine and masculine attributes find their fulfillment.

The following words by Ray Prinzing are freighted with spiritual wisdom and godly instruction. "There are many relationships that are spoken of in the scriptures, and for years all we heard taught was on 'the bride of Christ.' Then came the unfolding of the precious truths of sonship. And soon the one was pitted against the other with emphasis on the position to be obtained, this greater than that, etc. But we are coming to see that all of these relationships are allegorical - we can draw from them all some needed instruction, but we must not reduce them to physical, carnal realms, and hold them there. And all these allegories serve to bring out the characteristics desired. Bride, groom, son, daughter, friend, etc., these are not positions and realms to which we aspire, they are but allegorical relationships used to help reveal qualities and characteristics which are essential to every believer that desires to become ONE IN HIM, fully conformed to His image and likeness. ONENESS WITH CHRIST in its full reality goes beyond being a bride, or a son, or male, or female. So regardless of the symbol at which we are looking, it is the deeper meaning and truth which we desire, and may the Lord quicken to us this vital instruction for our up-building in Him. To be perfect in Christ, complete, mature, ONE IN HIM, this sums up all the facets used to illustrate our growth and development, characteristics, attributes, etc. Dare we settle for anything less? Can any parabolic example reveal such glory? Each part reveals something unique and wonderful, but they all fall far short of expressing the WHOLE, which is SUMMED UP IN CHRIST. He is ALL IN ALL, the fullness that filleth everything with Himself" -end quote.

As God becomes so many things to us, even Mother, so must we become many things to Him. When God created man male and female in His image He revealed that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in all the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father and many other things as well. The bride relationship bears the feminine nature whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord says to the overcomer, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My SON. To him will I give POWER over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. 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. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21).**

Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness and dependence are attributes of the feminine sex. Spiritually, these are the characteristics of the bride of Christ, as the apostle says, "Wives, be subject - be submissive and adapt yourselves - to your own husbands as a service to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Saviour of His body. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water

with the Word, that He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things - that she might be holy and faultless" **(Eph. 5:22-27)** (Amplified).

Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Ah, beloved, let us never become so overbalanced in our zeal to become SONS OF GOD that we circumvent the marvelous reality of BRIDESHIP! The simple but sublime truth is that THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP! This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. It is the inworking of brideship that births the realm of sonship. Jesus said, "I am the WAY, the truth and the life; no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship. It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made ONE IN HIM IN LOVE that we are initiated into that illustrious glory of strength and dominion over all things as sons of God. This is a true principle in God that I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

Any man can come to know something of the acts and ways of God, but only those born from above, who also FOLLOW ON to KNOW the Lord, can ever come to know Him in the most wonderfully personal and intimate manner. The depth of "knowing" Him is like the intimate relationship of a man with his beloved wife, in which love he seeks to reproduce after his own kind. In fact this is precisely the way in which the scriptures in a number of cases make use of the word "know" - to describe the giving and receiving of seed in the act of love. For example, we read in **Gen. 4:1,** "And Adam KNEW Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain." This statement does not mean that Adam was able to recognize his wife as she walked about the house! "KNOWING," in the sense of recognition, does not beget children! When Adam KNEW his wife he explored her emotional and physical being, and she KNEW him in return in a personal and intimate way that words could never communicate. Only by the experience of the sexual relationship does man know woman in this sense, and she him.

May the Spirit of God help us to understand that it is only in that exquisite relationship where the believing heart completely yields itself to the Spirit, the presence, the mind and the will of God, where the believer proves by his wholehearted response that he totally and truly loves the Lord, that he KNOWS and is KNOWN of God. This is the basis for Israel as a people being given the name "wife of Jehovah," and the chosen ones of this age the intimate title "the bride of Christ." As husband and wife, by means of the act of "knowing" become ONE FLESH, so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of "knowing" become ONE SPIRIT. "He that is joined (in union) unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" **(I Cor. 6:17).** The intimate relation and ecstasy here portrayed, are not found in the lives of any but those who are following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

While we write much in these pages of the glorious truth of sonship, we want to contemplate in our meditations at this time what it means to be the bride of Christ. If you have never really fallen in love with the Christ of God - and made HIM YOUR HEAD and ABSOLUTE LORD - don't ever expect to be a son. If you are not truly VIRGIN in your desires toward the Lord; if you are not walking in the Spirit, keeping yourself unto HIM and unto HIM ALONE; if you have never really forsaken the company of the wanton harlot of Mystery Babylon, the carnal religious systems called the church; if you have not renounced the schemes and plans and ambitions of the carnal mind nor abandoned your love of the world and the desires of the flesh - don't expect to be birthed into that glorious company of the sons of God who shall set creation free from bondage and corruption. If you have any other love before Him, any other master that rules your life, any other lord that dictates your actions, any "reserved" areas of your life, then you have not yet learned HOW TO B-E A BRIDE to Christ! One must first BOW in feminine love and submission to Jesus Christ the Lord - as a wife - before he can pass beyond , birthed to stand tall and erect in the majesty and splendor of sonship. it's just that simple. There IS NO OTHER WAY!

Only the blessed Holy Spirit can teach us how to truly BE a bride. As I have pointed out, the key to being a wife is love and submission. We are prone to think of submission in such a carnal way. The term conjures up images of the husband ruling, bossing, lording it over, barking commands to his wife while the little woman, intimidated, coweringly complies with his every demand. But true, godly submission is the LOVE of a woman

that is so pure and intense that she wants to yield herself to the high desires of her husband - a woman so in love with her man that it transcends infatuation - her submission becomes a willing and loving laying down of her own life until she no longer has a life because HER LIFE IS SURRENDERED TO ANOTHER! Her cry becomes, "I don't want my life ... I want to SHARE YOURS." Oh! most of us know so little of HOW TO BE A BRIDE!

I think I understand why so often men fall in love with their secretaries and leave their wives. A secretary is TOTALLY DEVOTED to the man by whom she is employed. His every wish is her desire; and a good secretary even anticipates his needs before they arise. Men are always impressed by such devotion in a woman. She has no goals of her own. Her only priority is to meet his needs. And, my beloved, when once we enter into the bride relationship to Christ we lay down our own identity and take upon us a new nature. In the feminine aspect of this nature we learn to yield - obey - this is the action of our will, giving our will over to become aligned with HIS WILL. Submission is more than blind obedience to demands laid upon us, it is the loving surrender of the will, otherwise one will soon revolt and try to throw off the yoke, or find a way of escape. But when it is OUR WILL to do HIS WILL we stand steadfast and carry on. There is a giving up, a surrender of our will that is, the flesh-motivated will, the carnal-minded will, BUT HIS WILL IN US IS TO BE RETAINED AT ALL COST. God is working in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" **(Phil. 2:13),** and we say "I WILL" in surrender to all of His exercise of His will in us. As one has written, "It seems that many people are more afraid of God's will for their life, than of anything else, as if it would be bad for them, hurt them, cause them distress or pain, to make them miserable, and they seem to fear yielding to His will, as if that would end all the joys of life, and yet they say they want to go to heaven. But surely heaven implies wondrous bliss because HIS WILL IS BEING PERFECTLY DONE THERE. Indeed, heaven is a state or a condition, the glory of which includes perfect oneness in His will. God loves His creation, and the 'will' of love always seeks the best for its loved one. Even in the natural, we would, if we had the power and the means to carry it out, do much more for those we love, simply because it is the nature and the will of love to do so. It is the hangover of tradition's 'monster God' that causes men to be afraid of God's will, BUT LOVE REMOVES ALL THIS TERROR. How much struggle and friction go out of our lives when we come to the point where we will have God's will, and then rest in the outworking of His will" -Ray Prinzing.

LOVE! Ah, this is the key. There is a call to love HIM so passionately, that everything else appears as hatred in comparison. When we are mere children, we love Him out of a childish, immature love. We love Him primarily for what He GIVES US. When you hear someone testify, "I love the Lord BECAUSE He saved me," or "I love the Lord BECAUSE He healed me," or "I love the Lord BECAUSE He answers my prayers and supplies all my needs," you know that you listen to the testimony of a CHILD, imperfect in love. That kind of talk is like the girl who married a rich man and said, "I love John because he provides me with a million-dollar beach house, a new Mercedes, a mink coat, and $1000.00 a week spending money!" Obviously, she loves John ONLY FOR HIS MONEY! Should John lose his wealth her love would soon die. And most immature Christians, the "children" of God, profess to love God basically out of these same selfish motives. But a true wife loves her husband FOR WHO AND WHAT HE IS! When a wife really loves her husband, she loves him just as much if they are poor and have nothing. As God brings forth a people into brideship to Christ, this people is coming to love our Lord Jesus Christ FOR WHO HE IS and not because of the blessings and benefits received from His loving hands. Children are always excited about the GIFT, but the bride is excited about the GIVER!

Do we really love Him, or are we merely using Him? Do we know what it means of come into His sweet presence, asking nothing, but only reaching out to HIM with gratitude and thanksgiving for loving us so completely. Haven't we become very selfish and egocentric in our prayers? We will pray to save America from judgment. "Spare us - don't judge us," we cry. "Give us, meet us, help us, bless us, prosper us, use us, protect us" - and that may all be scriptural in its place, but the focus is still on US. Even in our work for Him we have become selfish. We want Him to bless our service to Him to prove our faith is genuine. We want to be considered diligent, capable, successful as a sign of His blessing upon us. But the claims of the Bridegroom are paramount upon the bride - she is to love Him, not for His gifts, not for what He can do for her or make of her, but for HIMSELF!

"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a CHASTE VIRGIN to Christ" **(II Cor. 11:2).** To be a virgin means to be pure, undefiled and separated

unto our Lord. God is creating the desire in a people in this hour to be truly VIRGIN in their desires toward Him. We have known what it is to be conformed to the course of THIS WORLD. Then we have known what it is to trust Christ as Saviour while remaining entangled in all the defilement of a corrupt babylonish religious church system. But God is calling forth a glorious body of Christ who, because of the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be VIRGIN separated only unto her glorious Bridegroom, unto intimate and vital union with Him! How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! It is one thing to be washed in the blood, freed from all our past sins, and quite another thing to truly be virgin in our desires to keep ourselves only unto the Lord for union with Him. Separation is coming from everything of the flesh, the world and the devil and from every vestige of entanglement with false religious Babylon which we have made our HEAD in place of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Just this morning I was reading a splendid article by Lyn Gitchel, which I am deeply impressed to share with our readers. Lyn writes: "Today, most of God's people, that are aware at all of what He is doing, are readily admitting that we are on the verge of a new day, a new dimension in the Lord. Everywhere you can hear the trumpet call of the message that His kingdom is near. Dry and parched bones are awakening at the sound of His voice and are arising to be prepared as a mighty army to meet the enemy and take the kingdom. The word "kingdom" is heard more than ever before... and expectancy... is arising in the hearts of those who are waiting for Him.

"All this is good, but I have become aware of one thing. In all the striving for perfection, teaching of the kingdom, and preaching of the gospel of redemption that will be completed this side of eternity, we are strangely far from the real goal of it all. Some are striving for a greater understanding of the scriptures and the things of God, and some for a bigger and better revelation than ever before. Some are striving to become like Him, formed into His image; some are looking to become His dwelling place on this earth. Some are seeking to become mature 'sons,' and others are looking towards becoming the 'order of Melchizedek.' All these are fine goals, but they are not THE GOAL that God intends for us. The goal, and the only goal, is set out in the first commandment, which bids us seek God first with every part of our being. To move into Him; to establish a ONENESS WITH HIM - this is the only central goal of it all. So often we are seeking something so close to the real thing - and yet not the real central goal. We seek God in order to receive something from Him - or to be made holy, or like Him in some other way. We seek Him to have Him dwell in us, or to have His power, or joy, or peace. None of these are wrong! They are just not the goal!

"What kind of response do you think you would get if you were moving into a love relationship, with the intention of marrying that person, and then, when they asked you why you wanted to enter into that depth of relationship with them you replied, 'So that I can become like you!' or, 'So that I can have your power!' Too often that is the way we look at God. We have sought to come close to Him so that we might become like Him, or so that His power might be seen in us. Both are admirable desires, but they are not desires that will be fulfilling to the heart of God. He wants us to draw close to Him, not that we might become like Him, or that His nature be found in us (though, inevitably, that will happen), but solely to draw close to Him BECAUSE WE LOVE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS. He wants us to, come to Him WITH NO OTHER INTENTION in our hearts but to fellowship with Him, to love Him, and to appreciate Him, sharing with Him all the love-flow of our hearts. Everything else, no matter how fine a goal, must be second to that!" -end quote.

To the venerable prophet banished to the desolation of Patmos came the rousing command, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" **(Rev. 21:9).** To understand what the Spirit means by the term "bride" we must break away from our western concepts of what a bride is. Bride in Hebrew is KALLAH meaning "the completed one" or "the perfected one." It reveals the concept of a woman being completed once she is married to her husband - and, as Paul so beautifully expresses it, "YE are COMPLETE IN HIM!" When two become one - right man - right woman - they are totally dependent upon each other. They will never be anything without the other again. Each sex is incomplete without the other. In Genesis, before ever Adam named the woman God took and built from his being, he did some explaining. The Hebrew actually reads, "And Adam said, This one (she) now bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh, this one, (she) shall be called woman (ISHAH), because this one, (she) was taken from man (ISH)" **(Gen. 2:23).** Adam said, "This-now," or literally, "this one, she." There is no verb here. You don't need a verb at a time like this! Remember, the Lord is bringing to him the most perfect and beautiful woman ever formed. It just took his breath away when he saw her! "This one,

she bone from my bones" - Adam knew that something was missing from his very being and that this woman would complete him. What was missing would come back with INTEREST. So he adds, "Flesh from my flesh, this one, she, shall be called ISHAH (woman)." Why? Because she was taken out of ISH (man)! once the woman is given to him they become ISH and ISHAH. When ISH and ISHAH are joined together they become ONE; he fulfills her and she completes him. She is the bride, the "completed one," the "perfected one."

In **Rev. 21:9** the messenger entreats the apostle John, "Come hither, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." The message is clear - "Come hither and I will show you a COMPLETED PERSON, a PERFECTED PERSON, or, if you please, a CORPORATE BODY OF COMPLETED AND PERFECTED PEOPLE!" The holy city of New Jerusalem is the beautiful symbolical representation of the virtues, nature And glory of the Lamb's bride. Meditate deeply, precious child of God, on the symbolisms of that city, for they serve as an instruction manual outlining the processes by which one is ushered in to that most precious and intimate and glorious relationship with God's Lamb.

THE BRIDEGROOM

We are told that: in this, our day, shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten virgins. Virgins are pure and undefiled: not the common run of Christians who have defiled themselves with every lover-idol they can find and have departed from a walk in the Spirit of God and slithered off into the ditch, there to slop and flounder around in error and deception and ignorance and fleshly religious activities of every kind. Virgins are not even defiled with women - with the organized church systems. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE GOES, and not human leaders who have set themselves up between Christ and His saints (Rev. 14:4).

These ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Not very many people who name the name of Christ are doing that! Not very many know who or what the Bridegroom is, and therefore do not know where or how to meet Him. Not very many Bible students even suspect that the coming of the Bridegroom is different than the coming of the King or the coming of Christ in other dimensions. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. All their fuss and stir will be in vain. For no one will ever go "up" to meet Him! There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They have confused His coming as the Sun of Righteousness with His coming as Judge. They have confounded His coming as a refiner's fire with His coming as the rain. They have mistaken His coming WITH His saints for His coming IN His saints. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom. To their unenlightened minds there is but one single coming of Christ when He crashes down through the clouds of earth's atmosphere. Most saints today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. But not so with the virgins. They are in the right place at the right time, and all looking for a very blessed event - the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom. And they are spiritually intelligent enough to know that no one will ever go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. But in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" **(Mat. 25:6).** And the only way one may go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is to "come out" from among the world and the flesh and the harlot churches with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union.

The cry was, "Behold the Bridegroom!" This addresses the heart. It is not an historic event. As sure as you hold any truth intellectually you will eventually become an opposer of it. If you hold the coming of the Lord as a singular historic event I am bold to say that He will come and you will not recognize Him in His coming and you will oppose Him when He comes just as did the Jews of old. The coming of the Bridegroom is that revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the relationship of the bride until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. And this is a present reality! If you say the bride is only future, if you say the coming of the bridegroom is in the sweet bye and bye, you ignore the words, "The Spirit and the bride SAY, COME" **(Rev. 22:17).** When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount

with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take his. She has left all to follow him. The result of such a union is, as stated by Paul in **Rom. 7:4,** "that we should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The word "bridegroom" is from the Hebrew CHATHAN of which the root meaning is "to contract affinity." According to Webster affinity carries these shades of meaning: 1. relationship by marriage. 2. close relationship; connection. 3. a similarity or likeness implying common origin. 4. a spontaneous attraction to, or liking for, a person or thing. 5. a person of the opposite sex who especially attracts one. 6. the force that causes the atoms of certain elements to combine and stay combined.

For millenniums it has been believed that people who have the same birthdate, the same hour of birth, and were born on the same longitude and latitude generally live parallel lives. It is an affinity - a relationship, resemblance, likeness, connection, correspondence under the stars. Joseph Goodavage recorded the true story of two unrelated women who met for the first time in a hospital room in Hackensack, New Jersey in 1939. Their last names were Hanna and Osborne, but they had the same first name - Edna. Each woman had a baby at the same time; the babies weighed the same and were given the same name - Patricia Edna. Here is what their conversation revealed: both husbands were named Harold. Each Harold was in the same business and owned the same make, model, and color car. The Hannas and the Osbornes had been married exactly three and a half years and had the same anniversary. The babies were their first. Both fathers were born in the same year, month, and day. The mothers too had the same birth date - and the same number of brothers and sisters. Each Edna was a blue-eyed brunette, same height, same weight, and wore the same size clothes. Each family owned a dog named Spot - same mixed breed, same size, and same age.

AFFINITY means you have the same genetic makeup, you have the same thoughts, the same ideas, the same emotions, the same actions, even when you are not physically together. It is to be like another person. Bridegroom means AFFINITY - TO CONTRACT AFFINITY! The Bridegroom agrees, yea, purposes to spiritually bring affinity into the life of His COMPLETED PERSON. As the bride you will yield yourself to the process of completion and perfection in the Christ, but as Bridegroom HE IS DETERMINED THAT IT WILL HAPPEN! He is resolved that this high and holy calling be your destiny. First He attracts you, He allures you, charms you, draws you, captivates you with His love. Then He invites you to a contract, an agreement, a covenant. By the terms of that contract you WILL come into oneness with the Christ and by the very genes of your new creation life you will think and purpose and act like Him in all things. Hallelujah!

"Christ also loved the CHURCH, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that lie might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" **(Eph. 5:25-27).**

The Bridegroom has special qualifications. He must love the bride in a special way; He must give Himself to her; He must make a vow to her and enter into a covenant relationship with her. He is fully responsible for loving and providing for her every need. There are six things listed in the passage above that the Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom, assumes as HIS RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Loving her
2. Giving to her
3. Sanctifying her
4. Cleansing her
5. Presenting her to Himself proudly
6. Nourishing and cherishing her.

It is interesting to note one characteristic that is significantly missing from this list. Have you noticed that there is never any CHASTISEMENT spoken of in scripture with regard to the bride? The Bible says that sons are corrected and chastised, but the bride is not in any way punished! Hers is a love relationship whereby she does what pleases her Lord just because of who she is - His bride. It is the RELATIONSHIP that is the emphasis when the bride is spoken of, not the usefulness. The sons are chastened and corrected because

they are given great power and authority, but the bride is loved, cherished, nourished, attired, cleansed and made beautiful because she is made ONE IN HIM. Sons are taught how to use great power and glory, whereas the bride is instructed how to fulfill and complete her husband.

The question is arising in some minds: "What company am I in? Which am I apprehended to? Am I destined to be of the bride company, or a member of the manchild? Which should I DESIRE to be? Can I be BOTH? Is there really a difference - a separation between the two?"

Ah, my beloved, we have had such a veil over our minds! May the blessed Spirit of truth quicken the understanding of all who read these lines to see and discern that what the revelation of God teaches is just this: the WOMAN gives birth to the MANCHILD - THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESBIP! It is the relationship of brideship that births the reality of sonship. One must fall madly, fiercely, intensely in love with the Lord Jesus Christ, making Him Head and Absolute Lord, keeping oneself unto Him and Him alone, entering the secret chamber of His love, reserving nothing unto oneself. We must first BOW in feminine love and submission before we can be birthed to stand tall and erect in the majesty of sonship unto God. There is NO OTHER WAY!

Union with Christ is most assuredly NOT a physical union. To be the bride of Christ does not mean that we experience a physical love relationship with Jesus. It is, rather, a spiritual union, joined to the Lord as ONE SPIRIT. Since it is a spiritual union it does not necessitate the PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF THE MAN JESUS as Bridegroom. Gaze not, my brother, my sister, into the sky to behold Him coming down through the clouds. You will never see the Bridegroom riding upon a cloud should you stare into the heavens for long millenniums to come. The coming of the Bridegroom is a spiritual coming forth of the Lord unto His elect bride. Do you not now hear the cry reverberating down the corridors of your soul - "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!"

So many Christians today are satisfied with merely an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Their eyes are blinded to eternal values, and any efforts to lead them on to higher ground are rebuffed and resisted by a human reasoning which asks why one should waste time on them since they are saved. But salvation, while it is the most astounding miracle of the ages, yet is the birth of a MERE SPIRITUAL INFANT. There are many further steps which must follow this birth if one is to come into all the glories and the full heritage which is prepared for those who follow on to know the Lord. And not one of us has come all the way up to our full privileges in Christ. There is great glory and heavenly wealth awaiting those who become fully equipped unto God's great plan and purposes. Salvation is nothing more than the beginning of an eternal, heavenly, God-kind of life. Then the recipient may remain a baby spirit delighting only in the FACT of its childish spiritual existence. Salvation is a free gift, through unmerited mercy and favor: a new heavenly life begun by means of the new birth. But the outworking of the divine PURPOSE for that life is realized only by those who have salvation, and then go on to grow up into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ."

May God help us to truly BE A BRIDE that we may also learn how to BE A SON that God may in and through us BE ALL IN ALL!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 28
THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-EIGHT

THE BRIDEGROOM WITHIN
THE BRIDE WITHIN
THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; go ye out to meet Him" **(Mat. 25:6).** "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" **(Rev. 19:7).**

The revelation of Christ as the Bridegroom permeates His teaching and His parables and suggests the grand truth to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. More than once He refers to Himself in His utterances as the Bridegroom. The solemn midnight cry raised by the expectant throng is, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh," and they that are ready are represented as accompanying Him to the marriage. He speaks of His disciples as "children of the bride chamber," who at that time had the Bridegroom with them. He alludes to "the wedding" in the earnest exhortation which He utters, impressing upon His disciples the necessity of being prepared for His coming as Bridegroom. And He suggests the true purpose of all God's dealings with man in the parable of the wedding feast, whose opening words declare that, "a certain king made a marriage for his son."

The cry was, "Behold the Bridegroom!" This addresses the heart. It is not an historic event. As sure as you hold any truth intellectually you will eventually become an opposer of it. If you hold the coming of the Lord as a singular historic event I am bold to say that He will come and you will not recognize Him in His coming and you will oppose Him when He comes just as did the Jews of old. The coming of the Bridegroom is that revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the relationship of the bride until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ, which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. And this is a present reality! When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take his. She has left all to follow him. The result of such a union is, as stated by Paul in Rom. 7:4, "that we should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

It was to the church, which is His body that Paul wrote, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" **(Eph. 5:31-32).** It was also to the church that Paul addressed these significant words, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead..." **(Rom. 7:4).** Again, it was to the members of the church that Paul explained, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST" **(II Cor. 11:2).** I have heard great stress laid upon the fact that the bride of Christ consists of a body corporate, not of the individual; and therefore that we cannot, without irreverence and impropriety, personally experience Jesus Christ as the spiritual Husband of the individual soul. I readily admit the fact, but I demur to the inference. The church, though a body, is made up of individuals; and it is as an aggregation of individualities, each containing its own individuality, and not a unit - in which individuality is sunk and the individual absorbed - that the church is to be presented to Christ. We no more believe in the absorption of the individual in the church than we entertain the notion espoused by the eastern religions of the absorption of all things into God in such a way that all identity is lost.

The body of Christ is now multiplied by thousands, and it is not just one little girl that Christ will receive but a corporate bride composed of a vast multitude of individual members. The point is just this: all that happens to the corporate body must be experienced by each member - it is first and foremost the experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. If I do not know Christ PERSONALLY as my Bridegroom, it is impossible for me to be a part of that corporate body which is joined into union with Him. Let us by all means remember that we are to be perfected in One; but let not this check the outflow of our individual affection to Him with whom, in some strange way, we are to be thus closely related. The thought of this intimate relationship loses all its warmth, and even its reality, when we miss or eliminate the personal element in it. We teach the sinner to see in "God so loved the world," God loved ME. Surely we can't be wrong in seeing in "Christ loved the church," Christ loved ME!

It is a precious experience when any child of God begins to understand PERSONALLY something of the import of these prophetical words, "In that day thou shalt call me no more Baali (that is, my lord); but thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband)." And there are moments when His voice seems to sound in our ears, as though we heard Him say, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider ... forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty: for He is thy Lord God; and worship thou Him." He is the Bridegroom of the corporate bride, but our love and relation to Him is to be as gloriously personal as though to each of us He had made this revelation of Himself, and to no other. Let it be the one work of our lives to fit ourselves for the enjoyment of this wondrously close relationship to Him. Let all lower affections be dominated by this one, and all that is unworthy of this be renounced. We are espoused to Christ. We are to be presented as a chaste virgin to Him. Oh let us be true to His claims upon us, and gladly sacrifice all that keeps us back from full self-surrender to Him. So shall the King have pleasure in us, and we shall find our crown of eternal fulfillment in HIM.

THE BRIDEGROOM WITHIN

In our consideration of the Bridegroom and the bride we need to remember that first of all these precious realities are fulfilled in us personally. Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere; for us He is our hope of glory, and it is CHRIST IN YOU. That is a phrase of inexhaustible wonder - "Christ in you." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME" (Gal. 2:20). "For He abideth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU" **(Jn. 14:17).** "He shall be IN you." In these simple words our Lord announces that wonderful mystery of His indwelling which was to be the fruit and the crown of His redeeming work. It was for this man had been created. It was for this, God's mastery within the heart, the Spirit had striven with men through the past ages. It was for this Jesus had lived and was about to die. Dwelling in them, He would prepare them to receive Himself as their Lord - as Bridegroom. We will never understand the deep mystery of the Bridegroom and the bride until we know that Christ is the Bridegroom and that Christ lives in us. If you give godly consideration to these simple truths, you cannot avoid the conclusion that THE BRIDEGROOM IS IN YOU. There is a place within you where the Bridegroom dwells and He comes out of that place and woos you into relationship with Himself.

Suppose someone wants to visit me. He must first find where I live. If he cannot locate my home, he will have to forfeit his visit. Although there is much talk about Christ living in us, many Christians have no idea where He dwells. In **Rom. 8:9-10** we read, "...the Spirit of God dwelleth in you...and if Christ be in you, the body is dead ... but the spirit is life." Rom. 8:9 refers without doubt to the Holy Spirit of God, but verse 10 speaks of the human spirit. "The body is dead...but the spirit is life." Of course, the Holy Spirit cannot be compared with our body. The contrast is between what is true in OUR BODY and what is true in OUR SPIRIT. If Christ is in us our body (the earth man) is dead, but our spirit is life, quickened and energized by HIS INDWELLING LIFE.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" **(Jn. 3:6).** This verse speaks of two distinct "spirits": one is capitalized and the other is not. The first occurrence of the word refers to the Holy Spirit, and the second to the spirit of man. That which is born of the Holy Spirit is the human spirit. Another verse showing these two "spirits" is Jn. 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit." Again, the first "Spirit" is capitalized and the second is not. We must worship God, who is the Spirit, in our human spirit. Rom. 8:16 further confirms the existence of two spirits: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

The pronoun "our" definitely designates the human spirit and removes any ground to doubt the reality of both the divine Spirit and the human spirit.

Bible translators have found it very difficult to decide whether "spirit" in some passages refers to the Holy Spirit or the spirit of man. The reason for this difficulty is that in the believer the Holy Spirit and the human spirit are joined together as one spirit! "He that is JOINED unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" **(I Cor. 6:17).** We are one spirit with the Lord, but one, which is clearly joined with the Holy Spirit. It is like joining hydrogen and oxygen to make water. Such a united spirit makes it difficult for anyone to say whether this is the Holy Spirit or the human spirit. The two are compounded as one. We may say it is the Holy Spirit, and yet we can also say it is the human spirit. Sometimes we make a beverage by mixing two kinds of juices - apple and cranberry. After it is mixed it is difficult by taste to tell what kind of juice it is. Is it apple or cranberry? We would have to call it apple-cranberry. In the realm of the spirit it is wonderful to see that the two spirits, the Holy Spirit joined with our spirit, ARE ONE SPIRIT.

Ah - Christ is in us, but where within us is He? In what part? It is abundantly clear - Christ today is in our spirit. We should not be so vague, like many who say, "Oh, the Lord is in you and the Lord is in me." The last verse of II Tim. 4 definitely states that Christ is in our spirit. "The Lord be with thy spirit" **(II Tim. 4:22).** The preposition "with" is from the Greek SUN, which denotes "union." The Lord is in union with our spirit! There is a mighty working taking place within God's people - no more to have that duality - our spirit, His Spirit, but to be so fully merged into one with Him that HIS Spirit is mine, and my spirit, quickened by His Spirit, is swallowed up into His. "There is ONE SPIRIT" **(Eph. 4:4),** says the apostle. That one spirit is neither the Holy Spirit nor our spirit - it is His Spirit joined to our spirit - for "He that is joined to the Lord I-S O-N-E SPIRIT."

He that is JOINED TO THE LORD IS ... The unregenerate man is not one spirit with the Lord. The spirit of the unregenerated man is DEAD, and is therefore UNRESPONSIVE to that sphere from which man fell, which is the sphere of life in the spirit. The natural man is a lamp that is not lit, lacking the essence-life of God. A fallen man, dead as he is in spirit, can only live by the senses of the flesh. But we who have been born again from above have a quickened spirit, are made alive unto that higher dimension, and can live by the spirit. God has quickened us so that we can return to the spirit and live by the spirit.

The truth of the revelation of Christ in you is not a revelation of "The True Self," or "The Real You," or "The Inner You," or "The Christ Consciousness," of pagan eastern philosophy and its hybrid, metaphysical christianity. Until a man receives birth from above by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, his "Inner Self" is just as profane as his "Outer Self" and ALL SELF MUST GO. The complete self, the whole man: spirit, soul and body, must submit and bow to the power and life of the transforming Holy Spirit, the Christ of God. This, then, is the revelation of "Not I," but of "He that dwelleth in me." Many have erroneously perverted the real truth of "Christ in you" and have identified the inherent, unquickened, unregenerated spirit of the natural man with the "Inner Self" of Unity School of Thought, Science of Mind, Christian Science, etc. etc. They give place to their own corrupted "Inner Self" disguised as "the Christ." This self-transformation is not Christ; it is satanic. Satan is the great "Self-Transformer" who "transforms himSELF into an angel of light" **(II Cor. 11:14).** Whenever you try to "make yourself" like the Most High, this is the gross deception of Satan and this unclean spirit will deceive the very elect, if it were possible. But of those who have bowed low before the Christ of God, whose spirits have been lighted by His Spirit, it is written, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" **(Rom. 8:9, 15-17).**

The reverent heart is made to wonder at the unmistakable simplicity of the ways of God. Long centuries ago the apostle penned these meaningful words, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). This verse tells us that GOD is the FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS! Ah, He is not the Father of your empty religious rituals and static creeds; He is not the Father of your denomination; He is not the Father of your flesh; He is not the Father of your carnal mind, your self-will, or your fleshly emotions. He is not the Father of those whose father is the devil. You can never meet God in any of those realms - He is not there. God is the

God of your spirit, you must be in your spirit to be with God and touch God. Today I am sitting in my office in El Paso, Texas. If you go to Dallas you will miss me. If you go on any other street, you will miss me. If you stand outside my house on the street corner, you will miss me. You must come to the door and enter my dwelling to be where I am and know me. And you must enter in to where God is to know Him. God is the God of our spirits! We all need to turn to the spirit. From thence is the fountain of all life!

It is a blessed day for any man when he makes the amazing discovery that Christ Himself is the Bridegroom; that this Christ is in our spirit; that the Bridegroom is thus in our spirit; that the coming of the Bridegroom is W-I-T-H-I-N!

THE BRIDE WITHIN

It should be obvious to every thinking mind that if the Bridegroom is within, the bride is likewise to be found within. Marriage is the conjunction of two into one. When these two enter into union, they are called one. There is, therefore, a part of our being, which must be wooed by Christ in our spirit and brought into relationship and oneness in Him. Bride in Hebrew is KALLAH meaning "the completed one" or "the perfected one." It reveals the concept of a woman being completed once she is married to her husband - and, as Paul so beautifully expresses it, "YE are COMPLETE IN HIM!" In order to identify this bride within we must understand what part of us it is that must be perfected. The bride is a woman, a female. THE BRIDE IS THE FEMALE PART OF YOU. Your SOUL is the female part of your being; therefore your soul is the woman or the bride of Christ who is in your spirit. For a clear picture of this truth I call your attention to the awe-inspiring wonder of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

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 our life here on earth. It tells us about ourselves, it portrays in vivid imagery our state of being, our fall and redemption, and our destiny in God. It is the blueprint of spiritual anatomy. If you thoroughly understand Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the ground-plan for the outworking of the purposes of God through the ages. There is one thing about which God's people must be perfectly clear. The Bible is not primarily intended to teach history, or biography, or geography, or natural science. It is intended to teach DIVINE PRINCIPLES AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES.

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! No such place has ever been found, neither the angel with the flaming sword to keep men out. The garden of God is not a geographical spot located on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING. 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 presence of God, man with the incorruptible life of God available to him, man with the potential as master and lord over all things, man with the capability of 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. In one sense, man WAS the Garden. And yet, man was IN the Garden. The Bible reveals it as a "Garden within a Garden." Man both in a state of being and an environment - the two corresponding. All the conditions that surrounded man were also obvious realities within the heart of man. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities, propensities and potentials is what we 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. "And the Lord planted a Garden eastward in Eden (a pleasant land.")

In the Garden of Eden many people seem to think that Eve symbolizes woman as a sex, and that Adam somehow stands for man as a sex. The truth far transcends this! Adam and Eve represent one person. They represent the whole of humanity in the first Adam. They represent everyman. They represent you and me and every other man and woman on the globe. They stand for man as we know him, with all his capacities, propensities and potentials, under the gracious hand of God, guided from innocence to sin, from sin to salvation, and from salvation to THE IMAGE OF GOD.

On a day in the long ago an apostle by the name of Paul penned these telling words: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent BEGUILED EVE through his subtilty, so YOUR MINDS should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" **(II Cor. 11:2-3).** In this significant passage Eve in the garden of Eden is contrasted with two things: the bride of Christ and the mind. The mind is a function of the soul. The vision of the bride of Christ pervades the whole of scripture, from Eden onward, with ever-increasing clearness. Eve, the mother of the human race, is the first type of this great mystery. Let us not underestimate this remarkable woman from whom the whole human race has sprung!

In that ancient shadow Adam stands as a type of the spirit, Eve is a type of the soul, and the Garden of Eden is a type of the body, which Adam was to "dress and keep." Thus we see our tripartite being symbolically portrayed in the Adam-Eve-Garden story. The Garden was the earth, the land, the locale; and Adam and Eve were its inhabitants, in the same way that our spirit and soul are the inhabitants of the physical body. It is through our "Eve," our soulical desires, will and emotions, that we who have been espoused to Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, can be "beguiled" and turned from our single and pure devotion to Christ, entering into intimate associations with the flesh, the world, the spirit of Babylon, and the devil, thus disqualifying ourselves from being presented to Christ as a chaste virgin. Paul shows that just as Eve was beguiled from her singleness to God, so those espoused to Christ can be corrupted IN OUR MINDS from singleness to Christ.

Ray Prinzing has written: "The 'spirit of man', leaving the eternal realms of HIS SPIRIT to become encased in a tabernacle of flesh became 'a living soul', literally A BREATHING ONE on this earth plane. The MIND is the connecting link between the spirit within and the flesh realm without. 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded (that is, minding of the flesh) is death; but to be spiritually minded (minding of the Spirit) is life and peace' **(Rom. 8:5-6).** As one living and breathing on this earth plane, we will either mind the flesh, or the Spirit. When we take the word 'soul' over into the Greek of the New Testament, we find it expressed in the word PSUCHE, which literally bespeaks of the mind. One is not always conscious of their inner spirit, nor are we always conscious of our flesh body - for we live in the realm of THE MIND, and it is active twenty-four hours of the day, whether we wake or sleep. The soul, mind realm, bespeaks of the mental power to reason, of those mental forces that urge us into action, of the exercise of the will. If this is directed towards the things of the flesh, it means death - for all this flesh realm shall pass away and come to nothing. If our mind is directed towards the things of the Spirit, it means life and peace, for in Him alone are the eternal realities" -end quote.

Let us meditate deeply upon the soul-bride that Eve reveals to us. I must remind every reader of these lines that there is an essential and radical distinction between the spirit and the soul. God is the Father of spirits, but He is the Former of souls. I know not why this has been forgotten by the church world, and I know not why men claiming to be Christian scholars have never told you that the soul is not the spirit, and the spirit is not the soul. It seems to me a remarkable thing that that which God has so clearly revealed, the distinction between the soul and the spirit, men have, through their ignorance and devotion to a false platonic philosophy, been unable to see. If you read your Bible carefully, starting with the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that what the apostle says in the epistle to the Hebrews is true; that the Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder, separating soul and spirit. It is not the philosophy of Socrates or Plato that does this. It is not the philosophy of Kant or Hegel or Strauss that does this. It is not the philosophy of the Hindu or the Buddhist or the Transcendentalist that does this, but it is the Word of God that separates. In the same way that God separated Eve from Adam, the Spirit of God separates between the soul and the spirit of man.

What is this thing called the spirit? How can we know the spirit? How can we touch the spirit? To speak of the body is very easy, because we can see it and touch it. To speak of the soul is also not difficult because we can feel it and know it by its functions and actions, such as thinking, reasoning, determining, and being pleased, angry, fearful, sorrowful, and joyful. But it is not as easy to understand and speak of the spirit.

Romans chapter eight speaks of the spirit and gives us a wonderful clue. In verse two the apostle refers to "the spirit of life." In verse six he says, "to be spiritually minded is life." In verse ten he adds, "the spirit is life..." In these three statements he shows us that the spirit is the spirit of life, the spirit is related to life, contains life and

belongs to life. When a man's spirit is quickened by the Holy Spirit, God enters into man by His Spirit, so that man may have the life of God inwardly. At this time He enters into us as the Spirit of life, the Spirit of the life of God. Notice! He enters into us with the life of God as the SPIRIT OF LIFE. When He enters, He enters into OUR SPIRIT, not into our soul - our mind, emotion, or will. He enters into our SPIRIT, puts the life of God in our SPIRIT, and dwells in our SPIRIT; thus the Spirit of life is joined together with our spirit so that God and us are joined as one and never be separated.

If we desire to have true spiritual growth in life we must be able to discern what is the spirit and what is the soul, and what is spiritual and what is soulish. Paul has declared without equivocation, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ... but the natural man receiveth 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. 2:12,14).** These inspired words speak of two classes of man: one is the soulish man (the Greek text for "natural man" is "soulish man"), and the other is the spiritual man. This shows us that man can live by and belong to either of these two different realms, the soul or the spirit. Man can either live by the soul, thereby becoming a soulish man; or he can live by the spirit, thereby becoming a spiritual man.

The soul is our individual personality, our ego; therefore the soul is our self. That which is included in the soul, analytically speaking, is the mind, the emotion and the will - these three parts. The mind is the organ of man's thinking. It is what we usually speak of as the brain; physiologically it is the brain, but psychologically it is the mind. It is the dominant part of the soul. Man's thinking, reasoning, memorizing are all functions of the mind in the soul. The emotion in the soul is the organ of man is love, hatred, sorrow, joy, etc. Man rejoices, mourns, is excited or depressed these are all functions of the emotion in man's soul. There are many people who are emotional, easily stirred to be ecstatic or sad, animated or depressed. They often deal with matters by their emotion rather than by careful deliberation. The will of the soul is the organ of man's decision making, deliberation and determination. Man decides judges, chooses, accepts, rejects - these are all functions of the will in man's soul. These three parts are present in every man, for every man has the quality of soul.

Regardless of whether a man is in the mind, the emotion, or the will, he is soulish. Every man that lives by these senses apart from the mind, will and emotion of the spirit, is a soulish man. Therefore it is very easy to discern whether a man is soulish. I would be remiss if I did not point out that the soul can be moved upon to act religiously - and what a fine act it is able to perform! But forget not for one moment, precious friend of mine, that in spite of its "religious" appearance, it is still the soul! The soul can be taken into a meeting where a religious atmosphere is created by a man at the pulpit; with a suave and dynamic personality he tells you to stand up, clap your hands, sing, raise your hands, praise the Lord, say Amen, etc. The emotion of your soul is stirred and takes on the appearance of spirituality. Now, there is nothing wrong with standing, clapping, singing, raising the hands and praising the Lord. There is nothing wrong with religious activities, good works, good behavior, etc. The real issue, however, is the SOURCE of these things. Are they a spontaneous outflow of HIS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, or are they merely contrived actions of the soul? Ah, better that the soul behaves than that it misbehaves! Better that it sings the songs of Zion, than the perverted music of the world! Better that it praises the Lord than that it utters vulgarities! But we do not want to mistake that which is soulish for that which is spiritual. If none of these "good" things are motivated from within by the spirit, it is still naught but the vanity of the flesh.

If we can recognize what kind of person is soulish, it is not difficult to realize what kind of person is spiritual. Since a soulish person lives by the mind, emotion, or will, a spiritual person is one who does not live by these. A spiritual person must live in the spirit, act by the spirit, speak out of the spirit and not the soul. They allow the spirit to be the master and source of all their action and behavior. The spirit in them occupies the pre-eminent position; it is the source of their behavior and the starting point of their action. The soul in them is in the position of submission under the government of the spirit and dominated by the spirit. They are not like soulish persons, who let the soul be the master in everything; they deny the pre-eminence of their own mind, will and emotion. Thus they allow the spirit to BE LORD in them; they allow the spirit to direct their whole being so that they become the expression of the spirit. Whenever they encounter a situation they do not draw from their mind, will or emotion to deal with it; rather they draw from their spirit first to understand and comprehend it, seeking first in the spirit for the Lord's mind and purpose in the matter. These are spiritual, living by the life of

the spirit, and the soul is but a vehicle of expression for the spirit. Praise God! it is the ONE SPIRIT that becomes the Bridegroom that ultimately is fully joined to the soul - receives the soul into itself.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor unto Him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" **(Rev. 19:7).**

When God created man in His own image he was ONE, not separated in the beginning into two persons. Thus he remained until the Lord separated the feminine from the masculine, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, to exist separately. Within the one man's nature were both masculine and feminine elements, all the possibilities of male and female, all the potential of fruit and of power, wisdom and love, strength and nurture. This spiritual man, being a son of God, possessed that perfect chaste virgin WITHIN HIMSELF and could have replenished the whole earth with his kind in God's image by a word of power.

We shall not in this article consider the process by which God separated the female from the male, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, but we should carefully point out that following this separation, though existing in two bodies, and two personalities, inspiration declares in both the Old Testament and in the New that the man and his wife were ONE FLESH. Husbands and wives, according to the ordinance of Almighty God, are ONE FLESH, ONE UNIT, yea, ONE PERSON. The "thus saith the Lord" concerning the matter is simply stated in these inspired words: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the TWO shall become ONE FLESH, so that they are NO LONGER TWO, but ONE FLESH. What therefore God has united - joined together - let not man separate or divide" **(Mk. 10:6-9)** (KJV & Amplified).

It was not the burning self-desire of Adam that caused Eve to come forth, but the purpose of God. It was God Himself who initiated the whole process, for the record states, "And the LORD GOD said, It is NOT GOOD for the man to be alone; I WILL MAKE him an help meet for him" **(Gen. 2:18).** "Meet" is an old English word meaning "suitable, fit, proper." The whole flavor of the word "meet" is to fit, join, combine, agree, be in union, be together. No hostility here! No war between the sexes' And no division. God made a help to fit, join, combine, agree, be in union, yes, to be ONE with Adam!

When Eve had been built by the skillful hand of the Creator we read that He "brought her unto the man" **(Gen. 2:22).** I cannot conceive of anything more explicit and meaningful than that wonderful type. I say to every soul reading these lines, Have you been brought to Christ where Christ is? If you do not know union with the Christ in your spirit, you will never know union with Him in the sky nor in any heaven anywhere in all of God's great universe. And know this, oh man, you cannot be spiritual by effort. Many seek to be spiritual by prayer, reading the Word, devotedness, attending meetings; but the only pathway to it is to be brought by the Spirit to realize union with Christ. You are spiritual by union. What was Eve's thought when her eyes first rested upon Adam? I doubt not that she was completely overwhelmed and immediately drawn by irresistible cords of love and passionate desire to find union with him.

The allegory of lover and beloved, bride and groom, union of marriage, gives to us one of the best examples of the ONENESS, which we desire to share with Christ, which we desire within our own selves, the union of soul and spirit. We are weary of the realm of duality and separation. We are tired of speaking in tongues one minute and flying off the handle the next. From the time when Christ came into our lives we have battled this dualness - our mind often pulled to the direction of the flesh, our spirit yearning for that life from above which alone would satisfy. Thank God! the Spirit of Christ within is gaining the ascendancy as the soul becomes more and more subdued. But the prayer remains, "that they all may be ONE..."

Long millenniums ago the aged prophet-king of Israel articulated the deepest cry of the soul-bride for her beloved, saying, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth MY SOUL after THEE, O God. My SOUL thirsteth for GOD, for the living God..." **(Ps. 42:1-2).** As a woman yearns for union with her husband, so the soul longs for reunion with Christ. We cannot comprehend what fearful loss befell the man in Eden when the woman was severed from him. All the female qualities such as tenderness, patience, longsuffering,

intuition, nurture, gentleness, submissiveness, and succor were to a large degree taken from him and embodied in Eve. But consider also what the woman lost in strength, wisdom, courage, bravery, energy, stamina, and much more. Nature has created the fundamental urge of every human being for re-union with its counterpart - to find itself again in WHOLENESS. Just as there is the natural drive for union with the opposite sex, there is also within the soul the intense thirsting for union with God. But this urge exists not only within the soul - it is just as powerful in the spirit! This is the meaning of the mystery that every human being goes through a "mating season." In the natural, it is the man who courts the woman and is the aggressor. It is the boy who chases the girl. The bride of Christ has now entered a great "mating season" of reunion with God. In His appointed times the spirit within does the courting in his own way as He woos the soul and draws our desires and affections unto Himself. There is to be a unification within, so that all our soul realm is swallowed up into the life of the spirit dwelling in us, and brings us into the personal experience of THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

When in the distant mists of Eden the Creator presented Eve to Adam, he had an immediate name for what Eve obviously was. Not her given name, Eve, as we term it in English, but what KIND of creature she was. Hebrew is simpler than English, and more plainly explains exactly what a woman is. ISH is the Hebrew word for "man" and ISHA is the feminine form of ISH or "man." You merely add a single letter to the word, which stands for man, making it feminine, to define the quality of difference: sex. ISH is masculine, ISHA is feminine, but both mean "man." So Adam said, "Now here is bone exactly like my bone, and flesh exactly like my flesh; because she was built from what was taken from me, I will call her ISHA - a FEMALE MAN! And God confirmed Adam's understanding that they were both EXACTLY ALIKE despite the obvious outward differences: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called THEIR name ADAM, in the day when they were created" **(Gen. 5:1-2).** To both God and Adam it was ONE CREATION "in the image of God."

There was no inequality even considered. No superiority or inferiority alluded to. No hint of Eve's being a second-class creation. Differences, yes. But differences do not make for an inferior or superior individual, they only make him a different individual. Women can have babies, men can't. That's a difference. Men generally have a stronger musculature than women - that's a difference. Trying to prove equality between the sexes by playing the other fellow's game is not wise or logical, does not make sense - and proves nothing. It is not necessary for women to become mechanics or soldiers for them to prove their equality. It is not necessary for men to become homemakers or to bear children and give suck for them to prove equality with women. When God made Eve - here now was a creature EQUAL WITH ADAM, another PERSON, a SHE-MAN with whom he could share everything!

"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 fact of the formation of the woman until chapter two; but even here we find God blessing "them," and giving "them" JOINTLY THE PLACE OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All the inferior orders of creation were set under their JOINT DOMINION. Eve received all her blessings in Adam: in him, too, she got her dignity and position and power. Though not yet called into her individual identity, she was, in the purpose of God, looked at as 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 Eve had for Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in 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 the king and queen of the universe!

There is neither time nor space to consider the myriad ghastly consequences of the fall of man, but I would draw your attention to one disastrous result. The curses reaped CAUSED THE INEQUALITIES BETWEEN THE SEXES so prominent in the history of the human family. Life became a burden and a struggle. The beauty and equality of man and woman in the Garden of Eden disappeared. Strife, guilt, shame, discord, competition and pain took over - the way of the flesh held sway!

While the loss of oneness and equality between "ish" and "isha" was tragic indeed, this was but the sad fruit of DISUNITY WITH GOD, which had already invaded their lives. There is a most enlightening statement by the apostle Paul, quoted earlier, wherein he admonishes, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ" **(II Cor. 11:3).** The whole purpose of the serpent's beguilement was to CORRUPT THE MIND FROM THE SINGLENESS THAT EXISTS IN UNION WITH THE SPIRIT. The word "simplicity" actually is the Greek word for "singleness," from the same root as used in the verse, "When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light" **(Lk. 11:34).** We are beguiled when the spirit of the flesh, the world, or the devil draws our soul away from its unity and union with the spirit.

The dreadful fruit of disunity with God is disunity in every other realm, for "HE is our peace" **(Eph. 2:14).** The awful reality of this fact became apparent to Eve as the voice of God announced the dreadful judgment, the terrifying sentence, which swept like a frightening nightmare over her being, proclaiming, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ... and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE" (Gen. 3:16). "Thy desire shall be to thy husband" would be better translated, "Thy desire shall be SUBJECT to thy husband," that is, thy desire shall be subjected to the will and pleasure of thy husband. One ancient translation reads, "The direction of thee shall be with thy husband." "...and he shall RULE OVER thee." Another version says, "...and he will DOMINATE you!"

Can we not see by this that the headship of man over woman CAME AS A RESULT OF THE FALL AND AS A PART OF THE CURSE? It is my long considered opinion that there is actually no particle of evidence anywhere in the whole Bible to support the notion that Adam had the headship over Eve before the fall. The dreadful sentence laid upon Eve that fateful day in Eden is if I err not, the announcement of a condition that should occur with respect to the vast majority of women through succeeding ages and dispensations - but NOT ONE THAT SHOULD HOLD PERPETUALLY, for God purposed that the day would surely come when "there shall be no more curse!" **(Rev. 22:3).**

The same seeds of confusion and duplicity which brought disunity with God, swiftly brought disunity in the human family, beginning with Adam and Eve, in view of which the Lord established a LAW to maintain order in the home, pronouncing to the woman, "Thy desire shall be SUBJECT to thy husband, and HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE." God allowed women to be brought down into such a place of servitude and subjection to men that at the period in which Jesus came into the world, women were held in such a low place of subjection and bondage that in many cases they were not allowed to walk down the streets beside their husbands or to sit in the same room with their husbands when their husbands had company. They had been brought into many forms of bondage. In Eastern lands, even today, we see women the slaves of men, shut away in harems and purdahs. They have no rights, no privileges. The man is able to marry other women and to divorce his wives at will, to beat and cruelly misuse them. We see how the rule of man has brought women into a state of utter misuse and bondage.

That this arrangement was not God's original arrangement nor His eternal order, is evidenced by the fact that man's domination over woman is strictly enforced by the law of Moses, of which law Paul by inspiration wrote, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, T-I-L-L THE SEED SHOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE" **(Gal. 3:19).** Ah - when the promised seed comes, when the Christ comes, when the Bridegroom comes the law is no longer of effect! The New Testament has something to say of the headship of man over woman, but we must never forget for one moment that man is headship over woman is a mere temporary arrangement prescribed for this imperfect state while yet we walk subjected to the frailties of the flesh, and the weakness and travail of this carnal, corruptible realm, all of which is the product of the fall and part of the curse. Hearken to me, my brother, my sister! Man's headship over the woman was never part of God's original order, was not in any way related to the high and holy and eternal purposes of God, and it does not bespeak, by any stretch of the imagination, the glistering glory of the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God in Eden where man and woman walked and REIGNED TOGETHER in the mind of Christ. Man's headship over woman pertains, rather, to the tragic, sorrowful, and sordid ORDER OF THE CURSE.

The order of things under the fall is not man's normal state. Eve in Eden was not like the women of today; her state was far better and more excellent; she and her husband were completely ONE - one flesh, one body, one

soul, one spirit, one will, one mind, one desire, one hope, one purpose, one power and one position. How can one person rule over the other when the TWO ARE ONE in every way? It is high time for a people to begin to move out of the "in-part" realm of the church world today, to rise up and possess that true and eternal and divine order of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. There is a place, even in this physical dimension, where husband and wife can so become ONE in the mind of Christ until no headship or dominion of one over the other is necessary or appropriate.

Ah, hear the word of the Lord and take heed, all husbands and wives who hope to attain to God's high calling, for I declare to you that there is a HIGHER ORDER of the Kingdom of God revealed in Eden's blest Garden! This higher order of perfection and sonship requires the TWO to be so transformed by the spirit that in the pure nature and holy mind of Christ they BECOME ONE. When this union of mind, will, emotion, and spirit takes place between husband and wife there is nothing left to be "submitted," for duplicity is overcome, all variance flees away like the chaff driven with the wind out of the floor, and every disunity is swallowed up in the ONENESS OF HIS LIFE. Blessed unity! The "two" are "set at one again." Eden has been reentered. This is the glory and majesty of the Kingdom of God! "The Kingdom of God is PEACE ... in the Holy Ghost" **(Rom. 14:17).** Kingdom peace isn't when one subdues the other, forcing an agreement which submission only brought about.

Having said all this, let us now apply this beautiful truth spiritually and internally, to Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, and to us the bride in our soul. Spiritually, this means that as long as we walk in imperfection and duplicity THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN HEADSHIP OVER THE SOUL. The soul is commanded to be under obedience and is to be subjected under the authority of the spirit. Ah, but the headship of the man over the woman was never part of God's original order in the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God where man and woman walked and reigned together in the precious mind of Christ. In God's grand and glorious plan, when redemption has finished its work within us, man and woman, male and female, SPIRIT AND SOUL shall both be so quickened in the pure nature and holy mind of Christ that the two shall again be one. SUBMISSION shall be swallowed up into UNITY! Glory!

The wonderful goal is not just our will, our mind, and our emotions SUBMITTED to His will and way, but ONLY HIS WILL! In the marriage union of spirit and soul there is one new creature, Christ, with one mind, one will, one emotion - HIS made OURS. Blessed union! It is not His mind controlling our mind, but it is our possessing HIS mind. This is CHRIST IN YOU the hope of glory. It is more than just a "fill me" with more of God, but a being swallowed up into Him, that henceforth it is "no longer I, but CHRIST liveth in me" **(Gal. 2:20).** This is what we are yearning for - that we might have a constant outflow of our true inner nature. As Paul wrote, "Stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being..." **(Rom. 12:2)** (Wuest).

Prefigured by Adam and Eve in Eden, this is the perfect man, man in the image of God, male and female, spirit and soul dwelling in the Garden of the body, united in one, given dominion over all things. These are rising from the far country of sin and self, and from the confusion and limitation of religious Babylon, to be united again as one in the Spirit of God. These shall rule and reign gloriously, first over the domain of their own individual "earth," then over that earth out there, and in due time over all the endless vastnesses of infinity forever! Dearly beloved brethren, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us and, forsaking all else, cleave only unto HIM. Then shall we hear, down the corridors of our own soul, the celestial cry of jubilation THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 29
THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART TWENTY-NINE

THE GREAT PRETENDER GO OUT TO MEET HIM

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" **(Rev. 19:7).**

In our last study we shared the precious truth of what it means to personally experience Jesus Christ as the Spiritual Husband of the individual soul. In our consideration of the Bridegroom and the bride we need to remember that first of all these beautiful realities are fulfilled in us personally. Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere; for us He is our hope of glory, and it is CHRIST IN YOU. The body of Christ is now multiplied by thousands, and it is not just one little girl that Christ will receive but a corporate bride composed of a vast multitude of individual members. The point is just this: all that happens to the corporate body must be experienced by each member - it is first and foremost the experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. If I do not know Christ PERSONALLY as my Bridegroom, it is impossible for me to be a part of that corporate body which is joined into union with Him.

In this study we will write not of the individual, but of the relationship to Christ of the whole - the many-membered, corporate bride. Let us by all means remember that we are to be perfected in ONE; and in union with all who are joined to the Lord we become the bride-body of Christ.

Back in the Old Testament the nation of Israel is called the wife of Jehovah. In that Old Testament dispensation known as the Law age, during which time God's Kingdom work in the world was executed by the nation of Israel, that nation sustained the relationship to God that a wife sustains to her husband. You will find it in **Isa. 54:5** in these endearing words, "For thy Maker is thine husband; Jehovah of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel." Again, "...which My covenant they broke, although I was an HUSBAND unto them, saith Jehovah" **(Jer. 31:32).**

As a brother has written, It is always hard to tell what is the deciding factor in the choice of a marriage partner, for love is indefinable, and this is no less true in the choice that Jehovah made of the people who were to institute His national bride. He chose them, not because they were a great or a powerful people, nor even because they were a rich and prosperous people, not even because they were a particularly good or righteous people. In fact, the scripture expresses it this way: "The Lord did not set His love upon you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers..." **(Deut. 7:7-8).**

The account of the ceremony whereby Jehovah God took Israel to be His wife is distinctly portrayed in Exodus, chapter 19. The ceremony was concluded when the Israelites, having observed a period of cleansing and sanctification, beheld Jehovah come down upon mount Sinai in a display of awe-inspiring splendor. The conditions of the marriage contract are clearly stated: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" **(Ex. 19: 5-6).** Just as the modern bride endorses the marriage contract with the simple words, "I do," so the people of Israel responded to their divine Bridegroom: "All the people answered together and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken WE WILL DO" **(Ex. 19:8).** For a brief season after their conquest of the promised land of Canaan the children of Israel were faithful as the wife of Jehovah. But after a time we find the unmistakable signs of infidelity showing up. Their heads were turned and their hearts allured by the gods and goddesses of the heathen nations round about, Baal, Milcom, Chemosh and Ashtaroth, the Queen of Heaven. The behavior of Israel became that of an unfaithful

wife committing adultery with many lovers. As she spurned the love of her Husband, being joined unto the idols and demon gods of the heathen, her affairs led her deeper and deeper into spiritual adultery and religious whoredoms. Jehovah pleaded with Israel to return unto Him. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah, for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" **(Jer. 3:14).**

With words graphic and impassioned Jehovah warned Israel that her treacheries could result in only one thing - divorce - the dissolution of the marriage contract entered into at Sinai. Consider carefully these words of the prophet: "Jehovah said to me in the days of Josiah the king of Judah, have you seen what that faithless and backsliding Israel has done, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the harlot? And I saw, even though Judah knew that for this very cause of committing adultery (idolatry) I, Jehovah, had put faithless Israel away and given her a bill of divorcement; yet her faithless and treacherous sister Judah was not afraid, but she also went and played the harlot ... committing adultery with idols of stones and trees. Surely, as a wife treacherously and faithlessly departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously and faithlessly with Me, O house of Israel, says Jehovah" **(Jer. 3: 6-9, 20)** (Amplified).

When the Lord came and walked among them, He called them an ADULTEROUS generation, for they had not returned in faithfulness to Jehovah. What a striking thought - Almighty Jehovah God D-I-V-O-R-C-E-D HIS WIFE! He "put her away" and gave her "a bill of divorcement." Through the prophet Hosea He sent her this word: "Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not (no longer) My wife, neither am I her husband" **(Hos. 2:20).** So it was that God divorced Israel, and in 721 B.C. and A.D. 70 the Lord cast her out of His house - the Land of Palestine - to return no more for long millenniums.

In the New Testament we come to one of the grandest titles given the Lord's people throughout all generations - the BRIDE OF CHRIST. The question follows: Are the Old Testament "wife of Jehovah" and the New Testament "bride of Christ" one and the same? In the New Testament we see one of the most remarkable things. According to the Eastern customs, if a young man had acquired sufficient means to make it possible for him to provide a marriage dowry, then the father called in a man who was a close and trusted friend of the family to act as a deputy or go-between for him and his son. This go-between was called "The Friend of the Bridegroom." This man was fully informed as to the dowry the young man was willing to pay for his bride. He then went to the home of the young woman and negotiated with a deputy of the bride's family. There must be consent for the hand of the young woman and agreement on the dowry. When these were agreed upon, the deputies arose and their congratulations were exchanged, and they all drank together as a seal of the covenant thus entered into. Then this "Friend of the Bridegroom" continued to act on behalf of the bridegroom until the wedding was completed. When finally the bridegroom had "taken" his bride and escorted her into his own home for the marriage feast, THEN was the joy of the "Friend of the Bridegroom" fulfilled (Jn. 3:29).

In **John 3:28-29** we find John the Baptist making it very clear that he was not a member of the bride of Christ. Consider carefully and reverently his words: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: THIS MY JOY THEREFORE IS FULFILLED." Now John the Baptist, an Old Testament prophet, who, according to our Lord's own estimation was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets, walks out of the Old Testament and delivers the last message of that dispensation, and he says this: "I'm not the Bridegroom; and not only that, I'm not part of the bride - I'm just a 'friend,' the 'Friend of the Bridegroom' " - that's the best that this man, who was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, could say concerning himself. It is perfectly clear that he never thought of himself as part of the bride at all.

It was to the church, which is His body that Paul wrote, "I have ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" **(II Cor. 11:2).** I am confident that anyone who is of sane mind and sound judgment will agree that there is a vast universe of difference between an UNFAITHFUL, DIVORCED WIFE and a CHASTE, ESPOUSED VIRGIN. And Israel was an unfaithful wife, while in the New Testament the church is presented as a chaste virgin to be the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was to the members of the church that Paul addressed these meaningful words: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved THE CHURCH, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing

of water by the word, that He might present it (as a bride) to Himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto HIS WIFE, and they two shall be ONE FLESH. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" **(Eph. 5:25-27, 31-32).**

Under the law of Jehovah, Israel, once divorced and having been joined unto the heathen gods, it was impossible to return to her first husband, Jehovah, again. This law is stated in the simplest of terms. "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and when she departs out of his house, she goes and marries another man, and if the latter (second) husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; or if the last husband dies, who took her as his wife, then the former husband, who sent her away, MAY NOT TAKE HER AGAIN TO BE HIS WIFE ... for that is an abomination unto the Lord" **(Deut. 4:1-4)** Amplified.. Israel was indeed married to another husband after Jehovah put her away. Of the ten-tribed house of Israel the Lord said, "Ephraim is JOINED to idols" **(Hos. 4:17),** in the same sense that Paul spoke of when he said, "He that is JOINED unto the Lord is one spirit" **(I Cor. 6:17).** And of both Israel and Judah it was said, "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in ISREAL and in JERUSALEM; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF A STRANGE GOD" **(Mal. 2:11).** Thus, under the terms of the law, it was not possible for her to return and be married again to her first husband - Jehovah.

Strange - in spite of this law - the Lord still loved the children of Israel dearly, and still wanted them for His wife, and promised to bring her back into a marriage relationship with Him. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband); and shalt call Me no more Baali... and I will BETROTH THEE UNTO ME FOREVER; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in FAITHFULNESS: and thou shalt know Jehovah" **(Hos. 2:14-16, 19-20).**

Let us not look at these statements as mere facts or reading matter, but diligently search the scripture and seek God in humility and reverence for understanding. It is a strange saying - but considering Jehovah's own law concerning divorce and remarriage to the same woman that was divorced after she was joined to another the only way Israel could be married again to her first husband was FOR THAT FIRST HUSBAND TO DIE! "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" **(Rom. 7:2).** It thus becomes crystal clear that the restoration of Israel as the wife of Jehovah, spoken of by Hosea, could only come about by the death of Him who wrote her the bill of divorcement! If the husband should die, then the wife was free to marry whosoever she pleased.

May God anoint the minds of all who read these words and give understanding of the sublime and awe-inspiring truth I now write. May your heart grasp the wonder and magnitude of the fact that the great and eternal Jehovah God of the Old Testament covenanted to embody and manifest Himself on earth in the person of His Son, thus to walk among men as God in human flesh, with the express purpose to live and DIE THROUGH THIS SON. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it! This brings us to Calvary, the greatest love story the world has ever witnessed, for there upon that cursed tree, the Saviour, the Redeemer of Israel, the Saviour of the world, Jesus, JEHOVAH-SAVIOUR perfect Almighty Jehovah, yet perfect man, clothed in human flesh, poured out His life-blood, to die and rise again a new creation man, that He might as a new creation man, the last Adam, be married even to her whom He had put away! We feel helpless before a truth so great and eternal. God must teach us these things. Ah, my friend, you find it difficult to believe that it was the mighty God who came and lived and died in Jesus Christ? Hear now but a couple testimonies to this great truth which pours forth from the pages of God's blessed book from the first book of Genesis to the last book of the Revelation. "And ... He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto HIM which died for them, and rose again ... to wit, that G-O-D WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself" **(II Cor. 5:15,19).** "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: G-O-D WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,

received up into glory" **(I Tim. 3:16).** Jesus said, "It is not I that doeth the works; but My Father who dwelleth in Me."

Let me make one thing very clear. Israel alone does not constitute the bride of Christ. Those who would separate between Israel and the church do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. The New Testament is unmistakably plain that the TRUE CHURCH I-S the bride of Christ. Each and every statement in the pages of the New Testament concerning the bride of Christ was written to, directed to, addressed to, and sent to THE CHURCH. That is a simple and undeniable fact. When Jesus died and rose again, not only was He lawfully able to take back estranged Israel to be His wife - He was likewise free TO MARRY WHOSOEVER HE WILLED. The mystery of the bride of Christ was revealed to the apostle Paul and he revealed it unto the saints in the church in these words: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the GENTILES (nations) should be FELLOW HEIRS, and of the SAME BODY, and PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST by the gospel" **(Eph. 3:1-6).**

Harken attentively to these words of inspiration: "Now the promises (covenants, agreements) were decreed and made to Abraham and his Seed (his Offspring, his Heir). He (God) does not say, And to s-e-e-d-s (descendants, heirs), as if referring to many persons; but, And to your Seed (your Descendant, your Heir), obviously referring to ONE INDIVIDUAL, WHO IS NONE OTHER THAN CHRIST, the Messiah ... for IN CHRIST JESUS you are ALL sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ - into a spiritual union and communion with Christ - have put on Christ. There is now no distinction, neither JEW nor GREEK, there is neither SLAVE nor FREE, there is not MALE and FEMALE; for you are ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. And if you belong to CHRIST (are in Him, Who is Abraham's one and only SEED), then YOU ARE ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING and heirs according to the promise" **(Gal. 3:16, 26-29)** (Amplified) - Men of any nation, who believe in Christ Jesus, become Abraham's seed through faith, and thus become a vital member of the Israel of God. It is furthermore true that all such who by faith are born of the Spirit of God are constituted members of CHRIST'S CHURCH. To be in union with Christ is to be Abraham's seed. To be in union with Christ is to be a member of His church. To be in Christ is to be an Israelite. None can deny it! And it is in union with Christ that both Israelite and Gentile, Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female are joined together in one body. Can we not see by this that it is IN THE CHURCH that Israel, along with the chosen from every nation under heaven, is again constituted the wife of Jehovah - the BRIDE OF CHRIST. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a NEW CREATURE" **(Gal. 6:15).** "Therefore if any man be in Christ He is a NEW CREATURE" **(II Cor. 5:17).**

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead He redeemed man from his unregenerate state and by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost makes him an entirely NEW CREATURE in Christ Jesus. The man or woman in Christ is dead, and his or her life is hid with Christ in God. This clearly explains how it is that the UNFAITHFUL WIFE of the Old Testament is empowered to become the CHASTE VIRGIN of the New, for she is no more the unregenerated seed of Abraham after the flesh, but the REGENERATED SEED OF ABRAHAM IN CHRIST JESUS. And thus it is that the heathen who were without Christ, being ALIENS from the commonwealth of Israel, and STRANGERS from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, are now in Christ Jesus MADE NIGH by the blood of Christ, for He is our peace who has made both ONE, having reconciled BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE BODY by the cross; now therefore ye are no more STRANGERS and FOREIGNERS, but FELLOW CITIZENS with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD OF GOD (Eph. 2:11-19).

THE GREAT PRETENDER

The apostle John was one of the three mighty ones who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and

heard the inmost beating of His heart should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the church in this age. And such is the case. To him the Lord gave a graphic picture of the development of the bride of Christ over the past two millenniums.

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, gave him a communication concerning the church, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven churches in Asia. With wondering eyes John stood transfixed as there came to him one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven plagues and talked with him, saying, "COME HITHER; I will show unto thee the judgment of THE GREAT WHORE that sitteth upon many waters" **(Rev. 17:1).** As John beheld and pondered the scene abruptly changed and he saw an even greater wonder as the same angel came to him again, and said, "COME HITHER, I will show thee THE BRIDE, the Lamb's wife" **(Rev. 21:9).**

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 do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a revelation from God to see either. Of the harlot it is written, "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" **(Rev. 17:3).** Of the Bride it is written, "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).** Of the harlot it was said, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" **(Rev. 11:4-5).** In contrast of which it was said of the bride: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). The bride is described as, "...the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious" **(Rev. 21:10-11).**

The church of Christ is called a MYSTERY. She is presented as a virgin. She is called a bride. Finally, she is presented as a city, the New Jerusalem, the city of peace and righteousness and divine order. This scarlet clad woman is called a MYSTERY. She is not a virgin, she is a harlot. She is not a 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 and filthiness and the denial of divine order. As to Babylon, John adds, "When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I WILL TELL THEE THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN ... the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues...and the woman which thou sawest is that great city (a corporate people), which reigneth over the kings of the earth" **(Rev. 17:7).**

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 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, which Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself, and that filthy harlot system, full of names of blasphemy, who with her multiplied sects and denominations, 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 now see the hidden mystery of Christ and His bride! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing in common with that tradition-ridden system which all men everywhere believe to be THE CHURCH.

The two women are contrasted in every particular that is mentioned about them; the one is pure as purity itself, "made ready," clothed in heaven's unsullied holiness: the other, foul as corruption could make her, fit only for the burning fires of judgment. The one belongs to the Lamb, who loves her as the bridegroom loves the bride; the other is associated with a wild beast, and with the kings of the earth, who ultimately hate and destroy her.

The one is clothed in fine linen, and in another place is said to be clothed with the sun, and crowned with a coronet of stars; that is, robed in divine righteousness, and resplendent with heavenly glory; the other is attired in scarlet and gold, in jewels and pearls, gorgeous indeed but with earthly splendor only, who, being increased with this world's goods and having need of nothing has made herself drunk with the blood of saints and thrust Christ Himself outside her doors. The one is represented as a chaste virgin, espoused to Christ; the other is mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The one goes in with the Lamb to the marriage supper, amid the glad hallelujahs of celestial realms; the other is stripped, insulted, torn, destroyed, and burned by her illicit lovers. We lose sight of the bride amid the effulgence of heavenly glory and joy, and of the harlot amid the gloom and darkness of the smoke that "rose up to the ages of ages."

It is impossible to find in scripture, a contrast more marked; and the conclusion is irresistible, that whatever the one may represent, the other must prefigure ITS OPPOSITE. They are not two disconnected visions, but a pair - a pair associated, not by likeness, but by contrast. Now the Word of God leaves us in no doubt as to the signification of the emblematic bride, the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem. We read, "For the husband is the head of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the Head of the CHURCH: and He is the saviour of the body. 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 and without blemish. This is a great mystery: but I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" **(Eph. 5:23-32).** The bride of Christ is not old Israel after the flesh, but the church, which He is building up of living stones as an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Armed with this understanding, what then must the contrasted symbol, the Babylonian harlot represent? SURELY SOME FALSE AND APOSTATE CHURCH, some church which, while professing to belong to Christ, is in reality given up to fellowship with the world, and linked in closest union with the rulers of the earth realm; a worldly church, which has left her first love, forgotten her heavenly calling, sunk into carnality and sin, and proved shamelessly and glaringly faithless to her Lord. If Babylon is indeed the FALSE CHURCH, then the New Jerusalem bride of Christ must be the TRUE CHURCH; the law of the contrast demands it! Be it observed, that these symbols, a woman and a city, symbolize definite systems, corporate bodies, not merely a multitude of similar, but disconnected individuals. The true church of Christ is a body; its members are united in the closest union to their Head; one life animates them: "Because I live, ye shall live also;" one spirit dwells in them, they are one habitation of God. The link that unites them is, however, a SPIRITUAL one; the body, is consequently invisible AS SUCH. A false church can have no such spiritual link. The bond that unites IT must therefore be carnal, outward, visible; the church represented by Babylon dwells in the earthlies, must be A VISIBLE CHURCH, an earthly organization, and as such capable of being discerned and recognized.

George Hawtin has aptly written: "To see what I am saying you will have to go far beyond the edge of the crowd. You will need to go beyond the circle of that tired old thing men call THE CHURCH. The word 'church' has become sorely desecrated, so much so that the picture of what THE TRUE CHURCH really is has faded away until men can see in the church nothing but million dollar temples standing on street corners or multitudes of people who dwell behind the high walls which they call denominations. But this, my friend, is NOT THE CHURCH. This has nothing to do with His ... body. These denominations are only man made things, little self-appointed Christs who believe that they have the truth and that wisdom will die with them. I do not believe that they are divisions in the church or divisions in the body of Christ. They are something altogether aside from the true church and something different from the body of Christ. The church which Jesus called 'My church' has never had a division in it. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is that wonderful habitation Jesus spoke of as 'My Father's house,' saying, 'In My Father's house is many mansions.' The house, which the Father is building, is the true church, the... body of Christ. This building IS RISING upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ, the first Son, is the corner stone or the cap stone of it. He is the Head of the body, the church, the head stone of the corner. All other stones are living stones, built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus" -end quote.

The New Jerusalem and Babylon are, to use common language, rivals to each other. In the one there is nothing of man, it is all Christ; in the other there is nothing of Christ, it is all man. The one is the expression and the exhibition of the beauty seen in Christ Jesus; it is His fullness. The great lesson for us is that in the TRUE

CHURCH there is nothing that is not Christ. This comes home very practically to us for we may decide as to everything by the question: Is it Babylon, or is it the New Jerusalem? Which is it of? Which is it for? Is it for man's interests or Christ's? Babylon is the aggregation or collection, the bringing together of everything that suits and appeals to man, while the New Jerusalem is the exhibition of the divine beauty that was seen in Christ on earth.

What dreadful thoughts and feelings are awakened in the soul by the very sound of the name MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT. It is a terrible name. Babylon is called "the great city," Babylon, "that mighty city." Yes, man always wants something "great," but God does not call His church great. No, another adjective suits her better - "holy." Beware when Christians, especially preachers, tell you of their "great" churches, their "great" programs, their "great" pastors and evangelists, their "great" congregations, their "great" meetings and revivals. Babylon loves greatness, but we read of "the HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." Oh that God's people could realize once and for all that it is "NOT by MIGHT nor by POWER, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" **(Zech. 4:6).** The might and power here spoken of refer to man's might and power - not to God's. To the natural and not to the supernatural. There are two sources of power. Many "great" church organizations today boast of their "power," "influence," or "popularity" in the world. Their power and influence are derived from the magnificence of their huge church plants, their immense bank accounts, their numerical strength, their grandiose programs to entertain the people and, supposedly, to convert and change the world, and their connection with the "right" people - those with wealth and influence in this present world. Their fine talent, and soothing worship services, their beautiful forms and cherished traditions, all help to make them popular - to give them prestige and power in a world of "religious," "respectable" sinners. It is from such as these that Paul by inspiration has warned us that we must separate ourselves. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away" **(II Tim. 3:5).**

I share the following paragraph from the works of George Hawtin, which I feel are of true and anointed confirmation to what I am saying. "By her (Babylon) men and women are being brought to spiritual ruin and desolation as they sit with eyes glued to a screen and their ears tuned to the trash that is presented by sermon and song while their hearts are turned away from the truth. Several times each month I receive at least three computerized letters from the 700 Club... urging me to give more to this great cause. The truth is that never once in all my life have I ever given so much as one cent, and furthermore, I never will. They are part and parcel of the Babylon system; and this I believe is true of practically every T.V. preacher in America and elsewhere. I will not make crowds love me when I set forth these things, but that matters not to me. I care not a straw if every man on earth forsakes me just so long as I proclaim that which God has made clear to be the truth. Listen to them preach and you will soon see that it is a professional show from start to finish, often times engaging professional and unregenerant talent and, if I am not mistaken, unregenerate preachers as well. COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE! Well is she named a HARLOT. She sits as a queen, and says, 'I am no widow.' She is decked in scarlet and purple and precious stones and pearls. In her hand is a 'golden cup' full of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Whenever people are found sitting and watching these actors and performers on T.V. with their idolatrous doctrines of prosperity, their psychology and professionalism by which they hold captive millions who are more interested in a show and prosperity than in walking with Christ, then we may know that these are not the elect of the Lord. These are the foolish virgins who have let the oil of the Spirit drain out of their lives and will be found wanting when Jesus comes. Cut yourself off from this harlot lest her wiles destroy you" -end quote.

The wanton harlot calls herself Christianity, but she is not. She is a corrupt mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, the masterpiece of Satan, the corrupter of the truth of God, the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling block, the darkest blot in the universe of God. It is the corruption of the very best thing, and therefore the very worst of corruptions. It is THE GREAT PRETENDER, the counterfeit and usurper of the holy and glorious bride of Christ. It is worse by far than Judaism; worse by far than all the darkest forms of paganism, because it has higher light and richer privileges, makes the very highest profession, and occupies the very loftiest platform. Finally, it is that awful apostasy for which is reserved the very heaviest judgments of God - the most bitter dregs in the cup of His righteous wrath. True it is, blessed be God! there are a few names even in this harlot system who, through grace, have not defiled their garments. There are some brilliant embers amid the smoldering ashes - precious stones amid the terrible debris. But as to the mass of Christian

profession to which the term "the church" applies, nothing can be more appalling, whether we think of its present condition or its future destiny. I doubt that one Christian in a million has anything like an adequate sense of the true character and inevitable doom of that system which surrounds them. If they had it would solemnize their minds, and cause them to feel the urgent need of standing apart in holy separation, from the ways of the harlot system, and in distinct testimony against its spirit and principles. The "thus saith the Lord" to God's people is unmistakably clear: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" **(Rev. 18:4-8).**

GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM

We are told that in this, our day, shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins. Virgins are pure and undefiled: not the common run of Christians who have defiled themselves with every lover-idol they can find and have departed from a walk in the Spirit of God and slithered off into the ditch, there to slop and flounder around in error and deception and ignorance and fleshly religious activities of every kind. Virgins are not defiled with women - with organized church systems. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE GOES, and not human leaders who have set themselves up between Christ and His saints (Rev. 14:4).

These ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Not very many people who name the name of Christ are doing that! Not very many know who or what the Bridegroom is, and therefore do not know where or how to meet Him. Not very many Bible students even suspect that the coming of the Bridegroom is different than the coming of the King or the coming of Christ in other dimensions. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "UP" to meet the Bridegroom. All their fuss and stir will be in vain. For no one will ever go "UP" to meet Him! There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom, and His coming in many other ways and forms. To their unenlightened minds there is but one single coming of Christ where He crashes down through the clouds of earth's atmosphere. Most saints today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. But not so with the virgins. They are in the right place at the right time, and all looking for a very blessed event - the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom. And they are spiritually intelligent enough to know that no one will ever go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. But in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" **(Mat. 25:6).** And the only way one may go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is to "come out" from among the world and the flesh and the harlot churches with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union.

One of the marvels of God's condescending love and mercy is that He comes to us and meets us on our level, right where we are. "He came to His own," John writes **(Jn. 1:11).** "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" **(Lk. 19:10).** Jesus also invites the weary and heavy laden to "come unto Me, and I will give you rest" **(Mat. 11:28).** To the spiritually thirsty He calls, "Come unto Me and drink..." **(Jn. 7:37).** But there also comes a time when those who have been the recipients of God's love and mercy MUST THEN COME TO JESUS - not for bread and fishes, but in order that His will may be done in us and that we may be identified in union with Him.

The reason we must go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is because He is Himself "out." The message of the Gospels is very clear - all things related to Christ took place OUTSIDE of religion. In that day Judaism was the religious system of God's people. But when Jesus came everything concerning Him took place outside of that system. In plain language, Christ had nothing to do with religion - not even that religion which was purportedly based upon the Holy Scriptures (em. ed.). The birth of Christ was apart from the religion of the Lord's people. God did not send the angel Gabriel to king Herod's palace, nor to the company of priests, nor to the members of the Sanhedrin, nor to the leaders of the Pharisees or Sadducees. God sent His messenger to a dusty little

town in a despised Province, Nazareth of Galilee. Everything related to His birth was outside Jerusalem, outside the temple, outside the priesthood, outside the scribes and elders and all the religious sects; it had nothing to do with the organized religion of the day, although that religion had originally been founded according to God's Holy Word.

When the Christ child was found He was found outside of religion. He was not found by any priest, nor by any Levite, nor by any scribe, nor by any Pharisee, nor any holy people. We are all familiar with the account of the heavenly star appearing in a pagan country to people who were not even worshippers of Jehovah. But they found the Christ by the star. We know also how the band of heavenly angels appeared to lowly shepherds attending their flocks at night, and how startled and wondering they hurried into Bethlehem to find the new-born Saviour. When the hour arrived many years thence for Jesus' ministry to begin, He was introduced to Israel outside of religion. John the Baptist, as we have mentioned, was the one who announced Christ to the people. This John, though born a priest, departed from the organized priesthood and took up residence in the wilderness. He lived in a wild place and appeared to the cultured as a wild man wearing camel's hair and eating wild honey and locusts. He was not in the temple, he had no altar to offer sacrifices, his ministry was entirely apart from the religious system of the priesthood. This was the pioneer, the forerunner of Christ. Christ was followed outside of religion. Who were those who surrounded Him, who made up the multitudes that thronged the valleys and the mountains? The high priests? The scribes? The Pharisees? The Sadducees? The Essenes? The elders of Israel? NO! They were fishermen, tax gatherers, sinners, unlearned people, the poor and sick and needy, the common people who heard Him gladly and were transformed in mind and heart and body by the wisdom and power of the gracious words which flowed from His anointed lips.

"Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples fast not?" **(Mat. 9:14).** The disciples of John came to Jesus and asked such a question because they saw something - they saw Jesus sitting at a feast, not just an ordinary meal, but a feast (Lk. 5:29). Furthermore, they saw Him feasting not with the high priest, the Pharisees, or the scribes, but with the sinners, the publicans. Jesus was feasting with the corrupt tax-gatherers, of all people! This really bothered the religious ones. "Why do we fast and Your disciples FEAST?" they asked. The Lord Jesus did not argue nor reply to John's disciples with a doctrinal dissertation. He said to them, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" He answered not with a doctrine, but with a person. He referred to Himself as the Bridegroom! Let all who prize the hope of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus know the difference between religion and the Bridegroom! Like the Pharisees and the disciples of John we have all been so religious. Many of us are still to some extent under religion's influence. We are talking about fasting, baptism, communion, this religious activity and that, while the Lord Jesus is saying, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" The Lord is not speaking about doctrines or religious rituals, but pointing to Himself as the Bridegroom.

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this our day, and said, "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom" **(Mat. 25:1).** It is not our purpose to discuss who was the bride, or who were the five foolish virgins, or the five wise virgins. May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion - to detach ourselves from religion, from present things, from self, from the world, from ALL - to go forth, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply SPIRITUAL. It is the out-going of the heart to be joined in union with our Head and Lord. It means such a detachment from the world that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM. We are going out and away from our own preconceived ideas and religious understanding! Out and away from the kingdoms of men! Out from self-will! Out from the traditions of men, and the elders! Out from man's organizations and promotions! Out from the prophets who preach for hire! Out from the shepherds who deceive and fleece the sheep! Out from the healers who heal for gain! Out from the hireling ministry that incessantly cries, "Money, money, money, money!" Out from bondage to the merchandizers, the dove-sellers, the book-vendors, the tape-peddlers (for a price), the religious profiteers, who masquerade as prophets of God! Out from the confusion of Babylon, from man's laws, man's rules, man's heresies, which have no power to set you free! To those blessed ones quickened by the Spirit in this hour THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM COMETH! Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!

No man will ever go out to meet the Bridegroom until the ears of his spirit have been opened to hear the joyful cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" I would point out that it is in the original, "Behold, the Bridegroom," not, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Many scholars agree that the word "cometh" is an interpolation - an insertion into the manuscript by the scribes. If I tell you the Lord is coming, I am putting all upon that coming, not upon HIMSELF. "The Bridegroom is here!" that is the cry. And it is a very solemn and yet blessed thing, and I am sure I seek to awaken my own soul to the reality of that cry - "He is here!" Suppose someone came to the door and cried, "He is here, go ye out to meet Him;" would we not drop all and go? It means an appointed place of rendezvous. We have no word in our language to express it properly. Let me assure you, precious friend of mine, that that place of appointment with the Bridegroom has to do with an attitude, a mind, a condition, a state of being. Some speak of the Lord's coming because everything here is confusion and trouble. When the Lord comes, say they, He will settle all and solve everything. But I want to settle myself - to here and now be divested of everything that is unsuited to Him, that I may know Him in His coming. The apostle says, "That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ ... I am jealous over you ... for I have espoused you to one husband." I covet that preparation, to be washed and cleansed and presented to Christ, a part of that glorious church which is without spot or wrinkle or blemish.

I say to all as far as our message can reach: Listen! Do you not hear the cry, which rings over the land? Listen! Soon it will swell to a mighty chorus. Listen! High above the cry of battle; high above the deafening roar of the grinding wheels of business; high above the clamorous voices of a pleasure-crazed world; high above the rantings and ravings of the hucksters of religion. Listen! It is the Voice, which cries: "Behold the Bridegroom!" The Voice of the Spirit of God is calling you to lift up your eyes to the heavenly hills to behold the Bridegroom who sits in the heavenly places of the glory of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, both in this age and that which is to come. Oh, my friend, forsake the bawdy harlot and let us arise and go forth unto the Bridegroom. May tens of thousands of voices re-echo the soul-stirring cry until it passes in its mighty power, from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth, rousing all the elect of God to abandon all and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

Once more I would quote the challenging words of George Hawtin. "With all my heart I believe that the days are few for the people of God to escape from the power of Babylon, but escape they must if they are to avoid being partakers of her sins and receiving of her plagues. There is only one way to escape Babylon's hypnotic power. It is in strict obedience to the command, 'COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE.' This obedience is not difficult. It is very simple, though it demands true consecration. All you have to do is walk out. Leave great Babylon behind, as Abram did in the long ago, and go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" -end quote. Have you done it? Can you say that you have gone out to meet the Bridegroom? During the past forty years a cry ever increasing in its intensity has been going forth to the true saints of these last days - and, thank God! untold thousands have heard the trumpet call and gone forth to meet Him. Many others think they have come out - perhaps they have physically, but often their mind is still in the clutches of the old traditions. So wrapped in the grave clothes of creed and doctrine and delusion, there is a long process of coming OUT, to where we truly enter into UNION with the Bridegroom, becoming ONE IN HIM; one in His mind, will, nature and purpose.

Each one who is truly virgin towards the Lord will cry with the Shulamite, "Draw me and we will run after Thee" (S. of S. 1:4). We know that we are helpless in ourselves, and He alone can do this. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," saith the Lord. Each one of the virgins that make up the bride, must be drawn by God's personal dealing and working in the soul; and as each one yields to the Bridegroom's drawing, they will all find themselves in the company of those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The Word reads: "Draw ME and WE will run after Thee." The drawing of God is upon each elect member who will make up the bride; His hand is cutting and shaping each living stone for the habitation of the Spirit, which He is building for Himself. It is as each soul is drawn, that all run after Him; it is as He perfects each one, that all come forth in perfection; it is as each one is put into His purifying fires, that the gold in each life comes out pure and shining, and the glory of God shines out from the whole.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 30
THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

When God created man male and female in His image, He revealed that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in each of the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father, and many other things as well. Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Let us never become so over-balanced in our zeal to become SONS OF GOD that we despise the marvelous reality of BRIDESHIP! The simple but sublime truth is that THE WAY TO SONSHIP I-S BRIDESHIP! This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This graphic picture reveals that it is the relationship of brideship that births the realm of sonship. Jesus said, "I am the WAY, the truth and the life; no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship. It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made ONE IN HIM IN LOVE, that we are prepared for that illustrious glory and strength and dominion over all things as the sons of God. This is a true principle in God, which I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this our day, and said, "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom" **(Mat. 25:1).** It is not our purpose to explore the identity of the bride, or who were the five foolish virgins, or the five wise ones. May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion - to detach ourselves from religion, from present things, from self, from the world, from ALL - to go forth, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply SPIRITUAL. It is the out-going of the heart to be joined in union with our Head and Lord. It means such a detachment from THIS WORLD that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM.

It means "falling in love" with Jesus Christ our Head and Lord. It means being truly virgin in our desires towards the Lord; it means walking in the Spirit, keeping ourselves unto HIM and unto HIM ALONE; it means forsaking once and for all any partnership with the wanton harlot, Mystery Babylon; it means renouncing the schemes and plans and ambitions of the carnal mind and our love of the world and the desires of the flesh; it means to have no other love and no other god before Him, no master that rules our life, no lord that dictates our actions, no reserved areas of our being. To those apprehended ones quickened by the Spirit in this hour THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM COMETH! Listen! Have not the ears of your spirit been opened to hear the joyful cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" Listen! Has not your heart been deeply stirred and moved within you to hasten to obey the urgent command: "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!"

There are two voices abroad in the land today. Each of these voices purports to be the voice of the Spirit of God. One of these voices rings out loud and clear, "COME O-U-T OF HER MY PEOPLE! " The other voice issues forth from the mouths of men who profess to be Spirit-filled, tongues-speaking, Holy Ghost anointed leaders, teachers, apostles and prophets in the Charismatic Movement, exhorting the people, "S-T-A-Y I-N HER MY PEOPLE! Stay in your denomination, for, after all," they croon, "the Holy Spirit will make you a BETTER METHODIST, a BETTER BAPTIST, a BETTER PRESBYTERIAN, a BETTER CATHOLIC, a BETTER B-A-B-Y-L-O-N-I-A-N!" It requires but little of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to discern which of these voices is the voice of the Holy Spirit and which is the voice of the great antichrist. The voice that urges people to remain in Mystery Babylon is unmistakably the voice of rebellion and blasphemy against the

clear Word of the Lord. I have no hesitation whatever in declaring to you that God is not today in the business of blessing, renewing, or perfecting Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. He IS in the business of calling OUT a people for His name. He IS in the business of gathering together unto HIM. He IS in the business of washing, cleansing and sanctifying the VIRGIN BRIDE OF CHRIST. He IS in the business of building and preparing and adorning the HOLY CITY, the NEW JERUSALEM.

There is a place in the Spirit where saints may dwell in union with Christ. There is a true temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies. There is a church, which is the TRUE CHURCH. It cannot be seen of men. There is a realm where Christ is all in all. There is a "place by Me" where we stand upon a rock and behold His glory (Ex. 33:21). There is a path that the vulture's eye hath not seen (Job 28:7). There is a church of the firstborn whose names are written only in heaven (Heb. 12:23). There is a church, which is the BRIDE OF CHRIST. It has always been an enigma to me to find that a truth so plainly set forth in Holy Scripture should be so confused and misunderstood and misinterpreted by the people of God. That the church is not only the body of Christ in the symbology of a masculine body from the neck down to the toes, but is in truth also the feminine body of Christ as Eve was the body of Adam - his wife - is clear and obvious in the Word of God as is the sun blazing in the cloudless noonday sky.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the HEAD of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the HEAD OF THE CHURCH: and He is the saviour (protector, nurturer) of the body. Therefore, AS the CHURCH is SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST, so let the wives be unto their own husbands in everything. So ought men to love their WIVES as their OWN BODIES. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his OWN FLESH; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, EVEN AS the Lord THE CHURCH: For WE are members of HIS BODY, of HIS FLESH, and of HIS BONES. FOR THIS CAUSE shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be JOINED UNTO HIS WIFE, and THEY TWO shall be ONE FLESH. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE C-H-U-R-C-H" **(Eph. 5:22-32).**

There is a place OUTSIDE THE CAMP of Babylon's vain worship and pseudo-church. "Let us GO FORTH therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" **(Heb. 13:13),** and when you have departed from all these things and broken Babylon's idols from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see NO MAN BUT JESUS ONLY, and then you will understand what it means to be JOINED UNTO HIM. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then you will discover the secret place of the Most High, where the King brings you into His chambers, a hidden place of meeting with the Lord, that place within our own beings where our Lord ever dwells, where we go in and shut the door, where we meet Him alone in the most intimate fellowship and the most exquisite union of soul and spirit. This is a place which the world cannot invade**.** "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that WHERE I AM, there ye may be also" **(Jn. 14:3).** Where is this place? Jesus said, "Where I am." That is sufficient! It is a place in the Spirit that no man can violate. A hidden place for those who are in the world, but not of it, in the very sanctuary of the Spirit of God. A place where we can SEE the countenance of the Bridegroom, and HEAR His voice.

Ah, we do not arrive at this secret and sacred place with one grand leap. It is a continual leaving, leaving, leaving, and the nearer and dearer HE becomes to us, the more rejoiced we are to leave everybody and everything for Him. But where are we to go? Outside the gate, outside the city which hath played the harlot. Do you think that we shall see Him if we stay inside the city? inside with all those who do not love Him enough to go out to meet Him? if we stay with those who hate Him and are half-hearted? NO! It is as we "go forth" that we behold Him, the King in His beauty, and discern His beauty as He sits upon the throne of our lives. Let us go outside the city wall that we may behold Him; let us leave everything which is in the city that our eyes may be anointed to behold Him who is altogether lovely, the Bridegroom of our soul. When the earth is in, our eyes, we cannot behold Jesus; when Babylon is in our eyes, we cannot discern the Bridegroom; when anything else is before our eyes, we cannot see Him. Everything must be cleared away if we would see and hear Him.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

A number of weddings are described in the Bible. The first wedding was performed by a very special guest minister. Whatever ceremony He may have chosen, it did not include those familiar words, "If any man can show just cause why these two should not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else forever hold

his peace." This phrase was unnecessary, for the minister was God Himself, and the couple was Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:18-25). Then there was a very unusual wedding in which the bridegroom found out the next morning, by light of day, that he had married the wrong girl (Gen. 29:21-25). One of the most beautiful wedding stories began in a barley field outside the little town of Bethlehem (Ruth 2). Perhaps the most tragic wedding was that between Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel, a godless Baal worshipper. This marriage would result in much sorrow and suffering for God's people (I Kings 16:29-31). Finally, the Saviour of men chose a wedding in the city of Cana of Galilee to perform His first miracle and show forth His glory (Jn. 2:1-11). However, the most fantastic and wonderful wedding of all time is revealed in the Word of God in these inspiring words: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" **(Rev. 19:7,9).**

"And Jesus spake unto them again by parables, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding ... saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" **(Mat. 22:1-4).**

There is neither time nor space to consider the various elements contained in the parable above - Who are the servants, who are the guests, etc. It is sufficient to know that at this wedding are present the two objects and star participators in the drama that unfolds - the Bridegroom and the bride. Much is said about the proceedings involved in the marriage of Christ and His bride, and it is rather natural that Bible students speculate as to what actually occurs in the marriage. Some men are prone to view the marriage of Christ somewhat after the pattern of a wedding in our modern day society, in which there is a ceremony with the bride being given away and nuptial vows taken. Of course this is absolutely foreign to the Scriptures. If we are to understand what the Bible means by a marriage or a wedding, we must view it as it is portrayed in the Bible itself. There are some Bible examples of marriage which will, to this writer's thinking, adequately depict the marriage of Christ to His bride, and will show us what constitutes that marriage.

The first is the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. The beautiful story is related in Genesis chapter twenty-four of how, when Abraham was old, he sent his eldest servant, the steward of his house, into his own country and among his own kindred to select a bride for his son Isaac. When the servant came to the city of Nahor, by the guiding hand of God he was brought into contact with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. It was clearly evidenced that she was the one God has chosen to be the bride of Isaac. After Rebekah consented to become Isaac's wife, and after the servant had given some special gifts to her, he began the long journey to lead Rebekah to Isaac. The scriptures relate that "...Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that be had done. AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT, AND TOOK REBEKAH, AND SHE BECAME HIS WIFE; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" **(Gen. 24:62-67).**

There was no ceremony, no giving away of the bride, and no nuptial vows exchanged as we see in formal weddings in our society. The marriage simply consisted in Isaac's taking Rebekah unto himself. There is no evidence in scripture that there were any special religious forms in the ancient weddings, no priest or clergyman officiated or validated the marriage. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom. This was, of course, by the mutual consent of the families involved, the matter was publicly known and acknowledged and the marriage was binding.

Another beautiful example is presented in the book of Ruth. When Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, redeemed both Ruth and the estate of Naomi according to the law of the kinsman-redeemer, he redeemed Ruth to be his wife. When the marriage occurred, there was no ceremony. The record simply states, "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife..." (Ruth 4:13). The marriage consisted simply in the bridegroom taking his bride to himself. It

is my deep conviction that, in keeping with these analogies, the marriage of Christ and His bride consists simply in CHRIST TAKING HIS BRIDE TO HIMSELF. The Word of God states it this way: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it ... that He might PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious church..." **(Eph. 5:27).** The Emphatic Diaglott expresses the thought beautifully and correctly: "...that He might PLACE THE CONGREGATION BY HIS OWN SIDE, glorious..." He draws us unto Himself, to His side, into union, and that, my friend, IS THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!

The marriage of the Lamb is the revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the marriage of the Lamb until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ, which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take His. She has left all to follow Him. In mind, will, desire, emotion, hope, plans and actions the two become one.

In later times it became a custom in the Israelite wedding to have a feast after the bridegroom had taken his bride to his house. To this feast, all the friends and neighbors were invited. Such a feast was celebrated when the marriage of Jacob occurred, when he had worked seven years for Laban in order to obtain Rachel, but on the night of the wedding, was given Leah instead (Gen. 29:18-31), In the days of Christ this "Marriage Feast" was arranged by the bridegroom at his parent's home or some other suitable place. The absence of the bride in the early part of the ceremonial procedure was part of the custom. When the night arrived for the wedding festivities to begin, the bridegroom, attended by friends and accompanied by musicians and singers, set out to claim the bride at the house of her father. The bride would be waiting at her house with her maid-servants stationed along the road to alert her when they saw him approaching. The first one to see the bridegroom would shout to the next, "Behold, the bridegroom!" and the shout would be passed along from maid to maid until it reached the bride. She would hasten to put the final touches to her wedding attire and stand ready for his knock on her door. At his knocking the door would open and there would stand his bride in beauty and splendor, all adorned and prepared to go with him to the marriage feast. It was this wonderful scene, applied to Christ and His bride on the spiritual plan that John beheld in his awe-inspiring vision in Revelation chapter twenty-one.

After receiving the bride from her parents with their blessing the bridegroom conducted the whole party back to his own house. The streets of Asiatic cities were dark, and it was necessary that anyone venturing forth at night should carry a lamp or torch, as did the virgins in the parable of Jesus. There were demonstrations of joy all along the road to the destination. On the way other friends of the bride and bridegroom joined the party and there was much music and dancing (Ps. 45:15). Upon arrival the feast began. There was food and wine in abundance and during the meal mirthfulness prevailed, and the guests were expected to exalt the bride. After the wedding feast was over, the bride's parents escorted her to the nuptial chamber, and the husband was escorted there by his friends. They were then left alone and the bridegroom took his bride and the marriage was consummated. At last, there was UNION!

Now, lest you get the idea from this typology that Christ is coming to take His bride away, to leave this earth and take a flight to some other planet for a big supper of pork chops, steaks, baked potatoes and apple pie a-la-mode, let me set things straight. For long centuries the church world has been telling us of a day in the sweet bye and bye. It would be a time when we would be "caught up" in the air and find ourselves feasting and dining at a huge banqueting table in the sky. It would be a wonderful time indeed, this meeting in the air, and we would all feast lavishly on the richest dainties, while all the poor souls on earth who didn't make the rapture would be suffering the hellish torments of the Great Tribulation.

Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. As we have pointed out, there is not one scripture in the whole Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom, or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. This "marriage supper in the sky" business is naught but an ignorant invention and senseless delusion of Mystery Babylon. Most Christians today are not preparing to

meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. All their fuss and stir is in vain. I tell you plainly - THERE WILL BE NO MARRIAGE SUPPER IN THE SKY! In order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6). The marriage supper is not "up." It is OUT.

Great harm is done to God's children in teaching the coming of the Bridegroom and the marriage supper according to the wisdom of men. There are not words in the English language adequate to express how important it is to make the proper preparation for the right event. Suppose that I am invited to a special work day at a church and am instructed to wear old clothes and bring along a broom, a mop, a bucket, some rags and cleaners. Let us further suppose that I get the date confused, and upon arrival at the church discover that a very formal wedding is in progress, and many of my friends are in attendance. How unspeakably embarrassed I would be standing there before my well dressed friends at this lavish event attired in ragged clothes, with mop and bucket in hand! Ah, one must be very certain about where he is going, what the nature of the event is, and precisely how to prepare for it. And should someone find my illustration too crude or inappropriate, let me hastily add that it is a great fact that one does not prepare in the same way for going UP as he does for going OUT! Is it not a delusion that men are preparing themselves for a trip through the air to feast on some kind of natural food in these last days?

The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it. May Christ who is the power of God open the eyes of all who read these lines, even as the scales fell from the vision of Saul of Tarsus when Jesus purged them away. In Mat. 22:1-14 we are informed in the solemnest of tones about the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a king who invited different ones to a marriage feast for his son. A great number of people were invited and the wedding feast was filled with guests. Among the Eastern peoples, noblemen keep in their wardrobes a great number of garments, which are called caftans. They are given at such occasions as this to be worn by the guests. It is a great affront for anyone to come and not be appropriately costumed for the occasion.

Since they were giving out wedding garments at the door, we can only assume that when this fellow Jesus told about came to the door, and the servant inquired, "What size are you - small, medium, or large - you look like a medium," the man replied, "I don't need one." "Well," the servant insisted, "the King expects you to use this." "I don't have to do that, don't worry about it," and with his heart full of rebellion he entered into the hall. Soon the King entered into the wedding chamber to welcome his guests. But immediately He noticed a man who was not wearing the wedding garment. "Friend," he said, "how did you come in here without putting on the appropriate wedding garment?" The King was simply inquiring whether he had an excuse, if there was a reason why he had no garment. "Did we run out of garments at the door? Did we have no garment that would fit? Did the garment not look good on you? Did you not like our color schemes? Friend, give account of your conduct!" The scripture says he was speechless - not because he could not speak, but because he was without excuse.

Hearken! Are we not told by the preachers that the marriage supper is celebrated someplace far away in-the sky, and sometime after the rapture of the church? Were we not fervently taught that we are going to be in the air for seven years and have a wedding feast with the Lord? The question follows - If the wedding feast is the rapture, HOW DID THIS MAN WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT GET IN THERE? WAS HE "RAPTURED" BY MISTAKE? Did the Lord Jesus Christ commit a terrible error and accidentally "translate" a man who was not adequately prepared or properly invested for the marriage supper in the sky? How preposterous! This parable proves beyond any possibility of contradiction that a so-called "rapture" has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the marriage of the Lamb. This parable clearly shows that the wedding feast takes place right down here on this earth, and that there are people who are feasting on the riches of present truth and the depth of God's revelatory Word just as you are, but they have not had a change of garment; they have not been clothed in the transforming righteousness of Jesus Christ; they have not put on that precious mind that was in Christ Jesus; they have not put off the old man with his works and put on the new; they have not died to sin and self and religion. These have presumptuously "jumped on the bandwagon" of the message of the hour; with unsanctified minds and fleshly zeal they grasp after the deep things of God; they are along for the ride; they mingle with those elect saints who have been apprehended of God to the high calling in Christ Jesus. They show up at every meeting and at every convention; with unwashed hands they eat

from the table so bountifully prepared by the Holy Spirit for those who forsake all to follow the Lamb; they parrot all the right words, and mouth the sacred secrets revealed by the Holy Spirit, and may, with feigned piety appear as one of the choice vessels of the Kingdom; but beneath the cloak of pretense there is no true consecration in their lives, no inworking of the holiness of God, no conformation to the image of Christ, no transformation of mind or heart or nature; they are clearly imposters, deceivers, usurpers, pretenders, hypocrites and cheats. They have no wedding garment! And now, exposed to the penetrating gaze of the King's presence, the man of nice words and spiritual-sounding expressions no longer could conceal his true condition.

In due time, prior to the event of the marriage of His son, the King dealt swiftly and effectively with the usurper. "Then the King said to the attendants Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the darkness outside; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth" **(Mat. 22:13)** (Amplified). The King James version reads, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Among the many symbols connected with the Bridegroom and the bride, none is more meaningful than the wedding garment, whether of guest, of bride, or of groom. Throughout the scriptures garments are spoken of in connection with character. There is some kind of intrinsic connection between the character of the people and the clothing they wear. The garment we wear in our marriage to Christ is being woven NOW, stitch by stitch. The righteousness this glistering garment portrays is not the imputed righteousness received by grace when our sins are first forgiven, but the ACTUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS, wrought out in the nitty-gritty of the dealings, testings, purgings, processings and victories of this present travail. The garments of the Lord's people correspond to their STATE OF BEING. When seen by the eye of the spirit in the spiritual realm, some glitter like the snows of Mount Hermon in the noonday sun; some shine as with flame; and those of others are resplendent as with light; others are of various colors, dazzling like the scintillating brilliance of precious stones, and some opaque. It is because garments represent states of being and character that they are so much spoken of in the Word. Thus in **Isa. 53:1,** "Awake, put on strength, O Zion; put on thy BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, O Jerusalem." And in **Eze. 15:10** the Lord says of His people, "I girded thee about with fine linen, and covered thee with silk." And in **Rev. 3:4-5,** it is said, "They who have not defiled their GARMENTS, shall walk with Me in WHITE, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in WHITE RAIMENT." And of the bride of Christ it is written: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" **(Rev. 19:8).** What a depth of meaning appears in these passages when we remember the signification of garments!

The wedding garment speaks of character and fitness. The man without the wedding garment had no fitness or adequate degree of spiritual understanding or fellowship or relationship to move in the sphere of the wedding feast and all that this type represents. He had no garment - qualifying attributes to adapt him to the order of life suggested.

And note, too, the poor fellow is not cast into hellfire, hades, sheol, gehenna, the pit, or eternal damnation. "Outer darkness," is the word. Some may ask, What is the outer darkness? You will find Jesus using the same term in Mat. 8:12. Here it does not refer to hellfire or eternal damnation. He is speaking of the lack of faith and appreciation on the part of the Jews. And because of their refusal to accept and move into the Kingdom of Heaven, they are cast into "outer darkness." Any one knows that those Jews were not sentenced to everlasting hellfire, for Paul speaks of a glorious day when "all Israel shall be saved." Those Jews were turned into "outer darkness" where they are yet today. As far as Christ is concerned, and the blessings of the gospel, and the Kingdom Christ came to set up in the hearts of men, they are in outer darkness, devoid of understanding or revelation. They are cut off, denied the privilege and fellowship of the Kingdom of the Spirit.

So from the teaching of our Lord, "outer darkness" does not mean hell or the lake of fire, but rather the LOSS or denial of a great privilege. The Jews are alive today, and God is directing their steps, not in a pit, but in the "outer darkness" of spiritual blindness, the veil that hangs like a pall over mind and heart. The glory and joy of the marriage feast is LIGHT - understanding, revelation, reality and relationship. The man without the wedding garment, the one unprepared for this realm, is cast out EXCLUDED and REJECTED from the joy and fellowship and life experienced by those who are called to the marriage. He is cast into outer darkness and bound. His hands are bound and his feet are bound. The hands bespeak of service, the feet of the walk. He is

not QUALIFIED to serve in that blessed realm. He may know service in the carnal religious life and service in the sphere of the flesh, good works, etc., but he does not know that SPIRITUAL MINISTRY which springs from intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ - so he is bound. The feet represent the walk. He may have traveled thousands of miles in the energy and power of the natural life, and fairly exhausted himself in religious works, programs, activities, etc. But he does not know how to WALK IN THE SPIRIT. That was always too demanding and restricting for him. He may have walked all around the Lord, but not with Him. So his feet are bound. He has no power to enter into such life in the Spirit, such fullness, such glory, such wisdom and power as is pictured by the marriage of the Lamb.

What constitutes the marriage supper of the Lamb? When we think of a feast we are prone to think in natural terms and picture a banquet of rich foods and an evening of entertainment. There was a day when Jesus and His disciples came to Samaria. The day was long and the disciples of Jesus were weary and hungry. The disciples went to buy food and tried to get Jesus to eat. He refused, and said to them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This statement troubled the disciples, they wondered whether someone had brought food to Jesus. Then Jesus explained plainly: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." To do God's will! That is what Jesus lived for; but it is also what He lived ON. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of God" (Mat. 4:4). Nothing could satisfy Jesus' appetite but this: He hungered to do the Father's will. And nothing else could fill Him. The truth of these words is simply this: the strength of life for the firstborn Son of God was to do the Father's will. Now this is a great and surprising revelation to many. When we have thought of eating and drinking and feasting with Christ we have entertained such carnal concepts. Roast beef and potatoes - indeed! That is not what the Christ feasted upon, and it is not what those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb feed upon.

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people - a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His own. He set a feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the like of which man has never been able to reproduce, and He communed with them face to face. He ate with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and He gave them the very bread of heaven. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts, nor to celebrate the Feasts of Jehovah. And He has established the New Covenant with a feast, the great spiritual feast, wherein He has given the redeemed His own body for their meat and His own blood for their drink, that death might be swallowed up of life. He has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He will make a great feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for ALL NATIONS, upon His holy Mount (Isa. 25:6). And the greatest feast of all - the marriage supper of the Lamb - ushers a people into the most intimate relationship with their Lord!

A marriage supper is a time of great joy and festivity. Those who have tasted something of this heavenly meal know how bountifully the table has been spread with His presence and glory and power! I have more good news for you. Many are called to partake of this supper. Not all shall know Him as the bride shall know Him, but vast multitudes shall be in attendance at His feast and be filled with the overflow of the abundance that is spread upon His table! The attendants will be there, the guests will be there, the friends of the Bridegroom and the bride will be there, and what rejoicing and music and dancing there will be as we all eat of His bread and drink of His wine! What quickening, what impartation, what strength! As we leave this feast in great strength, it shall mean a new day of hope and deliverance and glory for the whole earth as the Lord comes as the heavenly Bridegroom to spread the great and glorious feast of HIS FULLNESS.

The fact is that the imagery of the marriage supper was quite familiar to those who heard our Lord employ it. It was often used in the popular religious speech of the time to denote the Messianic Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, which every pious Jew believed to be near at hand. Blessed are they that are called to this feast, to dine at His table and partake with Him and of Him! The Lord is come! The table is spread! Arise and eat!

We must never forget that the marriage supper is spread at the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB. Notice that it does not say the "Marriage of the Bride," but the "Marriage of the LAMB." That grand event is not so much the consummation of the hopes of the bride, as it is the consummation of the hopes and plans and purposes of the Bridegroom. The Shulamite in the Song of Solomon expresses it beautifully, "While the King sat at His table,

my spikenard sent forth its fragrance" **(S. of S. 1:12).** Having been wooed by the King, the Shulamite maiden suddenly finds herself beside His tent. She sees a table spread before her, and sees her Beloved sitting at His table; she finds herself sitting with Him in sweet fellowship and communion. As is always true of the faithful persevering one, she finds He has given her more than she asked. At last she has attained the object of her prayers and search, and He has brought her into His presence, even His own table. He does not come and sit with her at HER table, but invites her to come to HIS table; He invites her to listen to His voice and follow and obey it until she finds the table of continual communion and close fellowship. He has spread a table before her in green pastures, He has revealed to her fountains of living water; He has brought her to rest beside the cool, still streams; and He, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, is there beside her. The table is in the presence of all her enemies (not up in the sky), and her cup is overflowing with His loving kindness and goodness. She has entered a place of communion with Him such as she has never had before; communion that is deep and full of peace and joy and righteousness. A fellowship that abides, and where He sits with her; not a fleeting communion on Sunday morning that does not abide or satisfy, but a fellowship where she both feeds and rests in His presence. An intimacy in which He sets before her the HIDDEN MANNA of incorruptible life and fills her cup (body and soul) to overflowing with living water. A holy familiarity, which floods her soul with peace and joy and righteousness and life that flows like a river and passes all understanding.

We are commanded to feed upon Christ, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, "for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" **(Jn. 6:55).** No longer are we to feed off the husks of man's sustenance, no more are we to feed off the purification spread upon Babylon's polluted tables, but we are invited to feast on the bounties of the fullness of Christ in an exceedingly rich and intimate manner, thereby drawing our sustenance from Him**.** "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" **(Jn. 6:57).** "I am the bread of life..." **(Jn. 6:35).**

Jesus promised that when He returned He would "gird" Himself and make His servants to sit down to meat, and that He would "come forth and serve them ... meat in due season" **(Lk. 12:35-44).** In these days at the ending of the age we have in a unique way and in an abundant measure experienced the fulfillment of this promise. The Bridegroom is here! He has come and has served "meat in due season" to the elect household of faith. Rich indeed, faith strengthening and spiritually nourishing has been the fare made available by Christ, as He has spread upon His table profound truths of the Kingdom of God reserved for this hour. Only those who are prepared to enter into a MATURE RELATIONSHIP with Christ are bidden to come and sit with Him at this reserved table at the feast HIS TABLE. In the natural, babies do not have teeth, neither do babes in the Lord have mighty faith to feed upon His deep truths and rich word; but God metes out to them milk, the food that is prepared for babes. He sends them His Word and promises, presented in such a way and on such a level that they are able to take them; and He gives more than they can ask or think, not according to their faith, but according to His grace and mercy. But - BLESSED ARE THEY THAT ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!

I would be remiss if I failed to point out in clear and unmistakable words the fact that the "marriage of the Lamb" is not exclusively a future event as the preachers are wont to proclaim. Let me make it quite clear before we go any farther that what our Lord is speaking about under the figure of the marriage feast is an actual personal experience which every soul may have, something intensely real and precious, not in the sweet bye and bye, but here in our today. What it is, is a past event, a present event, as well as a future one. It is an on-going reality in the same sense that initial salvation is past for some, present for some, and future for others. Millions of souls have through the centuries experienced the Lord as Saviour, some are now receiving Him, and others will accept Him in the future. The "Marriage of the Lamb" is a relationship of union with Christ entered into as a result of spiritual growth and participation with the Lord. The marriage of the Lamb has already happened for many precious saints who have responded to the gracious appeal, "If any man hear My voice, I will come in to him, and SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME" **(Rev. 3:20).** To sup with Christ is to commune vitally with Him; it is to fellowship intimately with Him and freely partake of all that is proffered by His Spirit. He comes in to dine. It is there, deep within - in the inner union of soul and spirit as nowhere else, privately and alone, that spiritual edification and the understanding and participation in heavenly things begins and continues and consummates. Numerous yielded souls have attained this glorious experience, it is now happening for others, and it shall yet happen for others. it is, first and foremost, an individual experience for believers. It occurs for the individual when he reaches a condition of being ready for marriage - to fulfill the

responsibilities and privileges of truly BEING A WIFE. Not many of the teeming millions of earth who profess to know the Lord are ready at this time for this high and holy calling, but those who do make themselves ready will be married to the Lord here in this life. It is a blessed fact that the marriage of the Lamb is taking place now, but only those with spiritual understanding know it. The rest are "star gazing" - watching the clouds - waiting to go to a banquet in the sky. While they wait, snug and smug in their denominational beds, the Lord is taking a bride! The Lord stands knocking at their door - but they sleep on.

The awesome scene is portrayed in the Song of Solomon 5:2-6. The believer (Shulamite) speaks first and says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." The word "voice" means if sound." It is the sound of her Beloved that knocks at the door. The Bridegroom knocks, not only once, but He continues to knock; He calls her to arise and shake off the slumber that locks her in its embrace.

The sleeping believer replies, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" How often when our Lord is bringing to us a deeper revelation of Himself, He finds us asleep! We have washed our feet of all the dust of the day, we have cleansed our walk in all those areas He has dealt with previously, we have put off our garment, we have prepared a soft bed of ease, and we have said to our souls, "A little sleep, a little slumber, no need to press on any further at this time, let us rest in the experiences we have had and the truths we have learned." She was not only His love and His dove, but she was still His "undefiled." This shows that her greatest sin was in lying down to rest and not watching with wide-open eyes for His coming and the further revelation of Himself. And when He came, she was slow to rise and let Him in, she had kept Him waiting throughout the night. She had not gone off into spiritual fornication, she had not mingled with the world, she had committed no gross sins of the flesh, she had not been flirting with those who hated Him, as many who are called by His name are doing in these days; she had not lost her chastity. She had been indolent, she simply did not seem to have the stamina to go further. She had thought to lie down and rest, but not to go to sleep; but she was soon lulled into a half-slumber.

In desperate ardor the Bridegroom endeavors to enter the chamber, but the door is locked. She had not only closed, but had locked and bolted the door. When she locked the door, she did not mean to lock HIM out; she only desired that her rest might be undisturbed. She did not deliberately prepare herself to sleep, determining not to get up and let HIM in; she did not deliberately lock the door so that HE could not get in. This is always the way slumber steals in upon those who have received the call to follow the Lamb! Those who hear the call, but fall short of following on - it is not their set purpose to reach the place where at last they find themselves, nor to settle down in the place of sleep and stagnation where they finally arrive. They forget that it is through the avenue of sleep, indifference, and stagnation, that spiritual poverty comes and robs them of the glory of the Bridegroom of their soul; that it is in this way Want and Need come upon them, as an armed man with whom they cannot cope. Slumber does not prepare us for great attainment, it only paves the way for us to be defeated and robbed.

"My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him. I rose up to open to my Beloved ... but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone: my soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him but He gave me no answer." When she was sleeping, He had knocked; while she was refusing, He had called; but when He had aroused her from this beginning of deadly slumber, He had withdrawn. She little realized what she was doing when she refused to open to Him. She thought He would wait until she had opened the door. He had continued calling and knocking through the night, though she had treated Him as a stranger; though she had lain still in her bed of ease, and left Him out in the darkness until His head was wet with night dew, and His locks with night drops.

Beloved reader of this message, have you ever heard your Lord's voice calling you to come apart with Him, to leave everything and every one that hindered you and come into a higher place of revelation and separation unto Himself? Have you kept your Lord waiting while you pampered your flesh, or while you did something that YOU wanted to do, instead of coming away with Him? Have you heard Him chide you because you neglected Him, because you were not giving yourself to prayer and the Word, because you were not seeking His face, because you were not putting Him above all else, because you were not following on to KNOW HIM in deeper

measures? When you have heard His voice in these and other ways, have you risen up eagerly and quickly hastened to obey? Or have you asked Him to wait until a more convenient season? Did you have some "religious" work which you felt was very important? Did you have some association you felt you could not break? Did you tell the Lord to wait until you could leave them, or finish what you were doing? Not always in words do we tell Him to wait; we just go on with our "work," with our little religious games, with the programs of Babylon, with the demands of family and involvements with the flesh, with the admiration of friends, with pleasures and pursuits. We are going to respond and obey, we are going to come out and go away with Him, we are going to arise and commune with Him, we are going to explore the deeper measures of His wisdom, His love, His power and His glory which He waits to disclose to us, but not until a more propitious moment when we have finished what we are doing.

Ah, the Christian so accurately portrayed in this moving drama had closed the door and locked it. In her snug bed of religious fairy tales and personal indifference she had disrobed and gone to sleep. Her Lover was up and had come to commune with her and ravish her heart with His love, revealing Himself to her on yet a higher plane. He came knocking and calling. When she, at her own time, opened the door, lo! He was gone. She had waited too long!

In this dark hour the lukewarm church of Laodicea has no room for Christ and His glory and has their door closed against Him (Rev. 3:20). He is standing outside and knocking at the door. He is not within, as He should be, but on the outside. Behind the door that is locked against Him they are loudly preaching about Him, and ardently singing about Him, and earnestly working for Him, but He Himself they have left outside. The whole church system of our day is built on the programs and efforts of the flesh rather than the life and glory of the Spirit. But within that harlot system are locked many of the Lord's people. If this were not so, the cry would not sound forth, "Come out of her, MY PEOPLE!" I assure you that the Bridegroom will not remain in the place of a thwarted husband and a beggar at the door of His Beloved forever! His voice will cease and you will be left in your bed of fairy tales and dreams and delusions! You can go on dreaming about a banquet above the stars, and continue to ignore His knocking and calling at the door of your heart for entrance and love and union today. But one day you will awaken!

One day you will hear the call, but He will be gone and you will be left with the dry dust of your cherished traditions and the vanity of your fleshly pursuits. He is knocking as your husband. I exhort all God's saints in this lukewarm age of Laodicea to open wide the door that Jesus may enter in to fill our beings with light and understanding, with wisdom and glory, with power and victory. The answer is up to you. What will your answer be?

In these studies on the coming of the Bridegroom, the Spirit of God has given us a strain from the heavenly choir, the theme of which is CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE. Has this divine music sounded upon your heart until your spirit has been caught away to the Mount of the Lord? Have you received a deeper revelation of your high calling in Him, and the processes by which we may attain? Has the Spirit revealed clearer visions of those things that mortal eye cannot see nor ear hear, neither can the human heart contain even the things that God has prepared for you and me? If you will draw close to God, He will anoint your eyes with heavenly eyesalve: He will give you an eternal perspective; He will cause you to behold the things that are unseen and eternal as you lose sight of the things that are seen and temporal. He will bring you into His banqueting house and your soul will be ravished with the revelation of His love. The noise and glitter of Mystery Babylon the Great will fade from mind and heart until it seems but a dream dreamed in the long ago.

There is a remnant of God's people over the whole earth that have heard the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" This remnant has arisen, trimmed their lamps, and with vessels full of oil and lamps shining have fixed their eves upon Jesus, they are looking away from earth, from people, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God.

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 31
COMING AS A REFINER'S FIRE

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-ONE

COMING TO HIS TEMPLE
PURIFYING THE TEMPLE
THE REFINING FIRE

"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, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: 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).**

The Lord, whom ye seek, SHALL COME! Such was the promise of the inspired prophet. He who will come is the Lord, "the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire," the long expected, oft-promised Redeemer. The Messiah had been long called HE THAT SHOULD COME, NOW SHORTLY HE WILL COME. He will come in a personal way and will reveal Himself to His people in His holy temple.

The book of Malachi comes to us as the closing message of the Old Testament. It is the connecting link between the Old and the New, and in its contents it looks back over the centuries to the messages of such prophets as Moses and Isaiah, and it also looks forward to the coming of Him who was to be greater than either of these, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Lord. He is the messenger of the New Covenant, whom they desired. Of this messenger and of this covenant the prophets had spoken. With one voice they had predicted and promised His coming to redeem Israel and to bring about a righteous judgment upon Israel's enemies. Always the Coming One was represented as a divine messenger, frequently as God Himself; and we do not hesitate a moment in seeing the fulfillment of the prediction-promise in Jehovah-Jesus. For as Peter said to the Jews on Pentecost, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

COMING TO HIS TEMPLE

"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE..." **(Mal. 3:1).** Would God that all the saints might see that God's purpose from the foundation of the world has been the building of a spiritual house, a holy temple, an eternal abiding place in which He can be at home, and in which place He and His creation can meet. More than three thousand years ago Solomon built a magnificent temple of stone and precious materials. He overlaid it with gold and adorned it with silver. Silently it seemed to grow out of the top of Mount Moriah, as if drawn from the very mountain by some huge hand. There was no sound of hammer or chisel or saw, but only the soft blowing of the wind, for all of the stones and every part had been carefully made and cut far away, down in Solomon's quarry. And now this magnificent temple with its mammoth stones was rising into the sky. The pillars reflected the light of the Judean hills; the great Corinthian brass door shown in the sunlight. Inside was the huge thick blue, crimson and purple veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. And within the Holy of Holies was the gold covered mercy seat with the cherubim facing each other on either side. In the center over that mercy seat when the temple was completed and prayer was offered, suddenly there appeared right there in the presence of men the visible evidence of God's presence: the Shekinah Glory...and God dwelt among His people in His temple. The brilliant blinding light of His Shekinah Glory dwelt in the Most Holy Place. So wonderful was it that the Queen of Sheba stood transfixed at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only a fleeting foreshadow of the living temple which Christ would build by the Spirit - a temple not made with hands.

When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587 B.C., the great temple of Solomon along with the rest of the city was destroyed and its valuable contents carried to Babylon. Seventy years later a remnant of Israel returned from the Babylonian exile and soon thereafter, the community began to rebuild the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel. When the foundation was laid, the old men, who had seen the "first house" (Solomon's temple), wept for sorrow (Hag. 2:3), but the young men, who had been born in exile shouted for joy (Ezra 3:12). Like most of the reconstruction in that era immediately following the exile, the temple of Zerubbabel must have been modest indeed. Five long centuries further down the spectrum of time king Herod the Great, who was a usurper, an Idumean prince who had usurped the throne in Jerusalem, announced to the people assembled at the Passover, just twenty years before the birth of Jesus, his intention of restoring the temple which was quite dilapidated by that time. Herod was an indefatigable builder. Many cities and heathen temples had been rebuilt by him and it was natural that he should wish to show his own grandeur by making the modest restoration temple larger, more complex, and much more beautiful. Other motives also moved him, especially his desire to ingratiate himself with the more religious Jews, who resented his Idumean origin and friendliness with the Romans. Herod's temple in some respects exceeded both the temple of Solomon and the temple of Zerubbabel. It is minutely described by the historian Josephus, and the New Testament has made us familiar with the pride of the Jews in its magnificence during the days of Jesus and His apostles.

When Jesus came to earth in the long ago, He did not come to His temple except in figure and shadow. The beautiful temple in Jerusalem was but a fading type, which was to be left "with not one stone upon another that would not be thrown down." Prophetically, and in beautiful symbol Jesus did appear suddenly in Herod's temple in old Jerusalem. The disciples watched their Master with curiosity and astonishment. They had never seen the kind and compassionate Jesus like this before. He had come over the hill from Bethany, and on the way to the city He saw its fair towers and palaces from the top of Mount Olivet; and pausing as He looked at it, He wept, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Jesus descended into the Kidron valley and climbed the steep paths of Mount Moriah with His disciples in great anticipation. They approached the house of God, the temple of the Most High, and the Spirit of God that rested upon Him quickened His pulse as they came near to this great symbolic structure. As Jesus strode into the temple, suddenly something in Him erupted. Profound disappointment smote Him mercilessly in His breast as He surveyed the scene of confusion that rose before His astonished eyes. Oxen were bawling, sheep were bleating, doves were flying wildly through the temple, and the stench of manure was nauseating. Men were arguing violently over money, tempers flared, and coarse words were flying back and forth. Here and there pious pilgrims vainly sought a quiet place in which to pray. The temple priests, oblivious to the confusion, were making a great show of religious form in their long robes and broad phylacteries. Proud Pharisees stood where they could be easily seen and loudly prayed their long and eloquent prayers. To the undiscerning eye, it looked almost like a religious revival the bustling crowds were there; it was a scene of feverish religious activity; the prosperous multitudes were flocking to the tables - they were buying and selling. The baskets were bulging with money; the ministers of the temple were exuberant; never had God been so popular - never had religion been more acceptable!

The Rabbis had passed a law that no money could be received in payment of tithes or in offerings to God unless it was Jewish money. If it was money that had the Roman eagle upon it, or money that bore any heathen emblem, they would not take it, and these scoundrels of Rabbis were behind the money-changers, who paid them large sums of money to exchange the money from Athens, from Rome, from Ephesus, from Corinth, from Egypt, and from all parts of the world. They had a fore-court, a court of the Gentiles where the Gentiles could worship if they liked, and it was in that very fore-court of the temple that they had put their money-changers' tables, and their sellers of doves, and their merchandise sellers, and their traffickers. Who could worship amidst that braying of asses and lowing of oxen, and overwhelmed by the stench of dung?

That was the trouble. These miserable, narrow-minded bigots had divided the temple! God had never made a temple of that kind. He had made a temple where "all the nations" should come and worship before Him, and they put Gentiles in the outer court amid the asses and the oxen, and all the other animals; then there was an inner court, which they had divided again so that the women should be just a little lower than these sainted

hypocrites. There they were! They had divided up the temple of the Almighty, and Jesus reminded them that God had established that temple and that it should be A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS; but they had made it a den of robbers. Jesus beheld that sordid scene. He saw the money changers and the thieves who were stealing from the poor people who came to give their tithes and offerings. He saw the religious pretenders, the vain hypocrites who had turned the forecourt of the temple into a house of merchandise; from a place, which had been a place of prayer into a continuous noisy, wrangling mart for thieves, money changers, and merchants.

He stood in the great door of the temple, feet spread apart, with furrowed brow and set jaw, anger flashing from His countenance, drops of sweat standing out on His forehead, fire blazing in His eyes. Nearby He saw a pile of small cords that had been used with the dove crates. Picking them up, He began to braid them into a whip until He had a good sized scourge. He made a loop on the end of the scourge and fastened it around His wrist, took a firm grip on it and stepped forward. Into that robbers den Jesus strode - like' a rushing stream, driven by the wind of God! What a commotion! The whip cracked - the tables were overturned, and piles of coins, both foreign and Jewish, scattered across the temple floor; the doves were squaking, the lambs were loosed from their pens, the oxen trampled over the money boxes, and wielding the scourge Jesus drove the merchants toward the main entrance of the temple. "Out! Out! Enough! This is My Father's house! This is a house of prayer for all the nations! You robbers! You thieves! Get out! Don't come back!" That whip did not stop crackling until the last sheep was gone, the last ox, the last dove, and all the merchants, and all the religious thugs. The temple had never before seen such a day as this.

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth Jesus proclaimed? It was not many days thence that we read, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" **(Mat. 24:1-2).** The King had come to His own, and they had not received Him. After three and one half years of ministry among the people to whom He had been sent, Jesus had now closed His last public discourse (Mat. 23), and had left the temple for the last time. "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple," never again to re-enter or open His mouth in public teaching. With this act ended His public ministry. The last supper and Calvary were to follow immediately.

But the disciples, still concerned with the natural, had other thoughts. The Master had just made the statement, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" **(Mat. 23:38).** But these men, in their then unspiritual state, could not be expected to understand that declaration fully. That the Christ had come to completely destroy and bring to an end an old order and would establish in the earth an entirely new order was yet foreign to their minds. They were more concerned about the passing than the permanent. But the Master was now completing the work He had been given to do. The time had come for the greatest event of the ages to be enacted. So He had little interest now in that which represented a fallen order devoid of God's presence and power and majesty. And while our Authorized version reads, "See ye not all these things?" yet it is apparent that this is a mistranslation. The Greek really says, "And the Jesus said to them; Not you regard (or look to, or take heed to) all these." Most certainly He was saying in essence, "Now we are through with all that is natural. This has all been only a type and shadow of the greater reality and glory to come. DON'T CLING TO T-H-I-S! We have matters of much greater import to attend to. So, get your eyes off this which is passing, for, verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The account in Lk. 21:6 reads, "As for these things which ye behold." "Behold" here carries the meaning of earnest and continued inspection: that is, they were prone to continue looking in fondness on the natural magnificence. "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

This was a new revelation, a shocking blow to the inborn hope, which still held a prominent place in the hearts of these men. They had been brought up to believe that their Messiah was to come and restore Israel to her lost heritage of world dominion. But little by little they had come to know that other events must transpire first: that the King whom they had truly found and followed was not to reign immediately, but must die. Now they learn that the grandeur of the edifice which was the idol of every Jewish heart is to be destroyed instead of being preserved to remain the abode of the God of Israel. And now they are commanded to no longer cherish

or cling to this earthly and material temple, but to turn away from it once and for all in order to lay hold upon a far greater glory!

And my earnest prayer to God is for all who read these words that God may help us, as sons of God in these momentous days, to look not, as do those in the church system, for the re-establishing of that which God has forever destroyed and abolished. Many sincere but yet carnal Christians are looking for an earthly temple to be built by the Jews in Israel in this end time. But in spite of all teachings to the contrary, no temple made with hands will ever again be built in Jerusalem, and, should those unbelieving Jews who now possess the land stretch forth their hands to build a temple for the Lord, He will neither own it, accept it, nor dwell in it. It is my firm conviction, and I believe that I have the Spirit of God, that God in His wisdom and immutable purpose will never permit such a temple to be built. The temple of stone was only the SHADOW of better things to come; merely the natural type of the SPIRITUAL REALITY, which Moses saw in the mount.

The temple in Jerusalem never did constitute the TRUE TEMPLE of God. This is made plain in **Heb. 8:1-2,** "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the TRUE TABERNACLE which the LORD PITCHED, and not man!" Jesus is now a minister of the TRUE TABERNACLE. Concerning the old tabernacle and temple with its priestly ministry the apostle says, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of HEAVENLY THINGS, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, saith He, See that thou make all things according to the PATTERN showed thee in the mount" **(Heb. 8:5).**

The tabernacle of old was made as a physical, material COPY of the TRUE TABERNACLE, which Moses saw in the mount. And what Moses saw in the mount was heavenly, or spiritual. This truth is further amplified in **Heb. 9:8-11** in these graphic words, "By this the Holy Spirit points out that the way into the true Holy of Holies is not yet thrown open as long as the former tabernacle remains a recognized institution and is still standing. Seeing that first tabernacle was a parable - a visible symbol or type or picture of the present age. In it gifts or sacrifices are offered, and yet are incapable of perfecting the conscience or of cleansing or renewing the inner man of the worshipper. For the ceremonies deal only with clean and unclean meats and drinks and different washings, mere external rules and regulations for the body imposed to tide the worshippers over until the time of SETTING THINGS STRAIGHT - of reformation, of the complete new order when Christ, the Messiah, shall establish the REALITY of what these things foreshadow, a better covenant" (Amplified Bible).

All types and shadows are forever done away when Christ, the reality, comes. The Lord dwells not in temples made with hands. They are but shadowy figures of the true. "What temple will ye build Me," saith the Lord. So wherever we see a reference to a temple of the present or the future, it MUST refer to "the true sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" **(Heb. 8:2).** Furthermore, there is only one such tabernacle, or temple. The Word nowhere tells of two, or three, or one hundred; one away off somewhere in space where Jesus is ministering, another in Jerusalem built by the Jews, and another spiritual one composed of living stones. There is but ONE temple, ONE great High Priest, and ONE royal priesthood. So when the priests of old served it unto the example and shadow of heavenly (spiritual) things," those heavenly things were the same that Moses saw in the mount, and the same heavenly and spiritual things to which we have now come, for, We "ARE COME unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM" **(Heb. 12:22).** None of these are a future reality to be entered into after we die, or after Jesus returns. We ARE COME. Let us never foret that fact!

Now let us identify this heavenly temple unto which we are come. Listen to the words of Peter as he presses this golden truth home to the understanding hearts of the saints. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a LIVING STONE, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, YE ALSO, as LIVELY STONES, are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a CHIEF CORNER STONE, elect, precious: and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded" **(I Pet. 2:3-6).** The apostle Peter draws a striking metaphor of the construction by God of a remarkable spiritual house of which Jesus Christ is the most remarkable corner stone. He is remarkable as the corner stone because not only is Christ the sure foundation in the midst of a world where the pillars are trembling and the

foundations are shaken, but He remains ever sure and ever stable and gives His stability to the entire structure. More than that, He is the living stone that communicates that stability to all the other stones that are joined to Him. Praise God that in the midst of all the pressures and testings there is that INNER STABILITY of the Christ! So, we see painted before our eyes a magnificent structure, the living cathedral of Christ rising up into the sky, made of living stones. This superb gem of revelation vividly reveals just what the temple of God really is. Not a temple of dead stones, but of living stones, each stone a spiritually living person. Not covered with glittering gold, but overshadowed by God. Not adorned with silver, but founded on redemption. Not fashioned with glittering, precious stones, but with the eternal jewels of His own nature, glory, and power! Paul wrote of it thus: "The temple of God is holy, which temple YE ARE" **(I Cor. 3:17).** "Know ye not that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST which is IN YOU?" **(I Cor. 6:19).** "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).** And, hear it! my beloved, this spiritual temple which YOU ARE is that same spiritual temple in which Christ sits at the right hand of God and ministers as the High Priest of the sanctuary.

This human heavenly temple is the one not made with (men's) hands. The true temple is the body of Christ. The temple of the Lord is that vast family of God's sons who are coming to maturity in the image of Christ. This is the temple to which our blessed Lord and Christ SUDDENLY COMES. It distresses me to hear preachers constantly proclaiming as fact the old wives' fables that the temple of God must be rebuilt in Jerusalem by the Jews. I repeat again the truth that God's temple is the body of Christ and no temple of God, made from stones and mortar and ornamented with silver and gold, will ever be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The notion of a rebuilt temple is a lie that would be humorous were it not so ridiculous and blasphemous. The temple that God builds is the temple of which Jesus spoke to the poor, sinful woman at the well of Sychar. She was quibbling, and He said, "Neither in this mountain, NOR IN JERUSALEM, shall ye worship the Father... the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (in their own spirits) and in truth" **(Jn. 4:21-24).**

PURIFYING THE TEMPLE

In the cleansing of the temple of old, our Lord Jesus Christ made it perfectly plain that He was cleansing the temple to show them that He, who in the Temple of His own Body had come to redeem them, was so mighty that He would cleanse the whole Temple of Humanity. He would cleanse the Earthly Temples of the sorrowing and the sick and the poor and the sinful and the dying who came to Him; as He would, because of His purity, raise that same Earthly Sanctuary which He wore, that Temple of His Body, in three days when His three and one half years of ministry was fulfilled. That was clearly the thing as you can plainly see by considering the scripture passages in Jn. 2:13-22.

Sometimes I have tried to get it clear in my soul that God is in me. I have meditated upon the indwelling influence and power of that pure, sweet, living Spirit of the eternal God. I have come to continually live in the conscious awareness of His presence in my spirit, in my soul, in my body, in my person, in my being - the habitation of God, God preparing me to minister to the world, equipping my spirit, soul and body to live forever in harmony with the mind of God. All the God-like qualities of your life are due to the fact that God by His Spirit dwells in you. You are the temple of God! This is the wonder of the indwelling Spirit. It is not a work of grace; it is God possessing you. Oh, your heart may have been as sinful as the heart of man was ever sinful. But Christ comes to your spirit. That spirit of darkness that possessed you goes and in its stead, a new spirit comes to your spirit, your spirit is quickened by HIS SPIRIT, and Christ LIVES IN YOU! The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever thus see his place in God and yet remain in carnality. Should one claim to see these truths and yet remain as he was before, then he has not seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only.

For two thousand years this temple has been rising upon the only foundation that can be laid, which is Jesus the Christ, and the flaming words of the prophet Malachi are even now being fulfilled: "THE LORD, WHOM YE SEEK, SHALL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: 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." Praise God!

We are members of His bones and of His flesh. We are His temple. This is the visitation of the Lord to His body, to His church, to His people, to the overcomers, to His sons, to those who are looking for Him, to those who are seeking His face! Do we want the Lord to come to our temple in mighty power? Do we really want Him to invade us through and through, to thoroughly touch every area of our lives until we cry, Away with all sin and pride! Away with all self-seeking, self-indulgence, and self-promotion! Away with every vestige of the carnal mind, and every claim of the fleshly nature! Away with all the foolishness of religion! Away with the MAN OF SIN who usurps the place of Christ in the temple of God! For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap! When you know His coming in this manner you are thrust into the Day of the Lord and your world will be set on fire; all that is wood, hay and stubble will be burned up. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Where? In His temple. Everything that is in the Kingdom of Heaven that offends will be consumed (Mat. 13:41). Where is the Kingdom of Heaven, my beloved? Is it not within you? Everything that defiles in the Kingdom of Heaven, He comes to burn. He comes to purify the sons of Levi that they might offer unto Him an offering in righteousness.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave perhaps the greatest parable of His ministry when He cleansed the temple and then spoke to the people about the temple of His body. He said what He meant: His body was a pure body, and He stood there to let them know that the fore-court of the temple was a symbol of the body of the believer. There were three courts in the temple: the fore-court, the inner court, and the Holy of Holies. The Lord meant them to understand by that purification that the outer court of man's temple, the body, had to be cleansed. There are three courts in this temple of man's being. Your bodies, as the apostle Paul declares, are the temple of God. He also said, "The temple of God is holy." "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." The man who defiles his body is a sinner; you cannot sin with impunity; when you defile your body you defile the temple of God just as surely as did Antiochus when he offered a pig upon the altar of the temple in Jerusalem.

Redemption demands that a man shall be restored SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY to that sphere of life and purity and incorruptibleness and glory, which was his in that first blessed moment when he came forth from the bosom of God. There are three courts in the temple, which constitutes a man. The first is the outer court of the body; the next is the inner court of the soul; and the next is the innermost court of all, the spirit, which God Himself has given. But God demands that every part of the temple shall be cleansed and restored and embued with the incorruptible nature of God. There is the true temple. And the purification of the temple begins in the spirit. Would you worship God?

Oh, not in circling depth, nor height, But in the conscious breast,
Present by faith, though veiled from sight, There doth His Spirit rest:
Oh, come, thou Presence infinite! And make Thy creature blest.

If you are to worship God in a holy temple, let Him cleanse your spirit, let Him cleanse your soul, let Him cleanse your body, and worship God in the temple of your own Being. God wants that. Therefore it is that God sent His Son, not merely to cleanse the outer court, but through His death, through His resurrection, through His life, and in the power of His Spirit, to cleanse man FROM THE CENTER TO THE CIRCUMFERENCE. Hence it is that the purification of the Temple of Humanity must begin in your spirit and mine. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the FLESH AND SPIRIT, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" **(IICor. 7:1).**

I know no definition of God more sublime, outside of the scripture, than this definition of a philosopher of France, who said, "I conceive God to be Him whose CENTER IS EVERYWHERE, and whose CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE." The spirit, soul and body of a purified being is a center of omnipotent God. That God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who by His mercy sustains our being, I want you to know, my brother, my sister, no matter how carnal you may have been, desires to make your spirit a CENTER WHICH SHALL HAVE NO CIRCUMFERENCE. He wants to make your spirit pure, to make your soul pure, to make your body pure, and to cause the River of all Purity to flow out to all around you, and into unborn generations before you, and unto the vast multitudes of hopeless men and women who came before you; so that you shall be a CENTER for an omnipotent and omnipresent and a holy God; that is the object of the purification of the temple.

You will see then that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He purified the fore-court of the temple, determined to show His people that even this temple of the body which God has given man should no longer be the prey of foul disease, and of filthy, sensual passion, and of putrefying death. He showed them that the body should be purified, that the soul should be purified, that the spirit should be purified, and that He had come to pour out His Spirit, not only upon the spirits and souls of men, but upon all FLESH, and that all FLESH should rejoice in the advent of One who was not only the Saviour, but the Healer of mankind, the Cleanser of the outer court of the temple, the body, the giver of immortality so that even this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, and even this vile body shall be changed, to be fashioned like unto His body of glory.

THE REFINING FIRE

"He is like a REFINER'S FIRE ... 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..." **(Mal. 3:2-3).**

One of God's promises concerning the Lord who comes to His temple to sit as a refiner's fire is that He shall "purify the sons of Levi." The "sons of Levi" in the days when the prophecy was written, were the priests and ministers of God. The "sons of Levi" in these days of the spiritual temple of living stones are likewise the priests and ministers of God. Prophetically speaking, "the sons of Levi" refer to all who have received the call to the Royal Priesthood of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (temple), an HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" **(I Pet. 2:5,9).**

Even the word "sons" is significant. Becoming a son is the result of intense discipline, as we read in Heb. 12:5-11. The Lord comes to those who long to be His Priesthood, not with visible blessings and manifestations, which inflate the ego, but as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap to purify and refine them, even as gold and silver is refined. In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with us. The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God's nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something greater and better. He sets us apart, like the sons of Levi, and subjects us to an instance discipline of inner and outer sanctification that we might become HIS ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

To be HIS PRIESTS we must be changed from our carnality and selfhood into HIS DIVINE NATURE. No divine change can be wrought on God's elect, saving by "passing through the waters and through the fires" which are appointed for us, waters and fires as real, though not of this world, as those which moved in the laver of the temple, or burnt on the altar of old. Our Lord can no more spare our nature than the ram was spared by Moses. This is that "spirit of judgment and burning" promised by the prophet, with which the Lord shall "purify the sons of Levi, as gold and silver are purged."

The sons have to be cleansed and purified of the carnal mind that is contrary to God and is an enemy of His, filled with all unrighteousness and evil and is not subject to the will of God and never can be. As William Law said, "SELF is the whole root, branch and tree of sin." So for us to be His Priesthood, showing forth His virtues, His life and light and love, His righteousness and glory and power, this thing, that stands in the way of the priestly nature and ministry, must be destroyed and taken out of the way. We must be emptied of self and everything that pertains to the earthly nature so that we can put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. All carnality must go through the fire. None can escape it. There is no detour around this lake of fire if you wish to arrive finally at the safe harbor of perfection in God. The sons of Levi of this day have felt that purifying fire. Its burning has roused them from their lethargic ease as they have drifted along the stream of peace with the world, its clear flame has lit up the dark recesses of their own carnal minds and the deceitfulness of the heart of man, revealing in stark reality the

man of sin sitting in the temple of God, and its blasting flame has separated them from the fleshly follies of the religious systems and the so-called church. In many of them the fire is effectually doing its purifying work. They have begun to fulfill the prophecy and to "offer unto the Lord offerings in righteousness," praise His name!

Do you think God does not love you When you're passing 'neath the rod?
Do you grow a bit discouraged; Think the road is most too hard?
Oh, my brother, do you not know That our Father has a plan
By which to purge and purify And perfect this race of man?
"Think it not strange," said brother Peter, When comes the fiery trial;
It may come in fierce temptations That will call forth self-denial.
It may be in deepest sorrow Sad bereavement, or in pain.
Your friends may all forsake you; God will work it for your gain.
The trial of your faith, said he, Is of value more than gold.
His fire is burning out the dross From His chosen and His called.
Let us stay right in the furnace Though the flames seem hard to take;
God ordained their raging fury That He a perfect vessel make.
He is calling out His remnant, Seed with which to plant again;
He must test and try each vessel, Those to find who will remain.
Would you like for Him to use you? Would you like to add your voice
To this new day trumpet sounding? Then the fire must be your choice.
Should any dross or stain remain, Then the gold cannot be pure.
It will not reflect His image And you never will endure.
Go through, as faithful Abraham, For he proved his love by test;
Climbing up old Mount Moriah, On God's altar laid His best.
Think of those three Hebrew children; They loved God with all their hearts;
Yet each was tested by the fire, Nor from its pain refused a part.
God saw He could count them faithful In what'er their lot might be.
He wants to prove the same of you, So from His testing do not flee!

- Reba McMurry.

Words penned by another inspired writer, our dear friend and brother, Elwin Roach, are so pertinent at this point that I must share a portion with my reader. He writes: "When we receive a pure word of God, we should never think that this is the end of the matter, and that all we have to do after hearing a wonderful truth is to just bask in its glory. Listen to what has been recorded in the Psalms: 'The words of the Lord are PURE words: AS SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES' **(Ps. 12:6).** We know now why things get so hot when we begin to truly hear from the Lord - HIS WORDS HAVE TO BE PURIFIED in us! The dross of false doctrine and our own thoughts have to be removed. We have all kinds of words coming into our minds, and whether they are the pure words of God or nonsensical trash, we can count on them being tested sooner or later in the 'FURNACE OF EARTH' that we are. If we are of a submissive spirit, and have been called to be vessels of honor, then the testing fires will come early. It is at this time that the redemptive silver of God will be purified, while that of no worth is consumed or removed. But for those who are called to be the vessels of dishonor, the fires are held back until the purpose of their dishonor has been fulfilled. (See I Cor. 11:19 concerning the necessity of heresies).

'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).** The sons of Levi, the ones called to offer the bread of the Lord, are the GOLD and SILVER that is being FIRED IN THE FURNACE OF EARTH. It is not just the words that they have heard, but now it is THEMSELVES who are being consumed - they are the WORD PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES! And then, when the purging has done its work, they are the PURIFIED GOLD and SILVER to be brought into the storehouse of God, which is the OFFERING UNTO THE LORD.

"The fire that comes to the Firstfruits, the House of God, is one of the most essential ingredients with which we can possibly be afflicted (blessed). John the Baptist said not in vain that there would be One coming after him,

who should baptize us in the Holy Ghost and (even) FIRE. When the Holy Spirit and Word first comes to us, it comes as a cool, refreshing RAIN - we are 'born of water.' But there will be a time when His Spirit will be a purging fire. It is then that His Word will be in our hearts as a FIREBRAND SHUT UP IN OUR BONES, even as it was with Jeremiah (Jer. 20:9). Oh, but praise God! For when that HOLY FLAME is fanned by His hand, not only are we delivered from our wicked ways, but as we are consumed by the fire of God - we then BECOME THAT FLAME OF FIRE! Do you think not? Think again; for it is recorded in Ps. 104:1-4, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty ... who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who maketh His angels spirits; HIS MINISTERS A F-L-A-M-I-N-G F-I-R-E.' Yes, 'GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE' (Heb. 12:29), and '...AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD' (I Jn. 4:17). And as we go forth from God, AS HE IS, AS HIS WORD, not only will He make HIS WORDS IN OUR MOUTHS F-I-R-E that will devour rebellion (Jer. 5:14), but WE WILL BE THE WORDS OF FIRE THAT GOD SPEAKS INTO THE WORLD OF WOOD, HAY AND STUBBLE" end quote.

A remarkable prophecy given in the year 1619 contains some wonderful truths and predictions of the raising up of a firstfruits people, among whom "certain head powers" shall bear "the first office" and will be among the first to be commissioned as priests the glory of an endless life; but only after the order of Melchizedek, to partake of after being refined and purified by the most intense "spirit of burning." We quote only a portion of that prophecy:

"A prophet, and the most prophetical generation, will the Most High raise up who shall deliver His people by a force of spiritual arms; for which there must be raised certain head powers to bear the first office, who are to be persons in favor with God, whose dread and fear shall fall on all nations, visible and invisible, because of the mighty acting power of the Holy Spirit which shall rest upon them; for CHRIST WILL APPEAR IN SOME CHOSEN VEGSELS to bring into the Promised Land, the new creation state. None shall stand under God but those who have become 'tried' stones after the pattern and similitude of Christ. This will be a fiery trial through which a very few will be able to pass or bear up in it; whereby the waiters for this visible breaking forth are strictly charged to hold fast, and wait together in the unity of Pure Love. This trial will be of absolute necessity to all for the clearing away of all remaining infirmities of the natural mind, and the burning of all hay, wood, and stubble, for nothing must remain in the fire, for as a refiner shall He purify the sons of the Kingdom. There will be some who will be fully redeemed, being clothed upon with a priestly garment after the Melchizedek order. This will qualify them for governing authority. Therefore, it is required on their part to suffer the SPIRIT OF BURNING, and the fanning of the FIERY BREATH SEARCHING EVERY PART WITHIN THEM UNTIL THEY ARRIVE A FIXED BODY from whence the wonders are to flow out. Therefore, there should be a holy emulation and ambition stirred up among the bands of believers that they may be of the firstfruits unto Him that is risen from the dead, and so be made principal agents for Him and with Him, that they may be, if possible, of the number of the First-born, of the New Jerusalem mother. All true waiters of His Kingdom in Spirit, under whatsoever profession they may be, ought to be numbered among the VIRGIN SPIRITS, to whom this message appertains. Be watchful and quicken your pace..." -end quote.

What a burning, what a burning,
As all goes up in smoke and flame;
Everything of Adam's nature
Must bow the knee to Jesus' name.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 32
COMING AS A REFINER'S FIRE [continued]

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-TWO

PURIFYING THE SONS OF LEVI
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RESPONDING TO THE FIRE

"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, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: 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).**

Our blessed Lord and Christ is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Fire and soap. The Lord Jesus Christ is like fire! The Lord Jesus Christ is like soap. What can this strange, cryptic language mean? You know what fire and soap will do. Fire will purify.

More than three centuries ago when the Black Plague swept through London, England, more than 68,000 men, women, and children were sickened with the putrid fever, suffered nameless agonies, passed into delirium, sometimes with convulsions, and then died. Before the end of the terrible nightmare of anguish and death, what was thought to be an even greater tragedy occurred. The city caught fire, the whole heavens were ablaze as the Great Fire destroyed more than 13,200 homes and 89 churches. Most of the city, which was built largely of wood, lay in ashes. Wonder of wonders! As soon as the last dying embers cooled and the smoke cleared, the inhabitants of the city discovered that the Plague had been stayed! Not another person died of the epidemic. The Plague never returned. The fire had killed the bacteria-carrying fleas and rats that caused the Plague. It took a fire to do it! Fire is a great cleanser, purifier, and changer, the finest purifier.

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for fire is PUR, a derivative of which is the Latin word PYRA (pure) and the English word PYRE - the place for the burning of a corpse. PYREX also comes from the same root, PYR or PUR, meaning a fire, and REX, meaning a king - that which is king, thus ruling over the fire, hence a "heatresistant" glassware. All our English words having to do with that which is pure are related to the Greek word PUR, indicating clearly that that which is pure is so because it has been cleansed BY FIRE! Consider: PURE, PURity, PURify, PURification, PURitan.

And, of course, soap is also a purifier, a cleanser. The Bible mentions several times the profession of the fuller and fuller's soap. The trade of the fuller consisted chiefly in cleansing garments and whitening. The process of fulling or cleansing clothes consisted in treading or stamping on the garments with the feet or with paddles in vats of water in which a strong alkali soap had been dissolved. So when the prophet says that the Lord comes like fire and like soap he is telling us in language that we can understand that He is the great cleanser; He is the great purifier. The two figures, fire and soap, are used because fire purifies inwardly, and soap purifies outwardly (garments and flesh). The Lord Jesus Christ is like fire and soap, He not only does a purifying job on the outside, but He also does a far grander and more thorough purifying work on the inside.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden's gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire? Fire, in the scriptures, symbolized two things - judgment and cleansing. But God is not schizophrenic in

His nature - one side of His character disposed to forgive, save, heal, redeem, deliver and restore, while another part of His nature is bent on vengeful destruction and the sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, as His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, and balanced, directed towards the purging that will lead to restoration. His fire cleanses the believer that he may qualify for God's highest. His action of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from the kind mercy of the Lord.

The crude idea that a wise and loving and righteous Creator would decree endless torment in undying flame for His creatures who are the work of His hands does dishonor to the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is incredible that any man who has tasted of the goodness of the Lord could ever believe that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended us to read such a meaning into His words. The eternal fire is the truth, the righteousness, the love of God; in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol of the presence and action of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the scripture, and the apostle adds, "God is love." It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. Every father who has had to put the rod of correction to his son understands this! How we shall experience God's love depends upon the way we come up against it. God does not change; it is man's moral state that changes. The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God's unchanging opposition to sin; it is His righteous love operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or wars against the spirit of holiness. The consuming fire is eternal as God Himself; it is, because He is; it is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and rottenness, all the wickedness and cruelty, all the shame and wrong from which our souls have suffered. It is not evil which will have the last word, but good; not sorrow, but joy; not hate, but love; not Satan, but Christ!

Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. When of old God came down on Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable folds of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been get to keep the people back; but a special message must be sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept without the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it played around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed - not a leaf shriveled, nor a twig scorched. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings.

When Moses, before His death, blessed the tribes of Israel, in blessing the tribe of Joseph he said, "Blessed of the Lord be his land ... BY THE GOODWILL OF HIM THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH" **(Deut. 33:13,16).** Is not this a strange thing to place among the catalog of human blessings? We can understand why Moses should have desired that his people might be blessed by God with "the precious things of heaven," with "the dew and the deep that coucheth beneath," with "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and the precious things put forth by the moon." But why should he ask for them such a blessing as this? - the goodwill that God manifested when He dwelt in the unquenchable fire! Was not that aspect of Israel's God an aspect of deepest terror? did it not reveal Him in those attributes which do NOT suggest goodwill? Nay, my brother, it is not so. It is not only in the calm that the goodwill of God appears, it is not only under the cloudless sky and bright sunlight that the blessing of our Father is seen. The heart of the Father beats for you beneath every cloud and in the raging storm as well as in every sunbeam; the blessing of the Father is in our night as well as in our day. To every man He dwells betimes in the burning bush of a wilderness; but the fire chariot is HIS chariot, the burning bush is HIS dwelling-place. The fire of God is love; its burning is the burning of love. The fire that comes to you from the bush is that which consumes the barrier between your heart and the heart of God, and between your heart and the heart of your brother. This fire transformed Moses into a man of might, an instrument of deliverance.

The mandate to deliver came out of the fire. Judgment and mercy came forth from the fire! Oh, my beloved, may you assuredly, and blessedly, and fully know the goodwill of Him that dwells in the unquenchable fire!

PURIFYING THE SONS OF LEVI

Not only must we be saved from the penalty of sin, but we must also be delivered from the power and nature of sin. The Bible says that I have been saved from the penalty of sin; that same Bible declares that I must be saved from the power and nature of sin. As surely as God has delivered me from the penalty of sin, just so surely shall He deliver me from the power of sin, blessed be His name! He is fire and He is soap. With the sweet psalmist of Israel I will sing of mercy and of judgment.

You will recall to memory that memorable night, that tremendous occasion of the Passover when the angel of the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight. Wherever there was blood he passed over, wherever there was no blood he drew his avenging sword. In the morning there was a great cry raised throughout the whole land of Egypt, a bitter, heart-broken cry. It is an undeniable fact that God is awful in His wrath. It is a wonderful thing to be saved from the penalty of sin as the Israelites were. When they came out of their places in the morning unscathed, no deaths in any of the Israelitish homes where the blood was sprinkled, they came out praising the Lord and worshipping the God of Israel. The blood had saved them from the penalty of sin, while the bloodless Egyptians paid the uttermost farthing.

As the children of Israel traveled across the Red Sea and journeyed toward their destination, in the wilderness they made a startling discovery - the God who had saved them from the penalty of sin DEMANDED HOLINESS! And the record states that with many of those Israelites God was NOT WELL PLEASED. The vast majority of those who escaped the slaughter of the Passover finally died in the desert, never having attained to the high and holy promises of God in the land of Canaan. They didn't die a judgmental death, they were not condemned to eternal hell and damnation, but they died prematurely, being chastised as a father will chastise his children. They failed to enter in and possess their inheritance in God. But God continued to deal with Israel in the wilderness, for He determined to have a people purified unto His purpose. God is like fire! He is like soap! And cleanse and purify His people He will!

That the coming of the Lord as refining fire does not relate to His coming in the flesh two thousand years ago is clearly seen by the fact that there was no purifying of the priesthood then, and the term "the sons of Levi" cannot refer to the old Levitical priesthood but to the new order of the Melchizedekian priesthood, for the old Aaronic priesthood has passed away and the new order has come into being, the order of Melchizedek. The Lord has nothing to do with the Levitical priesthood, for He was not of the tribe of Levi but of the tribe of Judah. He couldn't be a priest after the old order because He was not of Levi nor of the descendents of Aaron. This is made perfectly clear in Hebrews chapter seven. Malachi used this word in reference to the priesthood because there was no other order in existence then, and as the old was a type of that which was to come, the reference must be to the new order of priesthood. Christ Jesus is the High Priest of the new order, the Melchizedekian priesthood, the priesthood that is being formed now, and THIS IS THE PRIESTHOOD THAT HE CLEANSES AND PURIFIES WHEN HE RETURNS TO HIS TEMPLE.

Many students who enter college are required to take an entrance exam. As with every test, the entrance exam is given to determine, and prove, those who qualify, and eliminate those who don't. Those who pass the test will remain and continue with their studies; those who fail are rejected. Every test and trial has within it the element of elimination. Those who do not stand and pass the test are eliminated - not killed or tortured - but cast off, excluded, rejected, prevented from entering in to the new realm. That this possibility exists in the callings of God is clearly seen by the earnest exhortation of Paul when he writes to the saints at Corinth**,** "So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" **(I Cor. 9:24-27).** The Revised Standard Version reads, "I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air (a shadow boxer), but I pummel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." Paul realized that the thing that could disqualify him from the priesthood was his old body, his flesh. He fought against it, he pummeled it, he beat it

down, as some translations say, not yielding to the desires of the flesh, but bringing his body into subjection to the spirit, lest after a wonderful and successful preaching ministry, he himself would be cast away, rejected from the High Calling of God. Being a preacher, even a great preacher, even a preacher of sonship and kingdom truths, is not sufficient to qualify one for sonship in the Kingdom or the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. And I can assure you that there are vast numbers of preachers who will be eliminated in that day; those who have not been able to pass the test.

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" The great desire of Paul's heart was to qualify and not be a castaway, and to help others to attain also. He wanted to attain and apprehend that for which Christ had apprehended him and to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3). "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" **(Col. 1:28-29).** This is the great cry and longing of my heart also, that with Paul I may be counted worthy of the Kingdom and a place in the Royal Priesthood, and to help you, my reader, to attain also. It is wonderful to hear preachers describe the glories of sonship, the priesthood, and the kingdom. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, we shout aloud and praise God when we hear, but are we going to be partakers of the glory? That is the question. Not all who imagine themselves to be sons, not all who speak passionately of their place in God, not all who boast of their position in the Kingdom are going to make it - only a few, methinks. "Many are called, but few are chosen" **(Mat. 20:16).** "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" **(Mat.7:14).** There is a price to pay to follow on to know the Lord; a test to pass. Will I pass the test? Will you?

"And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and PURGE them as gold and silver." In the refining and purifying process there is a purging taking place. Purging is getting rid of unwanted and unnecessary material. When Hitler came to power in Germany he instituted a purging of the government. He cast out all those who were not in favor of his agenda and whom he believed he could not trust to cooperate completely with him. These were put out of office. When a conspiracy to get rid of him was discovered there was another purge. Those involved in the purge were not just relieved of their responsibilities, they were executed. Every time there is a change of leadership in the Soviet Union there is a purge of the high officials. Many are demoted to a lesser office, some are retired altogether, while others are promoted to higher positions and power. This is what is called a purge. The Lord, when He comes to His temple, PURGES THE SONS OF LEVI. Only the ones who have completely surrendered to His will, and have walked in His ways, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will remain to reign with Him. How can any one be put in a place of authority in the Kingdom who has not come to the place of complete SUBORDINATION TO THE KING? He will purge the sons of Levi, the priests, removing those He cannot trust to do His will and cooperate completely in the administration of His Kingdom. The ways of Babylon must be purged, the attributes of the carnal mind must be cleansed, all self-hood must be purified. The ones who will abide the day of His coming are those He is refining and purifying now. The whole object of this refining is that the priesthood "may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." And methinks that the priests themselves ARE THE OFFERING!

God wants outward holiness and He wants inward holiness. Soap for the outside, fire for the inside. But God does not want outward holiness apart from inward holiness. That's what the Pharisees had, you know. Outwardly they looked marvelous, outwardly they were so religious it knocked your eye out, but the Lord who can see through a thick cloud and whose eyes penetrate the depths of darkness could see that inwardly they were full of dead men's bones - the skeletal form of their father's religion, but void of the life and substance thereof. Outwardly bright white-washed sepulchers, but inwardly full of death and corruption - form without essence, works without life, revelation without reality!

THE REFINING FIRE

"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."

In this wonderful process the miner 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. Somebody 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. You may appear today very beautiful and all gift-wrapped and glorious in the grace of God, but I'm not deceived, and heaven is not deceived, and I sincerely hope that you are not deceived. It is not my intention to either affront or insult those who read these lines, but I must remind every child of God that any man or woman saved by God's grace is nothing but a decorated mud ball. You are ore brought up from the depths, yet polluted with impurities and distracting, incompatible substances. While we praise God for His mercy and grace so lavishly bestowed, the fact remains that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked - who can know it? But now, praise His name! the ore belongs to Him. That is what happened in salvation, we became His property, purchased by His blood.

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" **(I Cor. 6:19-20).** "The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" **(Col. 1:13)** Amplified.

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 not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various other kinds of rocks, 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 thin sheets. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, gold and silver 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. There is so much that is worthwhile in us, but so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. So much that is of the Spirit, and so much that is of the flesh. So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture. And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. The ore, which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure 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, but He comes now, not to forgive and bless and coddle and wink at all our carnality, but He comes as a refining fire, to purify the sons of Levi. He comes now to lay the axe to the root of every tree that bears no good fruit.

THE FIERY TRIAL

One aspect of God's fire is affliction, reverses, calamities, heartbreak, disappointment, trouble, suffering - all this and more besides, everything that breaks and processes and moulds the character of God into our lives. People say, "I don't know why God has allowed all of this to happen to me!" Ah - that's an easy thing to solve - He lets it happen because you need it! Since we are now HIS, His ore, we ought not be surprised at any of the processings which He brings our way, but rather we see the hand of our Father in all these things, knowing that in His own mystical and divine way He is working it all for our good and unto His glory.

The apostle Peter expressed the truth of it this way: "Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered by the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange - unusual and alien to you and your position - were befalling you" **(I Pet. 4:12)** Amplified. "THINK IT NOT STRANGE," the King James version says - do not be amazed and bewildered, do not be astonished, do not be alarmed as though the experience is foreign, unexpected, abnormal, a surprise. It is not an accident - it was PLANNED. It is not a surprise - it was PURPOSED.

If we love the Lord and long to see His purpose realized in our lives, we must be willing to accept Him as a refiner's fire. We accepted Him as Saviour, now we must accept Him as Fire. We must be willing to embrace the means He uses to sanctify us. He sanctifies us in the crucible of adversities. The trials, afflictions, sufferings He sends us are not punishments for past sins but divine tools to conform us to His image. Paul's thorn in the flesh, Job's loss of all his possessions, family and health, Joseph's betrayal by his brethren, his being sold as a slave, and later his being falsely accused and thrown in prison, were all for a divine purpose. Taken to the isle of Patmos, John was made to see a great multitude of saints from every nation standing before the Lamb of God. Each was clothed in white robes and held a palm branch in his hand. The WHITE robes speak of purity; the palm branch denotes victory. Being made pure by the inwrought righteousness of Christ also brings victory over self. Asked by one of the elders, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" John answered, "Sir, you know." He was then told, "These are they who have come out of GREAT TRIBULATION; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Each of these white-robed saints had to experience GREAT tribulation. But as the result of their going THROUGH that great tribulation, God's purpose was accomplished in their lives. Cleansed and purified by the Lamb, they were also transformed into His very likeness.

It is necessary that testings come. It is necessary that God's elect be tried. It is the fierce heat of THIS OVEN OF EARTH that separates the gold from the dross. it is the sevenfold heat that purifies the gold, and we must not be amazed or troubled by it. The fiery trial that is to try us is for our transformation. The fire of God consumes without destroying. A good illustration of this truth can be found in one of the physical laws in science, which states that matter can never be destroyed, only transformed or changed. Ice, for example, when subjected to heat first becomes a liquid (water), then a gas (water vapor). It disappears, but it is not destroyed, only changed into a higher form. So too the fire of God's glory destroys the flesh by transforming it. His sanctifying fire destroys that which corrupts the flesh (sin) in order to render the flesh holy. The sanctifying power of the Spirit places us on holy ground where the flesh (self-life) must put off its shoes if we are to walk as God wills. I find it impossible to believe that the saints will be raptured OUT OF THE TRIBULATION. Noah was not saved from the flood, but IN THE MIDST of its awful torrents. Daniel was not saved FROM the Lion's den, but IN IT. Neither were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saved FROM the fiery furnace, by WALKING IN THE MIDST OF IT WITH THE SON OF GOD. We are not saved FROM the cross, but by it.

Ray Prinzing has written, "God is spirit - that is His substance. God is love that is His nature. God is also light and fire - they are His manifestations. We speak of fiery trials, HE IS IN EVERY ONE OF THEM. May we go even farther? He is the source of the fire in our fiery trial, 'HE' is the fire thereof. You say that God's hand is resting upon you - you say that He has filled with His Spirit and His anointing is upon your life, guiding you into all truth. Then don't be amazed at the fiery testing that is yours also, for with every advancing step into new truth, there needs to be a purging out of error and past traditions which are contrary to pure truth. The fire to burn out the dross is the Holy Spirit God has placed within, your GOD is your fire. The reason you are conscious of the fire is because there remains something in resistance to the move of God, but after all is brought into submission, it doesn't matter if the circumstances don't change, for by then you have been so changed you no longer consider them as a fire in your life. The Lord places you into a situation, which almost 'burns' you up, and by your unyieldedness to God you are completely miserable. But when you at last begin to yield to His will, you find that all of the situation has become a haven, and learning to be content in whatever state you are in, you are no more adversely affected by the fire, you delight in it.

"Kenneth Wuest, in his translation, calls the fiery trial 'the smelting process.' A fiery ordeal, a smelting process - why? because it will both purify us, as well as reveal what degree of quality has been attained within. We become so involved with the exterior happenings of the trial, how our flesh hurts, etc., that we forget the actual purpose is for the INNER PROCESSING, until we are of a PURE SPIRIT before Him. When suddenly we become aware of 'what spirit we are of' in some of these happenings, it sends us back to our knees in repentance and beseeching God to purge out these unholy traits. HE already knows what is in us, but the fires certainly expose us to ourselves. Sometimes we bow low in praise because we see what He has wrought, and are amazed at our own reaction to a situation - of the calm, the peace, the rest we have in it all. Then we also have those other times when the agitation of our spirit reveals that there are vast areas within that still need to be dealt with, purified and cleansed, until 'ALL that is within me (can) bless His holy name' (Ps. 103:1). Yet in all of this working, praise God, we find in Him NO CONDEMNATION - just that continual drawing upward and

onward, being assured that HE who hath begun in us this good work, will also bring it to a successful conclusion in His own time" - end quote. What a word!

"He shall SIT as a refiner and purifier of silver..." He sits - this is a process that requires time, this is something that is important to Him, something He must patiently sit and preoccupy Himself with, not a work to be rushed or accomplished in one grand sweep of His hand. To us it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment you were sovereignly apprehended by the Spirit of God to be a part of His specific workings in this day, the Lord Jesus Christ has been obsessively preoccupied with purifying and refining what you are as His instrument in the earth. He examines the ore, ugly, shapeless, not representative at all of that beautiful vessel He has in mind; but there it is, just a hunk of jagged, dirty ore, with too much alloy. He moves to change that, and under the crucible you go.

People enter into this walk of sonship and I hear them saying, "I've never had trouble like I've had since I came into this walk!" Of course you haven't. That's the way it's supposed to be! "I had it better back in the church system," they moan. I wouldn't doubt that one little bit, because God is not at this time interested in either Babylon or the world. His purposes lie with those whom He has selected, drawing them out and beyond the course of this world's religion, and placing within them a divine call, a sense of destiny, which must be fulfilled. You wonder why things are so difficult, why all hell breaks loose, why as soon as one door opens another door closes, you wonder why you have all the troubles, trials, and tribulations, while the way of the religious is not so. Brother, you're in the furnace - Jesus is being to you what He promised He would be - FIRE! You are in the crucible of His purpose.

How long will this continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. **Ps. 12:6** says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES." Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold - ah, it is HIM. The silver - it is of HIM. How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit - making us "partakers of the divine nature" **(II Pet. 1:4).** It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become.

How long, think you, would it take a workman with a hammer and chisel to crush the ore and extract the gold from the rocks in which it lies so closely embedded? But if they are flung into the great furnace, and fires fanned to torrid heat and the draught roars through the burning mass, eventually a great glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all dross and rubbish are parted, flows into the waiting mould. This is a parable of what God will do for us. At first the surface of the melting metal may be dark and lurid - deep orange red, over which a flickering flame shall pass; but, as the process is pursued, the color will become lighter, the dark fumes will pass off, and the metal shall bear the appearance of a highly polished mirror, reflecting the beholder's face. The process may be long and hot; BUT THE RESULT IS SURE.

A brother has shared his interesting and informative experience at a silver smelter. He says, "I once visited a silver refinery. As one looked in through the door of the furnace you could observe a beautiful sea of molten silver. The flames were reflected mirror-like in the melted metal and one doubt whether anything could be more pure. Then the operator of the furnace added a chemical reagent and within minutes none of that beautiful silver was visible. The material that was added reacted with the impurities in the silver and these impurities rose to the top. The beauty was completely obscured. The operator then used a long handled tool to rake all these impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returned to its original beauty. Another reagent was then added and the same thing happened. This process went on for about a week and by then the silver was over ninety-nine percent pure." What a beautiful picture of the work of the fire of God in us! We look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God casts some circumstance into our life and suddenly the beauty of the Lord in us becomes clouded over as things come to the surface that we were not even aware were in our hearts.

I would like to tell you that the fire will get cooler, I would like to assure you that God is going to reduce the temperature, I would like to promise you that God will not add to the fire another reagent, but I have the most

marvelous news for you - something good is NOT going to happen to you! I wonder how many people would appreciate us singing on television, "Something AWFUL is going to happen to you ... Jesus of Nazareth is passing this way!" Everybody wants to hear about the good, the gifts, the blessings and glory all around. But let me assure you that none of that will bring you to perfection. Only the consuming fire of God can bring the scum to the surface of our lives, where He scoops it off. More fire and more heat and more and more impurities rise to the surface to be removed by His dealing hand. The process continues hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year until He can look into the molten silver and see His own image, His own reflection, His own face perfectly and clearly. So long as He can look into that furnace and not behold His own face clearly and purely and precisely and perfectly the heat stays on. "TAKE AWAY the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer" **(Prov. 25:4).**

RESPONDING TO THE FIRE

You can do one of two things when the pressures come. You can either REACT or you can RESPOND. What is the difference? To react is: "Why did this happen to me? Why didn't it happen to somebody else? I'm so fed up with so-and-so and such-and-such." That is reaction - plain and simple. We can talk of how good God is, of the great revelations He has given, of marvelous truths revealed, of glorious experiences received, of the high realm to which we are called - but how do you do when the fire starts burning? The accurate test of the quality of what is built into our spiritual lives is: How do we act when put under pressure? Do we react, or do we respond? How do you do, precious friend of mine, when the heat is turned up? Do you go to pieces? Do you wring your hands in dismay? Do you moan and cry? Does your brow furrow with worry and frustration? Is your heart seized with fear? Do you ask, "Where are you, God? What did I do to deserve this?"

The question is just this - How do you do when you're in a test? What do you do when sickness strikes...financial crisis ... trouble in the family ... problems at work... car breaks down ... when the heavens seem like brass and God appears to be a trillion miles away. Our God is a God who hides Himself, who draws the curtain, who veils His presence and withdraws His hand, that those who are growing up into His image may be tested. There come seasons of drought in every soul, as well as times of rain. There are times of storm as well as periods of fair weather. There are seasons of difficulties as well as days of blessing. There are the times when God is building a fire under your pot, because He plans to bring some changes in you.

But RESPONDING when testing comes is like this: "Lord, you have permitted this to come upon me; it couldn't happen if You didn't allow it, You're my Father. What are you trying to tell me? What are you working at getting rid of? What scum is there down there? What thing is there in me that is alien to your purpose, a hindrance to the revelation of Yourself through me? Why are You turning up the fire again, Lord; what are you wanting to teach me? I commit myself into Your hands, Father; I commit all my way unto you. I trust you with all I have and all I am. Do with me as You see fit, what you know is best. I say Yes to Your will, Yes to Your ways, Yes to Your word, my God!" That is RESPONDING. The fires will go out and the testings will end when they have accomplished the purpose for which the fire was kindled in the first place - when you've gotten the message, when you've learned the lesson, when you've been completely purged, purified and transformed, when everything that is not of Christ is out of your mind, out of your nature, out of your character, out of your disposition, out of your emotions, and out of your life!

Who may abide - endure - wait for - the day of HIS COMING? So many are content in that spiritual place where they are. The vast majority of Christians are satisfied with the forgiveness realm, the blessing realm, the gift realm where all is received by free grace through faith. Everything in those elementary realms is free! There are no conditions, no qualifications, no price - neither is there any great attainment in God. It is the realm of children, of babes in Christ. "Ask, and ye shall receive." To the spiritual children Jesus promised, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" **(Mat. 7:11).** The world of children receiving gifts from their parents is a blessed world indeed!

The question follows - Who will wait for the day of HIS COMING? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. Ah, beloved, this is not the blessing realm, it is something beyond the gifts and benefits obtained by grace through faith. This is the PURGING, CLEANSING AND PURIFYING REALM! It is the realm of qualifying

for sonship, of preparation for the Kingdom, of readiness to rule and reign with Christ as a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. And who shall stand - or who can withstand who can stand against it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refiner's fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth!

Even so, Come Lord Jesus!

THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a furnace of seven-fold heat
As He watched by the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze
As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test
And He wanted the finest gold,
To mold as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of price untold.

So He laid our gold in the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would say Him, "Nay";
And watched the dross that we had not seen,
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright,
But our eyes were dim with tears,
We saw but the fire - not the Master's hand,
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a Form above,
That bent o're the fire, tho' unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.

Can we think it pleases His Loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah no! but He sees thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure.

FIRES FOR GLORY

In the Fires of our affliction,
All predestined for our good,
We can see the fourth man walking,
Forming now a son of God.

Lest our souls fall in that furnace,
Be consumed by sorrow sore,
He has sent the Holy Spirit,
Our deliverance to insure.

He knows what will purify us,
Knows the way, has gone before,
And He planned this fiery furnace,
Not an end - but as the DOOR.

For our body, soul, and spirit,
As a substance to refine,
From these fiery trials and sorrows,
Shall emerge, with glory shine.

Not a golden, evil image,
As some heathen king did mold,
But a precious Holy Image,
A reflected son of God.

So wait my soul, wait on His workings,
Wait my spirit, patiently,
Wait my body, for the changing,
Rising up triumphantly.

In the ages yet unrolling,
We shall still His glories share,
For the plan of God is ceaseless,
His salvation making bare.

Mortal minds cannot receive it,
This supernal plan so great,
One that covers all the ages,
Ending sin, and fear, and hate.

So we give Him all the glory,
Knowing fiery trials now,
Will present us in His likeness,
All is well, that He allows.

- Irene Lindsay

bLOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 33
COMING IN RESURRECTION POWER

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-THREE

THE RESURRECTION BODY OF JESUS
THE TWO GLORIES
THE GLORY OF THE SON IN THE FLESH
THE GLORY OF THE SON IN RESURRECTION
MINISTERS OF INCORRUPTION
THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).** "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen... Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" **(I Cor. 15:12,13,51).** Of all the dreams the heart of man has ever entertained, none has been more desirable, precious, and worthy of attainment, regardless of the cost, than the dream of immortality. Let's be honest; if there was an elixir that was invented guaranteed to give immortality to our physical bodies, we would all buy it and drink it! Kings and emperors who have conquered the world would gladly have exchanged all they had gained for immortality. But all the wealth of all the nations that lay prostrate before their victorious swords, even combined with all the riches amassed in their vast treasure houses, could not buy them so much as one single second's extension of time.

"It is appointed unto man once to die," says the Word of God. And, short of the coming of Jesus Christ, nothing would ever have changed that. It is as inevitable as God Himself can make it. Millionaires may offer their doctors vast fortunes to prolong their lives a month ... a day... at least an hour...or even a few minutes. But there comes a time when all the money in the world cannot stay the hand of death. The word "death" has many meanings to many people. To some it means the final and futile end of all their efforts - the leaving behind of all that they have striven for all their lives. There were no pockets in the ancient burial shroud, for those departing this world take with them only what they have in their hearts. All other treasures - no matter how valuable, or what the cost to the individual accumulating them - are left behind. Then, too, there is the sorrow of departing with loved ones. This is death's most devastating blow - the absence of someone we love so dearly. And, if this were the end, we would be most miserable indeed. BUT IT DOES NOT END THERE!

The resurrection from the dead is indeed a thing, which seems incredible to the mind of the natural man. Yet almost two millenniums ago Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by the Spirit of God these startling words: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" **(Jn. 11:25-26).** This, of course, is the greatest thing anybody could ever know and this assurance centers in Jesus Christ and in His resurrection. This is the hope and the only hope of all mankind. Until Christ came into the world men had no hope. We do not realize that today. We think that people have always had hope. But that is not so. Except for those few people who clung to the promises of God given in the Old Testament, most of the world dwelt in absolute hopelessness. There was no substantial promise; there was no concrete evidence; there was nothing but the vain wish which was so often the father of the thought that perhaps people who died lived still in another world, or should come back and live again. Everywhere, people watched with great despair as their loved ones were lowered into the grave. "If a man die, shall he live again?" was the burning question left unanswered. There were nothing but shadowy unsubstantial wishes that filled the hearts of men. And in the night watches, those cold doubts came swirling into the heart and mind, chilling the soul; thoughts that came right out of the sepulcher and the tomb.

But then...Jesus came and all was changed! Life and immortality were brought to light by Christ and His resurrection from the dead. The dark door of death was broken down, and One stepped back into this world from that dread realm. This was no vain speculation; this was a CERTAINTY! Hundreds of credible witnesses

saw Him, talked with Him, touched Him, held Him. This was no mere argument but a resurrected Christ! This was nothing like the pale hopes of the Egyptians who thought that their people would come back and through some transmigration of the soul would go into one sort of animal after another until finally they made it back into human form again. This was nothing like the foolish hopes of the Eastern religions and so-called Metaphysics who trusted in the reincarnation of their souls into mortal human bodies again and again throughout long ages, to bring them ultimately to perfection and oneness with God. Instead of reincarnation the Bible teaches resurrection. This was nothing like the early Greeks described by Homer in the Odyssey, where Odysseus and Achilles go into the nether world and see these miserable shades, the ghosts of people who had died. What a terrible picture they paint, where all alike are miserable. Ghosts flit aimlessly about, some more tormented than the rest, but none finding joy or satisfaction, until Achilles says, "I would rather be a poor paid servant in a poor rnan's house and be above ground than be king of kings among the dead."

Jesus Christ came and offered no vain speculation or philosophical argument, but offered His living body as the One that had risen from the dead. Christ arose from the dead and that was the greatest moment in the history of this world. He declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also" **(Jn. 14:19).** What a wonderful thing that is, to live forevermore! To live forevermore in a new body with no more pain, no more aches, no more arthritis, no more back trouble, no more gout, no more cancer, no more weakness, ageing, nor death! All of that is gone. We shall have a new body, fashioned after His own body of glory and power, a body of immortality and incorruption, where the sting and the dark victory of death shall be forever abolished. Praise His name!

THE RESURRECTION BODY OF JESUS

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a certainty beyond all question. Our faith as Christians has no basis if the Christ who was born at Bethlehem, and died on Calvary, is still within a Palestinian tomb; if He did not reanimate that body by the Holy Ghost and rise in a bloodless body from that sepulcher of stone. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" **(I Cor. 15:14-18).**

The Word of God bears immutable testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ arose triumphant over death, hell and the grave. Jesus' humanity was "swallowed up" completely by divinity and spirit. In the days of His flesh He made Himself subject to the law of the earth, earthly. He who knew no limitations became subject to the limitations of His own creation. At His birth He entered this earth realm as a normal human baby boy. There was no halo, nor did He wave at the shepherds as they entered the stable that starlit night in Bethlehem, announcing from the manger, "Hi, fellows, I was expecting you!" He was born and He grew up as any other person. He showed His humanity continually; He hungered, He thirsted, He grew weary, He wept, He slept and lived as a man. However, in His resurrection His humanity was made subject unto the law of spirit and divinity. The risen, glorified Christ will never again suffer in the flesh; neither shall He hunger, sleep, weep, thirst, grow weary, older, or weaker, or be controlled by the fleshly realm of the world system or the laws thereof. He is forever the resurrected and glorified Christ of glory! He completely and forever transcends all laws of cohesion, adhesion, gravity, inertia, interference and resistance. During the time He was on earth after His resurrection, He wrapped Himself in His majesty in such a way, that awe and reverence filled the hearts of His disciples. Suddenly, He appeared right in the midst of them, with the doors closed and bolted. How did He get in? Did someone leave the window open? No, He didn't slip in through the window or a hole in the wall. He walked through the spirit world and out of it right into the physical world. He possessed the ability to supersede all physical laws and limitations. He had a spiritual body, a celestial body - a house from heaven. When His disciples would have entered into closer intimacy, or would have constrained Him to be to them as He was before His death, He vanished out of their sight.

THE TWO GLORIES

One of the most significant statements ever uttered by Jesus was made in prayer on that dark and sorrowful night before the crucifixion. He said, "I have GLORIFIED Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" **(Jn. 17:4-5).** Who can begin to comprehend this? Generally,

when people think of the glory of Christ they think of the glory He had while on earth: His holiness of life, the miracles, the teachings, the love, humility, meekness and mercy that flowed so graciously from His life and ministry. Those things indeed characterize a great glory. Jesus spoke of it. "I have glorified Thee on the earth" - on the earth plane. But now the blessed Son speaks of another glory as high above the glory He revealed on earth as are the heavens high above the earth. With the most intense desire He petitions the Father, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS!" Come and hearken to what this divine message has to tell us of the eternal glory of the Son, in whom the Father speaks to us. Come and see how truly He is one with God, and dwells in a glory beyond that which can be either seen or known in the earth realm! To be glorified WITH THINE OWN SELF is to be ONE IN THE FATHER; to be not merely the Son, but God. The deeper our insight into the true Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, the more confident shall we be that He will, by His divine power, make us partakers of His very own glory.

We find arrayed before us here TWO GLORIES. Both glories are uniquely the glory of Christ. The one, the lesser, is His glory as He walked upon earth as a man revealing the Father on the earth plane, in a body of flesh; the other, the greater, is the glory which He had before the world was, and which, having passed through death and into resurrection, He now possesses once more. What is the difference between these two glories, and what do these mean for those apprehended unto sonship to God?

THE GLORY OF THE SON IN FLESH

I would draw your reverent attention to these significant words of inspiration found in **Phil. 2:5-9.** "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him..." The Amplified Bible is so expressive here: "Let this same attitude and purpose and mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus - Who, although being ... one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that lie became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! Therefore God has highly exalted Him..."

In this wonderful passage we have a summary of all the most precious truths that cluster about the person of the Son of God. There is first His wonderful divinity: "in the form of God," "equal with God." Then comes the mystery of Him laying aside that glory in that phrase of deep and inexhaustible meaning: "He stripped Himself," "He emptied Himself." The humiliation follows: "The form of a servant," "made in the likeness of men," "found in fashion as a man." Then comes the crushing and mortification of suffering and death: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And all is crowned by His glorious exaltation: "God hath highly exalted Him!" Christ as God Christ becoming man, Christ as man in humiliation revealing the glory of the Father in a body of flesh, and Christ in glory as Lord of all: such are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge this passage contains.

The two glories of sonship are here: firstly, the glory He had with the Father before the world was; secondly, the glory He had on earth. Then follows the glory to which He has now been exalted which is one with that glory that He had from eternity.

The great truth we want to grasp here is that Christ dwelt from eternity in the form, the essence, the nature and the being of God. In that divine nature He was eternal, untemptable and incorruptible. But when He laid aside that glory, emptying Himself of it, taking upon Him the form and nature of man, He, the ETERNAL ONE, subjected Himself to the dread power of DEATH, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. When the Christ laid aside His eternal heavenly glory, the UNTEMPTABLE ONE took upon Himself all the frailties and weaknesses of human nature so that the One who CANNOT be tempted was found in a nature that COULD be tempted and indeed He was in all points TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE. James says that, "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire), and enticed. Then when lust hath

conceived, it bringeth forth sin" **(James 1:14-15).** Was Jesus truly tempted in all points like as we are, or did He have some advantage over us, some inherent quality of divinity, some unique spiritual power which enabled Him to be oblivious to the cravings and demands of the flesh? May God in His great mercy give us a true insight into the glory of what is offered us in this truth - that our High Priest, whom we have in the heavenlies, is One who is able to sympathize with us in each and every circumstance, because He knows, from personal experience, exactly what we feel and face. Yes, that God might give us courage to draw nigh unto Him, He has placed upon the throne of heaven One out of our midst, of whom we can be certain that, because He Himself lived on earth as a man, He understands us perfectly, is prepared to have patience with our weakness, and give us just the help we need to enter into His glory.

The point I want to make crystal clear is that when Christ left the eternal glory of the Father-realm to take upon Himself the glory of the Son in human flesh, He EMPTIED HIMSELF of all His prerogatives as Deity and willfully, yea, deliberately subjected Himself to the finite restrictions and debilitating limitations of this physical, material world. As God He had been infinitely rich, while as man He became inconceivably poor. As God He had been the Omnipotent One, but as man He could do absolutely nothing more than any mortal man except as the Father worked through Him. As God He had been eternal and incorruptible, but as man He grew tired and weary, weak and faint, and died an ignominious death upon a cross. As God He could not be tempted with any evil, but as man He was tempted in every point as is common to men. As God He was Omniscient, possessing all wisdom and knowledge, while as man He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" **(Lk. 2:52).** As God He had been the Omnipresent One who filled all things, but as man He lay a helpless infant in a manger and throughout His life could never be in more than one place at a time. As God He had been pure spirit essence, but as man He was a physical flesh and blood human being.

Christ's glory as the Son of man was thus A FAR LESSER GLORY than the glory He had in the Father realm before the foundation of the world. He had faithfully glorified the Father on the earth plane, making Him visible through a body of flesh, as a life lived out, yet, when He prayed that He might be glorified with the glory which He had before the world was, He was asking to be released from the earthly, material, physical form He had assumed, with its human nature and limitations and restrictions, back into the untemptable, eternal and incorruptible realm of divine spirit life. His yearning was to be forever freed from the whole dreadful realm of physical weakness, limitation and confinement. This was to shortly take place through His RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

THE GLORY OF THE SON IN RESURRECTION

When we speak of the resurrection of Christ, we enter a new and glorious realm entirely, for no man other than Christ Jesus our Lord has until now experienced the glory of such a resurrection. In the glory of this resurrection is seen not only the glory which Christ now has in His exaltation, but also that marvelous glory which was His before the world was. Let us consider this glory.

When Christ our Lord rose from the dead, He was raised not in corruption but in INCORRUPTION. That which is incorruptible is forever beyond the power of corruption, decay, or death. God Himself is said to be incorruptible and we are said to be born again of incorruptible seed by the Word of God that liveth forever. This incorruptible life now resides in our inner man, but has not been manifested in our outer bodies. Death has no power over the incorruptible. Thus of the resurrection body it is written: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" **(I Cor. 15:42-44).** Paul declares that this corruptible MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION. The body of the corruptible man is the body of death, but the body of the incorruptible man is the body of the resurrection, a body beyond the power of death. When Jesus rose from the dead, He arose incorruptible. He had no blood as we know blood. He had forever laid aside that blood which had been the life of his mortal flesh and was now quickened in His flesh by the life of God, life immortal, incorruptible and eternal.

Many precious saints have claimed that they have already put on immortality, that they have here and now by-passed the grave and will never die. I would overthrow the faith of none, for it is my deep conviction that we are living in the generation that shall see the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God; but I do say that the body of glory and incorruption is the body of the RESURRECTION. When the Kingdom of God unfolds in its

next stage of power and glory in the earth, the sons of God will be manifest to the world and to every nation, tribe, tongue and people on the face of the whole earth in the full glory of their RESURRECTION. Being children of the resurrection, they will be seen as INCORRUPTIBLE BEINGS and they will rule the world and bless all the nations of earth as resurrected and incorruptible men. Just as Jesus had power after His resurrection to appear and disappear, to pass right through a wall or locked door, to disclose Himself or to hide His identity, taking various forms to ascend to heaven and return to the earth, to issue instructions concerning the Kingdom of God, even to eat and drink if He wished, so also shall the incorruptible and glorified sons of God have power. All that Jesus demonstrated and demonstrates in His resurrection and glorification the sons of God shall be in the fullness of their resurrection and glorification, for they are destined to share the totality of His glory.

MINISTERS OF INCORRUPTION

Jesus was the firstfruit of the resurrection. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept ... for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end (of the resurrection)" **(I Cor. 15:20-24).** Paul tells us in Rom. 8:19-23 that the whole creation is in travail to know the power of the resurrection as it shall be unveiled in the sons of God. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creation itself SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION into the glorious liberty (from death) of the children of God. 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 sons), to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

This glorious realm of incorruption, which lies beyond the power of temptation, sin, limitation, sickness, sorrow and death, belongs to the children of God, but, blessed be God! it is likewise the hope of ALL CREATION. One of the fundamental laws of nature is that one cannot dispense what he does not himself possess; on the spiritual plane this means that one cannot minister that of which he has not himself been made partaker. I therefore declare to you that although the glory of the Son of God on earth throughout His three and a half years of ministry and manifestation was truly marvelous beyond words to describe, still it was a glory, which was limited in the extreme. When the Christ took upon Him a body of flesh and the nature of man, He willfully subjected Himself to the limitations and restrictions of that which is material, earthly and mortal. Jesus did not walk among men as the incorruptible God, but as mortal man. It was as a natural, physical mortal earthling that He was tempted; He hungered; He thirsted; He was bound by time and space; He knew weakness; He wept; He slept; He suffered; He died. The life of God resided within His inner spirit, but that life was confined, restrained and restricted by the bounds of the material world, which He had taken upon Himself. It is manifest that His body was not an incorruptible body, else He could not have died though nailed to a thousand crosses! His own human nature was not of the incorruptible nature of God, else He could not have been TEMPTED in all points like as we are. Truly He emptied Himself, yea, stripped Himself of that incorruptible glory of the Father realm and, as man, as flesh, HE COULD NOT, though He were a Son, MINISTER THAT WHICH HE DID NOT HIMSELF POSSESS! If He laid it aside He did not have it. And if He did not have it, He could not give it. Oh! the mystery of it.

It is remarkable that during the few years of Jesus' earthly ministry He never performed one act, not even one miracle or wonder on the higher plane of incorruption. Every miracle Jesus did was in the realm of mortality. Jesus raised a number of folk from the dead, including Lazarus, the widow's son and the daughter of Jairus; but every person raised from the sleep of death was merely raised up again into the MORTAL LIFE to continue their lives for a season in the same old corruptible bodies. Each and every one of them DIED AGAIN! Think of it. Not one single person was raised up out of a corruptible body into an incorruptible body. It would be impossible for the world to even contain all the books that could be written about those astonishing signs and incredible wonders performed by the Son of God on earth; yet, all those works, mighty though they were, were restricted entirely to the plane of the physical, material and mortal. Jesus cleansed the lepers and healed every manner of sickness and disease among the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that each and every one of those good people got sick again and eventually died! Those were miracles within the sphere of mortality, not ministrations of incorruptible life. Those wonderful deliverances were in all reality but short new leases on the corruptible existence of this body of death. Though Christ blessed men with healing and health and these were

permitted to remain on earth for long series of years, yet He merely lengthened out the period of their mortal existence and NONE COULD AVOID THE FINAL CATASTROPHY.

Jesus did many other types of miracles. He began by turning water into wine. And it was very excellent wine, indeed. But just wine, nonetheless. It was composed of the same chemical elements as all fine wine. It was material, physical, earthly. It was consumed by flesh and blood bodies and a portion eliminated from those bodies as waste. Nothing incorruptible or celestial here! And yet it is written: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY; and His disciples believed on Him" **(Jn. 2: 11).** Ah - He manifested forth His glory, but this was not the glory He had with the Father before the world was, but the lesser glory of manifesting the Father on the earth plane, in the world of the physical, material and mortal.

On another occasion Jesus fed more than five thousand people from five little loaves and two small fish. How we stand in awe before the majesty of such a miracle! but remember, dear ones, that even a wonder so marvelous as this is but a wonder on the physical plane. Bread and fish. Nothing more. Multiplied! And what have you? More bread and fish! Material bread. Physical fish. Perishable, corruptible items, both. The multitude ate of it and their bodily hunger was satisfied momentarily, their mortal bodies strengthened for a few fleeting hours and then all the old hunger and weakness returned. Nothing of eternal value there, nothing of incorruptible substance! One time Jesus caused the boat in which He and His disciples were sailing to move from the middle of the sea to the shore with a speed swifter than any modern rocket. Wonderful! you say. Yes, wonderful indeed on the earth plane, wonderful to the fascinated eyes of poor finite mortals in their limitation and confinement to natural law, and their lack of understanding thereof. But still no ministration of the higher life of incorruption. The disciples who made this fantastic voyage with Jesus remained but natural men with carnal minds, unchanged and untransformed by heaven's life. Following this miracle creation was still groaning as it had been groaning for long millenniums - to be DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION! Without doubt that same boat which made such a miraculous passage across the sea has long since decayed back into the earth or lies ruined on the bottom of the sea. And creation goes on groaning...

"For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known - waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For ... the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" **(Rom. 8:19,21).** When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind a manifestation of God's sons after the order of which Jesus was manifested while on earth. Jesus glorified the Father on the earth plane, and so do we; but this is not the glory yet to be revealed that we anticipate, neither is it the hope for which the whole creation is in travail. The creation is not groaning for another revival, nor for another evangelistic campaign, nor for another healing campaign, nor for more gifts of the Spirit, nor for more apostles and prophets and teachers, nor for more signs, wonders and miracles, nor yet for 144,000 flaming evangelists just like Jesus when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. For two millenniums we have had revival after revival, healing upon healing, signs and wonders and miracles in abundance, and none of them have ever brought forth the fullness of the Kingdom of God on earth, nor has even one of them or all of them put together ever delivered the creation from its bondage to corruption! The creation continues to groan in its bondage and we ourselves, groan within ourselves, as we wait for the disclosing of our sonship - the redemption of our bodies. It is not another "patch-up" job we want, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of corruption in spirit, soul and body! Jesus clearly understood that He could never deliver the creation from its bondage to corruption so long as He remained Himself subject to this realm of mortality. He simply could not minister to men that which He had abrogated in coming to earth. Though He should have walked on earth for a million years in His body of humiliation, gaining in favor with the people and power over the nations through all those years, He still would not have been able to raise even one poor mortal up out of corruption into incorruption. It was necessary that He be resurrected Himself by the power and glory of the Father that He might be able then to minister even that resurrection life to a firstfruit company; that they, in turn, apprehending all that pertains to that life might be able then to minister it to the rest of creation. For this creation waits expectantly.

Let us give ear to Peter as his lips speak of the resurrection life of Christ in his tremendous sermon on the day of Pentecost. Notice that his message did not center in the Christ of the manger, nor in the Christ of teaching, nor in the Christ of healing, nor in the Christ of signs and wonders, nor alone in the Christ crucified, but in

CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD. "Ye men of Israel," he cries, "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom GOD HATH RAISED UP, having loosed the pains of death... for David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to Me the ways of life" **(Acts 2:22-25, 31).**

How we praise God and bless Him unceasingly for every temporal blessing so lavishly bestowed by His bountiful grace. We rejoice exceedingly in His provision of finances for our daily needs, for those healings which have preserved alive our bodies unto this day, for each sign and wonder which has quickened our faith and given assurance of His wonderful love, faithful care and gracious presence. We would not minimize the blessedness of any of these things, yet are aware that none of these are that for which creation, and we ourselves, are groaning. We cannot - dare not - be satisfied until we AWAKE IN HIS LIKENESS! The glory to which we are called as sons of God is not the glory Jesus had on earth, but the glory for which He prayed when His earth-walk was completed: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Paul wrote, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall YE also appear WITH HIM IN GLORY" **(Col. 3:4).** And Peter declared, "But the God of all grace ... hath called us unto HIS ETERNAL GLORY by Christ Jesus" **(I Pet. 5:10).**

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that this resurrection glory, this eternal glory is the hope of all creation. We rejoice in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, in prophecies, visions, hearings, miracles, temporal blessings and provisions, but I must confess that I am saddened to see the Lord's people continually following after mere TEMPORAL SIGNS and PHYSICAL, MATERIAL, MORTAL BLESSINGS. I would not depreciate for one moment, nor in any measure, the manifold blessings and gracious provisions of God in this earthly realm of mortality and corruption. I, above all who read these lines, perhaps, can testify to God's absolute and unswerving faithfulness to miraculously supply every need in this earthly, temporal realm as He daily provides sustenance for my family and the wherewithal to mail out tens of thousands of articles and books to the elect of God each year. It is all the LORD'S DOING, and I can bear witness that never once in these nineteen years of publishing the Kingdom Bible Studies has His faithfulness failed, bless His name!

And yet it distresses my soul to see my sick brethren (as well as myself) healed by the power of God, only to behold them smitten again later by some other debilitating disease. What sorrow it brings to the human heart to see the precious men and women of God who have walked in the Spirit and have so mightily blessed God's people finally grow old and pass from our midst into the silence of the grave. I grow tired of healing the sick only to see them sick again. It is frustrating to pray for the same saints over, and over, and over again for the same problems and weaknesses. I am tired of seeing the dead raised (I personally know several people who have been raised from the dead) just to watch them ageing and weakening on their way into death again. I tire of signs and wonders, which cater only to the flesh, and minister solely to the physical man on the level of mortality: food, raiment, money, jobs, and all the rest of the corruptible things of earth. I am deeply discontented with that which blesses men in the natural but then leaves them to carry on their lives in corruptible natures and bodies. How expressive the word which the Spirit selected when He inspired the apostle to write: "For in this (our earthly house) we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven... that mortality might be swallowed up of life" **(II Cor. 5:1-5).** Paul says that the whole creation GROANS. He says that WE ALSO GROAN ... that mortality might be swallowed up of life! "And He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us His pledge of the Spirit" **(II Cor. 5:5).**

Christ shall minister His eternal glory to a firstfruit company of sons who shall in turn minister that same eternal glory to the creation. Think not, dear saints, that the ministry of the manifested sons of God shall consist in holding great salvation-healing campaigns, of merely emptying out hospitals as the sick are healed, of supernaturally and miraculously feeding the world's hungry and starving multitudes, or raising some dead people back to life again as Jesus did. What Jesus WAS is not the pattern for the manifested sons of God. The pattern is WHAT HE IS IN HIS ETERNAL GLORY. He has planted within each and every son of God an incorruptible SEED which shall in due time produce an INCORRUPTIBLE PEOPLE. The ministry of the sons of

God will be to impart INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE so that ALL THINGS and ALL MEN may be raised up out of the realm of limitation and death into the glorious liberty of the ETERNAL SPIRITUAL ORDER. Glory!

Therefore the Spirit saith, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue ALL THINGS unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).** Here we have the top of the ladder, reaching into the celestial realm - the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. Beloved brethren! Let us lay aside all presumption and purge ourselves of every form of deception. I admonish you this day - do not allow any man to deceive you into believing that he can in some way minister immortality to your mortal body - unless He himself dwells in an incorruptible body! Some have professed to have already put on immortality, to have even now passed over the grave; but it should be obvious to any thinking mind that the wrinkles in their skin, the redness in their tired eyes, the gray in their hair, the daily need for food, water, air and sleep, and the unchecked ageing of their bodies give the lie to their confession. Some have tried to teach people into immortality, some have attempted to confess or meditate into it, others have concocted a scheme for baptizing people into it, while others have foolishly hoped to live forever by eating health food. I can tell you without any fear of contradiction that all the fruitarians and vegetarians and food faddists of all previous generations are now lying in their graves along with all who subscribed to any other method or technique devised by man for the putting on of immortality. The word cannot be broken: "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY..." How can corruption impart incorruption? How tan any man lift either himself or others out of the pit of corruption by his own corruptible boot straps? "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD," saith the Lord. Let me present this Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified and exalted above all heavens! Christ enthroned in the glory He had with the Father before the world began. HE is the tree of life in the paradise of the Kingdom of God! The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. The church in its walk in this corruptible realm has claimed to do the "greater works" of which Jesus spoke, but this is not so. The greater works will appear when this corruptible has fully put on incorruption and the sons of God are put on display in the fullness of His divine life and glory. When we consider the transcendent majesty and power of the glory of the resurrection unto incorruption, it seems but little wonder that these mighty sons of God will bring to pass a world wherein ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW.

With what anticipation do we wait for this glorious manifestation! Meantime we are taught to believe: "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body..." This is not meant merely for revelation, to be left for the future; for the full development of our life in sonship we must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death on every level. We do it as we learn to look to Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here and now victory over the terrible dominion sin has had in the body. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). We do it as we allow the powers of the coming age to possess us, and to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here and now, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.Sons of God! Seek to know CHRIST as your redemption. Let this be the crown of your life in sonship. Do not seek immortality in the body realm first, or only, apart from the knowledge of Christ in all His other aspects. But seek it truly as that unto which they are meant to lead you. Nothing will fit you for incorruption but faithfulness in every step of the putting on of the MIND OF CHRIST.. Seek Him as your wisdom and the wisdom will lead you into the mysteries of complete redemption. Seek Him as your righteousness and dwell clothed upon with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favor and presence. Seek Him as your sanctification; the experience of His power to make you holy, spirit, soul and body will quicken you to a power of holiness that shall not cease its work until the sin which causes death has been abolished in your being. Seek Him as your life, and live, even now, in the light of that glory. And as you seek to experience within yourself to the full, the power of HIS TRANSFORMING LIFE, your heart will be enlarged to see the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and you shall for your part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling!

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

There is a great misunderstanding among many of the Lord's people about the nature of the resurrection body. Many have speculated concerning the glorified body or the body of glory, insisting that it would have to be a body appearing about thirty years of age, in the prime of life and at the zenith of its powers. We have imagined

a race of men, all gods and goddesses of stunning beauty and unexcelled physical perfection, the ideal specimen of humanity, flawless and without any physical limitations. But such is not a scriptural nor a spiritually enlightened view of the resurrection body. In forthcoming issues I hope to deal in depth with this important thought, and in closing this message will but briefly touch upon it.

This brings us to a most wonderful and momentous statement of truth. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote, "The natural man RECEIVETH 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).** Jesus stated the same truth in different words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD" **(Jn. 3:3).** It cannot be said of the unregenerate man that he is living in contact with the spiritual world of God. Since that fateful day in Eden's garden when man was banished from the glories of the celestial realm the natural man has been dead, unresponsive to all spiritual things and has positively no communion on the plane of divine life. The natural man functions and knows in this present material world of corruption and death while being completely dead to the higher realm of God and spiritual realities. And so, until a man receives of God's Spirit - the Spirit of God is that which KNOWS - it is impossible for him to have any understanding, either of God, or His Word, or His ways.

The Holy Spirit who knoweth all things has taught us in the simplest and most beautiful words that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are TEMPORAL; but the things which are not seen are ETERNAL" **(II Cor. 4:18).** All the things which can be seen, heard, tasted, touched or smelled by the five physical senses or discerned by the psychological senses of the soul are TEMPORAL and are passing away. This was already a fact from the beginning, for where is the scripture, O man, that tells us that in that distant dawn the plants were immortal, or that the beasts of the field possessed eternal life, or that the roses never faded or dropped their petals, that the leaves of the trees withered not, or that no tool in the hand of man ever wore out? I declare to you that not only today are the things which are seen TEMPORAL, but the things which can be seen HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TEMPORAL since the day they came fresh from the hand of the Creator. The awe-inspiring wonder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is that God held out to His creation the potential to be TRANSFORMED and TRANSFERRED out of the realm of the natural into the Kingdom of the Spiritual. **I Jn. 2:17** has always been true: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God ABIDETH FOREVER." Can you think of any visible thing that is not passing away? Every form of life upon the earth is passing away, and the earth itself is passing away. The towering peaks of the majestic mountain ranges of earth's vast continents are slowly but surely, age after age, eroding and crumbling away. The visible universe of suns and planets and moons and stars and innumerable galaxies will one day be rolled together like a scroll and the magnitudes of time and space shall be no more.

We know that God is spirit, but what does that mean? Well, spirit is that which cannot be changed, destroyed, damaged, or hurt in any way. Spirit does not deteriorate. It cannot grow tired or old. It is the opposite of matter. Matter is always changing, deteriorating. While you read this page, on an infinitesimal scale the paper is actually wearing out. The clothes that adorn your body are wearing out. The building in which you dwell is weakening day by day. Your body, too, is wearing out - and some day all these things will be but dust. True, it will take a long time according to our ideas for some of these things to happen, but happen they will. There was a time when great cities filled with imposing buildings and splendid monuments flourished in Africa and Asia, cities of which every trace has now disappeared, for they have become one with the desert sands. This is inevitable because matter is always changing - wearing out! "Man who is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" **(Job 14:1-2).**

This is really a splendid thing because it means that the world is constantly being renewed. It is splendid that old and imperfect things should disappear in order that newer and better things may take their place. If clothing did not wear out, many people would continue wearing it for many years until it became out of style and dingy with dirt, instead of which we get new clothes at frequent intervals. If automobiles did not wear out we might still be using the primitive models of sixty years ago. Who would want to eternally preserve something that is imperfect, soiled, ruined, or insufficient? Because every thing of the material realm IS IMPERFECT God has, in His great wisdom and goodness, arranged it so that all things of this realm ARE TEMPORAL and are passing away.

Material forms wear out, but the Spirit of God does not wear out because the Spirit is ETERNAL SUBSTANCE. Our fleshly bodies of humiliation are composed of matter, whereas our spirits are the offspring of God's divine Spirit. Herein lies the folly of those who presume to have already put on immortality in their physical bodies and cannot die. I have known many precious and sincere brethren who believed that they had by-passed the grave, but I can tell you that today all of them are both dead and buried with the exception of a few who have not yet reached the age where death is a certainty. Hearken, my brother! and hear, my sister! the words of wisdom and understanding from the Almighty: "The things which are seen ARE TEMPORAL; but the things which are not seen ARE ETERNAL." The Spirit here reveals the great truth that there simply is no such thing as INCORRUPTIBLE MATTER, or unchanging forms of physical substance. There are no IMMORTAL PHYSICAL BODIES walking around anywhere on God's green earth! If they are composed of matter and visible then they are not eternal and cannot endure. It is a contradiction of terms. Nothing that is seen by the mortal eyes of men or perceived by the natural senses can be eternal by the very nature of things. There must be a transformation, a transferal from one kingdom to another.

The incorruptible body of the resurrection is not a material body at all, it is a SPIRIT BODY. The words of Paul to the Corinthians must be made very real to our hearts: "There are celestial (heavenly) bodies, and bodies terrestrial (earthly): but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So... is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in CORRUPTION; it is raised in INCORRUPTION: it is sown in DISHONOR; it is raised in GLORY: it is sown in WEAKNESS; it is raised in POWER: it is sown a NATURAL BODY; it is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY. There is a NATURAL BODY and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY" **(I Cor. 15:40, 42-44).** It is plain to see that our present bodies are "natural bodies." The "spiritual body" supersedes the "natural body" and is called in the Greek simply a SPIRIT BODY. The natural body and the spirit body belong to two entirely different kingdoms. The former is visible; the latter is invisible. The former is temporal; the latter is eternal. The former is of the earth; the latter is from heaven - out of the realm of spirit. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building (body) of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed (disem- bodied), but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" **(II Cor. 5:1-4).**

Our "earthly house," our physical body, is characterized as a "tabernacle" or more correctly a "tent-house." The transient character of the earthly body is thus revealed by this symbol. This house is to be "dissolved." "Dissolved" is from a Greek word meaning "loosened down," as the ropes of a tent are loosened and the tent is taken down. The "spirit body," on the other hand, is described as a "building of God, eternal in the heavens." The metaphor changes, interestingly, from a "tent" to a "building," from that which can be "dissolved" to that which "abides." My beloved brethren! I have absolutely no desire whatever to have God imbue with any eternal qualities this poor, imperfect, limited, restricted, humiliating, earthly, animal body! My hope of sonship rests not in preserving for either a thousand years or forever a body that must be washed, clothed, fed, rested, groomed, manicured, powdered and deodorized. There is another body, thank God! formed of the incorruptible flesh of the resurrected and glorified Christ of God and this marvelous body is of heaven even as my present body is of earth. I proclaim to you this day that as a man PUTS ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST he puts on not only the spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ, and this body IS our house from heaven. Even as our earth body has come to us from Adam, and is Adam's body, so our spirit body comes from the Christ and is the body of His resurrection. As the pure and holy life of the Son of God is formed within us God shall also give us bodies worthy of such divine life, bodies capable of expressing all the wisdom and power and glory of that blessed realm beyond sin and death, yea, beyond time and space and matter!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 34
COMING IN RESURRECTION POWER [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-FOUR

WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?
THE TWO BODIES

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).**

If you will in spirit stand "as in the beginning with your all-wise heavenly Father, you will behold the unfolding of the mystery of His divine intention for man. Your heart will throb with unspeakable joy as you hear the words, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." "Garments" is one of the most interesting words to be found in use as a Semitic symbol in scripture. Since the greater part of the writings of most of the Old Testament prophets is couched in figurative language abounding with Hebrew sign-words it is not surprising that an adaptable term like "garments" or "coats" should find wide usage as a figure of speech. When the prophet sings by the Spirit: "The Lord God ... hath covered me with the GARMENTS of salvation," with the parallel phrase, "He hath covered me with a ROBE of righteousness," it is obvious that he is not speaking literally of material "garment" or "robe" to be worn upon the physical body. It is interesting, however, that the human body itself, and the glorified body of the resurrection, are both referred to as "clothing" which prevent our spirits from being found "naked". "For in this (body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be CLOTHED UPON with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being CLOTHED we shall not be found NAKED. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be UNCLOTHED, but CLOTHED UPON, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" **(II Cor. 5:2-4).**

In the vast storehouse of truth contained in the Word of God no facet nor part thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit or soul flit about through eternity without a body. The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or disembodied upon physical death. Speaking of the earthly residence of the body of flesh he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" **(II Cor. 5:1).** The desire of the man who is begotten of God, whose spirit is a living spirit born from above, is that he should be clothed with a body at all times, and after speaking of this desire to be clothed upon with a heavenly, eternal body the apostle hastily adds, "He that hath wrought us for this very thing IS GOD" **(II Cor. 5:5).**

Many times in the years of my ministry I have been asked, "Why should there be a BODILY resurrection? Why not simply pure SPIRIT?" When we consider that man was created and formed spirit, soul, and body, we realize that the body belongs to THE ESSENCE OF MAN. The body is not a prison for the spirit and soul, but rather the HOUSE, the tabernacle in which spirit and soul live. Therefore without a body man is naked and homeless. The body is designed for the expression of our spirit-soul-mind. Even as God is three manifestations in one person of being, so are we three in one - body, soul, and spirit. When God said to Adam, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely DIE" **(Gen. 2:17),** in the deepest sense, of course, this meant spiritual death; but it also included physical death. Therefore, since physical death is the direct result of sin, if there were no bodily resurrection SOMETHING OF THE EFFECTS OF SIN WOULD ETERNALLY REMAIN IN THE REDEEMED. In other words, without bodily resurrection man would be stripped of one-third of his essence. If in eternity man should be only spirit and/or soul without a body, sin would have won a partial victory. Even in the natural realm the human body is undoubtedly among the most profound wonders of creation. Its mysterious composition and intricate complexities and physiological marvels are so great that I know not how any man of medicine or

science could ponder its magnificence and fail to see the master mind of an omniscient Creator. But in the scriptures we see that the Spirit of the Creator declares that not only is there this physical body of the earth realm, but there is also the spiritual body of the heavenly order, and the glory of the terrestrial is one, but the glory of the celestial is another.

WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?

The life, which Jesus gives, is Himself, and the life, which He is, is imperishable. Those who partake of it cannot perish, for they have passed from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life. "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall NEVER PERISH" **(Jn. 10:28).** Jesus did not die that you might live! Jesus died that He might GIVE HIS LIFE to you. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" **(Jn. 12:24).** HE is the kernel that fell into the ground and died, and, in dying, the life, which He is, has reappeared in the millions of those who have believed. Because His life is imperishable, they who receive Him shall never perish.

The flesh, which we inherited from Adam who was of the earth, earthy, is counted by God to be nothing more than a seed. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou SOWEST NOT THAT BODY THAT SHALL BE, but bare grain (seed), it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but GOD GIVETH IT A BODY as it hath pleased Him, and TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY" **(I Cor. 15:35-38).** I must confess that I used to believe, as many folk do, that in the resurrection the same body that goes into the grave would be the body that comes out of the grave. I wonder how many who read these lines have asked the question posed by the apostle: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Ah, how often through many years did I ask myself those very questions! I am confident that you, too, have asked. We have pondered how God would reconstruct the atoms of this flesh body and fashion it again into the likeness we once knew.

Consider for a moment the state of those who are dead. Some people suppose that those we lay away in their ornate coffins are to be taken up like those well preserved mummies of Egypt, but it is not so! This body speedily falls into dissolution - the first thing that goes is the brain and soon there is a large cavity between the ears; the heart soon follows. These are the two vital organs of man, and the rest of the body trails along not far behind. The bones are the last to disintegrate. And so man returns to the dust. Open any casket left long in the ground and you find but a bit of brown dust.

Consider where these people have gone. Many have been dissolved in lime pits, or burned in great fires, or buried in the depths of the sea. There are those who have been eaten by beasts. I think of Roger Williams, the Governor of one of our first colonies. He had an unseemly fate befall him. When his casket was taken up to give it a more noble burial, it was found that an apple tree had pried open the lid, reached in and sucked poor Roger out, tooth and claw, head and foot. The poor fellow was gone altogether! He is no exception, for this is what has happened to the vast majority of the people in the world. They have returned to the elements; they have been eaten by other creatures; their particles are spread sometimes as far as from pole to pole. What has happened to the ancient king Nebuchadnezzar? or Alexander the Great? or Caesar? One part may be in the desert sands of the great Sahara and another part floating in the waters of the mighty Pacific Ocean. Are these to rise again? There are those whose particles are buried in some deep cavern at the bottom of an ancient main or found among the trackless deserts, seen only by the vulture's eye. Can these live again? Is that not indeed a thing to be thought incredible? Where indeed are the remains of man? Or perhaps we should more accurately ask: "Where are they not?" Blows there any wind down any street that does not contain within its swirl some portion of that which was once the son of Adam? Breaks there a wave upon any shore that contains not in solution some relic of that which once was called man? He is found under every tree, in every crevice and in every corner, under every meadow, perhaps in almost every flower. Shall these live again? Is that not a thing incredible?

If that does not stretch your incredulity, then let us imagine a man who lived a thousand years ago. His body consisted of 150 pounds of elements such as oxygen, hydrogen, sodium, potassium and a number of others. When his body died it was placed in the ground and deteriorated. And as with Roger Williams a tree grew over

the grave and its roots absorbed the various elements, which were once the body of this man. They became part of the tree. The tree bore fruit. A cow ate the fruit containing many of the elements, which were part of the body of that man. They became part of the cow. The cow was butchered, and the meat was eaten by other men so that these men were literally eating the other man who had died, for the same elements which composed his body became part of their bodies. Then these men died and their bodies were buried and grass grew over their graves and ultimately their bodies were absorbed by the roots of the plants, and the plants were eaten again by animals. We find that the elements, which composed the body of the first man who died, became part of a thousand men and women. You can see how the bodies of the dead cannot be brought back atom by atom as they were originally. Certain individual atoms may belong to a thousand different bodies, and since no body can occupy two places at once, this makes it impossible for the actual body, which was buried to arise with its original component atoms and molecules

Who among us has never questioned whether in the resurrection we will recognize our friends and loved ones, whether uncle Joe and aunt Susie will look as they did at age twenty, or thirty, or seventy-five? We have debated whether in our glorified bodies we will be visible or invisible to the inhabitants of the earth realm, whether we shall eat and drink, wear clothes, travel at the speed of light, and with hundreds of other such notions we have repeatedly asked the very questions the apostle declared we would ask! "But some man will say, HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?"

Paul had a word for all who raise such questions: "Thou FOOL!" The Phillips translation says, "Now that is a silly question!" The Wuest translation says, "Stupid one!" The Amplified Bible reads, "You foolish man!" And another version renders it, "You unreasonable person!" Why are these questions foolish, stupid, silly and unreasonable? Because, the apostle explains, appealing to nature, "In your own experience you know that a seed does not germinate without itself 'dying.' When you sow a seed you do not sow the 'body' that will eventually be produced, but bare grain, of wheat, for example, or one of the other seeds. God gives the seed a 'body' according to His laws - a different 'body' to each kind of seed" (Phillips translation). Paul tells us plainly that the "body" of the harvest is not the same "body" that was planted, and calls the man a fool for even questioning whether the corn of the harvest is the same grains of corn that were planted. Let the farrier answer this!

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be" **(I Cor. 15:37).** The apostle Paul here makes a wonderfully significant spiritual use of an analogy derived from his observation of what takes place in the natural world when a seed is sown in the ground and springs up and grows. He is talking about the resurrection of the dead, and compares the burial of a human body tp the covering up of a vegetable seed in the earth in expectation of a bursting forth of new life. This is hardly an appropriate comparison if taken too literally, or applied to the wrong sense of burial. A literal dead body does not behave like a vegetable seed; it does not sprout and go on to produce new and more numerous bodies, the exact replicas of the old. When it is laid in the grave it is done with; it purifies and disintegrates. Paul knew this well enough just as well as we know it. His language here and elsewhere implies that he believed in a resurrection of the whole man, and that the resurrection body would be transformed into a spiritual, immortal, glorious body, which would never again have to know decay or corruption. But the only sense in which this illustration of his about the sowing of a seed holds good is that the disintegration of a seed in the ground and the death of a human body are in each case the breaking up of a form in order that the LIFE WITHIN may reclothe itself in other and ampler forms - the seed on this earth plane once more, but the spirit and soul on a higher plane.

When we really know life, when we understand our own environment and the dynamics of the biological forces within it, we will surely have a clearer understanding of the laws and processes of the HIGHER SPIRITUAL REALM of the Kingdom of God. When you sow a kernel of corn in the earth of your garden, you sow it out of sight, to decay and disintegrate, that a new plant shall spring forth. The corn you receive in the fall IS NOT THE SAME KERNELS YOU PLANTED in the spring! The kernel you planted died, that the corn ife within might be released. In this process the INNER LIFE springs forth and the corn of the harvest is the PRODUCT OF THAT INNER LIFE contained in the original seed. The seed's whole purpose is to die, that there may be a release of whatever life dwells within TO PRODUCE A NEW BODY. The principle is clear - a new, divine, heavenly life has been impregnated into the regenerated spirit so that the mortal body of the believer is a NEW KIND OF SEED CONTAINING A NEW AND HIGHER FORM OF LIFE. Thus it is that as our outer man

perishes, as the old man with his works is put off, this outer-man body is "sown," he says, "in corruption; it is raised (harvested) in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised (harvested) in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised (harvested) in power: it is sown a NATURAL BODY; it is raised (harvested) a SPIRITUAL BODY" **(I Cor. 15:35-44).**

Can we not see by this that the spiritual body IS NOT THE NATURAL BODY RECONSTRUCTED at all, but a brand new, totally different body, the PRODUCT OF THE CHRIST LIFE CONTAINED WITHIN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THE SEED. Surely, if no other instruction were given in the Bible but these few verses, we would have a sound foundation upon which to fasten our firm understanding that the natural body does not in any way become the spiritual body, but the spiritual body is the product of the indwelling life of the resurrected, glorified Son of God! If we would heed the voice of inspiration and revelation as it speaks through these words of the apostle, we would at once see and acknowledge that the "embryo" of our spiritual body ALREADY EXISTS AS A PRESENT REALITY WITHIN OUR REGENERATED SPIRIT! Hallelujah! It is, as a friend has said, "a life within a life, a MAN WITHIN A MAN, and a B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y." That MAN WITHIN A MAN, therefore, is not as we have in the past supposed, some ethereal spirit, some nebulous, vague, airy, nothingness but IS, rather, SUBSTANCE, the very FLESH of the resurrected and glorified CHRIST OF GOD!

What the New Testament represents as true respecting Jesus Christ, it represents as true of the body of Christ. HE is the firstfruits of them that sleep. Their resurrection is like His resurrection, their life is like His life, as their death is like His death. They are not raised from the death realm by a power acting on them from without; they rise from the dead as the bird from its egg, as the plant from its seed. The sons of God have in themselves the immortality of their Father. The resurrection body is not a restoration to physical life; it is an introduction into a new level of life, which transforms the very bodily existence. The body of the resurrection shall come from our resurrected inner nature. If we live after the flesh our inner nature shall not become filled with resurrection life. We die daily, and each day we are raised up. But that which is raised up is not our old nature, nor our old body. It is the eternal life of almighty God. It is a new creation. It is the resurrection from the dead! Do not talk about the old body - the flesh coming up again. We are sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body; sown an earth man, raised a heavenly man.

THE TWO BODIES

With this wonderful truth in mind it should not be difficult in the least for us to understand the contrast between the two bodies spoken of in **I Cor. 15:39-50.** "All flesh is not the same flesh ... there are also CELESTIAL BODIES and BODIES TERRESTRIAL: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of terrestrial is another ... there is a NATURAL BODY and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY. And so it is written, the FIRST MAN ADAM was made a living soul; the LAST ADAM was made a quickening spirit. The FIRST MAN is of the earth, earthy: the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and 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. Now this I say brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

These two bodies differ vastly in glory from each other. The glory of the earthly is one, the glory of the heavenly is another. The natural body, the earthly one, is a wonderful and beautiful piece of creation. I never cease to be amazed at how it functions, it is truly an amazing piece of work. Most people like their bodies as Paul said in **Eph. 5:29,** "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it ... even as Christ the church." I omitted the phrase, "and cherisheth it," and what an apt description this is, especially of those who happen to have a well formed, attractive body. My! the time some spend in trying to keep their body beautiful; and the money that is spent on soaps, creams, oils, and cosmetics to preserve and enhance the appearance of the body. There is a certain glory about the human body, but its glory is not worth being compared with the glory of the celestial. In contrast to the glory of the heavenly body, this body is vile and humiliating. The contrast between these two bodies - the first of flesh, the second of spirit - is almost too much for our weak and earthbound minds to comprehend. The natural mind and natural understanding cannot grasp it. The Holy Spirit declares that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Bearing the image of the heavenly is not taking your natural body to heaven. That is what millions of Christians think: that one of these days their present body is going to fly away to heaven, there to be clothed in a glistening white night-gown, and strum a harp while dancing up and down the streets of gold. Not so! my brother. Neither is bearing the image of the heavenly the imputation of longevity or immortality to this earthly body, so that one lives for a thousand years or forever in this terrestrial form. The body of our Lord Jesus Christ is a GLORIOUS BODY, or a BODY OF GLORY as the Greek expresses it (Phil. 3:20-21). A body of flesh is a body COMPOSED OF FLESH, and a body of glory is a body COMPOSED OF GLORY. This principle is so simple that even a child should understand it. As it is written, "There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies...there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

The most comprehensive single paragraph of scripture that deals with the truth that there are two distinct kinds of bodies, or two totally different bodies, is found in II Cor. 5:1-5 wherein we read, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (the earthly) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (celestial body) which is from heaven (the Spirit): if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle (fleshly body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon (with the celestial body), that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit."

This passage starts with assurances of absolute certainty. "For we know" is as dogmatic and definitely positive as human speech can be. The thing we thus know is that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (physical body) were dissolved, our spirit would not be "naked" or "disembodied," for there is ANOTHER BODY, a CELESTIAL BODY, a SPIRITUAL BODY, a BUILDING OF GOD FROM HEAVEN for the spirit to occupy in the celestial world.

In veritable truth does the apostle say that in this body we groan. We groan from the hour of our birth until the time of our departure. We groan when our stomachs are empty and the pangs of hunger ravish our system. We also groan when we eat too much Mexican food and suffer the consequences. We groan when we get our teeth; we groan again when we lose them. We groan when we are children under the rule of parents, teachers, etc. We groan again when we become adults and are forced to face the responsibilities of life. We groan because of our children, and we groan when they leave home. We groan because of sickness, pain and sorrow. We groan at the multiplied problems and afflictions and troubles and tragedies that fall our lot. At almost every movement of the body we are apt to come in violent contact with some sharp or unmovable object, and we groan again!

There are a lot of so-called revelations that are set forth these days which at first hearing sound very religious, advanced and spiritual, but as one examines that which is set forth, there are times when we find that what is being taught in some circles is not the same thing which the Spirit of God speaks into your own heart. For example, through many years I have heard a lot of folk speak of the "LIFE MESSAGE" and have been asked if I believe it. I would then have to inquire and probe into their minds and hearts to find out exactly what they meant by this term. Often I discovered that what they meant was that they had attained "by faith" a condition of immortality for this physical, flesh body, which they said would never die. In this body of dust they were able, they believed, to by-pass the grave.

I never cease to be amazed at how much effort people put into trying to "immortalize" this earth body of the first man Adam. The Holy Spirit witnesses that "there is a natural body, AND there is a spiritual body." The order in which these two bodies are experienced is also defined: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" **(I Cor. 15:46).** Most saints don't know the difference between these two bodies! And most have not the faintest idea about where, when, or how to put on the spiritual body. So many of the Lord's precious people imagine that the natural body shall somehow become the spiritual body, or that the first man Adam shall in some manner become the last man Adam, the Lord from heaven. No way! Is that which is spiritual, natural? Is that which is natural, spiritual? Is that which is earthly, heavenly? Is that which is heavenly, earthly? Is that which is terrestrial, celestial? Is that which is celestial, terrestrial? Is that which is corruptible, incorruptible? Is that which is incorruptible, corruptible? Is the first Adam also the last Adam? Is the last Adam the first? All, beloved, there are TWO BODIES, TWO TABERNACLES,

TWO GARMENTS - even as there are TWO ADAMS, TWO MEN, and TWO BIRTHS; the first birth and the second birth, one of flesh, the other of spirit; one of earth and the other of heaven! The first must decrease, the second must increase. The first must be "done away," the second must be eternally "established." The one must be "put off," while the other must be "put on." One dear sister, understanding not the difference between the flesh body and the spirit body thought that she had already laid hold on immortality for her flesh body and proclaimed on the basis of her conviction that she now had her GLORIFIED BODY. But one day she was hanging her drapes and fell and broke her GLORIFIED HIP!

Ah, hearken! my beloved brother, my precious sister, thou who thinkest thou possesseth immortality in thy Adamic body of flesh. Truly it is written, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me SHALL NEVER DIE" **(Jn. 11:25-26).** And again, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead ... NEITHER CAN THEY DIE any more ... the SONS OF GOD, being the SONS OF THE RESURRECTION" **(Lk. 20:35-36).** What do you expect it is like WHEN YOU CANNOT DIE? What would it be like for this flesh body if it COULD NOT DIE?

Let us imagine one coming into that state of being, yet all natural laws still in force. If you CANNOT DIE, then there is no need to eat food, for you cannot starve to death. YOU CANNOT DIE. If you did choose to eat, you could eat anything, even the very strongest poisons, for YOU CANNOT DIE. Nothing would have the power to kill. Should you be run over by an eighteen-wheeler your flesh would not be mangled, your bones would not crush, your blood would not splatter; and like Woody Woodpecker, you would arise from the imprint in the pavement and walk away unharmed, for YOU CANNOT DIE. You would be beyond the power of death. All natural laws may just as well be taken off the books, they have become of no effect. If there is still fire, you who cannot die cannot in any way be affected by the burning power of fire, no matter how great it might be. A furnace heated seven times hotter than ever before would have no power. The heat from an atomic or hydrogen explosion can never hurt you; as soon as the nuclear cloud has passed you would be seen standing there upon your two feet, for you CANNOT DIE. There could be no pain or hurt to you, for fire could have no effect. The natural law of cremation might just as well be removed from the books, for it has been superseded. The natural law of drowning would be transcended. Natural law says that one cannot breathe water into his lungs and live. If you CANNOT DIE, then you have NO NEED FOR ATMOSPHERE OR AIR to live, for even without air YOU CANNOT DIE. Nothing can kill you! Should you pass through the most poisonous of gases, you would not be affected, for you CANNOT DIE. Death would have lost its power, and not one thing could harm you or destroy you.

For those who cannot die, death has been done away. Therefore there would be nothing to prevent such a person from going anywhere in the universe. And there would be no need for any special preparation in the way of oxygen to breathe, spacesuit, spaceship, etc. Nothing could harm such a person and it would have become his or her nature to live under any circumstances. The time has come when we must see by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God that THIS EARTHLY HOUSE OF THE FIRST ADAM IS N-O-T OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN, this terrestrial body is not the celestial body, this mortal body is not the immortal body, this corruptible body is not the incorruptible body, this natural body is not the spiritual body, and this flesh from Adam is not the flesh of the Son of God! Those who walk in the BODY OF GLORY are those who have been given immortality. The body of glory is the BODY OF THE NEW CREATION MAN, not this bag of bones of the external, visible world. Those who fully "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," who "put on incorruption," who "put on immortality," thus putting on the body of glory - not one thing has any power to hurt or destroy these, for THEY CANNOT DIE. Nothing restricts them in any way. They are as God throughout the universe. They are the living, working, life-giving will of God. They become so one with the Lord that they are ONE SPIRIT in all things. These are the sons of God! And this reality is begun within us here and now, for the new creation is a life within a life, A MAN WITHIN A MAN, A B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y!

Glorious beyond description is the fact that here and now, even as I pen these words, in the inner realm of our spirit man there is being constructed an incorruptible life, a building of God, a house-body not made with hands, a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation, eternal in the heavenlies. Not a mansion in the sky, not a cabin in the corner, not a while nightgown and wings with which to flit about over the hills of glory, as the churches so ignorantly portray; but a new life, a new nature, a new garment, a new tabernacle, a

new body, a body of light and glory and power, a body of CELESTIAL FLESH, a body of incorruption, a body of immortality raised up and constructed by the mighty working of the INDWELLING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION! When this work has been completed we will not be found naked, even though this present hunk of wretched flesh be laid aside!

Nothing can be plainer in the blessed book of God than the fact that every child of God possesses two bodies - the outer-man body and the inner-man body. "Though our OUTWARD MAN perish (Greek: is perishing), yet the INWARD MAN is (being) renewed day by day" **(II Cor. 4:16).** As the outer-man body of death is dissolved, something else is revealed - a building of God, a heavenly house not made with hands, eternal. We see that beneath this surface tabernacle, this temporary state, is a body which is permanent. The new body is spiritual from its conception. It grows in spirituality. Just as an oak grows to be an oak so every seed can only bring forth after its kind. A spiritual seed will bring forth a spiritual body, and a carnal seed will issue only carnality. It is this principle - seed producing after its kind - that is the proof of the truth of which I now speak.

A brother in Christ has written, "Peter states that 'God has begotten us again to a LIVING HOPE through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance INCORRUPTIBLE and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.' There is only one who is living - God. There is only one who is incorruptible - God. And we know that He resides in heaven, which is in us (Lk. 17:21; Jn. 14:23). The word 'begotten' means fathered. He has placed a seed in this carcass of mine and yours. A child births itself. The mother cannot do it. The child knows the day and comes forth. The child while yet in darkness knows the day, the hour, the very time of deliverance. But the mother only knows of it after the child reveals it. The Christ within us knows the hour, the day, the precise minute. But our outer man has no knowledge of spiritual things. We do not know because we still live in the outer man. The spiritual babe within us lives in that spiritual eternal heavens of which our outer man seeks to know OF and ABOUT, but cannot receive the things of the spirit because it is carnal. So, if you are aware that something is 'stirring' but you can't put your finger on what it is, that is because your outer man seeks to understand or pull down onto the natural plane that which is spiritually discerned. The spiritual man is living in the day of the Lord, but the carnal man still thinks it is coming. There is a new man that has been formed in us. Can you not sense the rearrangement of priorities in your life, and even a change in your personality? If so, you may be looking out of the old caterpillar eyes with the understanding of a butterfly! This is the dissolving of the old and the appearing of the new. The old heavens and the old earth pass away. But the new is revealed. Our mother, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down. Not out of the natural sky, but out of the heavens (spiritual realm) within to be established in the revealing of a NEW BODY" - Charles Weller.

The outer-man is old Adam. It is not the physical body, but the nature within that body - a sphere of life. It is the Adam nature that controls the physical part of us carnally. When the serpent tempted Eve to partake of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she first considered in her mind, then was motivated by her heart, and finally her hand reached forth and took what mind and heart dictated. It was not her physical body that sinned - it was her nature - the outer-man of "flesh" that rebelled against God. But the "flesh" is not the physical body. Your mind, you see, is not your brain even as your old Adamic heart is not the organ that physiologically pumps your blood. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" **(Jer. 17:9).** We have a biological heart, but that is not spiritually the heart of the Adamic outer man, which is woefully deceitful and desperately wicked. That heart is a nature. The carnal mind is a nature. The flesh is a nature.

When Paul told the saints to "present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your reasonable service," he was not telling them to present themselves before the brazen altar in the temple, nor to physically march down to a church altar. He spake, rather, of the inner mind and will of you submitting yourself to God, and thereby relinquishing the death nature in it, dying to its will and desires, and letting God fill it with His nature and desires. When God gets possession of your will, the physical body will also act in harmony with that will, for it will perform according to whatever the thinking man inside of it dictates. It can do no other way. The Adam nature covering (body) which we plant (die out to) is corrupt, dishonorable and weak. How wonderful it is that we can exchange that accursed thing for a shining garment of glory and beauty and immortality, yes, even the Christ of God, the Lord from heaven filling our inner-man body (heart and mind). He that hath an ear, let him hear.

We will never understand the nature and reality of the TWO BODIES until we know for a certainty that this outer body we see with our eyes is not the body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 6:19-20). If the flesh body was indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost it would not get sick or wracked with pain or consumed by foul, loathsome disease; nor would it grow old and feeble, and die. We assumed that when the inspired apostle stated that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit he spake of the physical body. But how can one assume such a thing? The message is clear - there IS a natural body, and there IS a spiritual body - not "shall be," but there IS. Both bodies are present realities. Why should we suppose that it is the natural body, which is the temple of the Spirit? How can the natural body be the temple of the Holy Spirit when the natural man cannot ever receive the Spirit? Is it not much more logical and spiritually valid to say that the temple of the Holy Spirit is your SPIRITUAL BODY which has been made the receptacle of the Holy Spirit? The spiritual body is the substance of God, the flesh of the Son of God which clothes the inward Christ-nature.

We have put so much stress on outward things, so much "carnalizing" of the Word of God which is "spirit and life," that when we read the scriptures we oft times overlook the real truth the Spirit is speaking. The real man who is naked is not the outer physical body. In spite of all the "dress codes" religion may impose, it makes no difference, my friend, how much you clothe the outer body - your true "flesh" will still be exposed! It should be clear to all who have eyes to see that when the scripture makes such statements as, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," "put on the whole armor of God," "put on the armor of light," "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem," "be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," - these cannot be put on the outer physical body, they must be put on in the inner realm of soul and spirit, the hidden man of the heart, even that NEW MAN which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We are told in the wonderful parable of our Lord that in this, our day, the Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins. These ten virgins took their lamps (understanding-enlightenment) and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But five of these were foolish, and five were wise. It is my determined conviction that these ten virgins represent the senses of man - the five foolish senses of the outer man, and the five wise senses of the inner man. The five foolish virgins are the five soulical senses of the outer-man body. A mind that judges everything by the outward appearance as perceived by the external senses IS FOOLISH! To every outer sense you have an inner spiritual counterpart.

Our mind is that part of us which thinks and is the seat of consciousness; it is our intellect and in it dwells our ability to reason. When we are born of the flesh, we are born with a natural mind. We enter this world with five senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. These are natural physiological and soulical senses, and feed information to our natural mind. Peter writes about our new birth in **I Pet. 1:23.** "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." This new birth is by an incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, even that Word which was from the beginning,which is Jesus Christ. This incorruptible seed is the life of the Christ, which quickens our spirit at the time of regeneration. He is the author of eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" **(I Jn. 5:12).** When we are born of the Spirit, God gives us these same senses, which operate in the realm of the spirit, in the inner-man body. In the natural no one has ever been able to see in this world unless they have been born. So it is in the spiritual realm. Jesus speaks of this spiritual sight in Jn. 3:3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the Kingdom of God." Just as there are five natural senses in the natural realm, so also there are five spiritual senses in the spiritual realm. The five senses of the outer man are able to see, hear, taste, touch and smell natural things; but these same five senses in the world of the spirit are able to see, hear, taste, touch and smell all spiritual things which are invisible and incorruptible, as the apostle explains, "...eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him - but God HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY THE SPIRIT; for the spirit searcheth (out) all things, yea the deep things of God" **(I Cor. 2:9-14).** When we are born from above the FIVE SENSES OF THE SPIRIT WORLD become resident and operative within the inner-man body. Gradually, as this inner man grows and we are quickened to become aware of these senses, the EYES of our understanding open wider and wider to the things not seen by the natural eye; by degrees the HEARING of faith increases until every good promise of God is established as truth within; in time we come into TOUCH with the Lord in His invisible presence and powers; little by little we TASTE and see that the Lord is very gracious; after a time we come to appreciate those sacrifices and incense-prayers and praises which are a SWEET ODOR to the Lord. As the natural senses can be cultivated, so can the spiritual; and the cultivation of these spiritual senses

constitute marks indicating our growth in grace, our development as sons of God, to the completeness of our new selves in the glory, honor, and immortality of the divine nature.

The scriptures are plain. You can have eyes and not see, ears and not hear - so you must have two sets of eyes and two sets of ears - you have ears within that can hear on a level that is not heard by the outer ear. "My sheep hear My voice, and a stranger they will not follow" **(Jn. 10:5,27).** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" **(Rev. 2:7).**

The sons of God have eyes within that see on a level that is not seen by the eyes of the outer-man body. You can have 20/20 vision with your physical eyes and never see what you see with the "eyes of your understanding" **(Eph. 1:18).** It must forever be settled in our hearts that there is no true reality in any of the things that are SEEN, for how can we say that things, which are always changing and passing away are realities? The only eternal things in the whole universe are the things, which are NOT SEEN by the outer eye, and yet it is not that they are really invisible, for they are merely invisible to the kinds of eyes we have in our outer-man body. Eternal things are only inaudible to the ears of the natural and can be perceived only beyond the senses of the soulish man. The Holy Spirit has faithfully recorded of Moses, that grand hero of faith and spiritual vision, that "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE" **(Heb. 11:27).**

Here is the mighty power of the new creation: it sees what others cannot see! it sees, amid the thousand things natural men see and are guided by, something infinitely greater and more real - it SEES GOD. No wonder it leads a man to think and act differently from other men. On everything it looks at, the bright light of eternity is shining. No wonder that under the inspiration of that vision it can do mighty deeds, for it sees God its helper and strength. Let me here say to every saint of God that just as, in any pursuit, the eye can be trained to see what others cannot see, so the spiritual eyes of the new creation inner-man body can be trained to see God everywhere. Abide in His presence until the heart is filled with it. You will begin to recognize HIM in everything that happens. Seek to walk in the light of His countenance. Seeing the INVISIBLE will make it easy to forsake this world and do the will of God! The heavens are shut up from the natural man. He cannot see eternal things. He sees only natural things. He cannot hear spiritual things. He hears only the lower sounds of earth.

We have an exhortation of David to taste in the realm of the spirit. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" **(Ps. 34:8).** That's not physical, you can't taste of the Lord physically, we're not cannibals! When one walks by the spiritual senses of the inner-man body He, like Christ, has meat to eat that others know not of and drink to drink of which those around him have never tasted. When a man really tastes of the things of the world of the spirit it is not possible for him to ever again be satisfied with anything less. And especially if he has tasted of the "meat" of God's Word, it is very difficult for him to go back to feeding his soul on the milk of babes or the husks of lifeless forms and empty traditions of men. The natural man cannot TASTE SPIRITUAL THINGS but only such things as he can eat with his physical mouth and take into his soul of the spirit of this world, none of which contain one iota of life or reality.

You also have another sense of smelling on a higher plane of reality. This sense of smell is mentioned in **II Cor. 2:14-16,** "Thanks be to God who leads us, wherever we are, on His own triumphant way and makes our knowledge of Him to spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume! We Christians have the unmistakable scent of Christ, discernible alike to those who are being saved and to those who are heading for death. To the latter it smells like the very smell of doom, to the former it has the fresh fragrance of life itself" (Phillips translation).

Touch - "Who touched Me?" Jesus asked as virtue left His body to heal the woman with the issue of blood. The people flocked around Jesus to try and touch Him that they might be healed of their many infirmities. Many times Jesus touched them and they were made whole. He touched the leper and he was cleansed. He touched Peter's mother-in-law's hand and her fever left her. He touched the eyes of the two blind men and their eyes were opened. He touched the deaf man and his ears were opened, and He touched the bier of the mother's only son and commanded him to arise and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. But today, because the Christ dwells within by His Spirit, we are able to reach out and touch Him in the Spirit, and we know His mighty touch by the glory of His presence and power in our lives.

The five foolish virgins are the five external senses; the gate of the spiritual world is closed to them; but why are they foolish? One reason is that the five outer senses are BORROWERS - everything they do they borrow - and that is why they have no light in their lamps, because they borrow everything from the outer world. They have never had the INNER SOURCE tell them anything, but they have lived by a borrowed revelation, they have borrowed what everyone else teaches, preaches, thinks and says. And when the Bridegroom comes and the hour of union is at hand they run to the inner senses and cry, "Can we borrow - give us of YOUR OIL!" The reply comes speedily, "NO - go to the source, get your oil as we got ours, we got our light from the inside, from the inner man of spirit, from the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, AND THIS LIGHT CANNOT BE BORROWED."

There is an inner-man body, thank God! formed of the Spirit of the resurrected and glorified Christ, and this marvelous body is from heaven even as my outer-man body is of earth. I declare to you again that as a man puts on Christ he puts on not only the Spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ and this body is a present reality and this body IS our house from heaven. Just because you cannot see this body at this time, do not doubt its existence, my beloved. It is just as real, yea, a thousand times more real than this fleeting body of dust. Even as our earth body has come from Adam, and is Adam's body, so our spirit body comes from Christ Jesus our Lord and is the body of His resurrection. That glorious body of Jesus which passed through the locked door, and which, like the wind, blew where it would, yet men neither knew where it came from nor where it went; that is the inner-man body of the new creation of which you are made partaker in union with Him. I have been out of my earth body in that spirit body and have looked back and beheld my earth body from another level of consciousness. I doubt not that many saints have traveled to distant points by this inner-man body, ministering to those unto whom they were sent, and have returned, in a manner not unlike the experience of Philip when he was caught away in spirit, or John the beloved when he heard the voice saying, "Come up hither," or like Paul the apostle when he was present in spirit by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the assembly of the saints at Corinth, though his body was miles away in the city of Ephesus (I Cor. 5:3-5).

Jesus, speaking of the power of the resurrection said, "I am the LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven," and again, "He that eateth MY FLESH... shall live." My sincere prayer to God is that He may give my readers eyes to see and hearts to understand this simple but sublime truth: ALL FLESH IS NOT THE SAME FLESH. There is a flesh that is corruptible and there is a flesh that is incorruptible. There is a flesh that is a shame and there is a flesh that is a glory. There is a flesh that is of the earth, and there is a flesh which has come down from heaven. There is a flesh with which we are familiar. There is a flesh about which the natural man knows nothing. The flesh with which we are acquainted is OUR FLESH. That which yet remains a mystery is HIS FLESH. "Whosoever eateth MY FLESH... hath eternal life" **(in. 6:54).** "For we are members of His body, of HIS FLESH, and of HIS BONES**" (Eph. 5:30).** Only the Holy Spirit can give us the understanding that Jesus was not offering us the flesh that was born in Bethlehem, or that hung on a cross. NEITHER WAS HE OFFERING US SOMETHING WITHOUT SUBSTANCE. When Jesus said, "Eat My flesh," He was speaking of a flesh invisible to the human eye but a flesh that was and is, nonetheless, very real - the very flesh of His glorified body! ONLY ETERNAL FLESH CAN PRODUCE ETERNAL LIFE! ONLY ETERNAL FLESH CAN PRODUCE AN INCORRUPTIBLE BODY! This, precious friend of mine, is the power of His resurrection. Oh! that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 35
COMING IN RESURRECTION POWER [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-FIVE

METAMORPHOSIS
FLYING WORMS
THE LAW OF LIFE
THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).**

There has been a general misunderstanding of the Word of God throughout Christendom concerning the truth of the coming of the Lord; for it is clear as we consider all the scriptures on the subject that the Lord's coming is first and foremost a spiritual manifestation of Himself to and through His people. Paul therefore associates the coming of the Lord with a mighty revelation of the life, glory and power of God IN THE SAINTS. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels ... when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS S-A-I-N-T-S, and to be admired I-N ALL THEM that believe in that day" **(II Thes. 1:7, 10).**

Obviously, this revelation of the Christ in and through His body IS the coming of the Lord, and signals the full embodiment and transcendental expression of the totality of His life and victory in His saints. It is the second Man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven completed as a corporate body and unveiled before the world in all the splendor of His celestial Being. The words of the inspired apostle Paul come sounding like a trumpet through the centuries: "The first man was from out of earth, made of dust - earth-minded; the second Man is the Lord from out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust - earth-minded; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven - heaven-minded. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we and so let us bear the image of the Man of heaven" **(I Cor. 15:47-49)** Amplified**.**

God's purpose in man's redemption is not to just deliver us from the penalty of our sins, but to re-create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image of Him who created us. Having been molded and fashioned after the image of the first man, we have now put off that likeness and put on the image and likeness of the second man, the Lord from heaven. We must put off the image of the earthy, and put on the image of the heavenly; we must be changed from the natural, earthly, living creatures we first were to be recreated as spiritual, heavenly ones. This is not an option, it is a must; it is not discretional, it is necessary if we are to inherit the Kingdom. So the scriptures declare, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." My, what a purpose this is! To be changed from what we were created naturally, to be transformed, to be changed, to be transfigured into the image of the heavenly. It staggers the imagination to contemplate such a change; but change we must if we are to inherit the promises.

This marvelous change involves the whole man, spirit, soul and body. Many seem to think that a spiritual body is not a LITERAL body. In other words, that it is not a REAL body, or not actually a body at all, but a consciousness or a spirit. Literal, says Webster, means REAL; not figurative or metaphorical. "There is a NATURAL BODY, and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY," saith the Lord. Does any one suppose the apostle here teaches that there is a "real" body, and there is a "figurative" or "metaphorical" body; and as we have borne the image of the "real," we shall bear the image of the "figurative"? One would suppose they so read, from their exceeding blindness in not recognizing any but the animal body as a "true" body. They seem fearful lest, if the idea be entertained that Christ was resurrected in any other than an animal body, it will lead to the rejection of a LITERAL resurrection. We do reject the idea of saints being raised "a NATURAL body;" and if that is

rejecting a LITERAL resurrection of the saints, we must plead guilty, and beg to be excused simply on the ground that the Almighty has said, "It is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY" **(I Cor. 15:44).**

Now will someone inform me why it is unscriptural, or fanatical to maintain that Jesus Christ has a SPIRITUAL body; and, as the saints are to be like Him that they are raised spiritual bodies. Because some seem to think that a spiritual body is not REAL, but is only a metaphorical body; and that nothing is real except it be "of the earth, earthy," is no reason why those who can discern spiritual things, which the natural man cannot, should remain in darkness. The realm of the spiritual is a realm, which, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times more real than the natural world. Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm ever since that calamitous hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover by his natural senses that, which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were closed to the celestial world to discover the physical and natural and to be instructed in this barren realm of death. And yet that heavenly realm is as close to us today as it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it!

By His resurrection from the dead Jesus opened up to man again the spiritual realm **"The same day, at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples** were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst" **(Jn. 20:19).** "And after eight days, again His disciples were within, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you" **(Jn. 20:'20).** "And their EYES WERE OPENED, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight" **(Lk. 24:31).** Such language was never applied to the movements of Jesus before His crucifixion, and is used only in speaking of spiritual beings. The spiritual body of Jesus, and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out the door, but simply disappeared or de-materialized into the same elements from which He had created them a few moments before. He vanished out of their sight, and was no longer seen of them on the physical plane, though doubtless He was still with them - invisibly present; and so also much of the time during those forty days. This is how it is with spiritual beings. When the Lord and the angels appeared to Abraham in that long ago, "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him" **(Gen. 18:2).** He did not see them coming, but, apparently, it was just here, at his side, they took on a visible form.

So it was that distant morning in the dusty little town of Dothan. Standing before the gates of the town and encircling its walls stood the hosts of Syria with horsemen and chariots, spears and swords and banners, a mighty and well-equipped army to capture one humble and harmless prophet of God. It was this army that Elisha's servant, Gehazi, saw. But there was another and greater army that stood about Dothan that day, for upon the slopes and peaks of the nearby mountain were arrayed the numberless hosts of the Lord with horses and chariots of fire. "My father, my father," cried the terrified Gehazi, "alas, what shall we do?" The dismay and terror that gripped the emotions of this young man filled the heart of Elisha with pity, and, lifting his eyes to heaven Elisha prayed, saying, "Lord, I pray Thee, OPEN HIS EYES that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw. And, behold, the mountain was full of horses of fire, and chariots of fire round about Elisha (II Kings 6:13-23).

Spiritual bodies are represented as SHINING as the lightning. The heavenly messenger who came to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulcher where Jesus had been laid was described thus: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" **(Mat. 28:3).** When Jesus was transfigured before His disciples upon the dizzy heights of Mount Hermon "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" **(Mat. 17:2).** When Saul of Tarsus met this same Jesus following His resurrection and glorification, the SHINING was so bright that he fell from his horse and his sight was destroyed as by a blazing sun; and yet "the men that journeyed with him saw no man." And it is written, "Who maketh His messengers spirits, and His ministers a flame of FIRE" **(Heb. 1:7)**. Moses walked with his flock along the backside of the wind-swept desert when **"**the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a FLAME OF FIRE out of the midst of the bush" **(Ex. 3:2).** And while shepherds tended their flocks one starlit night just outside Bethlehem, suddenly, "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the GLORY of the Lord SHONE round about them: and they were sore afraid" **(Lk. 2:9).**

These were one and all appearances of spiritual beings from the spiritual realm. It is a wonderful fact that the elect sons of God are destined to rule and reign with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven from that higher sphere. This is a presently UNEXPLORED AND UNKNOWN REALM OF LIFE so far as we are concerned. The natural

mind cannot THINK ITSELF into such a realm of life as this by any kind of confession, positive thinking, or self-induced raised consciousness. It is only by the inspiration of the Spirit of God that we ever get even a glimpse of a realm so transcendent and glorious. No man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God does, and as God wills we are given understanding. The curtain is beginning to open and some are seeing that which lies before us to be apprehended, praise His wonderful name!

The spiritual world is a world with which we become familiar as we walk in the Spirit of God and experience more and more our union with the Father; a world so wonderfully real that all who once have had their eyes opened to it beg to remain in its celestial precincts, never more to return to the lowly estate and level of the natural man. And now I declare that not only the heavenly hosts, but heaven itself is all around you even as you read these lines, and, should the Lord but take away the veil of flesh from your sight, your eyes would behold the celestial realm and you would see that beings, incredible in glory and power, are all about us; for the Lord is not far from any one of us.

It follows of necessity that man's being, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. A bird would need a mighty change to be able to live under the water, or a fish to live in the air; but the Lord promises a much more striking change to those who are predestinated to be manifested as the sons of God with power.

Unknown millenniums ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his desolation and affliction. "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait UNTIL MY CHANGE COME. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands" **(Job 14:14-15).** Never did Job utter a statement, which bears out the absolute FAITHFULNESS of God to His creatures more than in this passage. He says, So what? If a man comes to the point where he goes by way of the grave - shall he live again? Is that the end? And then he answers his own question. He made reference to an APPOINTED TIME OF WAITING, through which we must pass until OUR CHANGE COME. We will not be left in this "unfinished state." There is much more work to be wrought in us before we are FULLY CHANGED. But even physical death will not deny us that fulfillment, because sooner or later, HE WILL CALL, and we will answer, because it is not dependent upon our state or condition, but upon HIS CALLING AND PURPOSE, and He has a desire to the work of His hands, the end is secure in the FAITHFUL CREATOR'S DESIRE to finish the work of His hands; His desire is towards us and that is the guarantee of our full redemption.

The appointed period of waiting is this long, long night of waiting until all that we hope for in Him springs into full manifestation, but there is not one experience that is unnecessary, not one precious moment that is wasted. Dread not this appointed night of waiting, dread not this difficult time of processing. It is our Father Himself who has ordained that we should proceed this way, and, when He has tried us we shall come forth as gold. Yea, we shall come forth in the likeness of Him who has passed this way before us, and has stepped forth from the darkness of this death realm into the power and glory of resurrection life full and abundant.

METAMORPHOSIS

God has so beautifully provided a parable of this blessed truth in the world of nature about us. Caterpillars do not lead very exciting lives. They are, indeed, to be pitied. They never travel very far and when they do tremendous exertions are required. After all, what enthralling sights do they see down there groveling in the dirt? Picture the ugly, slimy, repulsive caterpillar! We instinctively shrink from it as it wriggles and squirms threateningly. But the lowly caterpillar which crawls along the ground, trod upon by the foot of man, is destined to fly on starry wings in a heavenly atmosphere no longer hampered by earth-bound things but transformed as though by God's Spirit from a creature of the dust to one which has put on a somewhat heavenly tabernacle.

We find ourselves in a condition today not unlike the lowly caterpillar. It starts out its life as a creepy, crawly thing, with a long body and many feet, possessing a voracious appetite, and does nothing but gorge itself on the plant on which it was born. This same creature in due time fashions itself a cocoon, enters into the chrysalis stage, then the pupa stage, and through this mysterious and wonderful process undergoes a complete change, so that when it bursts forth from its crypt of death it is an entirely transformed creature, not at all like the worm that it was to start with. It is now a creature of the air, adapted to the heavenly, and spends its

time flying around the heavens, bearing the rich hues of all heavenly things, and gathering the most exquisite of nectars. This change is what in science is called a METAMORPHOSIS.

Paul sets forth the majesty of that supernal glory that now appears like a beckoning beacon before the anointed vision of the sons of God: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly**" (I Cor. 15:49).** He also explains exactly how this ineffable change is to take place within the elect. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" **(II Cor. 3:18).** "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind" **(Rom. 12:2).** "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour ... who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).**

Literally Paul says that we are being METAMORPHOSED into the image of the heavenly, and that God will METAMORPHOSE even our vile bodies. The Greek word METAMORPHOO means simply "to change into another form." It comes from two words: META - which means "beyond," and MORPHE - meaning "form." "Beyond form" - or changed into another form. From this Greek root comes our English word "metamorphosis," which means to change from one form, shape or substance to another. As I have pointed out, the transformation or metamorphosis of a worm possessing a voracious appetite for natural food to a butterfly that has appetite only for nectar is the classic example of a metamorphosis. In like manner our Lord through death and resurrection was changed or transformed - metamorphosed from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ of ascension and exaltation. And this is just the word that is used with reference to the experience of believers who are to come into the same image of Christ

Metamorphosis is that change which takes place from WITHIN. We are not transformed by external forces acting upon us, but by the breaking forth of a new INNER LIFE from within, the very life Of Jesus! Let us consider the wonder of this thing carefully, because it is certain that METAMORPHOSIS has already begun in us and will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of the Lord's people sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some sweet bye and bye, when God's Word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun. This is what must take place in us: we must be changed from what we started out to be, into a creature vastly different in form and nature. All the caterpillar wanted to do was eat and satisfy his natural appetite. The natural man does the same. He is a creature of the earth, and his primary concern is with the satisfaction of his natural appetites. "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5) and the things of the Spirit mean nothing to him. The realm of the Spirit is non-existent to the natural man, he has no entrance to it at all, but after we are born of the Spirit, and are no longer just natural creatures, the realm of the Spirit is opened unto us and we can now see hear and understand things that we didn't know existed before.

FLYING WORMS

By way of illustration let us suppose that I own both a horse and a canary bird. One day my fine stallion comes to me and says, "Boss, I'm tired of being a horse, there seems to be no future in the business. Day after day, I spend endless hours standing in my stable or grazing about the pasture. Only occasionally do you come and saddle me, and away we go, galloping through the fields and across the meadows. But too soon you are gone and I am returned to the stable. Frankly, Boss, I'm bored. I am smitten with a desire for a Higher Life, and I want you to help me rise to a nobler way of living."

Of course I would say, "Pal, I will be glad to help if I can, but what do you want me to do?" Now imagine that the horse should reply, "Ah, good Master, I've been observing your canary bird. I see it through the window. Now there is the Higher Life, indeed! While I am out in the weather, exposed to the elements, the canary sits snug in the warmth of your home. In fact, Mr. Canary is always near you, you talk to him constantly, and he sings continually for you. There is no place for loneliness or boredom in his life. No wonder he sings all the day. I believe I'd like to sit on a perch and sing songs! Will you help me?"

How utterly ludicrous! How could I, or any other person, help a horse to live the life of a bird? His nature is wrong. To live a bird life you must have a bird nature! I couldn't even explain this to a horse, his very nature makes it impossible.

To continue the figure, it would be equally preposterous for my canary to say to me one fine morning, "Boss, I'm tired of being a canary, there seems to be no future in this business. I'm confined by this tiny cage and all I ever do is sit here on this perch and eat bird seed. I never go anywhere or do anything. I am bored with this life of incessant swinging and twittering, and I yearn for the Higher Life. I want to accomplish something real. Will you help me?"

I would if I could, of course, so I reply, "Well, Tweety, let's talk it over. What do you want to do, or be?" " Ah, good Master," he replies, "I want to be a horse! I have observed the horse through the window, and there is the Higher Life, indeed. Mr. Horse is not confined to a cage, but enjoys the boundless freedom of the great out-of-doors and the wide open spaces. And not only that - you, Master, go and saddle him up, and sitting astride his back away you go racing through the fields and across the meadows, with the wind in your face and the thrill in your blood. I never get such excitement or comradeship. I want to be a horse! Will you help me?"

A canary bird with a saddle would be of no more use than a horse in a bird cage. Its nature is wrong, and the nature of each limits its activities, its desires, its environment, and its accomplishments and destiny.

To follow on with the illustration, suppose that one morning as I am strolling through the woods a caterpillar came to me and said, "Sir, I feel that I am living a most useless life, wasting all my time and effort tied to a bush and chewing leaves! 1 want to change my way of life. Will you help me?" Of course I'd like to help an ambitious worm to live a higher and better existence, so I would reply, "If I can. What do you want to do?" Whereupon the caterpillar would say, "I want to fly! I've been watching the birds, and I believe they live an ideal life. Can you help me attain my ambition, and assist me to fly?"

What shall I do? Shall I give the caterpillar a course of instruction in aero-dynamics and the theory of flight? No, that won't help; there are some things that are not achieved by education! Shall I tell the caterpillar how to become a better caterpillar? No, that will not work either. He can be the best caterpillar that ever catted a pillar; but he still can't fly! That's his trouble, he's a worm and worms don't fly! Even a course in positive thinking and right confession won't help the poor worm!

So I say to the caterpillar, "Strangely enough, I can help you. There are certain natural laws, which, if you will obey, will enable you to fly!" In great delight the worm says, "Now we are getting somewhere. Will you teach me those laws?" With regret I reply, "I'm sorry, worm, but I can't do that. I do not know those laws myself! I've seen them in operation many, many times, but I do not understand them, nor can I explain them." The disappointed caterpillar says, "You're a hot human! You've seen this hundreds of times and you can't explain it? What am I going to do, if you can't teach me those laws?" I smile and say, "JUST OBEY THEM whether you comprehend them or not." After some thought the ambitious worm says, "All right, Sir, I'll take your advice. What do I do now?" I tell him, "Just go right on chewing leaves! You see, when you are ready THE LAWS WILL BE REVEALED. When the laws are revealed to you all you have to do is obey them. In the meantime, just keep on chewing leaves!"

So my caterpillar goes back to his bush and resumes his daily grind. Then one day a strange lassitude comes over him, and he loses his appetite for leaves. He has never had a nap in his life, but suddenly he feels sleepy. He crawls away to a secluded corner, and suddenly discovers that he possesses equipment and knowledge that he never knew he had. He becomes an architect and designs a house. He has never thought of a dwelling before and has never seen one, but his first attempt follows a pattern that is standard dwelling for all caterpillars of his variety, and is perfect for its purpose. He finds that he has a spinning machine in his mouth, and an unlimited supply of fabric somewhere down in his goozlum! He is an interior decorator and a water-proofer as well, and he builds a habitation for himself that the genius of man cannot duplicate. But unbeknown to him, the house is actually a TOMB!

There is planted within the very being of that worm a call to a higher life-form, and, driven by that hidden nature within AT THE APPOINTED TIME HIS CHANCE COMES. These dramatic changes begin with two tiny glands behind his brain which since his first day had been secreting microscopic amounts of a juvenile hormone. As soon as the caterpillar builds his tomb and begins hanging head down from his leaf, the well-spring of the

glands attached to his brain starts drying up. These glands had controlled his larval growth, his larval life, and when their life-giving substance ceases to flow, the caterpillar begins to die and the butterfly to be formed.

George Hawtin relates, in one of his writings, an article, which appeared some years ago in LIFE magazine. For many centuries biologists had wondered what could possibly cause a caterpillar to change to a butterfly. At last one biologist discovered a very significant thing. He found that this remarkable transformation was caused by a hormone in the tiny brain of the caterpillar. He found that, if the hormone was removed, the caterpillar would remain a caterpillar until death, but, if the hormone was left in the brain, the caterpillar would change to a beautiful butterfly. To prove his theory he joined five caterpillars together, removing the hormone from the brains of the first four and leaving it in the brain of the last one. The first four remained as they were while the last changed to a butterfly. He then reversed the process, leaving the hormone in the head of the first worm, and removing it from the last four. To the amazement of all the whole five changed to butterflies, or shall we say, became the same as the head one. The spiritual significance of this remarkable discovery cannot be overlooked, for it is God's Word in His creation, teaching us that as a worm is transformed to a celestial creature by a tiny cell in its mind, so also are we transformed by receiving the MIND OF CHRIST. Thus Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice - and be not conformed to this world, but BE TRANSFORMED by the RENEWING OF THE MIND" **(Rom. 12:12)**. -The Page.

Open the cocoon of a caterpillar while the insect is in the process of metamorphosis and you will discover that within that death cell is such a mass of corruption that it would be difficult to even imagine how anything as graceful and beautiful as a butterfly could possibly emerge from it. No sooner does the worm begin to slumber in its cocoon than it begins to disintegrate and you would find only a chrysalis full of repulsive, apparently dead, formless, viscous fluid. But before the caterpillar ever crawled upon the earth the potential to become a butterfly lay within his being from the very moment of the fertilization of the egg. When the larva had begun to form in the egg, certain little groups of cells, belonging NOT TO THE LARVA BUT TO THE EVENTUAL BUTTERFLY, had also formed, and these remained dormant, safely stored within the body of the caterpillar. At the appointed time these cells awaken to life and begin to grow and multiply. Their presence becomes dramatically evident during the six short minutes when the last larval skin is shed, and the cocoon is spun. Hanging there in his cocoon, the worm bides his time and acts out a living prophecy of the words of Job who said, "If a man die, will he live again? ALL THE DAYS OF MY APPOINTED TIME WILL I WAIT UNTIL MY CHANCE COMES!" **(Job 14:4).**

Lazy days pass by in dreamless slumber. One observing merely from the outside would never imagine the awesome work being performed within that little cocoon. On the surface, there is nothing to see, for the cocoon serves as a veil, a womb, to conceal the marvelous processes, which change a caterpillar into a butterfly. As the butterfly cells grow, they completely CONSUME the form of the caterpillar. When the process is complete the hour comes when our worm wakes up. He feels crowded, and his shoulders feel like he is a hunch-back. He finds that he has a tooth on the top of his head, where he never had one before. He starts nodding his head up and down, and the cocoon begins to yield to the pressure of the NEW BEING within and is burst asunder as the beautiful - yes, superlatively beautiful, and heavenly - butterfly steps out, gracefully drying its wings as they unfold in the light and sparkle with a breath-taking iridescent beauty. In the process the caterpillar ceases to exist, the cocoon is discarded, laid aside, and THE NEW CREATION IS MANIFESTED TO THE WORLD! A few minutes later, without asking me or anyone else how to do it, he spreads his wings and takes to the air, to fly the rest of his life. My worm flies because he OBEYS A SET OF NATURAL LAWS, which he never comprehends, and which are equally mysterious to us. But we and he both know they work, because we have observed the result so many times!

THE LAW OF LIFE

There is a sphere of nature where miracles occur. A miracle is an order and natural proceeding on the plane of a law, which is higher than our present comprehension. We don't understand all the mysteries of how caterpillars turn into butterflies, we just know they do. In the same sense we admit that we do not know just how this earth-man is metamorphosed into the heavenly man, how this corruptible puts on incorruption, how this mortal puts on immortality, how this vile body of humiliation is changed to be fashioned like unto His

glorious body; we just know that obedience to certain clearly defined orders of procedure (laws) results in the supernatural change. This change ALWAYS comes in obedience to some certain supernatural, spiritual laws. What are these laws? Ah - I cannot explain them, my friend, I just know that they work.

Many times through my ministry after having spoken of the manifested sonship to which we are called and the Kingdom realm we are entering, people have come to me with tears in their eyes, saying that they must come into this and how can they do it. I have had to tell them that I do not know HOW to enter into these glories. I am not like one preacher I know who told the people, "Grab on to my coattail, and I will take you into the Kingdom!" The sad fact is that neither he nor they entered in. I am myself only able to enter as HE shows the way. But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that I know for a certainty that these spiritual laws that govern our spiritual metamorphosis will be revealed to you as you are ready for them. And as you OBEY THEM whether you comprehend them or not, your change will come. So what are you to do if I am unable to explain these laws to you? I say to you what I would say to the caterpillar: JUST GO RIGHT ON CHEWING LEAVES! Continue to eat the Word God is giving you today, continue to consume the truth He is quickening to you now, live and walk out consistently, day by day, the revelation sovereignly implanted within your spirit, and as your APPOINTED TIME comes each spiritual law will in turn unfold before your wondering eyes, clearly revealed to mind and heart.

What a great gulf there seems to be betimes between the condition of the worm and the state of the butterfly! We clearly see on one hand the desperate wickedness of our own hearts, and on the other hand the unspotted holiness to which we are called in Jesus Christ. On the one hand is the depth of our own corruption, on the other is the height of the glory of God, that image of the holy One, to which we are to be renewed. On the one hand is the incredible weakness of this mortal frame of dust, on the other is the awesome strength and glory of the spiritual body. Many times there is almost no spirit left within us. We would almost cry out, "Even with God, this is impossible!" We are ready to give up both faith and hope, and cast away that very confidence through which we are to overcome all things through Christ strengthening us, forgetting that "after we have done the will of God," we are to receive the promise.

The same omnipotent Lord who called us out of death sets in motion every creative act whereby we shall be transformed into the image of the heavenly. Paul tells us that it is the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). A "law" is a natural regulation, a constant and unchanging rule. A law is not necessarily derived from a life, but a life is definitely accompanied by a law. This law, which accompanies life is called the LAW OF LIFE. The law of a particular life is also the natural characteristic, the innate nature, of that particular life. For example, cats can catch mice, and dogs can stand guard through the night. These abilities are the natural characteristics and instinctive functions of a life. It does not require human teaching or urging; rather it develops very naturally without the least effort or instruction. Such natural characteristics and innate capabilities in a life constitute the law of that life.

The life of God is the highest life in the universe; it is the transcendental life, the surpassing life. Therefore, the characteristics, nature and capabilities of this life must definitely be the highest and most surpassing of all. Since these highest and most surpassing characteristics and powers constitute the law of the life of God, this law is the greatest and highest law of the universe. When God by the Holy Spirit regenerates us, He puts His own life, accompanied by the law of that life, into us. This law of life is the inward law, which is God's special gift to us. This law of life is put within us; therefore it is an inward law. Furthermore, this law of life is derived from the life of God and is the nature and function of the life of God; therefore it is the LAW OF HIS LIFE; hence it can supply and perform on the level of omnipotence, omniscience, and incorruptibility.

Let me illustrate how the law of life works. Consider a withered orange tree. Suppose we set up some laws for it, demanding: "You must grow out green leaves, bloom white blossoms, and bear orange fruit." We know that such demands, though made from the beginning of the year till the end of the year, are absolutely vain and futile, because there is no inward power of life to answer to the demands of such outward laws. Yet if we could transfuse the ORANGE QUALITY OF LIFE into it, though we do not demand anything outwardly from it, the life will have a natural capability and power which will cause the tree to grow the leaves, blossoms and fruit of the orange tree. This is the function of the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. When we allow the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus to work unhindered in us in ever-expanding spheres, the life of God within

us can then spread to such a degree that "Christ be formed" in us (Gal. 4:19). When Christ is thus gradually formed in us, we are gradually transformed into the image of the Lord (II Cor. 3:18) and have the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29) until eventually we are entirely "like Him" (I Jn. 3:2). This is the glorious result of the working of the law of God's life within us.

There are certain times and seasons when God brings to life truths that have been allowed to lie in grave clothes for ages and dispensations. As a seed lies dormant in the winter months and then bursts into life in the warmth and rain of spring, so also has the truth of God been allowed to lie in death throughout the wintry night of our walk in the religious systems of Babylon now at last to burst into a fruitful harvest in the spring of God's purpose to bring many sons to glory. There came a wonderful day when Christ came into our lives. "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart," we sweetly sing. But did you ever wait in holy reverence for the Spirit to reveal the eternal truth of those words to your deepest heart? Oh yes, we received Him - as a saviour, as a thought, as an idea or an ideal, as a truth, as a presence, as an experience, as an ethereal kind of spirit, something vague and intangible dwelling by faith in our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord is quickening, however, that there is SUBSTANCE to that MAN within us. When the incorruptible life of the Christ was conceived within us, we must realize that He was conceived within as the EMBRYO of a SPIRIT-BODY. Not just a spirit, but a SPIRIT-BODY!

When Paul speaks, then, of being strengthened with might in the INNER MAN, he is speaking of SUBSTANCE within us. When Peter speaks of the HIDDEN MAN of the heart, he is speaking of GLORIFIED FLESH that has been born into the believer but is hidden beneath the veil of Adamic flesh. A MAN is not a spirit. A MAN is spirit, soul and body. The first MAN was of the earth, earthy. The second MAN is the Lord from heaven. It is this second MAN that has come into us in His life. Jesus never said, "Except you receive My Spirit, you have no life in you." Rather, He said, "Except ye eat the FLESH of the Son of MAN, and drink His BLOOD (spirit), ye have no life in you" **(Jn. 6:53).** As we feed that man within with the FLESH SUBSTANCE and the SPIRIT LIFE of the resurrected and glorified MAN, this infant spirit-man begins to grow and when he is fully formed he will burst forth from the cocoon of Adamic flesh and stand in splendor and majesty as a NEW CREATION MAN - body, soul and spirit!

Oh! my brother, my sister, may the Spirit of God quicken the truth of these things to your heart! As I have looked to the Lord about these precious truths, it has become increasingly clear to my spirit that Jesus did not receive the GLORIFIED BODY when He arose from the tomb - no more than the butterfly became a butterfly when it broke from the cocoon. The worm becomes a butterfly BEFORE it emerges from the cocoon. The thing the Spirit would teach us in this, then, is that a butterfly does not become a butterfly BECAUSE it escapes the cocoon. It, rather, escapes the cocoon BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME A BUTTERFLY! Even so, Jesus did not possess a glorified body BECAUSE He arose from the grave. He, instead, burst forth from the grave BECAUSE HE ALREADY POSSESSED A GLORIFIED BODY! What a difference! Because He was indwelt by the incorruptible life of His Father, that life being formed fully within Him, He could announce to His disciples before His death: "The third day I shall rise again." And indwelt by this resurrected, glorified Christ Paul could confidently declare: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (cocoon of flesh) were dissolved, we HAVE a building of God, an house (body) not made with hands, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS" **(II Cor. 5:1).** A new spirit, a new soul and a new body are even now being formed in that heavenly realm within us. It is true right now that "there IS a natural body, and there IS a spiritual body." The message is abundantly clear - we shall not be the manifested sons of God BECAUSE we escape death. Rather, we shall escape death BECAUSE we are the sons of God!

THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

Biologists have discovered that there are two tiny glands at the back of the brain of the caterpillar, which secrete a growth hormone. These glands control his growth as a worm and his larval life. It is when these two glands shrivel and cease to yield their life-giving flow that the caterpillar begins to die and the butterfly begins to form. This is most enlightening when spiritually applied to the renewing of the mind. This is a wonderful discovery, and I cannot help but believe that these two glands figure in some mysterious and divine way the carnal mind which gives motivation to the natural man. When we apply the fact of the existence of TWO GLANDS instead of one, we see an amazing picture of the duality of the carnal mind - the knowledge of GOOD

and EVIL and the law of SIN and DEATH. If you long, dear one, to be metamorphosed into the image of the heavenly, then "PUT OFF concerning the former conversation the OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND; and PUT ON the NEW MAN, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" **(Eph. 4:22-24).**

It is an amazing fact that there is an active force, the secretion of a new hormone which appears in the brain of the caterpillar at the precise time when the two glands controlling the larval life cease to function. It is this new hormone, which actually causes the metamorphosis from the chrysalis stage to the butterfly. In other words, both the death of the caterpillar and the formation of the butterfly begin in the creature's MIND. The death of the caterpillar is effected by the cessation of a hormone from two glands in the brain, and the formation of the butterfly is caused by the secretion of a new hormone from another process in the brain. In the light of these remarkable circumstances is it not most significant that the apostle Paul by inspiration wrote: "Be ye transformed (metamorphosed) BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND."

All our lifetime we have been subject to the bondage of corruption and death, which is rooted in the CARNAL MIND. Ah - "to be carnally minded IS DEATH" **(Rom. 8:6).** That is God's own definition of death, and according to inspiration death is IN THE M-I-N-D! "It's all in your mind," they say, and though it may be spoken in jest, it is a wondrous and divine truth, nonetheless. In the same chapter a truth is introduced showing that the transformation of the body begins with the renewing of the mind, for, says the apostle, "to be spiritually minded IS LIFE..." **(Rom. 8:6).** Ah - life, also, is in the MIND! And he continues, "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU" **(Rom. 8:11).**

If ever a reason was given for a change of mind, a change of thinking, a raising of consciousness, this must be it: "Be ye metamorphosed BY the renewing of your mind." It is the termination of our old way of thinking - of the carnal consciousness of sin and death - and the activation of a new way of thinking - the spiritual consciousness of LIFE IN CHRIST that beings the change, works the change, and completes the change until our transformation into the heavenly is consummated in spirit, soul and body. Make no mistake about it! Paul declares forthrightly in Rom. 12:2 that this transformation, this change, this metamorphosis begins with the casting off of the corrupt and carnal mind which carries the mentality of sin and death, and replacing it with the mind of Christ which is the mind of life and glory and virtue. We have heard a great deal about the corruptible putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality. We have embraced many theories about how this would be accomplished, but in one majestic sweep of inspiration the apostle brushes aside all theories to tell us that we shall be transformed BY THE RENEWING OF THE MIND.

Mind means thought, intellect, reason, sense, thinking principle. Thought is thinking. The renewing of the mind means the renovation, reconstitution, re-programming of our thought patterns and processes. The old mind, carnal and human as it is, is always thinking thoughts of sin and death. It leaves us mortal, corruptible and unchanged. The new mind is the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is the intellect, the thought patterns, the thinking principles of Him who has conquered both sin and death and abides forever in the life and immortality of the celestial. The mind of Christ is a transforming mind! It renews not only the mind, but the body as well. Our minds, our THINKING must be raised from the level of the natural, carnal minds we were born with, and they must be spiritualized. This is not an instant change, it is not attained with one grand leap, but a continuous renewal as we hear the voice of the Spirit as He unfolds to us the mind and thoughts of God. These are thoughts of love, of righteousness, of life and light and power and incorruption and glory which transform into the image of God. If we wait in holy reverence in God's divine presence He will teach us how to think out of our divinity instead of our humanity.

Earlier I wrote of the law of the spirit of life. In Rom. 8:2 Paul speaks of not only the "spirit of life" but also the "law of the spirit of life." This tells us that not only is the spirit life, but it also has its law. Therefore, when he speaks of the spirit he speaks of life - divine life - and he speaks likewise of the law of that life. He joins the three - life, spirit, and law - together. Life and the spirit cannot be separated; law and spirit likewise cannot be divorced. Life is the content and issue of the spirit, whereas law is the nature and function of the spirit.

Every life definitely has a certain nature and consciousness. The higher the life, the loftier its nature and its consciousness. The law of a conscious life belongs to the realm of consciousness. For example, our youngest

son, in his teen years, was a lover of hamsters. He had a hamster, which from the time of its birth had never eaten anything but hamster food. One day he gave it an insect. Immediately, the hamster bit off the insect's head and then proceeded to eat it. Now this unique action of biting off the insect's head before eating it is a feature of the "instinct" of the animal. It is in his nature, a part of his consciousness. Though you breed countless generations of hamsters, and not one of them ever sees an insect, the moment you give one of those distant descendants an insect he will promptly bite off its head and then eat it. He requires no training whatever. This is the LAW of its life - its innate nature and consciousness. Nature abounds with tens of thousands of examples of this law of life-consciousness in the marvelous life-forms God has created on this planet. The law of the physical life pertains to the order of consciousness. Everything is what it is and acts as it acts out of its CONSCIOUSNESS.

The life of the spirit of life is the life of God Himself, which is the highest life; therefore it is the richest in consciousness. This life within us causes us to be full of divine consciousness, and this consciousness is the consciousness of LIFE. The law of life within us is this consciousness. So - as we put off the carnal mind which is filled with the consciousness of death, and are renewed in our mind into the mind of Christ which is the consciousness of life, our spirit, soul and body will become infused with not only the life of God, but also with the law of God's life, and we will walk in righteousness rather than sin - and we will think thoughts of life instead of death.

As soon as we are regenerated and are awakened to the life of God within, this law of life definitely causes us to have a certain consciousness. Our responsibility is to obey the sense of the law of life, thus thinking and acting out of the consciousness of life rather than death. In the beginning, the consciousness of this law of life may be comparatively weak and infrequent. Yet if only we are willing to obey the first sense, though it be weak, the consciousness following will be stronger and stronger. We have to begin by submitting to this first weak consciousness and continue to submit. In this way the law of life can work within us unceasingly until it reaches every part of our whole being. Thus the life within us will be enabled to expand outward and increase in depth and height until corruption is swallowed up into life in every fiber of our being. This is THE COMING FORTH OF THE CHRIST IN RESURRECTION POWER! This is the Christ the resurrection and the life!

Few believe that the spiritual body can be put on here and now even as we stand upon our feet. Do you? Do you believe it is possible for you to be changed, transformed, metamorphosed in your whole man here in this life? And, since you cannot by any natural process perform this for yourself, are you willing and ready to come under the deep secret law of letting the mind of Christ cancel out the carnal mind, of letting the law of life nullify the law of sin and death in the secret chambers of your consciousness? Within the cramped cocoon, which swings through the winter gale on the branch of a tree, a mighty transformation is taking place. Be still - all of a sudden the shell cracks, the cocoon gives way, the folded form stretches itself out of its cramped position, and limbers itself up with joy. In its new consciousness it does naturally what it has never done before, the former things have passed away, and with them all their limitations. The worm can fly! It is the law of its life! And the law of your life, precious friend of mine, is to know and live and demonstrate the full capacity of Him who is within you THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 36
COMING IN RESURRECTION POWER [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-SIX

THE DAWN OF RESURRECTION
THE "OUT" RESURRECTION
FROM WHENCE WE LOOK
IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

Wondrous things await the elect of God, things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter in the hearing of uncircumcised ears and hearts. Long ages have come and gone since that first glorious dawn when the Creator uttered the portentous decree, "Let there be light," and there are vast ages that lie yet unborn before us. Our present dispensation is closing, we are already overlapping into another. Glories greater far than this age has disclosed are already beginning to burn. Dawn with blushing hues is advancing in the eastern skies, stretching forth her golden fingers to draw aside the shades of night and open the gates of day. Soon will come the explosive fulfillment of divine promises that pertain to that wonderful age to come, of which we have merely "tasted" its powers (Heb. 6:5). Our blessed Lord and Christ shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied and that glory is to be revealed in us. The groaning earth is waiting, creation is longing for deliverance. The seas are roaring, the earth is quaking. There are wars and rumors of wars. Amid the ruthless surging tide of unbridled crime, drugs, rebellion, immorality, sickness, suffering, poverty, sorrow and injustice, we hear the groans of the dying. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. Men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things, which are coming on the earth. The cry of the oppressed is entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. The night has been long, and is so cold and dark. But the "Day Star" is arising. The morning cometh! Already the flashes of light are climbing the eastern sky. Heaven and earth will soon be ablaze with the glory of the revelation in the manifested sons of God.

Why has God not brought deliverance to this sin-cursed world during the past two millenniums of church history? Ah, God be praised! There are co-heirs in whom the glory is to be revealed. There are "many brethren" to be manifested in the image of "the firstborn." The number of these is not yet complete, but the hour is at hand. When all the heirs of the Kingdom are gathered out of this dark age, God will unveil His many-membered Christ to the world. The long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God will take place, and creation will be delivered from the bondage of decay and death and brought "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God" **(Rom. 8:21).** Creation cannot possibly be delivered during the church age. The gospel may be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven and it leaves the creation in the same bondage of corruption. The gospel of this age has been designed to call out a people for His name, to form the enChristed body in the earth. It is not intended that it should do anything else. But when the sons of God are manifested with Christ in His glory, it will be the signal for the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. The godly and glorious and incorruptible race of the second Adam is at hand, God's NEW MAN. He will bring the cure. He will enlighten the minds of the people and turn their hearts to the Lord. He will heal the broken world. He will rebuke sin and sorrow and disease. He will bind death. He will rifle the grave. He will deliver creation.

Those who have been apprehended to this high calling have been overshadowed by the power of the Highest and are aware of a glorious life within - a bursting life in embryo ready to come forth, or as Peter said, "unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" **(I Pet. 1:5).** It is the birth of the New Creation Life in Christ Jesus, the full manifestation of the sons of God. This is Christ formed in us. So arise, shine, for thy light is come. The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the light shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee. This is His day; this is your hour.

THE DAWN OF RESURRECTION

It is erroneous to speak of the resurrection of the body while ignoring the resurrection of soul and spirit. Man's body is not all that dies, or is dead. Death seized upon Adam in the very day when he partook of the forbidden

tree, although many hundreds of years passed before his body was finally laid in the grave. The divine edict was not, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thy BODY shall die," but "in the day that thou eatest thereof T-H-O-U shalt surely die" **(Gen. 2:17).** The result of sin would pass upon the WHOLE MAN - body, soul and spirit. "The SOUL that sinneth, it shall die," saith the Almighty. "And YOU hath He quickened, WHO WERE DEAD in trespasses and sins" **(Eph. 2:1).** "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" **(I Tim. 5:6).** We are prone to equate death with the demise of the body, but nothing is farther from the truth. If we who WERE DEAD have NOW BEEN QUICKENED by the spirit of life from God, the question follows: What part of us was dead? And what part of us has been quickened? Obviously, it was not our body! Equally obvious is the fact that it was not our soul, for the soul is still in the process of transformation.

Some teach that the spirit cannot die because it came from God, but we must remember that all death is not the same death. Death is a condition, a state of being - not cessation of existence. The man lying in the casket still has his bodily members, you behold his face and his form, but something has gone out. Through special processes his body may be preserved for millenniums. His body still exists, but it has entered the state, the condition of death. A dead man has not life, though his members remain. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," said the wise man, but I do not hesitate to tell you that a dead spirit is a candle whose light has gone out. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," the Word says, so it necessarily follows that he that is NOT joined to the Lord is NOT one spirit. A dead spirit is a spirit from which the divine essence has been withdrawn - the spirit still exists, even with consciousness, but it exists in the state of death - unresponsiveness to the realm of God. The man whose spirit does not respond to God, or to the bright spirit world, or to spiritual things, is a man who is dead in spirit.

Recently I read the story of a man from Puerto Rico named Jose, whose body had suffered much damage from leprosy. His insensitivity to touch was so great that, when blindfolded, he could not even detect whether someone had entered the room and held his hand. Touch cells and pain cells had fallen silent. As a result, scars and ulcers covered his hands, face, and feet, bearing mute witness to the unintentional abuse his body had endured without any sensation of pain. Because pain cells in his eyes no longer alerted him when to blink, gradually Jose's eyes dried out. That condition, aggravated by severe cataracts and glaucoma, soon made him blind. A terrible misfortune cut off Jose's last link with the outside world. He lost his hearing. Thus, at the age of forty-five Jose lost all contact with the world. He could not see nor hear if a person spoke. He would wake up from sleep and forget where he was. He did not know whether it was day or night, hot or cold, and when he spoke, he did not know if anyone heard or answered. No one could penetrate through his isolation even to ask him for permission to help. Jose's body coiled tighter and tighter on the bed; he was preparing for death in the same position as his birth.

Death is merely the final inability to respond or correspond to the world about you. Such is the condition of the unregenerated human spirit. I tell you the truth - the spirit of the natural man is dead - dead to God, dead to life, dead to reality, dead to truth, dead to righteousness, dead to promise, dead to the spiritual world, dead to spiritual things. He abides in this death through all the decades, centuries, or millenniums of his existence until Christ comes into his heart. The spirit of man can only be penetrated by the Holy Spirit which is the great Quickener, the great Lighter. When our spirit (the candle) is lighted by His Spirit a resurrection in the realm of spirit ensues.

Separated from God man is dead - spirit, soul and body. Receiving again of His life we find it to be a RESURRECTION LIFE. Two Greek words are used to speak of the resurrection. The first is ANASTASIS, generally translated "resurrection." The second is EGEIRO, rendered as "raise, raised or risen." A close examination of the texts where these words are employed reveals that they are frequently used interchangably and both are applied to the resurrection of body, soul and spirit. ANASTASIS means - a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word "resurrection" which we term to mean the restoring to life again. As one has pointed out, the Greek word means THE WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short of full conformation into the image of God, Christ formed in us, to be ONE IN HIM.

Resurrection is the process of STANDING UP and ADVANCING - it is arising from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life LIFTED UP from

the earth, to be raised to the heavenlies, to be joined in one with the Spirit of God. The more ONE we are WITH HIM, the more we will say with Paul, "for our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). The word "conversation" literally means "citizenship" and MANNER OF BEHAVIOUR. What a revelation to the world when we begin to manifest the behaviour of that higher realm - so foreign to the flesh.

Resurrection is the process of man's "fall" being REVERSED. If one is watching a program on his VCR and decides to stop and rewind it to see a scene again, he is simply reversing what he has previously seen with his eyes. It is comical betimes to watch the people running backwards, and bodies rising from the ground to the roof of a building, etc. What you saw is restored to its beginning by passing through the motion in reverse. And this is precisely what resurrection is: THE FALL OF MAN IN REVERSE! Since resurrection is man's fall in reverse, a standing up again into that oneness in God man knew in his bright beginning, the order of Adam first being alive, then dying, Is put in reverse. In the new creation death comes first, then life. We cannot have resurrection life without death. We die to self and sin that we may live unto God and righteousness. From that death we stand up again in HIS LIFE.

When we were first born of God our bodies were not "resurrected" at that time, but when that birthing by God's Spirit took place, there was certainly something within us that STOOD UP. In that blessed moment the ego of old Adam laid down in us and died, while the new creation man STOOD UP ALIVE. We were resurrected! Truly the resurrection had dawned within our bosom. But our outer-man bodies saw no change. The spirit within that first died in that long ago Eden has been quickened by His Spirit and caused to STAND UP FROM THE REALM OF SEPARATION AND DEATH. We have experienced the resurrection of our spirit, and now there must follow a resurrection of our soul. We have experienced the STANDING UP of our spirit, and now the awakening and RISING UP of our minds into the mind of Christ is taking place. Even now we are partakers of the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16), but we have not yet seen it in the COMPLETE RESURRECTED STATE. Ah, beloved, let us stand up!

I mentioned earlier that the word "risen" comes from the Greek word EGEIRO, meaning "to gather, through the idea of collecting one's faculties, to waken, to rouse from sleep, disease, or death. Here again the truth of being risen with Christ implies the GATHERING OR COLLECTING OF ONE'S FACULTIES. All the spiritual faculties that were lost in the fall of Adam are being restored to the elect by the operation of God. All that was lost shall be regained, including our lost faculties, which have to do with spiritual capacities and abilities, as well as the recovery of all spiritual truth. It is more than merely coming to life again, it is the orderly restoration of the totality of our original state of being.

Evelyn Isaacs has written: "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and as long as He dwells within, the resurrection process is going on. Resurrection is a standing or rising up. In the place of spiritual stagnation, we have come into a way of life. Upon arising to our feet, we are becoming adjusted to living in the fullness of His presence. It is a recovery of our morals and of our spiritual faculties, the regaining, and the restoration of truth. Our aptitudes are restored and we again see, hear, and feel with our spiritual senses. Since we read in Jn. 15:27 that we were with God from the beginning, resurrection life is the restoration and recovery of all that we were in the beginning with God (Prov. 8:22-32). Now we can say, 'I know that my redeemer liveth because He has risen in me.' You know you have been translated and are living in a heavenly land. Where once you stuttered, now, another speaks. Feet that were unsteady are now sure. Holy boldness has taken the place of fear. The soul reaches upward and takes root in the heavens instead of the earth. This is the only tree that grows UPSIDE DOWN. There is a new voice within and we are singing a new song. We behold new vistas and are leaping, as it were, on hind's feet, leaping from mountain peak to mountain peak of revelation. We are brought out of the night into the full light of the great day of God Almighty. Rising from the dead is the resumption of heavenly life. These plants of renown, growing in fertile soil, are no more of the world than Jesus was. Our spirit has been fully healed and we are living in our Paradisical home. We are being brought back to our one true love and to the same glory we had with the Father before the world was (Jn. 17:5; Job 38:7). This is the time of full restoration to our right mind, to our former estate, back where the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. All this process of resurrection is realized in the person of Jesus Christ, for resurrection is a person; His person! May we rest on the pinions of His wings and ascend from realm to realm. If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is in vain. Though He were born a thousand times, what does it matter, if He is not born in you? Though He arose a thousand times, if He

is not "risen" in you, what difference does it make? In union with Adam's nature you die, but in union with the Christ nature you not only live, but you are ALIVE! Adam was a living being, but Christ is a life-giving spirit, restoring the dead to life. The first Adam was earth minded, the second Adam is heavenly minded" -end quote.

In Adam all die, but in Christ all are made alive. In Christ! I am reminded of the story I read once about a preacher who was addressing the people one Sunday, trying to impress upon them the importance of religion. "All you people of this congregation," he cried from the pulpit, "one day you're going to die. Do you hear me? All you people of this congregation, one day you're going to die." One little man sitting in the front pew started to laugh, so the preacher asked him, "What's so funny?" The man answered, "I don't belong to this congregation." "In Adam all die." But I have some good news for you, my friend. I'M NOT IN ADAM! I don't belong to old Adam. I pertain to the Christ, the second Man. And in Christ all are made alive. Hallelujah! "If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" **(Col. 3:1).** That really says it all!

THE "OUT" RESURRECTION

There is an interesting passage in Mark 9, which throws great light on this subject. The opening verses contain the record of the transfiguration; and then we read, "As they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying within themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from (Gr. ek, from among) the dead should mean." The disciples felt that there was something special, something entirely beyond the ordinary orthodox idea of the resurrection of the dead, and verily so there was, though they understood it not then. It lay beyond their range of vision at that moment.

Fortunately, Paul gives us some very vital information concerning this resurrection "from among" the dead, without which we would be very much in the dark. He tells us just how he was planning to be included in it. He also tells us how others came to be included in the same class with him, and he states that the revelation concerning this great attainment and the way into it, is the sign of spiritual perfection (Phil. 3:11-15). But the popular teachers of the day have totally missed these great truths. Let us consider them very carefully. They are of the utmost importance. In Phil. 3:8-14, Paul informs us that he had given up the world, given up everything, that he might suffer with Christ, with his nature transformed to die even as Christ died, "IF BY ANY MEANS I might attain unto the resurrection out from amongst the dead." In our King James version this is rendered, "the resurrection of the dead:" a pathetic, and altogether misleading translation.

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" **(Acts 24:15)**. In the Greek language the resurrection "of the dead" is NEKRON or TON NEKRON and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. But the term EK NEKRON - "out of the dead" - is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or in any general sense. The latter phrase is used altogether 49 times in the New Testament, to-wit: 34 times, to express Christ's resurrection, whom we know was thus raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 Times, to express John the Baptist's supposed resurrection, who, as Herod thought, had been raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 Times, to express the resurrection of Lazarus, who was also raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 times, it is used to express spiritual life OUT FROM AMONG those who are still dead in sin. In **Rom. 6:13** we read, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from (among) the dead." In **Acts 4:1-2** the Sadducees were grieved because Peter and John "preached, through Jesus, THE RESURRECTION WHICH IS FROM AMONG THE DEAD."

The resurrection of which Paul spoke was not even the general resurrection of saints. Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if there were but one resurrection of the saved, as modern Babylon teaches, then all of his strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless. But no: Paul was not striving in vain; and unto the saints at Philippi he wrote, "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege - the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage - of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with

Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may win Christ, and that I may actually be found and known as in Him, not having any self-achieved righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands - but possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ, the truly right standing with God, which comes from God by saving faith. For my determined purpose is that I may know Him - that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him... that I may in that same way come to know the power out flowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into the likeness even to His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATTAIN TO THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY. Not that I have now attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me" **(Phil. 3:7-12)** (Amplified).

Oh! dearly beloved brethren, the resurrection "of" the dead is one thing, but the resurrection "out from among" the dead is a mightily different thing. If ALL the people in a building leave it at the same time, it is the coming out "of" the company; but if only SOME of the people present leave, theirs is a coming out "from" the rest of the company. It was for this resurrection "out from" the dead that Paul longed continually. This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him amid the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts. Every soul who dies, both saint and sinner, must be in the resurrection "of" the dead, for as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. There is no possible way of avoiding it. But to be a partaker in the resurrection "from among" the dead that, Paul tells us, is a special blessing and distinction for those who follow on to KNOW the Lord. The resurrection "from" the dead has already begun. It started 1900 years ago. Our Lord was the firstfruits of this company, "raised up out of dead ones" **(I Cor. 15:20).** There have been a few, a little remnant all through the years who strove and attained to this position. And there is a little remnant alive today who belong to this same company and who will now STAND UP AND COLLECT THEIR SPIRITUAL FACULTIES, transformed fully into the image and incorruptibleness of God by the power of the indwelling Christ. But mark: the way into this great privilege is through death: death to self and the world. Blessed be God! this process has already begun, and it has begun IN US.

FROM WHENCE WE LOOK ...

You will never understand the power of Christ's resurrection until you know union with Him. There are a couple of scriptures that I would like to consider with you. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, you will be given to understand a mystery comprehended by very few men or women who have walked the face of this planet. The following words of the apostle Paul are freighted with meaning and spiritual significance. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:20-21).** The opening statement of this beautiful passage declares that, "Our conversation is in heaven." The word conversation is from the Greek word POLITEUMA meaning "citizenship." It is not our words or our talk that are in heaven, but our citizenship - our habitation and residence with full civil rights. We are citizens of heaven. Our residence is in heaven. Heaven is our place of birth, our homeland, our native sphere of habitation.

There are some things about which we must be very clear. If we would grasp the deep meaning of our heavenly citizenship, we must come to an understanding of some basic and simple facts about HEAVEN ITSELF. We want no theories or guesses. We want facts. We want nothing but the highest authority. And what better authority can we find than the One who made the heavens and who owns them? If anyone understands all the facts about heaven, it is He! Let us see what He said. He had left His heavenly glory. He had humbled Himself, had taken upon Himself the form of sinful man; and becoming a man, was despised and rejected. And yet, while in humility and reproach, a man among men, He made this statement: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" **(Jn. 3:13).** The Son of God left His glory, and descended to the depths of this earth. Yet, while a man on earth, in humility, He Himself said, "The Son of man WHICH I-S IN HEAVEN."

When Jesus said that He was even then, as a man, in heaven - He used the usual Greek word for heaven, OURANOS. The meaning of the word is elevation, height, exaltation. But this elevation, height and exaltation is something so vast, so infinite, so inexhaustible that a person can be in it, can descend from it, and yet still possess it and be in it! The sweet singer of Israel, speaking of the vastness of the universe says, "The heavens declare the glory of God" **(Ps. 19:1).** The earth is simply a planet revolving around the sun. The sun is merely a star in a galaxy known as the Milky Way. And the Milky Way is but one small galaxy among billions that are known to exist. And scientists with their most powerful telescopes have never found the outer extremities of the universe. it appears to be infinite, unending! Certainly, were you to descend to earth from some distant galaxy, you would have descended from heaven while still remaining in heaven! The heavens are so vast that man can never escape them - he can only descend and ascend within them.

But the heaven that God dwells in is not the physical universe, nor is it some limited spot far out in the universe somewhere where God dwells in His majesty sitting upon a material throne. First of all, God is SPIRIT and spirit cannot utilize the material in its own realm. Not only is God spirit, He is OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT. He is everywhere present at the same time. David said of Him, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning... even there shall Thy hand lead me..." **(Ps. 139:6-10).** Solomon, at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem said, "And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS cannot contain Him" **(II Chron. 2:5-6).** God is spirit. He is omnipresent spirit. He fills all things. Therefore, God is not confined to some geographical or celestial location. He is equally present everywhere throughout the eternal, unbounded heavens!

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God's heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets - swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Let every man know for a certainty that heaven is not a geographical or astral location with their limitations, but a dimension, a sphere of existence, a state of being - that spiritual existence, being and habitation in which God eternally lives. Natural eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of spirit. Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of earth. Heaven is all around us but we must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

The Holy Spirit witnesses with unspeakable clearness that WHAT CHRIST IS ALL other sons of God are now becoming. He is the FIRSTBORN from among the dead ones; a vast body of sons will be raised because He was raised. He was crucified; THEY were crucified IN HIM. He was buried; THEY were buried IN HIM. He was raised; THEY were raised IN HIM. He ascended to God's right hand; THEY are ascended IN HIM. He was seated to reign; THEY are seated IN HIM.

Over and over again, the Gospel of John states that Jesus went unto His Father. We will quote only four of these as follows. "I depart out of this world unto the Father" **(Jn. 13:1).** "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more" **(Jn. 16:10).** "A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father" **(Jn. 16:16).** "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I" **(Jn. 14:28-29).**

Many Christians today are quite as carnal as were these first followers of Jesus who, being Jews, and God having shown their forefathers many wonderful signs, were expecting now to see something tangible and earthly, and it was therefore difficult for them to comprehend and receive these words of Jesus concerning His Father, and heaven, and His going unto the Father. God is a spirit and both fills and transcends all space. And since God is in heaven, heaven is wherever the Spirit of God is, whether it be far distant or deep within us.

Therefore, when Jesus went unto the Father, He did not travel many miles; lie simply moved out of one dimension into another; He returned to the Spirit-form from when He came forth as He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" **(Jn. 16:28).** This, then, is what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye shall not see Me - because I go unto My Father," or back into the spirit form and realm of heaven which is invisible. And now in spirit we are eternally joined unto Him in His own incorruptible sphere of life and state of being. He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit - in heaven! Henceforth, may our conversation be in heaven and of heaven, from whence also we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

It will be well worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. "For our citizenship is in heaven, FROM WHENCE WE LOOK..." "We LOOK." I ask you to notice this particularly. "From whence WE LOOK." "FROM WHENCE we look." It does not say, "from whence we SHALL look." Nor does it say, "from whence the Lord shall come." "From whence WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body..." It does not at all say that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal mindedness has taken it. Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE. Where are we? "Our citizenship (residence, homeland) is in heaven." This lovely passage shows the believer to be a heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies. And what are we doing there? From that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body. Just as a man may sit in a fire-tower steadily looking for the tell-tale signs of smoke that alert him to a forest fire, so WE SIT IN HEAVEN LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR BODY. The message is clear - we are not on earth looking for our Saviour to come crashing down from heaven. Rather, from our exalted seating in the height of heaven we look for this change, for we know the Christ there, we belong to Him there, we are joined in one with Him there, we are heavenly because He is. He will extend the work of salvation and exaltation to the body-realm, so as to present the whole being in the power of eternal life in the true sphere and home of that life above. We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world. This change from death to life takes place as Christ rises from within us, coming out of heaven (spirit) to manifest finally in the visible world. As we find Christ in us and our union in Him as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place. Oh! the mystery of it! It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up with our inner man. "FROM HEAVEN we look..." Hallelujah!

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

Our change from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible is a promise of God that can no more fail or pass away than any other of God's promises. "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" **(I Cor. 15:51-53).**

I want to show you one of the hidden secrets of God that only the Spirit of Truth can bring forth. After saying, "but we shall all be changed," the next words read, "in a moment." The Greek word used here for "moment" is ATOMOS. This passage is the only place in the Greek New Testament where this word is used. ATOMOS is the word from which is derived our English word "atom." The word carried the meaning in the Greek of that which is UNCUTTABLE or INDIVISIBLE because the Greeks believed that the atom was the smallest particle of matter that existed, therefore it could not be divided, cut, split, or reduced in any way. The translators have taken this to mean that our bodies shall be changed in "an atom of time," that is, in an instant of time so brief that you could not make it any quicker, or reduce the time in any measure. I can understand their reasoning, but it seems to me far a field from the facts. There are other Greek words that do mean moment, an infinitesimal period of time. If the Spirit intended this to be - in a moment - then why did He use the word ATOMOS instead of the word that actually means Moment. For instance, in II Cor. 4:17 we find the statement, "For our light afflictions which are but for a moment..." This word "moment" comes from the Greek word PARAUTIKA which means instant or momentary. So why did the Spirit use the word ATOMOS instead of the word PARAUTIKA when He said, "We shall all be changed, in a moment ... if He meant moment? And why do the translators persist in translating it "moment"? There must have been a reason for the Holy Spirit to use the word ATOMOS, that God has kept hidden from the translators. Does not this word ATOMOS indicate that we

shall be changed in the ATOMS of our bodies, in the very structure and substance of our outer house, in the ATOMICAL STRUCTURE of our bodies? "We shall be changed in ATOMS, in ATOMICAL STRUCTURE, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump!" Certainly this is much more in harmony with the subject: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" **(I Cor. 15:44, 49).** Certainly this involves a change in our atomical structure!

Following these words the apostle hastily adds this enigmatical phrase, "in the twinkling of any eye." "Twinkling" is from the Greek word RHIPE meaning "a jerk" of the eyes. RHIPE is from the root RHIPTO, a word which indicates a sudden motion; to hurl with a rapid movement; a stroke; to toss; to fling. The twinkling of an eye relates not so much to time as it does to the ACTION and MOTION involved. It is not a question of how quickly the eyelids flutter, but the fact of a movement, a jerk, a change of direction, a SUDDEN REFOCUSING OR LOOKING AWAY. If I were reading a book and I heard the door open, I would swiftly dart my eyes in the direction of the door to see who is entering. I would LOOK AWAY from the book and quickly REFOCUS my sight on the person coming through the door. This abrupt motion, this sudden refocusing of vision, this rapid change of eye contact is what is indicated by the Greek word RHIPE.

When our attention is unexpectedly attracted by a sudden burst of revelation and spiritual understanding there is that instantaneous "turning away" from our former concepts, beliefs, actions and ways, to behold and embrace the truth and glory of God disclosed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This sudden change in perspective, this immediate transformation of consciousness satisfies precisely the meaning of the Greek phrase - "in the twinkling of an eye." It bespeaks vision, illumination, understanding, perception and perspective. Furthermore, it has absolutely nothing to do with a so called "rapture of the saints," or the "second coming of Jesus." Plainly and unquestionably it concerns O-U-R CHANGE, O-U-R TRANSFORMATION into the image of Christ. It says nothing about us being "raptured" in the twinkling of an eye; what it does say is that "WE SHALL BE CHANGED in a moment (in atoms), in the twinkling (re-focused vision) of an eye." Yet the preachers loudly proclaim on the basis of this verse that Jesus will return in a split second, and the saints will in a flash of time travel a trillion miles cf miracle at the Rapture. It is as pure a myth as ever entered the brain of man!

My heart leaps within me as I contemplate this wonderful reality - being CHANGED! From the distant mountain peaks of faith comes a sound as clear as morning chimes. It is the voice of the inspired apostle sounding out from centuries past, "BEHOLDING as in a glass the glory of the Lord, WE ARE CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" **(II Cor. 3:18).** Beholding - we are changed! It is the same message - "We shall be changed ... in the twinkling of an eye!" We are changed by a beholding, by a looking, by A LOOK. Betimes it takes a lot to turn us. The Psalmist cries out, "Turn us, O Lord. Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved" **(Ps. 8O:3,7,19).** It is only as we turn in the direction of the present glory that we can know transformation! You can read the history of revivals, you can study the exploits of men of faith in centuries past, you can reminisce about the great visitations of God yesteryear. There is not enough power in such things to transform you. And there no need to cry, "Lord, do it again!" for our God is ever progressive in His dealings and the outworking of His purposes, and He doesn't retrogress to "do it again." This is a New Day and God will do a New Thing! Transformation comes only in the light of the present glory and revelation of Jesus Christ. We must turn, to behold Him as He is, not as He was. There is a multitude of people today whose experience goes no further than small measure of knowledge about the historical Jesus they read of in the Gospels. Countless thousands more know Him only in the light of yesterday's revelation. Oh! we need to turn to Him today by the Spirit. Seeing and knowing Him involves an on-going unveiling of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

It is never enough that there is something to be seen; it is not sufficient that a landscape is within sight; the properties of the landscape require in the observer a certain perceptiveness. When an interviewer approached the instrument of a celebrated microscopist, he paused and said, "But you must tell me what I am to see." The expert was delighted and replied, "You are a man after my own heart. You recognize that there must be a prepared mind to enable the eye to see rightly." Everything depends on the quality of perception we bring with us. We see what we are qualified to see, and what we actually see determines all our conduct, as someone has written:

"Earth's crammed with heaven
And every common bush afire with God,
But ONLY HE WHO SEES takes off his shoes,
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries."

It is true of all spiritual things that we see "through a glass darkly," but it is our own carnal minds and natural understanding which distort our sight and discolor our vision. When Cain forfeited the favor of God and his guilty life passed out to a fugitive existence, he lamented his fate; but above all his fears, he felt that his darkest destiny was to be denied the vision of God. For he cried, "From Thy face shall I be hid" **(Gen. 4:14).** The heaviest part of his sentence was to be exiled from God. He felt an aggravated sense of what is the common experience of mankind; alienation from God is written in large letters over the history of the world. But the hiding of God's face is not His withdrawal, but our lack of the powers of perception. Our carnal, earthbound souls have forfeited the power to see Him. Our spiritual denseness has hid His face from us, and we cannot see Him until that great, intercepting mass is taken out of the way.

We are going to have to get beyond dead doctrines and religious traditions. We are going to have to see the living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God and the Reality of God. It will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on perfection to make us perfect sons in God's image. We must SEE HIM to be changed into His likeness. It is going to take more than singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Halleluiahs, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God. We shall have to MEET HIM as Thomas and Paul and John met Him. We must hear His voice speaking to us in the deepest recesses of our spirits. We must commune with Him in the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship can only come by personal association with Christ Himself. I am willing to stake all that I have and all that I am on this one bold assertion: No man or woman can ever be changed into the image of God or put on incorruptibility until he has cast off the yoke of the carnal mind and the bondages of human tradition and religion and has met THE FIRSTBORN SON PERSONALLY, COMMUNED WITH HIM INTIMATELY, and continued to walk in the light and glory of what he sees.

The promise of this vision assures us of the perfecting of the powers of our spiritual life. When Moses desired the vision of the glory of God, he was warned that no man can see God's face and live. No man can stand in the full blaze of divine glory until he himself corresponds in nature to that glory. The glare of the eastern sun on desert sands has dazed men's eyes; the fierce, gleaming radiance of sunlight on the snowclad hills has blinded human sight, and none can, with naked eye, behold the sun in the sky. How, then, can our mortal vision turn its gaze upon the glory that is ineffable? When John on Patmos saw the glory of God's Christ he "fell as dead!" in the overwhelming presence. Our nature is not constituted to bear the blaze of uncreated light. But this restricted nature is not for ever. For the burning radiance of His holy light shining upon us releases us as we are exposed to it from the obstructiveness of our own impaired senses, and then with purged heart, renewed mind and quickened life we shall perceive Him.

George Hawtin has penned some beautiful words of truth along this line. He writes: "I have often thought of the wonderful words 'no man can SEE GOD AND LIVE.' Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me to reverently say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live AS THEY USED TO LIVE, but they are TRANSFORMED. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into THAT SAME IMAGE of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure you are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion" -end quote. Truly we are changed by beholding - in the twinkling (glance, look) of an eye! You won't see the Christ until you start looking for Him, and you won't find Him until you go where He is revealed. He is fully, totally revealed in His glory in the realm of spirit. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (that is, no longer after the flesh, merely as a man)" **(II Cor. 5: 16).**

A friend in California has written, "How short-sighted has been the vision of God's saints - yet how much we truly believe that we see. Some years ago the Lord spoke to me as many of us waited before Him and said, 'If you can see what Elisha saw, you will receive what Elisha received.' I was startled to hear those words, and

though I did not fully understand all that was included in that which Elisha received, I did know that he had come into a possession of the double portion of the Spirit. Turning to the chapter in which is recorded the account of Elijah's catching up into heaven (II Kings 2), beginning with verse 9 I began to read, 'And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he (Elijah typifying Christ) said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see..." And the Lord interrupted my reading, saying, 'Stop right there!' Then He repeated to me the words that I had just read, 'IF THOU SEE...' and said, 'You must have the vision of faith and the open vision into the heavenlies.' He then instructed me to continue reading, and I read, 'If thou see ME.' This was enlarged upon by the scripture, which says, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Heb. 12:2). With a spiritual eye we must see HIM! As Jesus said, 'This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which SEETH THE SON ... may have everlasting life.' We must be able to see that which is invisible, for Elijah, who prefigured Christ in this passage, said, 'If thou see me WHEN I AM TAKEN FROM THEE, it shall be unto thee.' There is a beholding of Him by the Spirit which changes into that same image" -end quote.

Do you know, dear friend, why the masses of Christians today have little or no revelation of the purposes of God, no hope of sonship, no going on to perfection, no putting on of the mind of Christ, and no conformation to His glorious image? It is because at every turn they have ceased to LOOK UNTO JESUS, having left the road He has marked out to wander in Stygian blackness. Here, there, and everywhere, one finds in tracts, magazines, books, on the radio and television, and behind pulpits across the land some poor deluded traveler who is proclaiming his particular alley - his theory, his doctrine, his gift, his ministry, his program, his baptism, his methods, or feeble little experience to be THE PASSAGEWAY to a new and better day. But in all this we find no true dawn. Instead of bright sunlight and clear skies, all we find here is some poor soul groping hopelessly by the pathetic light of a flickering match, which he himself holds.

I present to you, beloved brother, sister, a RISEN CHRIST in all His beauty, majesty, and incorruptibility, who bids us FOLLOW HIM to enter the glories of His new day of life and light and glory! Turn - behold HIM! You will be changed in the twinkling of YOUR EYE!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 37
COMING IN JUDGMENT
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-SEVEN

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB
THE JUDGMENT DAY

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" **(II Thes. 1:7-10).**

We are living in a time when the truth about the Lord's return is missed by many of the Lord's people, misunderstood by others, and misinterpreted by multitudes. The promise of the Lord's coming is intended to be GOOD NEWS. Yet many people react in fear to the very thought of the coming of Christ, for they associate it with the end of the world, which to them means complete disaster. The picture most people have of the judgment is vividly portrayed in Michael Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. The central figure in that celebrated masterpiece is that of our Lord seated upon a throne, with all the host of heaven gathered about Him, and trembling humanity arraigned before Him. The countenance of the Divine Judge is not at all what we are accustomed to associate with Jesus. It is wonderful in its beauty and majesty to be sure, but there is not a hint of mercy or compassion in it. On the contrary, it is menacing and awful in the extreme, as, with uplifted hand, the Omnipotent Saviour consigns to hopeless perdition the multitudes who are falling away downward upon His left hand with every expression of anguish and despair. The only suggestion of pity or compassion the scene contains is to be discerned in the face of the virgin mother, who stands close to her august Son while the fearful sentence is being pronounced; there is none in the face of Christ Himself.

The subject of judgment is a large one in the Bible, running through scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and it is so manifold in meaning, purpose, and application that it eludes simplification. The judgments of God run deep and are so vast and multi-faceted that they lie completely beyond the comprehension of the carnal mind and beyond the grasp of mortal man. As exclaimed by Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, and His ways past finding out!" **(Rom. 11:33).** David prophesied, "...for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" **(Ps. 96:13).** Paul urged the Athenians to repent "because He hath appointed A DAY in which He will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" **(Acts 17:31).** Judgment is inseparably related to the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom" **(II Tim. 4:1).**

Through the cunning of the adversary, both the world and the popular church have been robbed of the blessed assurances of the time when God's RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS break forth in the earth. Most people know that the Bible tells of a "judgment day," but the average person, believer or unbeliever, regards it only with a certain sense of fear and dread. Because of this FEAR there is, to them, no more unwelcome tidings than that the Lord is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH. Many tremble inwardly at the thought of God's judgments, and in this mind put them far from them, preferring not to even hear the subject mentioned. At various times in the past many people have become terror stricken when some unusual event or a terrible calamity has occurred, because they have supposed that the event signaled the finale for our planet with billions of people suddenly thrust into eternal damnation. They have absolutely no idea of the wonderful blessings in store for a sin-weary world under the glorious reign of the sons of God filled with all the nature, wisdom, glory and power of God!

There are many who preach what they call the "end-time message" who capitalize on this emotion of FEAR: "Christ is coming to judge and YOU ARE NOT READY!" That message sounds like something exasperated

mothers shout as they shake their disobedient children: "You just wait until your daddy comes home!" Many souls have been scared into the altars and have lived in dread of the end of the age and the coming of the Lord ever since. One day, they expect, they will suddenly be yanked up through the air, taken to that great woodshed in the sky, and given the spanking of their eternal life. The threat of the Lord appearing as Judge is somehow supposed to produce righteous living among the saints. Yeah, "JUST WAIT UNTIL YOUR DADDY (Jesus) COMES HOME!"

Then there are those who seem to be consumed with teaching and preaching about the terrible conditions that mark the end of this age: war, famine, pestilence, lawlessness, immorality, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, the great tribulation, persecution and trouble. Their main passion seems to be what the church system, the world bankers, the Jews, the Illuminati, the Russians, the politicians and the wicked in general are doing in the world. Their whole life is absorbed in discussions about who is the antichrist, credit cards, Social Security numbers, bar-code marking systems, laser-tattooed identification numbers, conspiracies, wilderness hideouts, survival camps, and all sorts of carnal preparations for getting through the "great tribulation." Still others want to talk about the horrors of AIDS, or some other manifestation of this dark hour. But I do not hesitate to tell you, beloved, that it is a total waste of time and effort to continually analyze the negative realm and curse the darkness. If we are really genuinely concerned about the darkness of this night, let us get up off our spiritual lazy bones and hasten to follow hard after the Lord. Pursue HIM with all your might! Let us repent of all our foolish preoccupation with the works of darkness and our fear of the night and turn our eyes to the light of His glorious face. Christ is the ILLUMINATION OF THE NEW DAY. And only as we walk with Him can the curse and bondages of this present darkness be turned into the glad morning of peace, righteousness, and life we all long for.

Judgment is God's strange work. He uses it as a tool in His redemptive and restorative processes. Men make it the end. But judgment is always a means to an end - never THE END! No matter how an unbeliever is dealt with, whether he dies as a result of his sin, or by the direct judgment of God; whether he be cast into hell, or turned into the lake of fire - THIS IS NOT HIS END. All men will be raised up either into a resurrection of life or a resurrection of judgment (Jn. 5:29), but for the latter THIS IS NOT THEIR END. All judgments are limited - confined to a day, or to the limitations of prescribed ages. "Because He hath appointed A DAY, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" **(Acts 17:31).** "And the smoke of their torment doth go up to AGES OF AGES; and they have no rest DAY and NIGHT (time periods), who are bowing before the beast and his image..." **(Rev. 14:11,** Young's Literal**)**. The Concordant Literal New Testament reads, "And the fumes of their torment are ascending FOR THE EONS OF THE EONS. And they are having no rest DAY and NIGHT..." God's great goal lies BEYOND THE AGES, on the OTHER SIDE OF TIME, for "He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages (the end of all time periods and ages) to UNIFY A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S AND HEAD THEM UP AND CONSUMMATE THEM IN CHRIST" **(Eph. 1:10)** (Amplified). GOD ALL IN ALL is the grand goal (I Cor. 15:27-28). God does not reach His goal during any of His judgmental or disciplinary measures wrought out in time. These only break and mold and prepare His creatures for it. Let us not confuse the process with the goal. The process involves JUDGMENT IN TIME. The goal is ALL THINGS GATHERED TOGETHER INTO CHRIST - IN ETERNITY.

The end of divine Judgment - no matter its form, no matter its subject - is to bring the whole universe into harmony with His will, nature and glory. How optimistically did the holy prophets and apostles regard the coming of the Lord in judgment! Note the expectation in Isaiah's spirit as he announces: "Yea, in the way of THY JUDGMENTS, O Lord, have we waited for Thee...with my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when THY JUDGMENTS are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" **(Isa. 26:8-9).** Here Isaiah assures us that the day when God's judgments are in the earth will be a most glorious and desirable day, a day in which the inhabitants of the world W-I-L-L LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! How opposite to the idea entertained by many that when God's judgments come in the earth the inhabitants of the world will be sent into oblivion or eternal damnation. If the desire of your heart is anything like the desire of my heart, this is a blessed thought and a wonderful assurance: the inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! How my ransomed soul yearns to behold such a thing! Every time I scan the headlines of the morning paper I am seized with an intense longing that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Oft times as I watch the evening newscast my spirit is mightily moved within to intercede earnestly that the inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

As I drive across our great land; as I walk the streets of our cities and towns, observing the condition of those about: neighbors, friends, relatives, strangers, the young and the old, my spirit groans with unutterable supplications that the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! What a marvelous provision of our all-wise and loving Father that, to this very end, He has ORDAINED JUDGMENT to come forth in the earth. Bless His name!

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

There are some good people who have conceived of the idea that the God of this universe is a Person of ALL LOVE expressed only through GOODNESS and MERCY. They do not want to think of Him as One who would punish individuals and nations. They do not want to think of Him as a God of fiery indignation and judgment. They do not want to think of Him as One who is capable of administering a fiery retribution on those who trample under foot His holy laws and abuse His spirit of grace. To these people God is a one-sided Being - a God of pure love and goodness, but not a God of wrath. Now, just think for a moment: If He were such a Person, He would be a God without character. Our God is a God of holiness who hates sin. He is a God of justice, whose very nature demands that He must punish and correct sin.

It must be quite convenient, and soothing to one's conscience, to have a God who will always overlook sin, and who will never punish or correct the erring. But such a God would only exist in the figment of the imagination of a deluded soul. Such a God could never be a reality; and a God who is truly holy and altogether righteous would never eternally condone that which is so totally antagonistic to His nature and character. In order for God's righteous Kingdom to be fully manifest there must be judgment and retribution against all that is evil in God's universe.

We have met some brethren in this end-time move of the Spirit who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to its other aspects. The love of God has been presented in such a way that it is a weakness rather than a strength. It has been presented on the sunny side of the street with nothing on the other side ever mentioned. There is a "love" of God preached that has become such a one-sided, mushy, gooey, sugar-sweet thing that it contains nothing of the vital and vigorous concern of a Father for the best interests of a son - it would never love enough to chasten, scourge and correct that son! They have perverted love, making it sickening rather than stimulating, causing it to slop over on every side like a sentimental feeling rather than expressing an abiding concern for the object of love.

All those who make God's nature and activity only gentleness have taken one side of the truth and allowed it to get out of balance. Gentleness without austerity becomes soft and characterless. Mothers who dote on their children in this way often raise criminals. The kind of person who is all sweetness with no steel in him is not inspiring. He has the same effect as eating too many chocolates. And the offspring of this false doctrine is one of the most unlovely by-products of Christianity - the "spoiled brat" Christian. He is the man who thinks God has given him a privileged claim on life. Nothing bad should ever happen to him now, he should never be sick, never have to suffer or do without, he should have the shiniest car, the finest home, the best job, the most elegant clothes and every desire of his carnal heart with never a care in the world nor a cross to bear.

The kind of God we have revealed in the scriptures is a God of both love and judgment. He is not a nebulous nonentity of sentimentalism. He is a God of character. We thank God today that He is a God of love and mercy - and there would not be one of us alive today to breathe His fresh air, if it were not for His amazing love toward us. But those who do not want to believe that God will administer a sufficient amount of corrective judgment upon the disobedient and rebellious, should be reminded that God is exactly that kind of Being. In the very cradle of human history, we find God pronouncing a curse upon our first parents on account of their transgression. He even pronounced a curse upon the earth itself on account of their sin.

After a while sin abounded in the earth, in that antediluvian era, and we find God executing judgment on the whole human race in the dreadful flood which destroyed all flesh, except for Noah and his family who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Upon the wicked nation of Egypt, God sent not one but ten, of the most severe judgments of which only divine justice could conceive and execute. Pharaoh knew the hopelessness of effort when the Almighty is against one's schemes. God can take the wheels from the chariots of the mighty, and

give their proud power to the overwhelming waters. Upon the wicked, idolatrous nations of Canaan, God caused the judgment of war to fall, wiping out more than twenty great kingdoms in one sweeping purge. In like manner, God sent His judgment of destruction upon the haughty Babylonian empire; then upon the Medo-Persian empire; and later, the Grecian empire; and later still, upon that kingdom of iron, the mighty Roman Empire. Because of their sins they were destroyed.

Nor did God spare His chosen people, the Israelites. Because of their unbelief and idolatry, and witchcraft, and rebellion, and haughtiness of spirit, God sent upon them the judgment of the captivities. "It is a FEARFUL THING to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). Napoleon confessed in his humiliation and with his shattered army, "The Almighty is too strong for me." Nothing prospers if God's vote is against it. Evil may seem to pay for a day, but in the long run it is crushed and broken and bankrupt. If you believe history, you must believe that God is a God of judgment!

Let every man and woman of God who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship know that there is the DARK SIDE OF GOD'S LOVE! If a person refuses to surrender to the will and way of God the Great Physician will put His child on the operating table. He will use the surgeon's knife when He sees a tumor of self-will or a deadly virus of carnality sapping our spiritual lives, or when He sees the cancerous growth of sin. The two-edged sword CUTS DEEP. It is a sharp sword and leaves the soul wounded when it cuts, as Jacob was wounded while wrestling with the Lord. He rebukes and chastises whom He loves, and if necessary He will proceed to the most desperate actions - indeed, HE WILL KILL YOU TO SAVE YOU! (I Cor. 5:5).

There is going to be a unique and different unfolding of this One we call Jesus Christ! For He is about to go forth bringing His judgments to the whole earth, to the entire bestial order that the carnal mind of man has erected. In the book of Revelation we see the Christ riding forth on a white horse with the armies of the sons of God following in His path, "judging and making war." In Rev. 6:16 it is called "the WRATH of the LAMB." What an amazing divine paradox! The "Lamb" of God who "takes away the sin of the W-O-R-L-D" on the one hand, and the "wrath" of the Lamb on the other hand. The Lamb - precious embodiment of meekness, mildness, lowliness, gentleness, patience and sacrifice - coming upon the world for which He died in the hot fury of wrath, until men are found fleeing from the wrath of the Lamb!

Can this be the same Jesus? The very thought seems incongruous. The two ideas seem completely incompatible and hopelessly unreconcilable - and they are until we understand the PURPOSE of the Lamb's wrath. The Lamb does not suddenly undergo some fundamental change, laying aside His Lambhood, transformed like the proverbial werewolf into something altogether contradictory, now Himself an executioner instead of a Saviour. Nay! It is not the wrath of One who has transmuted His Lamb nature, for it IS the very W-R-A-T-H OF THE L-A-M-B! This wrath, therefore, is strikingly unique - not unappeasable rage or beastly savagery inflicting unrepairable destruction and damnation upon mankind - but corrective, redemptive judgment to break the rebellion of men, and RESTORE ALL INTO HIMSELF AGAIN. That, my beloved, is the Divine Vengeance of Love - the wrath of the Lamb!

This dual nature - the meekness and wrath of the Lamb - makes Him what He is, both the SAVIOUR and the JUDGE of the universe. In His redemptive activity His face is set against sin. Nothing can ever alter that. He will go to all lengths to turn men from evil, and restore them into harmony with the mind and heart of God. The sheer simplicity and sincerity of His passion is enough to melt and win the most sophisticated or the hardest of men. The wrath of the Lamb is beyond our understanding. But the seer of Patmos was shown the unveiling the wrath of the Lamb. I want to declare that God is going to come forth in these last days in a revelation of Jesus Christ with the judgments and wrath of God. This shaking and purging will affect the very Church of the living God. The hour is come when judgment must begin at the house of God, but the whole earth will reel violently under the overflow.

It is that STERN and TENDER hand of God which makes the Lion and the Lamb dwell together in the saints. As he walked the lonely shores of Patmos, the apostle John found himself borne away into the realm of the Spirit. In spirit he beheld a wonderful sealed book, which no man could open. The symbolism of this book, and the message it conveys, is too much for us to discuss in this writing. However, John was brought into a place where he could see the intention of God to write His nature in the lives of a people. As he gazed in

astonishment at the sealed book he was strangely moved to tears, and as he wept he heard one of the elders instruct him to dry his tears, because "the LION of the tribe of Judah" had "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" **(Rev. 5:5).** The beloved prophet stood transfixed with wonder as he looked, and, lo, "in the midst of the throne... stood a LAMB as it had been slain" **(Rev. 5:6).** Let us look at these two highly significant names - "the LION of the tribe of Judah" and "a LAMB as it had been slain." There are many beautiful names of our Lord, each given to teach us some facet of His Person, nature, and work. Through these divine titles our finite minds grasp, a little here and a little there, something of the Infinite One who works His strange and wonderful work within us. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" speaks to us of the kingly character of our Lord. This official title takes us back to the familiar prophecy recorded in Gen. 49:8-10. Jacob was giving his last blessing upon his sons, looking forward to the then future history of the tribes of Israel; and to Judah he said, "Judah is a LION'S WHELP ... the scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh (the Christ) come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Jesus is the Lion sprung from Judah. He overcame, in the trials of life, in the temptations in the wilderness, in the agonies of the garden, in the terrors of death, and in the bonds of the grave. He hath ascended, leading captivity captive. He is the Victor now over law, and sin, and death, and hell, and the whole kingdom of darkness. He who appears in the Revelation as a Lamb, is the same whom the elder had just described as a Lion. The two titles seem to be incompatible! What more opposite than the monarch of the forest, in strength and majesty, inflicting terror and death, and the Lamb, in its uncomplaining meekness, in the hands of the sacrificer. BUT THE TWO PICTURES DO NOT CONFLICT. They complement each other, and combine to bring out what could not be otherwise so well portrayed, and yet what the truth of the matter requires.

It is by His sacrifice as a Lamb slain, that He comes to the qualifications for the further office of a Lion, to assert and enforce His supremacy. "He was led as a LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" **(Isa. 53:7);** but He is yet to "send forth judgment unto victory" **(Mat. 12:20).** As the Lamb He hath "borne our sorrows and carried our iniquities," and stands in the midst of the throne with life and blessing and glory for all; but it is reserved for Him, as Judah's Lion, "in righteousness to judge and make war," and enforce the power of His sovereignty upon all that stands in resistance against it.

This is certainly a word for us today. God has purposed to reveal every aspect of His purpose through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. God the Father had a purpose in Christ even before redemption, way back in the beginning, spoken of as "the eonian purpose." So we are living this very day in a progression. God is marching on. He wants to reveal Himself and unfold this glorious One that we call the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the tremendous unveiling in the form of symbols and signs that came to the prophet on that far-away Isle, is today FULFILLED SPIRITUALLY within the people in whom the Christ dwells. Let all who read these lines know for a certainty that it is the glorious CHRIST WITHIN who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the slain Lamb that lives in the throne. You will never understand the mystery of the Lion and the Lamb until you understand that Christ is in heaven, and heaven is within us, for the Christ of glory eternally and gloriously lives out His life in His body, His people. It is within His elect that He must come forth as both the Lion and the Lamb in the midst of the throne, in the POWER of the Kingdom of God within. The Lion is the omnipotent power and the sovereign authority of God in manifestation, whereas the Lamb is the inward quickening and sustaining life of God.

There is a two-fold working of God in the lives of the Lord's apprehended ones. First, SELF must be dethroned, and in the accomplishment of this Christ is a Lion, clothed with power and majesty and terribleness. As the Lion He will crush every bone in the body of your self-life and tear away and consume every morsel of your flesh. But as the Lamb He wondrously imparts of HIS LIFE that you may live by the Spirit. The Lion is Christ warring, devouring, conquering all that pertains to the nature of old Adam. The Lamb is Christ AS OUR LIFE that we may appear with Him in glory. But further these same qualities and characteristics must be fulfilled in the elect as we are conformed into His image, made ONE IN HIM. The company of the sons of God shall bear both the image of the Lion and the Lamb. The kingly strength and regal authority of the Lion nature shall function through the sons in perfect unity with the gentle and ministerial character of the Lamb. These two streams of the divine nature, working together as one, in judgment and mercy, shall flow mightily and great, and will cause the very earth to shake, will move heaven and stir hell, and bring the triumph of God's Kingdom

among men. When the effective dealings of God through the Lion are BALANCED by the merciful and gracious administrations of the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb then lie down together in the Kingdom of God where there is peace and joy and righteousness for evermore. Thank God! He is preparing His LION AND LAMB COMPANY, those blessed ones made one with the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb on Mount Zion. This glorious ministry shall prevail in the earth and restore all back into God again.

Only with the correct understanding of the purpose and results of God's judgments can we enter into the rest of God in these turbulent times. Many are agitated in these dark days, their hearts failing them for fear in-looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. The apostle Paul saw believers who were distressed by the terrible afflictions, tribulations and wickedness in the world, and he invited us to join him in entering into the rest of God. "And to you who are troubled REST WITH US, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(II Thes. 1:7-10).** What a word! REST WITH US when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven... in flaming fire taking vengeance! Let us therefore enter into the rest of God and cease worrying about all the problems, injustices and tyrannies of men, for the Lord shall soon bring judgment on the whole order, removing it to make way for the expansion of His glorious and righteous Kingdom. The whole earth eagerly and with bated breath awaits the manifestation of the glory of the Lord. God is not going to bypass the mode of operation He has chosen of working through human instruments. He comes in judgment - and in the process He comes TO BE GLORIFIED I-N H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S AND TO BE ADMIRED I-N A-L-L T-H-E-M THAT BELIEVE. He shall come forth mightily through His people as the Lion in judgment to crush the carnal inventions of man, but He shall reign ultimately as the Lamb in blessing and peace and glory. Hallelujah!

THE JUDGMENT DAY

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 on-going 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 Rule in Israel, whose GOINGS FORTH have been of old, from everlasting."

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 unfolding of the purpose of God, 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, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man. The unfolding of end-time events and God's order for the ages to come, which are the main contents of the last book of the Bible, are called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The pages of the Old Testament are literally sprinkled with the accounts of the Lord's comings, beginning in Eden's blessed Garden and continuing through all generations of old. We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of the harlot church system's unscriptural terms "first coming" and "second coming," but 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 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 the scriptures of a visitation or manifestation of the Lord to judge or bless or accomplish some aspect of His plan and purpose among His people and in the earth. One would think, listening to the preachers rant and rave 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 dim and misty future. I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that this is a great error.

Rev. 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 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." "Candlestick" means lampstand. A lampstand is for holding up a light. Now what is the use of an assembly of believers? This is the purpose of the Lord's people - "YE are the light of the world." Christ tells these people that if they do not repent HE WILL COME TO THEM IN JUDGMENT, swift and effective judgment, and remove them from being an assembly of light-bearing children of God. It was a coming that might not take place! Jesus said, "I will come if you don't repent. What would prevent this COMING? Ephesian saints repenting! The Ephesian Church was an active and patient and doctrinally sound Church. But it lost its first love for Christ, the pure, virginal love for Him and for Him alone, mingling fleshly interests with their devotion to Christ. Sadly, the Ephesian Church never repented. So God allowed the light to go out. Later on the darkness of Mohammedism swept over the land where this Church had been located. There is no lampstand in Ephesus today, for there is nothing but the ruins of a once great city. In Ephesus there is no Church at all. The sight of the ancient temple is now a marsh, inhabited only by frogs. Ephesus, of course, in keeping with the pattern of the book of Revelation, was merely a TYPICAL CHURCH, and the Lord's solemn warning signal flashes out to this day to be heeded by every man and movement that is of the Ephesian spirit and character: "Repent, or I WILL COME unto thee quickly!" Is this, then, THE so-called "second coming" of Christ? Assuredly not! But it is His coming nonetheless. It is His on-going coming in judgment beginning at the house of God!

It is my deep and considered conviction that just as the "coming" of the Lord is progressive - past, present, and future - so is the unfolding of the "judgment day" past, present, and future. The question follows - When did the judgment day begin? Jesus answers the question in the plainest of language. "For the Father judgeth no man, but HATH COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son" **(Jn. 5:22).** "And Jesus said, For judgment I AM COME into this world" (Jn. 9:39). "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out" **(Jn. 12:31).**

It is high time that the saints look into some of the things they have been taught. We have been told some funny stories. The preachers in the church systems love to speak loudly and preach long about what they term "the FINAL judgment." But the term "FINAL judgment" never appears once within the pages of God's blessed Book! In fact, the word "final" never appears there at all. It is a word that has been added to judgment and taught to the people as a divine revelation of an event that is supposed to transpire somewhere out in the future. The Word of God does not teach that there is a "final judgment day" at some future time. The pen of inspiration has blazoned with unmistakable clarity the truth: "Be ye also patient; establish your hears: for the COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH. Grudge not against one another, brethren, lest ye be condemned (judged): behold (look!), THE JUDGE STANDETH BEFORE THE DOOR" **(James 5:8-9).** Oh yes, the Judge IS HERE! even now standing before the door of your mind and heart. Some of the modern translations bring out the truth so beautifully: "Be patient, ye also; establish your hearts, because THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD HATH DRAWN NIGH; do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves shall not be judged. Look! THE JUDGE IS ALREADY STANDING AT THE VERY DOOR" (Young's Literal & Amplified Bible).

The judgments of God are first and foremost not external, but internal; not future, but on-going. The Word of God, history, and our own experience shout aloud the truth that the soul's verdict is even now being written moment by moment, not by recording angels in heavenly books on some distant shore, but by each man himself on the fleshy tables of his own heart. This present life is to each of the consecrated ones his "Day of Judgment" - his day of trial, testing, proving, chastening, his day of being brought to perfection in Christ. The apostle Peter's words are in harmony with this: "Judgment must BEGIN at the house of God!" **(I Pet. 4:17).** Let all men know that the hour has come when judgment must begin at the house of God. JUDGMENT BEGINNING AT THE HOUSE OF GOD! This does not imply a sudden visitation of catastrophes, calamities, and troubles, but it means that there will be a concentration of divine instruction and discipline, as the Father purifies each individual, until He can gather to Himself a FIRSTFRUITS.

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is WITHIN YOU because the Christ is WITHIN YOU! It takes no extraordinary intelligence nor any exceptional spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment beyond the cemetery and believe what God's Word really says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast

out" **(Jn. 12:31).** Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan is being bound and chained in your life today or he will never be eradicated from this planet. NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! It is happening now and shall continue to happen in God's progressive unfolding of His judgments through the ages until that wonderful consummation when God becomes ALL-IN-ALL!

"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," saith the Lord **(Lk. 19:22).** On that far-away Patmos, in august symbol and awesome sign John the Revelator in spirit beheld "the dead, small and great stand before God; and the BOOKS were opened: and ANOTHER BOOK was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books" **(Rev. 20:12).** As you meditate upon this significant passage, dear one, allow the Spirit of God to reveal truth to your heart. We have entertained such carnal notions when we come to the book of Revelation. The Holy Spirit must teach us the very first principle of this book - the book of Revelation is a book of SYMBOLS - and no symbol is ever to be taken in its literal form. It is significantly wonderful that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not a four-legged lion, nor is the Lamb in the midst of the throne a four-legged lamb! The Lamb has seven horns - not literal horns, of course - for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. I am sure my readers understand the simple truth that the various beasts in the Revelation are not literal beasts, the cities are not literal cities, nor is the great harlot a singular physical woman who sells he body. One and all are but symbols and figures of deep spiritual realities, positive or negative, as the case may be. May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the books such as you may have in your library. If they were, the principle of the book's symbology would utterly fail. If the Lamb who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged Lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the book is not a two-covered book! And if that "book" is one of Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not logically follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols?

The first key to understanding the book of Revelation is the fact that the book is, in its entirety, a book of symbols. Any other approach will leave you hopelessly lost in a sea of confusion or muttering like a mad man about things utterly ridiculous. "I saw the dead, small and great," John declared. When Jesus came this world was spiritually a cemetery. ALL were dead! NONE were living "To be carnally minded IS DEATH," is the Spirit's own graphic and accurate definition of what it means to be dead **(Rom. 7:6).** "And you hath He quickened who WERE DEAD in trespasses and sins" **(Eph. 2:1).** To the spiritually dead the apostle commands, "Awake thou that steepest and arise from THE DEAD, and Christ shall give thee light" **(Eph. 5:14).** Let us with pure minds and an understanding quickened by the spirit of revelation from God consider these meaningful words, "And I saw the DEAD... stand before God." I saw the DEAD -- S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the "books" were opened.

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name.

Where is the record? and what are these "books" where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are nought but the BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE - THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN B-E-I-N-G! In the sight of God you, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind and character is everything that YOU ARE. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" **(Mat. 12:34).** When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page of your book - the book which you are - known and read by all men. And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in the law of your own life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual and soulish condition and state of being, and to deal with you

in judgment God has but to "stand you up" and prompt you to speak or act - and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life. At once your "book" will "open," each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book, WHICH YOU A-R-E. When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand upon you, my friend, and summons you to STAND before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what you are, for "the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with who we have to do" **(Heb. 4:12-13).**

Without doubt, God is the great "book opener." I shall never forget an occasion many years ago when the Lord pressed this message home to my heart. In those days I was accustomed to changing the oil in my car. It never ceased to amaze me how a simple ten-minute job could invariably turn into a disastrous hour-long ordeal! This certain day I had a few extra minutes, so determined to utilize them by changing the oil. I crawled under the car and proceeded to try to remove the oil plug. But it refused to cooperate. It simply would not budge. I pushed on the wrench with all my might; I grunted, groaned, and moaned as the minutes passed into an hour. The plug refused to yield and by this time was becoming damaged. Exasperation laid hold upon me. At that point I became exceedingly agitated and began to act very un-godlike. And just as soon as my rage reached its most explosive pitch, and what was manifested was all of ME and none of HIM, I saw two feet walking slowly by the car. The feet belonged to my neighbor. I knew that this neighbor was aware that I was a minister of the gospel! Suddenly I realized that my "book" had just been "opened" and my neighbor had been permitted to read a very ugly chapter! My heart smote me. Oh God, no! How ashamed I was that this man had read such a sordid scene! Humiliated and convicted (judged), at once I laid down the wrench and breathed the earnest prayer, "Father, FORGIVE ME! Help me somehow to get this oil plug out." No sooner were the words uttered than the Spirit whispered the words of wisdom, "Go to the other side of the car and pull instead of pushing." I crawled out from under the car and obeyed the prompting of the Spirit. In less than a minute the plug responded and the black oil flowed out. The message is clear - I could have drawn upon the Spirit earlier and prevented all the trouble - but God wanted to put His finger on something in my life! He opened my book and for me it was a "judgment day"!

The grand purpose for this "opening of our book" is so that all that is written therein may be exposed, revealed, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. The procedure is simple but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of death is caused to "stand" before God - brought directly into relation to the countenance and dealing of God. God arranges the circumstances, puts him into a situation, and his "book" is "opened" - the inner condition uncovered, the secrets and intents of the heart manifest in such a measure and expressed to such a degree that there need be no other record of his state appealed to. As it is written, "God shall bring EVERY WORK into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" **(Eccl. 12:14),** for, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" **(Rom. 2:16).** Ah - you will despair and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to destroy you - but to DELIVER YOU! God brings no man to judgment apart from the opening of his book. It is a divine law - God can never deliver you, nor any man, until the corruption in your heart has been drawn into outward manifestation, exposed, to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. When the inner nature erupts in some outward uncleanness, DO NOT DESPAIR! Thank God for exposing the deceitfulness and wickedness, cast yourself upon the tender mercies of the Lord, and yield yourself under His mighty hand that victory may be obtained in YOUR EARTH. We must never be discouraged when the motions of the flesh and the carnal mind overwhelm us, but neither should we become complacent about it, for God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never terminate His judgments until every man is conformed into the image of the glorious Son of God.

"And another book was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE" **(Rev. 20:12).** This must be opened too, for the book of life is the nature of the Lamb inscribed by the Spirit in the life of the New Creature. The book of life is called "the book of the life of the Lamb" **(Rev. 13:8).** If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is a biography or an autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you

always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there: where he was born, who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, who he married, how he became general of the army, and finally president of our great nation. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for the sons and daughters of the most High are the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb. It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the Lamb, the book of the Son of God is A PEOPLE. "Forasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit GIVETH LIFE" **(II Cor. 3:3, 6).** See also Heb. 10:8-11.

How pitiful that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful EPISTLE OF CHRIST, this glorious BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB. They have poured over the books of religion, the books of hypocricy, the books of fleshly wisdom, forms of godliness, dead doctrines, empty rituals and ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations. But precious few have ever even seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God opens His holy book of life! The book of life is that blessed company of the sons of God, elect, chosen and transformed into the image of Christ throughout the ages. This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour and the time is drawing wonderfully nigh for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a manifestation it shall be! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of of God's sons, to deliver creation at last from the bondage of corruption. (For more on The Lamb's Book of Life see link below.)

God has a MESSAGE for the world - the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God's BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared and finished it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 38
COMING IN JUDGMENT
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-EIGHT

CHRIST THE JUDGE
THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
THE MINISTRY OF JUDGMENT

The scriptures reveal that just as the "coming" of the Lord is progressive - past, present, and future - so is the "judgment day" progressive - past, present, and future. The question follows - When did the judgment day begin? Jesus Himself answers the question in the plainest of language. "For the Father judgeth no man, but HATH COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son" **(Jn. 5:22).** "And Jesus said, For judgment I AM COME into the world" **(Jn. 9:39).** **"**N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out" **(Jn. 12:31).**

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is WITHIN YOU because the Christ is WITHIN YOU! It requires no extraordinary intelligence or spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment out beyond the cemetery and believe what God's Word really says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out." Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan IS BEING bound and chained in your life, and in the experience of multitudes TODAY, or he will never be eradicated from this planet. NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! It has to begin somewhere and end somewhere. It is happening now, praise God, and the work shall advance unto that glorious consummation when God becomes ALL IN ALL! We will be better equipped to face up to our PRESENT WALK and respond to the Father's dealings in our lives TODAY when once and for all we lay hold upon the significant and incontrovertible truth that "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out."

The apostle Paul, speaking on Mars Hill, told the Athenians, "The time of this ignorance God winked at; but NOW commandeth all men everywhere to repent: BECAUSE He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" **(Acts 17:30-31).** This passage sets forth four wonderful truths: (1) God has appointed A DAY (2) In that DAY He shall JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness (3) He shall judge the world by that MAN whom He hath ordained (4) This ASSURANCE is given unto ALL MEN.

This judgment day is not a day of eternal doom, but a blessed day of ASSURANCE UNTO ALL MEN. But how is that assurance given unto all men? In just this way. God has appointed A DAY in which He will in righteousness judge the world by A MAN whom He has ordained for that purpose. That Man, of course, is His Son, and His Son died the death of all humanity, but this assurance lies in the fact that GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. The assurance given UNTO ALL is, that as God dealt with His own Son in death and resurrection, so He will deal with ALL HUMANITY.

The first question encountered in this passage concerns the word "day." God has appointed "a day" in which He will "judge." Is it a twenty-four hour day, a thousand-year day, or a dispensational day? This much is certain - a twenty-four hour day in which all the billions upon billions of souls from Adam on down, march in a line before a literal judgment bar misses entirely the true purpose and import of this judgment day. When does this "judgment day" come? Most Greek interlinears furnish this reading: "Because He set a day in which He is about to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom He appointed." Two thousand years ago Paul said God was about (Greek: mellei) to judge the world. This word MELLO, where found in the present, active, indicative tense signifies, not only INTENTION of purpose but also NEARNESS of action, meaning at the point of, or ready to do what has been stated. Had Paul meant to teach a judgment day two or three thousand years

in the future, he certainly would not have used MELLO in any tense, and especially in the present tense. Therefore the judgment of the world was ABOUT to take place in Paul's day, yea, had ALREADY COMMENCED according to the teaching of Jesus!

There is a wonderfully significant term used by Jesus on several occasions wherein He states, "The hour IS COMING, and NOW IS." This unique expression points to something that is coming, but which has already begun - it SHALL BE, and yet it ALREADY IS. The process has begun but remains to be carried forth to its consummation. Just before His crucifixion Jesus warned His disciples, "Behold, the hour COMETH, yea, is NOW COME, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone" **(Jn. 16:32).** The predicted scattering was even then beginning by events already set in motion as the hour of His death drew nigh, but would be fully manifest during the time that His body lay in the tomb, and continue throughout the forty days until His ascension. "The hour COMETH... and NOW IS." In the tenderest of pathoes Jesus informed the woman of Samaria, "The hour COMETH, and NOW IS, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" **(Jn. 4:23).** The great transition from a localized God who dwelt in a magnificent temple built by men's hands to the omnipresent God known and experienced by the Spirit in the living temples of our own bodies was wondrously near at hand even as these enlightening words poured from the anointed lips of Jesus. The change had, in fact, ALREADY BEGUN in the Person of Jesus Himself who knew the Father in a dimension none had ever known Him before. Thus could He say, "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS." For multitudes it was still to come, but for Jesus it was a present and glorious reality.

Later, the Lord proclaimed, "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and HATH GIVEN Him authority to EXECUTE JUDGMENT also, because He is the Son of man" **(Jn. 5:25-27).** In this beautiful passage, pregnant with truth and spiritual instruction, both the resurrection and the judgment are associated with the activity of the Son of God, and both are included in the divine order: "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS." Hear it! The resurrection is COMING...and NOW IS! The judgment is COMING... and NOW IS!

CHRIST THE JUDGE

Judgment does not mean punishment alone. Punishment may be an element in judgment. Judgment is discrimination, decision; the finding of a verdict, and the passing of a sentence. Judgment is translated in the Old Testament most often from the Hebrew word MISHPAT. MISHPAT means simply "a verdict" which may be either FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE. The only judgment most people understand is the negative aspect of judgment, the UNFAVORABLE VERDICT, followed by swift and severe punishment. It should require no more than a moment's reflection, however, to enable anyone to see that the very same judge who sentences one man to pay a fine, another to die in the electric chair, may suspend the sentence of a third man and declare yet a fourth man "not guilty" - acquitted! It is plain that a great many different "judgments" or "verdicts" may come from this one judge. Thus, the work of the judge is not merely to condemn and mete out sentences, but to weigh all the facts and take all the circumstances into consideration in each case and render a just verdict, favorable or unfavorable, as the evidence may dictate.

It was Sunday, October 5, 1986. There was a football game being played in St. Louis. St Louis was playing the New York Giants. St. Louis was behind with only 2 minutes and 20 seconds left to go in the game. One touchdown could tie the game. Suddenly there was a pass into the end zone. It was so close. Was it a score or wasn't it? If you watched the game on television or read about it in the paper, you heard that the officials went into the instant replay to help make the call. For five minutes the game was held up while they looked at instant replays from every angle until they finally waved to one referee on the field, a man named Chuck Hammerling. They said, "You call it." He called it: "Incomplete!" St. Louis lost. How would YOU like to be that referee? Chuck Hammerling went to the shower room, packed his bags, and sneaked out of the stadium, hoping nobody would see him. He got to the airport, boarded the plane, slid into his seat and looked around to be sure that he was safe. When he looked across the isle he said to the man sitting there, "Did you hear the game today?" "No," the man replied. He said, "Are you a St. Louis fan by any chance?" "Not particularly." "Good," he sighed, "I finally feel safe."

That is a mere human reaction to the awesome sense of responsibility in rendering a decision, a verdict. But speaking of the judgment of the Lord, hear the note of triumph and exultation when David speaks by the inspiration that the Spirit gives, saying:

"Let the heavens be glad and LET THE EARTH REJOICE;
And let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth!
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof;
let the fields REJOICE, and all that are therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood (people of the earth)
SING ALOUD AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD,
Because HE COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH.
O give THANKS unto the Lord, for HE IS GOOD;
For His mercy endureth forever!" **(I Chron. 16:31-34)**

Why will the trees of the forest (people of the nations) "sing out" when is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH? One would think they might weep, or shrink in consternation at the thoughts of His judgments, but why all the SINGING? Why the REJOICING? Because God's judgments are an expression of HIS GOODNESS and everlasting MERCY, designed to teach the inhabitants of the world RIGHTEOUSNESS! The earth shall rejoice because this means that we have reached the turning point in our degeneration, and have come to the times of regeneration. This is true even now for the elect, but must ultimately reach unto the whole world and the entire creation. His presence, while it speaks of His utmost holiness, and will not tolerate the continuance of evil, brings the changes needed for harmony and righteousness. And when the divine disciplines have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory. Hallelujah!

My soul rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the knowledge that my Judge is Christ Jesus my Saviour and Lord. That Christ should be appointed Judge is most proper and fitting. Our American law ordains that a man shall be tried by his peers, and there is justice in that statute. Now the Lord God is the Judge of men, but at the same time it is in the person of Jesus Christ. "God shall judge the secrets of men BY JESUS CHRIST" **(Rom. 2:16).** JESUS CHRIST! What a name for a Judge! The SAVIOUR-ANOINTED: that is the meaning of the name. Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour, is the JUDGE! Someone has pointed out that we have a "hanging Judge" - hanged on a tree on Golgotha's hill! Men shall be judged by a Man. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son... and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" **(Jn. 5:22, 27).** Why, "because He is the SON OF MAN?" Because He has come into the scene where man is a sinner, under judgment and curse, and He, who has come into this scene became a man.

I think that God has chosen Christ, the MAN Christ Jesus, that there may never be an objection raised concerning that judgment. Men shall not be able to say - We were judged by a superior Being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations, and therefore he judged us harshly, and without a compassionate consideration of our condition. No, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He is our brother, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity, and therefore understands what is in men. He has shown Himself to be skillfull in dissecting motives and revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart. It will be the loving Christ, whose tears, and bloody sweat, and gaping wounds, attest His brotherhood with mankind; and it will be clear to all intelligences that however dread His sentences, He could not be unmerciful. God shall judge us by Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour, that the judgment may be judgment UNTO VICTORY!

The thoughts of many hearts were revealed by Christ on earth, and it is that same wise and compassionate Christ who is the Judge today. When the self-appointed judges of wrong brought to Christ a woman taken in sin to have Him pronounce His verdict and sentence upon her, He appeared to be preoccupied. Then in one brief moment of time He lifted the whole subject out of the realm of controversy, saying, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." A strange hush fell upon the crowd. Self-accusings began to make themselves felt within, forces long dormant were awakened to work, voices long silent began to shout, and "being convicted in their own conscience they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest." Ah, the judgment-seat was already set and the striking feature is that men pronounced judgment upon themselves and accepted it

without murmur or protest. But to the frightened woman cowering at His feet, He said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?" She answered, "No one, Lord!" And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. Go your way, and from now on sin no more." Glory! What a Saviour! Hallelujah! What a Judge!

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Perhaps in spirit we have stood with our adorable Christ as in humiliation He emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant, descending into the depths of our earthiness, tasting the bitter dregs of the darkness and death of this dread realm for every man; but have we stood with Him in His exaltation, where He sits far above principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the ages to come, HIGHLY EXALTED and given a name that is above every name, 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 He is Lord to the glory of God the Father?

What a difference between the babe of Bethlehem's manger, the child of Nazareth, hunted by Herod, carried down by night into Egypt for shelter, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, before whom every knee shall bow! What a difference between the weary man full of sorrows, and He that is girt with glory, sitting on a throne encircled with a rainbow! From the derision of men who cast Him out, and preferred a robber and a murderer to the Saviour, to the throne of universal judgment - what an ascent! I am unable to convey to you my own heart's sense of the contrast between the "despised and rejected of men," and the universally-acknowledged Lord, before whom kings and presidents and prime ministers and pontiffs must bow into the dust. He who was judged at Pilate's bar, shall summon all to His bar. What a change from the shame and spitting, from the nails and the wounds, the mockery and the thirst, and the dying anguish, to the glory of One whose eyes are as a flame of fire, His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in an oven, and out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword! Oh, how we ought to bow before Him now as He reveals Himself in His righteous judgment and in His fathomless grace!

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). That is very decisive, if there were no other text. We must ALL APPEAR. The Greek word which is translated "judgment seat" is BEMA, and means simply a step or that which the foot is set on, indicating a raised platform reached by steps and occupied by some person in authority. The same word is translated "throne" in Acts 12:21, and it can mean award-seat, as much as judgment-seat. It would apply as fully to the seat occupied by a judge in a civil case as to that of a judge trying a case of life or death. It bespeaks not of the TYPE of judgment, but of the FACT OF AUTHORITY.

When we come to this thought of the judgment seat of Christ we approach a subject upon which there has been a fathomless sea of misunderstanding and a world of carnal conjecture. The idea generally entertained is of Christ coming to earth, seated upon a dazzling throne, and that He will summon everyone in rank and file before Him, to be judged. Adam would stand there, with Mother Eve, and look in wonder upon his offspring. It would be the first time in which he has ever had the opportunity of seeing all his children together. What a sight he would then behold - far stretching, covering all the globe which they inhabit, enough not only to people all earth's plains, but crown her hill-tops, and cover even the ways of the sea, so numberless must the human race be if all the generations that have ever lived, or shall ever live, shall at once "appear" before the judgment seat of Christ! Every one from before the Flood, from the days of the Patriarchs, from the times of Moses, and David, and from the Babylonian kingdom, all the legions of Assyria, all the hosts of Persia, all the multitudes of the Greeks, all the vast armies and legions of Rome, the barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, the free, men of every color and of every tongue - what a vast assemblage would be mustered, what a spectacle would be held! I do not hesitate to say that though good and holy men have conceived the foregoing picture, it is, nonetheless, entirely out of harmony with the whole portrait of judgment. This distorted picture arises from a too-literal interpretation of a few obscure verses of scripture, which were supplied merely as SYMBOLS, to be understood by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" **(Rom. 14:10).** These are deeply solemn words, which our hearts would do well to ponder. But no less important than what the passage DOES say, is what it does

NOT say. It does NOT state that we shall all appear or stand before the judgment seat of Christ AT THE END OF THIS AGE, or AT THE END OF THE WORLD, or IN SOME FAR-OFF HEAVEN SOMEWHERE, or UP ON A CLOUD, or IN SOME FAR DISTANT AGE. The divine record states in emphatic terms that we MUST all APPEAR, but it does not dictate that we must all appear at once, or when or where we shall appear. The simple fact that we must appear has been embellished by the religious systems with a liberal sprinkling of carnal reasoning and unscriptural speculation!

Having established that "the Father HATH (already) COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son**"** **(Jn. 5:22),** and "the time IS COME that judgment must begin at the house of God" **(I Pet. 4:17),** and "ye ARE COME unto ... God the Judge of all" **(Heb. 12:22-23),** and "the Judge STANDETH before the door" **(James 5:9),** and "N-O-W is the judgment of this world" **(Jn. 12:31),** can we not see by these words of inspiration that the Christ truly CAME as Judge, and continued to come; He now COMES as Judge, and continues to come; and He YET SHALL COME as Judge, and shall continue to come until the last verdict is handed down, the final sentence carried out; there shall surely be those severe prunings, crushings, shattering, melting; but when they have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory for all mankind, praise His wonderful name! The judgment seat of Christ does not refer exclusively to any ONE coming moment or event, nor to ANY specified future time period in which Christ acts as Judge. It is a comprehensive term, embracing within its range the whole judicial dealing of Christ our Lord with men and nations until, by His redemptive judgments, "He will destroy in this mountain (the Kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over ALL PEOPLE, and the veil (of spiritual blindness) that is spread over ALL NATIONS. And He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off ALL FACES. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, and we will be glad and rejoice in HIS SALVATION" **(Isa. 25:7-9).**

"For we must all appear before the- judgment seat of Christ; that every one may RECEIVE the things done in his body" **(II Cor- 5:10).** The words of Paul in this passage demonstrate vividly the truth we have been dealing with heretofore. I would draw your attention to the word "receive." Let us see just what this word "receive" means according to Strong's Concordance. It means "TO TEND or to take care of; to provide; by implication to carry off." This should make it plain to us that the things we are doing in the body, the deeds performed in the body, are before the judgment seat of Christ, and are constantly NOW being judged and every thought is being brought into captivity to the Christ. Everything is being tended to, provided for, and all that need be removed is being carried off. This judgment is not inflicted from without, but from within. God, the wisest of all Fathers, has so ordered the universe that somehow, sometime, sin brings its own punishment, and it shall be the experience of the whole of mankind, as it was of Israel, and as it has been of the saints, that "thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and by backslidings shall reprove thee" (Jer. 2:19). In our own bodies we daily sow and reap (Gal. 6:7), actively receiving blessing or cursing according to the deeds performed. Who can deny that it is THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, who, moment by moment renders the verdict, setting in motion the precise circumstances, events, and dealings which constitute the reaping, the receiving in our body according to the deeds done! No, we are not awaiting some future specified day of judgment, but are keenly aware that we are constantly N-O-W being judged, receiving either the increase of HIS LIFE WITHIN, or His corrections - in our body.

What a judgment seat! What a Judge! What reality! Oh! what an unspeakably glorious and awe-inspiring scene John the beloved beheld as from his vantage point in the spirit he saw "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" **(Rev. 20:11).** Who is it that sits there? It is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ. The One who fills that throne is without doubt the Son of man. And how does He sit there? In and through His body, the saints, unto whom judgment is given (Dan. 7:22). A throne is of authority. The throne is called "great" because of its vast magnitude, its awful sovereignty, and the majesty of the One who fills it. It is called "white" because of the absolute purity and righteousness of its Judge and His judgment. So we see a seat of authority of great majesty, power and purity. Observe, the heaven, and the earth, fly from the face of Him that sits upon the throne!

"From His face (intelligence, countenance, illumination) the earth and the heaven fled away." Consider the scene! In its symbology the "earth" is that earth WHICH WE ARE, the carnal, earthly nature of old Adam. "The first man is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY" **(I Cor. 15:47).** "As we have borne the image of the EARTHY, we shall

also bear the image of the HEAVENLY" **(I Cor. 15:49).** "Heaven" means height, eminence, elevation, exaltation. God dwells in heaven, the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. When you touch God by the spirit, you touch heaven. When you experience God in the spirit, you experience heaven. When you know God in the spirit, you know heaven. When God is revealed to you by the spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things. There are many heavens, for there are many realms, dimensions, and levels on which God can be touched, experienced and known in the spiritual world. Most saints have passed through several heavens in their UPWARD WALK of progressive spiritual experience. But Jesus is greater than them all, for He "ascended up FAR ABOVE A-L-L H-E-A-VE-N-S" **(Eph. 4:10).** God is so great in His fullness that even "the heaven OF heavens (the super-heaven containing all other heavens) CANNOT CONTAIN HIM!" **(I Kings 8:27).**

It is wonderful to know God in His heavens. Each heaven bespeaks of a sphere of life, a plane of relationship, a level of experience in God by the spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. But, thank God! there is a realm of HIS FULLNESS which lies ABOVE and BEYOND all heavens! When the Christ appears on His great white throne of judgment its effulgence reveals the darkness of the carnal mind, uncovers the deceitfulness of the wicked heart, exposing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God. For us to become the sons of God, the image of God, this thing - SELF, carnality, and and all that pertains to the earthly nature - must be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, removed, taken out of the way. Blessed be God! Before the face of Him whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength, none of the things of the flesh can stand, so they flee away, and no place is found for them! Our "earth" flees away from before the face of HIM who sits upon the throne!

Before the face of Him who sits upon the throne in the higher-than-all-heavens, the limitations of our present "in part" knowledge of the Lord, every heaven of spiritual experience which is less than HIS FULLNESS, stand revealed as falling short of the image and glory of God. Before the majesty of His white throne, in the searching illumination of His eyes of flaming fire, none of our spiritual immaturity can stand, and ALL our HEAVENS flee away, and no place is found for them! In the sovereignty and fullness of His throne there are no more "heavens," no more companies, groups, levels of servants, friends, bride, sons, prophets, apostles, pastors, kings or priests; no more those who know Him as Saviour, while others know Him as Healer, others as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and still others who follow on to know Him in deeper measures. High above the earth realm, and far beyond all the heavens of spiritual experience sits the GREAT WHITE THRONE - and the invitation is extended: "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). But you will never know Him in the power and glory of His throneship, my beloved, until YOUR EARTH and all YOUR HEAVENS have flown away, and you have put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature, to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. Can you not see that this process is progressively going on all the time, as we are changed from glory to glory, moving inexorably toward the final goal - GOD ALL IN ALL!

THE MINISTRY OF JUDGMENT

Up to this point we have emphasized the office of Christ Jesus our Lord as universal Judge and the effectual working of His judgments in our lives. The scriptures reveal, however, that the Church is the body of Christ, and God's blessed Christ must include both the Head and the body. All true saints must be aware of this sacred secret - that the body is the body of ALL THAT THE HEAD IS. If Christ the Head is Saviour, then the body of Christ the Head is the body of the Saviour - a body of SAVIOURS. If Christ the Head is King, it follows that the body of the Head is the body of the King - a body of KINGS. And armed with the knowledge that Christ the Head is the great and universal Judge, it should be perfectly clear that the body of the Head is the body of the Judge a body of JUDGES! The purpose in the firstfruits being judged is that they in turn may be qualified to judge. The judgments of God shall be executed upon the human family and the ages to come by this glorious CORPORATE CHRIST, Jesus Christ the Head and all the sons and daughters of God, His body, the completeness of HIS THRONE which shall smite the dark kingdoms of this world, and the saints shall take the kingdom and reign with Christ in power, authority and glory.

God is preparing a mighty COMPANY OF JUDGES whose responsibility it shall be to JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness! Daniel 7:21-22 sheds much light upon this subject. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with

the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Again, "And he that overcometh... to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" **(Rev. 2:26-27).** "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM" **(Rev. 20:4, 6).** The apostle Paul adds, "Do ye not know that the SAINTS shall JUDGE THE WORLD? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that WE shall JUDGE ANGELS, how much more things that pertain to this life? **(I Cor. 6:2-3).** Jesus spoke of this same beautiful truth when He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in the kingdom, and SIT ON THRONES JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL" **(Lk. 22:28-30).**

Most of the Christian world is waiting for Jesus to come at "any minute" and bring judgment upon the earth. In the greater light of present truth we now understand that the judgment which HE IS, and which is now wrought out in His saints, the firstfruits of His redemption, will ultimately be manifested to creation in and through the sons of God. The judges for this day are now in preparation for their awesome task. Yes, YOU shall judge the world, saints...but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the coming age is JUDGMENT. This work however, hall be swiftly followed by the second ministry of MERCY and RESTORATION, for God's judgments are ever unto correction and redemption.

All who judge must be possessed of that same anointing of the SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD that rests upon the firstborn Son of God. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" **(Isa. 11:2).** "These things saith He that HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD" **(Rev. 3:1).** Thank God! The very thought of a universe governed by the sons of God who are filled with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of the Lord leaves me absolutely breathless! Words become totally inadequate and human ability to articulate the wonder of such a thing fails completely. Our faltering minds cannot fully appreciate nor comprehend the wonder of Enoch's prophecy: "Behold, the LORD COMETH with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" **(Jude 14-15).**

There are several points of interest in the passage just quoted. "Behold, the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS." The original would be better expressed, "The Lord cometh I-N HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF." He comes in that people who are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, life of His life, mind of His mind; the extension and projection of all HE IS - HIMSELF CREATURES. "To EXECUTE judgment upon all." To execute means to carry out, to fulfill, to PURSUE TO THE END. Holy myriads of Himself shall carry out judgment upon ALL, and pursue it unto the end, until the full fruit and effect of that judgment shall be manifested IN ALL. "And to CONVINCE all that are ungodly..." To convince means to CONVICT, REPROVE, and FULLY PERSUADE all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. This is conviction, my friend, HOLY GHOST CONVICTION that must be ministered into the minds and hearts of men before they will submit so that the cleansing process can begin in them. Hallelujah! What a judgment! Thus the Lord comes in His holy ones to bring an ending to the long reign of sin, darkness, and death, praise His wonderful name.

Day by day we are learning the ways of the Lord. Only God can teach us these things and equip us to judge with righteous judgment. It would be well here for us to take particular notice of a divine principle set forth by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. All who earnestly desire to acquire the wisdom and attributes of THE JUDGE and possess the nature which dispenses RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT should give prayerful consideration to these words. "For I know nothing by myself...but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come..." **I Cor. 4:4-5).** Judge nothing before the time, UNTIL THE LORD COME. When is that? In the blindness of church tradition someone's mind will immediately jump to the conclusion that Paul is talking about waiting to judge until the so-called "second coming of Christ." But that is in no way the meaning here. "Judge nothing before the time...until the Lord come, who (when He comes) both

will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God."

Judge nothing... until the Lord come - to judge. In any situation, circumstance, problem or trouble where judgment is required, it means just this - MAKE NO JUDGMENT APART FROM THE MIND OF THE LORD! Judge not, precious friend of mine, by the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear. Judge not by the outward appearance, by carnal reasoning, natural understanding, fleshly wisdom, nor by religious tradition. WAIT UPON THE LORD. Render no judgment about anything until the Lord draws nigh with that precious wisdom which is from above, until the light of His presence brings divine understanding, until the glorious mind of Christ gives spiritual discernment. Judge nothing until the Lord appears in the matter, disclosing the counsels of HIS MIND, making bright the pathway before your feet. The wisdom which is from above teaches us that this coming of the Lord in judgment is a PRESENT ACTION, NOT a future event. When the Lord comes He "brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of the hearts," that there may be righteous judgment. Jesus is the true Light that has come into the world and when this penetrating Light enters into our hearts, we have understanding.

No man has a right to judge anything until this Light has shined into his intellect. Otherwise he is judging in darkness and will do just as Paul says in **Rom. 2:1,** "For wherein thou judgest another, THOU CONDEMNEST THYSELF; for thou that judgest doest the same things." No one has any right to judge anyone else when he is himself in darkness and doing the same things he is judging in another. But when the entrance of the Lord occurs, then our whole being will be filled with light and we can know surely that the first one judged will be O-U-R-S-E-L-V-E-S. The faults and failings of others will fade as the darkness before the shining orb of the morning sun when God begins to reveal ourselves to us!

As a brother has shared, there are times of divine visitation when the Lord deals with you. Don't try to bring things to judgment before the Lord comes. The same thing is true for other people's lives. Don't try to bring them under conviction and get them into a dealing before the proper time. There is a time the Lord has reserved for every one of us. He will walk up and down the whole territory, of our being. He will cover us thoroughly from head to toe, in every area of our lives. He is going to convert this whole "earth" of mine so that it may reflect the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! We are always in a hurry. God is never in a hurry. Be sure to give Him enough time. He is going to deal with you. He is going to deal with your brother and sister. He is going to have a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, thoroughly purged, whose iniquity has been taken away. He is going to have a vast family of sons in the express image of the Father in heaven. He is going to have a world wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the transformation of the world in that day will be the marvel and joy of the inhabitants of earth. He is going to have a universe pulsating with the beauty, harmony, life and glory of God, for His grace shall freely reach out and touch everything in all the unbounded heavens with the eternal life of Him from whom all things come, by whom all things exist, and in whom all things end. As George Hawtin has so eloquently written, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. There shall be no end to its increase in this age, no end to its increase in the age to come, and no end to its increase in the ages of the ages. His increase shall reach far beyond the measure of man's mind until planet after planet, star after star, galaxy after galaxy throughout the vast rock strewn sidereal shall taste the increase of His government and the glory of His restoration and no inharmonious chord is heard in all God's universe forever, but order, interdependence and unity, where CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL" -end quote.

There is a PURPOSE IN JUDGMENT, and it is always a purpose of love. There is a deep, clear purpose in everything that God does. And His love for us, deep and tender, is the fire burning under that purpose. The character of God must be kept ever in mind. The leading trait in His character is expressed, not by the word "purity," nor "righteousness," nor "justice," but by the word "love." Though if we knew the real meaning of "love" we would find it includes these others, and more. The purpose in judgment is two-fold. It is a purpose TOWARD SIN, to get rid of it. And God's attitude here is relentlessly uncompromising. No exceptions are ever noted. And there is a purpose TOWARD MEN. Now regarding the purpose toward men, it is disciplinary. The whole thought is to change the man. It is love working, love for the man. The purpose is the same as the surgeon's. He thrusts in his keen-edged blade, not to destroy life, but to save it. He is driving hard against the disease. The knife that cuts and hurts is held steady by the kindly purpose in the heart.

Judgment only terrifies those who don't understand the process. One has seen the effect of tropical storms on people when first going to reside in a land where they prevailed. Having been brought up in a land where lightning and thunder were rarely seen, they found the effects Of a typically tropical storm to be TERRIFYING. But one is astonished to find that the inhabitants of the country in question looked forward to those electric storms with unmingled satisfaction. They forgot the elements of terror in the scene, in remembering the glorious blessings that the storm would bring. They saw the welcome rains falling from heaven and putting an end to their time of suffering and privation. The terrible period of drought and famine, dealing out death on every hand, would give place to the period of green and plenty. And truly their hopes were well founded, for in a few days, death seemed swallowed up of life; there was joy with plenty on every hand. The storm, therefore, had two different effects upon two classes of people. To those unaccustomed to the scene, and unmindful of the blessings at hand, it was terrifying; they saw only the electric storm with its menacing bolts of lightning and frightening peals of thunder. The more experienced inhabitants, however, rejoiced at the thunder and lightning because these heralded the blessings beyond.

So it is in regard to the coming of Christ in judgment. Strangers to the grace of God and His ways are alarmed by the portents of that Day. But those who have drawn close enough to the heavenly Father to know His mind and heart understand that all His judgments are corrective and redemptive, and therefore altogether desirable, beneficial and glorious! The ecstatic exclamation of joy and gladness at the prospects of the coming of God's righteous judgment in to the earth is found all through the psalms and the prophets. If you are truly destined to stand among the company of the sons of God, the long-awaited liberators of creation, you will most assuredly thrill at the heavenly vibration of David's inspired song: "Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the WORLD ALSO shall be established that it shall not be moved: HE SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY. Let the heavens rejoice, and LET THE EARTH BE GLAD; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood REJOICE before the Lord: for HE COMETH, for He C-O-M-E-T-H TO JUDGE THE EARTH: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" **(Ps. 96:10-13).**

"Make a JOYFUL noise unto the Lord, ALL THE EARTH: make a loud noise, and REJOICE, and SING PRAISE. Let the sea (raging, surging multitudes of humanity) roar, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods (armies) CLAP THEIR HANDS, let the hills (small kingdoms, third world nations) BE JOYFUL TOGETHER before the Lord; for HE COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" **(Ps. 98:4,8-9).**

There is a scene in Revelation 8 - so awesome, so incredible, so glorious! "And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God our of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up" **(Rev. 8:1-7).**

In this dramatic scene all heaven is hushed! For nearly half an hour the elders kneel in silent wonder. The living creatures, the mighty cherubim, the burning seraphim, all are hushed and speechless. The saints before the throne are silent. Angelic choirs put away their hymnals; the harps have been put aside; and there is not a sound in heaven. All is hushed! Why? It is because the SEVENTH SEAL has been broken and they have seen the judgments written on the seventh document. Seven angels with seven trumpets stand ready to inflict fiery judgments on the earth-realm. THIS INDESCRIBABLE SILENCE HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PRAYER! It has to do with INCENSE! It has to do with WORSHIP! It has to do with the holy FIRE upon the altar! The time has come for God to bring to His golden altar EVERY PRAYER of His people, all the PRAISE of His saints, and the WORSHIP of His elect. The judgment is set. All is brought to His judgment bar. He is going to put His consuming fire under the incense of OUR WORSHIP to test the aroma! Will it be a sweet smelling savor - or a

stench in His nostrils? Will it be the stench of flesh, the foul smell of soulish zeal and emotion, the offensive odor of carnal religious exercise - or will it be the sweet savor of a broken and contrite spirit, the fragrance of a yielded and obedient heart, the pleasing scent of a worship that is in spirit and in truth?

Then John saw the angel take the censer and fill it with FIRE from the altar of God and cast it into the EARTH - into that earth which WE ARE, into the lives and hearts of God's people; and "there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings and an earthquake" - great commotions, intense dealings, marvelous unveilings, powerful words, deep revelations, fearful manifestations, fiery processings and judgment of such intensity and severity that our soulish nature reels to and fro, shaking to its very foundations. Trumpet after trumpet, judgment is poured out from GOD'S ALTAR into the spiritual lives of the elect until they are so thoroughly purged, purified, refined and transformed that when we arrive at the final drama, the closing scene, the grand finale of the pageant of the SEVENTH TRUMPET we find "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the TEMPLE OF GOD was opened in HEAVEN, and there was seen in His temple (the body of Christ) the ARK OF HIS TESTAMENT (the glory, nature, authority and incorruptible life of God). And there appeared a great wonder in heaven (the realm of the spirit); a WOMAN (the true Church, the bride) clothed with the SUN (the illumination and glory of Christ), and the MOON (cold, reflective light of external religion) under her feet, and upon her head a CROWN OF TWELVE STARS (authority of divine government): and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a MANCHILD (the manifested sons of God), who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up UNTO GOD (into the highest heaven, the realm of His fullness), and to HIS THRONE (governmental authority)" **(Rev. 11:15,19; 12:1-2,5).**

Talk about judgment unto victory! This is the judgmental process of God which MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD! God shall bring forth a "firstfruit company" who are UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD. These are they that have repented of sin and every work of the flesh. With Christ, their victorious Head, they have died to all the desires of the flesh and mind. They are a people who have fixed all their hopes in Christ the Lord. Their hearts cry not for the tinsel of the world, nor yet for the trinkets of popular religion, but their prayer ascends to God day and night, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Purged of all pride, self-interest and filthiness of flesh and spirit, and of all soulish works and worship, these shall be accounted worthy to reign with Christ as kings and judges from the spirit realm, and those who rule from henceforth are a royal priesthood like unto their Lord, after the order of Melchizedek.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 39
COMING IN A SHOUT
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART THIRTY-NINE

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven WITH A SHOUT, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" **(I Thes. 4:16-17).**

I believe every word that the beautiful passage above says about the coming of our dear Lord. I believe what it says, not the fables men have built around it. I don't believe what the apostate churches say about it, nor what the tradition-bound preachers say about it; but I certainly believe what the Holy Spirit of truth says about it!

This famous, and often misunderstood scripture is one of great pondering. Because this is from Paul, the idea prevails that it must be a simple statement of literal facts, easy to understand with the natural mind, and altogether physical and natural; therefore many have come to expect a terrible vibration of the atmosphere from immortal lungs, an actual blast from a silver or perhaps golden trumpet, accompanied with a voice from the throat of Michael the archangel, that will resound throughout the whole earth, and will waken the dead in the cemeteries. But according to this same Paul, in Rom. 8:11, it is the "Spirit of God that DWELLS IN YOU" which will quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies, not the blast of a trumpet.

While the King James Version states that the Lord shall descend from heaven "with a shout," that is not quite the way it appears in the original. The Greek uses the preposition EN meaning "in," and Young's Literal Translation renders it correctly, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" a shout, but "in" a shout. If, therefore, we can recognize the shout, we should accept that as an indication, not that the Lord will come soon, but rather that He has come and is now present, appearing in power and glory IN THE SHOUT.

The word "shout" gives us a clarification, helping our understanding. It comes from the Greek word KELEUMA which means "a cry of incitement, an order, a command." Conybeare translates it, "A SHOUT OF WAR," and in his footnote explains, "this word denotes the shout used in battle." Thus we could rightly term this A WAR CRY. So the Lord descends from heaven in a shout, and this "shout" has a very special character. It is the word of a general ordering his army, the word of a commander to his own troop, of an admiral to his own seamen. It is the summons to His own, the rousing word of command, not with apprehension of fear, but A JOYFUL SOUND, a battle cry filled with courage and victory!

The Lord descends from heaven in a shout, with a summons designed only for the ears and the hearts of His elect. Not one uncircumcised ear shall hear - not one uncircumcised heart will be moved by that heavenly voice. "Shout" is a term implying the relationship that exists between the Lord and His chosen ones, like that of soldiers summoned by their general. If nothing more were meant than the loud, deafening roar of His voice for all the world to hear, then this particular Greek word, KELEUMA, would not be used. This word has nothing to do with the tone or pitch of the voice, but conveys the thought of a shout from one who COMMANDS to those who are COMMANDED; and, therefore, it is mere ignorance to suppose that the Lord comes with a LOUD SHOUT so that all the world can HEAR HIM!

If you ask, "How can some hear and not others," the answer is simple. Modern broadcasting has made it possible for sounds to be heard by some and not by others. You know the reason, of course. Some are tuned in to the right wave length, whereas others are tuned in to other wave lengths. Thus it is with the coming of the Lord! Amid the myriads of voices clamoring for attention in the world today, domineering and demanding, all trying to prescribe the course we should follow, how we rejoice that we can turn the "dial" and "tune out" all

such, and on the frequency of the deep inner calm of our own spirit discover the peace, joy, knowledge, wisdom and power that come from listening to the Voice of our Shepherd. Gladly do we turn away from the confusion of the religious systems of our day, with their multiplied creeds and contradictions, that we might be quickened and transformed by the power of HIS LIVING WORD WITHIN. How quickly the pressures of life, the feverish passions of the carnal mind, along with all the confused directions of natural-minded men, are all hushed and cleansed by the presence of the Lord IN HIS WORD to us. The clamoring voices of this bestial system mean nothing when HIS TRUTH is made LIFE WITHIN by the quickening of His Spirit.

"I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search" **(Ps. 77:6).** "And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they KNOW HIS VOICE. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they KNOW NOT THE VOICE of strangers. My sheep HEAR MY VOICE, and I know them, and they follow Me" **(Jn. 10:4-5, 27).** My sheep hear - the Greek word for "hear" in this Dass is des the meaning OKOUO and while it means "to hear" as in discerning a sound, it also in of "to hearken" and "to understand," a responsive action to one's hearing and the result thereof. This goes beyond the outward hearing of the natural ear, and penetrates into the area of our inner receptivity, understanding, and responsiveness to act in accordance with what is heard.

"He goes before His sheep, and they follow Him, for they KNOW His voice." There are various Greek words for "know," each bearing its own shade and depth of meaning, in this case it is OIDA, denoting ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE. Praise God, there is a realm where you can have absolute knowledge of His voice - without doubts or questionings. I do not hesitate to say that such absolute knowledge comes as a result of prolonged and intimate association, communion, and relationship with HIM. I "know" my wife's voice, not merely its sound, but also its meaning and intent. By each inflection of her voice I discern her attitude, determination, state of being, etc. Such knowledge has developed as a result of thirty-three years of being her HUSBAND! His sheep - the mature ones - shall come to the place where they unmistakably know His voice, not just hear it, but KNOW it. It is precious as we tune out the voices of this world, and of our own carnal minds, and listen only to the voice of the spirit within; the more we do so day by day the stronger and more resonant and meaningful becomes His voice unto us.

There is a beautiful illustration of hearing the Lord's voice in I Kings 19:8-13. After that Elijah had called fire down from heaven and slain the prophets of Baal he fled to the mount of God in Horeb where Moses had met God in the burning bush, and where God in blazing glory had spoken forth His law unto Israel. Elijah found a cave in the side of the mountain and went in it to rest. While he was in the cave, he heard God's voice speaking to him and saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah said to the Lord, "O Lord God, I have been very earnest for Thee; for the people of Israel have turned away from their promise to serve Thee; they have thrown down Thine altars and have slain Thine prophets with the sword; and now I, even I only, am left; and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go out and stand upon the mountain before the Lord." Then, while Elijah was standing upon the mountain, a great and strong wind swept by and tore the mountains apart and broke the rocks in pieces; but the Lord was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake, shaking the mountains; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire passed by; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was silence and stillness, and Elijah heard a low, quiet voice, which he knew, was the voice of the Lord. When he heard the voice of the Lord, then Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle, and he stood before the Lord in the opening of the cave.

In commenting on this incident, Ray Prinzing wrote, "'AND, BEHOLD, THE LORD PASSED BY...' Perhaps this is the first level of experience, and we used to sing, 'Jesus is passing this way.' Or again, 'Reach out and touch the Lord as He passes by.' No consciousness of His indwelling, so we prayed for Him to pass by often. 'AND A GREAT AND STRONG WIND RENT THE MOUNTAINS, AND BRAKE IN PIECES THE ROCKS BEFORE THE LORD; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND.' If we move on that plane, that's the voice we hear. RE-ACTION to the presence of the Lord. He passed by, and what re-action, what a wind, it shook the place, the rocks crumbled, strong men cried like babies, there was shouting, singing, prophesying, re-actions to His presence everywhere, but HE was not in the wind. 'AND AFTER THE WIND, AN EARTHQUAKE; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE EARTHQUAKE.' Say, were you in that meeting last night? everybody was shaken, it was a real earthquake. All they could do was talk about the quake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake that was only some more re-action to His presence passing by. 'AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, A FIRE; BUT

THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE FIRE.' Have you had the fire experience? they ask. Or, how about the burning, it is like another baptism. In His own way God surely uses the fires, but if you always try to find God's voice, because once you became conscious of Him in that way, be careful, this time He was not in the fire, it was but another re-action that followed His presence passing by. 'AND AFTER THE FIRE A S-T-I-L-L S-M-A-L-L V-O-I-C-E. AND IT WAS SO, WHEN ELIJAH HEARD, THAT HE WRAPPED HIS FACE IN HIS MANTLE, AND WENT OUT, AND STOOD IN THE ENTERING OF THE CAVE.' If you desire to have a clearer consciousness of the VOICE WITHIN, you will have to get past the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, and wrap your face in the mantle. The mantle prefigured the endowment of the Spirit that rested upon him. When our wanton eyes which are never satisfied with seeing, are covered by the mantle; when our ears that are never filled with hearing, are covered with the mantle; when our nose, forever sniffing out the strange odors, becomes covered with the mantle; and all else that is typified by the face - when all is covered by the mantle, so that we are turned inward - no more distracted by the outward phenomenon, then we are ready to draw out the message via the STILL SMALL VOICE" -end quote.

This "shout" in which the Lord descends is God breaking upon us in POWER as the LIVING WORD OF GOD. May the Spirit of God in His own divine and mystical way shine the light of revelation upon these inspired words from the pen of the apostle Peter: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD which LIVETH and abideth forever" **(I Pet. 1:23).** If the Spirit of God will give us understanding concerning this incorruptible SEED of the WORD OF GOD, then we will understand how it is that Christ comes to us IN A SHOUT. There you have two items: the SHOUT and the Christ who is IN the shout. Within every natural seed that can grow into a new plant or creature there are two parts: the OUTER form or substance, and WITHIN the "germ" of the seed wherein is contained the life and from which the germination and growth must come. Thus, the "germ" or "life" is IN the seed. In like manner the Word of God has the outer form or substance - the actual words spoken, the natural sound, the thought, idea, concept and understanding conveyed - and within the outer is the living germ, the Logos, the Christ of God.

The simple yet infinitely wonderful truth of God is this: the incorruptible, life giving, transforming power of the Christ is IN EVERY WORD that proceeds out of the mouth of God! I must point out that there is the living word, the spoken word, the written word, and the created word. Let there be, therefore, no doubt that the Word of God of which I speak is that word in which Christ dwells, the living word, the Logos of God. A dead word contains no life and gives no life, but a quickening word is the living word wherein is the Logos, the Christ of God. There are many pitiful words and pathetic messages pawned off on God's precious people under the guise of "the word of God." We are going to have to get beyond quoting scriptures and beyond dead doctrines and religious traditions. We are going to have to hear with our spirit the Voice of the Living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God, and the Reality of God. I cannot emphasize too strongly that it will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on perfection and boasts about immortality to make perfect and incorruptible sons in God's image. We must HEAR HIS VOICE, for it is only those that hear His voice who shall live. It is going to take more than having meetings, singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Hallelujahs, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God and transformation into His likeness. We shall have to see Him and touch Him and hear Him and walk with Him as did John on the Isle of Patmos. We must hear His voice speaking to us in the deepest recesses of our beings. We must commune with Him in the glory that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship can only come by personal association with the LIVING CHRIST. And think not, precious friend of mine, if you cannot now discern His voice amidst the confused babble of voices that fill the earth, that you will hear HIS SHOUT when He comes in that glorious Word by which He shall finally deliver us from the last vestiges of sin and death and present us faultless before His Father as holy sons of God with power.

Praise God for the Voice of the Son of God, the Shout in which the Lord Himself descends from heaven! Jesus Christ, the Logos, the pure and complete and eternal Word of God, is descending from the highest realms of our heavens (spirit) and into the conscious realm of our soul to impart to us that which will enable us to ascend - body and soul caught up into the majesty, glory and incorruptibleness of heaven - the realm of spirit. What a Voice! What a COMMAND! Not only does He come unto His elect in the war cry of triumph and victory, but His chosen ones are, thereby caught up in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus to themselves BECOME the voice of God to creation. He descends in a shout, we are caught up into the shout, made one with Him in His Word. There are myriads of voices crying out in the land today, but there is only one voice, which is the

LOGOS OF GOD - and it is the voice of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Many are hearing the voices of the sages of ancient times, others are hearing the voices from extra-terrestrial beings, some are listening to the voices of the masters and gurus of the dark pagan religions of the East, some are communing with the familiar spirits of the dead, others have their ears tuned to the bewitching voices of the television evangelists, or the captivating programs, rituals, activities and teachings of the religious systems, while others imagine their own voice to be that of Christ's; but one and all are but the voices of men and devils. There is only one Voice in all God's great universe that will cause one to be lifted up in his soul from the realms of dust and desolation to ascend into the heavens and sit with Christ in His glory - the voice of JESUS. All other voices are facades that masquerade as messengers of God. They are nought but gusty winds from the mid-heavens of men's carnal minds that drive the raging waves of the troubled sea, foaming out their shame.

Blessed be God, He comes IN A SHOUT! It is the shout of the omnipotent Christ of God. It is the same Voice that called into being the heavens and the earth in that primordial beginning. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made and the earth. It was His Voice that spoke on Sinai and shook the earth and the heavens. It was His Voice that said to a dead man in a tomb, "Lazarus, come forth!" and also said, "loose him and let him go." It was His Voice that commanded the waves of the sea, "Peace, be still!" and the hurricane heard that Voice, fell on its face on the glassy, watery floor, and came and licked its Master's hand. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. The astonished crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord by the POWER OF HIS WORD. It was this same Voice that cried at that zero hour of the ages, "It is finished." At that Voice the veil in the temple was rent in twain, the earth quaked ,the rocks rent, the sun hid its face, the graves of many of the saints were opened and they that slept arose. It was said of our Lord and elder brother, "Never man spake like this man" **(Jn. 7:46).** "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him" **(Mk. 1:27).** "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" **(Mat. 8:27).** That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD" **(I Kings 17:1).** The pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His sons to ride victoriously. Nought shall be able to stand before the two-edged sword of H-I-S W-O-R-D. How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company! The Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that CLEAR WORD OF THE LORD which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to nought.

When this Voice comes to you, my beloved, and to me with the command, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away" **(S. of S. 2:10),** no power of earth, hell or religion can detain the elect of God from rising up to meet Him. No, we have not always been able to clearly hear His voice, but He is teaching us, preparing us as He leads us from pasture to pasture. At the time Jesus was on earth, the Jews had fallen into much slumber and inertia, although outwardly they were religious and self-satisfied, and they did not know the Word of God when He was made flesh and came and stood before them. When their Messiah came, for whom they had been looking for centuries, they neither knew Him nor received Him. Because He was born in a stable, and His body was poor and without comeliness; because He did not come in pomp and glory, the Jews knew Him not.

He who came to His own, was the One who had led them through the wilderness, and who revealed God to them; He had gone before them in the cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night. It was He who had dwelt in unutterable and unapproachable glory in their Holiest of all; it was He who had defeated their enemies for them, and had spread His pavilion over them, so that all nations were afraid before them. He it was, who came to His own and they knew Him not.

He does not call the elect to come away with Him, but to come away and meet Him. Leave everything, especially your self-life behind, and come away to that which He has for you. We hardly realize that every time Christ calls us and we refuse Him, whether we say it with our lips or with our actions, we really say, "I choose this person or thing, I choose myself, instead of Christ." If we choose to walk with those who are not walking in

the Spirit and in the Truth, we really choose carnality and error in the place of choosing Him; for we cannot walk with both. There are times when He offers us advancement, and in place of rising up and leaving everything so that we can enter in and possess that which He shows us, we fail to enter in; we choose our own ease, or the comfort of some Babylonian garment, or our own wills in place of His. It is when we first hear His Voice, that we must rise up and come away to meet Him. God does not stand still, He is ever moving on; and if we delay, His Voice will grow fainter and fainter, so that when we do arise to go to Him, we may not find Him in the glory of His new day. Only as we learn to HEAR and HEED His Voice will we be ready to ascend with Him when He comes to us IN HIS SHOUT.

Thank God! there is a people in this hour unto whom the Lord is coming IN A SHOUT. For those blessed ones there is no more hesitation, no more vacillating back and forth between the flesh and the spirit, no more obeying the voice of the stranger, for these mature ones, these disciplined ones, have received the Lord in a shout of command - they no longer have any other master, priorities, or options - and the response is immediate and unreserved. These make up the mighty army of the Lord, the sons of God who shall rule and bless creation in those glorious ages yet to come. Even now as I pen these words HIS SHOUT is heard by a vast company of men and women over the face of the whole earth, in every nation under heaven, inciting and ordering the members of His body, giving them the command to flee from the harlot system of Babylon and to assemble UNTO HIM in preparation for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God.

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the shout that issues forth out of His mouth. The shout in which the Lord comes has two aspects - first, His shout of command UNTO US, His brethren; then, His shout of command THROUGH US unto the nations. Furthermore, there is progression to His shout. The Lord ALWAYS comes in a shout. The Lord Himself always descends from heaven in a shout. The Lord descends from the invisible realm of the spirit into our lives, our experience, our world of appearances, our earth - in a shout. He comes to us IN A WORD OF COMMAND, A WORD OF AUTHORITY AND POWER. It is doubtful if any Christian on earth has fully understood as yet how great is the transforming upheaval that works within the soul when men and women through the operation of the Spirit of God in their lives are born again, born from above, seized upon by a life from heaven, renewed, regenerated, recreated and translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. But this change, this transformation, this translation from death into life could never take place apart from the entrance of the all-powerful, incorruptible Christ into their lives. Ah, when first you were quickened by His Spirit, when the word of salvation reached you, was there not an urgency, a conviction, yea, a compulsion to KNOW HIM? IN that living word of salvation THE LORD HIMSELF DESCENDED into your earth, and in His shout of victory you who were dead in trespasses and sins were quickened and translated from the low realms of darkness and death and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places.

It was the day of Pentecost. As the disciples of Jesus were waiting and praying in the upper room in Jerusalem, the power of God manifested itself in their midst. Had not the messengers declared at His ascension, "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 like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." Ah, it was a fulfillment of the messenger's promise to them, this SAME JESUS had returned, had come from heaven in mighty Spirit power, they heard Him come, they saw Him come from heaven, even as they had seen Him go into heaven. The Lord Himself descended into their midst IN A SHOUT OF COMMAND, and these men and women were quickened, transformed instantly from the carnal traditions, rituals, and ordinances of Old Testament religion into a people ablaze with the dynamic spiritual life of God. Is it not also true, dear reader, that the Lord Himself entered into YOUR TEMPLE in a mighty shout of triumph on that blessed day when you were baptized with that same Holy Ghost and Fire! The principle is plain - every time there is a resurrection, an ascending, a catching up into higher dimensions of HIS LIFE, the change and translation is actuated by the coming of the Lord IN A NEW WORD OF LIFE, IN A FRESH WORD OF COMMAND - A SHOUT! Though we have known Him thus from experience to experience, from realm to realm, and from glory to glory, we yet with patience wait for His descent in that FINAL SHOUT which will bring the consummation and totality of our change into His likeness and image, and the fullness of His incorruptible life in body, soul and spirit.

As the Christ is a many-membered body, so is the shout that issues forth from His mouth. The Word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that Word issues forth as the sound of many waters. I declare to you today that I have heard that sound, I HAVE HEARD H-I-S S-H-O-U-T! In the body of Christ, through many members of teachers, prophets, and anointed ones, I have heard the authority of the Christ's Voice proclaiming that the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand for our transformation, our change, our translation out of corruption into incorruption, out of the carnal mind into the precious mind of Christ, out of our limitation into His omnipotence. This word, this revelation, this proclamation, this Kingdom Message, this SHOUT has sounded throughout the land, echoing from mountain to mountain, reverberating across the valleys and the plains, circling by divine projection the uttermost parts of the globe until there is hardly a city or town or community or hamlet anywhere where its sound has not been heard.

Think, O reader, of the profound depths of truth that lie hidden in these inspired words: "THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN IN A SHOUT!" This opens new and exalted vistas of truth concerning the coming of our Lord, and points us to the time of great battle, the conflict of this dark age coming to its final climax, with the CAPTAIN OF THE HOST descending in a shout of war, to urge on and encourage, ringing out the command, THE TIME HAS COME TO POSSESS THE KINGDOM. First of all the saints must possess the Kingdom, apprehending their full inheritance in Christ. Then shall they go forth in the glorious age to come as the invincible and incorruptible ARMY OF THE LORD, strong and doing exploits, pressing the claims of God's Kingdom upon all men and nations, until there be an ending to the reign of sin, death, and evil everywhere, and the universal establishment of that long-awaited Kingdom of Righteousness over all. A battle will ensue, and the conflict will be dreadful and fierce. The Lord shall descend into the midst of His sons, His army, in a BATTLE CRY, and will UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY. The purpose of Christ coming is not to provide an escape from tribulation for some weak, unspiritual, half-cleansed church, which has corrupted itself with the delusions of Mystery Babylon the Great. He comes, rather, as CAPTAIN OF THE HOSTS OF THE LORD (Jos. 5:14). No battle cry is ever given to CHARGE FORWARD that means retreat, or infers any escapism. The Lord is not coming to "rapture" His army off to some beautiful Isle of Somewhere; He is coming to issue the battle cry and to press the battle to the finish RIGHT HERE ON EARTH, completing the great process of redemption, restoration and the restitution of All things, bringing the wonderful fulfillment of the very prayer He taught us to pray, "THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." Amen!

True, as someone has pointed out, we have been in our skirmishes and battles, but the greatest battle is yet to be fought, once God takes to Himself His firstfruits company, those conformed to His image, filled with His Spirit, ruled by His mind, yes, and thoroughly equipped with the full armor that He imparts. All previous and present battles are to train and prepare us for that which is to come, therefore we need to learn our lessons and grow up into Him. "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones ... the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle" **(Isa. 13:3-4).** "And the Lord shall UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is very great and terrible; and who can abide it?" **(Joel 2:11).** "The Lord Jesus shall BE REVEALED from heaven WITH HIS MIGHTY MESSENGERS, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" **(II Thes. 1:7-8).**

Many precious nuggets of truth, rich and encouraging, lie hidden away amidst the verses of the little book of the Song of Solomon. The symbology of the Song of Solomon bespeaks of the riches and glory and honor of the great King and Captain which are conferred upon those elect saints who are called and chosen to be made ONE IN HIM. In the Song of Solomon 6:4 the King (Jesus) speaks to the Shulamite (elect), saying, "Thou art beautiful, O My love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS." "Terrible as an army with banners" means bannered hosts of armies in a fortified city. The Shulamite has just been compared to the two noted cities of the Israelites. The King now extends His description and declares that she is not only as fair as Tirzah, and as beautiful in her unity and perfection as Jerusalem, but she is as terrible as a city full of valiant hosts that have gone out against the enemy and have brought back innumerable banners. These bannered hosts speak of battles fought and won, of hard conflict with the enemy, in which they came out more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

It is wonderful grace from God that enables us to look upon all opposition, all conflict, all persecution, all difficulties, all attacks of the adversary, however they may come, as opportunities to overcome and to add to

the precious banners that God has enabled us to take and will enable us to bring to Him. The elect is not represented here as downtrodden by the enemy. They are not represented as a defeated army with no banners, all having been captured by the enemy. They are represented as a mighty, victorious army, as hosts of valiant soldiers of the Kingdom of God, with so many banners floating that the air above them seems to be alive with these trophies of victory. And, therefore, the inference is, that the enemy is utterly routed.

This same description of the elect appears again in the **Song of Solomon 6:10.** "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS?" At first glance, it would appear that this description is the same as the King gives in the fourth verse; but while the words are the same, we see by the context that the meaning is different. In the fourth verse, the King compares the Shulamite to the most majestic and beautiful of EARTHLY OBJECTS. He looks down upon earth and draws His comparisons from Tirzah, Jerusalem, and a host of bannered soldiers. But in verse ten it is not the King speaking, but another group called "the daughters of Jerusalem." These daughters of Jerusalem look up to the HEAVENS and compare the Shulamite to HEAVENLY BODIES, the sun and the moon. It would be inconsistent for the elect to be compared in the same description, to the dawn, the moon and the sun, and to hosts of earthly soldiers with banners camped in earthly fortified cities. Therefore it is plain that the reference in verse ten is not to the earthly hosts of victorious soldiers, but to the heavenly hosts typified by the sun, moon, and stars**. In Rev. 19:14** we are told of the white horse, coming forth out of heaven with One upon him called Faithful and True; "And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure." in **Dan. 12:3:** "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever." The stars are used as the great symbol of those who rule and reign in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Song of Solomon redounds with references to this truth, and we find a further confirmation of it in chapter 6:12. "Before I was aware, my soul set me among the chariots of the prince." Or, the literal translation is, "made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." Ammi-nadib is composed of two words compounded; the meaning of the first word is "Troops or a company of people congregated together and made one"; the meaning of the last word is "The prince." The meaning of the two words together is, "The people, or company, that have become one, and are the chariots, or war chariots, of the prince!" In Ps. 68:17-18 we are told, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them as Sinai, in the sanctuary. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led away captives; Thou hast received gifts among men."

Yet another precious piece of the puzzle is tucked away in the **Song of Solomon 6:13.** "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were THE COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES." The "company of two armies" is a figure of the Lord 's army in two divisions; and we have already seen that one company is in heaven (the invisible realm of spirit), and the other is upon the earth. But the two armies make ONE SHULAMITE, ONE ELECT, ONE BODY. How little we have been aware of the "working together" of the invisible hosts with the visible, that we might come to the fullness of perfection. Not apart from us shall they attain, and not apart from them should we attain - for who can deny that the dealings, purposes, and activity of God continue upon ALL who LIVE UNTO GOD in the spirit, whether they be in the body or out of the body - matters not to God! In the realm of spirit, transcending mere mortal consciousness, the FAMILY IN HEAVEN is working together and growing together and overcoming together with the FAMILY ON EARTH! And we see an application of this truth in **Mat. 18:18,** "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Sometimes we confine our ideas of the army of God to the visible army on earth, but the army on the other side of the veil is just as real and just as alive and active as that of this world; and because of the hosts of God's armies, He is called Jehovah Sabaoth - the Lord of Hosts. When the king of Syria sent horses and chariots to take Elisha, his servant was filled with fear. And Elisha prayed that Jehovah would open his eyes that he might see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The elect of the Lord is not only terrible as earthly bannered hosts, but is terrible as the heavenly bannered hosts; for He who leads them forth to battle is the Lord of Sabbath. He is the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth, of all realms, and before Him and His hosts, all the hosts of darkness must fall back; before the chariots of God, none can stand, praise His name!

From the pen of another ready writer I now share precious insight into these wonderful mysteries. "We are somewhat acquainted with the ministry of the family on earth, with the binding and loosing, but do you know who is supporting this work in the more invisible realms? It is the HEAVENLY FAMILY working with us that brings forth the victory. We haven't beheld them, we haven't always been conscious of them, but on rare occasions some have had their visions of this 'invisible ministry.' And we do read, 'Blessed are the dead which DIE IN THE LORD from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors (earth travail); and their works (service, ministry) do FOLLOW THEM' **(Rev. 14:13).** We rejoice that their works, ministries, do follow them, and they CARRY ON in the invisible realm, to aid us in every way the LORD bids them to give us aid. Are they not part of the 'ministering spirits, sent forth in the service of God for the assistance of those who are to inherit salvation?' **(Heb. 1:14,** Amplified**).** What glorious reinforcements are with us!

"Why haven't we been more aware of the power of this reinforcement? Because we have walked so long in the outer realm of the senses of the flesh, and soul. But the more we move into the realm of the spirit, the more we shall become aware of these messengers who not only stand by, but who are working with us. We are going to see an increased activity of the heavenly host, as they help to bring the rest of the 'earth-family' into the fullness of God that together we might possess our inheritance, and the perfection appointed us. We see our weakness and lack, and we measure our short-comings and almost weep in despair, but God has not ignored this day, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, He has a standard prepared to raise up against him, visible and invisible.

"The oppression was great, and the adversary was heavy against Israel. Then God moved upon Deborah, and she sent for Barak and encouraged him to gather Israel to battle against the hosts of Sisera, and they did so, but they were not alone, for we read, 'They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera' **(Judges 5:20**). Not only has our lack of spiritual perception held us back from full recognition of our heavenly family, but also God has been taking us through that DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL where even the stars didn't shine, that He might perfect our faith. But just because we have not seen them, not been aware of them, does not mean that they are not there, and ready to penetrate our darkness again at the time of God's appointment.

"THERE MUST BE A BREAK-THROUGH, and a joining of forces with the heavenly host. The scriptures have much concerning the 'armies of heaven' and also concerning the armies on earth - of which we are admonished to become good soldiers and put on the complete armor (II Tim. 2:3; Eph. 6:11-17). As the zero hour draws near for the climax of this great battle of the ages, there will be a uniting of the visible and invisible. We shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep - that is, who have died physically, and are now in the invisible realm, a part of that heavenly register that is spoken of in Heb. 12:23. But the dead in Christ shall rise, and we shall be joined unto that host, becoming the FULL ARMY of the Lord. Then the Lord Himself, as Captain of the Host, shall descend with a war cry, a shout of encouragement to press the battle to its finish, to overcome - conquering and to conquer. We have groaned because of the veil which stands between us and the invisible realm, between us and full spiritual victory. Praise God, He shall give us the command, and the victorious word which shall enable us to break through the barriers, and become JOINED UNTO OUR LORD, AND THE HEAVENLY HOST.

"Are you listening for the shout? Within that war cry, that shout of battle, is all the encouragement, direction, undergirding strength we will need to break through the barrier. The words our Lord speaks are SPIRIT AND LIFE, they are powerful and glorious, and HIS MESSAGE TO HIS OWN will be forceful, yes, will lift them up into new dimensions of victory. No man, no program of man will catapult us into divine fullness. This 'catching up' will be the work of JESUS CHRIST Himself. Our part is to be ready, watching and waiting, yielding to the daily inworkings of His grace so that we might be found unto praise at His coming.

"We are delighted, we praise God for each skirmish fought, and battle won, but remember, there is rejoicing in heaven also, for the 'waiting firstfruits' are desirous that we see the consummation of the process, that we, with them, might enter into our full inheritance. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I WILL HEAR THE HEAVENS, AND THEY SHALL HEAR THE EARTH; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezereel (Jah sows), and I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art

My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God' **(Hos. 2:21-23).** The heavens shall hear the earth! There is a drawing together again of that which was separated by so great a gulf. And as the hour of full redemption approaches, we shall find a closeness betwixt ourselves and the rest of those who have been apprehended for firstfruits. The WHOLE FAMILY shall be joined together. And then the new ministry shall begin to be revealed, for the earth shall hear the corn, the wine, and the oil. New life, a new message, food for the hungry - and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" -end quote (Gospel Echoes).

The Lord does not come in silence or gentleness as the Captain of His host, but in a shout - a MIGHTY WORD OF AUTHORITY AND POWER. In these days the Lord will utter His glorious Voice in the midst of His people. Deep shall call unto deep, and there shall be the manifestation and moving of the Lord in GREAT POWER AND GLORY, the sounding forth of His Living Word with life, and blessing, bringing change and transformation to all who hear the Voice of the Son of God. Marvelous indeed is the SHOUT that is sounding into the hearing of God's apprehended ones, a message that is total, complete, for ALL! Truly, when His shout has reverberated down the corridors of your ransomed soul, you will not fear, for it is A JOYFUL SOUND, a battle cry filled with courage, confidence, and victory. You will shout for joy over the enemy, and the LAST ENEMY that shall be destroyed is DEATH. When the Lord has descended into your consciousness in a shout and His message of TOTAL REDEMPTION has filled your being, there will rise up a responsive shout from God's holy hill. Gone will be that defeatist attitude of "pray for me that I will hold out to the end." Gone will be the worries, fears, frettings, doubts, negative attitudes, negative confessions, and weaknesses that frustrate, torment, and defeat. It is a surging, victorious declaration that GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU, THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD. It is His WAR CRY. It signifies that the time has come when HE shall arise to DO BATTLE against all sin, darkness, and death in us, and great shall be the victory. The work begins IN US, and shall then be carried forth THROUGH US. In the triumph of His life the army of God's sons will be a force against which this world system cannot stand.

I assure you that God's army will not fight in the manner that some fight today. The apocalyptic description of the Christ coming out of heaven on a war-horse, magnificently attired, attended by armies of celestial horsemen, to fight the battle against "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army," portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. The Kingdom of Christ does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. I believe in no such way of deciding the question between Christ and Satan, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of our blessed God. Believing that "the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL," but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," I believe the warfare itself to be not carnal.' The warfare, therefore, must be SPIRITUAL!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who is now one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph, which is even now proceeding into the city of God.

The Captain of the Lord's army descends out of His place IN A SHOUT. This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" **(Jn. 1:1).** This is the Word that was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In the book of Revelation He is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth - truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapon of HIS WORD. Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them. As someone has

said, It will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion. It will kill them (the carnal man) and raise them (the spiritual man) from the dead. The spirit, which animates Him, is the warrior spirit. His object is the conquest of the world - every man and woman and child who has ever lived. He has formed the resolution never to cease from His campaign until the whole world bows devotedly before Him as its rightful Lord and Master, the only true King.

The army of the Lord is at this very moment in careful preparation. The mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire, which the Captain mustereth for the battle. His great command is FOLLOW ME. He goes on from conquering to conquer. Can you hear HIS SHOUT, HIS ENCOURAGING COMMAND, HIS CALL TO RISE UP AND TAKE THE KINGDOM? Can you hear it? Arise, my beloved, and follow the Captain of the Lord's host from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph in your own life; then you, who constitute the Lord's army, will move forward beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 40
COMING IN THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY

THE MESSENGERS OF GOD
THE ARCHANGEL

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, and with the trump of God" **(I Thes. 4:16).** For years the beautiful passage quoted above has intrigued me with its mystery. While the King James Version states that the Lord shall descend from heaven "with the voice of the archangel," that is not exactly the way it is in the original. The Greek uses the preposition EN meaning "in," and Young's Literal Translation correctly renders it, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" the voice of the archangel, but "in" the voice of the archangel. If, therefore, we can know who the archangel is, and are able to recognize his voice, we will have assurance, not that the Lord is coming soon, but rather that He has come and is now present, for we shall have encountered Him in great power and glory in the place where He manifests - I-N THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL!

We must first go back and learn who and what angels actually are. Babylon has told us a lot of fictions about storks bringing babies, and Santa scurrying down the chimney. We, for some peculiar reason, do not believe these tales. But most of us still think that angels are funny things with white nightgowns, bare feet, long flowing hair, voluptuous breasts and wings, beautiful sexless things who fly and flutter and flit here and there.

From every part of scripture come testimonies to the existence of angels. They trod the plains of Mamre, and sang over the fields of Bethlehem. One prepared the meal on the desert sands for Elijah; another led Peter out of prison; a third flashed through the storm to stand by the hammock where the apostle Paul was sleeping. An angel came to Zacharias and Elizabeth with the message that John the Baptist would be born. The angel Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth and told her that she would conceive of the Holy Ghost and bring forth a Son who would be the Son of the Most High God. An angel warned Joseph. "And when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph... saying, Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him" **(Mat. 2:13).**

After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Word says, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" **(Mat. 4:1).** When all the severe testings had been accomplished, the record states, "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" **(Mat. 4:11).** God is not helpless in a corner somewhere, but His angels have been sent forth to take care of His people. "Now when the apostles had borne their testimony and preached the message of the Lord, they went back to Jerusalem, proclaiming the glad tidings to many villages of the Samaritans on the way. But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Rise and proceed southward at midday on the road that runs from Jerusalem down to Gaza. This is the desert route. So he got up and went" **(Acts 8:25-27).** What was the purpose of the angel telling Philip to travel that particular road at that specific time? So he could meet the Ethiopian eunuch and introduce him to Jesus! In Gen. 24:7, God sent forth an angel to assist the servant of Abraham in securing a wife for Isaac. In Ex. 23:20 He sent "an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." He sent His angels to clear the way in the going forth out of Egypt. In Ps. 34:7, the Holy Spirit inspired David to write these words, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

THE MESSENGERS OF GOD

Now let us face some facts. We have listened to fairy tales much too long. In the first place we discover that the word "angel," instead of being a translation, is but an evasion, being the English form of the Greek word

AGGELOS, which to the average person means nothing at all. The Greek word AGGELOS means nothing more than "messenger." And in every occurrence of the word "angel" in our Bibles, that is the word that should have been given. The word AGGELOS is simply a pure Greek word without any particular meaning except what we choose to give it, and people oftentimes have the notion that it means a man with wings, whereas, if a man did have wings, he has no muscles to move them - a most ridiculous thing! The wings mentioned in scripture are not represented as belonging to man and are just as mythical as the various winged gods of ancient Greek mythology. With the exception of the Cherubim and Seraphim, nothing is said about wings for either men or angels. The words are, "Clothed in shining garments," when referring to the young men who were the messengers at the tomb following the Christ's resurrection, and on the occasion of His ascension. But painters have given them wings, and poets have given them wings, and a great many people get their theology from the poets and painters, and that is the reason they blunder so.

Get the thought, now, that an angel is a messenger and read the word "angels," always with its proper translation, "messengers." The Greek word AGGELOS has just the direct meaning "messenger one sent with a message, the personal representative of the Sender. It does not identify any particular race or order of created beings. Anyone sent with a message is a messenger - an angel. If there had been Western Union messengers in Bible times they would have been called "Western Union Angels," for angel means messenger. It may mean a messenger from hell, or a messenger from heaven, or a messenger from some man on earth; any messenger sent by a king, or any other person, is in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages, an angel of that person, viz: a messenger. If sent by a human being, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of that one, in the message he was commissioned to bear. Lk. 7:18-28 speaks of the messengers of John the Baptist as angels and in verse 24 we read, "And when the messengers (angels) of John were departed..." These same messengers are called disciples in verse 18. If sent by God, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of God, in the message he was given to bear. In Lk. 7:27, John the Baptist is denominated as an angel: "Behold, I send My messenger (Gr: AGGELOS - angel) before Thy face..." The context always decides whose angel the messenger is. John was filled with the Holy Spirit, to bear a word of God, and accomplish a mission for the Anointed Messiah. In the anointing, the word, and mission, John was an angel of God, the greatest prophet born of women!

When we understand this truth, then we have no difficulty in understanding who the if "angels" of the Churches in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Revelation are because that word was commonly used in the early Church, as, "To the angel of the Church in Sardis, write...," "To the angel of the Church in Smyrna, write..." These angels of the Churches were merely God's messengers to those Churches, the MINISTERS who ministered to the saints. A messenger carries a message, and a messenger of God unto His people bears a SPIRITUAL MESSAGE, and is, therefore, a HEAVENLY ANGEL!

And now we go to the Word to learn something wonderful and exceptional about these creatures who have been described and even pictured so fantastically. And it is a fact completely missed by most Bible students and, I dare say, by ALL Bible scholars!

Abraham was once sitting, in the heat of the day, in his tent door. And he did not fall asleep and have a nightmare. But fully awake, in his right mind, he entertained some visitors. The Word says this: "And he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, THREE MEN stood by him" (**Gen. 18:2).** Now we are not studying the book, "Alice in Wonderland." We are not reading about mock turtles, nor March hares, nor hobgoblins, nor ghosts, nor bug-a-boos. We are studying the fully inspired Word of God. And surely none of us are so simple that we need to go to a museum to learn what kind of a creature a man is. All of us are dumb on some subject; I will admit that much. But surely we are not so dumb that when we see a man walking down the street we mistake him for a monkey, or a fairy!

God's Word says that three "MEN" came to Abraham as he sat in his tent door. And there is only one race of beings on earth that is called "men." If we have not enough intelligence to know what kind of beings they are, then we most certainly have no business running loose, but need to be in a padded room where we will be cared for. Abraham entertained these three men who visited him. He hurried in to Mrs. Abraham and got her on the job baking cakes, and had a servant kill a calf. "And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set the tree, and they did eat" **(Gen. 18:18).** Reading on, in **Gen. 18:16** we find the following,

"And the MEN rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom." In **verse 22** we read this, "And the MEN turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

That same evening, two of these three men arrived in Sodom. Lot met them, took them in, and gave them their supper. The men of Sodom also saw them, following which there was an unfortunate scene at Lot's house, a result of which was that "the MEN put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the door" **(Gen. 19:10).** In **verse 12** we read, "And the MEN said to Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it**."** Lot had no success trying to persuade his family to leave Sodom. He himself lingered as long as possible. And then in **verse 16** we read, "And while he lingered, the MEN laid hold upon his hand." They forced him to leave, together with his wife and two daughters. And these men were God's messengers, His angels, who both delivered Lot and destroyed Sodom.

Jacob was quite a character, a very human sort of person. And one day he had a harrowing experience. He must face his brother Esau, who he had tricked and supplanted. He was afraid of losing his head. Esau was coming toward him with four hundred men. So Jacob figured it all out how to appease his brother's wrath. First he sent drove after drove of livestock as a present to his brother, then he sent his own herds and servants and family, but he stayed behind. Then that night, as Jacob remained alone on the other side of the river no doubt shivering in his boots, we read this, "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a MAN with him until the breaking of the day" **(Gen. 32:24).** Quite a wrestling match, that!

In **Judges 13** we read of a man by the name of Manoah, and his wife. God sent one of His messengers to them. And in **verse 6** we read, "Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, a MAN of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible**."** In **verse 8** we read, **"**Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the MAN of God which Thou didst send come again unto us." Then in **verse 10** we read, "Behold the MAN hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the MAN, and said unto him, Art thou the MAN that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am." Here this angel of God admitted of being a man. "Art thou THE MAN ... I AM."

Daniel also had some rather startling experiences with God's messengers during his sojourn on earth. And in Dan. 9:21 we read this, "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even THE MAN GABRIEL, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me." No, it was not the fairy Gabriel, not a nymph, nor a sybil, nor an elf; but "THE MAN GABRIEL." Oh, we have been told a lot of funny stories! But it is high time to awaken, time to begin to face facts! In Dan. 10:1-5 we find Daniel on a fast. And while on this three-weeks' fast, while beside the river Hiddekel, hemet another angel or messenger of God. Here is how he described him: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain MAN clothed in linen." In Daniel 10:21 Michael the archangel, or chief messenger, is called, "Michael your prince." I never heard of a prince among men being a funny sexless thing with wings! Did you? In the 12th chapter of Daniel we find some further experiences with God's angels; and in verses 6 and 7 they are called men. "The MAN clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river."

Turning now to the New Testament we find some further startling facts. Our Lord had arisen. And **Mk. 16:5** tells us that, upon finding the stone rolled away from the tomb, the women entered. "And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a yong MAN sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment." **Lk. 24:4** in recording the same event says**,** "Behold, two MEN stood by them in shining garments." Then our Lord ascended. As the disciples stood gazing into the sky, "Behold, two MEN stood by them in white apparel" **(Acts 1:10).**

Lastly in the book of Revelation we find the capstone as it were, two of the plainest of statements, which identify God's angels as men, two statements that no one but a blind man could miss or a nitwit misunderstand. In Rev. 18:21 we find a mighty angel talking to John, and reading on concerning this same mighty angel in Rev. 19:10, we find he himself stating concerning his identity, "Then I fell prostrate at his feet to worship, but he restrained me and said, Refrain! You must not do that! I am only another servant with you and

your brethren who have accepted and hold the testimony borne by Jesus. Worship God!" John's brethren were all men. And further, in Rev. 21:9, one of the seven angels of Rev. 16:1 returns to John to show him some further truths. Then in Rev. 22:9 this same angel has this to say concerning himself. "I am thy fellow servant, and of THY BRETHREN THE PROPHETS." The prophets were all men. This angel was merely one of them who now was serving in a higher realm of spirit, but had appeared for a very special purpose while performing that higher service. An angel in scripture is never a woman - always a man. And finally, of the angel that showed John the glory of the Holy City which came down from God out of heaven, it is said, "He (the angel) measured its wall also, one hundred and forty-four cubits by a MAN'S measure (of a cubit from his elbow to his third finger tip) which IS THE MEASURE OF THE ANGEL" **(Rev. 21:17)** (Amplified).

Whenever we find the word "angel" in our Bibles, it is a mere evasion, which should be translated as "messenger." God's messengers, His angels, may be either men in the flesh, or the spirits of departed saints, or any other order of creature from above or beneath, who bears a message from God. Someone once wrote a book entitled, WHERE ARE THE DEAD? But he did not answer his own question. Neither he, nor any of his kind, are qualified to answer that question until they have learned their spiritual ABC's and break away from all the fables under which all of us were reared. Those whose bodies are asleep in Christ, those who are apprehended of the Lord, those who are called and chosen as a part of God's firstfruit company, those who are faithful - continue to serve, though veiled from our view except on rare occasions, when they may appear visibly to men still in the flesh.

THE ARCHANGEL

In Old Testament times the Lord often appeared to men through the manifestation of "the angel of the Lord" (Jud. 6:20; II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5-7). In Joshua 5, the children of Israel had just crossed over the Jordan and were ready to invade the Promised Land. There in full view of the new camp, stood the strong walls of Jericho. Joshua went out to look at the city; and he saw a man all armed coming toward him. Joshua walked boldly up to the man and said to him, "Are you on our side, or are you on the side of our adversaries?" If an angel were to tell believers today what this man told Joshua, they would probably be depressed, because this angel said, "Wrong on both counts! I'm not with your enemies, and I'm not part of your army. I'm part of another army, and I have come with orders from God. Standing all around me and behind me in great and mighty columns, are myriads of angels (messengers). You can't see them, Joshua, but there is a host of them, and I'M THEIR CAPTAIN!"

Then Joshua saw that he was the angel of the Lord; the Captain of the Lord's host; and Joshua, bowing down before him, said, "What word has my Lord unto His servant?" And the Captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, "Take off your shoes from your feet, for it is holy ground where you are standing." Joshua did so, and the Lord said to him, "I have given you Jericho and its king and its mighty men of war; and I will destroy the city of Jericho before you." Then the angel of the Lord told Joshua the way in which the city should be taken; and Joshua went back to the camp of Gilgal and made ready to march as God commanded. During the next seven days all that was done was according to the word spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joshua. And you, dear reader, know the rest of the story!

Oh yes! God has an army, a great and strong and fearful army, and His army has a glorious and invincible Captain. In view of the many passages of scripture, which speak of THE ARMY OF THE LORD, and their exploits to soon be revealed, this brings new meaning and depth to God's purposes in His people. "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones...the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle" **(Isa. 13:3-4).** "And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" **(Joel. 2:11).**

I have stood in spirit and by the inspiration of the Almighty beheld the nations of the world and the peoples of all the earth. There is a bewildering and gigantic struggle going on between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness - between Christ and antichrist - between truth and error - between righteousness and unrighteousness. The antichrist forces in nearly every phase of life have been going from one victory to another. Through deceit, delusion, and brazen wantonness they have weakened and destroyed almost all who

have stood in the way of their conquest. No age in world history matches in crisis and tragedy, in the debacle of nations, in moral degeneracy, in godlessness, in the stamping out of individual liberty and freedom, in the germs of complete destruction of civilization and the planet, as the age in which we live. On any moral chart, on any graph of religious and spiritual decline, on any schematic delineation pin-pointing the loss of the last vestiges of that which stands high in righteousness, THIS AGE IS THE HOUR HORRENDOUS. In the spirit I have witnessed the various efforts of those laboring in opposition to the manifest darkness of this hour - and all these efforts combined are about as effective as a feather in the wind! Religious, social and political organizations, with their myriad programs, committees and movements struggle against the evils and corruption of this day - but I do not hesitate to tell you that all the carnal methods of denominations and governments are totally useless in this battle, and pitiful when contrasted with the order of the Kingdom of God into which we are now entering.

Ah, I have some good news for you, my friend: GOD HAS AN ARMY! And God's great army has a CAPTAIN! The plans are laid, the preparation is in progress, and the strategy is determined. Even now, a manifestation of the glory of God of world-wide dimensions is in the making. This is not a revival of evangelistic crusades, but the marching forth of the army of God in the power of the invincible weapons of the Holy Spirit. Already bright clouds are gathering on the horizon. The sky rivers are running full, and the manifestation of the sons of God is about to break forth upon the earth. This is the time to gird up your loins, O child of God, like Elijah of old, and run before the chariots. Let your heart be lifted high, for God is on the move, and this can be your hour of victory.

The Lord Jesus Himself is the Captain of His army, and it is none other than He who shall descend from heaven in a WAR CRY, in the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, as Captain of the Lord's host! This points us to the time of great battle, the conflict of this dark age coming to its final climax, with the CAPTAIN OF THE HOST descending to lead His army of overcomers into battle. The sons of God shall go forth in the glorious age to come as the invincible ARMY OF THE LORD, strong and doing exploits, pressing the battle through the very gates of hell itself, until there be an ending to the reign of sin, death, and evil everywhere. The battle will rage, and the conflict will be tremendous and severe. But the Lord, the mighty Captain, shall descend into the midst of His sons, and will UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, for His army is very great. He is coming in truth, in righteousness, in judgment, in mighty spirit power and in great glory, to press the battle to the finish right here on earth, bringing deliverance and restoration and redemption everywhere and to all men, praise His name! What a day! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the earth. The crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and God is not silent. Many who read these lines have heard the call to join this army - and have, in fact, been CONSCRIPTED and made keenly aware that the Lord's army is at this very moment in careful and diligent preparation.

The army of God is not something one enters into as a vocation, a way to make a living, etc. You cannot volunteer your services of your own free will, for GOD CHOOSES WHOM HE WILLS, and if you are chosen you can only respond in humility and holy brokenness, for it is a commission from God, not a calling self-assumed. Those who volunteer themselves to be messengers of God in the religious systems of this age are mere hirelings of Babylon, and will fall with the system in the hour of judgment.

An army speaks of combined strength, and as we are brought under the disciplines and training of the Father we go from strength to strength, built into a strong and effective people armed with His power within. "The Lord shall utter His voice before His army." "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel." God's strong ones, His disciplined ones will have His voice to lead them on and back them up, preparing the way before them. God's elect is becoming the army of the Lord, His visible force to be manifested in the earth. You, my beloved, may not feel like you are a part of any conquering army today, because you measure your own strength by past experiences, previous performance, prior accomplishments, and self-made standards. But I say to you today, Despise not the day of the taxing rigors of "bootcamp," nor the exhausting drills imposed by your Commander, which seem to drain your strength and deplete your resources. HE does the calling, HE does the training, HE equips His own, until they are HIS INSTRUMENTS, and then it is HIS POWER manifested as He thrusts each into battle.

Undergirded and supported by the Voice of the Lord, now we can understand more when it says, "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as

David; and the house of David shall be AS GOD (Michael!), as the angel of the Lord before them" **(Zech. 12:8).** Those who have been growing stronger through their processings, and like David have learned to overcome their obstacles, they shall be AS GOD, maintaining the victory over all their difficulties and obstacles, OVERCOMING ALL THE WAY, trailblazing the way through every problem and power, that others might follow and be blessed thereby as well.

The Captain of the Lord's army is the same One who in the Old Testament times revealed Himself as "the angel (messenger) of the Lord." The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar, spoke as though He were God, and was called God by her (Gen. 16:7-13). The Bible says that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but then says that God Himself talked to Moses out of the bush (Ex. 3; Acts 7:30-38). The angel of the Lord appeared to Israel in Judges 2:1-5 and spoke as God. Judges 6:11-24 describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon and then says the Lord looked on Gideon. The Deity of this unique "angel" is proved by the fact that He is identified as God (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2-13; 22:1-18; Ex.-3:2-18; Jud. 2:1-5; 6:11-16); is recognized as God (Gen. 16:9-13; Jud. 6:22-24; 13:21-23; Gen. 32:24-30; Hos. 12:4); is also described in terms befitting the Deity alone (Ex. 3:5-14; Josh. 5:15); calls Himself God (Gen. 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-14); receives worship (Josh. 5:14; Jud. 2:4); and finally speaks with divine authority (Jud. 2:1-5).

Recently, 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 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 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 simple terms that He Himself is "the angel of the Lord," the "Captain of the Lord's host," the COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF GOD! John the Revelator beheld with wonder the same truth when in spirit He saw the Christ riding 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 are 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 angels, 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 symbolical number, a perfect number, signifying PERFECTION OF GOVERNMENT, or 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 SIGNITURE 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 thrones by DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

"Gen. 17:20 states that Ishmael begat TWELVE princes, and in Num. 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, 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. Seiss, 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. Seiss, it was revealed by the Lord to such men as Enoch and Noah. The TWELVE signs of the Zodiac were mentioned in the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible. God said to Job, 'Can you direct the signs of the Zodiac?' **(Job 38:32).** (In the King James Translation the word Mazzaroth means 'The Twelve Signs'). Even the testimony of the stars is numerically in harmony with the Bible. No wonder the Psalmist said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge' **(Ps. 19:1-2).** (For more on the signs of the Zodiac, go THE HEAVENS DECLARE series linked below).

"In the book of Revelation we read of the woman with a crown of TWELVE stars, and that the New Jerusalem has TWELVE gates, and at the gates TWELVE angels; and it has TWELVE foundations, and in them the names of the TWELVE apostles of the Lamb; that its tree bears TWELVE manner of fruits; that it lieth foursquare and measures TWELVE thousand furlongs on a side, and that the height of the wall is 144 cubits, or 12 x 12, which symbolizes this truth - that there is nothing in God's city which is not PERFECTED GOVERNED.

"It is also significant that only TWELVE judges - who judged Israel - are recorded 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 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.

I believe that we can see by the above numerical symbolism that the TWELVE legions of angels are not only WARRING MESSENGERS, but RULING MESSENGERS as well. They are messengers by DIVINE APPOINTMENT, with DIVINE AUTHORITY AND POWER. But beyond this wonderful truth it will greatly aid our understanding and devotion when we see that to be a messenger of God identifies not only a function or service, but a STATE OF BEING as well; it is not just a "doing" but a "being." It is an undeniable fact that it is not what we say, but what we ARE that speaks most loudly to men. There is a three-fold dimension in the ministry of the messengers. (1) We receive the message from the Sender - God. (2) We become the message, which we have received. (3) We deliver the message in a STATE OF BEING - THE MESSAGE PROCEEDS OUT OF OUR LIFE**.** It is time, beloved saints of God, that every man came to hear Christ personally, receiving from Him that message that spiritual knowledge far beyond what can be taught by men. I have spent thirty-eight years of my calling as a teacher and preacher - a messenger (angel) of God - and if I have learned one lesson above all others through these long years, it is this: it is worthless, ineffective and absolutely futile to minister any word that has not been made SPIRIT AND LIFE WITHIN. Pilate inquired of Christ, "What is truth?" **(Jn. 18:38).** He would better have asked, "WHO" is truth, for truth is more than a "what," it is a "HIM," even Jesus Christ who IS - the Truth, the Life, the Way, the Door, the Shepherd, the Bread, etc. It is also written, "Thy Word is TRUTH..." But He is the living personification of the Word, so we still see truth in a PERSON. Always the message and the messenger must become ONE.

Only in the measure that He reveals Himself to us, and the revelation BECOMES IN US, do we have a message to declare unto others. Until the Word BECOMES IN US it is no better than a theory - a statement of principles, which remain unproven and indemonstrable as fact. Suffice it to say, with Paul, we need to first be PARTAKER OF THE FRUITS, gaining a firsthand knowledge by experience of the things of God, then that

"which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" declare we unto you (I Jn. 1:1). The end is not just giving forth a message, but IN BECOMING THE MESSAGE by virtue of what you ARE. The ministry of the angel is the ministry of the messenger of THE WORD OF GOD, delivering THE MESSAGE OF GOD, not of preaching with words, with emphasis on utterances, but rather a manifestation of the thoughts, intents, purposes and will of God. The doing is the result of BEING, for having BECOME HIS MESSAGE, it follows that men will hear from God in the power and demonstration of the spirit, and not in the wisdom of men's words.

Christ comes IN the voice of the archangel. "The Voice of the Archangel" is another striking symbol of great import and significance. We have previously pointed out that angels are not, as commonly represented, beautiful creatures with wings. The word "angel" is not a translation of the Greek word AGGELOS at all, but merely an English transliteration of the Greek word, which means nothing to the average person. The doctrines taught concerning these angels are nothing short of popish ignorance and deception. AGGELOS means merely "a messenger," one possessing power and authority (II Pet. 2:11). Thus, the "archangel" is the CHIEF-MESSENGER. The word "archangel" is equivalent to "PRINCE OF MESSENGERS." And hence, the "voice of the archangel" means the voice or the message of one with supreme authority, the CHIEF-MESSENGER, or the P-R-I-N-C-E OF MESSENGERS. He comes I-N HIS MESSAGE, He comes AS THE MESSAGE, His very presence and word bring light and truth, encouragement and power, illuminating the minds of God's elect, leading them into the greater ministry which is coming upon the end of the age.

And who is this chief-messenger, this glorious Prince of Messengers, this PREEMINENT MESSAGE, this MESSAGE OF MESSAGES, this R-E-V-E-L-A-T-I-O-N O-F A-L-L R-E-VE-L-A-T-I-O-N-S? With a mouth filled with praise, and a heart of thanksgiving, I answer: CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD! "The LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven IN the voice of the archangel." Praise HIS wonderful name!

Permit me to follow that question with another. How many "arch-angels" are there? Nearly all Christians will tell you that originally there were THREE ARCHANGELS: Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. So-called "orthodoxy" has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Satan was originally "the anointed cherub that covereth... the most beautiful and wise and powerful of all God's creation!" This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic hosts and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy... the greatest being God ever created, one who had unequaled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told, this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated with power and pride and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to the story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant himself as king and god of the universe - and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God won, cast Lucifer out of heaven, and he became, instead of an holy angel, the Devil that he is today.

It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of the scriptures on this subject. Any man who fails to discern between facts and fables, and who opposes or rebels against facts, is a fool. Fools manifest their true state by resisting or ignoring facts. Please remember, there is a world of difference between facts, beliefs, and fantasies. I believe the core of our natural earth is hot, perhaps molten. But no man knows anything about the true conditions down there. There is no possible way of ascertaining or demonstrating the truth or falsity of my belief. So it remains merely a belief: it may be true, or it may be false. On the other hand, if I thought our natural sun were made of red paint that would be a fantasy, just a highly improbable or irrational idea of my own. But facts are altogether different. They are actualities, realities, whether they can be demonstrated as such or not. Ice is cold. That is a fact, which can be demonstrated. The earth is round. That fact has through recent centuries been conclusively demonstrated. It is neither a belief or a fantasy. Fire burns; one must have air to breathe; these are facts, and, only fools will oppose or resist them. Now we are going to state some facts. Let us contrast what MEN say and believe with what GOD says!

Man says that long ago, before the first shimmering light dawned in God's creation, Satan was one of three archangels in heaven. But the Bible nowhere speaks of three archangels. The Bible nowhere calls Lucifer an

archangel. There is not one scripture in the entire Bible wherein the mighty angel Gabriel is named an archangel. Furthermore, there is no instance in scripture where the word archangel appears in its plural form "archangel(s)." There is no plurality of archangels inferred anywhere in God's blessed Book. Our omniscient God has nowhere told us that there are more than one archangel, or that there ever were two or three or more archangels. You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces if you teach that! It is an extra-Biblical teaching. It is now time to awake, time to leave the ignorance of the Dark Ages, and begin to face up to the truth. It is time to open wide our hearts to the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

Dear reader, whom do you choose to believe? God or ignorant men? Men say there are three archangels, but God declares in the plainest of language that there is only ONE. Jude, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned these meaningful words, "Yet Michael THE ARCHANGEL, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, Jehovah rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Michael is not spoken of very often in the scriptures, but when he is, it is most significant. According to Jude there is only ONE archangel; he uses the definite article: "the" archangel; and "the" archangel is named "Michael." Only one other passage of scripture mentions the archangel, and that is the verse which serves as our text for this message: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL..." That, precious friend of mine, is A-L-L the Bible has to say about archangels! Only two verses in the whole Bible! Incredible, isn't it, after all the fanciful tales and elaborate doctrinal theories we have been given! I have very little time, and less patience, for the kind of offensive ignorance which, because men will not hear what is written, misrepresents these and other plain statements of the Word of God. How we thank God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the illumination of this, H-I-S D-A-Y!

It should be clear to any thinking mind that by the very nature of the case the existence of more than one archangel would be an utter impossibility. The Greek word ARCHO (arch) is a political term which means "to be FIRST in political rank or power." F-I-R-S-T! Do you hear it? How can three angels be FIRST? It is a contradiction of terms; it is a linguistical and grammatical absurdity. It is like a nation having three kings, three presidents, or three prime ministers! It would be the same as saying that George Bush is THE president of the United States of America, and then adding, "but two other men are also 'THE' president, you know!" In Dan. 10:13 Michael's position is said to be "one of the chief princes," but as Dr. Young has pointed out in his rendering (Young's Literal Translation), the sentence should read, "FIRST of the chief heads." There are other "principalities and powers," but He is "far above all" of them (Eph. 1:21). Of Michael alone it is said, He is "The Angel" and "The Great Prince" and "The First" of the chief heads! (Dan. 12:1; 10:13).

In the book of Daniel "Michael" is expressly identified with the Messiah (Dan. 12:1). In Dan. 10:21 He is called, "Michael your prince." This personal pronoun "your" is of interest. The archangel is definitely a WARRIOR, and His name means "WHO IS LIKE GOD." He defends the celestial realms, exalting the glorious God, yet His ministry is wondrously on behalf of GOD'S PEOPLE. "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people..." **(Dan. 12:1).** Again, in I Thes. 4:16-17 the voice of the archangel is represented as the voice that awakens the dead. "And the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven... in the voice of the archangel ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first..." Significantly, Dan. 12:1-2 draws the same connection. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ... and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth SHALL AWAKE..." And whose voice is it that quickens men and raises them out of the death realm into the life of God? None other than THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD! "Verily, verily I say unto you," Jesus asserted, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD, and they that hear SHALL LIVE" **(Jn. 5:25).** The voice of the archangel, therefore, IS the voice of the Son of God!

Who are the dead? The scriptures reveal many dimensions of death, from the physical death of the body, with which we are all so familiar, to the dead in trespasses and sins, to the death of being carnally minded, on to the death of our self-life as we are "made conformable to His death." Thank God, HIS VOICE shall penetrate into all the realms and dimensions of death, for John continues, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment; process of correction)." There shall come an hour - that day, that age appointed - when ALL shall hear the VOICE and

shall live, some made alive at once, others following the process of judgment, but ALL who hear His voice SHALL LIVE, and, blessed be God! ALL SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE.

At the present time we are living in the "now is" - "The hour is coming, and NOW IS" - when the firstfruits are being made alive, and "every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" **(Jn. 6:45).** In due time ALL shall be taught of God, but for the present the emphasis is on the little flock, the firstfruits, - and THEY THAT HEAR DO LIVE. HIS VOICE is the revelation of HIS LIFE, and that is why He was able to say, "The WORDS that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" **(Jn. 6:33).** Because they are WORDS OF LIFE they produce life in all who hear them. if you HEAR them, you have to live! This is THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL!

There can be no doubt about it - the title "archangel" signifies CHIEF MESSENGER and the question follows: WHO IS GOD'S CHIEF MESSENGER? Who else but our glorious Head - the Lord Jesus Christ! The name "Michael" means WHO IS LIKE GOD - an appropriate title for Him who is "the sole expression of the glory of God - the Light-being, the outraying of the divine - and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature" **(Heb. 1:3)** (Amplified). Certainly, the whole Christ body, all who are made ONE IN HIM, share this glory and image; but here we are speaking of the ministry of THE HEAD, the revelation of Christ to us, rather than the revelation of Christ through us. The voice of the archangel, the chief messenger, represents Christ's authority, command and life HIS LIVING WORD. This symbol, then, bespeaks of HIS HEADSHIP and represents Christ as coming in the glory of God as the military Leader, the Captain of the Lord's army, as the political Head, the KING of kings, and the LORD of lords!

Yes, the saints are the army of God, and Jesus Christ is the Captain of His army. "And He Himself existed before all things and in Him all things consist - cohere, are held together. HE also is the HEAD OF HIS BODY, the church; seeing He is THE BEGINNING, the First-born from among the dead, so that HE ALONE IN EVERYTHING AND IN EVERY RESPECT MIGHT OCCUPY THE C-H-I-E-F P-L-A-C-E - stand FIRST and be PRE-EMINENT" **(Col. 1:17-18)** (Amplified). A brother has commented on this passage: "Because He is the IMAGE of the invisible God, therefore He becomes the Firstborn of every creature. The word "firstborn" used here is the Greek word PROTOTOKOS, a technical word speaking of priority to and sovereign over all creation. It does not mean that He is simply the first in a successive line of created beings, though some would like to so limit Him, and rob Him of His deity. John 1:3 declares that 'all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.' He antedates all created things, for He is uncreated, eternal, absolute Deity. And when He would bring forth form, He is the FIRST FORM of all forms, the uncaused First Cause. 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men' **(Jn. 1:4).** He said, 'I form the light...' **(Isa. 45:7),** and HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Whatever the expression of life and light to man, HE is the first, the original expression, glorious" -Gospel Echoes.

Because He is the WORD which was with God in the beginning, and the WORD which was God, He is also the CHIEF MESSENGER, and the CHIEF MESSAGE, and therefore the HEAD of the whole MESSENGER COMPANY; HE is THE MESSAGE which has become OUR MESSAGE, and the message which WE ARE BECOMING, that in all He might have the pre-eminence. To be a message-messenger (angel) awaits the inward revelation of Christ, which results in His supremacy in our life. This alone enables us to declare His message - to proclaim the good tidings - to preach HIM. Many try to preach His Word, to teach His ways, to declare His virtues and excellencies, to extol His beauty and attributes, but only in the measures that He is formed and revealed IN us, can we truly speak forth to others. He must be REAL TO US, REAL I-N US, so that what flows out of us will be HIM, and then is fulfilled the scripture, "Lo, He cometh IN HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF!" **(Jude 14).** Then shall be heard the Lord Himself descending from heaven "IN the Voice of the Archangel!" Praise His wonderful name!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 41
COMING IN THE TRUMP OF GOD

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-ONE

THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUMPET
THE LAST TRUMP

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with THE TRUMP OF GOD..." **(I Thes. 4:16).**

In the previous two studies in which we have considered the beautiful passage above we have noted that Young's Literal Translation correctly translates the Greek text so that it reads, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" the trump of God, but "in" the trump of God. If, therefore, we can know what the trump of God is, and are able to recognize its sound, we will have assurance that the Lord Himself has descended from heaven and is present, for He comes to us IN the trump of God.

It is strange what odd notions some people get concerning the meaning of scriptures they read in the Bible. For instance, I was brought up under ministries who taught that every word in the Bible was to be taken literally, and that the word "trumpet," as used in our subject, and also in the book of Revelation and elsewhere, referred to the Lord blowing a literal trumpet when He crashes down through the clouds at the end of this age, a trumpet blast so piercing and electrifying that it would actually awaken the dead bodies in the cemeteries. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth than such a strange notion. When Jesus said that He was the vine and His disciples were the branches, He certainly did not mean that He was a literal vine and they were literal branches. When He told His followers they were the salt of the earth, He certainly did not mean that they were literally sodium chloride. The Bible is full of symbols and figures of speech, of which these are but a few. The greatest danger, when we come to the Word of God, is not in "spiritualizing" it away, but in "carnalizing" it away! "The words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE," Jesus said.

On one occasion Jesus said, "Behold, I come as a thief" **(Rev. 16:15).** Paul explained that the Lord would come in a "shout," also in the "voice of the archangel," and in the "trump of God." Certainly thieves do not blow trumpets and shout, nor did Jesus blow a trumpet or shout when He departed from the mount of Olives; although the scripture assures us that He comes "in like manner" even as He went into heaven. But these are not contradictions. They are but word pictures to help our minds comprehend more clearly some of the great factors in the coming of Christ and what the various facets of His coming mean to us spiritually. We know something about the manner of a thief's coming. We know a little concerning the purpose of blowing trumpets. We are familiar with shouts of command. We know something of the characteristics of clouds and what they specify. When we put all these together and add to them the many other illustrations of the scriptures 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 rain-clouds tooting a horn, but a series of MIGHTY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CHRIST IN GREAT SPIRITUAL POWER AND GLORY, shaking everything that is earthly, quickening all that is dead, and transforming men and nations until the prayer is fully answered, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." In each case the language is metaphorical; of necessity heavenly things are described to us under earthly imagery, otherwise we who have been subjected to this gross material realm, and who speak the language of this world, could not understand them.

The word "trumpet" appears approximately one hundred times in the Bible. In the Old Testament the word is found about eighty-five times while in the New Testament it occurs only about fifteen times. The first use of the term is recorded in Exodus, the last in the book of Revelation. To get the spiritual meaning of trumpets we need to establish something of their typological significance. The meaning of the trumpet is made crystal clear in a number of scriptures. Isaiah said, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up T-H-Y V-O-I-C-E LIKE A TRUMPET, and

show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins" **(Isa. 58:1).** Here the voice bearing God's message to His people is likened unto the sounding of a trumpet.

One day as the beloved apostle John trod the burning sands of the desolation of Patmos, he was suddenly caught away in the spirit and immediately, "I heard behind me a great V-O-I-C-E, AS OF A TRUMPET, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" **(Rev. 1:10-11).** Here, Christ's voice, as John heard it, is compared to a trumpet. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first V-O-I-C-E which I heard was as it were a TRUMPET talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show you things which must be hereafter" **(Rev. 4:1).** Notice this trumpet-voice told him to come up higher, so he could see the things God wanted to show him. God's trumpet-message is always to come up higher. It is sent because that is the great need of the saints and of all mankind, to come up into the higher realms of the spirit, for we cannot see the glorious spiritual truths nor behold the wondrous heavenly things from the lowlands of our carnal mind and nature. Normally we "hear" a voice, but John said of the trumpet-voice that penetrated his spiritual consciousness, "And I turned to SEE THE VOICE that spake with me. And being turned, I SAW seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks ONE like unto the Son of man..." **(Rev. 1:12-13).** The One who spoke with a "voice" as of a "trumpet" was IN the trumpet voice, and it was IN THE MESSAGE OF THE VOICE that this glorious One was revealed. I do not hesitate to tell you that this was the revelation of Jesus Christ as He appeared to John IN THE TRUMP OF GOD!

Isaiah foretells many things pertaining to the day of the Lord, this day in which we live. The trumpet that shall be blown is none other than the voice of God sounding forth. It is His word, His message going out to the people. "And He shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" **(Mat. 24:31).** Now if HE sends HIS messengers with a great sound of a trumpet, it must be HIS TRUMPET they are sounding; His word they are giving out. His mighty message gathers together in the spirit His elect. It brings them from the low places of spiritual experience, to high ones. Oh! think of the power the sound of His trumpet carries to lift men from corruption into His pure divine nature!

"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the SOUND OF A TRUMPET" **(Ps. 47:5).** When a rising time is due for God's people, it may be said that God is "gone UP," as taken from the lesson that He moved in a pillar of cloud and fire to lead His ancient people, Israel. "With the sound of a trumpet" signifies that His voice is being heard. God's VOICE and His TRUMPET are ore and the same. It is the sounding forth of His Word. Many messengers (His many-membered body) add volume to the sound of that trumpet. **Rev. 1:15** says, "...His voice as the sound of MANY WATERS." John also tells us in Rev. 17:15 that waters means multitudes of peoples. So God's trumpet voice is sounding through many people, "many waters." "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a multitude, and as the VOICE OF MANY WATERS, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" **(Rev. 19:5-6).** John heard coming from the throne (divine authority) a message which he said was a voice of a "multitude," of "many waters," and of "mighty thunderings," saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." It was one trumpet message with many voices adding volume to it. It was ONE MESSAGE, but being trumpeted by many voices, so that it became as the voice of a "great thunder." This shows the beautiful unity in Christ and His many-membered body.

There need be no question in the mind of anyone but that God's "trumpet" is a MESSAGE given to a person or persons and sounded out to the people. The word of the Lord came to the prophet Ezekiel saying, "Son of man, SPEAK to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he see the sword come upon the land, he blow the TRUMPET, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the SOUND OF THE TRUMPET, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. SO THOU, O son of man, I have set THEE A WATCHMAN unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me...therefore ... SPEAK unto the house of Israel, saying..." **(Eze. 33:2-10).**

How clear that the Holy Spirit here equates the VOICE of God's prophet, bearing the Lord's MESSAGE to the house of Israel, with the SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET of the watchman. The trumpet bespeaks a clear word of God from the Spirit appointed and Spirit anointed messengers, His ministers. Trumpets are words, clear words, living words. The trumpet of God is His voice, His voice from heaven, His voice in the saints; even the voice of the Holy Spirit through the consecrated priests of the Most High. The voice of the Lord is the trumpet-sound and the trumpet-voice, the divine message of His truth and life. The trumpet is the revelation of the Lord speaking through His true ministries in an oracle of the Spirit. The sound of the trumpet is simply the PROCLAMATION OF A MESSAGE!

With a simple knowledge like this we should have no trouble at all in understanding that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, is Himself the trumpet, the message, the revelation! In type, Jesus is the trumpet of God, delivering a clear sound, a living word, and introducing us to the reality of the perfection and incorruptible life of which He is the beginning. Praise God, it is the LORD HIMSELF who comes in the trumpet (message), and at the sound of His voice we are CAUGHT UP with Him to share the glory of His sphere of life. The Lord Himself descends out from the highest realms of our heavens (spirit) into the lower realm of our earth. We are the creatures God is creating to express His nature, power and glory unto creation. His purpose for coming out of the realm of spirit into your earth is to catch your whole being up into the realm of spirit, to swallow up all death into HIS LIFE. And He accomplishes this by coming to us IN A TRUMPET MESSAGE. He comes in a shout, in a voice of command, and in the trump of God because though we are hungry for God and desire more of Him, because of our flesh and the control of the carnal mind we are not easily alerted or moved.

Too numerous to mention have been the things God has taught us as we have walked in the light of His ever-increasing truth. Our minds have often been staggered by the wonderful things we have seen and heard and our ambitions have been raised as we have gazed into the Promised Land of the Spirit and have seen the innumerable and wonderful glories that lie before us in the fullness of our sonship. We are undoubtedly standing at the threshold of a new dimension in God, a higher realm in the Spirit, and a new level of experience. When we come to a time like this, many will refuse to go on. There is some strange thing inherent in all men that makes them reluctant to leave the security of their fixed abode to press forward into the challenge of the new. They feel that they have journeyed far enough and that the effort to press into the new and more wonderful realm is too great a risk. We tend to become rigid, settled, self confident and crystallized, - fixed in our gaze and in our pose. In order for us not to miss the next phase of the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ, God has to sound a shrill trumpet into our hearts that we might be alerted. God is wanting to say and do a NEW THING. It is time to go forward. It is the hour to arise to the battle and possess our land, our full inheritance in God. It is time to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and GO ON TO PERFECTION. It is time to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed by the renewing of our mind. It is time to live and not die. So the Lord descends from heaven in a battle alarm, in the electrifying sound of a trumpet-message, to stimulate, to arouse, to alert and challenge you to get ready for the battle of the ages and the victory of victories that follows!

Today God is trumpeting a message into our hearing. He is projecting into our thinking a realm beyond the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, yea, beyond anything we have heretofore seen, heard, or experienced. He is projecting the fullness of salvation, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the King-Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, maturity in the nature and power of sonship and the dynamic realities of the Most Holy Place into us. No matter what our spiritual understanding has been, we are finally being made aware that we are now living in the most momentous hour imaginable. There is an awakening among the elect of the Lord that transcends human knowledge. He is putting into the hearts of His chosen people the desire to ready themselves for the sonship prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

The trumpet-message is alerting our minds to the fact that the sons of God who are being prepared to restore creation are not just ordinary Christians with ordinary experiences. We have tasted of the earnest of our inheritance, and it is now time to arise and enter an entirely new realm of experience in God. I am speaking of the realm, which is in truth the realm of the fullness of God, the realm far above all heavens, the realm of incorruptible life and glory, and the realm of the Kingdom in authority and power. Furthermore I am convinced that those who have ears to hear the sound of the trumpet in this hour will attain to the glory of that new realm while the rest of the church world go on as usual in the old realm and on the old planes. Jesus is the revelation

of this realm of which I speak because He came forth as the Pattern Son and He spoke a clear sounding word. He is the pattern of this heavenly sonship and He is the Alpha and the Omega of it. He is the beginning of the new creation of God, but you and I are following the forerunner, and just as He trumpeted a clear sounding word, you and I are going to trumpet a clear sounding word to the elect in this generation.

We need to take heed to how we hear, and how we speak and what we speak. The order of man is passing. How? BY THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET! By the very word of your mouth, because of Him who speaks out of you. We might compromise the message and bear a message of appeasement to the old order of the religious systems, but what would that accomplish? I hear the voice of the Lord calling and commanding us today, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand" **(Joel 2:1).** It has been prophesied that a trumpet would be sounding at this time. If a trumpeter blows an uncertain sound, how will you know to prepare? If the trumpeter has no message, how is he going to speak? God has commanded us to blow a trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in His holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at hand. Our job is to sound an alarm in Zion and awaken His people, arouse His elect and let them know THE DAY OF THE LORD IS HERE!

THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUMPET

In I Thes. 4:16 we are told that the Lord descends from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel, and in the trump of God - a threefold announcement and publicity. In scripture the number three speaks of completeness. The emphasis here is that God is speaking a complete word, conveying a full, total, unfragmented and unimpaired message, truly the FULL GOSPEL! This message will not be received by reason or logic, nor by searching the letter that killeth, nor by might nor by power, "...but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" **(Zech. 4:6).** I have wondered betimes when passing through cities and seeing church buildings with the words over the doorway "FULL GOSPEL," whether those who lead or attend really understand those words. The words "FULL GOSPEL" have a far greater significance than most folks realize. The word "full" implies maximum in size, extent and degree And the word "gospel" speaks of GOOD NEWS. There IS such a gospel, praise God! that reaches out to the whole creation with the promise of reconciliation, restoration, and fullness. But few who proclaim that they preach the "full gospel" have ever heard of it.

Trumpets were used as a means of mass communication in ancient Israel, in their camps in the wilderness, and after they were settled in the Promised Land. The assembly in the wilderness was large and unruly. It was difficult to communicate by voice to upwards of two million people. When the troops were needed to fight, they might be out gathering the daily supply of manna. At night they would be sound asleep in their tents. At times all the people needed to be assembled. At other times only a portion of the people was required, such as the elders or the warriors. To communicate with the entire wilderness people, a clear system had to be devised.

Moses was instructed by the Lord as to the solution. He was to have two silver trumpets fashioned (Num. 10:1-2). From time immemorial, the military organizations of the world have used TRUMPETS because of their shrill, strident, exciting and piercing tones, in marshalling and moving military bands and groups of men. What veteran of the service is not familiar with "reveille," "general quarters," "chow call," and "taps"? A trumpet is far louder and more effective than any human voice. With the use of a system of calls, various portions of the congregation of Israel could be gathered for whatever purpose necessary. The alarm for war could be sounded as well as the announcement of the various feast days. The Israelites could be called to make their journey with clarity of direction sounded by these trumpets. Israel was now ready to move.

The tenth chapter of the book of Numbers deals with the importance of God's people KNOWING THE MEANING of the blowing of trumpets. Each trumpet blast has a spiritual significance. God's people had to become acquainted with each sound so that they would know what to do so there would not be confusion in the time of the blowing of the trumpets. There were twelve different uses of the trumpets. One purpose of the blowing of the trumpets was for the assembling together of the congregation, calling the tribes together as one nation, proclaiming the principle of unity. Out of their various tribes came the people of Judah, Issachar, Dan, Levi, etc., until they stood as ONE before the Door of the Tabernacle of God, to hear the voice of the Lord through His prophet. And in this hour, God is once again gathering His people together UNTO CHRIST, the

Door, to hear His prophet, that anointed ministry that God is raising up to bear the Word of the Lord. This trumpet blast of truth is freeing us from our sectarianism, hypocrisy, selfhood and confusion. This is no time for intellectual sermons and pleasing platitudes ... it is time for God's prophet, the anointed body, to lift up his voice like a trumpet as Isaiah says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" **(Isa. 58:1).** This silver, redemptive trumpet, is washing us with the water of His pure Word, resulting in our being cleansed and sanctified. This trumpet is perfecting us that we may be without spot or wrinkle and clothed in the white linen of the righteousness of the saints. This trumpet is watering and feeding the incorruptible seed in our spirit and causing Christ in us to be formed and arise in us. But many will not hear, their ears are dull, and they remain in the tents of their captivity and refuse to "come out of her, My people."

The second purpose of the blowing of the trumpets was for the Journeyings of the camp. When the cloud moved, the camp moved. Sometimes the camp of Israel would be in one place for just a few days, sometimes for several months. But when God moved on and the cloud moved on, Israel was called upon to move on. The move was announced by a certain blast of the trumpet. And today, beloved, God had a trumpet-message to send forth when it is time for His people to move into new territory. This redemptive message implores us to "follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6:3). This trumpet sound commands us to pull up the tent stakes of tradition; fold up the tents of man-made religion; take down the banners of static creeds and dogmas and past experiences in God, and stop camping around this mountain of "kingdom-building" and a partial experience of God. We have camped around this mountain long enough. Let us go on to know the Lord in all of His glorious and eternal reality! Only men who have ears to hear can hear this call of the Spirit, but the trumpet is blowing and many have heard the call. Thank God for the manna which has sustained us throughout our pilgrimage journey, even unto now. Thank God for the water out of the rock, to quench our thirst. Thank God for the Holy Spirit, the cloud that has gone ahead of us, and directed us all through this great and terrible wilderness. But there are better things ahead! What worked yesterday will not work today, and what satisfied yesterday will not satisfy today, and it will not take you on to perfection. There are times in your life when God wants you to move forward in Him. He says you have camped around this mountain long enough. He has a land of promise ahead for you with all its inexhaustible abundance! Let us not settle for a partial revelation of God as through a glass darkly, but let us see Him face to face, to know Him even as we are known of Him. Why sit ye here and die in the prison house of man's program when the very heavens cannot contain the glory of our God, whom the Spirit shall reveal and is revealing in all His fullness, if only we dare to journey on with Him!

The third purpose for the blowing of the trumpets was the calling together of the princes, or leadership of the tribes. Do you know how many times the trumpets blew to call the princes? ONLY ONCE! In this realm God only speaks once. These are the elders of Israel, the disciplined ones, the prepared ones, the experienced ones, the mature ones, the responsible ones who by intense dealings have learned to HEAR and to KNOW God's voice for themselves. These are the FIRSTFRUITS! If you are still of the mentality that questions, "God, is that really you? Are you sure Lord? I don't know for certain whether thi the will of God, but I THINK the Lord is saying... it seems to me...," then you are not of the princely spirit. In this dimension God speaks only once, with one clear sound, and those whose hearts are circumcised and whose ears are disciplined respond without hesitation or questioning.

The fourth purpose for the sounding of the trumpets was to sound an alarm. This was a warning when there was danger or Israel was threatened by an enemy. All the people could hear these blasts, which were prolonged and frequently repeated to alert the people to the danger. This is fulfilled in the life of the believer when the Holy Spirit gives that unquestionable "check" in one's spirit concerning a course of action, a false ministry, a wrong direction, false teachings, etc. This trumpet call fulfills the principle of SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

The fifth purpose of the sounding of the trumpets was the call to war. This trumpet is the redemptive message that beseeches us to put on the full armor of God that we may be able to STAND in THE EVIL DAY (Eph. 6:13). The church systems today are literally filled with carnal, earthly-minded Christians who sit back in ease and self-complacency awaiting a "rapture" that will translate them out of the day of great tribulation and trouble. In the vast majority of evangelical circles the people are taught the tranquilizing doctrine that at any moment all God's people shall be caught up, raptured, to be with the Lord in the air - to escape the great tribulation which

shall soon visit the earth. It is not true! Nowhere within the pages of God's blessed Book are we told that we are to be raptured out of trouble - including the "great tribulation." What is does say is that we are to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to STAND IN T-H-E E-V-I-L D-A-Y. The Holy Spirit witnesses of battle and warfare unto victory, not a massive "evacuation" of the army of the Lord carried out in the face of its greatest challenge. This truth is presented in an especially beautiful and forceful way in Weymouth's translation. "In conclusion, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armor of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world - the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore PUT ON THE COMPLETE ARMOUR OF GOD, so that you will be able to stand your ground IN THE EVIL DAY, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" (Eph. 6:10-13, Weymouth).

"And having fought to the end, to REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD." What a word! We are not instructed to seek wings to fly away to heaven while the devil trods roughshod over the earth and all mankind. We have a helmet and a breastplate, a shield and a sword, but NO WINGS. We are given enough armor to win the victory against the greatest foe, even the principalities and powers in the heavens, for our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. All hell trembles when it hears of this great army of the sons of God, small in number out of earth's teeming billions, but mighty through God. Ah, the saints shall be "caught up" alright; caught up into the throne of God, into the realm of His almighty power and sovereign authority. Arise, sons of God, from the dust of desolation and defeat. Put on your beautiful garments, and the whole armor of God! The trumpet call goes forth in this great hour, calling for a Gideon's band who shall be "more than conquerors" through Christ that loved us. And the band is being prepared, for which we are thankful; an army whose power is not in themselves, but in the Sword of the LORD!

The sixth purpose for the sounding of the trumpets was to announce the celebration of the Feasts of the Lord, the days of gladness, and times of joy and victory. There are three great Feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Trumpets sound for each Feast. There is a trumpet, or a message, that introduces the Feast of Passover. Another trumpet or message sounds for Pentecost. And there is a message or trumpet that brings God's people into the fullness of God in the Feast of Tabernacles. The trumpet message that calls us to celebrate Passover sounds like this: "Ye must be born again; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The trumpet that calls us to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, sounds like this**:** "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you, and your children, to as many as the Lord our God shall call" **(Acts 2:38-39).** "...be filled with the Spirit" **(Eph. 5:18).** "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" **(Mat. 3:11).** "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" **(Acts 19:2).**

The trumpet-message that calls us to the Feast of Tabernacles sounds like this: "Let us go on to perfection" **(Heb. 6:1).** "Take heed...until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" **(II Pet. 1:19).** "Arise, shine..." **(Isa. 60:1).** "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" **(Heb. 12:2).** "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" **(Phil. 3:14).** "... till Christ be formed in you" **(Gal. 4:19).** "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" **(Rom. 8:17).** "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" **(Rom. 8:19).** "He that overcometh... to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" **(Rev. 2:26-27).** "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" **(Dan. 11:32).** All enemies shall be put under the feet of the body of Christ, until every enemy has been destroyed, even death! Whether or not you have faith to believe for these great things, does not bother me in the least. For the performance of those things God has spoken does not depend upon your faith, and is not hindered by your unbelief. HE has spoken, and HE shall perform it. The age of sin, sickness, crime, hate, war, pain, darkness, and death is rapidly coming to an end. The door is opening to a new age. The Kingdom of God shall triumph in the earth! Hallelujah! I can hear the trumpet sounding!

The seventh purpose for the sounding of the trumpets in Israel was to gather the people to the solemn assemblies, to show God's people their transgression, and call them to mourning and repentance. The eighth purpose was to announce the beginning of the months, to herald the arrival of a new phase in God's purposes. The ninth was the announcing of offerings and sacrifices, the tenth the anointing of kings, the eleventh the

dedication of the temple, and the twelth the proclamation of the great year of Jubilee, when all creation is freed, restored to their inheritance again.

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD! "In the old covenant, the sons of Aaron blow with the trumpets; and this was an ordinance to the priests; and when they blowed the trumpets, the outward Israelites were to assemble themselves before the tabernacle. And when they blew an alarm, then the camp set forward. So they did not gather them together to the door of the tabernacle with ringing of bells, in the old covenant, but with the blowing of trumpets. And in the solemn feasts they blew the trumpets; which was a day of blowing the trumpets, which were outward, in their outward feasts, to their outward gathering to their outward tabernacle. But in the new covenant and testament, which is not according to the old, the trumpets are spiritual and heavenly, which are sounded with the power and spirit of God, in the day of Christ; yea, all the elect in His light, the life in Him, are a royal priesthood, and blow the trumpet. And at the sound of this heavenly trumpet, they gather to this heavenly tabernacle, not made with hands, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, to His heavenly solemn feast, through the baptism of Christ and circumcision with His spirit, that plunges down and cuts off all corruption; and so all come to drink into one spirit, that put off the body of death and sins of the flesh. And so by these spiritual and heavenly trumpets, ye are gathered to the heavenly feast, and bread, and wine, and honey, from heaven, and the new milk from the living word, that lives and abides, whose heavenly breast is never dry, but is always full of heavenly milk. And so as the heavenly trumpet sounds, the Israelites in spirit move and go, and follow the heavenly spiritual Lamb in their fine linen of righteousness, and keep their feast of the heavenly bread that cannot be leavened. So the bread, the wine, the milk, the honey, the water, the trumpets, and the tabernacle, are heavenly and spiritual in the new covenant and testament, which are not according to the old, with their outward bread, and water, and trumpets, and outward tabernacle. All those outward things Christ abolished, which served until the seed came to reform it; and in the time of the seed reformation of Christ, the heavenly and spiritual Man, translates His believers and followers out of the natural, outward, and carnal, into the heavenly, inward, spiritual. And so the new and living way, and the new covenant and testament, and the new time of reformation, are not according to Israel's old covenant and testament, and old order and way." - From the writings of George Fox in the year 1706.

THE LAST TRUMP

In interpreting scripture we are so inclined to interpret all things with our human understanding. When the Word speaks of the sounding of a trumpet, our carnal mind envisages a loud blast akin to the sound of reveille, but such is not necessarily the case. In I Cor. 15:51-52 we have this significant statement: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The scripture is clear: we shall be CHANGED at the LAST TRUMP! The Bible speaks of many trumpets, each with its own signification, but I think all will agree that there cannot be any trumpet sounding after the LAST TRUMP. There may be other trumpets of different orders, but the Last Trump is always the final trumpet to sound in any series.

It is significant to note that in the book of Revelation, chapters eight through twelve, we have presented the sounding of seven trumpets. I am confident that this seventh trumpet is the LAST TRUMPET, for after the seventh trumpet there can be no other. Trumpet after trumpet the inworking of God's truth progresses in the spiritual lives of the elect until at last the final trumpet, the last message, the ultimate revelation is ready to complete the process, producing a people in the fullness of the glory of the Lord. So great is the crowning work wrought by this final unveiling that a "strong" or mighty "angel" is dispatched from heaven to sound the trumpet. This honored messenger is seen coming from heaven with a rainbow over His head. A rainbow is formed when pure white light is passed through a three-dimensional object called a prism. As the light passes through the prism it is divided into the color spectrum. Throughout scripture we see these colors associated with God and His throne. Here, it bespeaks of the three-dimensional character of our LORD-JESUS-CHRIST who is "the expression of the glory of God - the Light-being, the outraying of the divine - the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature" **(Heb. 1:3)** (Amplified). The "angel" can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for this is the LAST TRUMP and HE it is, the LORD HIMSELF, who descends from heaven IN the trump of God." As the holy and perfect One descends from the heaven of our spirit into the earth of body and soul at the sounding of the last trump, we too shall become a perfect three-dimensional prism of perfected and

glorified body, soul, and spirit, whose ends are equal and parallel triangles, and whose faces are parallelograms, each equally and perfectly refracting the light of God to creation. As God's nature flows through our triangular being we, too, shall express the nature of God on many levels of His Spirit, such as wisdom, understanding, might, counsel, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord - God's Spirit coming forth as light which is the true expression of life denoting righteousness, peace and joy.

May God grant us wisdom and understanding that we may apprehend the mystery of these things. The number seven gives me the understanding that contained within the seven trumpets is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As the trumpets sound within the lives of God's people they begin to experience the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the firstborn among many brethren. But now there is a people who have been sealed unto the day of redemption and when God begins to loose the seals and sound the trumpet-messages it will bring forth a many-membered expression of God at the same level of God's fullness. This is the Lord Himself descending.

Rev. 8:1 records the opening of the "seventh" and last "seal." Then "seven angels" appear, and to these are given "seven trumpets." We will not attempt to go into detail concerning the nature of these various messages which are symbolized by the seven trumpets. Suffice it to call attention briefly to the fact that in connection with the "voice" or trumpet of the seventh angel, "when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished" **(Rev. 10:7).** In verses eight and nine of Rev. 10, this "finished mystery" of God is likened to a "little book," which, when it is eaten is sweet as honey in the mouth, but "shall make thy belly bitter." God's intention is to see His nature inscribed perfectly in the lives of a people. As we take the revelation of God - the present truth - into our mouths, all its wonderful promise and divine potential is sweet as honey to our taste (how wonderful it is!), but as it begins to be assimilated and work within the inner man it becomes bitter by the work of the cross as it leads to purging, processing, breaking, and multiplied changes of mind, heart, confession, and action.

The sounding of the seven trumpets denotes a process. "In the DAYS of the VOICE of the seventh angel (messenger), when he shall BEGIN TO SOUND, the mystery of God should be finished." The words, "In the D-A-Y-S of the voice of the seventh angel and the words, "begin to sound," speak volumes to me because the complete sounding of that trumpet involves a process in time and shows us that our change which comes with the sounding of the seventh or last trumpet is not to find its total consummation in one specific moment. There is an obvious implication of a prolonged sounding extending through various periods and dealings. Yet at the initial sounding, the "mystery" of God's purpose for His elect shall no longer be hidden. Ah - methinks I have heard this trumpet, for the mystery of God has been revealed in the midst of the saints in these days! In Rev. 12, when we arrive at the final drama, the closing act, the grand finale of the seventh trumpet the MANCHILD is birthed - that glorious company of the sons of God is caught up to God and His throne and given authority to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Hallelujah!

Let me reiterate. John said, "And I saw seven angels (messengers) which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" **(Rev. 8:2).** "And the seven angels (messengers) which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" **(Rev. 8:6).** Then follows the account of their sounding, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, which denotes times and seasons in which new messages come. "But in the days of the VOICE of the seventh angel (messenger), when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" **(Rev. 10:7).** When Christ appears in His SEVENTH TRUMPET MESSAGE the mystery of God is finished. "There are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which ARE the seven spirits of God" **(Rev. 4:7). "**And I beheld...a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns (power) and seven eyes (perception), which ARE the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" **(Rev. 5:6).** The term seven is used to denote completeness, and as seven spirits of God are mentioned, it means that He has a spirit of power that accompanies each trumpet message, and a vision which goes with each particular message, according to the need of the time. May the Lord help us to see these deep and precious truths.

It is time, my beloved, for the mystery of God to be finished. "Finished" means completed or consummated. What is the mystery of God? Eph. 3:2-6 explains the mystery! "How that by revelation He made known unto

me the MYSTERY; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." When you follow the word "mystery" through the writings of the apostles it is clear that the mystery is the body of Christ. In Eph. 5:31-32 it is the mystery of the union of Christ with His body.

The body of Christ has been being formed since the conception of the Church on the day of Pentecost. We all understand that when a baby comes forth in a normal birth the head comes forth first, and afterwards the body. Two thousand years ago Christ came forth as the Head and from that day to this He has been forming His body - right down to the feet. When the voice of the seventh and final trumpet begins to sound, precious saints of God, what is going to happen? THE BODY OF CHRIST IS GOING TO BE FINISHED! Not just quantitatively, but qualitatively. That trumpet signifies that the Lord's elect, the sons of God or the body of Christ, have all been transformed into His image and likeness, have partaken of His life, and are also joined to Christ the Head, making one radiantly adorned Christ in the image and likeness of God almighty. The MYSTERY will be completed! The body of Christ will come forth into full birth, full and complete manifestation. This corporate Christ, Head and body, this manchild company, is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Caught up to God and His throne - into His authority. In the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet the mystery shall be finished, the body completed, the long and tedious work of the preparation of God's sons shall at last be consummated, praise His name! The trumpet has begun to sound! There is an increase of God's revelatory word, an intensified trumpet-message, a clear revelation of Jesus Christ! Listen, my friend, for the sounding of the trumpet-voice within your spirit!

If you can hear this trumpet sounding above the hue and cry of rapture, antichrist, mark of the beast, Christmas, Easter, denominationalism, sectarianism, mansions over the hilltop, cabins in the corner of Glory land, pie in the sky, religious programs, rituals, ceremonies, endless meetings, shepherding, coverings, cunningly devised fables, money raising schemes, false prophets, false healers, lying signs and wonders, and carnal health and wealth and prosperity doctrines; if you can mount up with wings as eagles and soar high above all this carnal, confused, frustrated clamor of noisy gongs and clanging cymbals, and hear the distinct, plain, unmistakable sound of this last trump then it can be said to you: Blessed art thou, overcomer, manchild, hundredfold, firstfruits: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. This is the last redemptive message and when it is finished sounding God will have made man in His image. What tremendous truths are being blown on this redemptive trumpet! Let not any man rob you of the greatest sound that man has ever been privileged to hear. A sound with such a high and holy pitch, with tones so deep and profound, that only the Spirit can reveal its message to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Do not miss what the Spirit is saying; gird up the loins of your mind with the truth that will fully redeem you, spirit, soul, and body.

When the last trumpet sounds the mystery of Christ and His body is finished. The body of Christ will have appropriated their full inheritance in God. But let not any man imagine that that ends the purposes of God for His creation. No way! It is not an ending, but a glorious BEGINNING! The truth is that out of the seventh trumpet comes deliverance for all mankind! This is the purpose of the Christ body - to restore all things into the life, and light, and love of God. Nothing can be clearer than this in these inspired words of the beloved Seer of Patmos**:** "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world ARE BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned**"** **(Rev. 11:15-17).**

In closing this message I share with you a significant vision from a prophet of God of yesteryear. There is neither time nor space to elaborate upon this remarkable vision but I am confident that as you meditate prayerfully upon it the blessed Spirit of Truth will illuminate the eyes of your understanding and interpret its message to mind and heart. The vision is as follows...

"Just before we went to Africa, God came to me in a vision. In it I stood where I could view the whole world, and it was wrapped in darkness. At times I could see great fires springing up on the surface of the earth and the people would gather around the fires to warm themselves. Then, as I continued to watch, fires would break

out in other places. But without exception, after a large group would gather around the fire, little evil-looking figures came out of the shadows. Those who were gathered around the fire were so occupied with rejoicings that they seemed wholly unconscious of these little figures. But, from where I stood, I could see these shadowy figures as they came silently out of the surrounding darkness. I noticed that each one was carrying a little, engraved shovel. These they placed in the hands of each one who stood around the fire. In the immediate vicinity, I could see where great fires had burned in by-gone days, but had long since burned themselves out, leaving only great heaps of ashes.

"As I watched, each of those around the fire would go over to the ash heap, fill his little shovel with cold ashes; then, with much dignity - as though faithfully performing a solemn duty - they would scatter the cold ashes very carefully over the fire. This they continued to do until the fire was completely smothered and dead. They then knelt in the ashes and prayed for light and warmth. This procedure was repeated over, and over, and over. The world began to grow darker and colder, and the men continued in their efforts to extinguish every fire, here, there, and everywhere...

"All the fires had long since died out, and the people were weeping and wailing as they prayed for light and warmth. My heart was deeply stirred and I began to pray with a fervency that can only be born in the darkness of the world's Gethsemanes. Then I became a part of the scene, kneeling in the ashes. No longer an interceding observer, I prayed even more fervently. I stood to my feet and lifted my hands and my face toward heaven. I began to cry with great agony of soul. Louder and louder I lifted my voice, in frantic desperation, until all the other crying around about me was merged into my own desperate cry.

"As I stood there, calling unto the Lord with all the anguish of my soul, I saw a light, 'way, 'way high in the heavens, just a speck of light. It began to come closer and closer, and then, suddenly, it stood by my side - a celestial Being of fire. He was formed like a man and yet he was a Being of fire. In his hand was a trumpet of fire which he handed to me saying, 'Blow!' I stood transfixed, overcome with awe! He placed the trumpet to my lips; I breathed into it, and lo! the sound was amplified until it reverberated over the countryside. As I continued to blow, the creature of fire leaped into the ashes and stirred the smoldering embers until the flames leaped high into the sky. I was now blowing the trumpet louder and louder, and people began coming out of the darkness from every direction. The light from the fire seemed now to light the whole earth, and, as the people gathered, they began to march past the fiery messenger. He stood in the flaming fire, and, when they went by, he would give to each of them a trumpet of fire. They, in turn, would put it to their lips and start out across the earth, blowing with all their strength. As they went, fires were lighted everywhere. It seemed as though the very tones of the trumpets were lighting fires, sending a great wall of flame rolling across the earth. It was consuming everything in its path - burning everything as it went. As I looked, I thought, 'What desolation! What desolation! Everything that we have known is gone.' Then it began to rain, a slow, gentle rain.

"As I watched, vegetation began to spring up - grass, green herbs and trees, and every tree was loaded with fruit. Everything was fruitful, there wasn't one thing twisted, warped or barren. I turned to speak to the messenger, but he was gone. Yet the whole world remained beautiful and serene. The warfare was accomplished, the Kingdom of God had been established in the earth, and peace reigned. The Long night was over, and morning had come.

"I believe that, in this vision, God was showing me the course of these end-time days..." -Thomas Wyatt, in THUNDER BEFORE DAWN.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 42
CAUGHT UP IN THE AIR

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-TWO

CAUGHT UP
IN THE AIR

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel, and in the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP together with them in the clouds, to MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: and SO shall we ever be with the Lord**" (I Thes. 4:16-17).**

In our study of the coming of the Lord we now come to what is to me one of the most exciting truths in God's Word; exciting because it is happening; exciting because the Lord's people have been waiting for it for centuries; the promise has been standing for two millenniums. There are many theories and concepts today about this "catching up" experience. The common thought among many carnal minded Christian professors is that it is a yet future physical event, which could come at any moment. All over the world today there is a growing emphasis on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Bible-believing Christians, we rejoice at this phenomena, yet, sad to say, in almost every case the doctrine of the Lord's return has been mixed with error and spurious theories. This is because the people's vision or understanding has not been quickened to see the reality of spiritual things. So they interpret the scriptures according to the blindness and ignorance of the carnal mind, which understands only the forms of earthly and material things.

Vast multitudes of believers are looking for Jesus to come secretly and "rapture" or "catch away" His Church. Although Church history shows that such a theory has only come into prominence over the last one hundred and fifty years, today it is spreading like wildfire in sermons, books, radio, television, and even films, and accounts for the teaching in 90% of Pentecostal, Charismatic and Fundamentalist Churches and Seminaries world-wide. But, precious friend of mine, if you are looking at the things you can see with your natural eyes, you are missing the point of meaning in the scriptures. When Paul spoke of our being "caught up into the air" he was not looking at the physical bodies of old Adam which are only temporal and return to the dust from whence they came (the first man IS of the earth); he was looking at the inner man, the new creation, the heavenly body, the offspring of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which is the real person, and which bears the image of the heavenly.

I have no desire to take away your "blessed hope," but would point you to a BLESSED REALITY for the here and now. When Christ comes to lift our inner-man nature UP into the fullness of UNION IN HIM, we certainly do experience a rapture - believe me! While the word "rapture" is not to be found in scripture, there are other words and expressions that bear the same or similar meaning. Paul said in Eph. 2:4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, and has RAISED US UP TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS." This passage says that God H-A-S RAISED US UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. Our text verse declares that we are to be CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH HIM. It should not be difficult for any spiritual mind to see that in both cases the apostle is speaking of the same experience. In both cases we are elevated to a higher plane in Christ, and with Him. There is a glorious company of these "caught up" ones. It is a wonderful place of rest, glory, wisdom and power, far above the beggarly elements of THIS WORLD. Reba McMurry told of the little boy swimming in the pool who said to another, "Come on in, the water's fine." So I say to you who are dwelling in the earthlies, tossed by the storms of life, beset by problems, trials, and difficulties, hindered by the flesh and the world, "Come on up higher - there is a wonderful realm above of peace, joy, victory and blessedness!"

We encounter a divine principle here. "The Lord Himself shall descend" and "we shall be caught up." The Lord descends and we are caught up - producing a "meeting" or the experiencing of UNION WITH CHRIST. Most

Christians only know the Lord in His descending, not in their being caught up to "meet" Him - made ONE IN HIM. In Ex. 19:13 we read, "When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount." The people of Israel at Sinai could come up to the mount, as far as the foot of the mountain, but the Lord commanded, "There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" **(Ex. 19:13).** As the multitude waited there at the base of Sinai, "It came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because THE LORD DESCENDED UPON IT IN FIRE," **(Ex. 19:16, 18).**

They were not processed to ascend the mount, so GOD DESCENDED UPON IT, He came to them, as He now comes to us, right where we are. That natural, earthly, carnal people knew nothing of being "caught up" to meet the Lord, they could experience God only in the realm where GOD MUST COME DOWN and meet them on their level. We, too, have known God on that plane! We sang it in our hymns and choruses: "Jesus is passing this way," "Reach out and touch the Lord as He passes by," or, "Coming down, down, down, the glory of the Lord is coming down." And, praise God, HE DID COME DOWN! We have used our faith to bring God down to heal us where we are and leave us in the same condition of mortality to get sick again. We have brought God down to touch us, bless us, thrill us, provide for us, and meet all our needs on the earth plane. How we rejoice in His faithfulness, in His great condescension and mercy. HE DOES COME DOWN and meet with us on the level of our humanity. This is what religion has done for long millenniums - bring God down to the level of man instead of preaching a gospel that will bring man UP to the level of God. It is IN CHRIST that God and man "meet" - God in Christ "descends" and man in Christ is "caught up." There is a realm beyond God coming down to meet us where we are. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I AM, there YOU may be also." He said, "If I be LIFTED UP, I will draw all men UNTO ME." Yet man continually prays to God to meet him where he is. Ah - we need the wings of an eagle to soar into the heavens, the realm of spirit, where God is.

"He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts 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. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" **(Isa. 33:15-17).** The prophet prophesied of a people who would "dwell on high." Oh, thank God! Here is the man who dwells in the high places, on the mountain-top, with mountain scenery, and mountain air, and mountain sunshine. He is above the malaria and the river fog and the miasma of the low-lands. He is above the dust and the noise and the stench and the rattle of this world system. He lives up where the sky is clear and the air is pure and all is serene. The thunder may mutter and the clouds may swirl at his feet, but the sun always shines where he is. He is where the sun never sets, and where the flowers never fade, and where there is no defeat, decay or death.

A man had a sign on his desk that said, "Keep looking down." Whenever anyone came into his office, they asked him, "Don't you mean, 'Keep looking up'?" "It's all according to where you're seated," he replied. The man said that he could "look down" on everything, because he was seated with Christ in heavenly places. As he beheld life's circumstances, he saw them with a new perspective - that which comes from looking at each situation through the eyes of the REIGNING CHRIST!

CAUGHT UP

As we have pointed out, the word "rapture" nowhere appears in the Bible, although its synonym "caught up" does. The word used in the Greek New Testament is HARPAZO. Its literal meaning is "to take something or someone firmly, quickly, or rapaciously." It is a derivative of HAIREOMAI whose meaning is "to take for oneself." It conveys the idea of an act quickly done by someone of great skill and strength - thus, TO SEIZE. From this Greek word HARPAZO comes our English word "harpoon," an instrument used to catch or seize whales. The English word "rapture" comes to us from the Latin word RAPERE meaning "to snatch." Our word "rape" also comes from this Latin term and is used in English literature according to its proper meaning of "taking by force."

The following are the scriptures where the word HARPAZO is used: "...and the violent TAKE IT BY FORCE (SEIZE IT)" **(Mat. 11:12)**. "...then comes the wicked one, and CATCHES AWAY (SEIZES) that which was sown in his heart" **(Mat. 13:19).** "...and the wolf CATCHES (SEIZES) them, and scatters the sheep" **(Jn. 10:12).** "...neither shall any man PLUCK (SEIZE) them out of My hand ... and no man is able to PLUCK (SEIZE) them out of My Father's hand" **(Jn. 10:28-29).** "...with fear, PULLING (SEIZING) them out of the fire" **(Jude 23).** "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows:) such an one CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) to the third heaven" **(II Cor. 12:3).** ". . and her child was CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) unto God. . . **"** **(Rev. 12:5).** And finally, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) together with them..." **(I Thes. 4:17).**

HARPAZO does not of itself indicate any particular direction, such as being caught UP, but, of course, the context of the passage under consideration does lend it that meaning by adding the qualifying words: "Caught up IN THE CLOUDS, to meet the Lord IN THE AIR." The message is clear - we do not ascend, we are CAUGHT UP, SEIZED, SNATCHED, LAID HOLD UPON by a power beyond ourselves. This is not a self-projection into the "spirit world" as the soulish psychics and metaphysical people try to do it, nor can we in any way force ourselves to be spiritual or unilaterally overcome the lower realms. You cannot self-induce experience with God or make yourself have a revelation. There are no formulas for man to operate for lifting himself up by his own bootstraps. It is written, IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN US BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE, and it is that sovereign action initiated by HIM that shall catch us up into new dimensions of divine life and glory. We must be so completely SEIZED BY OUR LORD, with such divine power, that we never again respond to the gravitational pull of the flesh.

The preachers love to proclaim that Jesus is coming to "rapture the saints to heaven" or to "catch His waiting bride away." But the Word of God never says that. Nowhere within the pages of God's blessed Book are we told that the return of Jesus is to evacuate His people off of planet earth to relocate them in some astral location far above the Milky Way where there are no battles, no tribulation, and no antichrist. When the Bible speaks of being "caught up," it is not speaking in terms of miles or light-years away. Let us consider **II Cor. 12:1-4.** "It is not expediate for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows:) such an one CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN. And I knew such a man, how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Where did this friend of Paul's go? Physically, his body went nowhere. He said he was "caught up" to the third heaven; but remember this: when he was caught up into God's glory, he was actually right here on the earth. He never left the ground for a minute, and thus I think it will be for all God's elect people. So completely overwhelmed was he, so utterly were his faculties under the control of the Holy Spirit that he was not sure whether he was "in the body, or apart from the body." God carried him into that realm of life that is known as paradise, the third heaven. Heaven is not a location, but a realm of spirit in which we touch, experience, and know God. The first heaven corresponds to the first gate or entrance into the Tabernacle that brings us to the brazen altar, where Christ the Lamb is slain for us, giving to us His life. This is our initial "salvation" experience. The second heaven corresponds to the door into the second realm of the Tabernacle, the sanctuary, wherein dwells the candlestick and the golden altar of incense. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit brings us into this second supernatural heaven in Christ where the Holy Spirit fills us and becomes the light of our life, as the oil fills the candlestick and gives light to the Holy Place. It is there we truly partake of the bread of God and offer up the incense of spiritual praise and worship unto God. This is our second experience in God, the second heaven God has brought us into.

The man of whom Paul wrote had already ascended into the first two heavens in regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But now "in spirit" the Lord carried him for a brief moment into that realm of life, that dimension of glory, that third heaven of HIS FULLNESS which is our inheritance in Christ, typified by the Shekinah Glory of God beyond the veil in the Holiest of all. Moffatt's translation says, "In the body or out of the body? I do not know. I simply know that in the body or out of the body (God knows which) this man was caught up into paradise and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat." In this marvelous experience it was not important to him to know whether or not his body was caught up into that higher realm. But he had

been into that third heaven. He knew it was there. And he knew that in God's due time he would have an abundant and permanent entrance into that realm of glory, by the resurrection power of Christ, CAUGHT UP.

There is abundant truth in Eph. 1:3 where we read that God has blessed us with "all spiritual blessings IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST; according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." That's a heavenly place. And the heavenly places are not out beyond the stars somewhere - they are IN CHRIST. No need to purchase a ticket on a jetliner or book passage on a spaceship to get there, my beloved. When the Bible says that "He has raised us up together, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS," it speaks not of a physical ascent into space, but about a spiritual ascent. Our hearts are often filled with unbelief and carnal ideas about physical bodies soaring through the rain clouds because of the errors tradition has taught us. How much more real and blessed the precious truth: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and H-A-S TRANSLATED US into the Kingdom of His dear Son" **(I Cor. 1:13).**

How much more beautiful and meaningful it all becomes when the blessed Spirit of truth opens our eyes to see the truth as it is, that physical rapture, which figures so largely in modern preaching and teaching, is simply a figment of the imagination, without foundation in scriptures, and without purpose or meaning in God's great plan. Many spiritual realities are beyond the witness of the flesh. For example, Jesus said the new birth cannot be evidenced by the physical senses of man (Jn. 3:8) but no believer would, on that basis, deny the REALITY of it. Alas! vast numbers of saints entertain the mistaken and foolish notion that the only reality is PHYSICAL. Just the opposite is the truth. Reality is SPIRITUAL. To be "caught up" is to be lifted to a higher realm in the Spirit, a realm of spirit life where all is glory and life abundant.

Through many years and deep dealings God has been changing me. He has transformed my ministry into an instrument that is designed to lift people out from an earthly consciousness into a heavenly (or spiritual) consciousness. As a result of this, God is quickening great numbers of saints and making them aware of His emphasis in this hour to cause our consciousness to be raised to the level of understanding we had in our beginnings. Before ever man was lowered into this gross material realm and here made a "living soul" (Gen. 2:7), he had been created in pure spirit essence in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). That is man's true and original state of being, and the revelation of God's eternal heritage for him within and without himself, prior to the time he was separated from it. History is replete with the record of wars, hatred, bloodshed, suffering, sorrow, famines, pestilences, sin, sickness and death. Truly God has lowered us into the bondage of corruption, but not without a promise of restoring us into a full God-consciousness and state of being of wholeness again. This is what redemption is all about!

Peter Demetris has penned the following words of truth and wisdom: "Canaan represents the realm of the Spirit. In the past Canaan has been taught incorrectly. Canaan was always taught as some place people died to go. This philosophy has to be wrong. If heaven is a place we either have to die to go to or be raptured to, then our earthly existence is only to be one wilderness wandering after another, where we constantly go through trial after trial, suffering after suffering, only to die and finally make heaven. I believe it's this very lie that has been robbing people of living a Spirit-filled existence now. God is opening up to us an understanding of heaven. Heaven is the realm of spirit, in which we are joined to the Lord, a realm we become more aware of, partake of and live out from as we grow in Christ. As we live out from that inner, heavenly realm, He comes forth through us into our earthly experience. Jesus said pray that the Kingdom of God will come on earth; as it is in heaven so let it be in earth. Canaan represents the fulfillment of what's been promised, our inheritance, something you and I can now enter into, partake of and have manifested through our lives.

The tragedy I see among God's people today is they live so far below their privileges which have been purchased for them. Religion has failed to teach that through Jesus Christ there is no longer any limitation put upon us. One who understands that the veil has been rent, that the way into the Most Holy Place is now open, begins to come to an end of all limitations and to partake of the provision of that realm.

"There was an experiment performed in which flying insects were placed in a jar and the jar was covered. For a while the insects flew to the top and tried to get past the lid on the jar, but after struggling for a time, they stopped trying and only flew as high as they could. Offspring born to these insects now residing in captivity

never saw their parents fly above a certain level. Later, when the lid of the jar was removed, even though the insects could have flown out of the top of the jar (normally their nature), they didn't. They were born into captivity and never knew they could fly above that one realm of their existence. This is how it has been for two thousand years in the Christian Church. We have had certain traditions handed to us by our parents who have been in captivity, and have never thought to look beyond the experiences they passed on to us. But now God's people can rise above that into which they have been programmed. This message is written to raise your awareness, to let you know you don't have to live at the low level at which Christendom wants to keep you. Canaan is available! You can partake of it and it will change you from death to life, from natural to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly" -end quote.

I Thes. 4:16-17 deals with death and dying. Paul speaks of the war cry, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet-message sounding for those who are dead in Christ and their coming forth into glorious manifestation of resurrection power, and our being changed. Whether this amazing process takes one minute, five years or a thousand years makes no difference if we understand by the spirit instead of the letter of the Word. The point I wish to make clear is that the purpose for this "catching up" is first of all to transform us from the natural to the supernatural, from the earthly to the heavenly, from humanity to divinity; we ascend from dishonor to glory; we are "raptured" from weakness to power. We completely miss the point when we try to fit it into a time frame or turn it into an historical event. This doesn't mean the raising of those who have died from their physical graves, but the raising of us ALL up into heavenly realms, seated with Him in the sphere of His power, glory and majesty. I am not writing here about physical bodies rising to a location several thousand feet above the ground, but of a RAISING UP to be joined unto the Lord in a new relationship and reality in the heavenlies. I do not believe in the old "rapture" teaching; it is as unscriptural as anything can, be; but a RAISING UP, a CATCHING AWAY, a GATHERING TOGETHER unto the Lord. There is to be a gathering together unto Him by all of the tens of thousands of overcoming saints of God, from both this side and the other side of the veil. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" **(II Thes. 2:1).** Hallelujah! What a day is this! What an hour to be living in! Let us not think as the manifestation of our sonship draws nigh that those who have died and are in their graves have missed something. In the hour of manifestation we will all be RAISED UP together. Yea**,** "In the third day He will RAISE US UP, and we shall LIVE in His sight" **(Hos. 6:2).** The next verse says, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" **(Hos. 6:3).**

IN THE AIR

"We ... shall be caught up together with them... to MEET the Lord IN THE AIR: and SO shall we ever be with the Lord" **(I Thes. 4:17).**

Elwin Roach has pointed out, in one of his excellent articles, that the word "meeting" (apantesin, Grk.) appears four times in the New Testament (Mat. 25:1,6; Acts 28:15; I Thes. 4-17), and carries the thought of a CONFERENCE, an ASSEMBLY, or a CONVOCATION. It signifies much more than merely coming into contact with our Lord and standing in His presence. In essence, we are call to a HOLY CONVOCATION, to participate in the high activities of a HOLY ASSEMBLY that is "caught up" into a high place in God, a sphere of exaltation, influence, and authority. All through the scriptures it is common to find natural elements of the earth that represent spiritual realities. Truly, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the "air," and the word " air" is AER in the Greek, meaning "to breathe," and its usage throughout the New Testament consistently indicates the "atmosphere" surrounding the earth.

Several years ago, while meditating upon this precious passage of scripture, the Spirit unfolded in my consciousness the significant truth that our catching up "into the air" can never be properly understood apart from the inspired words of the apostle Paul in Eph. 2:1-2 wherein he states, "And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the SPIRIT that now WORKS IN the children of disobedience." There are several key words and terms that unlock the storehouse of truth contained in these verses. Consider - PRINCE, POWER, AIR, SPIRIT, WORKS, and IN. According to these plain statements of scripture there exists a "power of the air." This "power of the air" is a "spirit," and this spirit is located "in the

sons of disobedience, wherein he "works." Can we not see by this that the "prince of the power of the air" is not something or someone outside of us, but a spirit-power that operates right here WITHIN MAN. Furthermore, this spirit-power that works within man also emanates from man, exerting an influence throughout the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, giving motivation to the myriad activities and events that transpire in the world. Thus, it is called the "POWER of the AIR."

Dr. Charles Price wrote a little book entitled MADE ALIVE in which he shares this instructive information: "Every atom of matter - every piece of mineral - indeed everything which is the result of God's creative intelligence is surrounded by an 'AURA' or an emanation which is identical with and corresponds to the NATURE of the substance from which it comes. There is a sense in which personalities are possessed with this 'emanation' and 'extension' of themselves into their surroundings. It is a radiation, which can be felt when someone walks into a room in which you may be seated. Our personality becomes affected by their personality. They have power to elevate or depress" -end quote.

I would like you to really get a grasp of this thought. We ALL know people who by their very presence can lift us up, and impart a sense of well-being, who can lift out spirits up to heights of joy and happiness. Others can leave you feeling depressed just be spending a few minutes in their presence. The thought I want you to get is the fact that every atom of created material, in fact every created thing, has this aura surrounding them, which is a radiation of their nature and personality into their surroundings. It is an extension of themselves into their environment. This "aura" or emanation is identical with and corresponds to our nature, and is our nature and feelings radiating from us into our surroundings, and it affects everything around us. It is a radiation that flows from our spirits, and the stronger our spirits are the greater the radiation. If you find it difficult to believe the very atmosphere or air waves are charged by the emanations of energy, positive or negative, then go directly from a worship service where the saints are worshipping in the spirit, and enter a night club where ungodly men and women are drinking, cursing, laughing and singing, and the difference you feel in a very real way is the difference between the positive and the negative life force.

Grasp it! A hundred years ago we could not have understood as we do now how communication by sound and picture can be broadcast instantaneously THROUGH THE AIR. Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music IN THE AIR around you. A radio or TV set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you. You may not have realized it, but the spirit in every man is both a receiver and a transmitter. You may be tuned in on the wavelength of the Holy Spirit or you may tune in on the wavelength of Satan, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. You don't hear anything with your natural ears because spirit does not broadcast in words or sounds. Spirit broadcasts in thoughts and attitudes. Satan broadcasts in thoughts and attitudes of lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, anger, envy, fear, competition, strife, hatred, violence, bitterness, debate, etc. Here is the real cause of all the world's evils! The people hear no audible voice, they do not see a visible Satan, and they comprehend not from whence come such attitudes, impulses, and desires.

The center of this activity lies within the very heart of man, the core of his being. A friend has shared the following enlightening thought: "It is interesting, then, to read the words of Jeremiah who said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that 'the heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS and desperately wicked. 'Who can know it?' **(Jer. 17:9).** The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD! When the Pharisees criticized the disciples of Jesus for eating with unwashed hands we hear Jesus say, 'That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For FROM WITHIN, OUT OF THE HEART OF MEN, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come FROM WITHIN and defile the man' **(Mk. 7:20-23).** Every sin-category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Everything that a man could ever do or think that is evil is said by Jesus to come - not from outside of himself, but from WITHIN!

"In our consideration of this passage, there is one all-important phrase that we must be careful to note. Jesus said, 'for from within, out of the HEART OF MEN...' It is imperative that we notice the grammatical number of the two words here. The word 'heart' is singular being in the Greek in the genitive SINGULAR case. The word 'men,' however, is plural being in the genitive PLURAL case. We have then, ONE HEART - but MANY MEN! For want of a better word, I have called this one heart of all men the 'cosmic heart' - cosmic being from the

Greek word 'kosmos' which relates to this world system. This 'cosmic heart' or 'cosmic mind' is the common possession of all men - one great subconscious mind shared by all the inhabitants of the world. it is the mind of Adam - shared with his many-membered body. Prodding, goading, tempting, whispering, the subconscious mind makes its subtle suggestions to the conscious mind and man's will bows before it. FROM WITHIN, out of the HEART OF MEN - the subconscious mind - proceed all these evil things!" -end quote. Can you now understand how it is that the apostle, when speaking of the "prince of the power of the air," identifies him not as a funny creature in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork, but as the inward motivating SPIRIT I-N M-A-N! "The SPIRIT that now works (energizes) IN the sons of disobedience."

Let us explore this thought of the SPIRIT that WORKS IN MEN, which is also the POWER OF THE AIR. We must understand that life (spirit) is ENERGY. This means that you as a person, a personality, are ENERGY. Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a moving object has energy because it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. It is a sort of motion, too - the disorderly motion of the tiny atoms and molecules that make up all materials. Heat energy can melt ice, changing it to water, and heat it more, changing it to vapor. It can run the engine of an automobile, jet plane or rocket. There is another kind of energy, called chemical energy. It is in the coal or oil that heats buildings. It is in the food that nourishes your body and keeps you active. There is atomic energy, which can be set free from the atoms of some materials. And then there is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. It is the electromagnetic energy in sunlight that warms the earth. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across nearly a hundred million miles of space. When the energy of the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat.

Another kind of energy, which we, as the people of God, are aware of is SPIRIT ENERGY. In physics energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek word for energy is ENERGEIA or ENERGEO. These words are used in the Greek New Testament a number of times. Because of the association between "doing work" and "energy," the words are generally translated into English as "working." Since so much has been learned about energy in recent years it would now be far better to translate the word for just what it means energy or energize. Let us look at a couple scriptures. "That you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the WORKING (Grk: energeia, energizing) of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" **(Eph. 1:18-20).** Yes, it was ENERGY, GOD'S ENERGY, which RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD! And the record further states that He was raised up by the SPIRIT of God! And not only did Paul say that it was God's energy that raised Christ up , but he went on to say in Eph. 3:7 that it was that same energy of God which transformed his own life and made him a minister of Jesus Christ. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual WORKING (energy) of HIS POWER." Then on top of this Paul declares that it is this SPIRIT ENERGY of God which is working within us to bring us unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. "From whom (Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual WORKING (energizing) in the measure of every part" **(Eph. 4:16).** And finally, this energy of God shall so work in us, shall so CHANGE US, that we shall be changed even in the atomical structure of our bodies, as it is written, "Who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the WORKING (energizing) whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" **(Phil. 3:21).** All spirit is ENERGY, and exerts a force, or influence, upon our lives. God is the supreme source of energy - the highest and purest form of energy!

These principles show us that God is a Holy Spirit BEING, possessing Holy Spirit CHARACTERISTICS, and exerting Holy Spirit INFLUENCES. The influences of God are no less God than is the personality of God. The characteristics of God: His nature, virtues, attributes, power, mind, etc. are no less God than the personality of God. God Himself is supreme energy - able to influence and change ALL THINGS! But the characteristics and influences of God are likewise energy, spirit energy. The Bible declares that God is LOVE. It doesn't say that God has love, but God IS LOVE. That is His nature. Did you know that love is energy? You won't have to think about that very long to realize that it is true. Love is a powerful force that can influence and CHANGE THINGS. Love is invisible, like the wind, but it is powerful! And love can be transmitted, invisibly, from person to person, even as light rays are transmitted from the sun to the earth. The qualities of love can be received by those around us even as the life-giving qualities of the sun are utilized by every living thing on earth.

We read in **Rom. 14:17,** "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Do you believe peace is real? What does peace look like? Is it round? Is it square? Can you measure it? Can you buy a bottle full of peace, or a truckload? No! Peace is invisible, isn't it? And peace is powerful, isn't it? Peace is SPIRIT! And spirit is ENERGY! You can know when peace is present. You can sense peace, experience peace, speak peace, manifest peace and minister peace. How about joy? You cannot put joy in your pocket or roll it up like a wad of bills. Joy is SPIRIT! Joy is ENERGY! Righteousness is SPIRIT! Righteousness is ENERGY! Righteousness is attainable on this earth now because of the RIGHT SPIRIT, the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit. I have good news for you - you can receive a new spirit, a new ENERGY FORCE, Holy Spirit, Holy Energy, and as a result attain a walk in righteousness. HOLY ENERGY - this is what God IS!

The above characteristics all qualify as SPIRIT for they are realities, which are both invisible and powerful. They all qualify as ENERGY for they are real, invisible forces that can MAKE THINGS CHANGE. How we need a receptivity to these influences in the world today! Thank God, He is bringing to pass such a receptivity in a firstfruit company of His chosen ones in this hour! We experience this receptivity by means of a RAISED OR ACTIVATED CONSCIOUSNESS. If there were no receptivity in the trees and flowers and shrubs, we should have a desert around us. These things spring to life because of their quiet receptivity to the energy of the sunlight and moisture poured upon them. What they receive they utilize. That is why the primary function of all creation, animate or inanimate, is receptivity. Your basic function, and mine, is the same - simply to receive of that essence of God, which is so bountifully shed upon us by the Spirit! Then we must become TRANSMITTERS of that which we have received!

On the other hand, Satan is a SPIRIT and possesses an un-holy spirit mind, disposition, nature, will, etc., and exercises an un-holy spirit influence through various channels and agencies. Therefore, Satan is ALSO ENERGY - misdirected energy, negative energy, destructive energy. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this! Each characteristic of either God or Satan is a FORM OF SPIRIT ENERGY. This energy can be transmitted to our conscious mind, to produce its power within us, just as electricity is transmitted from a battery to an engine to make it function in a certain way. When the "spirit of holiness" is transmitted to us we begin to function in our personality in that characteristic of God's holiness, thus becoming holy. When the "spirit of wisdom" is transmitted to us we cease from our own natural reasonings and commence to act in accordance with the higher wisdom of God.

In the same way it is clear that there is another spirit mentioned frequently throughout the scriptures, and in opposite terms, namely, the "spirit of fear," the "spirit of bondage," the "spirit of the world," the "spirit of error," the "spirit of antichrist," the "spirit of jealousy," the "spirit of slumber," etc. No one thinks that these various definitions would justify the thought that there are two, or ten, or one hundred or more SATANS! These terms signify in general the WRONG SPIRIT - the spirit, nature, disposition, power and will which has its personification in that one that we call Satan, and which emanates from all whom HE ENERGIZES. This is the spirit that now works in (energizes) the sons of disobedience, and is the POWER OF THE AIR.

Never forget, dear reader, that all of the attributes and characteristics of the Holy Spirit and the Un-Holy Spirit ARE SPIRIT, and therefore ENERGY - POWER! In the area of will, attitude, nature, emotion, mind, disposition, actions, etc. there is ALWAYS A TRANSMISSION OF ENERGY. Haven't you noticed that one persons attitude will "rub off" on to another person? One can begin complaining and soon everyone is complaining. One begins to be argumentative and soon everyone in the room is in a heated argument. Someone vents their anger on you and within seconds you are angry and screaming back at them. Or, a whole group of people may feel frustrated and hopeless in a situation, and just one person can enter the room with a smile on his face, radiating the attitude of confidence and assurance, speak a positive word of encouragement and victory, and soon the whole atmosphere changes, becoming charged with this new expectation, the spirit of the entire group being raised up into hope and anticipation. What is this? It is the work of SPIRIT: invisible, intangible ENERGY - POWER! Invisible, but very real. And very powerful! There is constantly in this world a definite transference of spirit energy from person to person, from group to group, from nation to nation, positive or negative, as the case may be. The rise and success of false religions, communism, rock music, immorality, etc. are the direct result of negative satanic spirit influence transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become filled with the UN-HOLY SPIRIT, and consequently transmitters of the

same, producing a SURCHARGED ATMOSPHERE. THIS, my beloved, IS the "power of the air!" Satan has a large elemental power. He is named the prince of the power of the air, meaning that he is the INVISIBLE RULER, which activity and authority he exercises IN and THROUGH men!

The word for "air" in the Greek language is AER meaning "to breathe." The "power of the air" is thus the ENERGY OF BREATHING! Thoughts from the unconscious realm BREATHED OUT - expressed in words in the conscious realm and lived out as deeds in the physical realm - go forth as energy, power, spiritual influence in the atmosphere of earth. These are not MERELY thoughts or MERELY words, for the spirit of man is tapped into the timeless sphere of eternity wherein is that which is called by the scriptures "the powers of the heavens." This is the realm of PURE ENERGY, and the unconscious mind of man is tapped into this vast supply of ENERGY, and not only tapped in, but when the mouth is opened, the energy is brought forth from the conscious realm and released into the atmosphere of man's physical world, carrying a very real power capable of either blessing or cursing mankind.

Hannah Hurnard has written, "There is another very important thing about our thoughts and words. It really seems true that, as we breathe and speak them out, they set in motion a vibration or current of spiritual energy, which gravitates to, and unites with, the same sort of thought-energies being breathed out by other people. 'Like gravitates to like.' God-inspired thought-and-word energy gravitates to all the other God-inspired thought-and-word energies, which other men and women are breathing out, and uniting with them, help to build up tremendous forces and influences for good in the world. Our thoughts and words unite with "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" of which the apostle Paul writes. Isn't that challenging!

"But our wrong, self-inspired thoughts and feelings, and the resentful, jealous, unloving, impure ones, when they are breathed and spoken out, gravitate to the same kind of wrong spiritual energies and influences, and, alas, help to strengthen the powers of evil and hate in the world. In that way, without realizing what we are doing, we actually help to increase the destructive forces which are at work in this fallen world of mankind. Our unforgiving thoughts wing their way like birds of prey to the same kind of thoughts; or like dark clouds of evil influence which pile up into huge masses and make it more difficult for people everywhere to forgive and love each other. The impure thoughts and imaginations, inspired by the things we read, look at, and listen to, are also breathed out, and gravitate to the same kind of thoughts, and help to create the dreadful atmosphere in different places where vice and all sorts of unclean things are practiced. Our angry, revengeful and covetous thoughts, as we breathe them out, gravitate to, and unite with, the dark powers, which urge men to crimes and violence and murder. How dreadful it is, that we can, if we are not careful, be really responsible for helping to kill someone else. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, warned us of all this when He told us that whoever becomes angry with his brother is guilty of murder, and he who lusts in imagination ia guilty of adultery; simply because, those evil thoughts, imaginations, feelings and desires have strengthened the dark powers which urge men to express these dreadful things through their bodies. But when we begin to experience a transformed thought-life and transformed speech-habits, then, by the grace and power of God, we can cooperate all the time in strengthening the forces or influences of righteousness in the world, and of helping men and women to do good and noble and sacrificial things" -end quote.

What a graphic picture of how the "power of the air" operates! Thoughts and words are thus perceived to be spiritual energy, capable of being transmitted and transferred through the atmosphere of earth as influences upon men. The action of spirit on spirit is inappreciable by the senses; but could we look behind the veil of nature when a crowd is swayed higher and thither by the speech of one man, we should see that the influence exerted was as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The WORDS that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" **(Jn. 6:63).** Another example of the power of breathed-out spiritual energy was recorded by J. F. Goodavage: "Dr. Franklin Loehr, a minister of the Religious Research Foundation, discovered that plants, when PRAYED OVER by his congregation, grew 75 times faster than an equally tended and nourished plant that was NOT prayed over."

The message is just this - "the air" bespeaks of the atmosphere of this earth which today is super-charged by fleshly and satanic energy radiating from the cosmic heart of unregenerated men. Truly, Satan IS the "god of this world" and the "PRINCE of the power of the air!" But I have some good news for you, my friend! Satan

shall be bound - restrained, restricted, removed from his sphere of influence and authority "in the air"! "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold upon the dragon, that old serpent, which is bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." **(Rev. 20:1-3).** What does this mean? It means that when Satan is bound in man and thus removed from his sphere of operation "in the air," THAT POSITION IS NOT GOING TO GO UNFILLED. ANOTHER POWER MUST BE RAISED UP INTO THAT VACATED REALM OF DOMINION TO BECOME THE ENERGY FORCE THAT INFLUENCES THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD, giving direction and motivation to every activity and event wrought upon earth. THAT, my beloved, is what it means for the saints of God to be CAUGHT UP IN THE AIR! As Satan is dispossessed from his position as the prince of the power of the air, saints are caught up or elevated into that place of influence, power and authority. God is now preparing a company to fill that place, that sphere of spirit energy and control that has been occupied by Satan, and thus BECOME the "power of the air," and our blessed Lord Jesus Christ becoming the "PRINCE of the power of the air." Glory! Satan is bound and we are raised up into that realm even now, in the measure that we have appropriated it, but the fullness remains to be revealed. What a prospect! The earth now under the power of the Evil One, renewed and filled with the glory of God under the power of the Righteous Ones! What changes shall yet be wrought in the earth! What righteousness, peace and joy will flow forth to the peoples of the nations! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

The natural minded Christian is looking to be suddenly snatched up into the air, away from the earth, to inhabit mansions on golden streets somewhere in the blue beyond. The spiritual Christian looks to be LAID HOLD UPON BY A HIGHER POWER and lifted into a realm from which He can do something for this world. The almighty Father is preparing and equipping a people who shall bind the devil and usurp his place of cosmic power in the atmosphere, supercharging the atmosphere with vibrations and influences of health and righteousness and life and light and love! When the Righteous Kingdom is in power, the cruel usurper will be absent; when the Righteous Kings hold sway, and the great tempter is overcome, men's motives to godliness will be unhindered. The present activity of God is devoted to selecting, training, teaching, testing, developing and perfecting this conquering, ruling company. Just think - you have the unique potential to be a transmitter of the LIFE-GIVING ENERGY of God Almighty here upon this earth! You can minister the power and glory of God! All the abilities and characteristics of God can be transferred through you to the world around you thus producing harmony and reconciliation to God.

The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and this glory surrounds Him. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we will also radiate the glory of His nature. This is the real purpose of our calling, and the meaning of being caught up in the air. Recognize, O saint of God, the radiant glory that is even now vibrating from your being, and seek His presence, that the glory and power might be greatly increased for the sake of His body as well as a lost world. Release the Christ within! Praise God, what a day! You can change the atmosphere about you, regardless of how dark or hopeless it may appear. You can radiate with His power and glory, like a blazing light where darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Arise and shine! Your light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 43
HIS FEET UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-THREE

HIS FEET
THE MOUNT OF OLIVES
THE VALLEY OF BLESSING

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool" **(Isa. 66:1).** "And I will make the place of My feet glorious" (Isa. 60:13). And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" **(Zech. 14:4).**

Children in school learn what we call definitions. A definition is an explanatory statement, which tells us just exactly what a certain thing is, as "an island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water." God also gives us definitions in His Word. He tells us exactly what certain things are. And, in the scripture just quoted He has told us exactly what heaven is: "Heaven is My throne." Now, let us make this a little plainer. Definitions of men can be given backward. For instance the definition, "An island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water," can be given thus: "A tract of land completely surrounded by water is an island." This is but another way of stating the same thing. It does not, in any way, change the meaning. Now, let us try this on the biblical definition of heaven. "Heaven is My throne" may also be turned around to say: "My throne is heaven." Whether we say that heaven is God's throne or that God's throne is heaven the meaning is still the same. We would do well to remember here that "heaven" is not a place away off somewhere in the ethereal blue, millions of miles distant; but "heaven I-S M-Y T-H-R-O-N-E." God's heaven is the throne from which He reigns over the earth - yea, over all things! And God's throne IS HEAVEN.

Christ is the supreme Ruler of the universe. Christ always has ruled. He always will. The Father has given "ALL things" into His hand (Jn. 3:35). So God's "heaven" is His throne from which He reigns over the earth. The earth is physical and natural; God, on the other hand, is SPIRIT. God rules BY HIS SPIRIT, as the prophet declared, "Not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts (armies)" **(Zech. 4:6).** The reality of omnipotent power within God's Spirit IS God's throne! It means just this - God rules out of spirit. His power is spiritual power, His authority spiritual authority. The natural realm must always be acted upon by the higher spiritual realm.

The chemical elements in the soil of the farmer's field are lifeless and powerless. It is absolutely impossible for the inorganic mineral to produce any life or raise itself up into the kingdom of the living. The inorganic world is staked off from the living world by barriers, which have never yet been crossed from within. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted with the properties of life; without this direct contact with life they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere forever. The law is: Except a mineral be born "from above" - from the kingdom just above it - it cannot enter the kingdom just above it. Let us UNDERSTAND! How are the inorganic, non-living mineral elements of the earth raised up into the organic kingdom of living things? You begin with a seed. Within the seed is a-germ of life. The seed containing the life is planted IN THE EARTH, in the kingdom of the dead. Once buried in the earth, with all the right amounts of water and air, and the right temperatures, the seed germinates and the life within the seed begins to grow. Finally the shell of the seed bursts and there takes place a release of the life from the seed. As the life is released it immediately SEIZES UPON the chemical elements in the earth, converts them into food, and then builds up living tissue out of matter that never lived! The inorganic chemicals B-E-C-O-M-E organic tissue! In like manner, the breath of God, blowing where it listeth, touches with its mystery of divine life the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf between the natural and the spiritual, endows them with its own holy and eternal and divine qualities, and produces within them these new and marvelous faculties, by which

those who are born of the Spirit are said to SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD and ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Thus heaven, spirit, throne - these three terms are synonymous, bespeaking of the dimension of SPIRIT from whence God is revealed and by which the earth realm is quickened and made glorious. As heaven is God's THRONE - the sphere of His almighty spirit-power - so is earth His FOOTSTOOL the realm ruled over and transformed by the divine action of infused spirit!

God's footstool has been anything but glorious for the past six thousand years: sin, pain, fear, sickness, sorrow and death have made it one vast hell in which now at least five billions of humanity wait for the time when deliverance shall come, the curse shall be lifted, and life and glory shall break forth upon all nations and all the inhabitants of the world. To this end God has made abundant provision. The apostle Paul speaks of the appointed hour of the manifestation of the sons of God when all creation shall be set free from the bondage of corruption and ushered into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-22).

The first work of the manifested sons of God will consist in MAKING GLORIOUS GOD'S FOOTSTOOL. The earth is God's footstool - not merely that earth out there consisting of rocks, soil, water, and vegetation, but that "earth" which MAN IS, forecasts is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY: as is the earthy, such are they also that ARE EARTHY" (I Cor. 15:47-48). The richest jewel of the Lord's glorified footstool in that glorious age to come will be mankind in whose deliverance, regeneration, transformation, and likeness to God will be reflected the very image of Divinity, as most gloriously the perfected humanity reveals the honor, wisdom, nature and power of God and His wondrous plan of redemption, reconciliation and restitution of all things. The long age of the reign of sin and death is represented as the time when God "remembered not His FOOTSTOOL in the day of His anger (judgment)" **(Lam. 2:1);** but following the subduing of the nations unto Himself, the people are prophetically called upon to "Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His FOOTSTOOL, for He is worthy" **(Ps. 99:5).** This beautifying and glorifying of the Lord's "footstool" will not be completed until our Lord Jesus Christ shall have "put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" **(I Cor. 15:24-28).**

HIS FEET

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and shall fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" **(Zech. 14:3-4).**

This prophecy is generally misunderstood, and applied to the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ at His second advent: and indeed, those who thus err generally go farther and assert that it will be the feet of flesh, pierced with the nails of Calvary; not realizing that now "the LORD is that SPIRIT" **(II Cor. 3:17),** and "YE are the BODY of Christ, and members in particular" **(I Cor. 12:27),** and "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),** and it is "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory" **(Col. 1:27).** Shall we now become carnal And say that the visible, flesh feet of the man of Nazareth who walked, shod with sandals, along the shores of blue Galilee are again to stand upon the mount of Olives east of Jerusalem? Cannot we see with the spiritual eye that we must discern the Lord's "feet" there in the same spirit and manner that we now discern the Lord's "body"?

The scriptures are positively plain that the glorious Christ of God is a many-membered body, with Jesus as the Head. The whole world is waiting for the manifestation of this new creation Man, God's corporate Son. Long centuries ago the prophet Isaiah peered through the telescope of divine revelation and exclaimed in astonished wonder, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the FEET OF HIM that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" **(Isa. 52:7).** I would draw your prayerful attention to several things in this verse. First, Paul quotes this passage in Rom. 10:15 and applies it to the gospel messengers of the body of Christ. The word "beautiful" translates the Greek word HORAIOS which is from HORA, meaning hour, day, or season. Dr. Strong explains that HORAIOS means "timely," or "belonging to the right hour or season." Dr. Thayer says, similarly, that it means "ripe" or "mature." The spirit of inspiration is suggesting that the "feet" of him that publishes the gospel of

peace bespeaks of a ministry that appears in God's APPOINTED TIME, bearing a SEASONED MESSAGE, proclaimed by a MATURE BODY that has grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. It has nothing whatever to do with the popular distorted and diluted "gospel" proclaimed by the spiritual dwarfs called "ministers" and "preachers" in the harlot religious systems, which promises merely a partial salvation, and that for only a small minority of earth's teeming inhabitants. That only a handful of the billions who have lived and died on this planet will finally make it into the Kingdom of God is certainly N-O-T "good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people!"

Second, this One bringing good tidings, publishing salvation and proclaiming the reign of God is referred to as "HIM" - a singular and masculine. Not a bride, but a MAN. And the beauty of this One will be seen in His feet. "How beautiful are the FEET OF HIM." The same truth is stated in Nahum 1:15, "Behold upon the mountains the FEET of HIM that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" Again it is masculine and singular. And who is this One who brings good tidings and publishes peace? First of all it is our Lord Jesus Christ. "And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the GLAD TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God" **(Lk. 8:1).** "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching PEACE by Jesus Christ: that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee" **(Acts 10:36-37).** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to PREACH THE GOSPEL to the poor..." **(Lk. 4:18).** Now turn to **Rom**. **10:15** where Paul quotes this Old Testament passage about the "feet of Him," giving us the fuller revelation of what God is saying: "As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of THEM that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!"

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that Paul was not ignorantly misquoting a scripture. The Holy Spirit is revealing here that the ONE who came two millenniums ago preaching good tidings, publishing peace, and proclaiming the Kingdom is NOW A MANY-MEMBERED BODY. And just as Jesus was designated Head of this body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22), there is a company of this body that will be known as the feet, the part of the body in contact with the earth - His footstool! In a normal birth, the head is the first and the feet are the last to be born. So it is with God's glorious Christ, Christ the Head and Christ the body. We have arrived at the hour, my beloved, when the feet of the new creation Man are being brought forth into the fullness of His glory. It must be a work and a ministry wrought upon a company of saints still living here upon the earth. It must be the last members of the enChristed ones birthed into the fullness of Christ at the end of this age.

It is this "feet company" that I present to you today. Bill Britton wrote of this company: "The Word is full of this truth, giving the nature, characteristics, and activities of this great people. If the scriptures had so much to say concerning John the Baptist, Judas, and the first coming of Jesus, is it strange that there would be so much written about the people who come to the end of the age and bring forth the manifestation of the sons of God? We have many times read over scriptures that spoke of the Feet, and never gave it a thought. We never realized that God was speaking to us of a company of people that we were to be a part of.

"The great need for those who live here on this earth is that they come to a life of absolute perfection and purity. There can be no true and full manifestation of His glory out of a people who are loaded with sins and evil spirits. The FEET must be washed! Jesus warned Peter that if his feet were not washed, he would have no part in the glory of this Kingdom. He also told him that it was only the feet that needed washing. Speaking of His Church on earth in Eph. 5:26 He says: 'That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, 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 and without blemish.' That sounds like a perfected company, doesn't it? You see, there is to be a people in the last days who come into a greater knowledge of His Word than anyone who has walked this earth, except Jesus. Even Paul said, 'Now I know in part.' The part shall be done away, and the perfect shall take over. For if we are to be perfectly washed and cleansed, we need a perfect understanding of His perfect Word. This New Creation Man shall be clean, perfect, no longer bearing the image of that earthy Adam. And to bring us to that, we need a strong cleansing agent. His Word, clearly understood, is that agent.

"Not only shall this feet company be cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word, but out of them shall flow a fountain of living waters to bring life to this world. The nations shall sit at His 'feet' to learn wisdom. This world will be set free from the bondage of corruption, and the rulership of principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Then the world will will sit at His 'feet'. That is they will learn from and be governed by a people

living on who have come into the fullness of Christ. The glory of this people of God is spoken of by the prophet in Isa. 60:13-15. 'The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I WILL MAKE THE PLACE OF MY FEET GLORIOUS. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down AT THE SOLES OF THY FEET; and they shall call thee, The city O the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.' Can you believe that? It's in the Word!

"All the glory of heaven is going to be manifested on this earth. 'I will make the place of My feet glorious.' Did not Jesus pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'? My friends, let me tell you something: God is calling an end to this wicked age wherein man has rebelled against God and Satan has run rampant through the earth. But God has not given up on His creation, not even this physical ball of mud we call earth. HE IS GOING TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS. God has a surprise for the people of this world, and He is just about ready to spring it on them. Glory to God! What a Saviour! Did you know that the body of Christ will rule and reign on this earth? Are you aware that a living people are going to overcome all enemies, and that even the nations of the world shall be subdued under them? 'He shall subdue the people under us, and THE NATIONS UNDER OUR F-E-E-T' **(Ps. 47:3).** So the feet company of this glorious body of Christ shall bring the nations under subjection to the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! But first we must be brought completely in subjection to Him.

"There is a Babylon system to be overcome. We know that God has already decreed its fall, and as far as God is concerned, it is already overcome. But He is going to let His "feet company" tread down Babylon. This system shall be destroyed by a people manifesting the fullness of the Spirit right here on earth. In Isa. 26:1 we read: 'In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation shall God appoint for walls and bulwarks.' Now we understand that this is not a natural city spoken of, that this is the people of God, the bride of Christ, the Holy City. But notice in verse 5 that he speaks of another city, even Babylon: 'For he bringeth down them that dwell on high (Babel); the lofty city, he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. THE F-O-O-T SHALL TREAD IT DOWN, even THE F-E-E-T of the poor, and the steps of the needy.' Who are the 'poor' who shall tread down the 'lofty city'? In **Lk. 4:18** Jesus said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.' And in **Lk. 6:20** Jesus said, 'Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God.' Yes, it is that glorious 'feet company' in the last days who hear the everlasting gospel of the Kingdom, and who press their way into that Kingdom, that shall tear down Babylon's walls and set her captives free! Don't expect an angel to come from heaven to perform this great task. This victory and this honor has been given to saints of God living here on this earth. And I can assure you that the saints who went on by way of the grave shall rejoice with the 'feet' in this glorious triumph (I Cor. 12:26). Notice what it says in I Cor. 12:23: 'And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have MORE ABUNDANT COMELINESS.' Yes, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET!" -end quote.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

When the Lord declared that the earth is His "footstool," surely no one will err and get the thought that God possesses a body like unto men and that the Almighty literally rests His feet upon the earth as a footstool! And if the placing and resting of Jehovah's "feet" is symbolic, and signifies His dominion from the throne of the spirit realm expressed through members of His body on earth, so, we may be sure that when the Word speaks of His feet standing upon the mount of Olives, and its peculiar division, its valley, the flight of the people, the waters of life from Jerusalem, etc., all are symbolic statements - word-pictures of grand and glorious spiritual realities.

Your understanding will be greatly enlightened when you are able to grasp the simple truths in this remarkable prophecy. The OLIVE is a symbol full of meaning. In Bible days it was the source of light, its oil being used to light the lamps of God's Tabernacle, as well as the homes of His people. Indeed, in the Hebrew the olive tree was called SHEMEN or "oil tree." Olive oil was also used as the basis of many of the precious ointments of olden times - such as that used in anointing the kings and priests, typifying the Holy Spirit upon the "royal priesthood" of the New Covenant (Ex. 30:24). And from time immemorial the olive branch has been used as a

symbol of peace (Gen. 8:11; Neh. 8:15). If then the olive be the symbol of LIGHT, PEACE and BLESSING through the Holy Spirit, and if mountain be considered as elsewhere in the scriptures the symbol for a Kingdom, the significance here of the term "Mount of Olives" is easily seen to be - the Kingdom of DIVINE ILLUMINATION, PEACE and BLESSING. And the standing or establishment or fixing of Jehovah's "feet" upon it signifies that it is upon and from the ground or base of the Kingdom of God in the Spirit that the feet company shall minister illumination, peace and glory to the peoples of earth. Glory to God!

The anointing is upon the feet! The earth is God's footstool; and I do not hesitate to declare that we are living in the "feet" time of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image (Dan. 2:31-45), as well as the "feet" stage of the development of the body of Christ. The feet company, or the sons of God in preparation in these days, must be anointed with the precious ointment or anointing that came upon the Head of this High Priesthood (Ps. 133:2). We know that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit without measure, that He had the seven-fold intensified Spirit of God (Isa. 11:2; Rev. 5:6), but what about the rest of the body? In the beautiful Old Testament type the anointing oil ran down Aaron's beard, on to his robe, and unto his feet. The Word tells us that we have received only a "measure" of faith, and knowledge "in part." Is it possible that God has ordained for a people living on this earth to be anointed with this same "precious ointment" of the seven spirits of God that the Head received? Yes, praise God! it is.

Mary of Bethany took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet as well as the head of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. The ointment was worth some three hundred pence (Jn. 12:1-5; Mat. 26:6-13). Martha was there too, rattling pots and pans, still moving on the serving realm of good works and religious efforts, while Mary sat at the anointed feet of Jesus receiving something that would never be taken away! Think, dear reader, of the profound depths of truth that lie hidden in the great value of the precious oil that anointed the feet of our Lord! - three hundred pence. Three hundred is the number of divine deliverance, as shown in Gideon's army, Noah's ark, Moses' tabernacle, Solomon's shields, etc. The wonderful truth here revealed is that the "feet company" of the body of Christ receive the same unique anointing as the Head - the anointing for the deliverance of groaning creation! When the feet are anointed there is a beautiful and wondrous result - "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment" **(Jn. 12:3).**

Ah - the putrid stench of the death realm, a world filled with walking dead men performing twice-dead works, will be changed when the anointed feet of the many-membered Christ stand in power and glory upon the Mount of Olives, the heavenly Kingdom of light and peace and blessing. The awful stench of evil, fear, hatred, deception, greed, lies, murder, unfaithfulness, pain, torment, war, sickness sorrow and death will be replaced by the exhilarating fragrance of the precious ointment upon the "feet" of the Christ. By the power of the spirit the whole atmosphere of the world shall be perfumed by the heavenly aroma of the righteousness, peace and joy emanating from the anointed sons of God. The fragrance of His glory, His truth and His love shall fill and permeate the whole earth! God is anointing His feet in the world today, not with the literal ointment or oil, but with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of God.

The triumphant, victorious sons of God shall stand upon the Olive Mountain (Kingdom) and in the power of the anointing do battle with all the forces that oppose the Kingdom of God; they shall enter into every battlefield of human life, breaking every foe and conquering every enemy. They shall walk on tops of the mountains (kingdoms). "He maketh my feet like hinds feet: and setteth me upon my high places" (Ps. 18:33). Praise God, how beautiful are the feet! How we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that we are privileged to live in this great hour of the manifestation of the sons of God, the bursting forth of God's incorruptible life through His many-membered Son. Be encouraged, children of God! Press on, saints of the Most High! Jesus is coming! And HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE HIS FEET!

THE VALLEY OF BLESSING

In this passage of scripture (Zech. 14:4-8) so pregnant with meaning the inspired prophet has told us of the deep and profound events that mark the great and wonderful day which lies before us in these strange and remarkable words: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and

there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be."

I would draw your attention to what takes place, a mighty upheaval of nature before which the people flee and, as if to tell us the natural cause underlying the upheaval, we are told that it is "as before the EARTHQUAKE in the days of Uzziah." This upheaval results in the splitting of the mountain and the formation of a very great valley; the land is turned into a plain and the light becomes dim, then brighter, until at evening it is brilliant as the noonday. And what causes it all? HIS FEET STANDING UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES! Yes, the earth is His footstool.

Here we see, then, that the TWO HALVES of the Mount of Olives (Kingdom of the Anointing) signify TWO ASPECTS or PARTS of the Kingdom of God, distinctly separated according to a divine order or arrangement. The separation indicates no opposition between the two ministries of God's Anointed Government. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of producing the "Valley of Blessing" between - to which all who desire divine aid may flee and find delivering and transforming grace under the blessed ministry of both the Kingship and Priesthood of the sons of God. The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other part to the south is wonderfully significant. The original Zion, with its fortress of the Jebusites captured by king David, and made into his palace and throne, was located just to the south of Mount Moriah. On Mount Moriah to the north the priesthood served in the temple. On Mount Zion to the south David the king reigned gloriously. The Mount of Olives is located just across the Kidron Valley to the east, directly facing both Moriah and Zion. To remove to the north relates to Mount Moriah, the temple, and the priesthood. To remove to the south relates to Mount Zion, the throne, and kingship. Praise God, this ANOINTED KINGDOM is a Kingdom of both KINGS AND PRIESTS!

It is the glory of Christ and His many brethren as KING-PRIESTS that Melchizedek so wondrously prefigures. A new order has arisen in Jesus Christ. He is a King-Priest. And He has made us to be Kings and Priests, yea, a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. "They shall be PRIESTS of God and of Christ, and shall REIGN with Him" **(Rev. 20:6).** The principal idea attached to the title "king" is that of authority and rule; to the title "priest" that of mediation, mercy, ministry and reconciliation, drawing men nigh unto God, and God nigh unto men. Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? It is that men may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man. As priest He lives only for others, to bring them near to God. He lives as king only that He might reveal the Kingdom - the power, authority and glory - of God in and through us.

JESUS IS PRIEST AND KING. The Lord Jesus is a Priest who is ever merciful and compassionate. He will and does meet the needs of man, but He is also the King who demands your obedience to His wise and sovereign will. Surely He will meet your needs, but He will also demand your obedience. We must learn about BOTH dimensions of the Melchizedek ministry. We cannot project a loving Priest apart from the firm discipline of His Rulership. And we cannot preach the Gospel of the Kingdom without the mercy and compassion of His Priesthood.

Do you want to be an overcomer? Then learn that the firstborn Son is Priest AND King. There is a great error abroad in the land today. There is a projection of a one-sided gospel to the multitudes that appeals to the flesh. This is how it comes across: "God loves you, God wants to forgive you, bless you, heal you, deliver you, solve all your problems, prosper you, fill you - God wants to meet all YOUR NEEDS." And that is tremendously true! But if that is our sole emphasis, if that is where our message stops, if that is all we tell God's people, then we are in trouble! If we make that priestly truth our priority, we will produce a race of spoiled spiritual brats who are immature and selfish, takers and not givers. And when the clouds of adversity and trouble roll in, when the storms of tribulation and fiery trial break in unbridled fury upon their land, as they surely shall, these poor folk will be frustrated, fearful, upset and angry with God when He doesn't come running when they quote their

favorite "faith" scriptures. An unbalanced presentation of truth will produce unbalanced saints. And the land is filled with these today! They are all excitedly awaiting the "rapture"! Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself not only as King, not only as Priest, but as KING-PRIEST. He is the King eternal and invincible. He is the Priest for the ages full of compassion and mercy. He shall yet arise in glory in His NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE and reveal Himself in a people as the great and conquering King and the merciful High Priest, and then all shall know Him. Every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow and all men shall partake of the blessings that flow from the Mount of Olives, God's anointed Kingdom of King-Priests after the order of Melchizedek.

Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship know that the principles of this anointed Kingdom are being established in the lives of God's elect today. The Lord must be King NOW. But He wants to be more than that. We first have to know Him in His Kingship, in His authority, rulership and government. The scriptures call Him a "righteous Governor." We have to first know Him as King. But why does He desire us to know Him as King? Why is it His purpose to set up the throne of His Kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US to become kings. But that is not the end. He is not setting up His throne within us, just to make us kings. But He is establishing His throne in us and is making us kings in order that HE may be able to appear and manifest Himself in the midst of the kings as THE KING OF ALL THE KINGS. The world will never know Him as the King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of the kings. Do not think you will be puffed up when you come into kingship - "Ah, when I become a king!" When you become a king that is just the beginning. It is just the beginning of the opportunity for the revelation of Jesus Christ as KING OF KINGS. He will not reign THROUGH you until first He reigns OVER you. Furthermore, He is a Priest upon His throne. He is priest in our hearts. In this age only the church which is His body knows His wonderful priesthood. But the hour is coming when the priests of the order of Melchizedek shall touch all creation. You are only becoming a priest, my brother, my sister, so He can manifest HIS HIGH PRIESTHOOD through you. May God make this real to you today!

In these wonderful King-Priests the authority of God's law and the mercy and compassion of God's grace are brought together. It was, then, of this priestly kingship that David prophesied when he said, "Surely His salvation is nigh ... MERCY and TRUTH are met together; RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE have kissed each other" **(Ps. 85:9-10).** Mercy and truth are met together - praise God, what a summit meeting! These words are pregnant with meaning. When one contemplates the very impossibility of such an union, it is an overwhelming thought that mercy and truth are met together. Truth is harsh and demanding; mercy is lenient and lax. Truth condemns and devours; mercy covers and exonerates. Yet here, in the Melchizedek priesthood, these two incompatible forces are MET TOGETHER! Partakers with Him in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes an ANOINTED KING, he shares that dominion, that power that is derived from the King of kings. And when one actually becomes an ANOINTED PRIEST, he shares that unlimited outflow of mercy, of compassion, of unqualified love that is derived from the heart of our Great High Priest.

The appearance of this DUAL MINISTRY (King-Priest) of the sons of God causes the formation of a "very great valley" known as "the valley of the mountains" - specifically the mountains of Olivet, Moriah and Zion - each symbolizing in its unique way the anointed Kingdom of the sons of God. Olivet bespeaks of the anointing, and the anointing rests upon Zion and Moriah - Kingship and Priesthood. The "valley" thus produced bespeaks of the hope of all mankind for deliverance and refuge from the travail of this dark world; and this valley would be one full of light - free from shadows: for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks of the Sun of Righteousness and His full light of glory, truth and blessing scattering the shadows of ignorance, sin, superstition, and death, and healing and reconciling and restoring all who will flee to this valley of blessings, this valley of mercy and safety - for the Hebrew word signifying mercy is ELAIOS and is derived from ELAIA signifying an OLIVE.

Carrying the picture further, the prophet declares, respecting that day in which gradually the earth shall be made glorious as the Lord's footstool**:** "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT" **(Zech. 14:6-7).** The day here referred to is in its beginning only partially bright, although in it the Sun of Righteousness arises and shines to scatter earth's miasma of sin, superstition, sorrow and death. Has it not been thus in the experience of God's elect? What LITTLE LIGHT we actually had in our spiritual beginning, when first the consciousness of Christ awakened and dawned within our

hearts! How the light has grown brighter and brighter until today we are dazzled by the brightness of the illumination of His glorious mind! For the masses of humanity entering this day of the Lord it will at first be only partially bright, because it will be dealing with people after people, nation after nation, power after power, system after system, delusion after delusion, evil after evil, as the fallen race is progressively brought forth from the tomb of ignorance, sin and death, from glory to glory ushered into the illumination of God's perfect day.

Ah - it shall also be a day of battle, for in the same hour that the "feet company" are planted on the heights of the Anointed Kingdom, in the authority and power of the seven-fold anointing, WAR BREAKS OUT! "Then shall the Lord go forth and FIGHT against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives ... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" **(Zech. 14:3-5).** How shall the Lord, the Spirit, fight? How shall those elect saints in whom He comes, fight? The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world (order): if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants FIGHT..." **(Jn. 18:36).** The Kingdom of God is not a Kingdom enforced by might of worldly armaments. The weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (II Cor. 10:4). The weapon of the army of God is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, the sharp two-edged sword of the spoken Word of God - a sword to smite the nations, not with the cruel force of merciless slaughter, but with the life-changing properties of TRUTH AND LIFE. The battle fought on the Mount of Olives, the Kingdom of the Anointing, is a spiritual warfare, combat between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death, between the customs and ways of THIS WORLD and the principles of the Kingdom of God. The anointed feet company of the lovely Son of God does not conquer nations by blowing away millions or with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery.

The apocalyptic description of the Christ setting His feet on the Mount of Olives and engaging in fierce warfare with all the nations that come against Jerusalem, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. How utterly uncharacteristic of our precious Saviour that would be! "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" **(Zech. 14:12).** Sounds ominous, doesn't it? Atomic war? No. There are deep mysteries and profound realities in these significant words which the veil of the carnal mind has hidden from our eyes. When the Spirit of God draws aside the curtain of human tradition and interpretation and shines His light into the dark recesses of the understanding, all is made clear. Three beautiful spiritual principles emerge from the letter of the Word: (1) their FLESH shall consume away (2) their EYES shall consume away (3) their TONGUES shall consume away. When the truth of this dawns like a ray of sunlight in the heart, it is a life-changing concept and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that shall come to every man who is the enemy of God that blessed experience in which HIS FLESH (fleshly nature) consumes away before the blazing countenance of God's Christ; his EYES (worldly understanding, carnal vision) dissolve away as he leaps for wonder at the revelation that bursts upon his consciousness from the presence of the Lord; and his TONGUE (speech, confession, outward expression of the inner nature) melts within him as the Living Word is implanted in his heart by the regenerating power of the Spirit, and from that moment grows and develops until its life consumes his old self completely and he can literally say in absolute truth. "it is not I, but Christ." Thus does God's Christ do battle! What a mighty victory! Hallelujah!

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be NO RAIN... there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" **(Zech. 14:17-18).** There need be no question in the mind of anyone as what the "rain" signifies. The prophet Hosea declared, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE shall come unto us as the RAIN, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" **(Hos. 6:3).** There is a strange and foolish tendency in man to interpret the words of God with the carnal understanding. If you will take time to meditate upon this with the spiritual mind it will become clear that the "rain" in both passages quoted above is the VERY SAME RAIN. It is not the rain from the sky that is withheld from those nations which fail to follow on to know the Lord in His fullness in

the Feast of Tabernacles, but the glorious RAIN OF HIS SPIRIT - the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God!

We are looking forward with great anticipation to God's Kingdom dealings with ALL NATIONS. Humanity is thirsting for these living waters from heaven! Let us not sell creation short. Arise, saints of God, and come away with the enChristed to the holy Mount of Olives, the Kingdom of the Anointing, the FULLNESS OF GOD. Can we not see, then, how simple a matter it will be for the overcoming "feet company" to administer help, deliverance and life to a weary and suffering world? For these shall be OVERCOMERS in the fullness of Christ's victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. Sin, sickness, or death shall have no more claim on them. They will be EVEN AS their Lord and Master when He walked upon earth and ministered among men. And more! We can easily understand, therefore, how the glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed in power and great glory throughout the whole earth. There will not be a country, city, village or hamlet on earth that will be closed to THIS gospel of the Kingdom. Glory to God!

How refreshing it is to be assured that in that day of the establishment of the Lord's "feet" upon His footstool, there shall be no more "thick darkness," no more "gross darkness" resting upon the minds and hearts of the vast majority of earth's inhabitants; and at the close of that day, instead of growing darker, the world will have reached the high noon of its "light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord," and its sun shall never set.

The Sun of Righteousness is the arising of the glory of the Lord shining in His full strength and majesty, dispelling the darkness, bringing in the day of victory, life and blessing. This day has already dawned upon us and shone in our hearts, but creation awaits its day. The scriptures are plain that the influence of the Sun of Righteousness - the glory of God upon His people - is destined to extend to the world and beyond to the farthest reaches of creation. "I am the light of THE WORLD," not just of the saints, said Jesus. And again, "YE are the light of THE WORLD" **(Jn. 8:12; Mat. 5:4).** John on Patmos, beholding with astonishment the glistering glory of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, exclaimed with the voice of jubilation, "And the NATIONS of them that 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).** To which the prophet Isaiah adds his testimony, saying, "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... HIS GLORY SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE. And the GENTILES (NATIONS) SHALL COME TO T-H-Y L-I-G-H-T, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" **(Isa. 60:1-3).**

The message is clear - there has been a dawn for us and, blessed be God! there shall be a dawn for all creation. The peoples of our planet will not remain in the icy clutches of an ever-deepening darkness until all hope is gone, until there is nothing but total darkness and death. No, light will appear - more light than the world has ever seen - at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness and the sending forth of His healing rays through the VALLEY OF BLESSING. The whole face of this old world is yet to be changed by the arising of the glory of the Lord within His people! The illuminating rays of glory will fill the earth, your earth, my earth, their earth, until all the shadows and darkness of night have been chased away. All the carnal thinking of man, all the delusions of this gross material realm, all the doctrines of devils, all superstitions, all human creeds and dogmas, all human precepts by which men are taught to fear God rather than to love Him; all political intrigues, all humanistic education and institutions, all the myriad citadels of sin and vice and crime, are to be swept away, replaced by the glorious KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND HIS TRANSFORMING GRACE. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise and arise until there is no more night anywhere in God's vast universe. "It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light" **(Zech. 14:7).** No man anywhere will be able to escape the glory of God. WE ARE THE DAWN OF IT, the firstfruits, praise His name!

This glorious work commences just as soon as the "feet company" are established upon the "Anointed Kingdom" of God in the fullness of the King-Priest ministry after the order of Melchizedek. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; and the Lord shall be King over all the earth in that day" **(Zech. 14:8-9).** Oh! We have understood so carnally, supposing as the natural-minded preachers have taught us, that this glorious prophecy pointed to nothing more than a physical Jesus descending upon the little hill of Olivet at Jerusalem, attended

by terrestrial earthquakes and commotions, and natural waters flowing forth unto the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

The reference to the rivers of living waters flowing from Jerusalem during this day of the establishment of the Lord's "feet" upon the government of His footstool, is highly reminiscent of the corresponding testimony of Ezekiel (Eze. 47:1-12) and of John's revelation (Rev. 22:1-2) which, under this same symbol of living waters proceeding from the throne of the Kingdom of God, show us the restoration blessings going forth to all mankind by the overflowing of the spirit of life from the glorified body of Christ on earth. "In the last day, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST (tabernacles), Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me ... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive" **(Jn. 7:37-39).**

Jesus spoke of an artesian fountain of living water that would rise up in the soul, and flow forth to humanity in mighty rivers of blessing and life. It is the healing, life-giving stream that we read about in Ezekiel: "These waters issue out toward the east country (false religion, departure from the truth of God), and go down into the desert (spiritually parched; death realm), and go into the sea (raging, surging masses of wicked humanity): which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, that moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish (people, converts), because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh" **(Eze. 47:8-9).**

The coming manifestation of God through His sons shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read about in the Bible or in Church history! This river of life has been flowing under the Mount of Olives and in the City of God, within those elect saints who as a firstfruit have experienced the powers of the Kingdom of God ever since Pentecost; we realize that. But soon it shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness where no water is. "Behold, I will 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).** Let it flow, child of God - let it surge forward until it becomes a mighty Amazon in this desert-world of sin, disease, sorrow and death. As one has written: "Said Jesus, 'Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' We are not looking forward, then, to some strange, foreign power ... some glory or some experience that does not really belong to us. But we are awaiting the RELEASE of the Divine flow, which is now locked up in the hearts of God's people. We are 'A spring shut up, a fountain sealed...'" -end quote.

The world is thirsting for these living streams from the ANOINTED KINGDOM. The time is at hand when we may with all confidence expect the mighty EARTHQUAKE that will loose us from our carnal-mindedness and raise our consciousness to walk in the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. From this glorious mind shall flow forth the seven spirits of God into all the earth in that glorious age and ages to come. Therefore, let us even now begin to rejoice in the NEW DAY, as the first rays of hope arise on the eastern horizon; let us arise to plant our feet on the Anointed Mount and drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn! Hallelujah!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 44
COMING TO RECEIVE US UNTO HIMSELF

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-FOUR

MANY MANSIONS
PREPARING A PLACE FOR YOU

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" **(Jn. 14:1-3).**

Multitudes today believe Jesus told His disciples that Christians will spend eternity in "mansions" in heaven. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." There is the assumption by carnal-minded Bible teachers and preachers that the Lord was discussing some material and physical mansions in a far away heaven somewhere; mansions in some bright glory world above that we will move into on "Some Golden Daybreak." The supposition is that these splendid mansions are now being built by Jesus, the master carpenter, on some utopian planet in a far distant galaxy. He has been ardently preoccupied with this monumental project for the past 2,000 years. From what we hear, however, many would be willing to forego their mansion and settle for a shack in some remote corner of Glory land, just so long as they don't have to go to hell!

Did Jesus really say that our reward is a mansion in heaven? Let's see! "In My Father's house," Jesus said plainly, "there are many MANSIONS. If it were not true," He continued, "I would have told you." Let us identify this "Father's house" of which Jesus spoke. Long centuries before these words of promise fell from the lips of Jesus David's holy desire was that he would "find out a place for the Lord, an HABITATION for the mighty God of Jacob" **(Ps. 132:5).** This holy, spirit-born desire was within him while just a child in his father's house in Ephrata (Ps. 132:6; I Sam. 17:12). The word "habitation" is a plural word, and should read "habitations."

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, entered into the temple, "And said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not MY FATHER'S HOUSE an house of merchandise" **(Jn. 2:16).** "And said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" **(Mat. 21:13).** "Everyone that taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in MY HOUSE OF PRAYER: - for MINE HOUSE shall be called an house of prayer for all people" **(Isa. 56:6-7).** And yet again Jesus refers to the earthly tabernacle as God's house, when He spoke of David, "How he entered into the HOUSE OF GOD, and did eat the showbread" **(Mat. 12:4).** Thus, according to the scriptures, the earthly tabernacle and temple in Israel was called "THE HOUSE OF GOD," and served "unto the example (exhibition) and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" **(Heb. 8:5).**

Moses built a portable tabernacle, which was followed by Solomon's temple of splendor, and later still by the rebuilt temple of Zerubbabel, all of them to be an EXHIBITION, an earthly display of the greater spiritual habitation that is yet to be assembled, and which is even now in preparation under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. As we have pointed out, when we come to this phrase, "My Father's House," many of us carry our immature, childish understanding of "The Father's House" over into our adult thinking. We have automatically, due to former false teaching, conjured up a picture of a park-like place with golden streets and beautiful mansions, with saints flitting about in white night gowns, playing harps. We can readily imagine our mansion over the hilltop where we shall reside in magnificent splendor with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in! But let us look into the Word of the Lord, and let us not partake of the folly of another group of religionists who displayed their ignorance on one occasion when Jesus stood in the temple in Jerusalem and said to them,

"Destroy THIS TEMPLE, and in three days I will raise it up again" **(Jn. 2:19).** Those Jews became indignant and replied that it had taken forty-six arduous years to construct that temple, and would He rebuild it in three days? With their carnal minds darkened, only able to see the natural, not receiving the revelation of His words by the Spirit, they "perceived not that He spake of the TEMPLE OF HIS BODY" **(Jn. 2:19-21).**

Jesus here states that HIS BODY is the TEMPLE. The revelation that His body was the Temple of God was as difficult for carnal minds as was the revelation that God was His Father. The scriptures clearly reveal that Jesus Himself is the beginning of the TRUE TABERNACLE of God. We must note particularly that beginning with the New Covenant, which Jesus came to establish, God no longer dwells in tabernacles made with hands. "But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. However the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands; as the prophet says ... What kind of house can you build for Me, says the Lord..." **(Acts 7:47-49).** And again, "The God who produced and formed the world and all things in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in HANDMADE SHRINES. Neither is He served by human hands, as though He lacked anything..." **(Acts 17:23-24)** (Amplified).

When king David desired to build a house for the Lord, God sent Nathan the prophet to him who delivered this message: "Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me a house to dwell in: it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired... that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. HE SHALL BUILD ME A HOUSE, and I will establish his throne forever." Now while it is true that Solomon, David's son, did build a house for God in Jerusalem, it is quite evident that neither Solomon nor his temple were the true fulfillment of this prophecy. But when Jesus came He was specifically identified as THE SON OF DAVID (Mat. 1:1). The angel Gabriel, in the annunciation to Mary declared, "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the THRONE of HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" **(Lk. 1:31-33).** Jesus was even born in the "City of David" **(Lk. 2:4,11)**. So Nathan's remarkable prophecy was never fulfilled until Jesus came. The son of David who was to BUILD THE HOUSE OF THE LORD - is Jesus! Therefore, Jesus Himself is the beginning of the TRUE TABERNACLE of God.

Jesus was the first man on the earth realm to ever build God a habitation where He could live and reveal Himself in His fullness. He did this by possessing His vessel (body) in honor and holiness, in obedience and submission, in love, humility and perfection. This was a place where God could fully live. For the first time since the creation God had a TRUE HABITATION on earth - a temple which was WHOLLY HIS - nothing reserved. Hebrews 1:8-9 says of Jesus, "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Jesus did not receive the Spirit of God by measure, but was filled with ALL the fullness of God. "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" **(Jn. 3:34).** "For in Him dwelleth ALL THE FULLNESS of the Godhead BODILY" **(Col. 2:9). II Cor. 5:19** states: "It was God personally present in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself..." (Amplified Bible). Again, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US." Our Lord Himself declared, "If you had known Me - had learned to recognize Me - you would also have known My Father. From now on you know Him and have seen Him. Phillip said to Him, Lord show us the Father - cause us to see the Father, that is all we ask; then we shall be satisfied. Jesus replied, Have I been with all of you for so long a time and you do not recognize and know Me yet, Phillip? Anyone who has SEEN ME has seen THE FATHER. How can you say then, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? The Father who lives continually in Me does the works" **(Jn. 14:7-10,** Amplified**).** So Jesus built the Father a house to live in. He became the beginning, the firstborn of a new and divine species - the TRUE TABERNACLE which the LORD PITCHED, and not man! The Father was even then indwelling His most treasured abode at that very moment in their midst!

But it is not sufficient to know only that Jesus was and is the temple, the dwelling place of God. It was with an expression of wonder that Paul demanded of the Corinthians, "Know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE" **(I Cor. 3:16-17).** And again, "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; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" **(II Cor. 6:16).** And with still greater emphasis, "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, YE are God's BUILDING" **(I Cor. 3:9).** The writer to the Hebrews presses the point even further. "Wherefore...consider the apostle... of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all HIS HOUSE ... for every house is built by some man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all HIS HOUSE, as a servant, as a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; BUT CHRIST as a Son over HIS OWN HOUSE; whose house WE ARE" **(Heb. 3:1-6).**

These are solemnizing truths. Oh, that men and women would cease with their elation over the rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem and rejoice rather in the holy knowledge that WE ARE THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. We have become so accustomed even to calling temporal and transient church buildings made of wood and brick and stone the "house of God" that we are amazed when we are shown that these are NOUGHT BUT BUILDINGS made with men's hands. The fact is, NO EARTHLY BUILDING is sacred or holy, no matter how earnestly you dedicate it to the service of God. Men reverence buildings when they should reverence GOD. No mundane building made with man's hands can ever qualify as the "house of God." All of these carnal, Babylonian buildings that men erroneously call "churches" and the "house of the Lord" shall meet the same fate as the temple of old. Not one stone shall be left standing upon another! Babylon has raised up some fantastic structures, gems of architectural genius, but it is all VANITY and the glory of God dwells in none of them. May the Spirit of God so reveal to us the truth of God that we shall abandon even our perverted terminology acquired in Babylon and no longer call buildings made with men's hands churches and "the house of God." They are no such thing, and we need to correct our speech and sanctify our glossology before God and speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and refuse to even utter the distortions and foolishness of Babylon. The holy PLACE where our heavenly Father has chosen to put His name is not in any earthly building, nor in a geographical location, but IN HIS PEOPLE! Hallelujah!

Listen to the words of Peter: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, YE ALSO, as living stones, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE... acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" **(I Pet. 2:4-5).** Add to this these meaningful words of Paul from Weymouth's beautiful translation: "You are therefore no longer foreigners nor persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY. YOU ARE A BUILDING which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, IN UNION WITH WHOM the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a HOLY SANCTUARY IN THE LORD; in whom you also are being BUILT UP TOGETHER to become a FIXED ABODE FOR GOD through the Spirit" **(Eph. 2:19-22).**

In the words of Jesus throughout the Gospels we find references to three houses "My house," "Father's house," and "your house." The temple in Jerusalem had been "Father's house" so long as the ministry there moved under the anointing of the Spirit. But when the Lord began His ministry, He said to the people, "But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple" **(Mat. 12:6)**. And truly, Christ is far superior to the temple and all its trappings, even as He is far superior to the present church order, no matter how good we think some of it is. Jesus saw that "Father's house" had become "your house," so He proclaimed of their house, "Behold, YOUR HOUSE is left unto you desolate." It was no longer "Father's house" for the corrupt priesthood had usurped the glory of God and had made it "their house" with their empty traditions and vain abominations**.** "And Jesus went into the temple... and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves**"** **(Mat. 21:12-13).** Although Jesus drove out the moneychangers, the judgment of the temple was given by our Lord, for He declared it to be A "DESOLATE" HOUSE, or a house devoid of the presence and purpose of God.

MANY MANSIONS

Here now we must ask the blessed Spirit of truth to uncover the hidden things from before our understanding and reveal the things that from the foundation of the world have been kept secret. The word "mansion" is found in only one place in the King James Version of the Bible. "In My Father's house are many mansions" **(Jn.**

14:2). The word "mansions" is obviously a mistranslation. The Amplified Bible says, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places." The New English Bible and Wuest's translation say the same. The Revised Standard version, Phillips translation, Goodspeed, and the Jerusalem Bible all say, "There are many rooms in My Father's house." Rotheham's Emphasized New Testament reads, "In the house of My Father are many dwellings." The Greek word MONE should be correctly translated as "abodes" or, as the Amplified Bible renders it, "abiding places." In the Father's house are many "abiding places," with no allusion to size or grandeur. Furthermore, the reference is not to the space available inside the house, but rather to the very FRAMEWORK OF THE HOUSE ITSELF. For it is NOT WE who dwell in the Father's house - it is the FATHER HIMSELF who dwells in and fills the house. We ARE the house!

Read it again. The "mansion" is not for YOU to live in! A few verses later Jesus says, "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. 14:23).** Very beautiful is it to notice that our Lord here employs the same sweet and significant word, with which He began this wonderful series of encouragements, when He said, "In My Father's house are many MANSIONS." "Mansions" in Jn. 14:1 is the same Greek word as "abode" in Jn. 14:23 (MONE). If the translators had been consistent in their rendering vs. 23 would read, "We will come unto him, and make our MANSION with him." The message is clear - God is preparing YOU and ME, beloved, as the place to live and have His abode. OUR mansion is IN GOD and GOD'S mansion is IN US. Glory! The church system has taught us that we have a mansion in the sky. Great singers, before vast crowds of thousands sing, "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop," and the carnal mind gets blessed with the thought that since we don't have much wealth and riches, or many yachts or mansions down here, God has prepared a beautiful mansion for us on that beautiful "Isle of Somewhere." This sounds sweet to the emotional, carnal mind, but how far from the truth it is! This deception is so imprinted in the minds of the people that nought but the overflowing grace of God can ever erase it. They understand not that God's chosen and elect saints ARE that beautiful home, full of life and light and love, where no power of darkness, sin or death can ever invade or operate. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Listen to the words of Paul as he presses this truth home to heart of the young minister, Timothy. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth" **(I Tim. 3:15).** What does this term "the house of God" mean? When you refer to "your house," you mean the place where you dwell, where you live, where you work out your life; and that is just the meaning of the house of God. It is not a frivolous term. "The house of God" is the place where God dwells, where He lives, and where He works out His life. It is His address!

This house is none other than the CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD. Notice that the term here is not merely "God," but "the living God." He is so living; and He now dwells in the Church, moves in the Church, lives in the Church, and works out His whole life in the Church. When we say that the Church is the house of God, we must have a very deep realization that God dwells, lives, and works out His life in this house. I speak not of that "harlot's house" which everywhere calls itself "the church" and masquerades as the "house of God," but of that true temple of the redeemed, regenerated and transformed people of God whose feet have been washed from the filth of all of Babylon's abominations, each one a living stone, an eternal abiding place which our God is building for Himself. Within the Church - this group of redeemed, regenerated and transformed people - God dwells; and upon this group of people, there is the reality of the universe. All the reality of the universe is centered in this body of the Christ. If anyone wants to know what life is he must come to this Church and see. If some would like to know what love is, they too must come and see. If anyone wants to touch the manifold wisdom, grace, glory and power of God, the body of Christ is the place to find it. The function of this body is not in doctrine, ceremony and ritual, but in bearing Christ as the reality.

Would God that all the saints might see that since WE ARE THE HOUSE OF GOD, our dwelling place is not inside the house, but in the very framework of the house. Every part of a building has its specific place to "abide." What would happen to a building were its members possessed of the faculty of speech and the ability of movement? What would happen were the roof to say, "I'm tired of being up here, exposed to the heat of the sun in summer, the beating of the rain, and the chill of winter. I have decided to come inside and abide on the floor!" Or, what if the doors announced, "We're tired of hanging here on the wall, pushed and pulled all the

time. Let's go up and rest on the roof." Or, suppose the walls were to declare, "We don't like this position; we're going out and lie on the lawn!" Or if the carpet curled up in the bathtub, or the electric range floated up to the ceiling. Ridiculous! In every house - each stone, board, nail, and furnishing has its unique abiding place. And all together, in perfect order, each fulfilling its place and function for which the architect designed it, they form the complete, perfect building, a place of habitation for those worthy of it.

Ah, we are given the transcendent and glorious privilege of entering into Father's house! Not as a guest, or occupant, but as part of the very substance of the building itself to be DWELT IN, FULLY INHABITED BY THE FATHER HIMSELF! Jesus says that if this were not true, He would have told us. But because it IS wondrously true, He has prepared a place for us in this glorious habitation of God, bringing us into relationship with the Father, that as sons we might be filled with ALL the fullness of God.

In the first reference we have to the temple of God in the book of Revelation, Jesus proclaimed to the seven churches, "Him that overcometh will I make a PILLAR in the TEMPLE OF MY GOD, and he shall go no more out" **(Rev. 3:12).** A "pillar" is a part of the structure. Just think of that! I doubt not that thousands of saints who read these lines rejoice in the knowledge that they are LIVING STONES in the wall, but here is a promise, given to overcomers, that they shall be P-I-L-L-A-R-S IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD. It is a high and wonderful promise. Only God can reveal such things to us. The pillars bear the weight of the superstructure. One day, when Paul was writing to his son in the faith, he wrote of the house of God "which is the church of the living God, the PILLAR and ground of the truth" **(I Tim. 3:15).** This house of God, in which God dwells, lives, and works out His life, is also the P-I-L-L-A-R OF THE TRUTH. What is truth? Be not deceived into thinking, my beloved, that truth is a doctrine, creed, or correct understanding about God. The most simple definition of truth is - REALITY. Nothing is real in the whole material universe, nothing is truth; everything is but a shadow, all is temporal, illusion, and is passing away. Everything that can be seen, touched, tasted, and possessed is not real, but at best a shadow. Whatever exists in this universe of appearances is but a figure, not the real thing.

What is the real thing - REALITY? "The things which are SEEN are temporal," the inspired apostle says, "but the things which are NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL" **(II Cor. 4:18).** The things, which cannot be seen by the natural eye, are the things of the SPIRIT. CHRIST, the SPIRIT, is the reality of everything! You may think that the human life you have is real, but it is not; it too is only a shadow. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" **(James 1:24).** Real life is Christ. If you have the Son of God, you have life; if you do not have the Son of God, you do not have life (I Jn. 5:12). If someone sends you a photograph of himself, you will say, "That is uncle Joe, or cousin Mary." But in truth, that is not any person at all. It is merely a picture, an image, a false likeness. REAL things are not found in pictures! The whole universe is but a picture, an image, a likeness. All the types, shadows and figures in the Bible were but symbols and images of REALITY to come, and that reality IS CHRIST. Christ is the truth, the reality of all. In the physical realm we have food, but Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven. On earth we have great rocks, but Christ is the true rock of ages, the stability that cannot be moved or shaken by anything. We dress our bodies in clothing, but Christ is the eternal robe of righteousness covering the nakedness of our flesh nature. Christ Himself is the truth, and His Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; I Jn. 5:7). Christ is the reality, and His Spirit is the SPIRIT OF REALITY. The people in whom the living God dwells, lives and moves, is the PILLAR OF THE TRUTH, the support upon which reality stands, the buttress that bears the reality. Upon this people can be seen what is the glory of the Lord, the reality of the universe! Upon this people can be seen what is real and true - truth. Upon the sons of God can be seen the reality of life and incorruption, the reality of love, the reality of righteousness, the reality of mercy and goodness, the reality of wisdom and knowledge and power. The sons of God are the PILLARS of God' s temple, the support of the superstructure, the resting place of all truth, the foundation of all REALITY! God is raising up a many-membered temple, all in perfect union with Christ, to be filled with all the glory of God for eternity. And this body, dear ones, IS the FATHER'S HOUSE!

Let me repeat - this time in the anointed words of George Warnock, "When Jesus said, 'We will come unto him, and make our ABODE with him,' He used the very same word for ABODE as He used earlier when He said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' The word 'mansion' and 'abode' is one and the same Greek word. This, then, is the real mansion that Christ has gone to prepare for His own. Some might prefer a house of gold or of glistening white marble or pearl. But those things are corruptible; even gold and silver are described by

the apostle as being 'corruptible things.' They are not REAL. The real things are the counterparts of gold, and pearls, and sapphires, and emeralds, and jasper. In our finite and limited understanding these natural and earthly things are used to describe our heavenly heritage - because that is the only language that we can understand. But in reality, the glorious realm of the SPIRIT far transcends and outshines any such earthly glory. One glorious thing about the realm of the Spirit is that here there is nothing stagnant or monotonous. Immediately one is introduced into this glorious realm, there is ceaseless progression and activity. Then you are linked up with the infinite and eternal God, whose ways are past finding out, whose depths are unsearchable, and whose heights are unattainable. Therefore the Lord tells us there are many ABODES in Father's house, depending on the level of one's experience, and his spiritual attainment through faith and obedience. 'In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor' **(II Tim. 2:20).** There is a resting-place, an abiding-place; but in God the true rest is found in the midst of outward strife and warfare: and the true ABIDING-PLACE is the one that is ceaselessly moving forward and upward into a closer and more vital union with the Father" -end quote.

The door into the invisible world of the Father's house is Jesus Himself. In the drinking of the cup of wine at the "last supper," Jesus told His disciples that He would effect the New Covenant, which promised that within the covenant all men would KNOW the Lord. Jesus, by making the New Covenant for man, would bring man into ultimate communion with the Father, dwelling in His house. This He would go and accomplish for them that night; and having accomplished it, He would return to them by the Spirit that they might share a common life. What a revelation! What a wonderful word this was! What different prospects were being held out from what the twelve had been expecting! Earthly ambitions of Kingdom honors were now on the wane, as wonderfully new and unthought of hopes came upon their horizon. At last the truth was dawning like the brilliant hues of the break of day within their breasts that in the Father's house ARE many mansions many dwelling places, many planes of life. On the earth there are many forms of life, beginning with the lowly shellfish on up to man, the king upon the earth. And the Bible tells us that all these are mere pictures of spiritual realities - celestial spheres of life in the eternal and heavenly Kingdom of God. Yes, there are many mansions or planes of reality. There is a house of many mansions - many levels of experience, many dimensions of truth, or a many-faceted wisdom of God. Each realm of truth we embrace and move into brings us higher and higher into the Kingdom of Reality. Each dimension we attain to brings us into a larger degree of KNOWING GOD. Those who truly "follow on" to "know the Lord" thus explore the "many mansions" - these blessed ones discover reality in every room and are still moving forward into UNLIMITED AND INFINITE TRUTH. Praise God! the many mansions are here and now accessible, and they are found IN HIM.

The following vision was received many years ago by a young sister in Argentina. If you can interpret it with a spiritual mind you will see that under the metaphor of "houses" the Holy Spirit has portrayed for us those bright celestial realms IN THE SPIRIT, composed not of cold hard stones, but of living realities possessed by living members of a living temple of living stones who are built up a spiritual house, an habitation of God through the Spirit. The vision is as follows: "The Lord set me free from the heavy oppressions of the enemy and I was enabled to enter into His presence most easily and quickly. Then He carried me away to the sphere where He resides in His great Cloud. When I looked He showed me a great many most wonderful houses but they were not at all like houses down here. They were like great, beautiful arches of light, each by itself distinctly separated one from the other. These treasures were for His people and there they would abide with Him. And indeed they were so beautiful they truly appeared like most wonderful riches for they were like glowing gems of purest celestial light of some material I could never explain.

"There was a marked difference between the houses on the different spheres. Those on the same sphere were more or less of the same appearance and were of a great number, but those on a higher sphere were vastly different and far more wonderful. The highest sphere of all was so gloriously brilliant that I could only behold in amazing wonder without being able to describe it. Each separate sphere was most markedly different, superior, harmonious and far more brilliant than the sphere below it. So great was their light and so glorious their shining that they outshone the sun by far. Nevertheless, I could not ascertain the number of spheres.

"These arches - or domes of light - were not things separate from Him but they were a PART OF HIMSELF. This was the most surprising of all. They were parts of His very person. Each separate sphere was made up of a part of Himself but was such a different manifestation of Himself. Each higher sphere was so much superior

and wonderful than the one before. I thought afterwards of an illustration from my own mind to try to describe it: As though a young lady prepares herself in one way to work in the kitchen, in another way to go out to tea, but in still another way she beautifies herself to go out for an evening gala celebration. 'These are the riches of Myself,' He said, 'and are most distinct one from the other. I have offered every one of these dwellings in every sphere to every one of My children. Although I have given to every one the same opportunities, many will be satisfied and will resign themselves to lower spheres because they do not want any more of Me. Each one will reach the place that his heart truly desires which will be given to him. Because some do not want to make the effort to reach out for any more they will have no more for they do not want any more.'

"As He showed me the most glorious mansions on the highest sphere, He said, 'These will be given to those who have sought for Me alone, who have not sought for these riches but have sought to be with Me. Even though they have not sought for any of these I am going to give them as a gift because they greatly desired to be more and more at My side and to be with Me. Those who are conformists and do not want to make any more effort did not really desire to be with Me as much as they desired My blessings and My riches. They have loved Me and I have loved them and these dwelling places are for those who truly desired and sought for Me. This was their will and their desire and it shall be given unto them.' Then He further said that although it was their will it was also His will for them, that He had willed it to be so for them and therefore it was so. He had ordered it to be and therefore it was" -end quote.

PREPARING A PLACE FOR YOU

God nowhere in the Bible holds up heaven as a hope for the future; but He does promise us "THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" **(II Thes. 2:14).** And all who are hoping for a mansion in heaven are, in their blindness, totally ignoring the jewels of great price and toying instead with an invention of ignorance, which can bring but disappointment and shame and loss at the end of the road. Of course they find statements in the Word, which they use as proof for their delusions. So does every crack-pot cult and "ism" on earth. God wrote His Word in such a way that those who do not want to believe the truth can always find mistaken evidence to prove their ignorance. And the one popular obsession and pastime of even Christians today seems to be that of using scripture which they do not understand to contradict and make a lie of scripture which they can understand, but refuse to believe.

They say that heaven must be a place, because Christ is now preparing a place for His own. "I go to prepare a place for you." But has anyone ever found where the One who spoke those words called that place heaven? Let them search! Many eyes have searched for many centuries to find such. And it has not been found. Let Satan's simpletons show us just one statement even, in the Word, which says that Christ is building a mansion for us away up in heaven. Just one statement is all we need to make it true. But there is no such statement to be found in God's blessed Book.

The darkness of religious tradition has blinded the people of God, causing them to become spiritual illiterates, staggering in spiritual stupidities, totally unprepared for and unmindful of God's eternal purpose in His elect. Let us consider seven verses of scripture from the fourteenth chapter of John. To suit our purpose of emphasizing just what Jesus is REALLY saying, in contrast with what most people THINK He was saying, we shall paraphrase all seven verses in keeping with the popular teaching of the church systems. To hear the average Christian expounding the things of God, it would go something like this: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in hell, believe also in heaven. In heaven there are many mansions: you know I have told you this and described its beautiful golden streets many times. I am going to heaven to prepare a mansion just over the hilltop for you, and if I go and build a mansion for you, I will come again and take you to heaven, that where I will then be you may be also. And you all know well that I am going to heaven, and you know the way to heaven. And Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we didn't know you were going to heaven and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man shall ever get to heaven but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: but when you get to heaven you shall know Him and you shall see Him."

Strange as it may seem to those brainwashed by the errors of Babylon, the subject of the fourteenth chapter of John is NOT HEAVEN! Jesus rarely spoke of heaven in the traditional sense during His teaching ministry. For

Jesus came, not as the revelation of a geographical or astral location, but as the revelation of a PERSON. And that Person is the FATHER. It is significant to note that the word "heaven" does not appear even once in this entire chapter, whereas the term "Father" appears TWENTY-THREE TIMES! I stand in amazement and wonder at the incredible blindness of the carnal mind and how it twists the pure Word of God into grotesque forms of spiritual nonsense. Jesus did not say, "In heaven there are many mansions," rather, "In My FATHER'S HOUSE there are many abiding places." Jesus did not say, "I am going to heaven to build you a mansion." He said, "I GO to prepare a PLACE for you." Jesus never said, "I will come again and take you to heaven." What He said was, "I will come again and receive you UNTO MYSELF." Jesus never said, "I am the way to heaven." He said, "I am the way... no man cometh UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Jesus was not talking about a "place" in "heaven." He was talking about a PLACE IN THE FATHER, and in the FATHER'S HOUSE. "Believe Me that I AM IN THE FATHER, and the FATHER IS IN ME...at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and YE IN ME, and I in you" **(Jn. 14:11,20).** Can we not understand by this that the key word in John chapter fourteen is "Father" and not "heaven"!

Let us now proceed to examine the profound truth that Jesus the SON is unfolding to those who are called unto sonship in this significant portion of scripture. As a preface to His teaching He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Christ here identifies Himself with God. Christ is setting forth the great revelation of His sonship to the Father, opening to the minds of these wondering disciples a relationship with God that no man had ever understood before. This revelation of sonship was the truth that was so difficult for the Jews to receive. They reasoned that if Jesus was the Son of God, that then made Him ONE with God, EQUAL with God - GOD!

Their carnal hearts comprehended not that GOD WAS IN CHRIST, that Jesus was in very fact the embodiment and personalization of the Father, and that it pleased the Father that in Him should ALL FULLNESS dwell. It is a blessed and wonderful truth that all that the Father is was deposited in Jesus. The body of Jesus housed the Father-Spirit. When Jesus moved, it was the Father moving in Him. "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).** When He spoke it was the Father speaking. When He looked, it was the Father looking through Him. When He stretched forth His hand, it was the Father stretching His hand. This, precious friend of mine, is the glorious "place" where Jesus dwelt, this was His plane of existence, His sphere of life, His state of being. When Jesus walked on earth He was the only body-building of God, but one beautiful day He thrust wide the door into that exalted realm and proclaimed that in His Father's house are MANY MANSIONS and that He would go to the Father and prepare A PLACE FOR US. Since Jesus dwelt in a spiritual realm of relationship with the Father, we know that the place prepared for us is a spiritual rather than a natural sphere. It is a heavenly realm. It is the realm of the Father's indwelling. It is a place in Father's house. It is not only a place prepared FOR us, but a place prepared IN us. What has Christ prepared in you? A place where there is perfect peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation... IN ME ye have PEACE" **(Jn. 16:33).** What has Christ cultivated in your spirit? A place where there is fullness of joy and righteousness. What has He enjoined you to have? Longsuffering, meekness, gentleness, temperance. What is Christ preparing in you? Goodness, faith, and divine love. What has Christ brought you into? He has ushered us into dimensions of His wisdom, knowledge, power and glory. What a PLACE He has prepared for us!

Evelyn Isaacs wrote, "There are those who are not of this world. They tread the path no vulture's eye has seen, above this mundane sphere, seated in heavenly places with Christ. God has actually lifted a body of people out of this earthly sphere. How suddenly we were awakened to His exaltation and to the revelation of His person within. The light of God's day broke through the prison cell of flesh and we see our way about through an inner illumination. The traveling has seemed a little rough as we have gone from one world of understanding to another, but now we are becoming satisfied with a new satisfaction that we no longer live in this changing world of confusion and revolution. We are so aware that we have been translated out of these passing kingdoms which totter and fall, into the one Kingdom which is eternally secure and cannot be moved: the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Who could want a more beautiful mansion than that one eternally in the heavens of a redeemed mind and state of being? Man says when he dies he will go to heaven and live in a mansion. Why not die to self now and move into a spiritual mansion here in this present world? We can be caught up in perfection in a quickened body, in a new way of life. Entering the Kingdom of God is coming into God's realm" - end quote.

Having ascertained that the Father's house is a spiritual temple, we can easily understand the meaning of there being many mansions, or rooms, or chambers, as we look at the beautiful type of Solomon's magnificent temple. "And against the wall of the house (temple) he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and the oracle: and he made chambers round about: and the nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad. The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs in to the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. And then he built chambers against all the house five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar" **(I Kings 6:5-10).**

In turning to **Jer. 35:2,** we read this: "Speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, INTO ONE OF THE CHAMBERS." In the fourth verse of the same chapter, we notice that different chambers were for persons of different rank. Hanan, a man of God, had his chamber or room "By the chamber of the princes...which was above the chamber of... the keeper of the door." The various chambers or "mansions" corresponded to the ranks of the persons residing in them. Each room of the temple - a type of the Father's house - not only designated the RESIDENCE of each official, but also indicated his POSITION OR OFFICE, whether he was a doorkeeper or prince.

Ah - there are many mansions in God's house, many spiritual levels with various elevations and degrees of prestige and honor, and each of us must find his own. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" **(I Cor. 15:41-42).** The Father's house contains many positions, many glories. Some saints have tried to seize some coveted position as did the mother of James and John on behalf of her two sons, who came to Jesus, "worshipping, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy Kingdom" **(Mat. 20:20-21).** Jesus did not deny that these positions existed, but He did say, "to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not mine to give, BUT IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THEM FOR WHOM IT IS PREPARED OF MY FATHER" (**Mat. 20:23).**

Some desire the position so much that they appoint themselves and claim to be this or that great one, Elijah, the two witnesses, the seventh angel, or an already manifested son; but there are no self-appointed positions in the Kingdom of God. This is a place prepared for a prepared people, and THE SON DOES THE PREPARING. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that bringeth forth fruit He purgeth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit" **(Jn. 15:2).** The Spirit of God, through the Word, thus testifies or witnesses to us the rule of our heavenly Father's dealing with His sons - chastisements, pruning, taking away of the dross, and a development of life. Our all-wise heavenly Father is preparing a glorious spiritual temple, in and through which the world of mankind is to have the privilege of coming to reconciliation with Himself. We see in the scriptures the great Architect's ideal in respect to this temple - that the ideal of the whole was represented in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, its chief cornerstone, and "top-stone," "laid in heaven." We can see the better what is required of all those who will be acceptable to God as the "living stones" of that temple - to be built together with Christ the Head, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And in the light of His glory we discern our own roughness by nature, our in harmony with the graceful lines of the temple, delineated in its "top-stone." We can readily discern that much chiseling and much polishing are absolutely necessary to us, if we would be fitted and prepared for the place in this temple to which, through the grace of God, we are called and chosen. And hence those who find that they are not receiving the blows from the Lord's hammer and chisel, lack this "witness" which the Spirit of God testifies must come to all living stones of His temple: and which even the grand top-stone did not escape. If the Spirit of God does not mark out for us a NARROW WAY with a certain amount of difficulty and adversity, with dealings and processings - if we are simply permitted to rest without trials and testings, super abounding in health, wealth, and blessing, then we may know of a surety that God is not dealing with us as with stones in His temple, because we lack the "witness" of our acceptance and preparation. But if we have this "witness" of chiselings, polishings, prunings, disciplines, chastisements, let us take them patiently, joyfully, appreciatively, as evidences of our Father's love essential to our attainment to our high-calling, knowing that we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17). We are His workmanship, and the clay does not say to the Potter, What makest Thou? but yields for the outworking of His will.

We do not vie and compete for positions in Father's house, but we rejoice that there is a room for each one. "In My Father's house are M-A-N-Y M-A-N-S-I-O-N-S." Note its ample room! This spiritual house is the reality of which the earthly temple was intended to be the dim prophecy and shadow. A chamber in the great temple waits for each of us, and the question is, Shall we occupy it, or shall we not? The old rabbis had a tradition, which, like a great many of their apparently foolish sayings, covers in picturesque guise a very deep truth. They said that, how ever many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the time of the Feasts, the streets of the city and the courts of the sanctuary were never crowded. And so it is with that great heavenly temple. There is room for all! There are throngs, a great multitude that no man can number, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father's house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which were counted by the thousand. And surely in that ample accommodation, you and I and ALL MANKIND shall find a place where we may lodge for evermore.

When God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ was the projection of the Father, and everything we see revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ is to make known to us the Father, that we might truly come to know Him, and be made partakers of His wonderful nature, character and purpose. Furthermore, the Son must reign - and reign He shall, until everything is subdued, and then "He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father... that God may be all in all" **(I Cor. 15:24,28).** And God shall not be ALL IN ALL until everything and everyone has been brought back to the Father. And it is IN HIM that we shall find our dwelling place - the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, our heavenly Father!

So, my dear friends, if you are looking for a mansion over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner of Glory land you are going to be disappointed. Christ has prepared a place for us alright - a place IN HIM - which is far more glorious and exciting than some tangible, carnal possession. He has raised us up to sit with Him, and in Him, in the higher than all heavens. The place He has been preparing for each one of us is not only a world to come, or a heaven somewhere, but a position, a place of eminence, a place of glory IN HIM - thereto reveal all the magnificence of the INDWELLING FATHER to all the endlessness of the unbounded heavens!

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 45
COMING TO RECEIVE US UNTO HIMSELF [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-FIVE

UNTO THE FATHER

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also**" (Jn. 14:1-3).**

This is one of the most profound revelations Christ ever shared with His disciples. He was, with words glorious indeed and wonderful beyond the comprehension of the natural mind, showing His disciples a new realm of existence, a new sphere of life, a new dimension of reality they had not touched. He introduced the reality of the Father realm. In essence, Jesus told them, "I am leaving you to prepare a place for you in another realm. I am going to bring you into that new realm - My resurrected, ascended realm. You are going to be united with Me in the power and glory of My Father."

Did these disciples understand? Not any more than we have understood with our natural minds. Consider the incredible blindness of these men who had walked with Jesus and listened for three years to His gracious words of eternal life. God help us to see what the disciples did not! Christ opened up the way for us into a supernatural realm. He ascended up far above all heavens, back into the position of Fatherhood, from whence He poured out of Himself that flow of the Spirit which we need, and whereby we are able to cry, "Abba, Father." He yearns to seat every believer with Him in this heavenly place. He meant it when He said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." He meant He would bring us to Himself - united with Him in His glory - right now while upon earth. If you "abide" in Him you must be where He is! He is outside of all that of this earth. He is outside of all that is fleshly. He is outside of all that is natural. He is outside of all that is visible. He is outside of all that is temporal. He is outside of all that is evil. He abides in the realm of Spirit. He dwells in the realm of holiness. He lives in the realm of the unlimited. AND ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN TAKE US TO WHERE HE IS!

The disciples heard Jesus' promise, "...that where I am, there ye may be also." But like multitudes today, they could understand it only in carnal, physical, material and geographical terms. "He will come someday, rapture me, and take me to His mansion in heaven," they were doubtless thinking. To them, it was all physical, and it was a future blessing. But Christ meant it to be an immediate reality. He wanted to return in mighty spirit power and quicken them in spirit and raise them up and make them sit together with Him in the heavenly places! How can we miss this intention? How clear can He make it? "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

As we pointed out in our last article, God nowhere in the Bible holds up "heaven" as a hope for the future; but He does promise us "THE GLORY OF OUR LORD

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 46
COMING TO, WITH, AND IN HIS SAINTS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-SIX

COMING TO HIS SAINTS
COMING WITH HIS SAINTS
COMING IN HIS SAINTS

Everybody is prophesying the soon coming of the Lord, and they have been doing so for hundreds of years. He didn't come. Not in the way they thought He was going to come. Two millenniums ago the Jews had it all figured out that the Messiah would come as a great military general to crush their enemies and as a king in regal splendor to sit upon the throne in old Jerusalem; but He came as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. He came healing, teaching and preaching on the sunkissed hills of Galilee. He came a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and a Saviour dying ignominiously between two thieves on Golgotha's hill.

According to the popular teachings of our day, Christ will, at any moment now, come in a secret rapture "FOR His saints," take them to heaven for seven years, and then come back again "WITH the saints." The argument is, of course, that since He will come "with" His people (Zech. 14:5; Jude 14; I Thes. 3:12-13), He will have to come earlier "for" the saints. Repeatedly we hear statements like this: "Jesus is coming FOR a church without spot or wrinkle," or "Soon Jesus will return FOR His Church, to take it out of the world," or "The Lord comes in the rapture FOR His saints; after the Tribulation period, He comes with His saints." I just finished reading an article by a well-known personality (now deceased) on the second coming of Christ. In commenting on II Thes. 4:16-17 she says, "When Christ comes in this first stage, this great catching away, He will not touch the earth, He will come into our atmosphere, and the, believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air... then comes stage two: the final phase of the Second Coming of Christ. This is the revelation - when Jesus Christ comes back to earth to set up His kingdom."

Since so many Christians are steadfastly looking for Jesus to come FOR the Church, to whisk it away up to heaven somewhere, to sing and shout and eat for seven years, while the rest of mankind are suffering indescribable agonies, we need to take a closer look at the Word and see if ANYWHERE in the Bible we can find this expression "coming FOR the saints." This may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the Bible NOWHERE speaks of Jesus coming "FOR the saints." Let those who continually use this term show us where it appears in the pages of God's inspired Book. Let them search! It cannot be found! Never! Nowhere! Not even once! Surely then, a teaching, which constantly employs an expression that is foreign to the Word of God should be subjected to close examination. I can hear some dear saint saying, "Oh, but the Bible does say that Jesus is coming FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle." No it doesn't! What it says is that Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself for it "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" **(Eph. 5:26-27).** In order to "present the Church to Himself" in a holy and blameless condition doesn't necessitate "taking" it anywhere!

We have all been guilty sometime in our lives of thinking we were quoting scripture, when actually we were merely repeating the sayings of men. Often through the years I have heard people say, "The Good Book says that God helps those who help themselves." But that quotation isn't found in Holy Writ. What about this one: "God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." It's quite pretty, but it isn't in the Book either. "God will cast your sins into the sea of forgetfulness," people quote. Poetic, but it's not a quotation of scripture. Ever hear this oldie: "Every tub must sit on its own bottom." I have no idea where that saying originated, but it certainly didn't come out of the Bible. And then the most famous MISQUOTE of all time: "Christ is coming back FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle." A popular concept, but I must hasten to tell you, my friend, it's NOT IN THE BOOK! What saith the scripture? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and

gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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 and without blemish." Why did we misquote this beautiful passage making it say that Christ is coming "for" the Church when it plainly says no such thing? Because the darkness of the carnal mind is predisposed to read into the scriptures what we have been taught. It wasn't there, yet we quoted it. We heard the incessant drumbeat of Christ coming "for" the saints until we thoughtless injected the notion into the Word of God. Once a person has the concept in mind that there will be a special coming of the Lord "for" the saints, he then reads about believers being "caught up" and immediately concludes that they will be caught up to "heaven" somewhere. But that is not what the passage in I Thes. 4:16-17 says at all!

It is almost impossible to show some, who loudly proclaim their love of the truth, the groundlessness of their cherished "Rapture Theory." They are bound and determined that they will "fly away" in spite of the plain statements of the Word of God. Tradition says otherwise, and tradition takes precedence over what the Word, or anyone else, may say. No, tradition lovers have not changed one whit in the two thousand years since the Pharisees were rebuked by our Lord. "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition" **(Mat. 15:6).** Cross their first love (tradition) and they will cast you out, stone you or crucify you. And the church system's traditions about the "second coming of Christ" are the most sacred of all and to be revered as a shrine of truth. What God really says about "The Unveiling of the Christ" couldn't mean less to them. "Tradition be praised! Oh, mighty tradition we love thee! Tradition, we serve and worship thee! Tradition, you are our God! You are our Bible! We follow you blindly, and woe to the person who raises a voice against thee! The King James Bible is the only Bible! My Church teaches it this way and I accept what my Church teaches in spite of what men or the scriptures say! O Mighty Tradition, we are true to you in spite of everything else!"

If the scriptures speak not of the coming of the Lord "FOR" His saints, WHAT DO THEY SAY? It readily appears that His coming is expressed in three dimensions, namely: He will come TO His saints; He will come WITH His saints; and He will come IN His saints. He is coming TO us, He is coming WITH us, and He is coming IN us. When the coming of the Lord has been studied and taught, it has usually been in one of those three, but not all of them. There has, in fact, been some idea that one aspect has been set in juxtaposition to the other to the extent that only one of these concepts is right or valid. But one does not exclude the other; in fact, understood in proper sequence one supports the other, one leads to the other, one prepares for the successive comings of the Lord. It should be obvious to any reader of these lines that the distinction between TO, WITH and IN is not without a difference. His coming TO us is different from His coming WITH us, and His coming WITH us is different than His coming IN us. And rather than contending for one aspect or another our hearts cry in this hour for the "fuller revelation" which will combine and harmonize the many "facets" and bring the new light of His full-orbed and unlimited glory!

COMING TO HIS SAINTS

The first prerequisite for the coming of the Lord WITH His saints and IN His saints is His coming TO His saints. He cannot come WITH us unless first He has come TO us, and He must come TO us before He can come IN us. As someone has said, Whether He comes to our front door in the form of a man, or beams down a shaft of light brighter than the noon day sun, is not the issue. The point is HE SHALL COME TO US, and HE SHALL BRING TO US that grace which bespeaks the fullness of our salvation. The testimony is sure: "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. 14:23). By His Spirit He comes, yes, in ways, and in dimensions far beyond our present comprehension. How we long to be FULLY INDWELT BY HIM till we overflow with His abundant and eternal life. But He can only indwell us in the measure that first He has come TO US.

There is a coming of the Lord TO His Church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our authority for this is found in **Jn. 14:15-18** wherein Jesus says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. 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 (as Jesus), and shall be in you (as the Spirit). I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME U-N-T-O YOU." Now, HE is the One "whom the heavens must receive (retain) until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" **(Acts 3:21).** He is now in

the heavens - the INVISIBLE SPIRIT REALM, from whence also we LOOK FOR Him (Phil. 3:20-21). This word "look" is from the Greek APEKDECHOMAI meaning TO RECEIVE OUT FROM. Ah, He does not forever remain in the invisible sphere, but we RECEIVE OUT FROM the heavens, for HE COMES TO US in mighty spirit power, in the manifestation of Himself. OUT OF THE INVISIBLE comes a visible manifestation. There is not the slightest uncertainty that this is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost when suddenly "there CAME FROM HEAVEN A SOUND as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there APPEARED UNTO THEM cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" **(Acts 2:2-4).** Out of the heavens, out of the invisible came the visible manifestation of His presence. He came, as He had promised, TO them!

God had spoken through the prophet Malachi concerning His coming TO His people in these words, "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" **(Mal. 3:1).** The outpouring of God's Spirit is in the scriptures likened to the falling of rain (Isa. 44:3; 32:15). There are two other scriptures which I will quote from the Old Testament to indicate the Lord's coming TO His people in a latter rain outpouring. The first is **Joel 2:23:** "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will CAUSE TO COME DOWN for you the rain, the former rain, AND the latter rain in the first month." Then in **Hos. 6:1-3** we have the following admonition and promise: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." We are now in the dawning period of this third day, and the Lord is beginning to come to His people as the rain, praise His name.

There is abundant testimony in the New Testament and all the Christian centuries to the fact that Christ does come in special ways at special times, sometimes quite unexpectedly, both to those who seek Him and those who seek Him not. Take, for example, His striking self-revelation to Saul of Tarsus, as on the road to Damascus, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven," and he fell to the earth for a revolutionary experience. Here we have a man bent with all the intensity of his nature on one course of action, being suddenly thrust upon another. To the day of his death the apostle Paul was convinced, and all his personal history confirmed his conviction, that it was Christ he met that day. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" came the divine Voice. "Who art Thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The Voice that spoke to him was not identified just as "Christ," which some would conclude was only the Anointing Spirit, but the Voice declared, "I AM J-E-S-U-S." It matters not how those words were conveyed to the intelligence of the man who heard them; they revolutionized his whole career; he had come into contact with Christ Himself, and he knew it with a certainty nothing could ever shake in the years to come, when he suffered the extremity of evil and final martyrdom for the sake of His mighty name. No man does that in obedience to an imperative, which is less than overwhelming.

Nor was this all. Three years the new convert spent in silence and seclusion before he began to teach the faith he once denied. Who gave him his message? He says he conferred not with flesh and blood; no man, not even a five-fold ministry taught him what to say! Here is his own account of it: "I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" **(Gal. 1:11-12).** No follower of Christ has ever given more emphatic testimony of his assurance of the immediacy of his relationship to his Lord. Christ came to him, to him alone, as though there was none other with whom to dwell, so that in time to come he could say, in recounting his experience before king Agrippa, the words the Lord Jesus had spoken unto him in that eventful day, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I HAVE APPEARED unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I WILL APPEAR unto thee" (Acts 26:16). "I W-I-L-L APPEAR!" Is it not plain to be seen that the appearing of the Lord in Paul's life was an on-going reality from glory to glory? He was TAUGHT by the REVELATION of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Only one who had encountered the Lord in a personal and real way could pen these meaningful words: "For I have RECEIVED OF THE LORD that which I delivered unto you..." **(I Cor. 11:23).** The Lord appeared UNTO Paul and continued to appear TO him throughout his ministry, imparting the transforming truths he proclaimed.

When, like another Saul of Tarsus, George Fox in the seventeenth century felt that he was at odds with life, and, to use his own words, could find none able to speak to his condition, he heard a Voice, which said, "There is One, Jesus Christ, who can speak to thy condition." So sure was this apostle of the inner light, this indefatigable missionary of peace and simplicity of heart - so sure was he of the reality of the possession which Christ took of his whole being from that time forward, that it made him one of the mightiest spiritual forces of his time.

Has there ever been a conversion to Christ which was not a revelation of Christ to the inner man; and has there ever been a spiritual movement which did not originate somewhere in an advent of Christ to an earnest, seeking soul; and even to those sanctified souls of whom the world knows nothing, and who had never been called to serve God in the open, as it were? Has there ever been an accession of power, wisdom, understanding, comfort, and grace, which was not at the same time a newer and deeper apprehension of Christ? There can be no spiritual experience which is not rooted in an immediate personal knowledge of Christ as Lord, Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, Shepherd, Friend, etc. Sometimes this is so strong, so real, so all-subduing, that it seems to the percipient as though Christ had singled him out for special favor. In some cases the very day and hour of the experience stand out vividly from all the rest of life; in some it is not until long afterwards that the full significance of the spiritual visitation illuminates the consciousness. In either event we say of it: "It was Christ who came to me then, and my whole world has been new ever since." Christ is always coming, coming in ways which the world cannot recognize; coming in sorrow, coming in joy; coming in tumult, coming in peace; coming in judgment, coming in quickening; coming in strange and mysterious visitations, coming in silence and in power and great glory.

It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done,
And you have time to sit in the twilight,
And watch the sinking sun,
While the long bright day dies slowly
Over the sea,
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me;
While you hear the village children
Passing along the street -
Among those thronging footsteps
May come the sound of My feet.
Therefore I tell you, Watch!
By the light of the evening star
When the moon is growing dusky
As the clouds afar,
Let the door be on the latch In your home,
For it may be through the gloaming I WILL COME.

"Looking for His appearing" does not mean gazing into the skies for Jesus to flash down from heaven on a cloud. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. EACH MANIFESTATION IS ON THE PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PERSON TO WHOM HE APPEARS, AND EACH IS DESIGNED TO MEET A NEED. Understand this truth, my beloved, and you will comprehend a great mystery of the Kingdom of God. Every man and woman on the face of the earth, regardless of spiritual stature, should, on the plane they are on, LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING TO THEM, for men are always transformed thereby. It is impossible to emphasize too strongly the fact that the Christ appears to men right where they are and on a level of manifestation they are capable to receive. He appears to us in greater and greater glory as we walk on in Him.

COMING WITH HIS SAINTS

Jude, the brother of Jesus, who wrote the small book of Jude in the New Testament, quotes a prophecy from Enoch in **vs. 14:** "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord

cometh WITH ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." This is in harmony with II Thes. 1:7-8 where Paul states that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven WITH His mighty messengers, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Another passage, which shows that Jesus comes WITH His saints is **I Thes. 3:13,** "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH all His saints." And again, "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign WITH HIM a thousand years" **(Rev. 20:6).**

It is a wonderful truth, as we shall elaborate later, that Christ shall come "to be glorified IN His saints, and to be admired IN all them that believe" **(II Thes. 1:10).** But it is equally true that we shall be GLORIFIED TOGETHER with Jesus. So Paul says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and JOINT HEIRS W-I-T-H CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED T-O-G-E-T-H-E-R" **(Rom. 8:17).** Paul makes it clear that Jesus is one son of God and we are also sons. And that first son and all His younger brethren are to be GLORIFIED TOGETHER. This is not the "in" glorification of the Christ, but the "with" glorification. TOGETHER! To be GLORIFIED TOGETHER is the hope that springs perennial within my breast. This glorious experience of being GLORIFIED TOGETHER is a reference to our union with Christ as members of His body, and speaks of a time when this entire company of the sons of God, in union with Christ the Head, shall be GLORIFIED TOGETHER - IMMERSED INTO THE LIFE OF CHRIST, sharing with Him in that glory. This entire company shall be joined to Christ to share with Him in the blessed glorification experience when we shall partake of His glory, being fully transformed into the body of His likeness. These will be joined to Christ the Head, so that the manifestation of Christ at the end of this age will be a company of the redeemed. This time His appearing will be not only as the Head, but as THE COMPLETED BODY OF CHRIST prepared to execute judgment upon all.

When Christ comes WITH His people "every eye shall see Him." "Behold, He cometh WITH clouds (of His saints); and every eye shall see Him" **(Rev. 1:7).** When He is manifested His people are manifested also. "When Christ our life shall appear (or be manifested), then shall ye also appear W-I-T-H HIM IN GLORY" **(Col. 3:4).** "For He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are WITH HIM are called, and chosen, and faithful" **(Rev. 17:14).**

In moments of meditation I thought upon this beautiful truth of Christ coming with His saints and in His saints and wondered what exactly was the difference. There is always an element of profound mystery wherever the mind and wisdom of God is concerned. As in spirit I waited upon the Lord for instruction and counsel with the prayer, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," the rain of revelation fell upon my understanding and the light of God dawned in my heart. Suddenly, I SAW! The coming of Christ IN the saints is "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory," whereas Christ coming WITH the saints is WE IN HIM! He comes IN US, and we come IN HIM. He grows up IN US, while we grow up IN HIM. He is manifested IN US, but we are manifested IN HIM. He is glorified IN US, whereas we are glorified IN HIM. Oh! the mystery of it. Oh, the wonder of it!

Of this great and eternal truth George Hawtin has graphically written: "We shall go much farther than this by saying that, great as is the truth of 'Christ in you' and glorious beyond the scope of all but the spiritual mind, the truth that YOU are 'in Christ' is fatherless in its depths and lofty beyond the highest eminence. If 'Christ in you' is the HOPE of glory, as the scripture says it is (Col. 1:27), then 'you in Christ' must certainly be the GLORY. In Christ! In Christ! Think of the glory of the expression! 'God was IN CHRIST:' the Word declares. And now - mystery of mysteries - He is saying that His people are also 'in Christ.' Then we are told, 'God was IN CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself,' and now 'if ANY MAN be IN CHRIST he is a new creation' (II Cor. 5:17). Certainly he must be a new creation, for he has entered the realm where God dwells. No longer is he of the earth earthy, but one spirit with the Lord from heaven. Herein is the prayer of Jesus fulfilled, 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one' **(Jn. 17:23).** This oneness is no unity of doctrine or belief as the church system would have us think, but individual members baptized into one body and that body THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"In Christ Jesus! What a transforming expression that is! Quoted and read by countless millions, but understood, I fear, by practically none. Let the reader visualize the form of a man, standing with his feet on the

earth, so tall that his head reaches the heavens above and so broad that his form fills the universe ALL IN ALL. Then let him examine the scene more closely and his wondering eyes will see that this gigantic man, God's anointed Christ, is a man of MANY MEMBERS just as the human body is one body with many members. Look closer still and you will now see that each and every member in that mighty form is an individual man, a son of God. The Head is the man Jesus of Nazareth. The arms, the fingers, the toes, the heart, the nerves, the blood vessels - every member of Him that filleth all in all is an individual man and every man is a son of God. And, if you will look still more closely, you will see an even greater wonder, for every man, every member, every son in that whole gigantic form is in the exact image of Jesus Christ, the Head, the first begotten Son of God. O, how I hope you can grasp the picture!" -end quote.

And so it is that "in Christ" He cannot come except we come WITH HIM and He WITH US. It is a divine union between God and man, between Jesus Christ and His body. It must have been with the revelation and understanding of the Almighty upon his mind that the hymn writer uas inspired to pen these immortal words:

Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumphs of His train;
Hallelujah! GOD appears on earth to reign.

COMING IN HIS SAINTS

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN all them that believe in that day" **(II Thes. 1:7,10).**

The moment any man identifies himself with the INDWELLING CHRIST of God he enters into an entirely new realm. He has passed from the limited knowledge of a distant Christ to CHRIST AS HIS LIFE. He has heard the message of the Lord, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man (the individual) hear My voice, and open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, and I will sup with him and he with Me (Rev. 3:20). He comes not to the flesh oriented church of today where the claim is being made, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." He is outside the temples of carnal zeal and fleshly prosperity. He comes not to a vast multitude gathered within the Laodicean church systems of this dark age, but to that "little flock" of footstep followers who have been set aside of the Lord for the most intimate and personal visitation. How wonderful it is when the Christ comes IN to sup with us and us with Him! How blessed we are to have that intimate and sacred communion with the Lord!

Multitudes of sincere believers today are gazing wistfully into the sky, yearning and watching with eager anticipation for Christ to return, riding upon a white charger, appearing in the clouds of the atmosphere, leading the armies of heaven in vengeance upon an ungodly world. But not one in ten thousand has turned aside and taken the shoes from off his feet as with understanding he has heard the penetrating voice of the Son of God crying, "If any man will open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM!" Centuries ago Paul, by the divine wisdom given unto him, wrote these words of truth: "But it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON I-N ME, that I might preach Him among the heathen... and they glorified GOD I-N ME" **(Gal. 1:15-16,24).** Paul is here describing the process of his own conversion and call to apostleship, the light which he saw from heaven. He says that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. Why IN Him? Why does he not say, "It pleased God to reveal His Son TO me?" Was not the light which he saw an outer vision? Did it not arrest him at midday with a glory above the brightness of the sun? Did it not bar the way to his old nature, and bid his life to holy transformation in the midst of his journey? Surely that appearing of His Lord was a vision to his outer eye. Ah, but can any picture be but a vision to the outer eye? Can a thing be revealed TO me and not be revealed IN me? Is the landscape on which I gaze revealed only to my outer vision? No - or it would not be revealed at all; there could be no beauty without if there were not a sense of beauty within. Is the music to which I listen revealed only to my outward ear? Nay, or I would be deaf to it for evermore; there could be no harmony without if there were not a sense of harmony within. So it is with the beauty of Him who is fairer than the children of men! Often have I envied the lot of those who were permitted to

gaze upon His outward form, to see the radiance on His face, to hear the thrill of His voice. Yet was it not to the very chief of these that the words were spoken, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." It was not the eye which saw the radiance, it was not the ear which heard the thrill; it was the soul, the heart, the life, the responsive spirit bearing witness with His Spirit, the deep within that ran out to meet its counterpart, and found in Him its ALL because it found in Him all its yearning and desire.

My God, reveal Thy Son IN ME! I ask for more than an audible voice, because I need more. It would not help me to behold Thy handwriting on the clouds of heaven; it would be but the letters of a book to the child that cannot read. Teach me the meaning of Thy appearing! No description of Thy heavens could declare their glory to the one born blind; no description of Thy Christ could manifest His greatness to the one dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, O Spirit of God, unseal the inner eye, unstop the spiritual ear, that the symmetries and the harmonies of Thy glorious Christ may be revealed. It is in Thy light alone that we shall see light. Only they who are rooted and grounded in love shall be able to comprehend that love of Thine, which, although familiar to all saints, passeth finite knowledge. I shall see the King in His beauty when His beauty shall be revealed in me!

Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified IN His saints and to be admired IN the sons of God who by His grace have come into His image throughout the ages. These sons are the body of the Son of God. This is the fullness of the Christ. Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory of the age and ages which are to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of ALL CREATION is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God's Christ is One, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold beauties and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the only-begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to glory. He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on Mount Zion.

I bring you good news. YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST; not the "mystical body" as the theologians of Babylon are wont to define it, but you are T-H-E B-O-D-Y of Christ and Christ is IN YOU of a truth, precious friend of mine, to manifest the fullness of Himself. We can think and know and act like God and not like men. Let us pray as did Paul: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, UNTIL Christ be FORMED in you" **(Gal. 4:19).** The New English Bible says, "I am in travail with you over again until you take the shape of Christ." The Amplified Bible reads "I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you!" Wuest's Translation renders, "I am again striving with intense effort and anguish until Christ be outwardly expressed in you."

In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. One time it was wood, NOW IT IS ROCK. For something has happened to it. Certain minerals entered into every cell of that piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. This process continued until that piece of wood had become rock. Same shape, same size and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US. Something is happening to us. We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself. God is impregnating us with Himself. God is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is and will be. This change is taking place in our inner selves, in our minds, and even in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God. God shall so fill us, shall so overwhelm us that we take on the very characteristics of God.

I think the highest privilege that scripture puts before us is surely that Christ will be glorified IN us - that HE will be admired IN US. Think of it, my brethren, so completely has the image of the earthly passed away - so completely is the image of the heavenly gained that CHRIST is seen, CHRIST is admired in us! It is not the believer that is admired, glorified though he be. It is CHRIST who is admired IN HIM. All that the saints are radiates HIS glory. It is in HIS beauty they are arrayed - in HIS glory they shine. The image they wear is HIS - HIS blood has bought them, and HIS hand formed them. They shine as the sun in that heavenly glory, but only in HIS light, and for HIS praise. This is not the hour for any self-exaltation, nor for the promotion of "my ministry" or "my kingdom," for it is HE who is coming to be GLORIFIED IN US. Many think that the call to sonship is for their glorification - but it is not so. While it is true that we share His glory, not until He has shared

with us of HIS GLORY do we have anything that is glorious. 'The Christ, being revealed in us, does not exalt us, because we are not the one being revealed, HE IS, therefore this exalts HIM! Little wonder that He is purging, pruning, sifting, bringing us to such absolute nothingness, so that the only one left to be revealed is THE CHRIST. We have dwelt upon this - our hearts have burned within us as we have gazed upon the picture of our future, which the Spirit of God has drawn! Blessed day, when every lineament (facial distinction) shall speak the praise of Christ! When His image will be so imprinted upon us that it will be HE who is seen, and HE who is admired, when the universe of God gazes upon the body of Christ.

Though it is wondrously true that it is HE who must be glorified in all, it is also true that HE has purposed to be glorified IN US. Notice - He will not be glorified in Himself, nor in the angels, nor in the scriptures, nor in heaven, nor in the millennium - but IN HIS SAINTS. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church, he spoke about "the truth as it is IN JESUS" (**Eph. 4:21).** But the beloved John amplified the truth in these words, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, WHICH THING IS TRUE IN HIM AND IN YOU" **(I Jn. 2:6,8).** Initially, the truth was in God, because He is a God of truth. The truth was recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures: "Thy word is truth" **(Jn. 17:17).** The truth became embodied in Jesus Christ, who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life" **(Jn. 14:6).** The truth comes to us even by the Holy Spirit: "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" **(Jn. 16:13).** Finally, the truth must find its embodiment and expression, its manifestation and revelation, in and through the body of Christ. If light is the expression of God in Christ, who said, "I am the light of the world" **(Jn. 8:12),** if "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" **(Ps. 119:105),** it must be true in us: "YE are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." If it is true in Him, it must be true in us. HE was full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14), so we read with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, "and great grace was upon them all" **(Acts 4:33).** If grace is part of the expression of God in Jesus Christ, then it must be the expression of God in us also.

Why tell people things that are only true in Jesus Christ, but which do not work in us? No, if it is true in Him, it must be true in us, for He is the Head of the whole body of the sons. If it is operating in His life, it must come to be operating in our lives. He is come, not only to be our Saviour, but our Lord and our Life. "Be ye holy, as He which has called you is holy." If holiness is true in Him, then holiness must be true in us. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect" **(Mat. 5:48).** If perfection is true in Jesus Christ, then perfection must be true in us. **"God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24).** Jesus Christ worshipped the Father, Jesus Christ loved the Father, Jesus Christ did His Father's will. Thank God that He did find a man in whom His will, His love, His power, His grace, His truth, His holiness and His life could find a dwelling place and expression. But would it not be sad if there were not a people today, the body of Christ, saved by His blood, cleansed by the washing of water by the word, indwelt by His Spirit, in whom that same thing is true that is true in Him? Jesus said in His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John: "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" **(Jn. 17:26).** If the love of God is truly expressed in Jesus Christ, then it must be truly expressed in us. If He loves and we do not love, if He is in the light and we are in darkness, if He is expressing the grace of God and we are proclaiming hellfire and damnation then what is true in Him is not yet true in us. Whatever is true in Him, may God make it true in all His sons. Not just for our sakes, but for other's sakes, that they may open their hearts and let God do something in them. They will see the manifestation of Christ in you, and glorify God in you.

I am reminded of the story I heard once about a little seven-year-old boy who went to a gospel meeting. He went on Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night. On Friday night, following the meeting, he ran out to the parking lot following the preacher. The little boy said, "Let me ask you something. You say I have to receive Jesus Christ into my life." The evangelist replied, "That's right." "I'm seven years old. How big is Jesus?" "He's pretty good size because He's a carpenter. " "That's what I thought. If I were to receive Him into me, wouldn't He stick out?" "Son, you've got the message. More and more HE'D STICK OUT!"

To which I would reverently add - you will never in a million years see the Christ coming again until you can see Him coming in His body which is His habitation for evermore. Again I quote: "How we have scanned the media news and sifted through newspapers and journals scratching for tidbits of evidence that the condition of world affairs heralds His soon return. How we have been so furtively 'raptured' and deceived by all the latest

'anti-christ' propaganda, and 'beast' stories, and '666' contrivances in some vain effort to pinpoint His appearing; to say, 'Look here!' or 'Lo, there!' But this, dear saints - the second coming of the Lord Jesus - is not the mystery! The Word is sure that '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.' The mystery hidden from ages past, but now made known to His own, is not that Christ is coming again, but that HE IS COMING I-N HIS SAINTS! Walking the earth in His body of flesh and bone! Soon to be manifested in the fullness of His power and glory to subdue every principality and power that would usurp His sovereignty. The Christ who shall sit upon the throne of His everlasting Kingdom to rule all nations with a rod of iron is the Christ that is nigh at hand" -end quote.

God will not allow us to refuse to see the Christ in each other and then look upon Him in some other form. We will have to recognize Him in our brethren. God will not satisfy our carnal nature by allowing us to see Jesus descending from heaven in clouds of glory while we pass by His body on earth and refuse to see Him in them. It is this message that is coming to us today, it is necessary that we see Him in those who are called and chosen and faithful. If I want to see the Christ I look at you because that is where He is forming Himself and manifesting Himself and glorifying Himself. The body of Christ is not something apart from Christ, not just something the Christ has formed as a separate entity. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth IS CHRIST in the earth! When this precious knowledge becomes sweet to our soul we begin to look at one another and BEHOLD HIM. We are looking for HIS APPEARING in His temple, which temple ye are. "And unto them that LOOK FOR HIM shall HE APPEAR..." **(Heb. 9:28).**

The question is just this, child of God - are you looking for HIM? When you see your brother and sister in Christ, are you looking for HIM? Or do you behold only their flesh? Are you looking at the outward weaknesses, errors, shortcomings; are you looking at an unfinished product and judging it in its present state; or are you LOOKING FOR HIM? You say, "Well, I've looked for Him in my brothers and sisters and I've been so disappointed." I do not hesitate to tell you that you didn't look deep enough. Have you looked deep enough? The truth is certain - unto them that look for HIM shall HE APPEAR! Do you see Christ in your fellow believers? Are you looking for HIM to appear? Are you looking for HIM? As we look at our brethren we are not to look for the faults, the failures, the mistakes and the imperfections - we are to look for HIM! You will see exactly what you look for. LOOK FOR HIM AND HE SHALL APPEAR. If you do not see Him in your brother, speak a word to him, encourage him, impart something of the Christ to him, minister unto him. Then look for HIM to APPEAR. Your vision will become changed and your eye will become single unto the glory of the Lord in His people.

The Christ that we preach is nigh at hand. "He is not far from every one of us," the apostle Paul says. **"**Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The Word (Christ) is NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART" **(Rom. 10:6-8).** "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever." Not one pang or joy of earth Has He forgotten; not one purpose of His life or death or resurrection or ascension has He abandoned. "This same Jesus" who toiled and prayed and wept and suffered is living today as surely as when He trod the earth. Unless we are sure that He is unchanged and unchangeable, that He is right here WITHIN US in every turn of life as really as He was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, unless we live daily in the power of this, our life will never be pure, we will never see His works, we will never be sure that He cares for us, that He wishes to perfect us, that He is guiding our lives and bringing us unto the Father. Therefore, why strain your eyes to pierce the clouds? The cloud that hides Christ from us is in ourselves, in our love of self, in our blind adherence to traditions, in our devotion to the world. Let us ask God to send the wind of His Spirit that bloweth where it listeth, to sweep it aside, and then we will see Christ AS OUR LIFE at every step of the journey. Why stand gazing up into heaven for a Christ whom we may find in our own hearts?

"Where is your Lord?
Seated at God's right hand,
Captain of Heaven's host,
Directing campaigns grand
On some removed coast
Of eternity's vast sea -
So far above

Man's highest love
He cannot reached be?
Where is your Lord?

At God's right hand in sooth:
Where'er His servants brave
Are fighting for the truth,
That all the world may have
His larger life. 'Tis here
The Christ is found:
His accents sound
Within your soul - so near!
Where is your Lord?

Within the daily round
Of duty. God's command
For you just now's the sound
Of the Master's voice. Stand
To your hard task! Be true
To your ideal!
God's will's the real -
Your Lord dwells there for you."

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 47

THE RAPTURE LIE

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-SEVEN

THE ORIGIN OF THE PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE
THERE IS NO RAPTURE!
THE GREAT ESCAPE
COME UP HITHER
THE TRUE "RAPTURE"

"The Rapture"! Many an average person on the street may never have heard of it until watching religious programs on television or listening to conversations by "born-again" Christians. "The Rapture"? What's that? But large numbers of Church goers in various denominations hear all about it - often. They live in constant expectation of it. "Christ may come tonight and snatch the Church away to heaven," the preacher assures in revival meetings, in Sunday Church services and on television. "The trumpet may sound before this meeting is over, or before you wake up in the morning," the evangelist warns. When that happens the cemeteries burst open and the dead saints arise, and those still living go zooming off into the sky to meet the Lord. Such a snatching away or "rapture" of the Church, it is claimed, will be the next great prophetic event. And it may take place at any moment. Millions of believers wonder with great concern, "When will it happen? Will it be in my lifetime? Will I be ready? Who of my loved ones will miss it and have to go through the Great Tribulation?"

It is generally supposed to happen this way: Strife, crime, violence and evil doing in the world will become increasingly worse. Civilization will plunge headlong toward a time of intense trouble. Suddenly, just before the world arrives at a period of calamity called "the tribulation," we are told, Jesus will return invisibly and snatch away - "rapture" - all born-again Christians and take them to heaven, or away up in the clouds somewhere, away from the world turmoil, for seven years. It will be a sudden, yet secret event. No one will see it happen. Only the effects - empty cars, empty houses, empty beds, workers missing from their jobs - will be apparent. Some suggest what the newspaper headlines will be like the day after: "Millions Mysteriously Vanish!" "Graves Found Open and Empty!" "Massive Traffic Snarles Due to Missing Drivers!" "Planes Crash, Trains Wreck As Pilots and Engineers Disappear!" "All Children Have Disappeared!" Pictures have been drawn by artists, and distributed by the multiplied thousands, of Jesus standing on a stratocumulus cloud a few thousand feet in the air, while Christians are being lifted out of a city below. Business of all kinds will be disrupted, while tumult, confusion, misery and terror will reign. The airports, trains, bus lines, and the great industrial plants over the world will be hushed, as so many of the head men, the pilots, engineers, managers, foremen, workers and others will be missing. Families will be separated, one taken and the other left; wives will bewail the sudden disappearance of their husbands, husbands will bemoan the loss of their wives. Parents will search in vain with terror-stricken faces for their children.

They go on to describe how all the people who are left on earth will have to go through seven years of terrible trouble and punishment. During this time the great Antichrist will make his appearance and display his power, the apocalyptic judgments the unmeasured wrath of God - foretold in the book of Revelation will be unleased in dreadful fury upon the inhabitants of the world, and there will be a time of unequalled tribulation. Then, at the end of this period, according to the teaching, Christ will return from heaven once again in a great universal public display, bringing all His saints with Him. The reason for this is, they say, because God is far too good to allow His people to go through such tribulation. The implication is that they are far too weak to survive in the face of such demonic power. So they will be called away to attend the "Marriage Supper in the Sky", receive their "rewards" for their labors here, and have a glorious seven years of feasting, singing and celebration - while their unsaved loved ones, their dear friends and neighbors who had not been born again, and the untaught millions of heathen are suffering indescribable agonies on earth. "Good enough for them!" seems to be the general attitude, "they should have listened and gotten prepared, like me. "

THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

That's the way the "rapture" is usually presented. But is that how Jesus announced He would return? Will He come back physically in two phases - one, secret and unexpected, "for" His saints, to rapture them away; and a second, publicly "with" His saints? Is this "rapture" really the "hope" of the Church as the preachers are wont to proclaim? Let me give you the history of how this theory got started.

It wasn't until the early or mid 1800's that there was any significant group of believers around the world that looked for a "rapture" of the Church prior to a seven-year tribulation period. It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but it is a fact nonetheless, that the "rapture" teaching was NOT taught by the early Church, it was NOT taught by the Church of the first centuries, it was NOT taught by the Reformers, IT WAS NOT TAUGHT BY ANYONE (except a couple Roman Catholic theologians) UNTIL ABOUT THE YEAR 1830! At the time of the Reformation the early Protestants widely held and Were convinced that the Pope was the supreme individual embodiment and personification of the spirit of antichrist, and the Roman Church the Harlot System of Rev. 17. This understanding was responsible for bringing millions of believers out of the Roman Catholic religious system. It therefore became expedient for certain Romish theologians to turn the attention of the people away from the Papacy, and this they endeavored to a counter-interpretation to that held by the Protestants. This new scheme of prophetic interpretation became known as FUTURISM. Rather than viewing the drama of the book of Revelation spiritually and historically, they would consign it all to a brief period of time at the end of the age. It was a Jesuit priest named Ribera who, in the days of the Reformation, first taught that all the events in the book of Revelation were to take place literally during the three and a half years reign of the Antichrist away down at the end of the age. Thus Ribera laid the foundation of a system of prophetic interpretation of which the Secret Rapture has now become an integral part.

Later, Emmanuel Lacunza, also a Jesuit priest, built on Ribera's teachings, and spent much of his life writing a book titled "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty." Lacunza, however, wrote under the assumed name of "Rabbi Ben Ezra," supposedly a learned Jew who had accepted Christ as his Saviour. With Jesuit cunning he thus conspired to get his book a hearing in the Protestant world - they would not even permit it in their homes coming from a Jesuit pen - but as the earnest work of a "converted Jew" they would consume it with avid interest! Within the pages of this elaborate forgery Lacunza taught the novel notion that Jesus returns not once, but twice, and at the "first stage" of His return He "raptures" His Church so they can escape the reign of the "future Antichrist." His book was first published in Spanish in the year 1812 and soon found its way onto the shelves of the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, England.

Now enter the name of Edward Irving. Born in Scotland in 1792, Irving became one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. In 1828 his open-air meetings in Scotland drew crowds of 10,000 people. His Church in London seated one thousand people and was packed week after week with a congregation drawn from the most brilliant and influencial circles of society. There were some among them who by prophetic declaration announced that the Lord was coming soon, and this idea became prominent in their prophetic utterances and teachings. Out of those prophetic declarations some began to study the scriptures in the light of a physical, literal coming of the Lord. Up until that time the coming of the Lord was understood as a coming of the Lord TO His people, and IN His saints, and there was no sense of His fleshly coming. Irving discovered Lacunza's book and was deeply shaken by it, in fact, fell in love with it, translated it into English, and it was published in London in 1827. And at this very time Irving heard what he believed to be a Voice from heaven commanding him to preach the Secret Rapture of the Saints. Then Irving began to hold Bible Conferences throughout Scotland, emphasizing the coming of Jesus to rapture His Church.

About this same time there began the emergence of a new movement, which came to be known as the "Plymouth Brethren." The Brethren movement had its beginning in Dublin in 1825 when a small group of earnest men, dissatisfied with the spiritually lethargic condition that prevailed in the Protestant Church in Ireland, met for prayer and fellowship. Soon others joined the fellowship and associated groups sprang up in various places. Though the movement had its beginning at Dublin ' , it was Plymouth, England that became the center of their vast literature outreach, thus the name !'Plymouth Brethren" became attached. Although there was interest from the start in prophetic subjects, the center of interest was on the body of Christ as an organism and the spiritual unity in Christ of all believers - in reaction to the deadness and formalism of the

organized church systems and the ecclesiastical Heirarchy. A man by the name of John Nelson Darby was the leading spirit among the Plymouth Brethren from 1830 onward. Darby was from a prosperous Irish family, was educated as a lawyer, took high honors at Dublin University, then turned aside, to his father's chagrin, to become a minister.

Thus Irving and Darby were contemporaries, though associated with different spiritual movements. Another series of meetings were in progress at this time, a group of seeking Christians were meeting in the castle of Lady Powerscourt for the study of Bible prophecy. Many clergymen attended, and quite a few who were Irvingites. The Irvingites came to the meetings obsessed with the ideas of the "Secret Rapture" and the future Antichrist, imbibed from the Jesuit Lacunza's book. J.N. Darby and the other Brethren leaders were invited to these meetings and became participators in them. It was there that he was introduced to the Jesuit teaching of the Secret Rapture and the futurist interpretation of prophecy, as well as the famous book by Rabbi Ben-Ezra, or, actually, Jesuit priest Emmanuel Lacunza! Darby was himself a prolific writer and from that time a constant stream of propaganda came from his pen. His writings on biblical subjects number over 30 volumes of 600 pages each. Darby developed and organized "futurism" into a system of prophetic teaching called "dispensationalism." Darby' s biographers refer to him as "the father of dispensationalism." And the crown jewel in the kingdom of dispensationalism is, of course, the so-called SECRET RAPTURE!

The Secret Rapture teaching was introduced into the United States and Canada in the 1860's and 1870's, though there is some indication that it may have been taught as early as the 1840's. Darby himself visited the United States six times. The "new" teaching was spreading. A Congregationalist preacher by the name of C. I. Scofield came under the influence of Darby and the Plymouth Brethren. Scofield became a strong promoter of the teaching that had been promulgated by Darby, whom he considered "the most profound Bible student of modern times." He incorporated this teaching into his SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE. The Scofield Reference Bible was destined to have a tremendous impact upon the beliefs of many, when, three million copies were published in the first 50 years! Through this Bible Scofield shrewdly carried the teaching of the Secret Rapture into the very heart of Evangelicalism. Some ignorant souls look on the "notes" in this Bible as the Word of God itself! I do not doubt for one instant that many who read these lines have been influenced somewhere in their spiritual lives by the "footnotes" in the Scofield Bible!

There is one final link in the chain of the development and spread of the rapture theory that should be mentioned in passing. I would draw your attention again to the SOURCE, the ORIGIN of the rapture doctrine and the chain of contact by which it has been brought down to us today. It began as a Roman Catholic invention! The Jesuit priest Ribera's writings influenced the Jesuit priest Lacunza, Lacunza influenced Irving, Irving influenced Darby, Darby influenced Scofield, Scofield and Darby influenced D. L. Moody, and Moody influenced the early PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT. How? you ask. The Assemblies of God is today by far the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. When the Pentecostal movement began at the turn of the century and the Assemblies of God held their first General Council in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas they were a small movement and didn't have their own Publishing House. They needed Sunday School and study materials for their Churches - so where do you suppose they got it? They bought it from Moody Press and had their own cover stitched on it! So what do you think the Assemblies of God people believed? They believed what Moody Bible Institute taught! This had its impact on Pentecostal theology, because in the early years there were practically NO PREMILLENIALISTS IN THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT! Most of the ministers in those early days came from Presbyterian, Methodist, or other historic denominations - men who, being baptized in the Holy Spirit and leaving their denominations, joined themselves to the Assemblies of God or one of the other emerging Pentecostal denominations. That is how the Pentecostal movement became influenced and saturated with the "Secret Rapture" doctrine - by a direct chain right back to the Roman Catholic Church! And now, my friend - you know the REST OF THE STORY!

THERE IS NO RAPTURE!

The church systems are literally filled today with carnal, earthly-minded Christians who sit back in ease and self-complacency and await a future rapture that will translate them out of the midst of earth's Great Tribulation at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. To this generation of Lukewarm Laodiceans the Spirit speaks in certain tones of warning: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is

darkness, and not light" **(Amos 5:18).** In the vast majority of evangelical circles we are taught that at any moment Jesus will come and secretly, silently snatch away His elect to a heaven in the far-flung skies - to escape the Great Tribulation, which shall soon visit the earth. It is not true. The saints shall be "caught up" all right; but it is not speaking of distance in terms of miles or light years, but to glorious reality in the Spirit. When Christ comes to lift our inner-man nature UP into the fullness of UNION IN HIM we certainly know the reality of being raised up and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. This is not a place in the sky, but a spiritual position of eminence, glory and authority. Paul says that we shall be caught up "in the air," that sphere of influence, authority and spirit-control now occupied by "the god of this world," the "prince and power OF THE AIR" (see Study #42 in this series).

"Rapture" is not a biblical word. Let all of God's people stop speaking of the "rapture." The word rapture is not in the scripture and is at best very misleading. If instead of the rapture we speak of being caught up in the spirit (Acts 8:39; II Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 4:1-2), translated into the Kingdom (Col. 1:13), raised up into the heavenlies with Christ (Eph. 2:5-6), and caught up into the throne, the spiritual dimension of the Christ's authority, power and glory (Rev. 4:1-2; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 12:5) we will rid ourselves of much confusion and carnal delusion, and we will have a much better understanding of present spiritual realities and the immediate program of God.

Religionists debate loud and long about WHEN THE "RAPTURE" IS TO TAKE PLACE. Some believe in the "pre-tribulation rapture." That means that God's people will be removed from the earth just before the beginning of the tribulation. Thus they will not be here for any of the seven years of plagues, vials, etc. Bumper stickers state: "In case of Rapture, this car will self-destruct". Tracts for airliners say: "In case the trumpet sounds, be prepared for this plane to crash, your pilot may be a Christian." These are fear tactics. Then there are those who teach the "mid-tribulation rapture." They believe that the Bible teaches that the Church will have to go through the first three and a half years of the tribulation while the Antichrist is warring against the saints, but will be raptured and spared the last three and a half years of the intense wrath and judgment of God. Finally there are the "post-tribulation" people. They teach that the Church goes through the entire seven years of tribulation, and that only after the tribulation are the saints "caught up", as according to I Thes. 4:17. They see a Church being empowered by the Spirit of God to survive the worst onslaughts of Satan and pass through victoriously to the other side. This is an admirable concept, and much closer to the truth, but these still embrace the notion of the rapture.

There is a story of King Charles II of England, that he once puzzled the Royal Society (a society of scientists) by propounding the question, Why is a dead fish heavier than a live one? The men of science debated this question with much acumen, and offered various solutions to it. It however occurred to one of them to make sure by experiment that the dead fish was in fact the heavier; and it was found that it was not. Now this trick of the Jesting Monarch is often played upon us by our own minds. We assume, because the preachers and teachers play the incessant drumbeat, that there IS a rapture. But when one carefully examines "the alleged fact" of the rapture he is led to the astounding discovery that in fact there isn't even any such thing!

A German Prince was once visiting a certain city. When greeted by a deputation from the Town Council he expressed great surprise that his arrival had not been heralded by salvoes of cannon. The Burgomaster, who had a sense of humor, replied that there were a hundred reasons for the omission. Asked by the Prince what they were, he began: "In the first place we have no cannon; in the second we - " "Now," broke in the Prince, "your first reason is so good that I don't want to hear the other ninety-nine." That answer comes to mind as one reflects on the theory of the Secret Rapture. We wait in vain for one strong argument that simply compels us to consider their view. Take a searchlight. Take all the suns and moons and stars, break the rim of the Milky Way and pour the compacted brilliance of its infinite depths of light into every crevice of the good old Book; search every page and chatter and verse and line, from Gen. 1:1 through Rev. 22:21, and you can find no trace of it in teaching, in prophecy, in parable or in symbol. The rapture is simply not found in the Bible! That one reason is so good that we have no need to consider any others!

Since so many Christians are steadfastly looking for Jesus to come FOR the Church, to whisk it away up to heaven somewhere, we need to take a closer look at the Word and see if ANYWHERE in the Bible we can find this expression "coming FOR the saints." This may come as a shock to some, but the Bible NOWHERE speaks of Jesus coming "FOR the saints." Let those who carelessly use this term show us where it appears in

the pages of God's inspired Book. Let them search! It cannot be found! Never! Nowhere! Not even once! Surely then, a teaching, which constantly employs an expression that is foreign to the Word of God should be subjected to close examination. I can hear some dear saint saying, "Oh, but the Bible does say that Jesus is coming FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle**."** No it doesn't! What it says is that Christ so loved the Church and gave Himself for it "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" **(Eph. 5:26-27).** It says nothing about taking the Church anywhere. In order to "present the Church to Himself" in a holy and blameless condition doesn't necessitate changing the Church's physical location at all! There is no reference to a journey; the description is of a CONDITION. Our Lord's coming "for" His Church is nothing more than an invention of ignorant minds, hatched up by men who are reading into their Bibles many fantastic tales which they use to uphold their delusions. The sleeping Church, of course, can think of little else except a physical ride into the clouds, being whisked away into an etherial state and experience of their own invention, where they intend to sit around dressed in white nightgowns or something similar, eating - eating - eating what?

But let us forget all this nonsense. Let us come on down out of the clouds and get our feet planted firmly on solid footing, and leave them there. We are not going anywhere: not for a long while, at least. We are not yet ready to go anywhere, in fact. These people who think they are all prepared to be physically caught away to the throne on high and there help God run His universe, are simply manifesting the fact that they are just babes living in a dream-world and are not even capable of eating good wholesome spiritual food. Before we are fitted for running God's affairs and ruling with Christ over His universe, we have got to become proficient at running our little earth. This is our proving ground. And we are going to stay right here until we graduate! Before we are even capable of running an earth we must grow up spiritually and become proficient at living by the principles of the Kingdom and walking out the mind, nature and will of the Father in our own lives. The Church has not yet done even this. The vast majority, including the preachers, are just babies who still need a lot of comforts and soothing syrups, need to have their garments changed quite regularly and their bottle filled and held for them. Of course I know that the Church realizes what a horrible mess she has made of things in general, and would like to run away off somewhere to get away from it all. But she is going to stay right here and face the music, whether she wants to or not.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" **(Tit. 2:13).** There is a strange thing happening today, for most Christians are not looking for the "coming" of the Lord - rather, they are expecting the "going" of the saints! It is hard to convince men of the truth when for years their minds have been set in a contrary direction. The truth is that the "blessed hope" is not the rapture; it is the APPEARING of the Lord. The "blessed hope" is not deliverance from the Tribulation; it is HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING in His people. We are not looking for a rapture to take people out of this old world, but we are looking for HIM TO APPEAR out of the innermost being of His sons to transform His elect so that they will be able to change the very courses of this world. This is the time of the appearing of Christ in power and great glory. The Lord has confirmed this fact by appearing to us personally, and to others as well. He is coming and has come to us in His spiritual presence and is uncovering Himself within us to appear through us to the world. With each appearing of our Lord we witness greater growth unto maturity and perfection than we have seen in the past, for the Lord is doing that quick work. This is a very significant hour, an hour of much spiritual activity, accomplished by the arising of HIS LIFE WITHIN.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted WORTHY TO ESCAPE all these things that shall come to pass, and TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN" **(Lk. 21:36).** This verse of scripture has often been misapplied to the rapture theory. However, the words of Jesus are relevant to this hour and should be considered in the light of all present, revealed truth. If the old rapture theory is wrong, as we certainly believe it is, what then did Jesus mean by admonishing us to "pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape" the things that are coming upon the world? Some like to point at Enoch, who was translated that he should not see death, and say that he is a type of those who are raptured before the Tribulation, thus "escaping" the things that are coming upon the earth. But Enoch did not live during the time that judgment was being poured out on the earth in the form of a flood. Enoch had his experience some 669 years before the

Flood, and never met Noah. In other words, his translation (and that's another story!) was not for the purpose of helping him escape the flood.

It is NOT Enoch who serves as the type of how one escapes the judgments of God poured out in the earth, but NOAH! Jesus did not say, "As it was in the days of Enoch." He said, "But AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE" **(Mat. 24:37-39).** How the preachers have distorted and mutilated these wonderful words of our Lord! Songs have been written and sermons preached to urge us to be ready to be "taken" when Jesus comes. The great truth is that Jesus is saying the exact opposite! Let us consider what happened in the days of Noah. Who was taken? Who was left? "For as in the days that were before the flood THEY (the wicked) were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and (they, the wicked) knew not until the flood came and TOOK T-H-E-M ALL AWAY" **(Mat. 24:38-39).** It was the wicked that were "taken" in Noah's day, for the record states that the flood came and "took them all away." And who was left? NOAH! Noah had spent much time and diligence in building an ark in which to "ride out" the storm. Noah went THROUGH the flood, protected by the ark he had prepared and entered into. When the flood waters abated, and the wicked had been taken away, he stepped out of the ark and inherited the purified earth. He and his family now owned the whole planet! Everyone else who had held a deed to a piece of property was GONE, along with the heirs. Noah inherited the earth and there were none to dispute his claim. The previous owners had been "taken" and Noah alone was LEFT to inaugurate the new age. To which fact Jesus adds this significant statement: SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING (PRESENCE) OF THE SON OF MAN BE!

This great type points to far more than merely the inhabitants of the world being blown off the map and just you and me and a few other elect saints remaining. It points to the way of LIFE instead of DEATH. In this hour God's chosen ones are building an ark of obedience and truth, of wisdom and righteousness that they might LIVE AND NOT DIE. I declare to you that there is a people who shall live and not die! This is not an outer ark of gopher wood and pitch, but an inner ark of the mind of Christ and the ways of God in the SPIRIT. Our "hiding place" is in Christ. "Your life is hid with God in Christ" **(Col. 3:3).** It is the fearful, the faithless, or the wicked, who seek a geographical hiding place. Some want to leave the earth and fly away to heaven, while some cry for the rocks and the mountains to hide them, and yet others are seeking a hiding place in some natural place, a farm, a desert, a wilderness area, etc. But it will not work. It will not work because it is natural, physical, carnal, earthly. You cannot escape from death that way. You can only escape death by LIFE! And you can only find life by sowing to the SPIRIT! It is the life of God in your spirit, which will swallow up all death, enabling you to "escape" the things that are coming upon the world.

George Hawtin penned the following words of truth: "The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace were living types of the elect of God as they will be preserved through the fires of tribulation. The fire will not hurt them and the Son of God, who was with those blessed three, will be with us also. The elect will be right here in the world, yet they will be caught up to a new realm of spiritual glory and power, a realm where nothing of the earth can really harm them. Daniel was thrown into the den of ravening lions because of his faithfulness to God, but because he lived in a heavenly realm far above all his associates, the roaring lions became as docile as domestic kittens in his presence. It is quite possible that he stroked their manes and listened with pleasure to their mighty purring throughout the night when angels came to shut their mouths, yet these same lions tore his enemies to pieces before they could fall to the bottom of the pit. And thus I think it will be for all God's elect people. They will be in the fire, but never feel it. They will be in the lion's den, but find no hurt. Yea, they will be like Noah, who rode through the great waters of the flood, but came down on side to people a glorious new age, which in our case will be the age of the Kingdom."

Those chosen ones who shall be blessed with that promised ESCAPE shall be delivered, not by being removed from the earth, but by a more glorious transformation. They shall escape the things that are coming upon the world by appearing before the Son of man - by standing before the Son of man - by union with Him in the incorruptibleness of His divine life. When anyone among us is blessed to stand before the Son of man we are changed into the same image by seeing Him as He is. But let not any saint of God think that we speak of an outward event, for the Son of man is WITHIN YOU, and it is there that you behold Him, are changed into

His image, and stand before Him, your outer man brought into harmony and oneness of life with the inner, praise His wonderful name!

COME UP HITHER

Another scripture used to teach the pre-tribulation rapture is Rev. 4:1-2 where John heard a voice "as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven..." They say John was a type here of the Church being caught up off the earth into heaven just prior to the wrath of God falling upon the world in the Great Tribulation. But it says no such thing. Oh, what shame! What deliriums! Men, poor deluded and blind children who know as little of the Christ life and spiritual realities as does the father of lies whom they unwittingly serve, yet parade themselves as angels of light and their carnal imaginings as revelation direct from God! No wonder Paul wrote, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" **(II Tim. 4:3-4).** No wonder Isaiah wrote, "All tables (from which the Church is fed) are filled with vomit and filthiness, so that there is NO PLACE CLEAN" **(Isa. 28:8).** God pity the poor victims who follow these wretched blind leaders of the blind, poor nursing infants who know not their right hand from their left, victims of these messengers of the carnal mind, poor helpless babes, who have never, since the day of their birth, had a good square spiritual meal, and who as a result grow weaker and thinner and more anemic spiritually day by day.

A tremendous revelation was given to John on Patmos. John was one of the "three mighties" who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the depositary of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the Church in this age. And such is the case. This picture is to be found in the book of the Revelation. The seven Churches are saluted by John. He was shown the seven candlesticks "which ARE the seven Churches" **(Rev. 1:20).** God raised up a prophet that could see and foretell in detail the entire Church age before it could transpire. This is what the messages to the seven Churches in Rev. 2 and 3 are all about.

This prophecy is directed to the seven Churches in Asia as they became the symbolic vehicle by which the Lord quickened a message that is not only to be unto them, but is to be relevant to all Christians throughout the entire Church age. The messages and prophecies that are seemingly directed unto the seven special Churches of Asia actually symbolize and characterize the conditions that have existed in the Church age from the day of Pentecost until now. Seven is the perfect spiritual number of completeness and these SEVEN CHURCHES embody and characterize all the combined conditions that not only existed then, but have existed in one form or another throughout this entire age and are still in some form or another manifested in the Churches today. John beheld the good and the evil of the Church age. He declared the blessings and the curses of this age. He saw the strength and the weakness of the Church. He saw the Church in its beginnings and in its consummation. He beheld the True Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and he exposed the false church systems, the swaggering harlot of this age with her unholy spirit, doctrines, organization and methods. John shows forth the full revelation of all the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church during the Church age and the ages to come.

If you want to know what the Church of this age is like look at the SEVEN CANDLESTICKS! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the Church painted in awesome detail by the skillful hand of the Holy Spirit. The outstanding fact is that it is a Church of MIXTURE - imperfect, immature, carnal, idolatrous, lethargic, heretical, adulterous - a realm of mixture and duality. Not only is the Church age an age of mixture, but it is an experience of CONTINUED MIXTURE; as in the parable of the wheat and tares, right up to the end of the harvest the field is a MIXED FIELD; it is a field divided between wheat and tares. There is neither time nor space to explore the meaning and fulfillment of all the symbols attached to these seven Churches, but these seven Churches perfectly reveal WHAT THE CHURCH REALM IS IN ITS ENTIRETY, and history and personal experience testify conclusively that John was shown aright! The early Church itself was a mixture of flesh and spirit, truth and error, law and grace, spirituality and carnality, Christ and antichrist. And I do not hesitate to tell you that from that day to this ALL CHURCHES HAVE SO BEEN. They are today! ALL of them! Yes, YOURS too! precious friend of mine, matters not if you call it a "New Testament Church," "Kingdom

Church," "Sonship Church," "End-time Church," "New Day Church," or by some other inventive title if it IS a Church - its portrait is graphically and unerringly drawn in chapters 2 and 3 of the Revelation. Have you been searching for the perfect Church? Forget it! Such a Church does not exist during the Church age. And should this age continue for another thousand years the Church shall not have changed - the Word of the Almighty God declares it! The seven candlesticks ARE the seven Churches and the seven Churches ARE the whole Church throughout the entire Church age. The "New Testament Church" realm can never be different from what John saw in spirit.

Notice now the inspired words that follow: "After this (the vision of the candlesticks) I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show thee things which must be HEREAFTER. And immediately I was IN THE SPIRIT: and, behold, a THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN, and one sat on the throne" **(Rev. 4:1-2).** An entrance is given to John into the heavenlies of the Most High. A door is opened unto John into the highest spiritual dimension of the divine eternal domain. At the speaking of the trumpet, the spirit translates John into the higher spiritual and heavenly realm of the THRONE OF GOD. I would draw your reverent attention to the wording: "AFTER THIS I looked... Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be HEREAFTER." H-E-R-E-A-F-T-E-R! After what? Why, bless your heart, after the CANDLESTICK REALM! The promises have already been given, NOT TO THE CHURCHES, but to a class in the Churches - to HIM THAT OVERCOMETH. It is divinely significant that not one promise was ever given to even one Church in these Churches of mixture - every single- promise was made to that Church within the Church - the OVERCOMER - the SONS OF GOD. "HE THAT OVERCOMETH shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be MY SON" **(Rev. 21:7).** Ah, here is a higher realm, the realm of the OVERCOMER. There is no duality, no mixture in this higher realm, no immaturity or imperfection of any kind. And the message sounds forth like the blast of a trumpet: "COME UP HITHER!"

Is it not plain that John is shown TWO REALMS - the candlestick realm and the throne realm? First John is informed about what the candlestick realm is, then he is shown another realm HIGHER THAN THE CANDLESTICK REALM. It is the realm of the overcomer, of the throne (the Lordship realm), of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. The throne denotes the seat of authority, rulership and dominion. It is the realm of HIS LORDSHIP, and ours with Him. Any person who ever enters into that divine realm of the Spirit in the heavenlies must be in complete and total submission unto that Holy One who sits upon that heavenly throne. And "to him that overcometh will I grant to SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, even as I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" **(Rev. 3:21).** It is interesting to note that immediately following this invitation to the throne John is bidden to leave the candlestick realm of the earthlies and ascend IN THE SPIRIT (not a physical "rapture"!) into this HIGHER-THAN-THE-CANDLESTICK-REALM where the Lamb is in the throne.

This is what the brethren don't want to do! How tenaciously they cling to the candlestick realm with its five-fold ministry, New Testament Order, with its limitation, imperfection, weakness, immaturity, mixture, structures, methods, etc. Even so-called "Kingdom" preachers tell me that unless I am joined to some "New Testament Church" I will never make it into sonship. It is a lie. The truth is just the opposite. COME UP HITHER! Actually, you must leave the candlestick realm and ascend into the higher dimension of the Spirit in order to be a son of God! This revelation was given in A. D. 96. The people in the Churches of John's generation refused to leave the candlestick realm and rise to a higher experience in God and within only a few years the great apostasy set in, by the third and fourth centuries the apostasy was complete, followed by a dreadful night of great and terrible darkness. If we would be overcomers, pressing into sonship to God, our ears must hear with joy the challenging call, "Come up hither!" We must arise and forsake the limitation of the candlestick realm to become related to Christ in that inner union where HIS LORDSHIP SWALLOWS UP OUR LIVES. Oh, yes, the Lord is still out there in the candlestick realm, for as long as that realm endures there is "One like unto the Son of man standing in the midst." I have seen Him there in the midst of all the delusion, foolishness and carnality, I have beheld Him blessing, moving, speaking, saving, baptizing in the Holy Ghost, healing, imparting gifts, I have heard His voice in the praising, in the preaching, in the prayers. Yes, He is there all right, in the midst, as the light that remains in Babylon, ministering on that level, blessing by His wonderful grace. But, my beloved, I would be remiss if I failed to warn you that He is NOT THERE taking men on to perfection, into the incorruptible life, into the fullness of sonship. The "up hither" realm is where that experience is known. If any

man can show me any Church order, including the early Church, or their own, that has ever carried God's people on to perfection and fullness I will recant and gladly join it. If such a Church cannot be produced, then John's estimation of the candlestick realm remains valid and I have no obligation to join myself to that which is totally impotent to minister what is needed in this hour to bring us into the depths of Jesus Christ. Here me now! We are not opposed to gatherings, meetings and ministry! It is just that all these things must be kept in the perspective of reality as the "in part" realm and not over-rated as the vehicle to bring us into fullness.

I hear a Voice, my brother, my sister, bidding me to distinguish between the "dwellers on earth" and the "dwellers in heaven." "Therefore rejoice, YE HEAVENS, and YE THAT DWELL IN THEM. Woe to the INHABITERS OF THE EARTH... for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath..." **(Rev. 12:12).** In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we are told that the "dwellers in heaven" are the tabernacle of God. The tabernacle of God is that blessed company of the overcomers - the sons of God. The dwellers in heaven are the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion. The dwellers in heaven are the manchild company "caught up to God and His throne." The dwellers in heaven are the enthroned elders. The dwellers in heaven are the four living creatures in the midst of the throne. The dwellers in heaven are the Kings and Priests after the order of Melchizedek. The dwellers in heaven are the tabernacle of God. The dwellers in heaven are the warriors on white horses who come out of heaven, accompanying the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The dwellers in heaven are the New Jerusalem, which comes down from God out of heaven bringing the glory of the celestial Kingdom among men. Yea! and Amen! The more you search the more clear it will become that the "open door" in heaven and the invitation "Come up hither" separates between the candlestick realm in the earthlies, which are the seven Churches, the entire age of Church economy - and the higher realm of HIS LORDSHIP WITHIN, the throne realm!

I say to you today as the trumpet-voice said to John in that long ago, "Come up hither!" We have stood on the sidelines and said, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and rapture us out of this world." And He has sat on His throne and said, "Come, My people; enter into my gates, enter into my glory." We have said, "Come and get us Lord Jesus," and He has said, Come up hither, My people; come up into the realm of My Spirit, of My reality, of My glory and power." THE DOOR IS OPEN IN HEAVEN TODAY. You may live in the candlestick or the throne. You may be an earth-dweller or a heaven-dweller. You may be a "Christian" or you may be a SON!

THE TRUE "RAPTURE"

The word "rapture" as used theologically is a misapplied and misappropriated term. Although this word is not found in the Bible, it IS found in the dictionary. The correct rendering of "rapture" has nothing to do with going anywhere. The World Book Dictionary furnishes us with this definition: "A strong feeling that absorbs the mind; very great joy. A feeling of being lifted high in MIND and SPIRIT; being filled with and completely taken up in feeling or delight or bliss." Armed with the true definition of rapture, is it not clear that we have been raptured on occasions too numerous to mention, as we have experienced the life of God in our SPIRIT from glory to glory!

Men gaze steadily into the skies looking for Jesus to come flashing across the heavens to snatch them up and carry them away, but their spirits have never been enravished with these enlightening words: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH TRANSLATED US into the kingdom of His dear Son" **(Col. 1:13).** Is that not an illuminating statement? And while the preachers rant and rave and speculate about a "rapture", displaying their carnal charts complete with pictures of automobiles wrecking, trains derailing, and airplanes crashing while the bodies of the saints soar away through the atmosphere, there are some humble sons of the Most High God who have EYES TO SEE and have discovered a process NOW TAKING PLACE in every believer who is earnestly pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. From the far distant mountain peaks of revelation the inspired voice of Paul clear as the morning song of the morning dove sounds forth the message: "Even when we were dead in sin, He H-A-T-H QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST, and H-A-T-H RAISED US UP TOGETHER, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus" **(Eph. 2:5-6).** Blessed be God!

He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that we have ALREADY PASSED FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN! My God, my God! What words are these that Thou hast bidden us believe? Since, then, we have

been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son, is it any wonder that we should discover ourselves to be citizens of the true and eternal realm? By His resurrection and ascension we have been raised up and translated. We have passed from the realm where all is earthly and carnal to the realm where all is heavenly and spiritual. Our citizenship in this present age has been revoked and we have obtained a new citizenship in the eternal and undying realm. For this reason Paul wrote, saying, "Your citizenship is in heaven." We were citizens of another land, a dark land of fear, limitation, sorrow, sin and death. We were of different speech and culture, but we crossed over. We have changed our citizenship and our allegiance from one domain to another. We have renounced our existence on the earth-realm in favor of a new life in the heaven-realm. We have renounced our allegiance to this present world system, its customs, life-style, thought processes, wisdom, knowledge, ways, and religion, to become partakers of a new and heavenly citizenship, speakers of its new language, revelators of the beauty of its customs, culture and life-style, partakers of its higher inspiration, its more noble wisdom and knowledge, and manifestors of the wonders of its truth, and the glory of its endless life.

Ah, my beloved, WHAT YOU SEE DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU LIVE. The story is told of a mole who once pushed its head out of the ground and said to a bird who was swinging and singing on the branch above it, "What are you making such a noise about?" Said the bird, "Oh, the sunshine, the trees, the grasses, the shining stream, and the white clouds on the mountainside. The world is full of beauty!" "Nonsense," said the mole; "I have lived in this world longer than you have, and I have gone deeper into it. I have traversed it and tunneled it, and I know what I am talking about, and I tell you there is nothing in it but fishing worms." If all you can see is sorrow and trouble, pain and distress, sin and evil, crime and violence, lust and greed, wrath and judgment, and antichrist and tribulation, then you are living still in the wrong country! "WOE to the INHABITORS OF THE EARTH!"

A "catching up" is taking place today. There is a transference to a new kingdom and a new kind of experience which we have not known before. Unto transformed men today the Spirit is speaking these magnificent words: "If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" **(Col. 3:1).** There is a spiritual rapture with Christ and all who partake of it will find that their affections are being set upon heavenly things ABOVE and not on things on the earth. This can be your experience here and now in this present world. Some will be dismayed by the statement I am about to make, but quite frankly, I care not one whit who anyone thinks the Antichrist is, or when the tribulation will begin, or how long it will last, or what technological or economic development may bring the mark of the beast, or what the Illuminati conspires to do, the world bankers, the trilateral commission, the Pope, the communists, or any other event that men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after. That may all be interesting information but it is for the "earth-dwellers" to concern themselves with. I have no time for such trivialities and even less interest. None of this is of any significance in the Kingdom in which I now live, and holds nothing for me anymore. It all seems quite childish, speculative and boring. I have higher matters to attend to and greater and more enduring things to pursue in the Kingdom of my Father. Hallelujah! I've been "raptured"! And to one and all I say, "COME UP HITHER!" I am no longer a citizen of this world, for I have risen with Christ and am seated with Him in the higher than all heavens far above all principality and power and might and dominion, praise His wonderful name!

Come up hither, in the Son realm,
No dragon here abides;
For the sure Word now has conquered,
And in Him we have our life;
As the kingdoms of men crumble,
Have no fear, just stand and see,
That the Kingdom of our Father
Is brought forth in you and me!

-Bobby & Charlotte Torango

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LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING, PART 48
COMING AS A THIEF
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
studies in end-time revelation

PART FORTY-EIGHT

WATCHING FOR HIS COMING

We must now draw this series of messages, on the appearing of Christ, to a close; and it is with a strong feeling of reluctance that we do so. The theme is intensely interesting, inscrutably profound and abundantly fruitful. Its manifold facets open up an extensive field of vision for the spiritual mind to explore with enlightenment that never flags, because the subject is inexhaustible. However, we must, for the present at least, close our meditations on this most marvelous line of truth and go on to others; but ere doing so, we are moved to call our reader's attention to yet one final thought in connection with our Lord's return - His coming AS A THIEF.

"And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" **(Lk. 12:39-40).** "Behold, I COME AS A THIEF. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" **(Rev. 16:15).** "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee AS A THIEF, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" **(Rev. 3:3).**

There is a coming of the Lord as a thief. That is not a coming or an appearing that is before the public. It is not an unveiling before the multitudes. A thief does not go down to the public square with a trumpet and say, "I'd like to make an announcement. At three o'clock in the morning I'm going to visit the wealthiest man in this town and I'm going to steal everything I can get my hands on." He doesn't do that. He comes at the darkest part of the night. He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning. He comes as silently and stealthily as possible, unobserved by the sleepers. He comes to rob. He comes to take away everything that he can. He is after gold and pearls and jewels of great price. Men are unaware of the event until he has come and gone and the items of value to the owner have disappeared with him. The Lord Jesus Himself says that HE WILL COME AS A THIEF.

Almighty Lord! in whom dwellest the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, flood our souls with understanding from above. Remove the dark veil from our minds, and flood our hearts with light divine, that we may clearly behold the sacred secrets of truth long concealed in Thee. Our understanding of this beautiful truth will be greatly enhanced once we understand that in that long ago in Palestine Jesus came as a thief. The carnal mind conceives of Him coming in royal splendor and magnificence, with a band of trumpets sounding, a host of angels announcing His arrival, as He makes His triumphal entry into the world riding in a chariot overlaid with gold, His royal garments glistening with jewels of the rarest kind, and a crown of gold on His head and the omnipotent scepter of His Kingdom in His hand. Perhaps one of the greatest mysteries of all is that Christ came, not to dazzle the world with a spectacular political coup or military overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, but to reveal the Kingdom of God WITHIN MEN, to unveil the internal rule of the spirit by which men and families and communities and cities and nations are transformed from domains of sin, ignorance, fear, evil, greed, lust, sorrow, darkness, disease and death into shining citadels of righteousness, wisdom, love, joy, peace, health, light and life. He came the first time to an out-of-the-way place, in the womb of a woman, and lying in a manger. He came riding on a little donkey. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" **(Zech. 9:9).** He came in weakness, in meekness, in obscurity. His coming was shrouded in secret. Very few knew when He arrived in the midst. When Jerusalem and the great city of Rome closed their shops that star-lit night they knew not that the King of glory had come to earth. Even Bethlehem did not know. When He rode into Jerusalem He came not with the flamboyant and dazzling style of an earthly king. There were not legions of angels, no blasting of trumpets, no marching of armies, no royal chariot pulled by lively, prancing, expertly groomed and trained white horses.

There was no palace where royal attendants waited to escort Him to His throne, and to await His every command. Our glorious King - yours and mine, beloved - came to the common, ordinary multitude in the most lowly, humble and unpretentious way - riding on a common beast of burden - yet He came in the quiet and hushed movings of His omnipotent Spirit! The kingdoms of the world knew nothing of His coming until it was too late - the feet of iron and clay were smitten by the power of His Word as like a thief He came upon them and spoiled their houses, setting up a kingdom of life and light and love in their midst which shall never be destroyed and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and all the kingdoms of men shall be driven away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor before the wind.

As our Lord came into the world two thousand years ago silently, with softest tread, without fanfare or warning, so does He come to every man. Every well-marked crisis in the life of a child of God is a "coming" or "appearing" of the Christ, whether we know it at the time or not. Many times we encounter Him in the most unthinkable places, and under the most unpropitious circumstances. In places and ways where we least expected to find the Lord, He will meet us face to face. There are times when we are faced with a mountain in circumstances, which appears insurmountable and immovable. This is often the very place where we find Him waiting for us. All the mountains in our lives are raised up through our lack or unbelief, but there are no mountains of difficulty with God.

There are occasions when such appearings of the Lord seem the very opposite of what they are, times when our fate seems to be at the mercy of haphazard influences and accidental events. The greater part of any life-history is unpredictable, and in most cases the really great crises in the experience of any of us are unexpected, take us unaware. If you read our Lord's figurative descriptions of His coming in this light you cannot fail to see how true they are. He says no warning will be given. People will be going about their ordinary avocations in the ordinary way, taking for granted that nothing different will occur from what they have been accustomed to from day to day; outwardly there will be nothing portentous, no sign that the old order of things is at an end; and then, like a thunder clap, the cataclysm will be upon them. "For as the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."

Is not this exactly what happens in life as we know it now? You have only to look around you to see that these words of Christ are receiving fulfillment every day and hour. It is true of the great movements of history. Consider the events of the past several months in Eastern Europe (6-90). What is truer than that great crises prepare themselves insensibly and almost unnoticed, and generally take humanity by surprise? And it is equally so with the individual, and with the spiritual life. How apparently casual, uncertain, inconsequent, are the things which happen to us from hour to hour as contrasted with the effects they produce for weal or woe! Things look so accidental, of such small account oftentimes, and yet they make all the difference between life and death to the soul to whom they occur. By this time tomorrow your whole world may have been turned upside down, your entire outlook on fife revolutionized. What God may have in store for you no man can prophesy; but this I urge you to believe, that it is mercy and not vindictiveness that directs His hand.

Furthermore, we are bidden to look in all the changes of our earthly lot for the appearing of the Lord. This is what the Lord Jesus Himself has told us. He directs and mandates every experience of your life, precious friend of mine, and compels these things, whether good or evil, to be the instruments of His redeeming love, the vehicles of His appearing to, in and through you. In the crises, changes, processings, strippings, purgings and prunings, HE COMES to succor and relieve, to claim us for Himself, to teach us His ways, to inwork of His nature, and transform into His image and likeness. Nothing happens without Him; nothing can reach us which is not directly the token of His presence - or, as I prefer to put it, it is His very own special advent, the parousia, the coming, the appearing of Christ, to the soul thus visited. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Some time ago I read the most enlightening testimony of a man - a Christian teacher and scholar - shared at a retreat for Christian teachers at a great university. The meetings were entirely private and the numbers purposely restricted in order to secure the spiritual intimacy without which the interchange of experience would have been profitless. This distinguished scholar opened his heart to his companions and told of the way in

which he discovered the reality of the indwelling Christ - Christ present and active, appearing and manifesting in the inner reality of his own spirit. He said there came a time in his life when everything to which he had hitherto clung fell away from him; it was as though some fiend of hell had been planning his ruin. Up to that point he had believed himself to be an exemplary character; but that was because he had never been tested; he had lived a sheltered life and been fortunate in most of his undertakings. Like so many of us he was rather self-complacent, too easily satisfied with his own standard of being and doing, too sure of himself, too ready to judge others. And then, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came the blow - he did not say what - which destroyed all the vain fabric of his self-delusion. It was not one thing only that went wrong with him; everything went wrong; and, worst of all, he lost all confidence in his own rectitude of principle and strength of will. He could do nothing to save himself, nothing whatever; he found no comfort, no resting place, no anchorage for his soul; his sense of helplessness could not have been more complete. But when things were at their very blackest a miracle took place. For no reason that he could ever divine - no human reason, anyway - he became conscious of a strange unearthly quietude in his heart; something broke in upon him, as it were, from the world beyond; yet, it was not from outside of him, but from somewhere deep within; he became aware of the presence of Christ within, and the omnipotent power and energizing nature of God within his spirit. He confessed that this was the greatest spiritual discovery he ever made, and he was never afterwards able to see that his own will had anything to do with it beyond directing the inarticulate cry for help that went up from his desolate soul and was thus answered. He simply knew that Christ was there, suddenly appearing in glory as a thief out of his own reality, and the surprise of the realization was quickly superseded by the sense of peace and consolation and wholeness that holy presence brought. His trouble fled; he was content to rest from himself and his woes, and to leave everything to those Almighty hands - not hands in some far-off heaven, but the hands of the reality of the Christ within. Like a thief in the night the Christ stole into the darkness of his state of being and snatched away from him his cherished treasures of his own self-righteousness, self-sufficiency and self-dependency, breaking up his carnal outer house of being. Ah, Christ is always present - yet is always coming - by the manifestation of His presence, the epiphaneia of His parousia, as He steps forth from our inner invisible life in spirit into our outer visible world of consciousness and experience. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

As a thief! Can the natural mind even fathom the depths of a truth so eternal and sublime? This statement plainly indicates the manner of the Lord's coming. It shows that He is present unseen, doing a work of which men are for a time entirely unaware. His working is therefore in a quiet manner, unobserved and entirely unknown until the discovery is made in consciousness of the handiwork He has wrought in secret. His arising steals its way upon us as the dawning of the day. The sun comes up at an early hour in the morning and if you are awake and up at that time you will see it rise, but if you sleep until noon, a great number of important things can transpire ere you are aware. The morning can be over before you know what is going on! Jesus told His disciples that NO MAN KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR OF HIS COMING. Certainly not! for He comes "as a thief." If we trust this word of inspiration and truth, then outward symbols and signs indicating a specific time for Christ's return make no sense at all. If the seventy weeks of Daniel, the "seven times" of Israel's punishment, the 1335 days, the 2300 days, the measurements of the Great Pyramid, or any other sign or symbol indicated a date on the calendar when Jesus would return to earth, then our Lord's own words would stand contradicted. This simple yet infallible principle is just the reason why I could proclaim so confidently that "the rapture" would NOT take place in 1988!

The false teaching that the "second coming" of Christ is one singular event limited to a specific date in the future when Jesus Christ will descend from heaven in a body of flesh, with wounds in His hands, feet and side, and that He will flash through the skies, snatching away His faithful followers, carrying them with Him to some far-away heaven somewhere, has given rise to innumerable speculations, predictions, calculations, prophecies and projected dates concerning when this stupendous event is supposed to transpire. The inspiring promises about our Lord's coming have too often been an issue of sensationalism. Men have quarreled and quibbled and fought over a most precious assurance, and have missed altogether the wonderful blessing and the glorious reality. Because of the distorted understanding of this blessed truth many ridiculous theories have been spawned about the "time" and "manner" of His appearing.

In the past few decades, several small groups, devoutly following the leadership of some would-be prophet, abandoned their jobs and professions, sold all their worldly goods, and confidently awaited a precise moment

when either the "rapture" would occur, or Jesus Christ would return. All such predictions failed, of course. Usually the news media only inform us of the sheepish admissions of such aspiring prophets that they will have to "re-study the prophecies," but we never hear about the victims of their harebrained schemes who divested themselves of their accumulated goods only to find that the dogmatically trumpeted prophecies were only so much "pie in the sky." Occasionally you will see one of these embarrassed false prophets frantically attempting to discover some alternative explanation as to WHY his confident predictions did not come to pass as he had proclaimed! Over the years I have seen some of the most carefully constructed theories collapse like the proverbial house of cards!

Put away your charts and timetables and calculations and dates, O ye saints of God! for they have all failed miserably and none will ever be right. Thank God that He delivers us from all this fantastic nonsense! And in its place He directs our attention to what HE is doing, yes, that which HE IS BECOMING and FULFILLING in His elect. We look, indeed, for HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory wherein He has appeared unto us, and in the glory in which He shall yet appear in surpassing splendor, praise His wonderful name!

Before the Lord Jesus Christ departed from this visible world, He said, "I will come again." He, as the glorified Christ, repeated these words to John on the lonely island of Patmos. Here He sharpened His promise and delivered it in a dramatic way. "And, behold, I come QUICKLY; and My reward is with Me" **(Rev. 22:12).** This word "quickly" is from the Greek TACHU meaning shortly, without delay, soon. Why would Christ say He was coming QUICKLY, SHORTLY, SOON AND WITHOUT DELAY if two long milleniums of time were to stretch out between His promise and its fulfillment? If such was the case, He either lied, deceived, or was mistaken. Two thousand years are N-O-T SOON, SHORTLY OR WITHOUT DELAY by the stretch of anybody's imagination His last word to the Churches is: "I am coming quickly," and this is the testimony of the One who is Faithful and true. He makes His coming to be the "NEXT THING" for the Christian. He sets up neither time nor event between Himself and His body. He takes special pains to assure His people that there is no required delay, no parenthesis of time between Him and the saints. He uses a word which from the earliest days of classic Greek signifies "without delay." When therefore, He says, "I am coming (for He uses the present tense),"He says actually, "I am coming, I am already inthe process of coming, and there SHALL BE NO DELAY." It would be impossible to use language which could more adequately, and without reserve, teach that the coming of Christ is a PRESENT AND CONTINUOUS EVENT. An aged minister once said that he did not believe the Lord was coming for 60,000 years. I concluded that he COULD NOT BE WATCHING FOR IT!

As we have pointed out repeatedly in this series, 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. He states, "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" **(Micah 5:2).** 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 unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of the Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man.

We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of our unscriptural and extra-biblical terms "first coming" and "second coming," but the truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; He will continue to come!

Like 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 us is a many sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. They invite Him to come "Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus!" And this coming is just as real and meaningful and powerful as was His coming long centuries ago. To many He becomes their salvation but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They

have only a superficial knowledge of Him. To others He appears as Bridegroom. These hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. 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. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth.

There is a principle in the scriptures concerning the coming of the Lord. That is, we must spiritually discern and respond to His 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. Thus, 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, transformation, Lordship, fellowship, communion, judgment, correction, stripping, purging or cleansing - we shall come to KNOW HIM in all His wonderful reality, and be made like Him as His own in the earth.

Oh, listen for the sound of His comings! When all hope seems gone, we receive His promise, "I am coming!" When our lives are pitched too and fro in the storms of life, when all around the darkness hangs like a pall, we bear His voice of encouragement, "I am coming!" In every situation and experience, negative or positive, there rings out clearly His faithful assurance, "Fear not, IT IS I!" Truly HE is our expectation! He is coming. He is always coming. Ears of faith can hear the sound of His chariot wheels. And in His faithfulness He comes to accomplish what is needful for the occasion. Hallelujah!

WATCHING FOR HIS COMING

"WATCH THEREFORE: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have WATCHED, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh**" (Mat. 24:42-44).** "WATCH ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" **(Mat. 25:13).** "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not WATCH, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" **(Rev. 3:3).**

These significant passages raise the question as to what Jesus meant by WATCHING. For what are the Lord's people to watch? Did He mean that we should relax on some sunny beach, eyes heavenward, until we see some fleecy white cloud bearing Him along? Well, hardly! Obviously, we are not to watch the sky at all. If Jesus were to come in the literal manner suggested by the traditions of the Dark Ages, and if His faithful saints in various parts of the earth were all watching the sky to see Him come, the vast majority of them would, of necessity, be sorely disappointed. Only those within a radius of a few square miles at the most would be able to see, while those outside this small circle - in other parts of the country and the world - would be denied this ecstasy of joy.

Nor does it mean counting dates or de-coding time-prophecies in the Bible. We are so accustomed to thinking of events being fixed by fixed dates, that it seems very difficult to get bold of the fact that the appearing of our Lord is not an event fixed by a date on the calendar. Through the years we have had a lot of SIGN-WATCHERS, though I dare say most of them have missed the meaning of the signs altogether, for they read with the carnal mind, having the understanding darkened. We can be so taken up with the natural, carnal signs of wars and rumors of wars, of financial collapse, of international events, of conspiracies and alliances, political intrigues, of earthquakes and disasters, until we totally miss the real thing that is happening in the realm of SPIRIT, or hearing His voice within, that He might bring us into complete union with Himself, that we might BECOME His salvation unto the ends of the earth. We watch the evening news, and suppose that we are watching for His coming. We hear of the storms, the drought, the crime, the wars, aids, the rise and fall of governments, and our perspective becomes distorted, and fear and doubt seize hold of our souls, until we become more conscious of the darkness of "this world," than we are of the light and glory and triumph of the INDWELLING CHRIST. Any time we are troubled by or anxious about the things coming to pass in the earth, it is obvious that we are WATCHING THE REALM OF DARKNESS rather than LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING. "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, BE YE NOT TROUBLED: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet" **(Mk. 13:7).** The message is just this: These things, the wars and

rumors of wars, DO NOT HERALD THE END! These things must needs be, they always have been in this natural realm and will continue in that realm, but they are N-O-T signs of "the end"! Therefore, BE YE NOT TROUBLED! Let God keep you IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. All the chaos which staggers the imagination MUST NEEDS BE. God would use all these negative forces to develop our trust and confidence, to drive us inward, that we may find God within as the source of our life, our all-in-all, our total sufficiency.

There are five different words in the New Testament which are translated by our English word "watch." Two of these words, TEREO and PARATEREO bear the meaning of "watching" in the sense of keeping the attention focused upon the object of concern. The soldiers at the cross were there for the purpose of keeping watch over Jesus (Mat. 27: 36,54). The Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would perform a miracle on the sabbath (Mk. 3:2; Lk. 6:7). The Jews watched the gates at Damascus that they might apprehend Paul when he attempted to leave the city (Acts 9:24). THESE WORDS WHICH REFER TO THE PHYSICAL ACT OF FIXING ONE'S ATTENTION UPON SOME OBJECT ARE NEVER USED OF THE COMING OF CHRIST. Another word is NEPHO. In I Pet. 4:7 this word is translated in the King James Version as follows: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH unto prayer." This word, however, which is here translated by the word "watch," literally means "to be sober." The Revised Version of 1900 renders this verse: "Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be SOBER unto prayer." In I Pet. 1:3, even the King James Bible translates the word "be sober" in view of the hope of the revelation of Jesus: "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." NEPHO does not mean "to watch" but to have a sober mind and character.

The two words commonly used to admonish watchfulness with relation to the Lord's coming are GREGOREO and AGRUPNEO. And they have a similar meaning. AGRUPNEO means "to be sleepless" or "wakeful," and thus "to be vigilant." The noun AGRUPNIA, occurs only twice in the New Testament where it is used to refer to loss of sleep and to wakeful nights (II Cor. 6:5; 11:27). The verb is used of spiritual vigilance in Eph. 6:18, and in Heb. 13:17 it refers to the vigilance of ministries over the flock.

The word GREGOREO means "to be awake, raise, or rise up, as from sleep or death." In the deep shadows of the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus' soul was agonizing in the face of the cross, He longed for His closest disciples to "watch" with Him, that is, to rise up from their sleep to join Him in His spiritual battle and in the exercise of prayer (Mat. 26:38-41). In I Thes. 5:10 the word means "to be alive" in contrast to the sleep of death. The exhortation in Rev. 3:2-3 to the Church in Sardis to watch does not mean that they were not spending enough time gazing into the sky so as not to miss the Lord when He comes. The word refers to their spiritual lethargy and their dead condition. Williams correctly translates the passage "WAKE UP, and strengthen what is left, although it is on the very point of dying...if you do not WAKE UP, I will come like a thief, and you will never know the hour when I came unto you." In other words, they would MISS THE TIME OF THEIR VISITATION! As the historic denominations missed the outpouring of the Lord in the Pentecostal Revival, and as the Pentecostals missed His coming as the rain in the great move of God in 1948, so, if we do not stay awake spiritually, we can miss Him in His comings unto us in this great hour, for ye know not when your Lord doth come. But there was a further aspect of His coming like a thief upon the Church at Sardis, for He came in a spiritual visitation in judgment to strip and purge from them the death of the carnal mind; those outer, earthly things they were cherishing above the SPIRIT of Christ. That is what a thief does - he plunders the house, carrying off those things treasured by the householder! He appears as a thief in the night, and there have often been times that He has stolen out of the dark hour of our ignorance some carnal concept, some religious tradition, some Babylonian garment of exquisite design that we have hidden in our tent of experience. Ah, we must stay AWAKE to joyfully receive Him in His coming to us, His appearing in us; if we fail to do so He will come like a thief, He will come into our world uninvited and unannounced, He will overtake us unexpectedly and break up our life style and smash our religious games, exposing our pretense. Those who are AWAKE TO REALITY do not have their houses plundered. These willingly yield up the things they once prized, which now are counted but dung that they might win Christ.

The word GREGOREO also carries the thought of - to gather all the faculties together, become mentally alert with all forces brought into focus. It points directly to that which pertains to the realm of the SOUL - mind, will, emotion and desire. OUR SPIRIT is quickened by HIS SPIRIT, and he that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT, thus coming into a spirit of life, for indeed, "the spirit IS LIFE" **(Rom. 8:10).** It must needs follow,

therefore, that the life of God IS THE LIFE IN YOUR SPIRIT. All that God is and has is the reality of your spirit. God is closer to you, my brother, my sister, than the air that you breathe, yea! closer even than the blood coursing its way through your veins, for it is written, "GOD dwelleth IN US, and His love is perfected IN US. Hereby know we that we dwell IN HIM, and HE IN US, BECAUSE HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT" **(I Jn. 4:12-13).**

But there is right now a process going on in the soul realm - to where all our faculties are being brought into focus ON HIM - awake to Him, being raised into the higher state of GOD CONSCIOUSNESS. The veil that has hung like a pall over the eyes of our understanding is being removed so that our vision become focused on OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT, that we might comprehend the full implication of the oft repeated truth that it is "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory" **(Col. 1:27).** As someone has said, It is an on-going process now, that shall yet have a glorious climax, "when reality breaks through."

Millenniums ago the Spirit of the Almighty posed the question to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" **(Job 38:4, 7).** Oh that God might anoint the eyes of all His saints to see that there was a day, glorious and wonderful beyond the telling, in which God laid His great plan of creation and redemption. So majestic and sublime was the wisdom that conceived so grand and excellent a plan that the morning stars flooded God's mountain with harmonious canticles of rhapsody, and the sons of God filled the vastness of heaven with their shouts of joy and expectation as they beheld what the end of that plan would be! There is a chord deep within the depths of my spirit today that still vibrates to that shout of joy. There is a consciousness in my redeemed spirit that in that long forgotten past I was there with Him in spirit beholding with wonder the unfolding of His plan. But as a child forgets the day of his birth, so we, too, have forgotten the glorious things of eternity past, because for a purpose we were born into this world and subjected to vanity.

Lowered from the realm of pure spirit, formed of the dust of the ground, made a living soul, subjected to this gross material realm, the forbidding darkness of the carnal mind enshrouded Adam, and from that hour to this darkness has hung like a thick cloud over the hearts of men, and gross darkness has blinded all to the glories of that bright realm of spirit from whence we came. The whole race of men is groping in terrible darkness and confusion and misunderstanding. The eyes of men who hitherto stood erect in the image of God, living by His Spirit and walking in His fellowship, now behold only the outward illusions of the flesh and lust after things that do not pertain to the spirit. The glory of God has departed. As with Adam, God has caused a deep sleep to fall upon the whole race of mankind, as their soul is separated from the spirit, and their eyes are holden to see God, or any heavenly or spiritual thing. Their only remaining ability is to gaze earthward toward all that is unspiritual, natural and dying. The glory of the celestial realm is shut out and even spiritual sense and understanding has vanished from their hearts. The carnal mind is the dark veil of ignorance and spiritual blindness, for it shuts out the celestial world and imprisons men in the consciousness of sin, sorrow, limitation and death.

And yet - heaven itself, and the image and glory of God - are to be found in man, locked up in that outer form of sensuality and earthiness in the same way the germ of life is imprisoned within the outer shell of the seed. Yea, indeed man IS a seed, and within his inner life in spirit is the life of God, the very seed of Elohim, awaiting only that fructification that comes via the fertilization of the seed by the TRUTH the Word of God. "Being born (begotten) again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD (TRUTH) OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever" **(I Pet. 1:23).** On occasions in God's Word we read that the eyes of certain ones were OPENED. Now if the veil of the flesh is over our understanding, which veil is the natural mind, is it not evident that when the veil is cast aside, when the natural mind is put away, "all of us, as with unveiled faces we mirror THE GLORY OF THE LORD, are TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME LIKENESS, FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS DERIVED FROM THE LORD, THE SPIRIT" (II Cor 3:18, Weymouth). And notice this: "Now the Lord means the SPIRIT; and where the spirit of the Lord is, freedom (from the veil of flesh) is" **(II Cor. 3:17,** Weymouth**).** Those who renounce the consciousness of the natural world in order to discover, experience, develop and nurture to fullness the inner life of spirit are no ordinary people. They "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit," for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death. They have come out of the fleshly corral of the outer world of illusion and unreality and escaped the prison house of human tradition and understanding, to live in a spiritual realm where the light of God illumines mind

and heart, effecting life and transformation. To "walk after the flesh" means that the outward, visible, tangible realm is your source, and may I add that it is the source only of darkness and death. To "walk after the spirit" means to make the inward spirit realm your source, and it is the source of life, light, truth, reality, glory and incorruptibility. If you, like Israel, are lusting after outward things, even an outward God and external blessings, you will never grow to maturity nor come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Thank God, the quickenings of His Spirit are causing us to BE RAISED, out of the sleep of death in old Adam, standing up again in Christ, getting us all-together! We have been so fragmented in ourselves, vacillating back and forth between the flesh and the spirit, with our soulish nature frustrated, emotions spent, intellectually exhausted, our will divided, our minds confused, our desires unfulfilled. But now, praise God! HE is saying to us all, WATCH! AWAKE! RISE UP! ASCEND IN CONSCIOUSNESS! GET YOURSELF TOGETHER! THE LORD IS COMING! HE IS ARISING OUT OF HIS PLACE IN YOUR HEART! HE IS ARISING FROM WITHIN AS THE DAYSTAR! LIGHT IS DAWNING! THE CHRIST IS APPEARING! YOUR GOD IS COMING TO SAVE YOU! AND HIS APPEARING IS FROM W-I-T-H-I-N! It is the hour to gather all our faculties and focus them on HIM - THE SPIRIT WITHIN - and all that He has and brings, praise His wonderful name!

Out of the stupor of minding the flesh, now let us AWAKE and RISE UP to put on the mind of Christ, with our will one in the will of God, our thought-processes renewed into the truth as it is in Christ, our emotions girded up into the joy and peace of the unchanging spirit, our desires seeking only those things which are above, no longer setting any affection on the passing realm of the earthly. When Jesus says, "WATCH therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," it is the SPIRIT exhorting the SOUL to AWAKE from its narcosis of ignorance that it might become alert and aware of the activity of spirit, bringing the life and authority of God to deliver, heal and restore to soundness even the soul and body realms. Awake, O my soul! and LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING. Many dear saints are "waiting" for Him but they are not "watching." They believe He is coming, but they know not when nor how, so they doze on in drowsiness. He will appear some day, somewhere, they think, so they wait. To be "ready" or "perceptive" one must WATCH. A man in a railroad station may be waiting for the train and fall fast asleep, but the man who is watching for the train will be wide awake. WATCH! I say.

We have passed through a time of great darkness. Thank God, the first rays of light of the new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. And the Word describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are called "the drunkards of Ephraim" **(Isa. 28:1-14).** Then in **Isa. 29:9-11** we are told, "they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads, the seers, hath He covered. And all vision hath become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." And when these drunken shepherds spread tables for their flocks, instead of those tables being loaded with good wholesome spiritual food, the prophet says, "All tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is NO PLACE CLEAN" **(Isa. 28:8).**

But we who are of the day, and who are not lovers of the drunkenness of false doctrine nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. "We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as did others" **(I Thes. 5:5-6).** We who have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business. There must be a parting of the ways. It is time to forsake the shame and error, and time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" **(Isa. 52:1).** Because the church today has not received of God's enlightenment, we find Christians in the pathetic state of darkness. Because Christians today, whether baptized in God's Spirit, or not, have stopped far short of God's fullness, and are still spiritual babes, they, with few exceptions, do not discern the spiritual side of life. Their human minds comprehend the natural side, but the spiritual is veiled from their view. They have not arisen above the mists of night. But the day, which we have now entered, calls for all who will to awake, and to go forth, beholding a more glorious scene.

This more glorious scene of which I speak is of a people who are "looking for Him" and have FOUND HIM! "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go

about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go..." **(S. of S. 3:1-5).**

Symbolically, the Shulamite maiden in the S. of S. sets forth the bride of Christ seeking a more intimate relationship with the Lord. Individually, the bride bespeaks of the soul, the feminine area of our life, seeking the relationship of love (union) with the Lord who is the spirit. That the Shulamite symbolizes the SOUL is clear when you consider how many times she says, "I will seek HIM whom MY SOUL loveth." "By night upon my bed I sought Him whom my SOUL loveth." The word used for bed is a Hebrew word denoting "love bed" **(Gen. 49:4; Num. 31:17).** It is UNION she desires! "By night" catches the force of the Hebrew plural "nights" as well as "night after night," picturing "the dark night of the soul." The soul arises to go about the city, and to seek Him whom she loveth in the broad ways, and in every likely and unlikely place. Literally, this refers to the city of Jerusalem and the broad places at the gates of the city, where citizens gathered to transact business. Spiritually, it is the assembly, the church, or gathering places of spiritual enrichment, blessing and instruction.

The watchmen mentioned in this beautiful passage COULD NOT TELL THE SEEKER where to go to find the Lord, and in this respect they represent the preachers of the church system in our day who, though they go all about the city, compassing land and sea in search of proselytes, have no answer to the seeker's problem, no eternal reality to offer, for that answer, important above all others, they do not know. But "IT WAS BUT A LITTLE THAT I PASSED FROM THEM, and I found Him whom my soul loveth!" Oh yes, you will have to go beyond the ignorance of the so-called gospel of today's religious systems if you are going to find the Lord, the Spirit, and come into union with Him. Sermons and explanations are but vanity here, for God is found only by those who love Him enough to search for Him until they find Him. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear..." Neither will such seekers find Him in the broad ways, or with the watchmen, or in any other religious realm where men suppose Him to be. Those places leave us high and dry on the sand, proud in the knowledge that is nothing short of ignorance and foolishness with God. But men who will turn inward and find union with God in the INNER CHAMBER of the human spirit will discover that the glory light of His life within fades into nothingness the endless doctrines and instructions of men. Those blessed souls who truly find the ALL SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHRIST WITHIN are wiser in God and the things of God than all the doctors of the law and the ministers of religion, and richer far than the rarest treasures of earth.

O my soul! WATCH for HIS coming. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" **(Rev. 16:15).** This gives us the picture of a Roman sentry supposed to be on guard duty through the night. They wore a garment, a robe, a uniform; the robe was the profession they made to be guards, the insignia or proof of their position. There was a captain. At certain and unannounced hours the captain made his rounds to inspect and relieve the watch; some times he took one guard and left another. At times a guard became weary and slumped down. Presently he was asleep. Is there anything more despicable and criminal than to sleep at the post of duty? What must be said of a captain who sleeps on the bridge? Or a soldier who sleeps at his post? Or a light-house keeper who sleeps in the night? Of a soul who sleeps in the deceptive bed of religious activities, unaware of the movings and wooings of the spirit? When the captain of the guard discovered the sleeping sentry, as the custom was, he grabbed his tunic from him without waking him. When he arose his shame was evident, the captain had come and gone, had stripped off his profession, made him naked and put him to shame.

SO we are exhorted to "watch" in view of the Lord's coming. Those who are faithless will be stripped of their profession, naked and ashamed before the bare light of day. He comes like a thief to steal from the "professing" church the garment that has under it no it possession." Because He is coming to snatch away the mere profession and make it naked to the gaze of judgment He warns all in the Church to be on the watch, and for each one to keep his garment; that is, to "hold fast" the profession he has made. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" **(Rev. 3:11).** Cling fervently to the hope within you today, dear child of God. Embrace and never let go the reality you have found in the Christ within. Trade it not for the worthless tinsel pandered by the harlot system in the broad ways of Mystery Babylon. Treasure the truth you know as you would treasure the most priceless gem of earth, and guard it with all the vigilance of your being, for there, and there alone, is reality, life, immortality and glory eternal.

"It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go..."

So many people wonder, Will Jesus come in my lifetime? Will I live to see the return of the Lord? Well, start living and allow Jesus to come again in your lifetime! How many lifetimes do you have? You have only this one lifetime - let Jesus come in your lifetime! As someone has said, Let Jesus come in your lifetime and begin to have the TIME OF YOUR LIFE! Then you can cease gazing up into the skies wondering when Jesus is going to come, and you can step into the NOW of God and begin your progression back into God where He is all-in-all in your life. NOW is always the best time to live. TODAY is always the best time to walk with God. THE PRESENT is always the best time to see and know the Lord. I have this peculiar trait of enjoying life NOW. You can dream of tomorrow and you can look back into the past, but all you have or will ever have is RIGHT NOW. It is always NOW. God is NOW. Get into TODAY, into God's NOW and begin living

JESUS HAS COME!

Did you expect the sky to rend asunder?
Were you expecting lightening, hail and thunder?
Have you looked up to the skies With beclouded earthly eyes?
Did you expect the Lord to come that way?
Once He came and they laid Him in a manger.
He came unto His own, but remained a stranger.
Though some still looked for the King
They never heard the angels sing,
They didn't expect the Lord to come that way.
None could desire Him, for He had no beauty.
It then became their strict religious duty,
Because His life they could not see,
To nail and hang Him on a tree.
How could they expect the Lord to come that way?
That age is over; a new one is beginning.
It's time for the next appearing without sinning.
If He comes in robes of flesh
And riding on a lowly ass,
Would you expect the Lord to come that way?
Be careful, then, just how you judge another,
For Christ may come to you as just a brother.
He's Zion's incognito King
Whose coming will salvation bring
To those who expect the Lord to come that way.
"All flesh is not the same," our Lord has taught us.
For when that sonship comes, which He has bought us,
He's a Man within a man,
A Living Word beyond time's span.
We MUST expect the Lord to come that way.
Yes, we MUST expect the Lord to come that way,
For the Lord will surely, surely come that way
In the sons of God... today!
Connie Asbill

End of the Series